

HAIKU

for LOVERS



Manu Bazzano



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Compiled by Manu Bazzano



For Sarita, now and always

Thank you

David Scott for being Dave. Amanda Little and Sugra Zaman. Leanne Bryan and Ljiljana Baird at MQ Publications. To all the haiku poets who help to keep haiku alive in the 21st Century. And to Sarita Doveton, for reminding me of the Beloved.

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*the weight,
the weight we carry
is love.*

ALLEN GINSBERG

LOVE IS, according to the Czech poet Rainer Maria Rilke, the “obscure interval between birth and death.” The implication is that precious little else happens in our life which carries the same meaning, the same intensity. Doubtless, we toil and struggle, and busy ourselves with pursuing and acquiring all sort of objects, only to realize, sooner or later, that they do not give us the satisfaction we crave.

Love gives us the golden opportunity to surrender the root cause of our anguish: the self. Without surrendering the self—

even momentarily—neither love nor poetry, and haiku poetry in particular, are possible. For love—ordinary, imperfect, human love—is at its very core a form of generosity, the first of the six “transcendental perfections” expounded by the Buddha. Even noble pursuits such as science and religion are refined stimulants, ways in which the self busies itself, beating around the bush, postponing its own inevitable extinction through love.

We all possess this yearning, deep down, to give ourselves up. We also sense that without having experienced love we are merely killing time. Unless we have fully revealed ourselves to another, unless we have been exposed at some point in our life to the elemental forces of love, we have not truly lived.

And what is Art, after all, if not a sublimation of love? And doesn't religion borrow its ecstasies from the sighs and cries of the lovers' bedroom?

Love is a journey with a beginning, a middle, and an end. It is fashionable nowadays to speak of the journey for the journey's sake, but, as D. H. Lawrence reminds us, we undertake love's journey precisely in order to arrive somewhere. Naturally, most of us get stuck someplace along the journey. We are all very fond of beginnings, and our culture, when it comes to love, is essentially a honeymoon culture. Addiction to the heady wine of romance harbors the disappointments that inevitably follow; we cannot have perennial summer, for that would mean living in a picture postcard.

The lover's glance has stirred up in us much more than we bargained for. If we then undertake the journey until the end, perhaps no other discipline or training is needed.

"When I love thee not, Chaos is come again," exclaims Shakespeare's Othello. When we are not ruled by the gods of love,

we are at the mercy of our own ego, and of its unreasonable demands. We then inhabit a world of fear, ignorance, and aggression. We end up with a semi-detached in hell, or with an “apartment in the City of Death” as the mystic poet Kabir has it.

Heightened by love, life appears in its true colors. Meetings and separations are intensely felt, the joys and chagrins of love remove our protective membrane and allow us to perceive life in its raw magnificence.

Lovers gain access to that same source from which artists draw inspiration, from which saints procure their visions. They all realise—albeit for a brief spell—that they are part of the vast ocean of life and death, rather than individual waves with their particular destinies.

With sexual union, we lose our discontinuity and bathe again in the sacred river. Separation is—for a brief moment—gone. The

same happens when we practice meditation regularly: We forget the self, as it is said in the Zen tradition, and when the self is forgotten, “the ten thousand things come to the fore.”

How to integrate the orgasmic experience into the everyday life of a couple—and how to integrate the realization in the meditation hall into that same everyday life—these are the parallel, strikingly similar tasks that lovers share with spiritual practitioners.

“Haiku for Lovers” might sound at first like a contradiction in terms. Haikus are unadorned and lonely in their appearance whereas love is overflowing and ecstatic. Haikus often deal with heightened states of aloneness, whereas love is a celebration of union. Experience tells us, however, that unless we have savored the joys of solitude, we cannot truly and intimately relate to another. We also sense, in spite of centuries of romantic literature, that intense, complex emotions are best conveyed with economy

of words and a terse simplicity. A “haiku moment” occurs when the self is momentarily forgotten, and the wild wind of reality floods our room carrying gifts from the nearby woods. Haiku is a moment of reality expressed in three lines of verse. We rarely perceive reality, for we are either too busy making plans for the future or trying to relive the past through memory. When reality knocks at our door, the world is full of wonder. We become exposed to joy and pain, to an overwhelming sense of mystery. We realise that, deep down, we know nothing, and that this “not knowing” is the most intimate knowledge of all.

Haiku has its spiritual origins in Zen and Taoism. It is the very flowering of Eastern culture. To appreciate haiku is at the same time to honour Taoism, Zen, the tea ceremony, the art of flower arrangement—all the rich and wonderful spiritual traditions of ancient China and Japan. We have also been blessed, since the last

century, with some excellent Western haiku, the fruit of a natural process, parallel to the spreading of Zen Buddhism in the West.

There are various aesthetic guidelines in haiku. The first is simplicity. The greatest master of haiku, Matsuo Basho, learned and perfected the basic element of this poetic form; that it is possible to compress in an harmonious way, and within few syllables, meaningful feelings and insights. Or, as Allen Ginsberg has it, maximum communication, minimum number of words.

Other meaningful aesthetic qualities are the avoidance of the sublime and the celebration of the richness of the plain, an acute awareness of the physical, and a refreshing lack of self-centeredness. These are all characteristics that would no doubt benefit all forms of poetry.

The classic poetic dilemma of realism versus the imagination or the present versus eternity is happily dissolved in haiku. Using

the imagination in the present is the very essence of the poetic life. Looking at an object intimately is at once precise observation, and awareness of the infinity breathing inside it. For this reason, in haiku we find Classic poetry reconciled to Modern European poetry.

A “haiku moment” occurs when we open our eyes and look. We step into the river of life, and realise that we can’t step twice in the same river. Not even once, in fact. The experience is a “small death.” We sense the fragility and raw quality of life, its inexplicability. For a brief moment, we forget our illusion of separateness. We are in the river. We are the river.

The haiku world is the raindrop world. The true haiku poet is intensely absorbed in the physical and acutely aware of its transience. Such loving absorption allows her to perceive phenomena with equanimity: Nothing is too high or too low.

This anthology includes some senryu poetry. Most haiku magazines and anthologies in English also publish senryu, a poetic form so similar to haiku that it has become increasingly difficult to set the two apart. Traditionally, Japanese senryu are jocose, anonymous, and proverbial. Nature—a key element in haiku—shifts into the background. What concerns a Japanese or Western senryu is the imperfection of the human condition, the weaknesses and foibles of human beings; our fears, hopes and shortcomings. No wonder so many of them deal with love...

Dividing love's journey into three stages is a way to chart the rise and unfolding of Desire. The world, the saying goes, is in love with itself. From the initial bolt of lightning to the gentle unfolding, to the level of "harmonic love," we become acquainted with the various degrees and tonalities of desire. In the process, we discover and come to terms with the whole range of human

feelings and emotions, from the deepest joy to the pain of separation. We lay ourselves bare to the siege of love and beauty. We have known love: Now we can truly call ourselves human.

Love knows no East or West, North or South. It transcends the boundaries of race, culture, and language. Whether experienced by an ancient Chinese poet, a European troubadour, or a contemporary city dweller, love remains as rich and as unfathomable as ever. It testifies to a deep longing, and in some cases, to a deep fulfilment: the latter is a sign that the river has reached the ocean, and that we have found true satisfaction in the arms of the beloved. The old separation between “me” and the world has melted away. The world has regained its natural fluidity.

Manu Bazzano



The top half of the image features a vibrant red background with a complex, repeating pattern of stylized floral and sunburst motifs. A large, white, three-dimensional number '1' is positioned on the right side, partially overlapping the pattern.

1

Honeymoon

AFTER THE FIRST MEETING, this ordinary room is transformed into the garden of Eden. Time's gray hand becomes golden: It punctuates the gaps between now and the next rendezvous.

In sexual passion, we inherit the sun, the moon and the stars, and in the languid embrace of afterlove, we are closer to the heart of the universe. Our blood sings in dark veins, and we discover the night.

The long, sleepless hours devoted to sex and love wash us clean, and in the morning we find radiance, lightness in our step, a courage we did not know we possessed. We find a morning sunbeam on the face of our loved one.

We love, and are loved in return. We are the first woman and the first man walking on earth, and today is the only day. We have no

history, and thus no regrets. We have no future, and thus we belong to eternity. All other human endeavors seem gray and anaemic when perceived through the honeymoon glow. Logic and reason seem skeletal knick-knacks, rusty tools for mere survival.

Lovers shrug off the gravity of the world with their laughter: their laughter adds music to the world: "She enters / Sunshine, waves and violins..."

Eros, like poetry, is a dancing child in the dull abattoir of law and necessity. Looking at nature through tears of joy, it appears as if broken up in iridescent colors. Lovers access fluidity, the ability to be anyone, to dare anything.

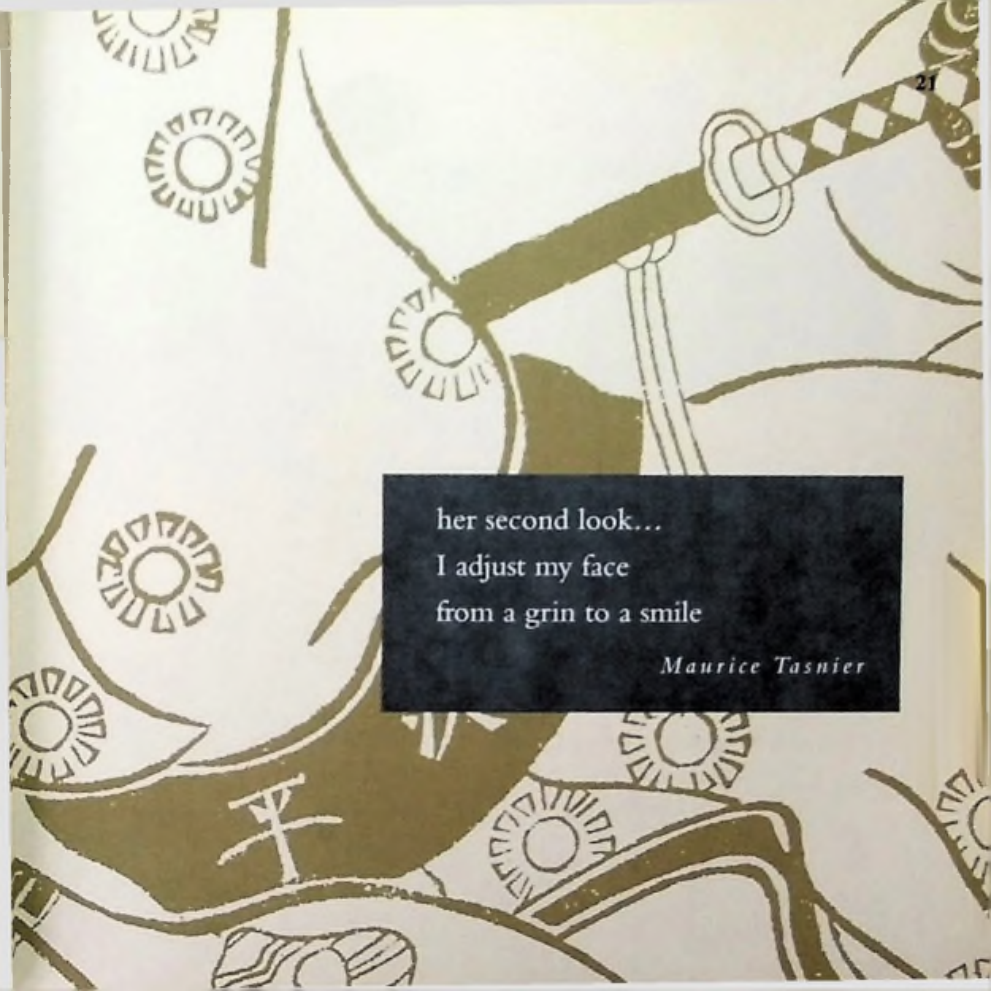
*Watched her approach
and as we finally pass
our umbrellas touch*

Seán O'Connor

through binoculars
a woman looking at me
through binoculars

MYKEL BOARD

Abstract geometric patterns in dark brown and black ink at the bottom of the page. On the left, there are overlapping shapes resembling stylized umbrellas or flags. On the right, there is a pattern of interlocking hexagons, some containing a cross-like symbol.



her second look...

I adjust my face
from a grin to a smile

Maurice Tasnier


he looks again—
the girl in the summer dress
has closed her eyes

David Steele

*She enters
sunshine, waves and violins
then leaves.*

Basem Farid





*Festival pathos:
falling hopelessly in love
with a lady juggler.*

Seishi Yamaguchi /
Tr. Takashi Kodaira and Alfred H. Marks

The lily she held
in her hand as she passed by
left its fragrance here

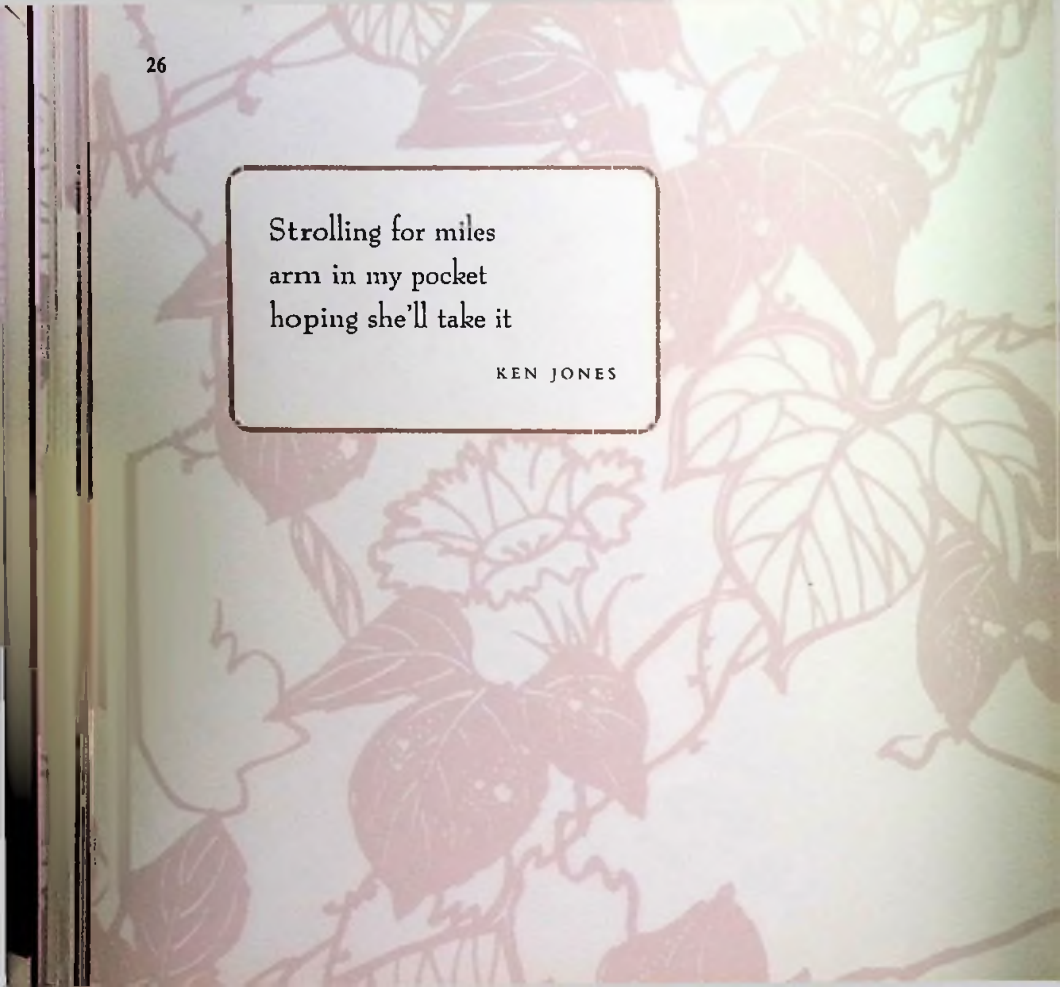
SEISHI YAMAGUCHI /

TR. TAKASHI KODAIRA AND ALFRED H. MARKS

in her perfumed
wake I walk to class
kicking yellow leaves

John Hazelton





Strolling for miles
arm in my pocket
hoping she'll take it

KEN JONES

*waiting for you
one, two, three petals
on the seat*

Akiko Sakaguchi

sun shining
through her skirt
and she knows it

Robert Gray

placing her curves
between him
and the doorway

Joanna Ashwell

*Leading him in . . .
my bracelet
jangling.*

Alexis Rotella



we talked while outside
the sky changed from wintry blue
through green to black night

COLIN BLUNDELL

memorable night out
film-plot unknown
still

Douglas M. Henly

*too quick to reply
cutting my tongue
on the envelope*


John Stevenson



廣重筆

*Peach trees all in bloom
to make a hair ornament
for the love goddess.*

Seishi Yamaguchi f
Tr. Takashi Kodaira and Alfred H. Marks



cemetery
our first feared
kiss


Christopher W. Howell

away from eyes
the stairwell holds
us in its arms

ROD WILLMOT

*she can't read
he can't write, yet between them
a romance*

Senryu / Tr. Makoto Ueda



*Spring rain:
Clinging to each other
Under one umbrella.*

Natsume Soseki / Tr. Soiku Shigematsu

tissue paper kisses
melting
in the rain

MAGGIE WEST

all my expectations
my lover letting down
her hair

BRIAN TASKER

She is naked now
and the rose hue of her breast
tints a gift of pearls.

Gilbert Bowen

*The white of her neck
as she lifts her hair for me
to undo her dress*


Bernard Lionel Einbond



A crane carries
All my burning passion
Through the autumn night.

ISHIDA HAKYO / TR. R. H. BLYTH





that first time in bed—
surprised at how fluent
our body language

Frank Dullaghan

*first eye to eye
then hand to hand
and mouth to mouth*

Senryu / Tr. Makoto Ueda



*moon flowers!
when a woman's skin
is revealed*

*Kaga no Chiyo /
Tr. Patricia Donegan and Yoshie Ishibashi*

how long it seems
when you unwind a woman's sash
while lying in bed!

Senryu / Tr. Makoto Ueda

Stand erect my love;
let the divinity of your eyes
fall upon me.

Sappho / Tr. Kevin Bailey

*I will share
This pomegranate with you,
Splitting it at the seam.*


Takeo / Tr. R. H. Blyth

*afterwards
from the bedroom window
cool moonlight*

John Shimmin

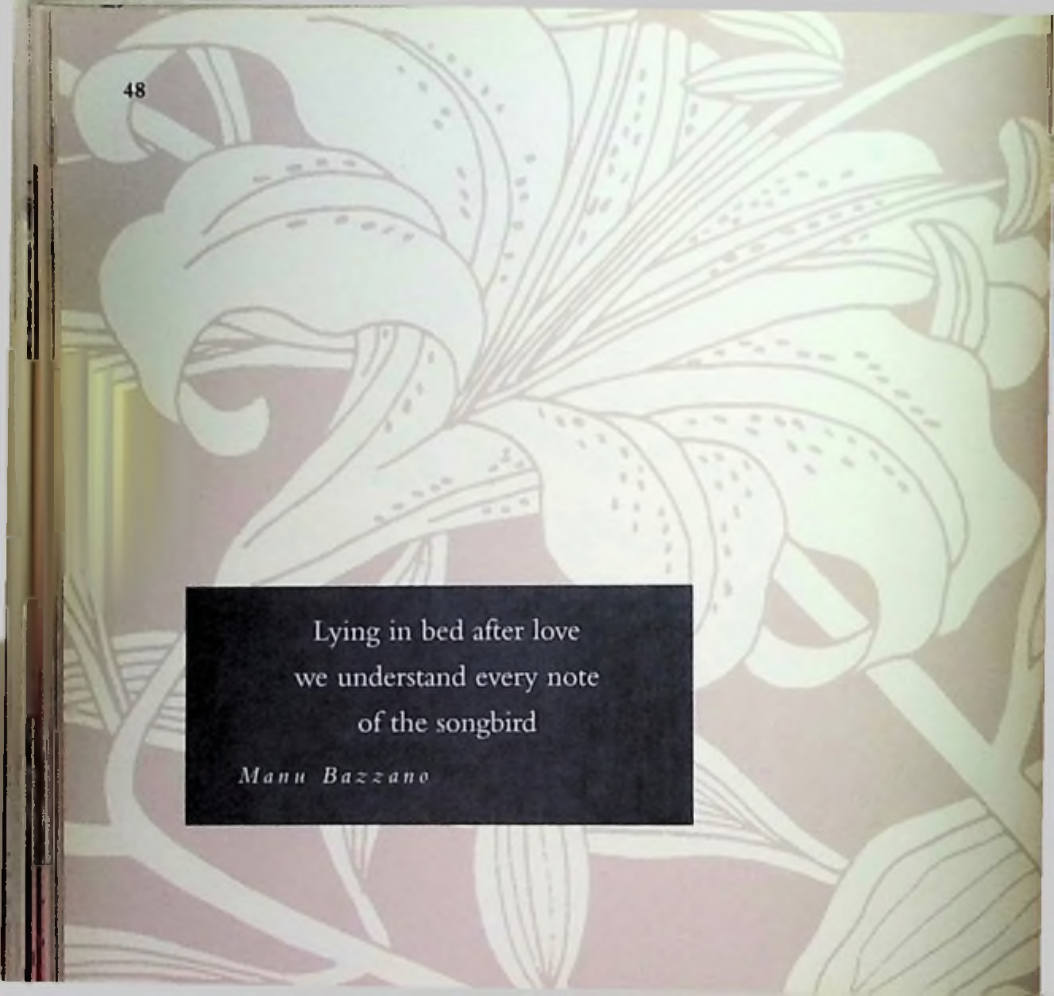
kept awake
by the silence
of her breathing

Maurice Tasnier



early morning voices
and the scent of you
half a pillow away

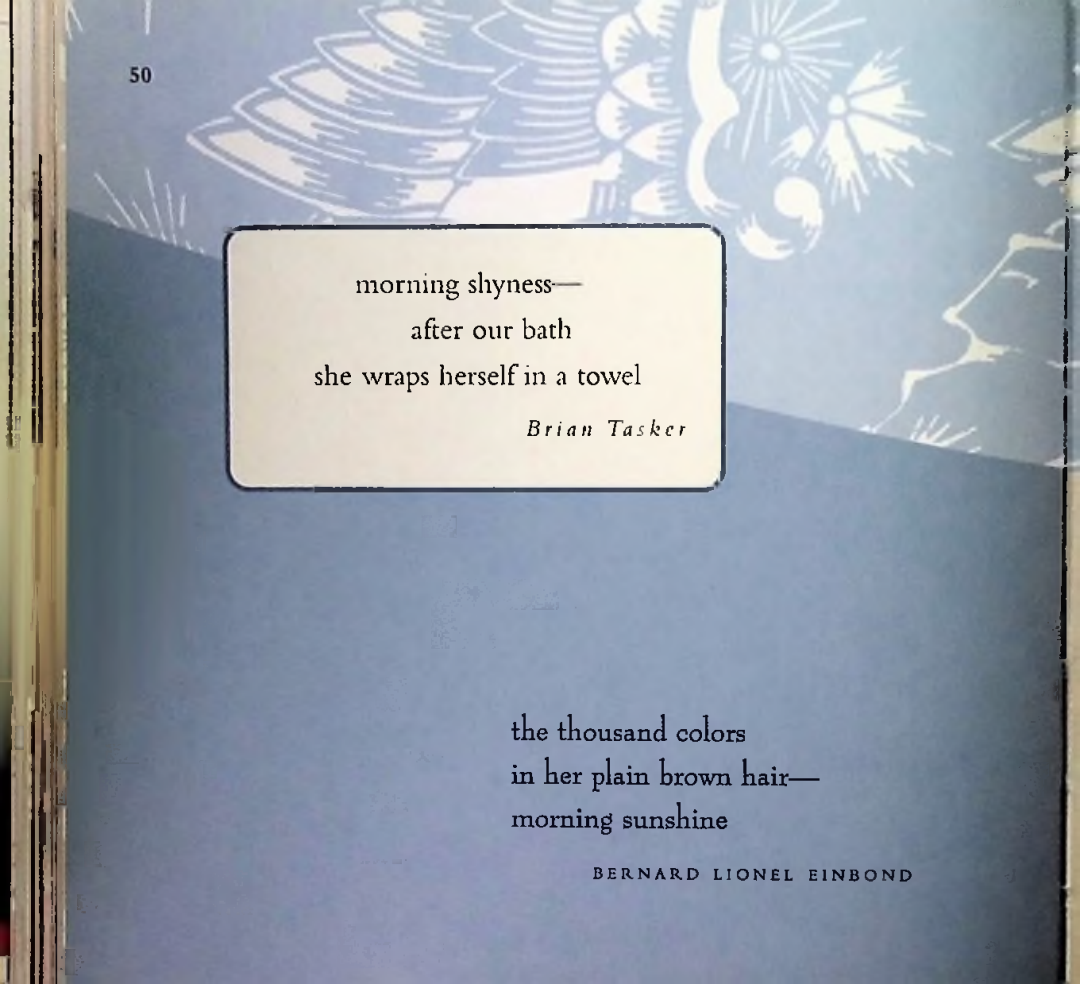
John Barlow



Lying in bed after love
we understand every note
of the songbird

Manu Bazzano






morning shyness—
after our bath
she wraps herself in a towel

Brian Tasker

the thousand colors
in her plain brown hair—
morning sunshine

BERNARD LIONEL EINBOND



*You kissed me:
the sun lit up
on my dumbfounded lips.*

Claudia Baldini / Tr. Manu Bazzano

*Looking for you
through hundreds
of love haiku*

Manu Bazzano

Your gaze:
a warm haven
a soft answer

GEMMA CRISCUOLI / TR. MANU BAZZANO

First cold dawn;
Sharing the same knit sweater
we watch the moon set

Lorraine Ellis Harr

*frozen darkness:
someone knocks
at my heart*

Toshimi Horiuchi

after she's gone
unwinding
a long hair from my sweater

Brian Tasker



*Lying—
I tell him I'm not looking
for a prince.*

Alexis Rotella

failing to intrude
on our lovemaking
his bagpipe practice

Nick Woodward

*Makes the eye happy—
the whiteness
of the lover's fan.*

Yosa Buson / Tr. Robert Hass



I'm glad I stuck my
tongue right down your ear although
it tasted waxy.

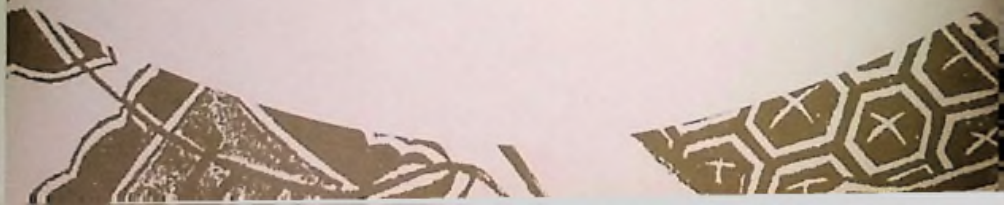
JENNIFER WALLACE

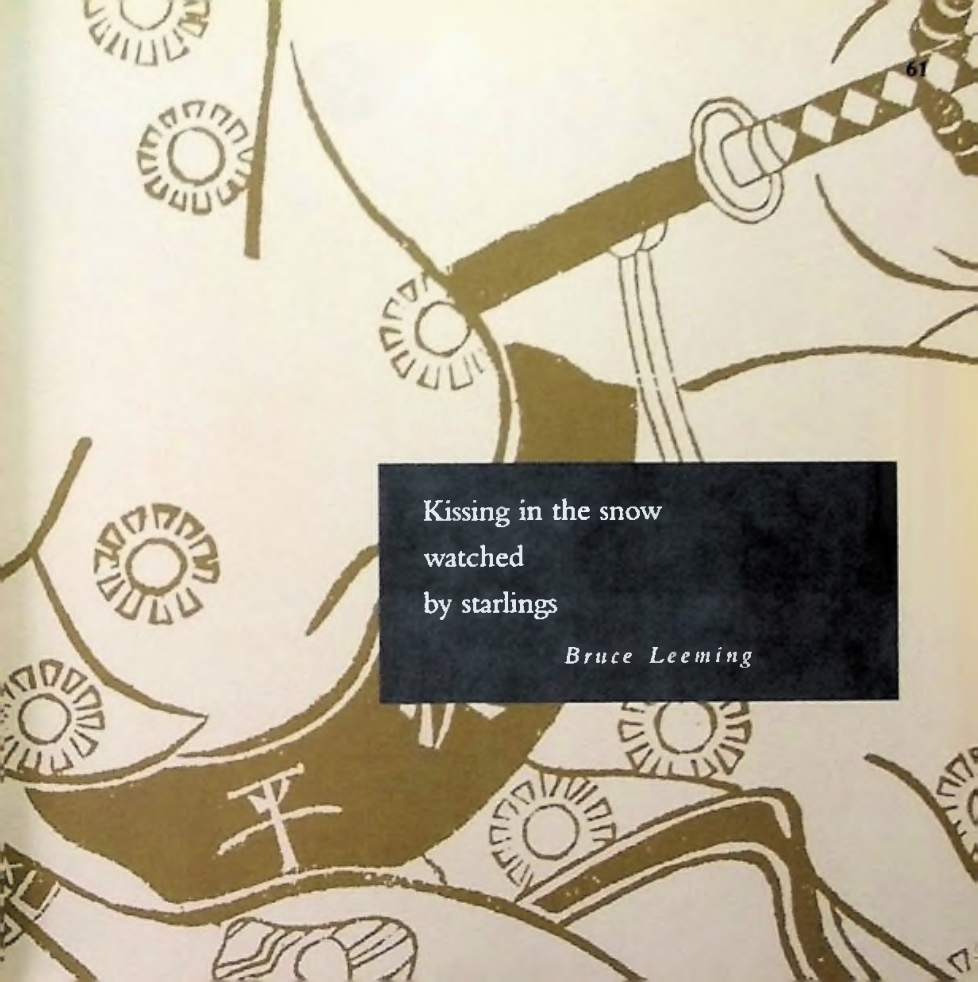
*She removes
her panties
full moon*

George Swede

*The shrine maiden's hands
held over the charcoal pan
radiated love.*

*Seishi Yamaguchi /
Tr. Takashi Kodaira and Alfred H. Marks*



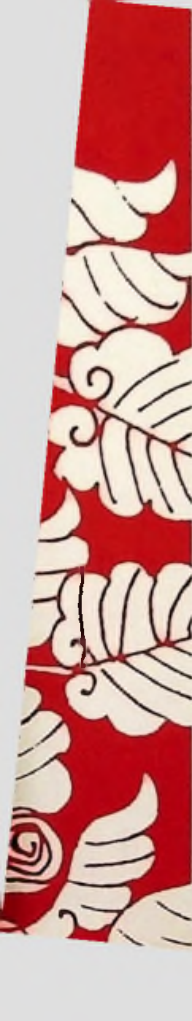


Kissing in the snow
watched
by starlings

Bruce Leeming

a kiss on each cheek
traffic tearing past
in both directions

David Cobb



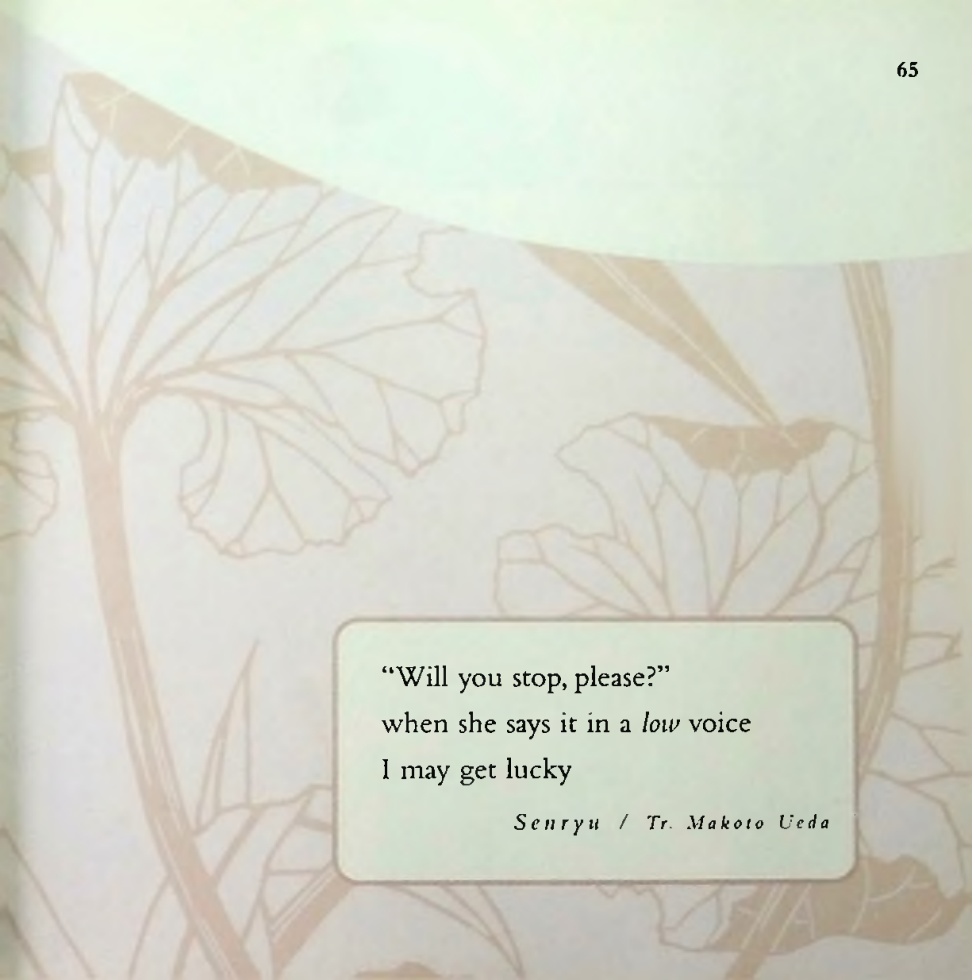
*at the quick-serve till
checked out with each item
her engagement ring*

David Cobb

after the quake
adding I love you
to a letter

MICHAEL DYLAN WELCH





“Will you stop, please?”
when she says it in a *low* voice
I may get lucky

Senryu / Tr. Makoto Ueda

Making love—building
card castles till the last card
brings them crashing down

ALVARO MUTIS / TR. JAMES KIRKUP

*Pink butterflies
the hands of love
give warmth*

Anna Santoro / Tr. Manu Bazzano

Summer afternoon:
through bars of light your shoulder
rising and falling.

D. C. Trent

Swinging on the hanger
her white summer dress:
wind chimes

George Swede

*naked you sit
in a wicker chair
kneeling.
I'm a bird nestfallen*

Gabriel Rosenstock



How soft is the nap
of a female bear's skin
when a male's is near.

SEISHI YAMAGUCHI /

TR. TAKASHI KODAIRA AND ALFRED H. MARKS

*Late August
I bring him the garden
in my skirt.*

Alexis Rotella

*Her body so beautiful
The Old Man resolves to do
something about his own*

Steve Sanfield

his bicycle
on hers—path
by the meadow

John O'Connor

*Indian summer . . .
two lovers rolling
on a bed of leaves*

Giovanni Malito

parkbench
lovers pantomime
the Kama Sutra

William Hart



lovers' beach walk
they can feel the moisture
after sunset

WERNER REICHHOLD

pressed rose petals—
their nude bodies
on wet sand

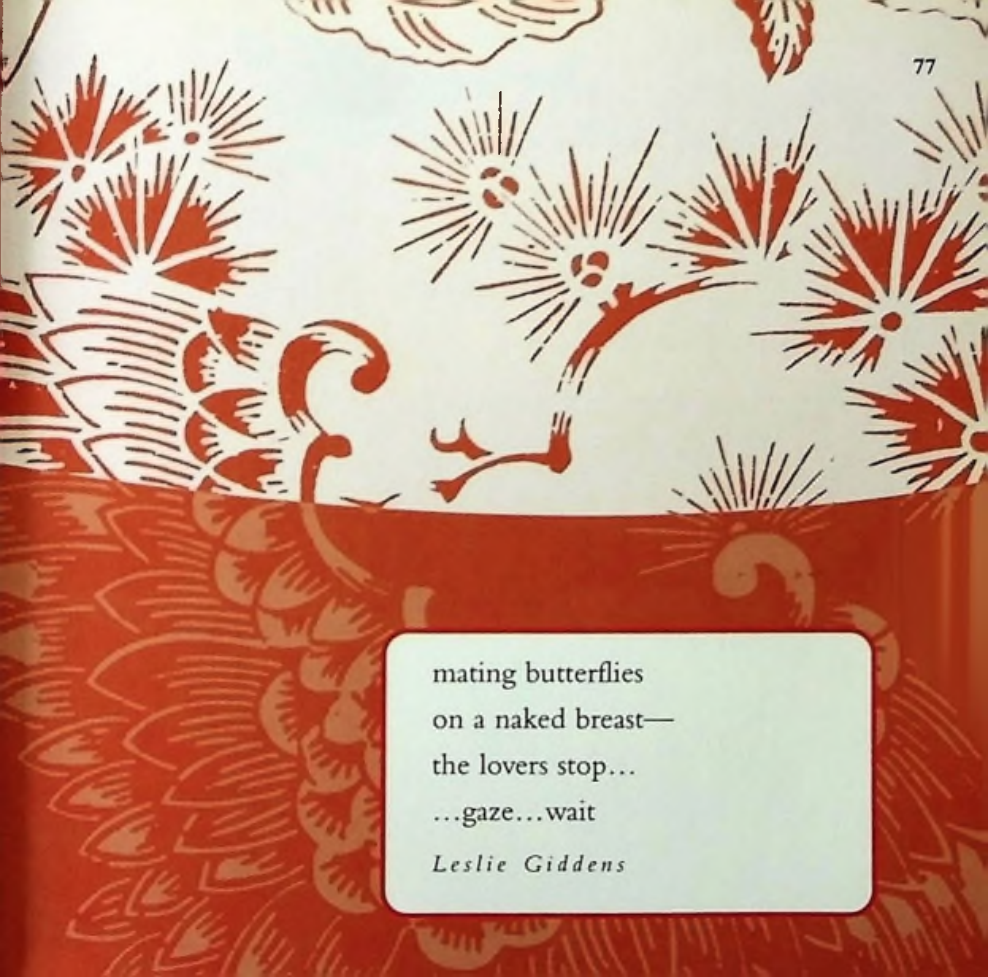
Raffael de Gruttola

*On the shore
smooth, round boulders—
her hand-cupped breasts*

Bruce Leeming

Heat waves—
cats worship
the God of Love.

Issa Kobayashi / Tr. Lucien Stryk



mating butterflies
on a naked breast—
the lovers stop...
...gaze...wait

Leslie Giddens

holding you
in me still...
sparrow songs

ANITA VIRGIL



We curled together,
warm in the softness of leaves,
the winter cradle.

William Alderson

*Afternoon tryst.
Undressed, trembling—
watched by a pigeon*


Bruce Leeming

*Butterfly kidnapped
from butterfly—
all's a-flutter.*

Seisensui / Tr. Lucien Stryk







Gaze glimmers
throat turning inside out
you are in love

Anna Santoro /
Tr. Manu Bazzano

"I love you"
such brief words, yet how hard
to say them!

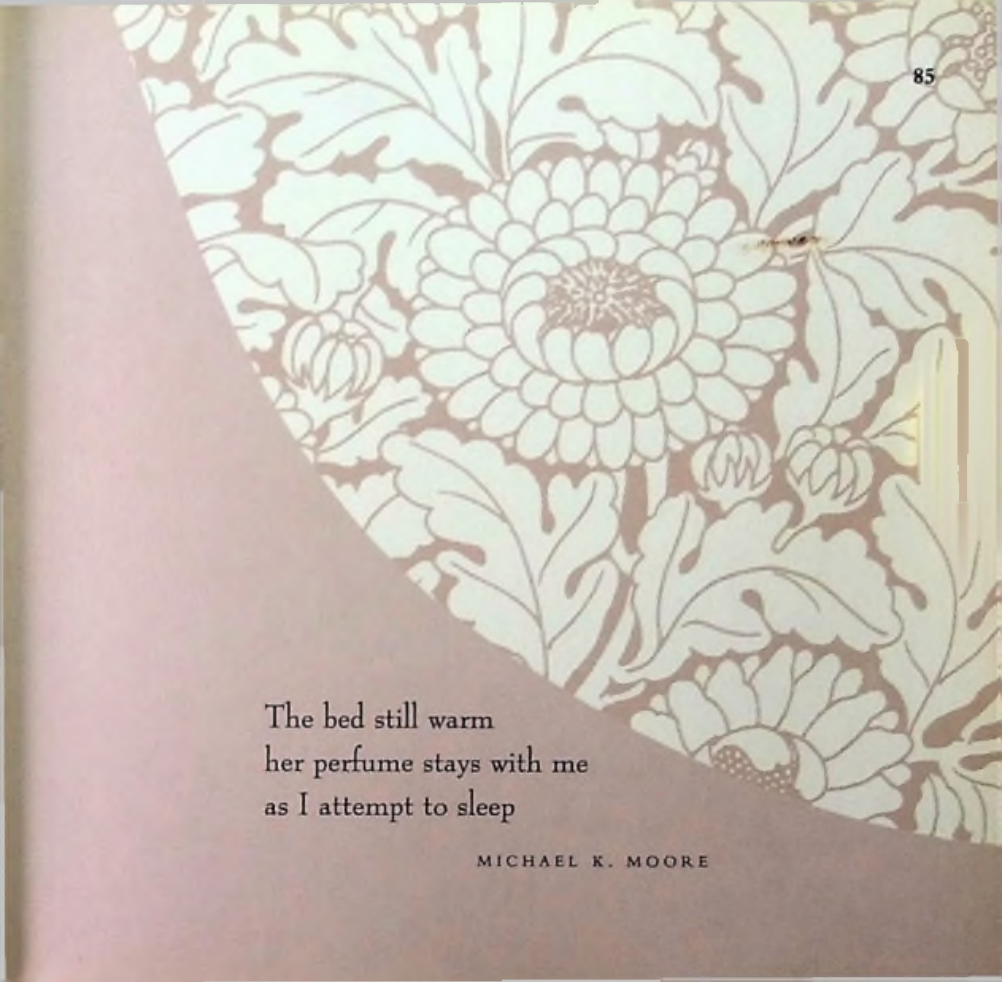
Senryu / Tr. Makoto Ueda

*we sweat on our beds
after each climax
the rain never stops*

David Cobb

midnight
your thumb strums my nipple
a creak on the stair

Jackie Hardy



The bed still warm
her perfume stays with me
as I attempt to sleep

MICHAEL K. MOORE

*spring love—
the curtains breathe in,
and out*

Kevin Bailey

Moonlight caresses
her voluptuousness:
jealous, the stars stare.

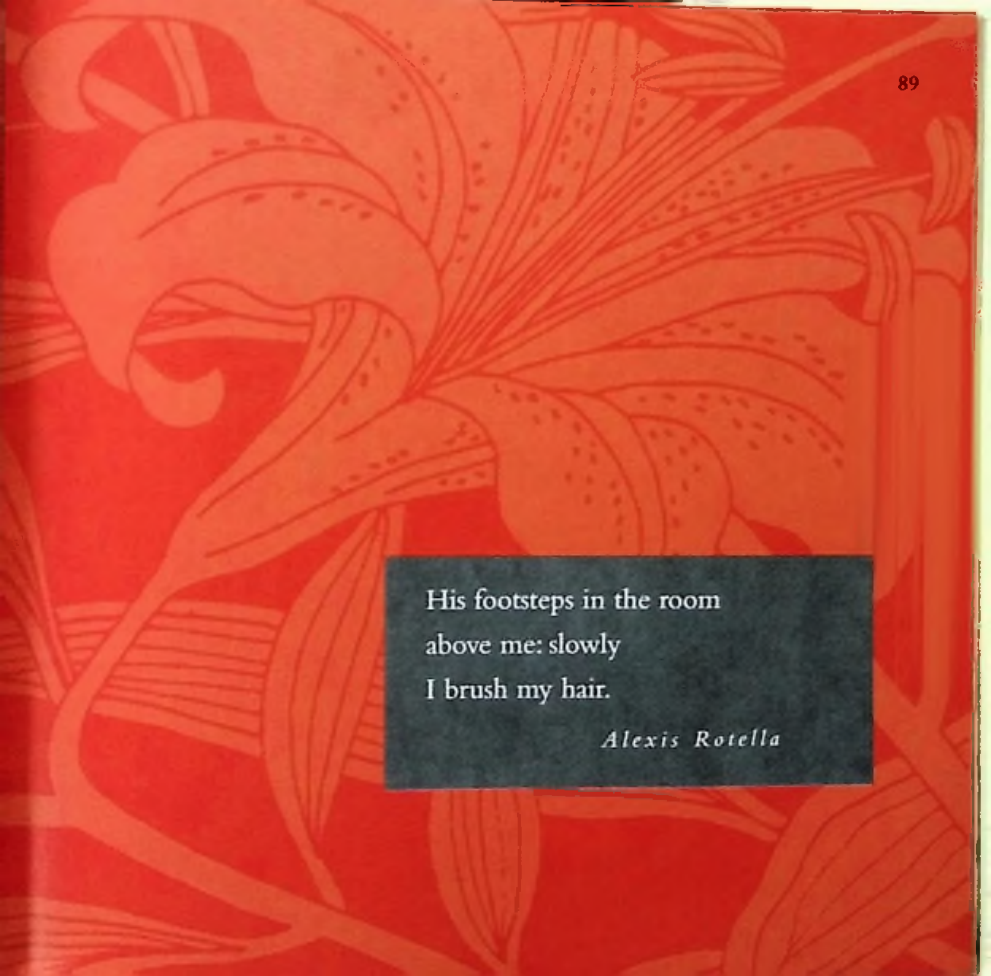
Bruce Leeming

みづの初掬

大かきや
怪乃戸

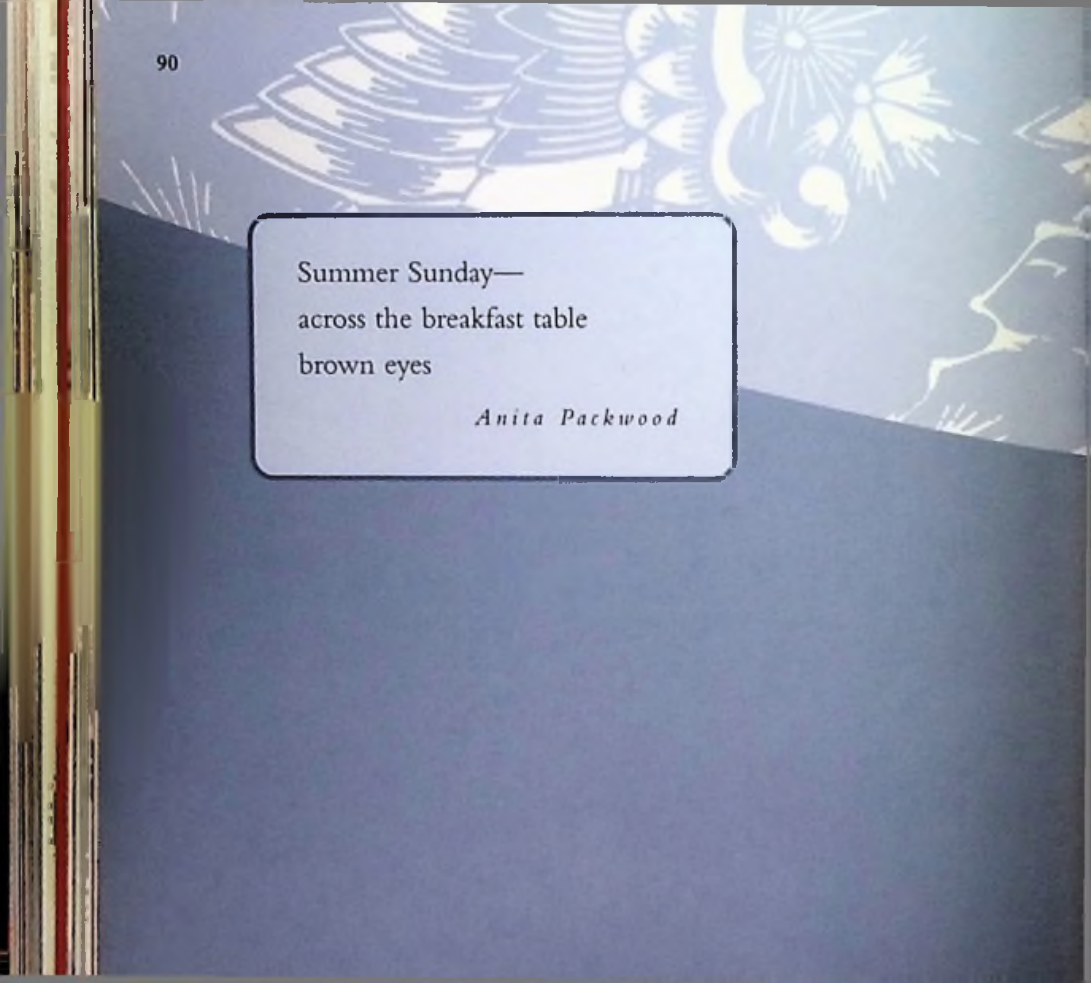


湖龍齋画




His footsteps in the room
above me: slowly
I brush my hair.

Alexis Rotella



Summer Sunday—
across the breakfast table
brown eyes

Anita Packwood



*on my return
she brings blue plums
on a white plate*

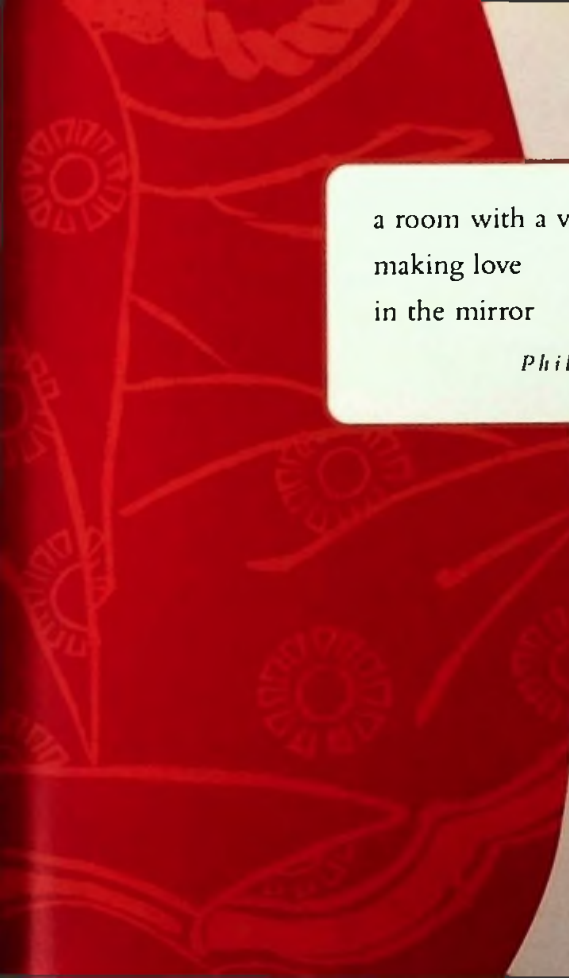
L. A. Davidson

*The first night,
The elopers
Stay at the beautiful place.*

Hisui / Tr. R. H. Blyth

how beautiful
she looks—a bride
with nothing on

SENRYU / TR. MAKOTO UEDA



a room with a view—
making love
in the mirror

Philip Rowland

trilliums rippling...
under her scarf
her pulse

Rod Willmot



*the small gasp
in the throat of a lover.
No going back.*

Giles Goodland

my full red rose—
the weight of it
surprises you


FRANK DULLAGHAN

The lover has a key
to the small gate.

KYORAI / TR. LENORE MAYHEW







*the bones of a bird
on the spring path of lovers
not saying a word*

Raymond Roseliep

Poverty also,
 In excess,—
And they laugh together.

Kijiro / Tr. R. H. Blyth

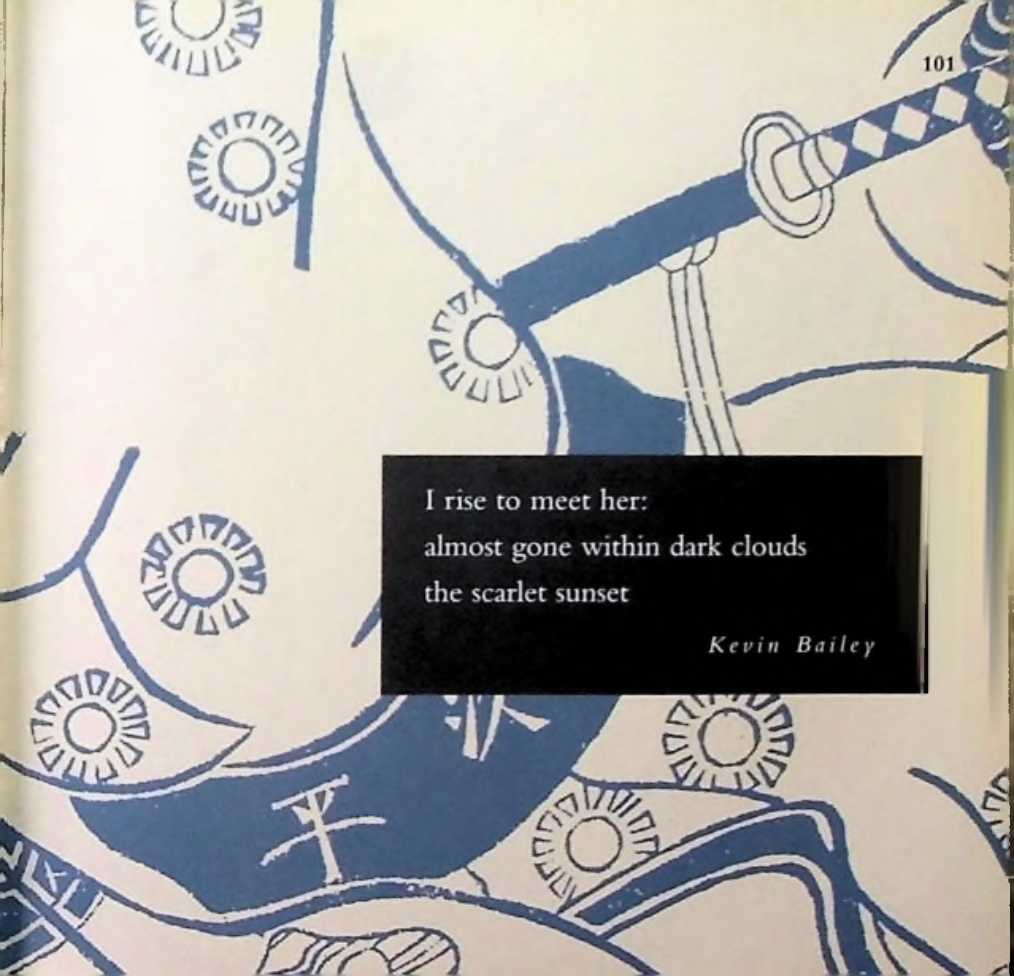
*Silence, and I watch
The soft cascade of her hair
Shimmer in the dark.*

Gilbert Bowen

My tongue on her skin
uncoils desire:
oh, exploring hands!

BRUCE LEEMING





I rise to meet her:
almost gone within dark clouds
the scarlet sunset

Kevin Bailey

In the dust
on the carriage window:

I ♥ U

John McDonald

*singing a love song
into her ansaphone*

Manu Bazzano

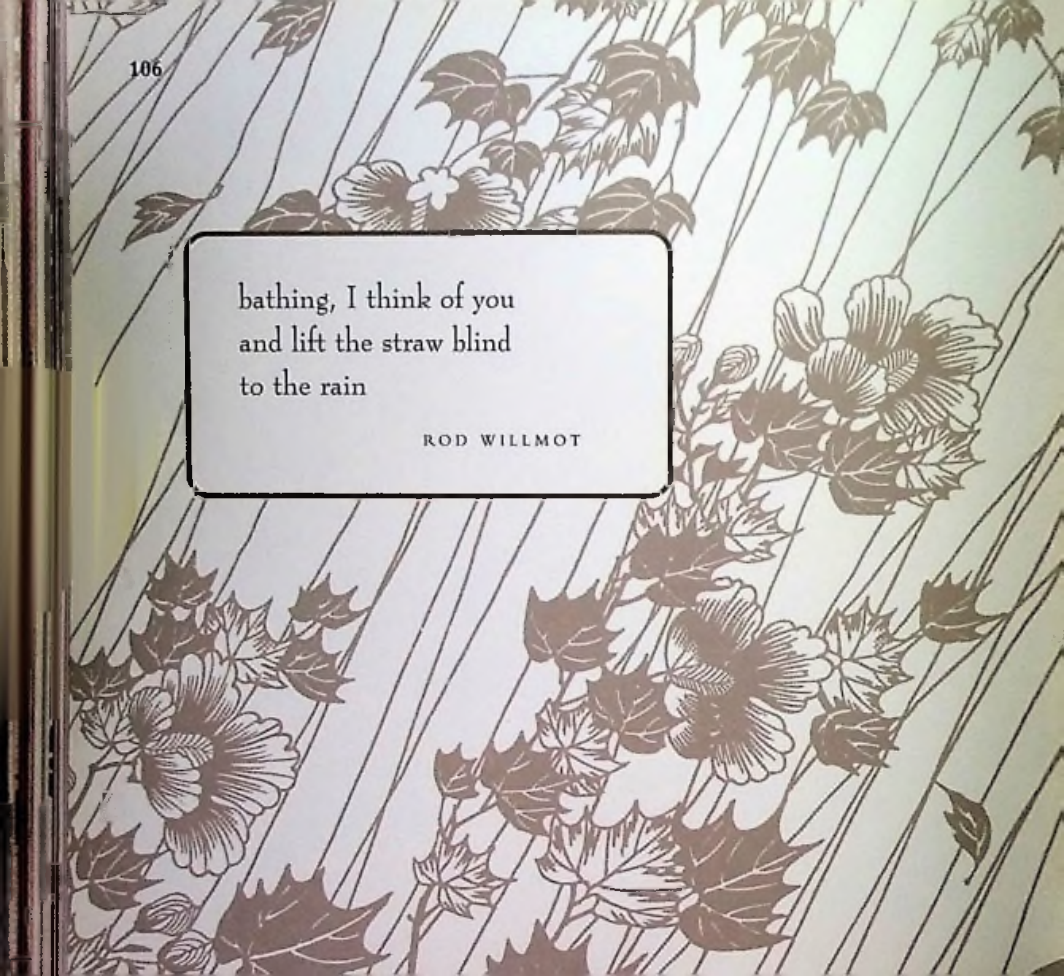
the window pane squeaks
as my finger daubs your name
then mine

ANDREW DETHERIDGE



A haiku is enough
given the complicity
of the girl at the window

John Aspinall



bathing, I think of you
and lift the straw blind
to the rain

ROD WILLMOT

*With wine glasses
we stand and talk
into the rhododendrons.*

Alexis Rotella

snuffing a candle
her expression
...changes

David Steele

*Men, women
and their shadows—
dancing*

Santoka / Tr. Fumiko and Akira Yamamoto



乙
不恒月

色
新

哥
姉





Bittersweet


STARING AT THE embers of the bonfire after a night of passion, we feel the first shivers of the dawn. The lover's face is no longer so radiant. Could it be an effect of the light?

As the honeymoon fades, we have the opportunity to deepen our union. The end of the honeymoon could be the beginning of a deeper love.

This phase of the journey translates for some into a time of separation. Alongside the pain of breaking up, we find that sweetness and gentle melancholy color our days and nights, giving us fresh insights into our human condition. Some say "a broken heart is an open heart," and that we cannot know true happiness without tasting the bitter wine of disappointment.

If, however, we persevere through the difficulties, we gradually enter a new stage in the journey. We start to understand true intimacy, and learn other facets of ourselves and of the beloved. We get to know our lover's shadow, and aspects of his personality that were hidden to us, perhaps even to him. At this stage, lovers become companions, they take together the first tentative steps in sharing love's journey.

This stage requires courage and humor. We are ready to show a more vulnerable, ordinary side to the other. As peak experiences slowly fade into the plateau of daily life, we need to remind ourselves that we are on a journey, and that new peaks always await us.



hearing us argue,
our old dog tiptoes past
her empty water bowl

Carol Montgomery

*if I were a cat
I could sit on your crossword
with my back to you*

Jane Whittle

*lone woman singing
to the river while her man
carries on fishing*

Colin Blundell

leaving you
on the crowded train
alone

FRANK DULLAGHAN

after early rain
flowers open to the sun
I miss you

Kate Hall

*magnolia leaves
clattering in sudden gusts—
his departure*

Linda Jeanne Ward

After we make up
on my ear lobe
black mascara.

SEÁN O'CONNOR



their hands touch
then their feet—in no time
an armistice

Senryu / Tr. Makoto Ueda

*After drinking and quarreling,
Going back silently,
Under the Milky Way.*

Tomoji / Tr. R. H. Blyth

by the pleasure boats
our last night—
new moon setting

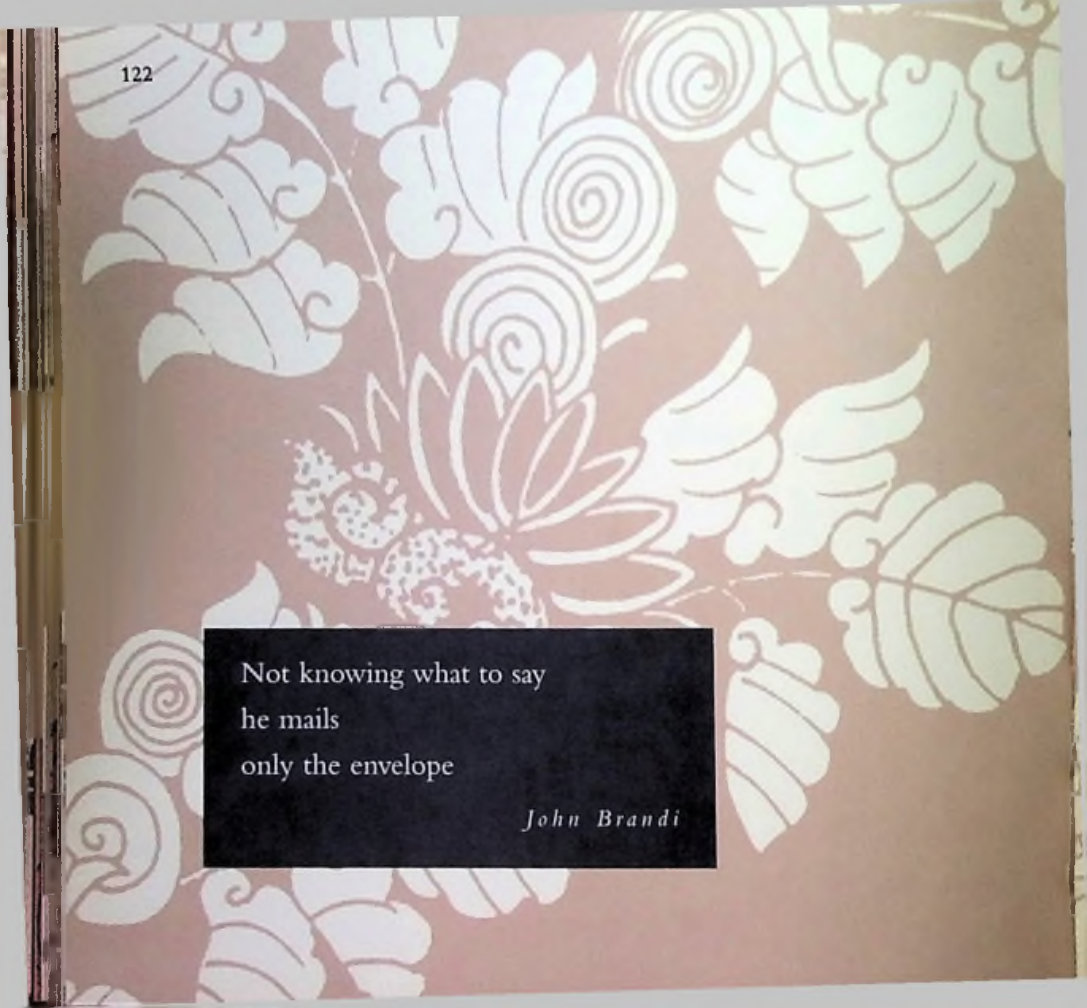
KEN COCKBURN



東列名所圖

天正癸卯






Not knowing what to say
he mails
only the envelope

John Brandi

*no letter from you
watching a mocking bird
chase a butterfly*


Raffael de Gruttola





*After an affair
sweeping
all the rooms.*

Alexis Rotella



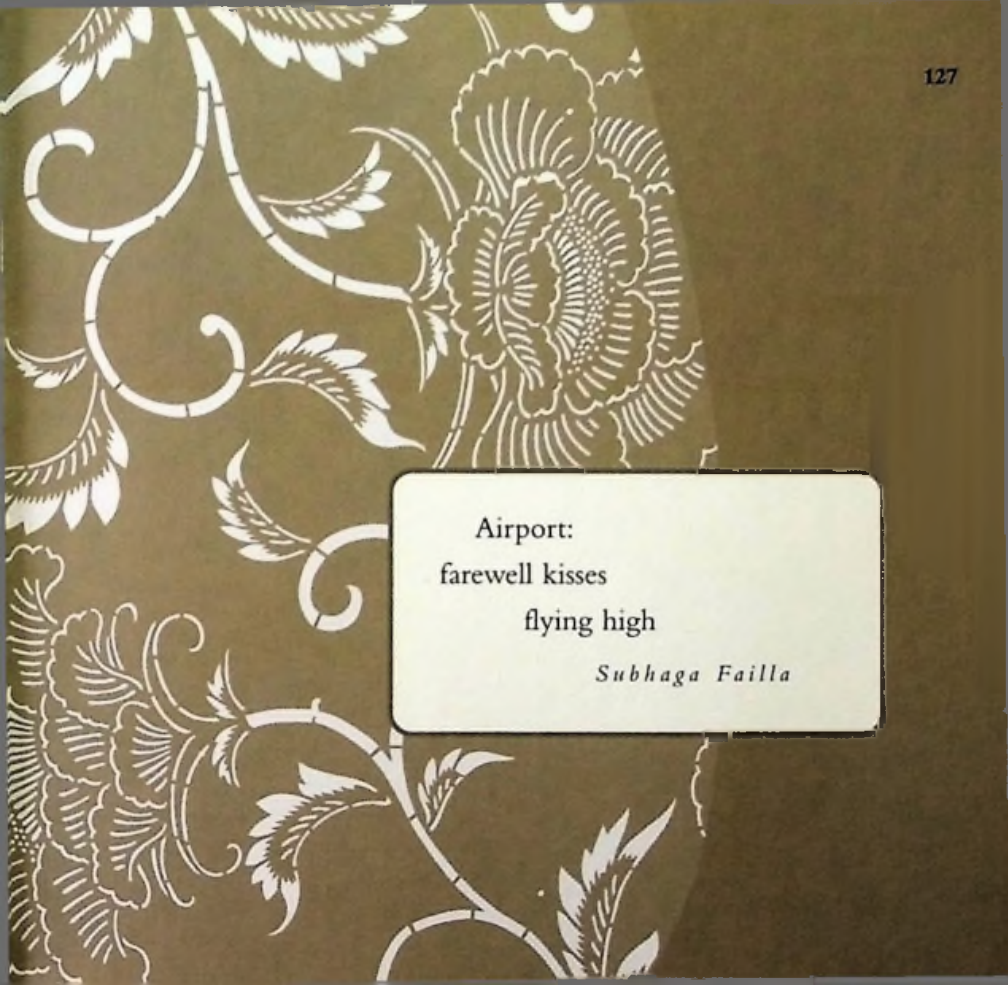
doorbell unanswered:
in the porch, my lover's bike
—saddle still warm

CHARLES BRIEN

*The tearful parting,
The porter carrying their things
Busily.*

Eishi / Tr. R. H. Blyth

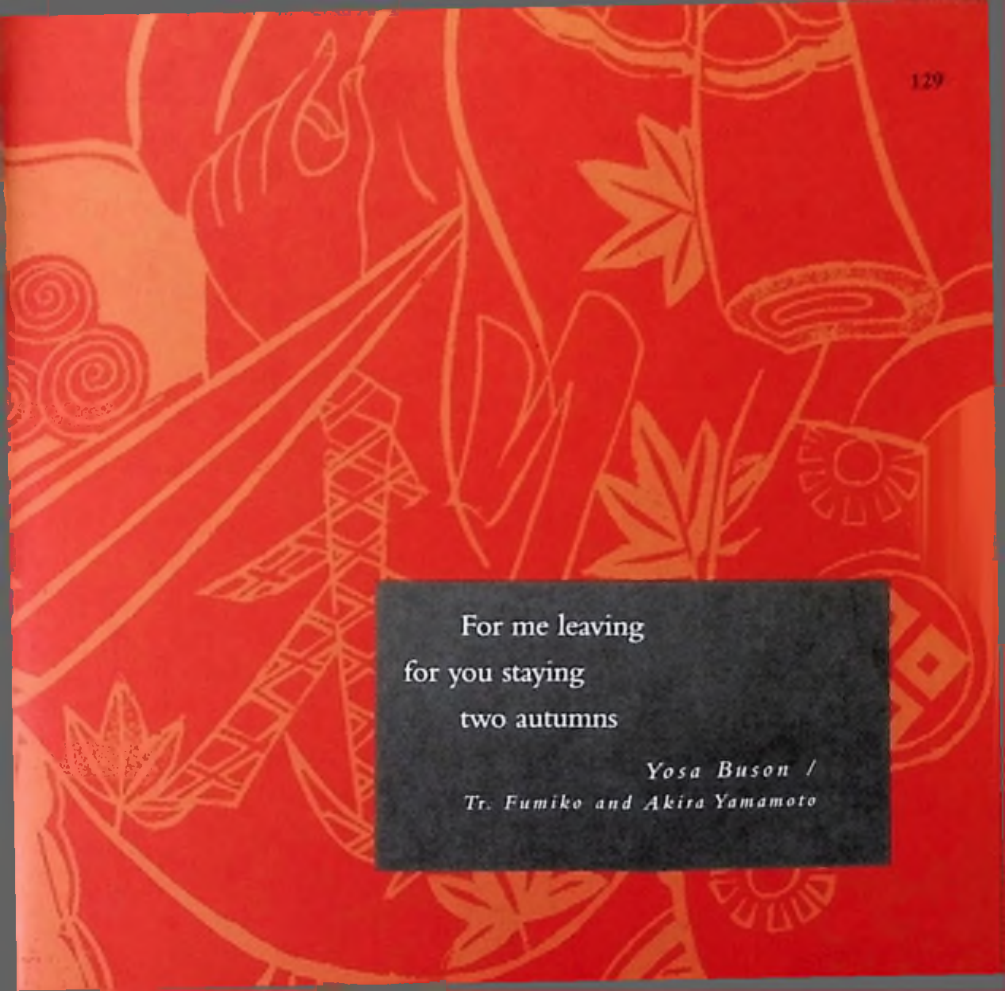
dense fog—
I write your name
on the airport window
Michael Dylan Welch



Airport:
farewell kisses
flying high

Subhaga Failla



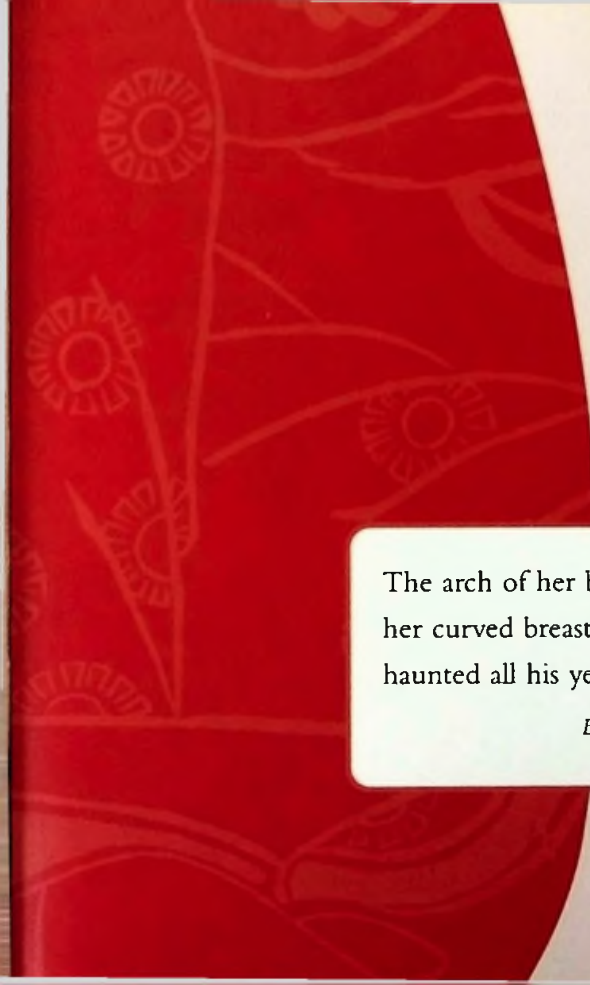


For me leaving
for you staying
two autumns

Yosa Buson /
Tr. Fumiko and Akira Yamamoto

*Drumming rain—she
asleep, warm in passion's wake:
my tears taste of salt.*

Bruce Leeming



The arch of her back,
her curved breasts' allure,
haunted all his years.

Bruce Leeming

heated discussion
the ceiling fan
stirs the air

John Crook



*My wife holds
a thistle—I feel its prickles
in my hand.*

Hino Sojo / Tr. Makoto Ueda

breakfast in silence
both halves of the grapefruit
unsweetened


DAVID COBB

my coat dripping
two hours in the rain
without you

FRANK DULLAGHAN







*Suddenly
remembering her,
his feet crushed gravel.*

Kusatao / Tr. Lucien Stryk

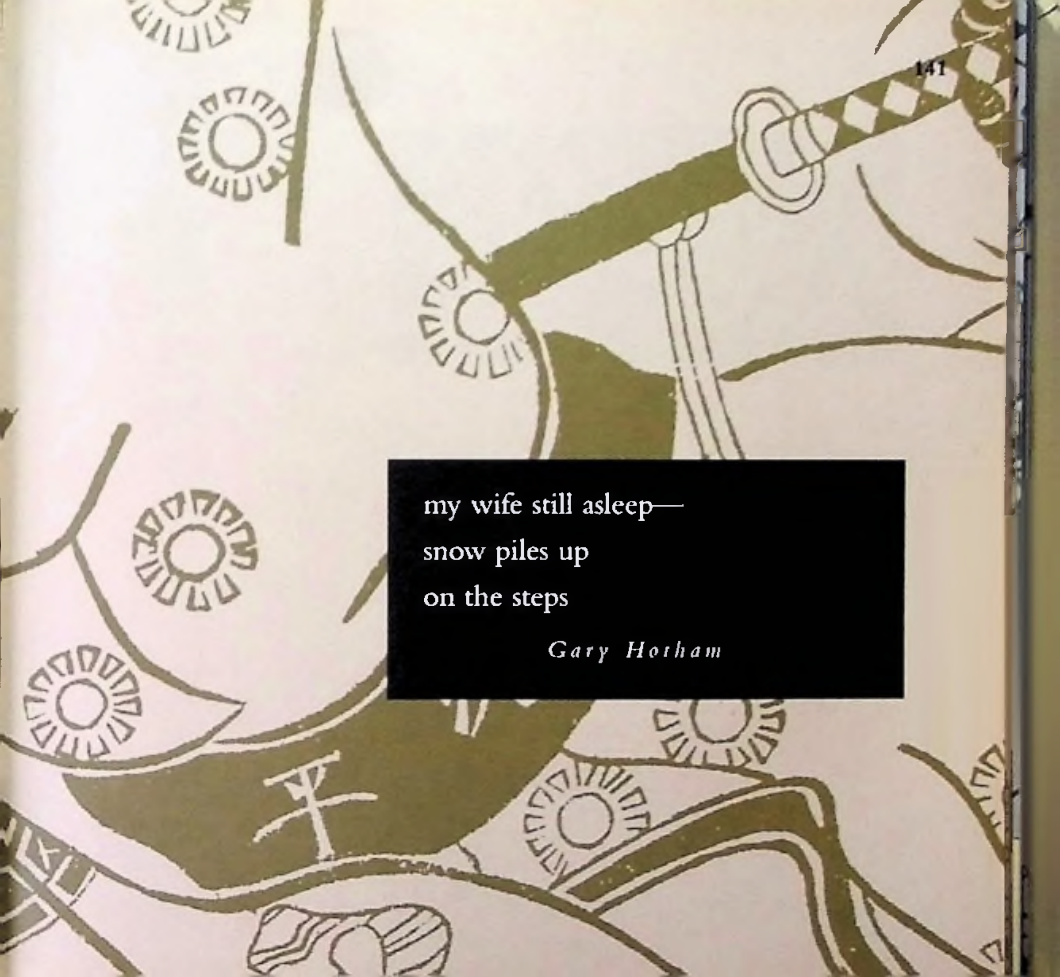
In the garbage bin
mound of snow
and a valentine.

Alexis Rotella

*He says a word,
and I say a word—autumn
is deepening.*

Kyoshi Takahama / Tr. Makoto Ueda





my wife still asleep—
snow piles up
on the steps


Gary Hotham

she has gone—
a vase of wild asters
on the kitchen table

Richard Crist

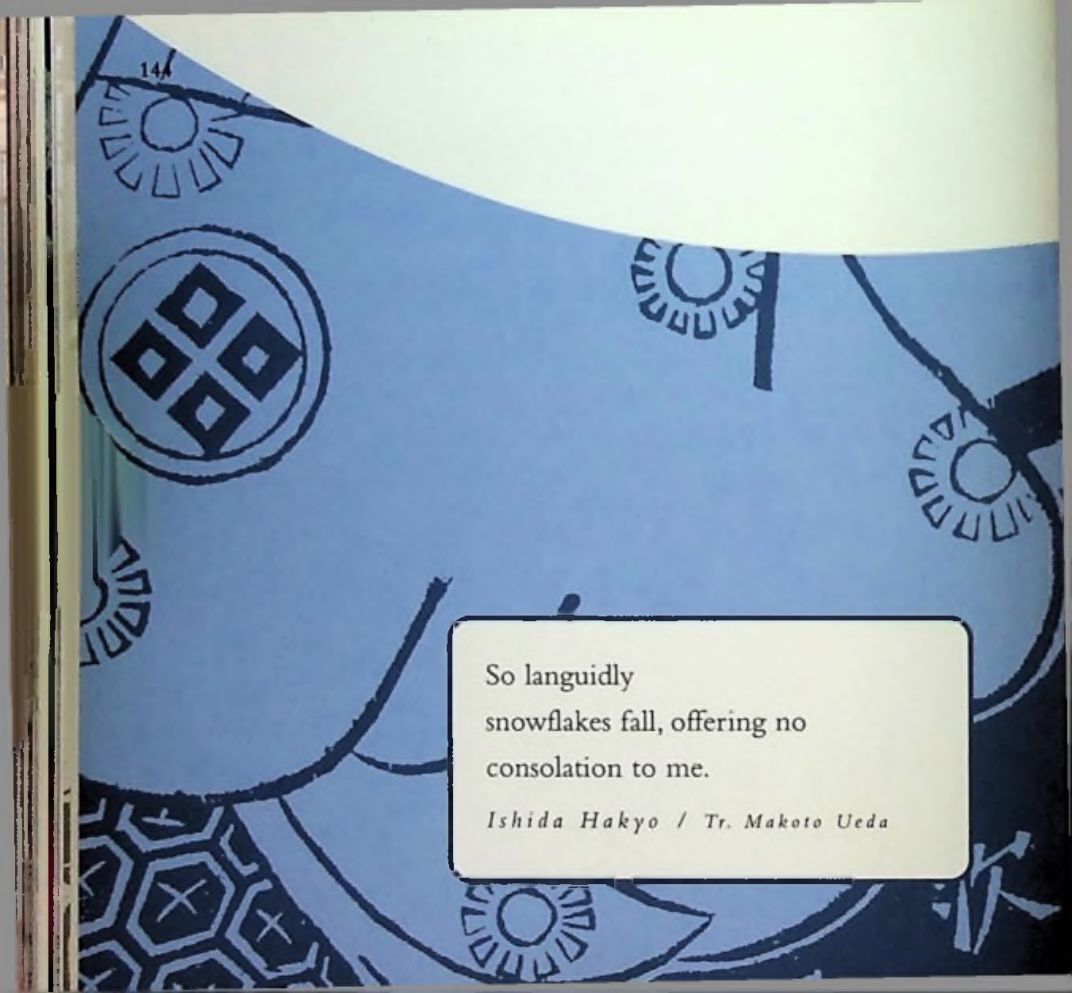
this night
your answering
machine unplugged

NICK PEARSON



*Since you went away
No flowers are left on earth.*

Natsume Soseki / Tr. Jonathan Clements



So languidly
snowflakes fall, offering no
consolation to me.

Ishida Hakyō / Tr. Makoto Ueda



His turn to cook
again he can't find
the thyme

CAROLINE G. BANKS

*Sunday morning sex
lasts only as long as the
children's video*

Gerald England

In the waves no trace
remains, though I have swum there
with a woman.

Seishi Yamaguchi / Tr. Makoto Ueda

*I close my eyes
and bask in the warmth of love
that is long past.*

Hino Sojo / Tr. Makoto Ueda



During our argument
a pink rose
tightens its petals.

ALEXIS ROTELLA

her silence at dinner
sediment

hanging in the wine

Scott Montgomery

*Lightning flashes
where my wife has come from,
whither I go.*

Ishida Hakyō / Tr. Makoto Ueda



we should have known it
a November fifth wedding
had to mean fireworks

Phillip Murrell



Making up a quarrel,
Apparently ashamed
To be the first to smile.

SENRYU / TR. R. H. BLYTH

*On the face
that last night called me names—
morning sunbeam*

George Swede

She sulks,
says nothing, and becomes
a white rose.

Hino Sojo / Tr. Makoto Ueda

*Clutching a fist of hair
from my brush
I watch him sleep.*

Alexis Rotella

...and another thing
exactly as he left it—
his old pruning hook

Louise Somers Winder


a broken heart
is an open
heart

Anon.

*saying nothing—
just the moon rising
a little more*

John O'Connor





fallen oak
the initials he carved
girlfriends ago

Steve Dolphy

After
our quarrel,
a full moon

MARGARET SAUNDERS

*last goodbye—
his ashes on the water
gold-flecked waves*

*for Brian
Winona Baker*





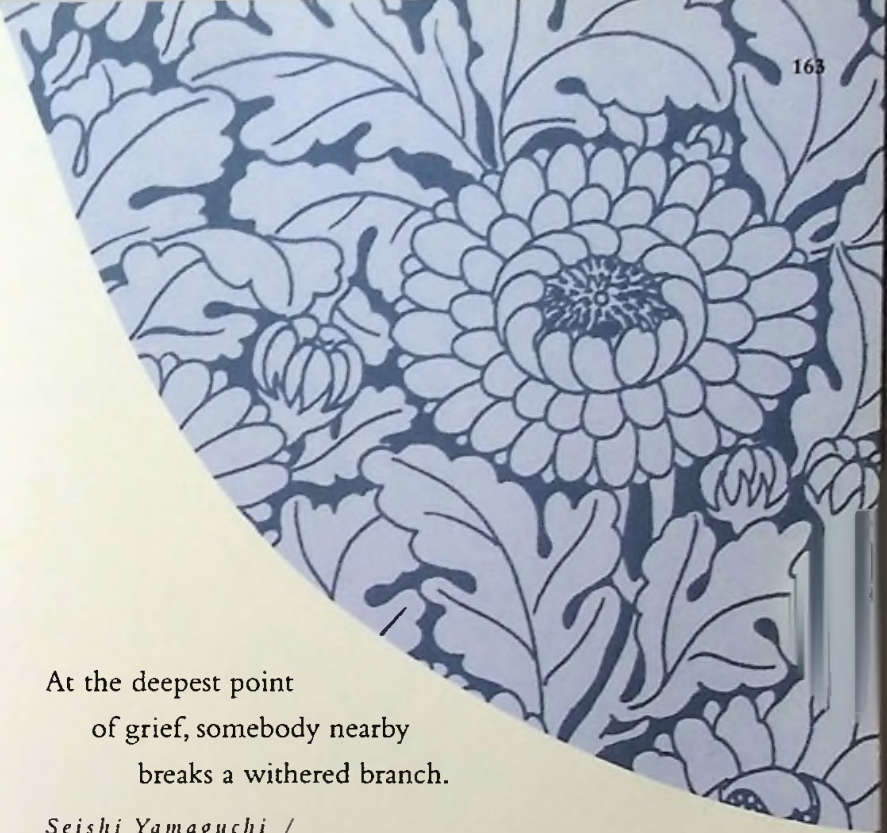
富士山
大船

unexpected news
she stands staring into
the cutlery drawer

Dee Everett

*Sudden shower—
a woman looking out
alone*

Otsuyu / Tr. Fumiko and Akira Yamamoto



At the deepest point
of grief, somebody nearby
breaks a withered branch.

Seishi Yamaguchi /

Tr. Takashi Kodaira and Alfred H. Marks

she leaves—
warm pillow scent
remaining

Michael McClintock

*in the same room
but not feeling what you feel—
summer breeze*

Lee Gurga

百全
才子
才子
才子





3


Harmony

IN MUSIC, two individual notes create a deeper resonance when strung together in “harmony.” Of the three hundred or so love songs transmitted by the troubadours, we know only their melodies, but not their tempo. This wasn’t the result of neglect, but a deliberate act, known to music lovers as “Tempo Rubato,” which allows greater freedom of interpretation of each love song, according to mood, circumstances, and temperament. Seized by love, we might want to speed up, pause, or slow the tempo right down.

Love, unlike religion or politics, is hard to canonize. There are as many ways to reach the peak of love’s journey as there are people. The common element is a certain quality of merging, of slow dissolution of the individual self.

Here, the journey through the wilderness and the arid desert, through the hurdles of time and the hostilities of territory, reaches its goal, its final station (“ecstase” in greek)—the merging into the other and the disappearance of the self. This is also the goal of spiritual practice and of Zen in particular, which is the very bone and marrow of all good haiku. From the standpoint of harmonic love, death itself is a fiction, and romantic love only the ABC, the net of seduction stealing us into the possibility of a more spacious life.

The way in which such merging happens while the two lovers maintain their individuality is what some good love haiku point at, with their characteristic humor and warmth.



*the pages flutter softly
through three chapters,
while you sleep*

Andrew Detheridge

Watching you get up,
I slide into the warm space
that you leave behind.

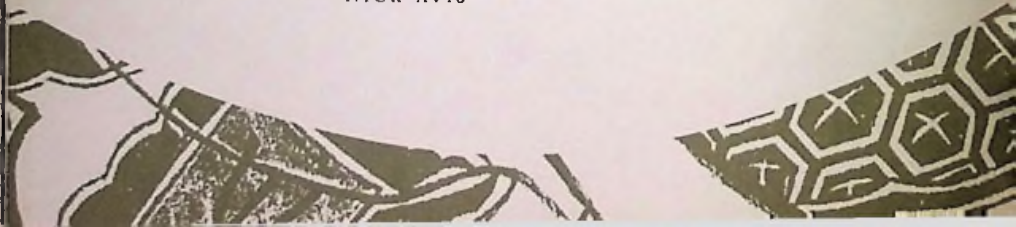
Andrew Shimield

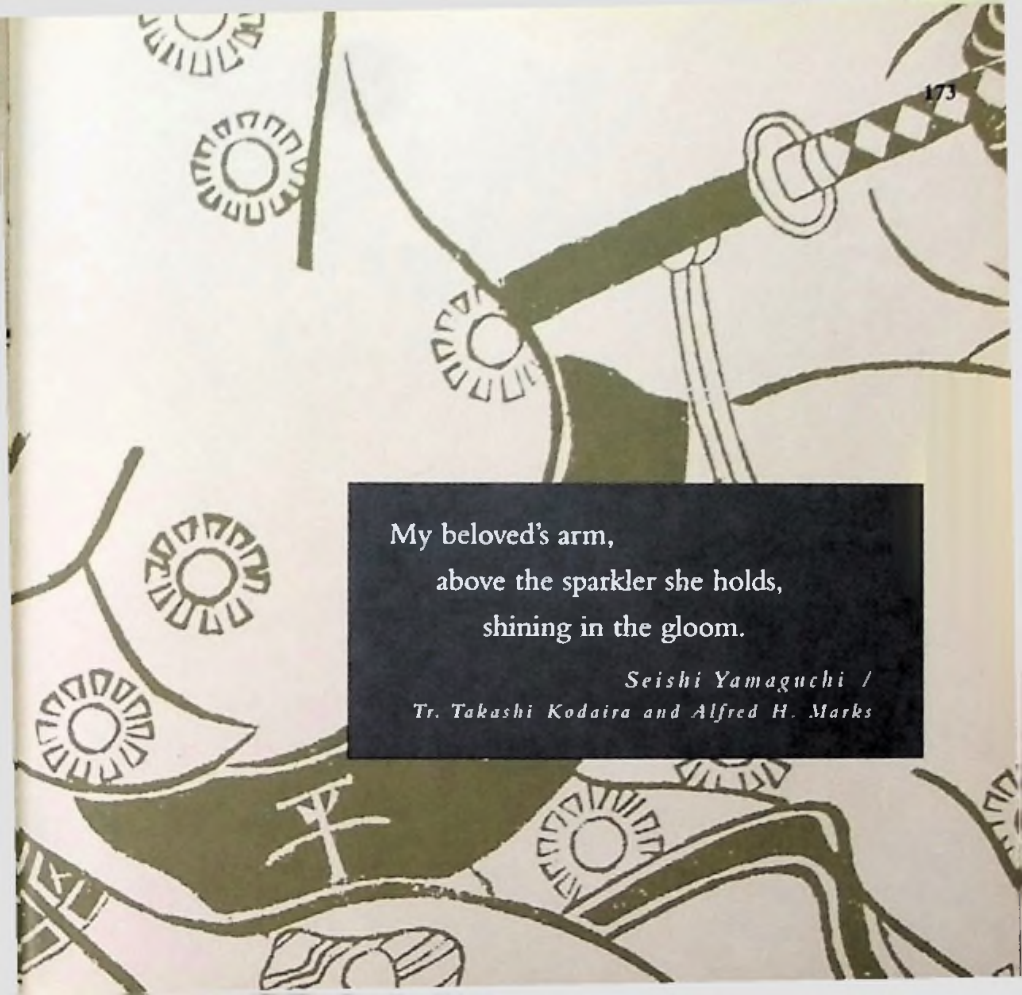
*sharing a sandwich:
my mouth your mouth*

Ross Clark

longing to be near her
i remember my shirt
hanging in her closet

NICK AVIS






My beloved's arm,
above the sparkler she holds,
shining in the gloom.

Seishi Yamaguchi /
Tr. Takashi Kodaira and Alfred H. Marks

The telephone poles,
so ugly on the landscape,
bring your lovely voice.

Dorothy Cameron Smith





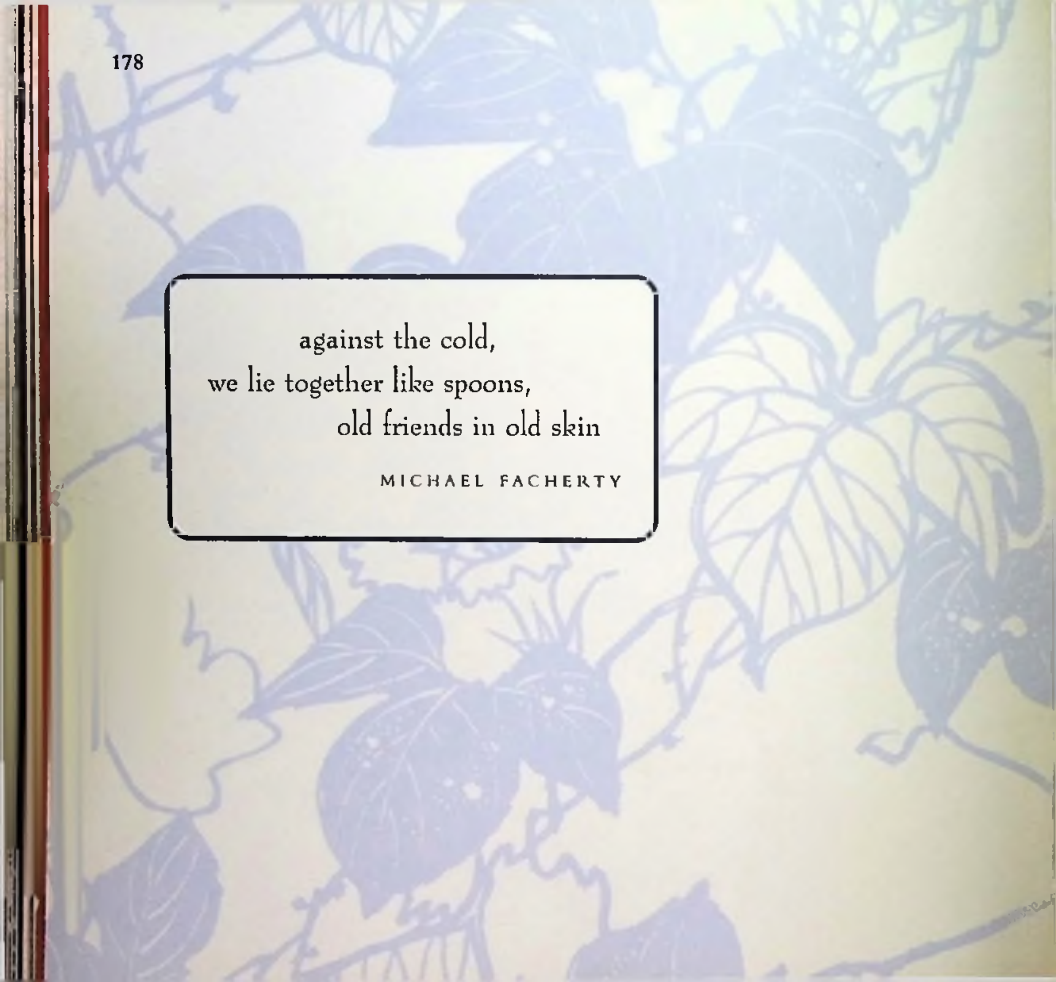
*I set the alarm
get out of bed to unpack
her photograph*

Dee Evetts



it nullifies
all the treatments by the doctor—
his wife's beauty

Senryu / Tr. Makoto Ueda



against the cold,
we lie together like spoons,
old friends in old skin

MICHAEL FACHERTY

Still playing with words—
an old couple linked
by a lifetime of scrabble

Noragh Jones

*My wife—blurred
in my right eye,
clear in my left.*

Hino Sojo / Tr. Lucien Stryk



*the whole bed
yet he lays his head
in my hand*

Jane Reichhold

As day breaks...
the lightness of her breath
on my back

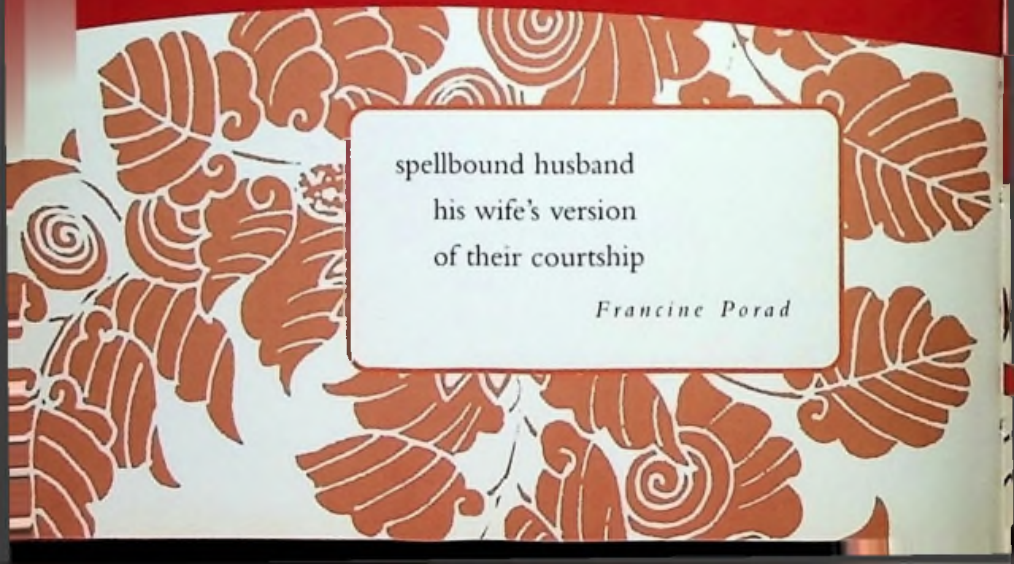
TOM TICO

The rainy season;
I gaze out at the rain,
My wife standing behind me.

Rinka / Tr. R. H. Blyth

*puddle after puddle—
the bright color
of her long raincoat*

Gary Hotham



spellbound husband
his wife's version
of their courtship

Francine Porad

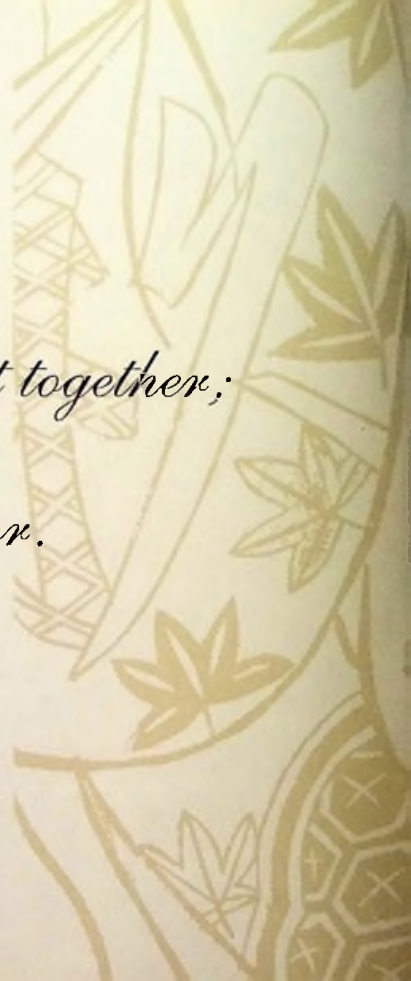
*Methodical husband:
On his list of chores, she finds
Her name*

Anita Kruminis




*They are going out together;
The husband
Speaks to the mirror.*

Seiko / Tr. R. H. Blyth







birth mark
on her cheek—a rain cloud
at nightfall

John O'Connor

I touch your left breast,
a soft white pouch in my hand,
holding everything.

NEIL HOPKINS

*her back freckled
like a field
of brown poppies*

Kevin Bailey

*Valentine's Day—
she reminds me
to fasten my seatbelt*

Michael Dylan Welch

French waitress
my wife refocuses
my attention

John Crook

The wind in the pines
makes me lonely for you
a mile from home

JAMES NORTON



homecoming:
a two-day growth of beard
bristles her nipple...

David Cobb

*Against his coat
I brush my lips—
the silence of snowflakes.*

Alexis Rotella

名勝八景
江堤晴嵐

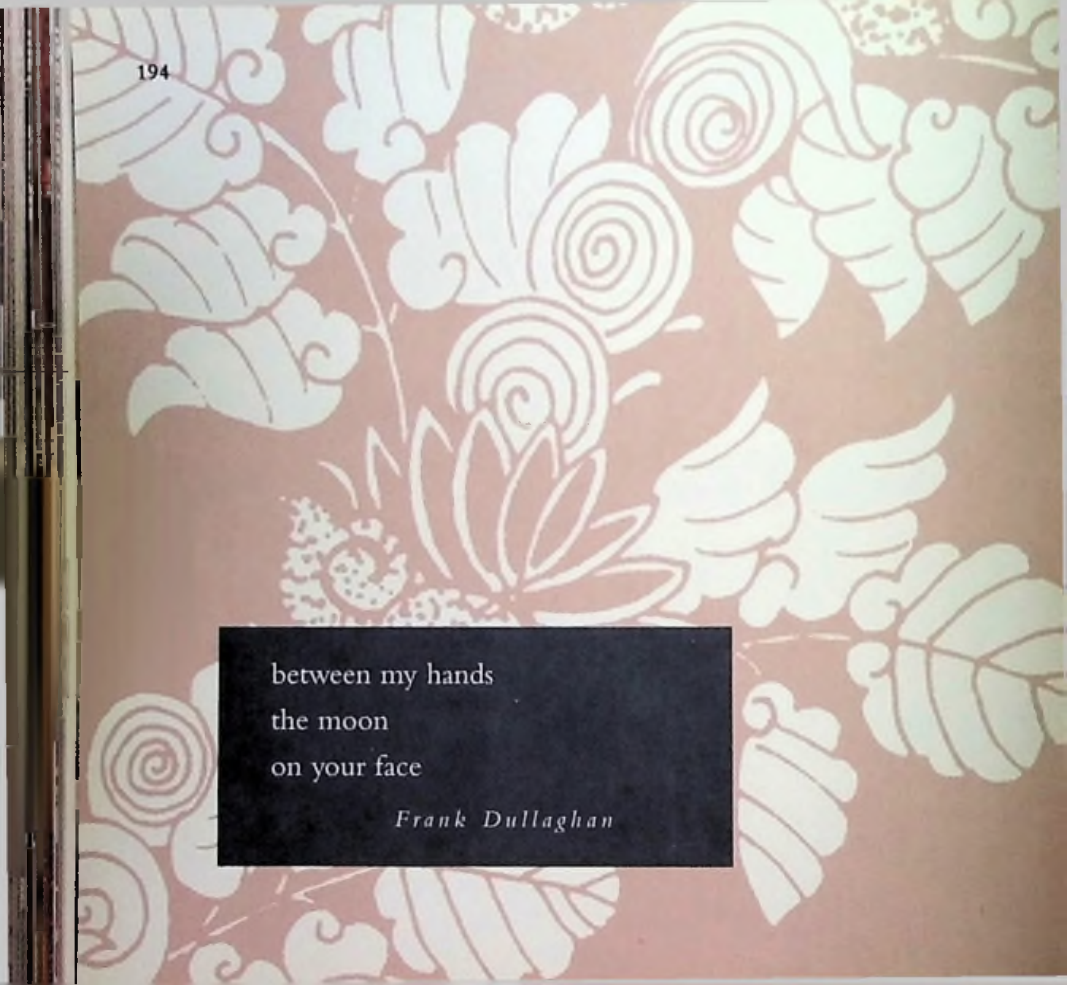
皇國華



We laugh and kiss
picking strange pebbles
by a roaring sea

KEN JONES





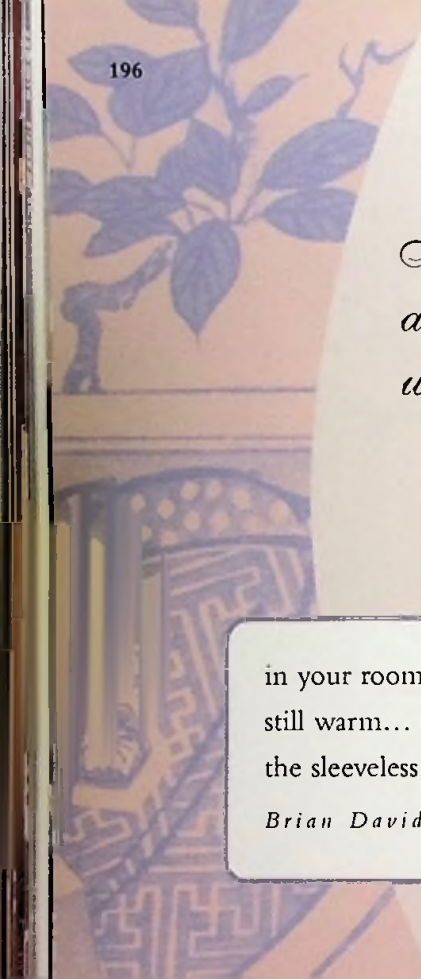
between my hands
the moon
on your face

Frank Dullaghan

*The autumn tempest:
Looking at one another
In the candle-light.*

Sekito / Tr. R. H. Blyth



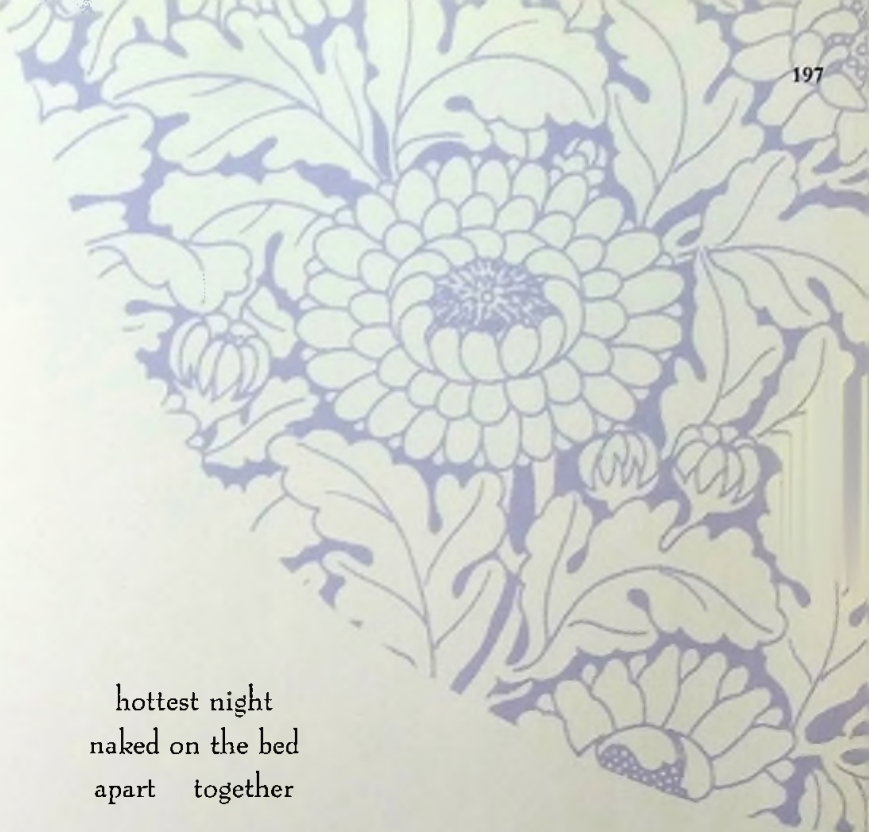


*Moon
and melon cooling
with us in the stream*

Peggy Willis Lyles

in your room
still warm...
the sleeveless dress

Brian David Johnston



hottest night
naked on the bed
apart together

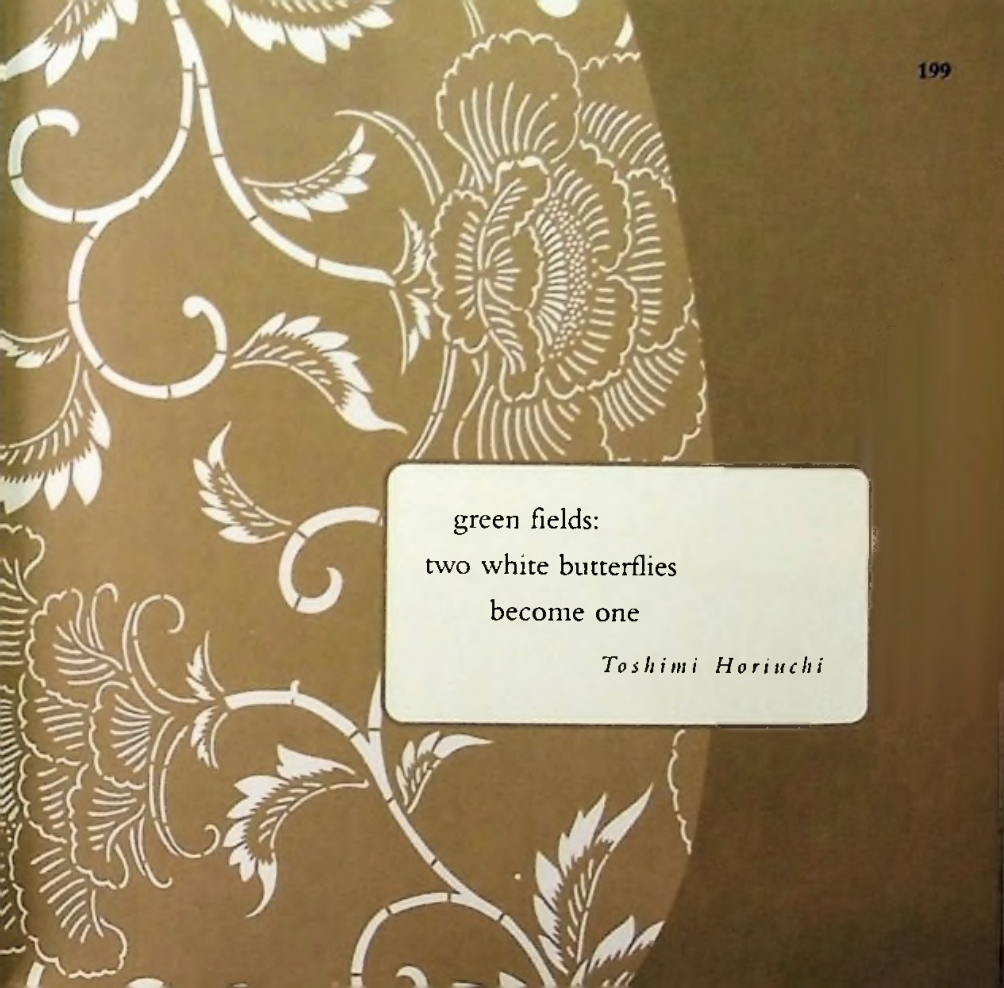
DAVID STEELE

*tonight
two crickets
are singing*

Toshimi Horiuchi

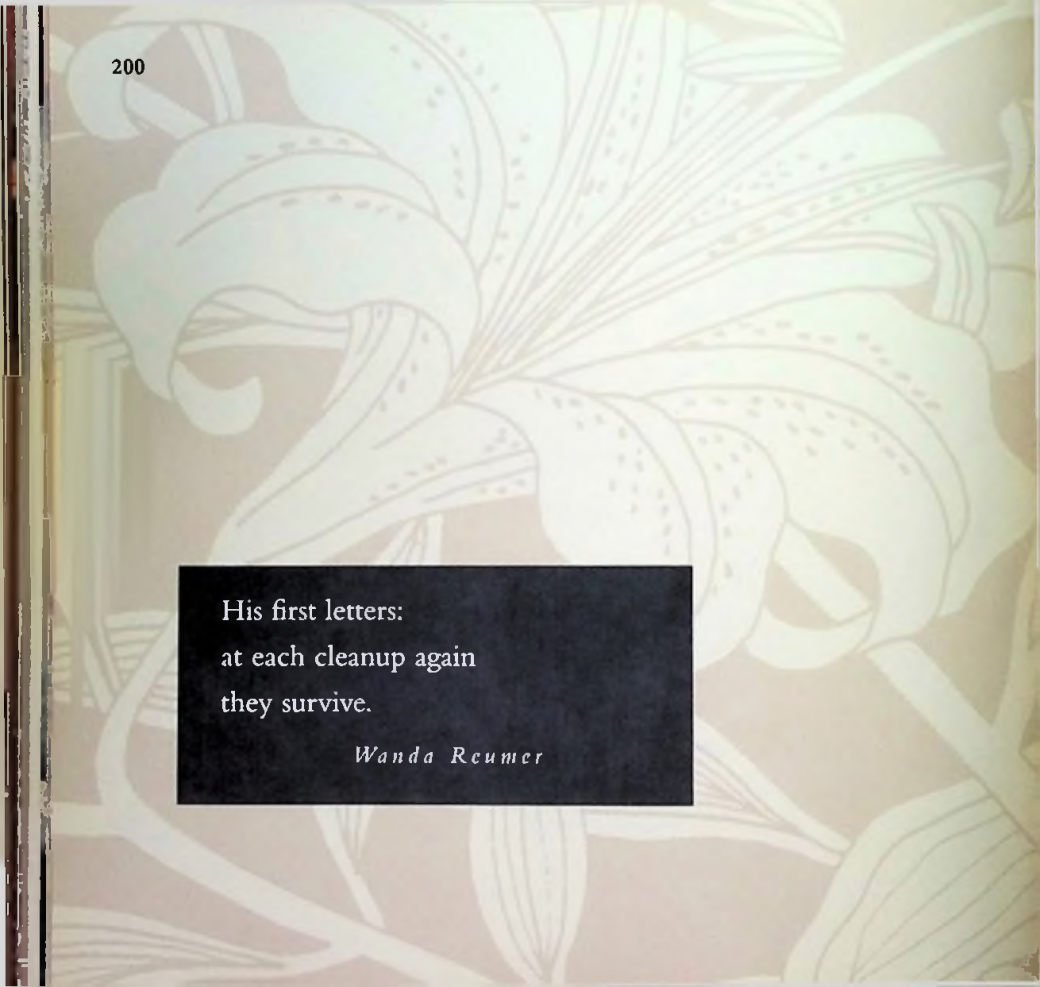
The end of summer,
but Love-in-a-Mist
starts to flower again.

Patricia V. Dawson



green fields:
two white butterflies
become one

Toshimi Horiuchi



His first letters:
at each cleanup again
they survive.

Wanda Reumer



*wallpaper flowers
have not faded
behind your photo*

David Walker

you stand
framed in my window
moonlight through the trees

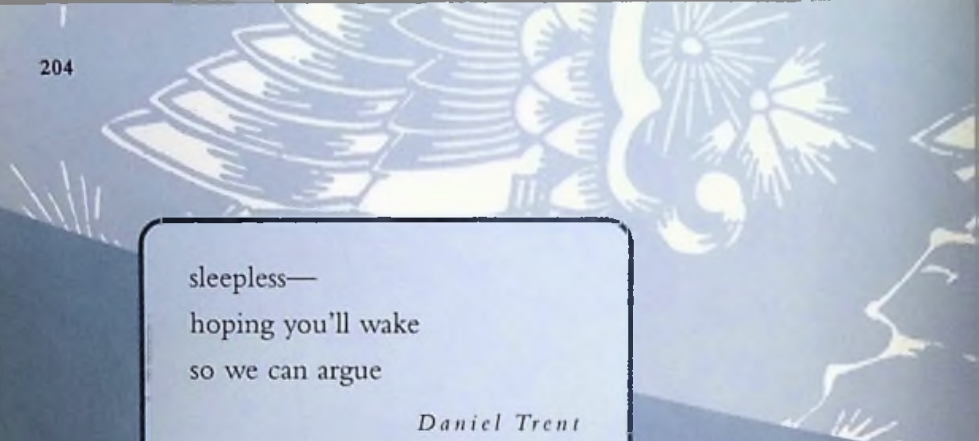
JACKIE HARDY

Waiting by her,
As she ties her sash,
Holding his chin.

Nakibo / Tr. R. H. Blyth

night comes—
picking up your shoes
still warm

Gary Hotham




sleepless—
hoping you'll wake
so we can argue

Daniel Trent

so large at dusk
they argue whether
it is Venus

JANICE BOSTOK



*Sunrise:
I forget my side
of the argument*

George Swede

A sigh from her
then one from me—
two pages turn

George Swede




*your breathing
moves my book—wind rises
in the trees*

Jane Whittle



Don't weep, insects—
lovers, stars themselves,
must part.

Issa Kobayashi / Tr. Lucien Stryk



*in the mirrors on her dress
little pieces of my
self*

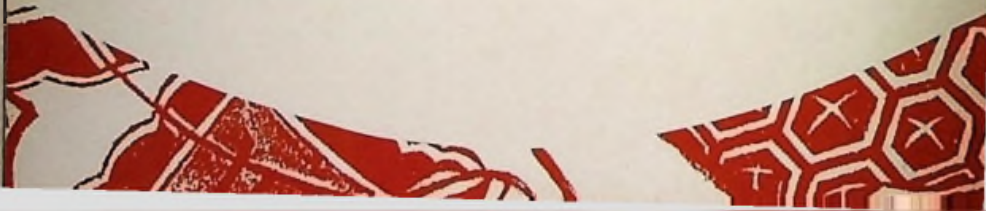
Cor van den Heuvel

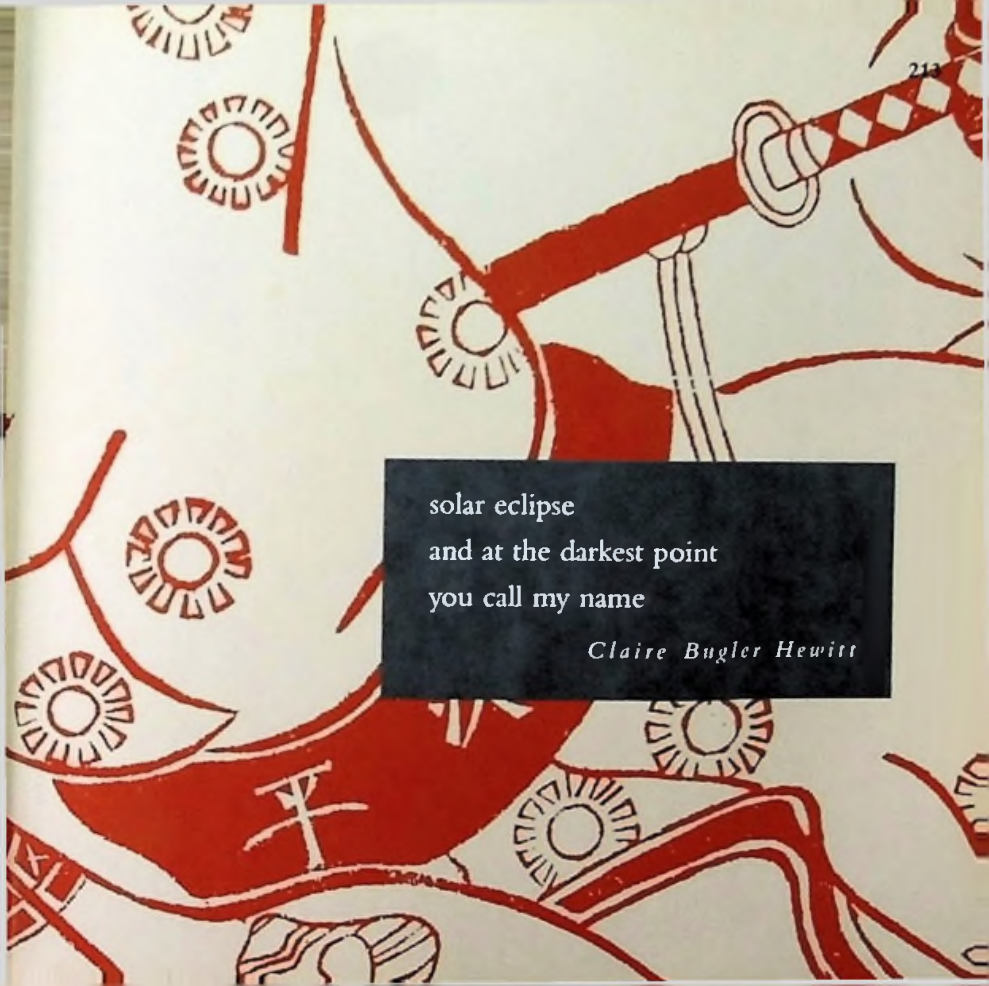
Among the graffiti
The name of
Beloved you.

Matsuo Basho / Tr. Alex Kerr

*night of no moon
I turn on every light
to read your letter*

Marco Fraticelli





solar eclipse
and at the darkest point
you call my name

Claire Bugler Hewitt


Only I laugh
at his joke...
the silence.

Alexis Rotella

*chill night
after you the toilet seat
slightly warm*

Dee Evetts





*Wife in a good mood
I don't tell her about
the snake in the grass*

George Swede

fresh from the bath
she leans—two drops of water
catch the light

David Steele



daybreak—
working as one,
two butterflies.

ISSA KOBAYASHI / TR. LUCIEN STRYK

*undressing for love:
the click of our spectacles
folded together*

Brian Tasker

A man and a woman—
each sheet they fold
brings them together.

Nanneke Huizinga

*first snow
lites our bedroom
she puts on the flowered sheets*

LeRoy Gorman




*warm wine
the sharing of thoughts
a widening sky*

Joanna Ashwell

last bale of hay—
we sit down on it
and watch the moon

LEE GURGA



*this summer night—
she lets the firefly glow
through the cage of her fingers*

Gary Holtham



old married couple
crossing the bridge at twilight
wear similar coats


Adrian Keefe

*Imagined: sitting
with old woman, both in tears,
gazing at the moon.*

Matsuo Basho / Tr. Nobuyuki Yuasa

woods walking
in a time of trilliums
my hand in her hand

anne mckay



Lifting our coffee cups
simultaneously
This must be the plateau

Adrian Keefe

snow now rain—
your picture
by mine

GARY HOTHAM

*the engaged couple:
they catch the same cold, one
after the other*

Senryu / Tr. Makoto Ueda

at the airport
our unspent coins—
sights we didn't see

KEN COCKBURN



*time to go—
the stones we threw
at the bottom of the ocean*

Gary Hotham

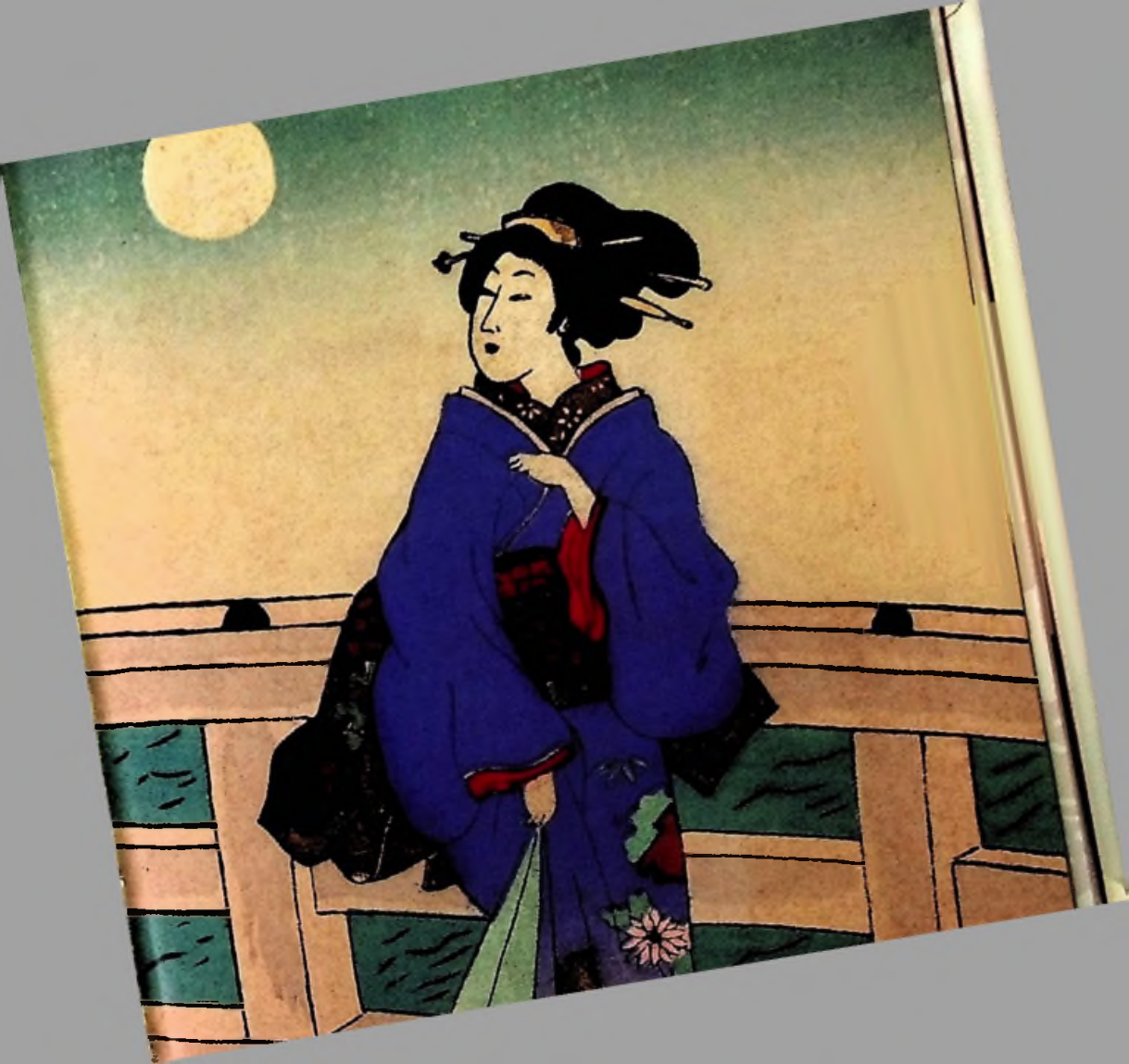
going on holiday
we show each other
our special clothes

FRED SCHOFIELD

*Whatever she wears
she becomes beautiful—
moon-viewing*

Chiyo / Tr. Fumiko and Akira Yamamoto





Slowly they grew apart.
Fifty years on their gravestones
lean together

Edward D. Glover

*A man and his wife
Are pushing the hand-cart,
Saying something to each other.*

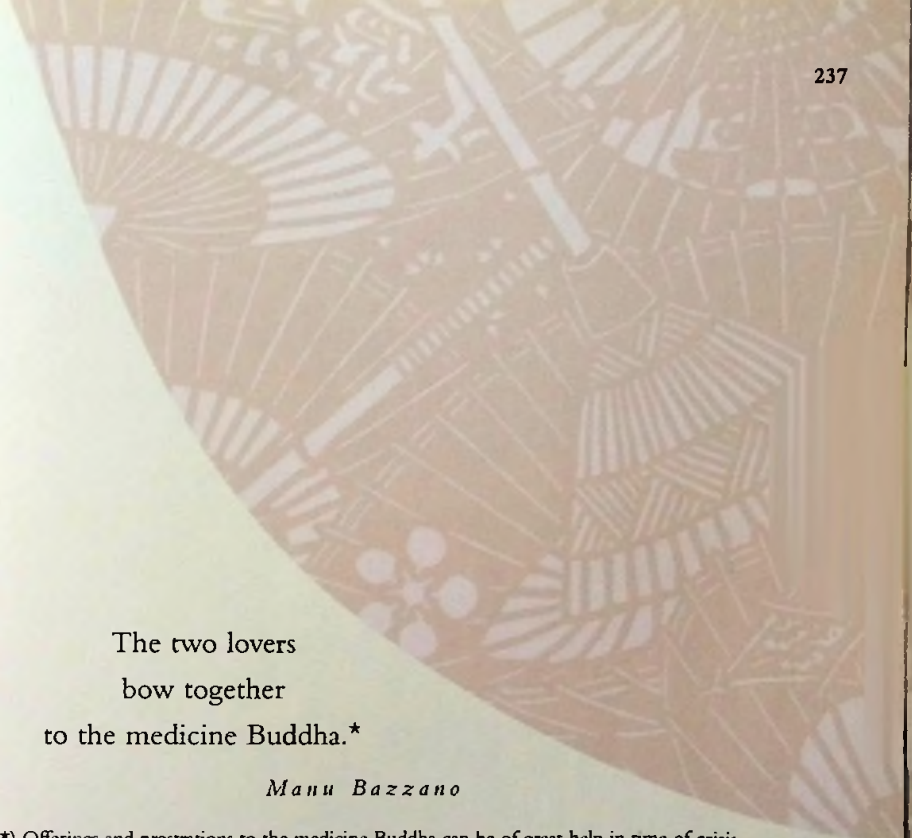
Itto / Tr. R. H. Blyth

*On our evening walk
a tree with no name
blooming*

Manu Bazzano

Sitting silently
in our bedroom
April shower

Manu Bazzano



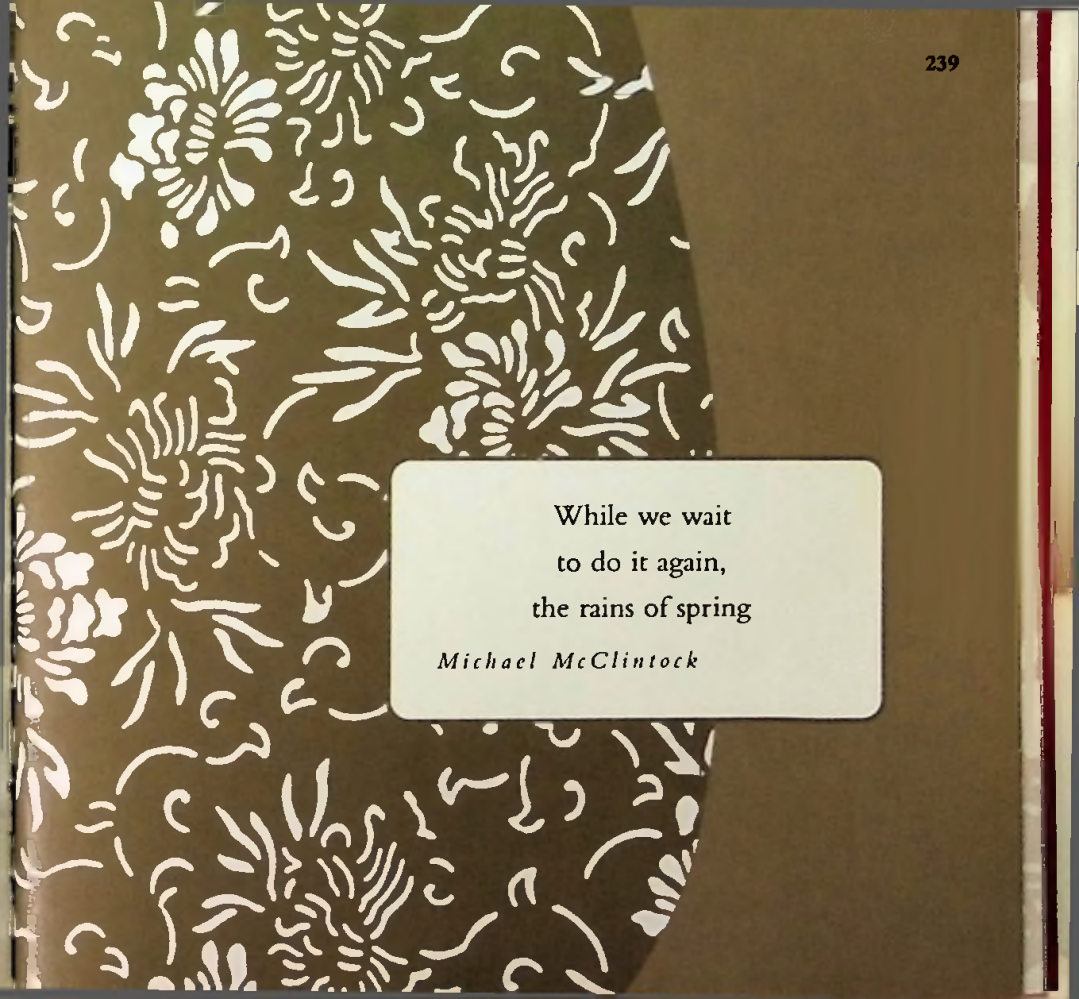
The two lovers
bow together
to the medicine Buddha.*

Manu Bazzano

(*) Offerings and prostrations to the medicine Buddha can be of great help in time of crisis and illness. A deity in the Buddhist pantheon, the medicine Buddha also represents the innate qualities for healing present in human beings.

*a smell of jasmine tea
drifting after love
rainy cottage*

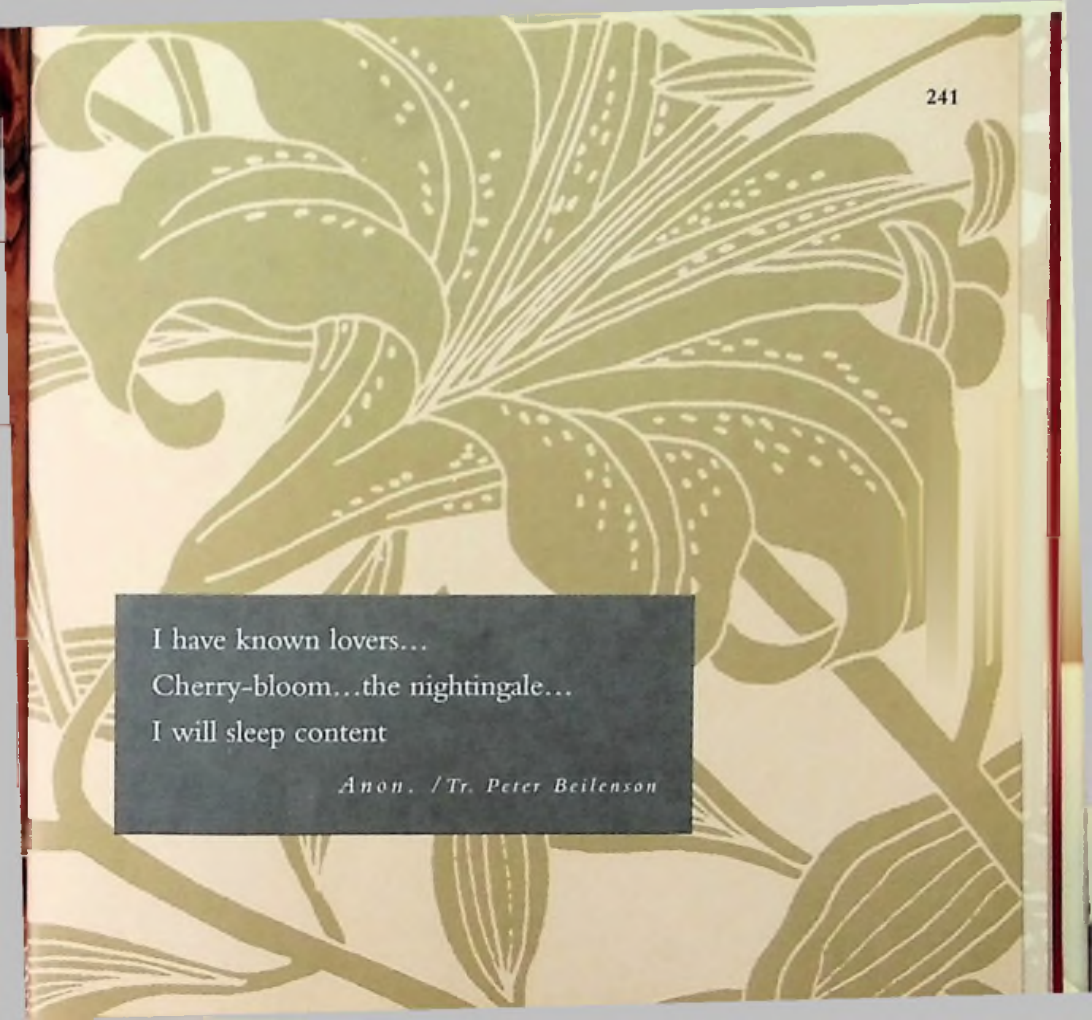
Ikuyo Yoshimura



While we wait
to do it again,
the rains of spring

Michael McClintock





I have known lovers...
Cherry-bloom...the nightingale...
I will sleep content

Anon. / Tr. Peter Beilenson

*The morning cold:
smelling of tooth powder,
my wife's mouth.*

Hino Sojo / Tr. Makoto Ueda

The fiddler's wife
watching his fingers move
knits him a scarf

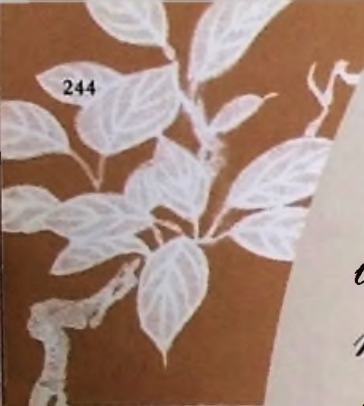
KIM PAUL RICHARDSON

sunset kiss—
our faces turning
slowly orange

Kevin Bailey

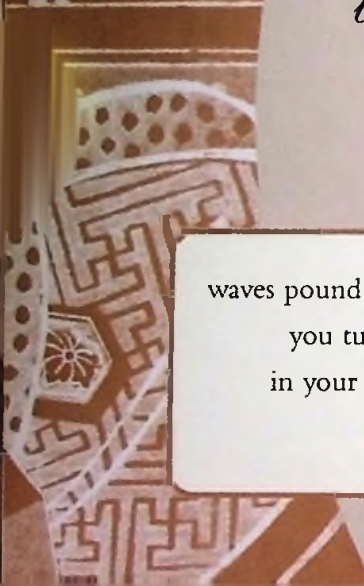
Let's take
the duckweed way
to clouds.

Issa Kobayashi /
Tr. Lucien Stryk



*winter moon
nudge of the unborn child
between us*

Jean Jorgensen



waves pound the shore
you turn
in your sleep

Caroline Gourlay

Hazy moonlight night:
there must be love for
unlikely faces too.

Natsume Soseki / Tr. Makoto Ueda

*Love.
So many different ways
to have been in love.*

Boncho / Tr. Lenore Mayhew

The moment two bubbles
are united, they both vanish.
A lotus blooms.

MURAKAMI KIJO / TR. MAKOTO UEDA



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