



Back Roads With A White Cane

Elizabeth Hazen



A black and white line drawing of a tree trunk and a large mushroom. The tree trunk is on the left, with several thin branches extending upwards and outwards. A large, textured mushroom is growing from the base of the tree trunk. The drawing is done in a simple, sketchy style.

Back Roads With A White Cane

Haiku

by Elizabeth Hazen

INTRODUCTION

When I became blind the distinction between my other four senses blurred, and my awareness of place and of the present moment sharpened. On regaining my sight I found that only the simplicity of haiku could connect all the layers of perception I had experienced, without bogging down in a confusion of emotions. I also found that so little haiku and instruction for writing haiku is available to persons who do not read print. We who can see and we who cannot, *need* each other's haiku, *need* each other's perceptions to complete our understanding of the earth and one another.

What better way to start than by wandering together on back roads?

segment by segment
the icicle
and earthworm

— Elizabeth Hazen

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for Dale Tompkins
my mobility instructor



so much sparrow song
in the shape of a bush
falling snow

icy wind
a thin row of burr
on raspberry twigs

pelting sleet
the only sound
a shush

creak of the bare limb
against bare limb
another raven

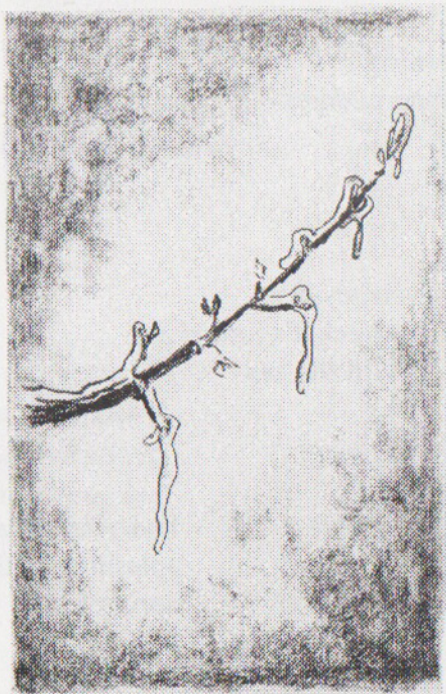
cold snap
a pileated pauses
to answer

sugar snow
so many feet
under my feet

March morning
the crackling puddles
of air

steady drip
a bucket's tone rising
with the sap

heavy snowflakes
splashing in the road ditch—
spring frogs



a softer bud
the woody taste
of an icicle

hard rain
filling the air
with wild leek

chilled fingers
the curled whorl
of new leaves

April
the feel of earth
taking footprints

heads here and there
along the pasture fence—
finding the jonquils

spring runoff
the pungent fermentation
of crushed maple seeds

tender blade
held taut between the thumbs
the pitch of grass

flitting shade
the silence of a large bird
passes over

water in the air
a dog flings from creek to me
catnip fragrance

bluebird song
the smell of torn grass
and lanolin

lost on the road
the bees homing in
on our locust trees



the wooden bridge
silent beneath my wait
a smell of mushrooms

heron's call
the slushing of waves
around something

ripples
the wind through treetops
on the other side

a different song—
mosquito feet landing
palm to palm

the sway of a tree
against my shoulder
long evening

breathless heat
a cloud of cigar smoke
on the empty road

horses too
swatting horseflies
still summer

a cool cloud
passes over
throbbing baler

shelter
a freshening wind
flips rain filled leaves

early dew
settling the road dust
along my arms

light explosion
the touch-me-not
touched

a daytime owl
answers to itself
falling acorns

wormwood's scent
of sage and rosemary
harvest wind



late blackbird
the woman plowing
sings

press of cattle
creaking in the pasture gate
a scent of cider

spinning around
the eddy of leaves—
warm sun

walking on leaves
the road and the road ditch
all one

fall rain
the patter
of pine needles

echoes
the leaves overhead
underfoot

crushed stone
flung by the tractor's wheel—
whole butternuts

hard frost
no sound of wind
between the pines

a drop of resin
on the roof
of my mouth

geese in the sky
the wind blowing them south
tips my hat



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elizabeth Hazen is a native of north western Vermont. Her short prose has appeared monthly for almost twenty years in area newspapers and magazines. Her haiku are published internationally, and she displays her watercolors in local galleries.

For three years in the 1990s Elizabeth lost sight completely, due to constricting blood vessels. Now, with partially recovered vision, she writes and paints with mechanical and electronic assistance.

A braille reader herself, and user of the National Library Service's recorded books, Elizabeth works to make haiku available to persons who cannot read print, and to introduce sighted readers to the context of those who are blind.

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