

# Goldfish's Sigh

Naho SUGITA

Translated by Yasuhiro KAMIMURA





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ISBN 978-1-947271-73-9

Red Moon Press

PO Box 2461

Winchester VA

22604-1661 USA

[www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Cover: OHARA Koson, Japanese, 1878–1945

Publisher: WATANABE Shōzaburō, Japanese

*Two Goldfish*

Japanese, Shōwa era, 1926 (Shōwa 1)

Woodblock print; ink and color on paper

Vertical ōban; 38.9 x 25.8 cm (15.3175" x 10.125")

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Asiatic Curator's Fund (50.272)

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first printing



RED MOON PRESS

## PREFACE

This book is an English translation of 150 haiku selected from my first two collections, *Summer Hat* (2010), and *The Glow of Sand* (2014).

I have been familiar with haiku since I was a child, and have been published in newspapers and haiku magazines. At the end of my long student days, I joined the Unga (Canal) Haiku Association led by Kazuo IBARAKI.

*Summer Hat* is a collection selected at that time by Mr. IBARAKI from my previous works. It is a youthful work that consists of pieces written from junior high through graduate school years.

*The Glow of Sand* was also selected by Mr. IBARAKI from my work based on my activities with Unga. Since I joined Unga, I have been passionate about participating in haiku gatherings and excursions, and reading other people's works.

Here the selected poems from the collections appear as two chapters of the book. Readers can go through two courses of four seasons, which also reflect the transition of time from youth to adulthood.

It was Yasuhiro KAMIMURA who proposed to publish this book, and translated it into English. The title, *Goldfish's Sigh*, was chosen after his favorite poem. Later he understood that some pieces are untranslatable because they consist simply of rhythms. He said he could translate meanings and findings only. So it is totally up to your appreciation whether the works presented here can be recognized as poems in English.

I would like to express my gratitude to Yasuhiro for his translation, and to Jim KACIAN for his generous support in publishing this book, including editing the translations.

Early Spring, 2021  
Naho SUGITA

# Goldfish's Sigh





## Chapter One: *Summer Hat*



Spring



文机の梅一輪の置きどころ

on the writing desk  
wondering where to place  
a single plum flower

畑の香残る菜の花スパゲッティ

field mustard pasta  
retaining the scent  
of the field

受験子の吾を見つめるもう一人

the other self  
who gazes at me  
taking the entrance exam

不確かなものばかりなり卒業す

there is nothing  
but uncertainty—  
graduated from high school



タイヤにも春の空気を入れにけり

having pumped up  
some spring air  
in my bicycle tires

四月来る夢の中まで恋をして

April arrives!  
I am in love  
even into a dream

春昼の自動演奏ピアノかな

on a spring day  
an automatic piano  
playing itself

永き日に一億年の先思ふ

thinking of  
a hundred million years ahead  
on a long spring day

父逝くや父の畑の葱坊主

my father has passed away —  
flower heads of onion  
in his field

月朧我といふものまた朧

hazy moon—  
the self is also  
a hazy thing

校舎から図書館までの春日傘

spring parasol  
from the college  
to the library

小説が好き 蝌蚪の手触りが好き

I like novels  
and the touch  
of tadpoles



移動図書館に来てゐる雀の子

sparrow kids  
also come into  
the mobile library

低すぎず又高すぎず巣箱掛く

put up a birdhouse  
not too low  
not too high

姉と見てゐる東京の朝ざくら

with my sister in Tokyo  
looking up together at  
morning cherry blossoms

東京のさくら吉野のさくらかな

cherry blossoms in Tokyo—  
Yoshino may also  
be blooming

黒板は深海の色風光る

a blackboard the color  
of the abyss —  
the wind shines

死は一度きりこの春も一度きり

we only die once  
this spring also  
only happens once

Summer





書きかけの手紙そのまま余花の雨

laying an unfinished letter aside  
the rain showers  
over late blossoms

抱き下ろしたれば温か鯉幟

carp streamers  
were warm  
once gotten down

明易し水車の刻む水の音

dawning earlier —  
the waterwheel  
ticking away the water

母の日の母の献血手帳かな

Mother's Day —  
the blood donor's card  
of my mother

学問の自由泰山木の花

academic freedom  
flowers of  
evergreen magnolia

惑星の一つに住みて田草取る

living on a planet  
pulling weeds  
in the rice field

真実と事実は違ふ額の花

truth and facts  
are not the same—  
lacecap hydrangea

鳥声がしきり墓の声も

the constant songs  
of birds and  
of toads



過去よりも未来は長し朴の花

the future is longer  
than the past—  
flowers of *magnolia hypoleuca*

幸せに気づく幸せさくらんぼ

happiness  
in noticing happiness—  
a cherry bob

どこまでも行ける切符や夏の旅

summer travel—  
a ticket  
for a million miles

正論を貫き通す涼しさよ

how cool the air  
when you keep saying  
the right thing

ボルドーのインクの匂ふ夏見舞

summer greeting  
a whiff of  
Bordeaux ink

後世に及ぶ約束雲の峰

a promise  
valid until the next world—  
cloud peaks

青春の真つ只中の夏帽子

a summer hat  
in the flower  
of my youth

夜濯の紅き洗濯ばさみかな

washing clothes  
at midnight—  
the clothespins are red



学会の夜のホテルに泳ぎけり

swam at the hotel  
that night after  
presenting at a conference

取り返しつかぬことして髪洗ふ

washing my hair  
after doing  
something irreparable

昼寝して夢ならば許さること

taking a nap—  
doing something allowed  
only in a dream

夏痩せて辞書の分厚きことを言ふ

getting thin in summer  
complained that  
the dictionary is too thick

金魚にもある溜息のやうなもの

something  
like a sigh—  
which goldfish also breathe

空蟬のすつくと刻を止めぬたり

a cicada shell  
holds back time  
resolutely

ごきぶりを捕へし迄の一部始終

the whole story  
until squashing  
a cockroach

ハンカチに折目人生には節目

a neat handkerchief—  
an event that marks  
one's life



Autumn



赤とんぼ悲しき時はたと飛べ

red dragonfly  
when you are sad  
fly a lot

無花果やどこか哀しきかたちして

figs—  
having a somehow  
sad shape

学ぶこと詩をつくること水澄めり

doing research  
making poetry —  
the water is clear

無人駅降りて花野の始まり

getting off the train  
at the unmanned station  
a flower field begins

図書館のいつもの席に秋の暮

autumn dusk—  
onto the usual seat  
in the library

秋冷や百万冊の書庫にゐて

autumn chill—  
staying in the archive  
with a million books



爽やかや乗り遅るといふことも

how refreshing—  
even after  
missing a train

太陽と月と男と女かな

sun

moon

man and woman

ゴンドラの人皆紅葉狩りの人

everyone  
in the gondola  
is a leaf peeper

門限の正しき寺や夕紅葉

a temple  
with a strict closing time—  
autumn foliage at sunset

飽食の時代の木の実拾ひけり

picking up nuts  
in this age of  
plenty



Winter





大仏のぢつとしてゐる寒さかな

the coldness  
of the Great Buddha  
sitting still

読み了へて外す栞のつめたさよ

how cold the bookmark  
when taken out  
after reading through

寒星の海に葬るものいくつ

cold star —  
how many things do you have  
to bury in the sea?

降る雪や永眠といふ眠りあり

falling snow —  
there is a sleep  
called eternal sleep

冬ぬくし博物館の赤き壁

mild winter day—  
the red wall  
of a museum

向き合つてゐる隔たりに冬日差す

in the distance  
between us facing each other  
the winter sun shines

ひらめきといふ風花のやうなもの

inspirations —  
something like  
snowflakes

保守的なことばかり言ひ日短

only saying  
negative things  
on a short day



ヒトはなほ進化の途上寒夕焼

winter sunset —  
human beings are  
still on the way of evolution

不況とは人の世のこと山眠る

economic depression  
is a worldly thing—  
the mountains sleep

短日の三時四時五時六時かな

three, four, five,  
and six o'clock  
on a short day

着ぶくれて地球大事にする話

being thickly dressed  
we talk about  
cherishing our planet

愛といふ言葉愛せず毛糸編む

knitting wool—  
I can't love  
the word “love”

クリスマスツリーの電気消す係

someone in charge of  
turning off  
the Christmas tree lights

裏庭に日当たるところ寒雀

winter sparrows—  
a sunny spot  
in the back yard

くちびるに微熱の残る冬林檎

winter apple —  
a slight fever  
remaining in my lips



母の分姉の分買ふ宝船

bought pictures of treasure ships  
one for my mother  
the other for my sister

取り敢へず研究室にゐる三日

for the time being  
staying at the lab  
on the third day of the new year

大阪は商ひの街初戎

Osaka is the city of commerce  
the new year festival  
of the god of wealth

凍星やいつれ師恩に応へむと

frozen star —  
I pledge to repay  
my mentor someday

久女忌や真つ黒のワンピース着て

Hisajo Sugita Memorial Day—  
wearing a dress  
of pitch black

待春の五分進んでゐる時計

waiting for spring—  
a clock which advances  
five minutes

## Chapter Two: *The Glow of Sand*





Spring



余韻とは好文木のかをりかも

a poem's afterglow  
something like  
the fragrance of *prunus mume*

嬉しくて嬉しくて踏む薄氷

gladly and happily  
cracked the thin ice  
in the puddle

農学部棟まで続く春の泥

spring mud  
all the way to the entrance  
of the department of agriculture

恋猫や彼の人その後は知らず

cats in love—  
his later life  
is unknown to me

ふらここにある思ひ出を揺らしけり

swung  
a reminiscence  
on a swing

孤独感いそぎんちやくを見てよりの

a sense of loneliness  
since seeing  
a sea anemone



山麓駅山上駅の春の風

spring winds at the tram stations  
of the mountain foot  
and of the mountain top

難しき話さておき桜餅

cherry-leaf rice cakes—  
let's set difficult issues  
aside for a while

春の野やゆつくり雲の動く日の

spring field—  
on a day  
clouds are moving slowly

母の春日傘私の春日傘

my mother's  
spring parasol  
and my spring parasol

巣箱掛くところ朝日の差すところ

where I put up  
a birdhouse, where  
the morning sun shines

恋歌は詠み人知らず花の雨

cherry blossom rain—  
this old love poem  
is anonymous

Summer





葬礼の帰りに出合ふ螢かな

encountered a firefly  
on the way home  
from a funeral

緑蔭に収まりきらぬ合唱団

a singing choir  
can't fit in  
the green shade

水色のボールペン買ふ薄暑かな

early summer —  
bought a light blue  
ballpoint pen

一切を束ねて滝の音なりけり

binding up everything  
the waterfall  
is reverberating

髪を切るのは風の盆終へてから

I won't cut my hair —  
until after  
the wind festival

風鈴の日と名づけたき日となりぬ

it has become a day  
which I want to name  
Wind Chime Day

猫好きと犬好きと蟻好き

cat lovers  
dog lovers  
and toad lovers

女ざかり働きざかり晶子の忌

in my prime as at once  
a woman and a writer  
Akiko Yosano Memorial Day



噴水に背を向けてゐる人をらず

none of us  
with one's back  
to the fountain

月涼し出国ゲート抜けてより

how cool the moon  
after passing through  
the departure gate

モネの色遣ひと思ふ夕焼雲

sunset clouds —  
reminiscent of  
Monet's use of color

羅を着て朝までを語りけり

talked until  
morning, wearing  
a thin robe

涼しさよポニーテールにしてよりの

the coolness comes  
since putting my hair up  
in a ponytail

明け方の砂の輝き磯遊

playing on the beach—  
the glow of sand  
at early dawn

朝焼を見てから眠る日もありて

there were days  
when I went to sleep  
after watching the sunrise

考ふる夜のプールに浮かびつつ

floating  
in the night pool  
what I thought was . . .



手花火のふたりだけしか知らぬこと

having small sparklers  
something only  
you and I know

星涼しロマンチストになりきれず

cool star—  
I can never really  
be a romantic

本当の自分泳ぎてゐるときは

I am someone  
who I really am  
when I am swimming

人間も山椒魚も愉快なり

humans and  
salamanders  
alike are delightful

アルバムの子は少年夏帽子

in the album  
you are a small boy  
with a summer hat

日常に戻る京都の暑さかな

the heat of Kyoto  
returning to normalcy  
from the festival

浴衣着ることなく過ぎてしまひけり

missed the season  
without wearing  
a *yukata*





Autumn



向き合うてのち隣り合ふ星祭

the star festival—  
sat next to each other  
after facing each other

朝顔の家と呼ばれてゐる町屋

a townhouse  
called the house of  
morning glory

コスモスを括る蝶々結びかな

a bowknot  
to tie  
cosmos

水面に触れてきらきら蜻蛉は

a dragonfly glitters  
touching  
the water surface

先生を見送りに行く秋日傘

autumn parasol  
to see  
my teacher off

小鳥来る建設中の校舎かな

little birds come  
to the college  
under construction



花野まで来て今ならば言へること

coming to the flower field  
something  
I can say to you now

実石榴や恋がすべてでありし頃

a pomegranate—  
the days when  
romance was everything

名前なき小川の水も澄みにけり

even the water  
of the nameless stream  
was clear

中心に磐座のある虫の闇

darkness of insects  
with a holy rock  
in the center

鰯雲君の街より流れ来る

mackerel clouds  
flow from  
your town

爽涼の恐竜の歯の化石かな

on a refreshing day  
saw a fossil of  
a dinosaur's tooth

持つてゐることの愉しき捕虫網

the butterfly net  
delightful  
just to hold one

月の美しさがわかる人とゐる

living with someone  
who appreciates  
the beauty of the moon



爽やかや素顔で過ごす一日は

how refreshing—  
a day spent  
without makeup

花野ゆく童話の中にゐるごとく

walked down a flower field  
like a child  
in a fairy tale

寂しさを口にすべきか水澄むころ

in the clear water season  
should I speak  
of my loneliness?

長き一日の終わりに月仰ぐ

looking up  
at the moon  
at the end of a long day

虫籠がソファーになかつたら不在

if you don't see  
an insect cage on the couch  
I am out

三つ四つと足して七つの木の実かな

three plus four  
make seven  
nuts in my hand

月は優し悲嘆に暮れてゐるときも

the moon is gentle  
even when  
I am grieving

秋惜しむ琵琶湖の水に手を浸し

lamented autumn  
dipping my hand  
into the water of Lake Biwa



Winter



冬に入る新島襄の旧居かな

entering winter  
the former residence of  
Jo Neesima

小春日や湖を買ふ夢を見て

spring-like day —  
had a dream  
about buying a lake

企てのやうにしぐれてゐたりけり

it was drizzling  
somehow  
like a plot

搾りたて牛乳のいろ初雪は

the color of  
farm-fresh milk  
the first snow is

一枚の毛布の中に姉とゐる

in a blanket  
I am with  
my sister

冬日和ガラスケースの中までも

a calm winter day  
even inside  
the glass cases



冬帽の第一印象とは違ふ

different from  
his first impression  
with a winter beanie

帰りたくなきマフラーの乱れかな

disheveled scarf

reluctant

to go home

加筆修正加筆修正年暮るる

revise and edit  
revise and edit  
and the year is over

遷都千三百年の初日かな

first sunrise of  
the 1300th anniversary  
of the new capital

涙出るほどよ姉妹の初笑

new year's first laughter  
of the two sisters  
to the point of tears

哲学の道ゆき枯野人となる

going through the philosophers' walk  
I became a traveler  
in a dry grass field

太陽も月も出てゐる冬の山

over winter mountains  
the sun and the moon  
are both out

いつまでもどこまでも雪かと思ふ

wondering  
if it will be snowing  
always and forever



手袋を外して触るる樹氷かな

touched the rime ice  
after taking off  
my gloves

冬眠をせぬ人間を哀しめり

felt pity for  
human beings  
not to have winter sleep

冬の星仰ぐ言葉にならぬとき

looking up  
at the winter stars  
when lost for words

梅探る父との思ひ出の場所に

searched for plum blossoms  
remembering a previous visit  
with my father



## BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

In 1980, born in Nara, Japan.

In 2009, received Ph.D. from Graduate School of Economics, Osaka City University.

Associate Professor (history of social policy), Graduate School of Economics, Osaka City University, since 2014.

Member of Unga Haiku Association since 2009.

Member of the Association of Haiku Poets since 2009.



ISBN 978-1-947271-73-9

Haiku / Poetry \$15

something  
like a sigh—  
which goldfish also breathe



RED MOON PRESS