

SAILING BONES

HAIKU

Raymond Roseliep



SOBI-SHI

(from a Note in Uzzano 9/10, Spring - Summer 1978, reprinted with the permission of editor Robert Schuler)

Casting about for a haigo, or haiku-name, Raymond Roseliep called upon his friend Nobuo Hirasawa, in Tokyo; and they both thought it would be meaningful if they could come up with a name for this other-self based upon Ray's Germanic surname. (Roseliep originally was Roselieb: "rose/love," or "lover of the rose.") Nobuo suggested Sobi-Shi. Though "bara" is the usual name for "rose" in Japanese, "sobi" means exactly "rose" in the world of poetry. "Shi" is literally "child," but for haigo "shi" means "a man of art." Now christened, Sobi-Shi then is "a rose man of art," or "a man of art who loves the rose."

SAILING BONES

Barbara Kingsolver

Illustrated by
John Schoenherr

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Merry Christmas, friend Bob
friend Ray
1978

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The haiku and senryu in this book first appeared in the following magazines: *Alembic*, *Bits*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Bonsai*, *The Christian Century*, *Cicada* (Canada), *Delta Epsilon Sigma Bulletin*, *Encore*, *Freshwater Journal*, *Frogpond* (Haiku Society of America), *Green Revolution*, *Gusto*, *Haiku Journal*, *High/Coo*, *Modern Haiku*, *New Letters*, *Outch* (Japan), *Pilgrimage*, *Poetry Nippon* (Japan), *Portals*, *Rapport*, *Third Coast Archives*, *Thoreau Journal Quarterly*, *Tweed* (Australia), *Uzzano*, *The Windless Orchard*, *Yankee*, and *Yukuharu* (Japan). The Rook Press published "crow caw" (p. 36) as a Bookmark.

"reaching into sky" (p. 25) won the Harold G. Henderson Award, 1977, from the Haiku Society of America.

The bamboo brush illustrations were drawn by Nobuo F. Hirasawa, of Tokyo, Japan, to whom the author expresses deep gratitude. On the cover is the Kanji or Chinese character for "flame," suggested by the title poem on page 40. The frontispiece presents the Kanji for "cat," incorporated into snow scenery and based upon the fourth poem on page 33.

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for Verna Christensen

the wild berry
named after me:
your jam in gray dawn

the white crocus!
and I haven't changed
my clothes

finch
graphing the air
gold

sap
flows
go inside yourself

our lives, friend:
between them grassroot
each year stirring

vernal equinox:
wringing out her bra,
frogs simmering

waiting for my love.
the incurled
apple bud

in broad daylight
the columbine's chandelier
completely lit

picking columbine
three children of
the junk picker

leaving a bookmark
by Issa's wild goose—
to pick wild strawberries

"Shine, mister?"
yes, so I can watch
his jar of black widows

in the stream
stones making half
the music

their small talk
after marriage
the wild strawberries

painting high
stiffens the neck
for tonight's stars

painting low
creases the knees
for night-crawlers

the new moon:
cherries slip
through my fingers

such a strain, chanticleer,
when the room is so soft,
the roommate too

with plainsong
nuns are canceling
rococo chanticleer

beholding
her lover's face
in black honey

the weeds
ring
bell jeans

making love;
the oxeye
daisy

pillowed
on the breasts of the girl
who picks turnips

Sobi-Shi waiting
for his lover . . .
ants are rebuilding

the man and cat
darken the pier
searching north

in morning light
the loon ferries downy chicks
no one is laughing

our wet selves;
the heron carefully
wading

the boy's fingers
circle
the sweet volcano

handling
so many emeralds—
now this frog

blues are the big thing
with Monet, she said,
spreading the Roquefort

Night Piece

i

bumping in the dusk
Sobi-Shi promises
no power blackout

ii

taking flame
from Sobi-Shi's candle
the beauty sighs

iii

from Beauty's bedroom
Sobi-Shi brings the moon
back to his own

June yip of red:
my own breath
enters me

the wren tries its wings;
this hook
and eye

lust in the thumb
settling
for peach feel

pouring broth
and the North Star
into my bowl

birds wake me,
I try on
myself

carrot tops
and the woman's back
bend to the wind

on the apple
the white butterfly
is pink

dead on air
Houdini
hummingbird

“cataracts, pshaw!
you hear birds
better”

full of day voices
the valley
tonight

rain:
the busy
soybeans

alone in the rain
Sobi-Shi opens
his little rainspout

pulling
the turnip
birthcry

tumbleweed;
Isadora's
dancing shoe

trap-door spider:
I remember
myself

birth miracle gone,
the woman hunts milkweed
caterpillars

milkweed . . .
Pavlova's
swan

the cat
in his arms
defines the man

she looks over her shoulder
before putting the stars
aside

entering my room
her shadow slips
into her

on rafts of lilies
Sobi-Shi just drifting
with Monet

in Sobi-Shi's glass
the dark rose
of a love ago

seeing some fireflies
Sobi-Shi turns from the street
of red lights

Year of the horse:
Sobi-Shi's heart goes thudding
softly through the wood

waiting for her
his eye on the wind
Sobi-Shi blows the conch

stuck in the mud
Sobi-Shi's horse
and the moon

another hill
to climb
inside Sobi-Shi

Sobi-Shi
has no more to say
the frog said it

Nefertiti
in
the flea market

coins clink to his fiddle
a breastpin
drops to the street

fish peddler
handling them
like babies

he gave me bread, though,
the man with sequins
in his hair

bringing lemonade
the farmer's daughter
becomes the threshers' song

all day at the elms
men with their saws;
tonight the cicadas

night sky
of sunflowers
arsonist

Lucy is dead.
the light
in her clock

The Morning-Glory

takes in
the world
from the heart out

funnels
our day
into itself

closes
on its own
inner light

he removes his glove
to point out
Orion

sickle
in autumn grass;
the egg-timer

reaching into sky
the girl breaks the wish-
bone of geese

by the autumn hill
my watercolor box
unopened

among corn shocks
remembering my mother's
"don't talk to strangers"

autumn mummies:
Sobi-Shi covering
his American Beauties

telephone wire:
crows are sitting
on her voice

the first frost
brings out
the architect

Thanksgiving:
the axe
in moonlight

calling
"aardvark"
back to the crow

sorrow of the sea
stealing on the autumn wind
to my love and me

fall stars
go on:
we two

in my arms tonight:
let the apple fall
on our borrowed roof

through mist
a few bars of Strauss,
a woman's voice

love's voice
is different
over water

the ripple
in his blue jeans
another kind of wave

chantey of
wave and seaman:
we too make love

lovers;
fishtail
thrashing

could I house in me
the sundogs to unleash
on your dark ground

my fingers
in pocket dark
know your house key

wrong bed—
best run

I said

the mouse just misses
the excavator's
scoop

sky roofing
bird nothing but bird
over the roofer

the bricklayer
breathes into a mouth
of chimney

the contractor
reads blueprint detail
through dragonfly wing

with his trowel
the plasterer
swats flies

shooting star
still in the eye of
the electrician

the painter bids
the grasshopper
'Spit tobacco juice'

eating rose
pink by pink petal
the interior decorator

guiding the blind man
the woman does not tell him
of her shadows

walking from the streetlight
our shadows
have no heads

rain
erasing
the clown's face

walking in rain
I pass a stranger
I know

day's familiar shapes
turn unfamiliar in snow—
even the crow's call

sub-zero
pigeons curve
into themselves

the old woman
loading firewood
her nose a live coal

snow gradually
sculpturing
the cat

such a pretty girl
fixing her hair
in an icicle

black cat snoozing
by the potbelly stove
income tax Forms

after Beethoven
he gets the furnace
roaring

for a moment
the spark
is itself

this winter night
my rose bed opens
to Schubert's bee

snow stops snowing
and you feel
your own nature

my frozen neck
won't pivot—
one star

the long night:
I am as near
as myself

crow caw
triggering
the lark

Sobi-Shi mending his socks
snow
on Buddha's nose

defrosting liver,
her hands still warm
from the spinet

Marianne Moore:
silversmith silverfish
tooling the word

the pleated paper bell
locks the sound of snow
till you blow

dissecting the frog
where the music
begins

mid-winter dawn;
in the painting
the willow shivers

on her shoulder
the crow too watches
for his return

at his grave
the sun comes out
bringing back her shadow

winter stars
hurt your eyes more
in the attic

winter night
shortens—
Beethoven's bird calls

breaking the silence
of Mama's knitting needles
the click-click of sleet

skid row:
he devours the gloom
in others' eyes

insomnia:
the star in the wall
won't go out

telling my sins
to the priest
a fly buzzes

sky
of one bird
and I

snuff the candle—
in my sailing bones
the pilot light



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