

# Insect Haiku 虫の俳句

from the Shiki-School

selected and translated by **Harold J Isaacson**

typescript made around 1959,  
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with a selection and translation of insect haiku of various schools,  
made by **Helen Shigeko Isaacson**

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**INSECT HAIKU**

**translated by**

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**Please return to**

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## Preface

Of those charming creatures, the insects, the Japanese have, from of old, written excellently. And when, in Tokugawa days, the haiku took form, its powers were well employed upon this matter. Mr. Lafcadio Hearn years ago set before the Western public the beauty of these insect haiku in a series of translations from haijin (or master<sup>s</sup> of the haiku) of Tokugawa times. Here now is a collection made from works of haijin of the Twentieth century, (being) various masters of the school of haiku promulgated by the great haijin Shiki. 2/p

(In particular) views about insects that tend to manifest at the present day in the West are somewhat morbid, and such notions seem to compound in direct ratio to the <sup>n</sup>diminution of immediate knowledge of insects themselves. It is to be hoped that these works, <sup>which</sup> embody ~~are~~ a consummate perception of insects as they actually are, <sup>^</sup>~~will~~ <sup>?</sup>serve to correct crank impressions, and make it possible to see with more truth and more enjoyment a considerable portion of the <sup>e</sup>everyday world.

To read these works should also ~~en~~crease appreciation of the haiku itself; and when its complete plainness and unpretentiousness has been realized perhaps there will come the inclination to try to make English haiku on these subjects. For such~~a~~ purpose the careful reading of this book could offer much help.

In the translations three particles will be found, ya, kana, and keri. These are known as haiku particles and they do not have any precise meaning, but rather lend to the haiku a certain character by virtue of their sound. Thus they serve ~~to~~ much the same end in the English translation as in the Japanese original, and for this reason have been retained. This will be verified by repeating one of the haiku over in English with the particle omitted, when it will be found to suffer from the absence.

At the end of the book is a glossary of the few Japanese ~~and~~ (?) terms used in the translations.

INSECT HAIKU 3.

BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies, quiet and in motion. First quiet.

Ownerless  
the helmet on which sleeps  
a butterfly kana

--Choi

This means its possessor dead, a helmet that lies in the grass. *awk?*

~~But their rest too~~

On the stone pedestal  
a butterfly fast asleep kerī

Torin-ji

--Shiei

But their rest too is related to motion.

Grown tired,  
on a yamabuki he rests,  
the butterfly kana

--Ransui

INSECT HAIKU 4.

On the horse-trough  
a mountain butterfly that has come  
perches keri

--Rosui

Now butterflies in motion.

By the quick-set hedge  
proceeds along, flutter-flutter,  
a butterfly, yellow.

--Sansen

Rice-bowl firing  
kiln, above it flutters  
a butterfly kana

--Getto

On the stone stair-flight  
the butterfly cannot become quiet,  
people up and down.

--Kodo

A dyed tassel,  
the butterfly that has settled on it  
flutters wings kerī

--Donanshi

The whimsicality of butterfly motion.

From the vegetable garden  
to the straw-sail veers  
butterfly kana

--Tosuishi

Butterfly ya  
A mountainless country  
he flies above.

--Shuko

Every now and then  
he is under the parasol,  
a butterfly kana

--Kunkadan



INSECT HAIKU 6.

Butterflies over water.

Two or three yards  
above Suma Bay ya  
Butterfly flies.

--Okeishi

Forest butterfly  
on the face of a swamp  
displayed.

--Komu

To off-shore islands  
butterflies make their way,  
fine weather kana

--Getto

Upon the lake  
he is blown down,  
butterfly kana

--Seccho

Or other things in the nature of a butterfly.

3/2

INSECT HAIKU 7.

A butterfly;  
the sound as he eats  
so quiet it is.

--Kyoshi

A butterfly dances ya  
The mountain by mist  
grown remote.

--Shiki

SUMMER BUTTERFLY

Butterflies are ordinarily understood to be a Spring subject,  
thus the Summer butterfly is treated in a distinct fashion.

Into the great sky  
it gets rolled up, a sail ya  
Summer butterfly.

--Issei

Summer butterfly ya  
The courtesan-flower is  
what he comes for.

--Midori-jo

INSECT HAIKU 8.

AUTUMN BUTTERFLY

The Autumn butterfly is still again different.

E-no-Shima ya

An Autumn butterfly that flits  
across the waves.

On a horse-ball

to catch his breath, Autumn  
butterfly kana

--Shiki

Yellow dusk ya

With the fallen leaves mingles  
an Autumn butterfly.

--Hekito

INSECT HAIKU 9.

FIREFLIES

To the enchantment of mid-summer nights fireflies bring  
the fascination of their cold fire.

Ones that weren't<sup>2</sup> sold  
the ladders lean against the door ya  
Fireflies flit.

--Koji

While punting,  
in the wa<sup>2</sup>st-mino flit  
fireflies kana

--Hosen

Struck by a raindrop  
to fall to the ground, there is that kind of fire too;  
firefly kana

--Kyoshi

Fireflies tend to gather over moist areas.

This grass trodden,  
towards the marsh, fireflies  
vanish keri

--Kana-jo

INSECT HAIKU 10.

Though leaf-concealed  
in the water are reflected,  
the fireflies kana

--Shigei

Fireflies are caught, and can be purchased; they may be  
kept in cages and nurtured upon a turf sprinkled with fresh water.

Firefly-cage.  
What long-ago's  
silk gauze?

--Getto

Firefly-cage.  
From house-boat roof-eave  
hung keri

--Ryusen

Firefly-cage.  
Far away from the andon  
it hangs keri

--Shiki

## INSECT HAIKU 11.

Fireflies are especially delightful in gardens in the cool of a summer night; and places that are famous for them are visited.

Year by year  
to diminish---forlorn ya  
Firefly tea-house.

--Gesan

## CATERPILLARS

When the caterpillars appear their soft persistence and their pervasiveness much insinuate the ~~xxxx~~ character of early summer's first warm days.

Caterpillar's crawl;  
a haikai-do's  
free-and-easiness kana

--Kankotsu

From the potted tree  
yesterday picked off,  
a caterpillar kana

--Kaen

The chestnut tree is apt to be caterpillar-ridden.

With a chestnut flower  
there fell and crawls away  
a caterpillar kana

--Kosui

His green-jewel  
entrails squelch out,  
caterpillar kana

--Kyoshi

The caterpillar's handsome coloring is often somewhat baleful of appearance; and one kind is called the oni, or demon, caterpillar. The following haiku alludes to a region in hell known as the Needle Mountain.

Demon-caterpillar,  
a pine-tree's needle mountain  
he crosses keri

--Jouro

Plum fruits.  
To gather them it was climbed, there  
caterpillars kana

--Kigu

SILKWORMS

One kind of caterpillar, that of the silkworm moth, is cultivated to obtain silk thread. This is usually done when Spring has become mild in a little house put up especially for the purpose.

By the roadway  
bamboo blinds hang down.

Silkworm-house kana

--Kuippo

The silkworm is delicate and its cultivation requires great care. ?

Spell against harm  
that the beggar offered to sell  
bought for silkworms.

--Bakuka

The cultivation of the silkworm is of great antiquity and used generally to be practised in most households.

The palace ya  
Deep among cherry-trees  
silkworm shed put up.

--Toyojo



Come as a bride  
months and days are swift.  
Silkworm tend.

--Haikosei

HACHI

Hachi is the name given to those honey-making, stinging  
insects the bees and hornets.

By a hornet-nest  
the second-floor person's  
snores kana

--Fuson

Hive demolished;  
when he returned, to the bee  
that place's emptiness.

--Hakuun

The bee's rump;  
gingerly his needle  
sheathed keri

--Bosha

The bee is prone to anger.

Washed along a stream,  
when he climbs up on to a post the bee's  
anger kana

--Seioshi

As bee-poison  
swell<sup>s</sup> out, the face  
lop-sided keri

--Sosen

HORSEFLY

The horsefly, abu, is very different from the hachi, and  
although it does not sting, it bites. When Spring gets warm  
it appears everywhere.

The dye-man ya  
With a tenter-hook he chases away  
the starch's abu.

--Bisai

The kasa's abu  
aboard the ferry  
it flew off keri

--Shumin

The abu makes a rather ~~ex~~ loud buzzing noise.

A flower obtained  
he becomes quiet keri  
the fuji's abu.

--Kyokusen

Buzzing abu's  
shadow gets bigger;  
shoji kana

Into the green sky  
in one straight line  
the abu vanished.

--Shashun

That an abu circles  
the pot of azalea  
as it is carried keri

--Yugetsu

Sunlit abu ya  
Newly washed shoji  
set on the grass.

--Nanbanji

FLIES

By flies primarily the house-fly is meant.

On the andon  
a fly sits outside  
= wind and rain kana  
--Tsukijiro

Three-foot  
sea-bream ya Flies flit  
kitchfn.  
--Shiki

The above haiku was written by Shiki on the receipt of  
a fine sea-bream as a present.

The house-fly can exasperate to the point of rage.

From the tatami  
a needle bounced up;  
flyswatter.  
--Haishosei

On a morning-glory's  
wide circle, fly  
specks kana  
--Igga

But there are many varieties of fly besides the common house fly.

Golden flies ya  
Where on the ground has spilled  
a melon's entrails.

--Chikuba

# MOSQUITOES

The mosquito is a notable thing of summer. It is interesting to compare the mosquito haiku with abu haiku.

Melon pips  
that were removed, their scent ya  
Mosquito dusk

--Hekigoto

The fencing-school's  
tatami are chill;  
sound of mosquitoes kana

--Kyoshi

Late at night  
the banquet's sake  
they sip,---mosquitoes kana

--Jakotsu

Early mosquitoes begin to appear even in the Springtime.

Spring mosquito;  
near the lamp light  
faintly green.  
--Kenyo

During the daylight mosquitoes tend to lurk in obscure  
corners.

When struck  
it spat out a daytime mosquito,  
wooden fish kana  
--Soseki

Mosquito protection:

Mosquito-net put up,  
that quiet kind of sound  
to be heard.  
--Toshi

Punk is also burnt to drive mosquitoes away.

On a great river,  
on a boat that awaits the tide  
mosquito smudge kana  
--Unzan

MOSQUITO LARVAE

Mosquito larvae, wrigglers, are found where there is  
stagnant water.

Leech swamp and  
mosquit<sup>o</sup>-larva stream too  
drought kana

--Yuyu

LIGHT DRAWN INSECTS

This term signifies those winged insects, especially moths,  
that on summer nights are attracted to a light and circle round  
and round it.

Light-drawn insects.  
When we go outside  
night people.

--Koyo

Mountain abode ya  
Like sparrows  
the light-drawn insects.

--Mon-jo

INSECT HAIKU 21.

A large moth comes,  
a disturbance in their motion,  
light insects kana

--Kyoshi

PAPER-FISH

The insect that gets in amongst papery things and eats through them is called the shimi, a name written with ideograms that signify "paper-fish". In Japan books, pictures, and so forth are examined periodically to see if paper-fish have gotten at them.

Paper-fish crawl ya  
an ancient kosode's  
flower mountain.

--Sangai

Into the deep pool's color  
a paper-fish has plunged deep,  
Edo-e kana

--Kana-jo



INSECT HAIKU 22.

Ancient picture ya  
Now paper-fish climb up  
Hakone Mountain.

--Soshun

The paper-fish hole  
'by a book-mark left there  
was halted.

--Seisho

Paper-fish marks,  
if they are slight enough,  
endearing.

--Getto

CICADAS

Cicada, the semi, an insect that in Summer, settled upon tree trunks and such things, chants through the heat of the day in a loud, continuous, vibrant, monotonous cry, that seems to intensify the heat.

Cicadas sing ya  
Down the tree oozes  
pine resin.  
--Sekichiku

A shabby  
funeral procession enters  
the cicada temple.  
--Sou

A few of them also may sing during the night.

Night cicada;  
having slipped upon some dew  
to the moon he cries.  
--Shodo

INSECT HAIKU 24.

Cicada are cool.  
Onions diced into  
cold soup.

--Seiran

First cicada,  
the way he just says chii.  
The pine tree's green.

--Koyo

His cry stilled,  
when he flies the cicada  
becomes visible.

--Shiki

The clothe-pole's  
cicada chased off,  
clothes dried.

--Ontei

INSECT HAIKU 25.

In large temple compounds the trees are fine and in the Summer there  
are many cicada.

Cicada voices.

The Great Tripitaka with its  
five thousand volumes.

--Hokusho

SINGING INSECTS

In the Autumn a great variety of singing insects are heard. Each species  
has its own song and the sounds are quite delightful.

What insect is that?

"koro-koro-jii"

under the porch.

--Torahiko

INSECT HAIKU 26.

Hagi insects;  
so much as to scatter the dew  
they sing keri

--Bakua

On Otsu-e  
devising a ku to write;  
insect abode.

--Kuson

By insect abode is meant a house so situated that in the Autumn there  
are many insects that sing about it.

A horse stable's  
twelve vacant stalls;  
insects cry.

--Koto

Insect whiskers;  
on the moonlit little window  
their faint shadow.

--Hotenkyo

INSECT HAIKU 27.

Insects cry ya  
When the moon comes to shine on it  
a valley's appearance.

--Shuu

In the sutra scroll  
where he was folded, corpse of  
one insect.

--Ryufu

These insects are often kept in cages to sing, in the autumn.

The caged insects  
all have started to sing;  
fine rain kana

--Shiki

The insect cage's  
door stands wide open,  
none of them there.

--Musetsu

INSECT HAIKU 28.

Insect-sellers ya  
Their voices are raucous,  
market-place moon.

--Shiki

The grave-custodian's  
child; to sell insects he has  
gone to the market.

--Torahiko

But these insects can well be heard singing everywhere in early Autumn.

An outdoor-bath  
neighbor too, insects too,  
travel sleep kana

--Rakuto

To listen to insects.  
Shiki's tomb somewhere  
in these mountains.

--Meisetsu

There follow a number of particular sorts of singing insects.

INSECT HAIKU 29.

KIRIGIRISU

This insect makes a pleasant chirping sound something like kirigiri-kirigiri.

Even an inkstone's rub  
moves the little house I have now.

Kirigirisu.

--Shirei

Until light faded,  
these two and only these two,  
kirigirisu.

--Eiki

When night was far on  
rice husk sound ya

Kirigirisu.

--Shiki



INSECT HAIKU 30.

SUZU MUSHI

This insect has a note like the tinkling of a little bell of  
silver.

When the suzu mushi  
suddenly stopped, the koto's  
wrong note kana

--Shohin

This insect's  
each time, four times  
tinkle the bell.

--Bosui

INSECT HAIKU 31.

HOSHI SEMI

This insect, hoshi, Buddhist monk cicada, is also called tsuku-boshi,  
or tsuku-tsuku-boshi, its cry being such.

Tsukuboshi;  
as if there were no tomorrow  
they sing keri

--Shiki

Broom-tree  
being cut; tsuku-tsuku  
boshi kana

--Isson

Among the cockscombs  
there are days of heat.  
Hoshi-semi.

--Fuson

This alludes to the earlier semi of the Summer.

INSECT HAIKU 32.

HIGURASHI

The name of this insect signifies, "the day darkens", as it begins to sing towards the latter part of the day in early Autumn.

Higurashi ya  
Along the desk-side  
paper and inkstone.

--Kyomei

With the higurashi  
of return to home  
we began to think.

--Kyodo

Higurashi ya  
By cedar overgrown  
a road-marker.

--Kanko

INSECT HAIKU 33.

DRAGONFLIES

Dragonflies come with the Autumn, of which they seem to be an essential part.

On the engawa dries  
a large black umbrella ya  
Red dragonflies.

--Torahiko

The lordliness of the dragonfly's behaviour.

Dragonflies ya  
In waraji to stroll  
the pleasure district.

--Seisensui

The eyes of the dragonfly are especially large.

For the dragonfly's  
eyeball too much, the horse's  
body kana

--Kyokuto

The dragonfly is able to vibrate its wings in such a way as to stand  
motionless in mid-air.

INSECT HAIKU 34.

In mid-sky  
stock-still in flight  
dragonfly kana  
--Ko-o

Hanging bridge,  
below it emptiness of space,  
dragonflies kana  
--Torahiko

Where pictured lacquer  
is set to dry, come  
dragonflies kana  
--Mokumu

Dragonfly ya  
Hidden among orchids can be seen  
Fuji's pure white.  
--Jushi

Children are fond of hunting the dragonfly.

The pursuing ~~child~~  
child he turns to look back at  
dragonfly kana  
--Sonka

INSECT HAIKU 35.

Into a vast sky  
on until he disappears  
dragonfly kana

--Soshun

Some dragonflies continue until late in the Autumn.

Dragonflies also  
along with leaves on trees  
have disappeared.

--Kyoshi

The demon dragonfly,  
where all color is finished  
he flies keri

--Sekitei

The demon dragonfly is a particular species of dragonfly.

On a hill of grass  
to make a target-place ya  
Red dragonflies.

--Kasen

On horseback,  
jingling some change.  
Dragonflies kana

--Gogetsu

INSECT HAIKU 36.

MANTIS

The praying-mantis is a predatory insect with a large grasping claw which it holds up before it something in the manner of a battle-axe.

Grass thicket ya  
A mantis on the butterfly  
has seized.

--Kyoshi

A mantis;  
battle-axe held up in front  
the way he steps kana

--Ontei

The mantis appears in Autumn and turns up in quite varied places.

The demon-tile  
is chipped ya  
Mantis there.

--Seisei

INSECT HAIKU 37.

Demon-tile means a tile at the end of a roof. These are made in various forms, sometimes a demon's face.

Mantis ya  
Swept out, in the dust  
he rights himself.

--Bishōshi

The mantis  
grows angry, the kitten  
grows glad.

--Hogai

As the mantis'  
back becomes bent, Autumn  
gets old keri

--Getsufuro



INSECT HAIKU 38.

Insects may show up far out of season, in the winter, and some of these are treated in the haiku.

WINTER FLY

Forlornness ya  
On the incense-burner sets  
a winter fly.

--Suiha

Winter fly;  
even, give case, he is pursued,  
he still crawls.

--Getsuden

A winter fly  
on the Buddha's face  
he walks keri

--Goun

The eboshi maker  
holds up an eboshi ya  
Winter fly.

--Kangyo

The eboshi just finished he holds up to examine whether it is in proper proportion and balance, etc.

INSECT HAIKU 39.

A Winter fly;  
with the ruler his legs  
held down keri

--Zenjido

WINTER HORNET

Winter hornet  
no place to die  
he walks around keri

--Kijo

"Winter hornet,"  
said in contempt. His needle's  
longness kana

--Koji

The winter hornet  
as he clasps a fallen leaf  
gets angry keri

--Issan

INSECT HAIKU 40.

MINO MUSHI

The mino mushi builds himself a shelter out of bits of dried leaves and grass, that rather resembles a mino, or crude straw rain-cloak, and in this he usually stays.

Neither one knows it;  
two mino mushi  
in a row keri  
--Gyonojo

The mino mushi's  
head peeps out a little;  
dried leaves kana  
--Futo

INSECT HAIKU 41.

TAMA MUSHI

Tama mushi, the jewel insect, has a carapace that is irridescent and  
glitters like a jewel.

A tama mushi's  
glitter left behind him,  
flown away keri  
--Kyoshi

The tama mushi's  
flight shimmered  
through the trees kana  
--Kasa

ANTS

Ant-hills.  
When the axe-handle crumbles  
three thousand years.  
--Getto

GLOSSARY

andon---A house-lamp. The wooden stand upholds a papered framework within which a dish of oil with wicks is set.

axe-handle---This appears to refer to an ancient Taoist story. A woodcutter in the deep mountains found two aged men occupied in playing the board game Go. He paused to watch for a few minutes while they made a couple of moves, when suddenly the axe he was leaning on gave way beneath him. Its wooden handle had crumbled into dust with the passage of ages.

courtesan-plant---A handsome flowering plant that blossoms in the Summer. It is three or four feet high with purple or white flowers.

eboshi---A formal sort of hat worn for court attendance and such ceremonial occasions.

Edo-e---A Japanese print. That is a print made by an artist of the Tokugawa school of painting called Ukiyo-e

engawa---The narrow verandah that runs along a Japanese house.

E-no-Shima---A small island just a few hundred feet off the coast not far from Tokyo. It is a shrine to Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning and Beauty, who is called in Japanese, Benten.

INSECT HAIKU 43.

fuji---The wisteria vine.

Fuji---The great Japanese mountain.

Maikai-do---A pavillion, or one-roomed hall meant for meetings to write haiku and renga.

Hakone Mountain---A mountain below Edo where the old roads crossed over on their way to the capital, Kyoto.

inkstone---The stone on which the inkstick is rubbed to make fresh ink.

kasa---A broad wicker-work head-covering.

kosode---The form of Tokugawa outer garment, or kimono, with a moderately short hanging sleeve.

koto---A thirteen-stringed musical instrument.

ku---A haiku.

Otsu-e---A crude sort of hand-colored picture, made by a kind of stenciling process in the town of Otsu during Tokugawa times.

outdoor-bath---gyosui; a cool bath taken out of doors in a corner of the garden in late afternoons of the Summer.

INSECT HAIKU 44.

sake---Japanese rice wine.

shoji---Paper walls; those that separate the room from the outdoors.

Suma---A place on the Inland Sea south of Osaka; the bay there is the Bay of Suma.

tatami---Thin mat woven of straw; universally the covering for the floor in a Japanese house.

Torin-ji---The name of a certain Buddhist temple compound, the Peach Grove Temple.

Tripitaka---The canonical collection of Buddhist sutras and texts.

waist-mino---A mino, or straw-cloak, when tied round the waist instead of put about the shoulders.

waraji---Japanese straw sandals, which are tied on with straw thongs.

wooden-fish---A wooden gong in the shape of a fish used at Buddhist temples.

yamabuki---The kerria Japonica, a kind of yellow rose that grows by the banks of streams and ponds.

# DRAGONFLIES

Sabishisa-wo  
tonbo tobu-nari  
haka-no ue

The forlornness --  
dragonflies fly in it,  
above the graves.

Tonbo ya  
mi-wo-mo kogasa-zu  
naki-mo se-zu

The dragonfly ya  
He neither burns his body  
nor does he sing.

Tonbo-no  
kao-wo ookata  
medama kana

The dragonfly's  
face--mostly  
eyeballs kana

Koe-naku -wo  
tonboo munen-ni  
miyuru kana

You never speak  
dragonfly, you are vexed  
it would seem kana

Ono-ga mi-ni  
aki-wo someyuku  
tonbo kana

In his own body  
is soaked the dye of Autumn,  
dragonfly kana

ine-no ho-no  
tonboo tomari  
tare-ni keri

An ear of rice  
that the dragonfly settles on  
bends low keri

Nagare-yuku  
awa-ni yume miru  
tonbo kana

In the flow of  
the foam he sees a dream,  
dragonfly kana

Tsuri-beta-no  
sao-ni kite neru  
tonboo kana

The unskillful angler's  
pole he comes to sleep on,  
dragonfly kana

Semi-ni make-nu  
hagoromo mochi-shi  
tonboo kana

Not less than the cicada  
the feather garment it has,  
the dragonfly kana

Tachi-kaeru  
tonboo tomaru  
tsubute kana

Started up,  
the dragonfly returns  
to the pebble kana



Tonboo ya  
hana- no -ni-mo me-wa  
hozorase-zu

The dragonfly ya  
Even in the flowery meadow his eyes  
don't squint.

Tonboo ya  
hana-naki kui-ni  
sumi-narai

Dragonfly ya  
The flowerless stake  
he's used to dwelling on.

#### CICADAS

Semi-no koe  
kigi-ni ugoi-te  
kaze-mo nashi

Cicada voices  
on tree upon tree are in motion,  
not a breath of wind.

Morogoe-ni  
yama ya ugokasu  
kigi-no semi

With all their voices together  
they shake the mountain!  
the trees' cicadas.

Koe nagaki  
semi-wa mijikaki  
inochi kana

The long-voiced  
cicada is short-  
lived kana

Semi-no tatsu  
ato suzushisa yo  
matsu-no koe

The cicadas leave,  
and then what coolness!  
Pine-tree voices.

Semi-wo kike  
ichi-nichi nai-te  
yoru-no tsuyu

Listen to the cicada,  
All day long he cries  
for the dew of night.

Yuu tsuyu-no  
kuchi-ni iru-made  
naku semi ka

Until the evening dew  
lands in his mouth  
will the cicada sing?

Koe-ni mina  
naki-shimoo-te ya  
semi-no kara

Into voice completely  
sung away ya  
Cicada shell.

Semi atsushi  
matsu kiraba-ya-to  
omou-made

Cicadas add to the heat  
till: "shall I cut that pinetree down?"  
I begin to think.

Ware hitori  
atsui yoo nari  
semi-no koe

Only I alone  
seem to be hot---  
cicada voices.

Ushiro-kara  
tsukamu yoo nari  
semi-no koe

From behind  
being grabbed is how it sounds,  
the cicada's voice.

Yama-no kami-no  
mimi-ni yamai ka  
semi-no koe

The God of the Mountain's  
pain-in-the-ear, is it not?  
cicada voices.

Mizu kare-te  
semi-wo fudan-no  
taki-no koe

The water dried up,  
the cicadas are everyday  
the waterfall's voice.

Soko-no nai  
atsusa ya kumo-ni  
semi-no koe

Bottomless--  
the heat ya in the clouds  
cicada voices.

Tonari-kara  
kono ki nikumu ya  
semi-no koe

By my neighbour  
this tree is detested ya  
Voice of the cicada.

#### FIREFLIES

Kuraki-yori  
kuraki hito yobu  
hotaru kana

Out of the blackness  
black people call--  
fireflies kana

Oware-te wa  
tsuki-ni kakururu  
hotaru kana

When chased  
they hide in the moonlight,  
fireflies kana

yo-no fukuru  
hodo ooki naru  
hotaru kana

As night deepens,  
to the same extent grow bigger  
the fireflies kana

Akenure-ba  
kusa-nomi zo  
hotaru kago

When dawn comes  
only grass in  
the firefly cage.

Yo-ga ake-te  
mushi-ni nari-taru  
hotaru kana

As night departs  
they turn into just insects,  
fireflies kana

Hiru mire-ba  
kubi-suji akaki  
hotaru kana (Basho)

Seen by daylight  
the neck line is red,  
firefly kana

Osoroshi-no  
te-ni suki-tooru  
hotaru kana

The fearfulness of  
The way it shines through the hand,  
firefly kana

Sabishisa ya  
isshaku kie-te  
yuku hotaru

The strangeness ya  
For one foot it fades  
and goes, the firefly.

Sode-e ki-te  
yohan-no hotaru  
sabishi kana

Come to the sleeve,  
a midnight firefly,  
strange kana

Sugitaru-wa  
me-ni mono sugoshi  
tobu hotaru

One who went too far--  
to his eyes a fearsome sight,  
flitting of fireflies.

#### BUTTERFLIES

Choo ton-de  
kaze naki hi-to-mo  
mie-zari-ki

Butterflies are flying;  
though a windless day  
it doesn't appear so.

Choo-wa mina  
ju-shichi-hachi-no  
sugata kana

Butterflies--they all  
are 17 or 18 by the  
look of them kana

Choo tobu ya  
kono yo-ni nozomi  
nai yoo-ni (Issa)

Butterflies fly ya  
As if in this world things to wish for  
did not exist.

Choo tobu ya  
kono yo-ni urami  
naki yoo-ni

The butterfly flits ya  
As if in this world begrudgers  
did not exist.

Mutsumashi ya  
umare-kawara-ba  
no-be-no choo (Issa)

Happy together ya  
When we are reborn may it be  
as butterflies in the meadow.

Ki-te-wa mau  
futari shizuka-no  
kochoo kana

When they come they dance  
but when they have met they are quiet,  
the butterflies.kana

Choo-wa ou  
kokoro mochitashi  
itsumademo

As for butterflies, to chase!  
Would that we might keep that feeling  
forever and ever.

Oki yo oki yo  
waga tomo ni sen  
neru kochoo (Basho)

Wake up, wake up,  
and be my comrade,  
sleeping butterfly.

#### FROGS

Te-wo tsui-te  
uta mooshi-ageru  
kawasu kana (Sookan)

Hands set on the ground  
it delivers up its poem,  
frog kana

Hito-aze-wa  
shibashi naki-yamu  
kawazu kana (Kyorai)

At one ricefield ridge  
for a moment they stop singing,  
frogs kana

Nawashiro-no  
shikishi-ni asobu  
kawazu kana (Buson)

The rice-seedling-bed  
poem cards play  
frogs kana

Yuu-Fuji-no  
shiri-wo narabe-te  
naku kawazu (Issa)

With dusk Fuji  
its rump lined up,  
singing frog.

Ama-gumo-ni  
hara-no fukururu  
kawazu kana (Chiyojo)

Under rain clouds  
its belly swells out,  
frog kana

Kawazu naku ta-no mizu ugoku tsukiyo kana	(Ranko)	Frogs sing, the ricefield water moves, moon night kana
I-no uchi ya yamabuki shira-de naku kawazu	(Yuuya)	Inside the well ya The kerria unknown to it, sings the frog.
Tsuchikure-ni ugoku mono mina kawazu kana	(Ryoota)	On the mud clod things that move, all frogs kana
Morogoe ya uki-mo-ni matou mura-kawazu	(Taigi)	All their voices ya In floating duckweed twine round a hoard of frogs.

#### ANTS

Yukue naki ari-no sumai ya go-gatsu ame		else No where/for them to go, the dwelling places of ants ya Fifth Month rains.
Ari-no michi kumo-no mine-yori tsuzuki-ken	(Issa)	The ant's' road from the cloud mountain it went on.

#### SNAILS

Katatsumuri ochi-keri mizu-ni uki-mo suru	(Hakuo)	The snail fell keri In the water it floats even.
Shira-tsuyu ya tsuno-ni me-wo motsu katatsumuri	(Ransetsu)	White dew ya On the horns it gets eyes, the snail
Katatsumuri nani omou tsuno-no naga-mijika	(Buson)	The snail: what's it thinking, the horns' long and short.