

# an upside down bucket



haiku by Bruce Sengan Kennedy

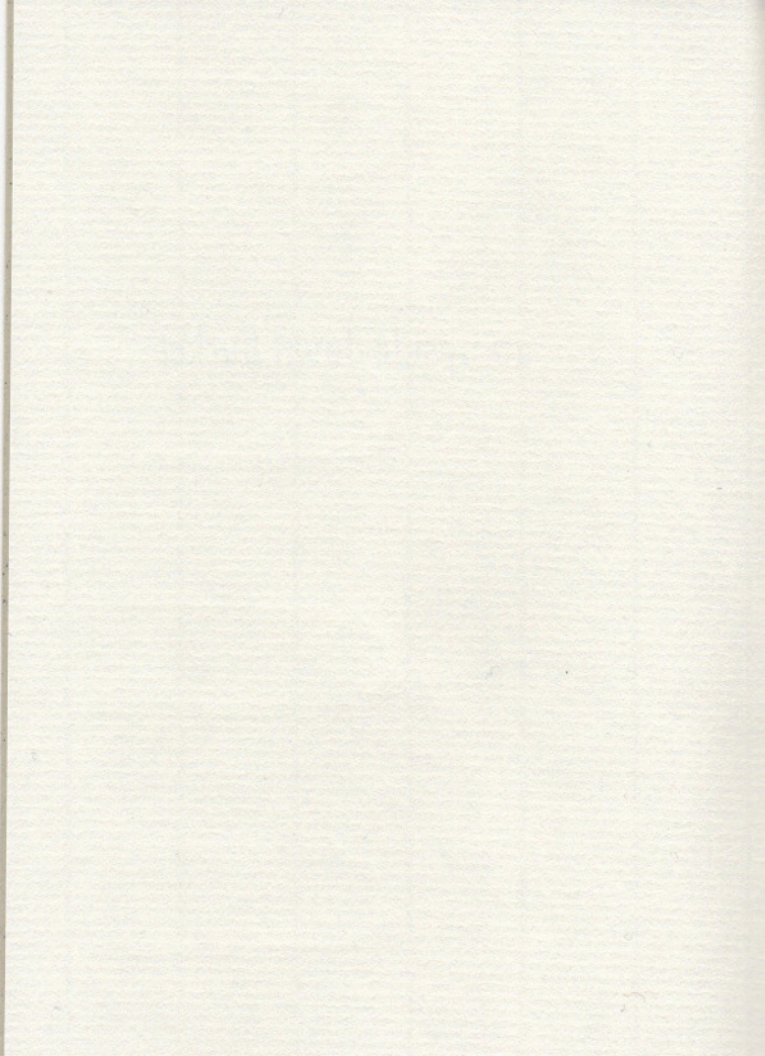


an upside down bucket

written by Bruce Sengren, Brooklyn

Sengren@midspring.com

WHEATON'S EYE PRESS - Brooklyn, New York





AUTHOR'S NOTE

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Sengan@ mindspring.com

HERMIT'S EYE PRESS • Brooklyn, New York

Dedicated to Mom & Dad

Bruce Kennedy, an upside down bucket

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sengan@mindspring.com

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"goldfish search" first appeared in Wind Chimes.

"if Robert were here" is for Robert Genjin Savage.

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

**B**asho, Japan's greatest haiku poet, is purported to have said that haiku is simply what is happening here in this particular place at this particular moment. Of course Basho had much more to say about haiku, and the art form has since undergone evolution, change and shifts in cultural context—especially during the twentieth century. As a consequence, the precise definition of haiku today is subject to a certain amount of debate and personal preference. Yet, like the majority of English-language haiku poets, I consider such a focus on a particular here-now moment as being central to the definition of haiku.

Indeed, for me, the virtue of haiku lies in it as a means to appreciate, discern, express and dwell more fully in a moment of life. (The appreciation of life may be the greatest art of all.) Moreover haiku

offers me an occasion and challenge to be intimate with Nature, for which I am grateful. The pleasure I find in reading haiku seems to derive from its focus on physical sensations, the feeling of intimacy haiku creates, its economy of language, the uniqueness of its images, and its special point of view, depth of feeling or insight.

My task as a haiku writer, as I currently engage it, is to select and represent whole moments in such a way that they live and have value for others. In doing so I hope also to convey something of the essence of the place or topic being written about.

The occasion for the publication of an upside down bucket is the grand opening of the Zen Temple of New York City, Karenji, at 500 State Street, Brooklyn, New York. The full proceeds from the sale of this book are being donated to the temple. Although haiku need not be associated with Zen (but must be associated with Life), the two have had a fruitful relationship, which this temple's love and devotion to the arts will undoubtedly nurture.



I want to thank Abbot John Daido Loori, Roshi, for incorporating the arts into his teachings, and Bonnie Myotai Treace, Sensei, for suggesting I pull together this chapbook.

Special thanks to: Cor van den Heuvel, for his edits and comments, as well as for his own masterly haiku and unmatched standards as an anthologist; Carl Patrick for his edits, encouragement and tips; Dee Evetts for his feedback and stewardship of the Spring Street Haiku Group. Together these poets have helped me hone my skills, judgment and confidence, for which I am grateful.

Additional thanks to David Sanshin Noble for his friendship and design work on this chapbook.

And, most especially, to Carolyn C. Harada, for her love, humor and generosity.

I hope you enjoy the following haiku.

Bruce Sengan Kennedy

October 2000

Brooklyn



# Spring

lingering cold  
an abandoned tree house  
beside the canal



early spring rains  
traces of a smiley face  
on a mist covered window  
thrown open to release a song  
into the cool night  
a light rain  
the glug, glug, glug of water  
in the teahouse

a poor Zen temple  
the single shoji screen makes  
a spring teahouse

misty rain  
a large straw hat  
tends the irises

doors of the church  
thrown open to release a song  
into the cool night

dogwood in bloom  
the coolness inside  
an empty moving van

if Robert were here  
he'd know this mushroom  
growing on his grave



# Summer

waterlilies  
closed for the night  
mountain stillness

campfire  
into the burning embers  
go a few raindrops

columns of lake mist  
rise, fade, rise again  
the rising sun

water striders  
in the shade of a pine branch  
going nowhere

an upside down bucket  
where the fisherman was  
summer dusk



city pier  
in summer heat  
a cruise ship glides by

coolness  
of the stone bridge  
willow shade

a street lamp lights  
the fork in the road  
dark trees all around

windowless office  
throughout the afternoon  
rumors of heavy rain

# Autumn

a street lamp light

the fork in the road

goldfish search

the tank bottom for food

a blustery day

windowless office

throughout the afternoon

rumors of heavy rain



this and that  
all week long  
the yellow leaves falling

bouncing as high  
as a startled schoolboy  
the acorn falls

floating above  
the morning haze  
Ellis Island

in the moonlight  
jet trails thin out  
over the sea

the skywriter's  
enso  
floats away

enso: a single-stroke circle drawn by Zen painters

floating above  
the morning haze

miles out to sea  
a pale patch  
of moonlight

in the moonlight

in the moonlight  
over the sea



# Winter

the rose garden gate  
opening and shutting  
gusts of snow

idleness

large snowflakes falling  
throughout the day

the wash of water  
through a metal radiator  
cold morning

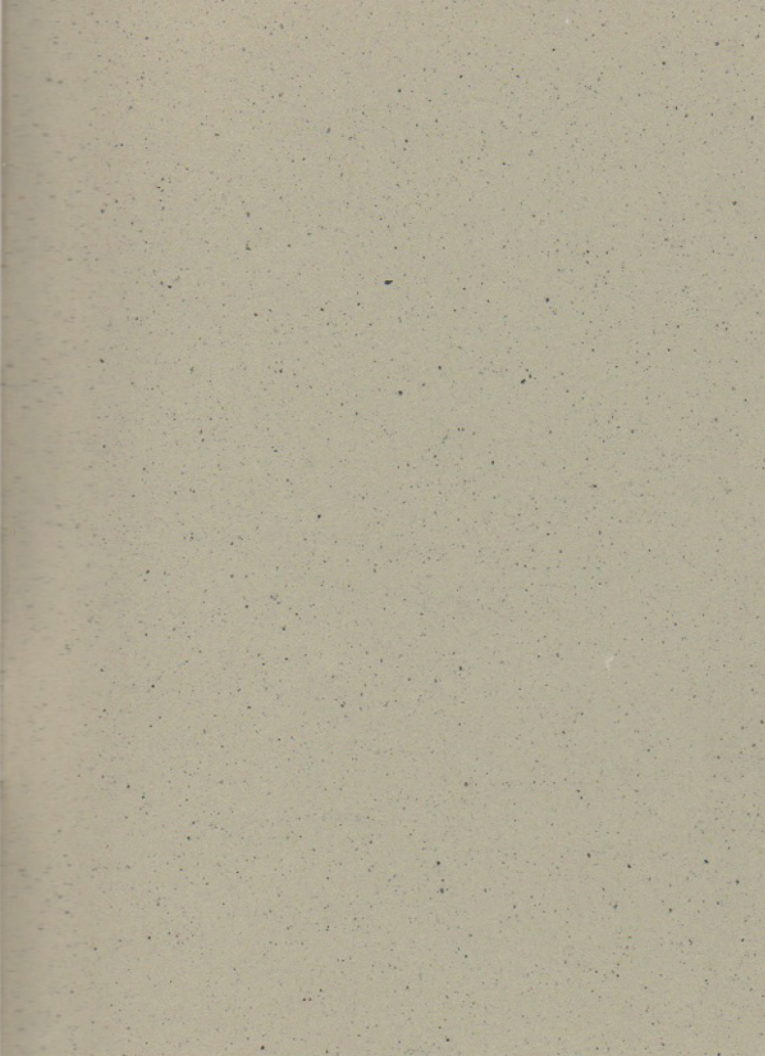
house slippers  
simply from being worn  
they've become left and right

drifting to sleep  
her warm hand uncurls  
from mine



looming larger  
in the heavy snowfall  
Empire State Building

house flippers  
simply from being worn  
looking better and the wood is  
in the heavy snowfall  
people start building  
drifting to sleep  
her warm hand around  
from above





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