

Otata

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CONTENTS

anna bala

Sonam Chhoki

Guliz Mutlu

Christina Sng

John Levy

Gary Hotham

vincent tripi

Marlene Mountain

Sayumi Kamakura

Ban'ya Natsuishi

Mike Montreuil

Alan Summers

Caroline Skanne

Sabine Miller

Kim Dorman

Tom Montag

Bob Arnold

John Perlman

[otata's bookshelf](#)

Tom Montag, *The Miles No One Wants*
([Link to pdf e-book](#))

Cuccangna

Italian senryu selected and edited by Valeria Simonova-Cecon
([Link to pdf e-book](#))

TOKONOMA

At first he tried infusing his work with a new philosophy he called *karumi* (“lightness”). The aim was to write with detachment and ease, and to take a step back from the folly of this life. He felt the author should only be a bystander, and an invisible one at that. To be without feelings or emotions was his goal. In this way he thought he could cope with the depressing fragility of life.

At one of his last gatherings with the Tokyo group, Bashō tried once more to explain his technique of lightness. “The style I have in mind these days is a light one in form and in the method of lining verses, one that gives the impression of looking at a shallow river with a sandy bed.”

It is not wonder that several of his disciples were so at odds with this idea that they broke away from Bashō and started new groups. They tried to retain the direction of his previous works, which reflected a belief that all things are mutually communicable and that a person can become one with the other creations of nature.

As his new concept failed, Bashō found himself so impatient with the battles between egos of poets that he chose to stop seeing people altogether. He closed his gate and, as he wrote in a poem, “fastened it with a morning glory.” As he explained, “If someone comes to see me, I have to waste my words in vain. If I leave my house to visit others, I waste their time in vain. Following the examples of Sonkei and Togorō, I have decided to live in complete isolation with a firmly closed door. My solitude shall be my company, and my poverty my wealth. Already a man of fifty, I should be able to maintain this self-imposed discipline.”

— Jane Reichhold, *Bashō: The Complete Haiku*. (Kodansha, 2008.)

In Memoriam
Jane Reichhold
1937-2016

anna bala

I too don't like
that brown cardigan
clothes moth

red trench coat
always across the road
on another's shoulder

november rain
you stupid tease
my poor lil 'brella

frizzy hair
the toon in me looks the part
damn you world

northern lights
dance in his eyes --
I lost it again

burnt soup::int

errupted thoughts on Nirvana

Sonam Chhoki

driving home lower and lower the sun each dusk

Venice sunrise
a lacework of dew
on the eruv

Journeying to the Gods

When the last pots have been washed at the village well and the bonnet of the late bus is covered in dew it is then that I hear the Amo-Chu. A long echoing flow, deep in the gully. Ashes, votive lamps, flowers, prayer flags and coins interred in its sinewy bends it carries along grief, dreams and hopes from the glacier lakes to the sea.

*seam of fog
opening the gorge shrine
conch-shell light*

[Author's note: *Amo-Chu* rises from the Chumbi Valley (9,800 ft) in Tibet, where it is known as *Ma-chu*. In Bhutan it is called the *Amo-Chu*. It has a total length of 358 kilometres, out of which 113 kilometres is in Tibet and 145 kilometres in Bhutan. It flows into the northern part of West Bengal, India.]

The alchemy of quiet malice by which we construct a subtle prison from ordinary trifles.

rain-bombed
silence between furtive calls
of a barred owlet

Guliz Mutlu

winter blues
deep in a dream
the simple things

spring cleaning
grandma preparing herself
to return home

hands in my pockets
under a blue sky
the lady with sweet peas

Christina Sng

day's end
a hatchling tucked
under its mother's wing

home finally
after the war
baby smells

dark clouds
burning off another
cancerous mole

scorched leaves
this dry season
the welcome rain

heavy thunderstorm
cars and snails
crawl together

rainy season
a new banana pup
beside its mother

on the bleakest day a firefly

John Levy

boy at the zoo trying
to get closer
to the pacing tiger
candy still in his mouth

now can you hear the stars
it is their silent silence
distant eighth notes

Gary Hotham

end of a Maine day
rocks too big to sink
into the ocean

changing seasons
what the sky does
to the eagle

warm start to the day
the apple's shadow before
it is peeled

at the back door
night leaving
its odor

before winter
sounds the river covers up
with water

lowering the sky
snow changing the sound
of the air

vincent tripi

the unmarked trail all the fallen trees

canyon gust
wild horses
a particular one?

taxi
“where to?”
Buddha on the dash

Middle Way the beaver's tail flat

i see
bird-tree-sky
moment

stop being i being butterfly wind

chrysalis
all of us

Marlene Mountain

white iris i hitch a ride in

a breeze follows the leaf where it goes

just enough crows to commit a crime morning dew

beneath a fancy bloom odor of soil and carrot

always a moon full the shadow knows

as if it were normal a swallowtail sips upside down

a yellow leaf carries a bit of its sun beneath

slender spreadwing eggs an alley in nature

much needed rain on the much needed sun

before morning birds a glory

[Author's note: The *spreadwing* is a damselfly]

Sayumi Kamakura

鎌倉佐弓

PATCH OF CLOUDS

ちぎれ雲

サイダーの泡少年をかけのぼる

Bubbles of soda pop
climbing up
a young boy

野の岩のここには虹が帰ってくる

Back to this rock
in the field,
a rainbow must return here

糸杉立つわたしは何をしたいのか

A cypress stands —
what would I
do?

昼下がり泉は水にいやされて

In early afternoon
the fountain gets
healed by the water

みずうみの泥ほつほつと唄うらし

Hearing that lake-bottom mud
sounds
like a murmurous song

るり紐欲しわたしの春をつないでおく

I want an ultramarine string
to hitch my spring
to a tree

土ほわん隣りの土ともたれあう

The soil is softly warm
leaning against
the neighbor's soil

ポストまで歩けば二分走れば春

Walking, it's two minutes
to the mailbox —
running, it's spring

まだ夢はあるか きつつき木を覗く

Do you still have dream?
a woodpecker peeps
through a tree hole

ちぎれ雲ときにはこの指に止まれ

Patch of clouds —
sometimes
perch on this finger!

Translations by Sayumi Kamakura and James Shea

Ban'ya Natsuishi

夏石番矢

THIS SIDE OF JOYS AND SORROWS

苦楽のこちら側

苦楽のこちら側

Walking 49 degrees Celsius
my memory
a black hole

頭の歯車欠けて零下十度から帰宅

Back from
10 degrees below zero
a gear lost from my head

死ぬことよりもつらくここに座るもしあわせ

Sitting here
more bitter than passing away is
so happy

包丁を突き付けられる砂の男

A man of sand
menaced
by a knife

熟睡や長い毛もしらが短い毛もしらが

Sound sleep
long hair is white
short hair is white

先祖代々の墓は遠く一人娘の婚約

The ancestral grave
far away
my only daughter's engagement

わが生家は国道となり糸蜻蛉も消えた

Erased — my boyhood home
becomes a national road — a thin
dragonfly disappears

電気になぶられ火に愛されて背骨の回春

Teased by electricity
fire-beloved
backbones young again

この痛みの芯に真清水

pure source
core of
this pain

わが全神経の最先端に消失点

Vanishing point
extremity of
my nerves

Mike Montreuil

the coolness
of the day
from the basement

Alan Summers

a drone's hum
the Hunter's moon
clears cloud

in deeper shadow
a day too long
the carpenter's calluses

blood moon
the wind whips
up a fox

elm groves
Christopher Logue slips
into the Iliad

postcoital coffee
songs out of the blue
drown the highway

a river surreptitiously the heron

the death of parents
the cold brightnesses
around robins

wolf rain my taste maps a cloud

dark fields
tightly the vee of birds
into pockets of forest

night shadows
a star catches something
out of an office window

Running Dogs

This ape between pigments takes ridges from cartridge paper and whorls them into a dog. The shadows themselves conjure up running as I look and move out of sight again.

shift in the shell
a new day of sunlight
for a small creature

Author's Notes

Ekphrastic haibun inspired by "Apple Chase" by Michael, a silverback gorilla from the Rwandan lowlands (acrylic on canvas 1983).

Michael had a dog named Apple, and they would play "chase". The painting was from memory using black and white pigments, which matched Apple's coat, though Michael had a large range of colours to select:

<http://antiquatedantiquarian.blogspot.co.uk/2014/09/the-neandering-mind-aesthetic-mind-and.html>

Caroline Skanne

clear lake
until the ripple
of a thought

every autumn
remembering
his death wish

mid autumn
a row of sunflowers
refusing to bow

some things
never change
green tomatoes

the picture
within the picture
maple leaf

us
them

war

in
common

hacking into that mind forgotten

cold moon
i had my reasons
for leaving

looking up looking down yellow leaves

high tide
a left behind feather
spreads out

crossroads---
i follow
the dragonfly

where once
there was a river
dust trail

fading light
through a dead leaf
how stillness feels

faulty streetlight the robin sings and sings

<https://hedgerowpoems.wordpress.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/hedgerowpoems>

<https://wildflowerpoetrypress.wordpress.com>

Sabine Miller

Articular Cradles

The tide
fills
bone

The stars
sound
night

Dream birds
gather
tinder

The house-sheltered finch
notes turn

egg shell where
the light drift
taps

[Editor's Note: Excerpted from her *Branch to Finch* the latest production of Ornithopter Press.]

Kim Dorman

Dark sea,
oncoming night.

Small table,
a lamp. Scents

& sensations.
I'm let alone.

Those who love me
trust I'll be safe.

Pain keeps me awake.

The sky turns black,
the trees a dark network.

I listen to Arvo Part's
Kanon Pokajanen,

& wonder at its power to heal.

[from a bedside notebook kept May thru July, 2016]

Lying on damp
sheets,

leg in a cast.
Tree frogs

sing me to sleep.

~

intermittent
rain,

sunlight —
patter

on leaves,
silence —

only time
is a constant,

passing

~

sensed
light,

both
real

& imagined

~

Dream life.
Limitless layers
of mystery
& meaning

Tom Montag

Morning's sky.
Hangdown clouds.

All I want, it seems,
is wanting.

Where water
 meets rock
the story
 wind tells.

Mourning dove
lifts and turns.

The wind speaks
its language.

Small black hawk
down on supper.

Darkness swallows
all our prayers.

Bob Arnold

G L A D E

for SEA

*the woodcutter
never gets it —*

*while he sleeps
firewood seasons*

Where the tall hemlock
crashed down in the woods
taking away its shade

now a sunshine
with only benevolence
runs along its spine

work clothes off
back into a skirt
you show me
at supper where
the log today
bruised your shin

right behind
and nearly under
the truck we spread
the Mexican blanket
to take a nap be-
tween cutting wood
because the sunshine is there

the apple today
isn't as tasty as
the apple yesterday
you packed for me
at lunch when we
break from wood-
cutting and the two
chocolate kisses you
never forget to bring

the same time
we are cutting
all this wood

the tomatoes
back at home
are ripening

the ash trees by the truck
are so willowy and tall I
hate to cut them down
to dry that way through
fall, winter, spring and I
will visit them again by
summer with my saw
meaning business

I can't help but stop
to rest and sink my
woodsmear hands
while hugging you
down inside your
overalls and now
your smile at my
touch of the
silkiest things

without looking —
too busy with axe
chain saw, wooded ground tumble
we hear hawk, bluejay, sparrow, owl
chickadee & a few things unknown

It's a glade we rough out from
blown down oak and maple trees

woodcut and hand-split circle
of sunshine and scrabble

we could almost call it home

before we hiked in for a look
then drove in getting serious
with chain saw and tools

everything was just *fine*
(and rotting)

I said

we could make love
right on the tailgate

33 years
somehow never done

she said she would
but in the deepest green woods
someone could be watching

I can split red oak on the run
rock maple with three whacks
I dream about it now

[Editor's note: Glade is reprinted with the poet's permission from *I'm In Love With You Who Is In Love with Me* (Longhouse, 2012)]

John Perlman

Late Words for a Sachem of 'Pilgrim Swamp Spring'

Clouds of
seafoam
following a
finger of floodtide
up the saltmarsh path
pilgrims if you love these
lands return with the sea you
ride & no word spoken of the
wonders of our shores our sweet
cool waters cannot quench the thirst
of any nomads lost & vagrant as your
dreams

More Late Words

Pilgrims
the wonders of
our shores fly
agaric & the
amanita

In the Sachem's Village a Telling of the Wonders

Sunken pinewoods
deer's ear turning
after birdsong

✧

light in lichen
on the wet black
bark of pines in fog

✧

sweetmeat
of the puffball
sweet boletes'
blue stain

✧

wind in
ears of
dunegrass

✧

inland point
when surf &
wind possess
one voice

✧

standing on
high dunes
over waves in
fall our speech
not unlike the
wind's

*

perishing of
seafoam on
the wind on
sand above
low tide

*

pilgrims
warm last
days of fall
we offer you
the secret
teaching of
our bones
the crickets'
peace in
pines