

Winter Sunlight

David Burleigh



To her,

in friendship,

Winter Sunlight

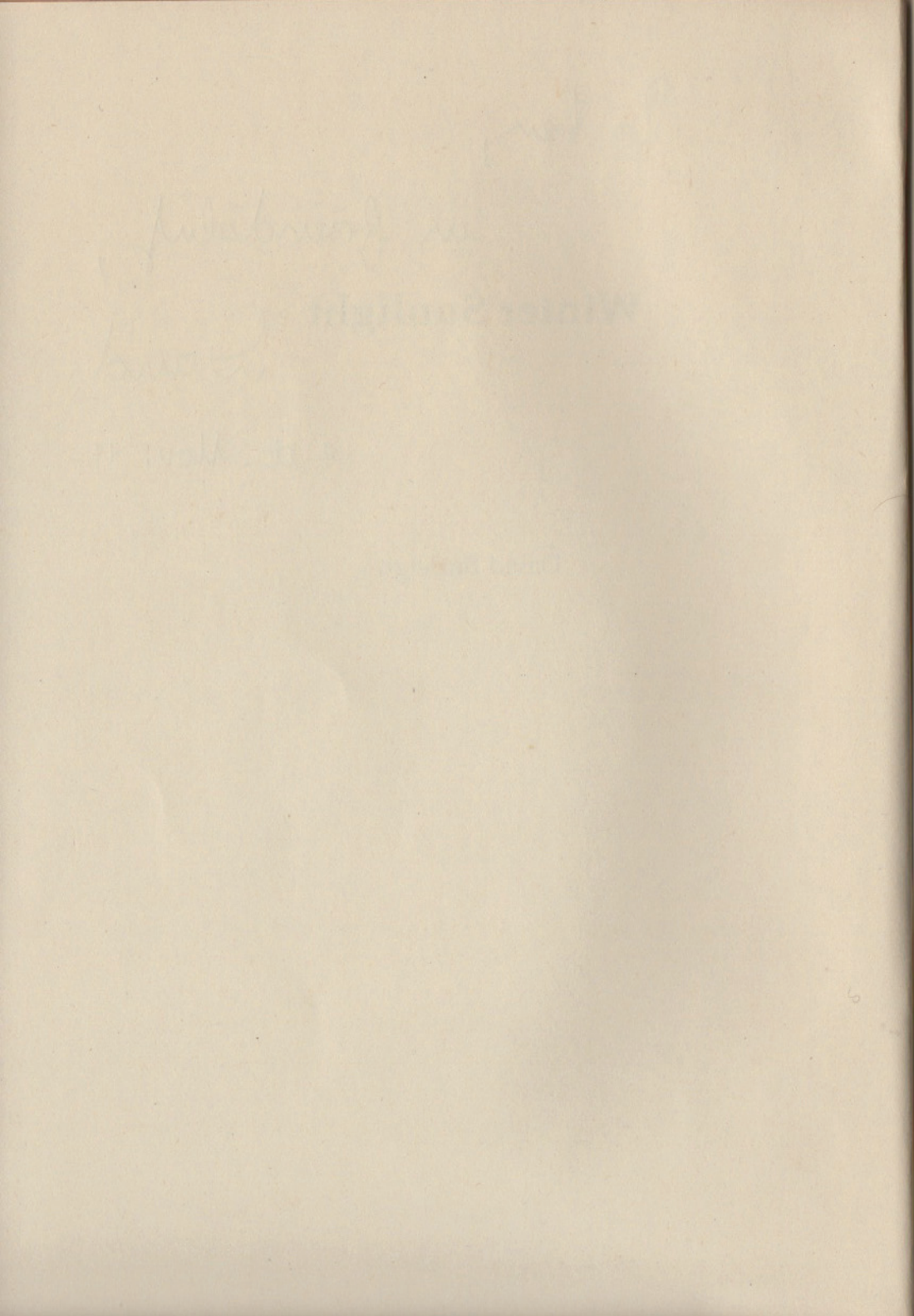
David.

17th Nov. '92

David Burleigh

Little Spring. Ko-haru, or "the Little Spring," is the Japanese name for the Indian Summer — those beautiful weeks in November and December, when the burden and heat of the year are past, when the sky is constantly blue and the atmosphere golden, and the magnificence to borrow a Western expression of the Japanese poets) put on their dearest robes.

And Hall Chamberlain, Things Japanese



On a sharp corner
leaving back from the traffic
into sweet daphne

Riding the train
a spring wind snatches the paper
out of my hand

On a city street
future and cherry blossom
come out to the sun

Little Spring. *Ko-haru*, or "the Little Spring," is the Japanese name for the Indian Summer,—those beauteous weeks in November and December, when the burden and heat of the year are over, when the sky is constantly blue and the atmosphere golden, and the maple-trees (to borrow a favourite expression of the Japanese poets) put on their damask robes.

Basil Hall Chamberlain, **Things Japanese**

Little Spring, known as "the Little Spring," is the Japanese name for the hidden fountain - those beautiful waters in November and December, when the bushes and trees of the year are over, when the sky is constantly blue and the atmosphere golden, and the words used to borrow a favorite expression of the Japanese poet put on their classic robes.

Small Hall Chamberlain, Things Japanese

On a sharp corner
leaning back from the traffic
into sweet daphne

Riding the train
a spring wind snatches the paper
out of my hand

On a city street
futons and cherry blossom
come out in the sun

春

Even after dark
cherry blossoms bright outside
the office window

An evening in spring -
the strains of a shamisen
coming through the rain

Cherry petals fall
from a folded umbrella
opened after rain

Daurian redstart -
white plum blooming at the foot
of a brown mountain

White magnolia
like a flock of creamy birds
about to take flight

A New Testament
forgotten on a college bench -
spring zelkova

春

The cherry blossoms
with bright new faces falling
onto the students

Plum tree still blooming
against an old wooden house
when the builders come

A ball in springtime
making its way downriver
slowly to the sea

春

Hanging new curtains -
blooms already showing on
the persimmon tree

Puffy hydrangeas
blooming under rainclouds
that come from the sea

The rainy season -
lying soaked upon the ground
a paper crane

夏

Cinema signboard -
the broad leaves of a plane tree
hiding the titles

The green persimmons
falling on my neighbour's roof
throughout the night

Glittering spaceships
moving closer together
in the airless dark

(Tanabata Festival)

Creeper already
two more yards across the wall -
working in the heat

A night with no wind
to stir the chimes - a clinking
of ice in glasses

Perspiration breaks
across a young man's forehead -
a scent of camphor

夏

The white silhouette
of garden chairs and table
waiting in the dark

Sunlight through the trees
dappling the pond dapples
the underside of leaves

A black and yellow
butterfly sits waiting for
the boat's departure

A helicopter
over the trees and under them
a dragonfly

Peeling a nashi
that grows whiter and rounder
like the autumn moon

The first autumn leaves
blowing through the open door
of a coffee shop

秋

Sawdust blowing off
the timbers of a new house -
Autumn Equinox

Just the orange glow
of a single persimmon
before Halloween

Riding the chairlift -
a three-dimensional film
of the autumn leaves

秋

Young people still
returning to the garden -
scent of osmanthus

Up on the rooftop
a golfer without a ball -
the high autumn sky

A last persimmon
hanging between bare branches -
the hesitant sun

秋

Ghost of November -
a shirt pegged up on the line
hanging in moonlight

After the storm
the yellow leaves of gingko trees
covering the ground

A sparrow eating
an overripe persimmon
when the crow has gone

Cleaning the windows
on a winter afternoon -
a passing airship

The early evenings
and policemen's uniforms
darker in winter

Outside the toyshop
tinsel glitters round a gift
of winter sunlight

冬

A knot of children
pointing at stars in the street -
the Winter Solstice

After washing up
putting a warm plate back
in the cold cupboard

A sprinkle of lights
in the bowl of a valley
below twinkling stars

(Hakone).

Under the streetlamp
the shadows of snowflakes and
a black cat crossing

The door flung back -
snow falling on the garden
in a soft grey light

Like a sudden thought -
accumulated snow
plunging to the ground

冬

Under the full moon
as bright and clearly shining -
the face of a clock

Wisps of melting snow
in the palm of a warm hand
winter vanishes

A crack in the glass
refracting winter sunlight
in colours of spring

冬

The red green and white
on winter neon so much
brighter than before

Waking at New Year
and trying to remember
the very first dream

新年

Under the full and round
as bright as
to see out

The red green and white
on winter moon so much
brighter than before

Waiting at New Year
and trying to remember
the very first dream

A crack in the glass
refracting winter sunlight
in colours of spring

Acknowledgements

Some of these verses have appeared previously in *HI, Kō, Mainichi Daily News, Poetry Nippon, Sunday Mainichi* or been read on NHK television.

