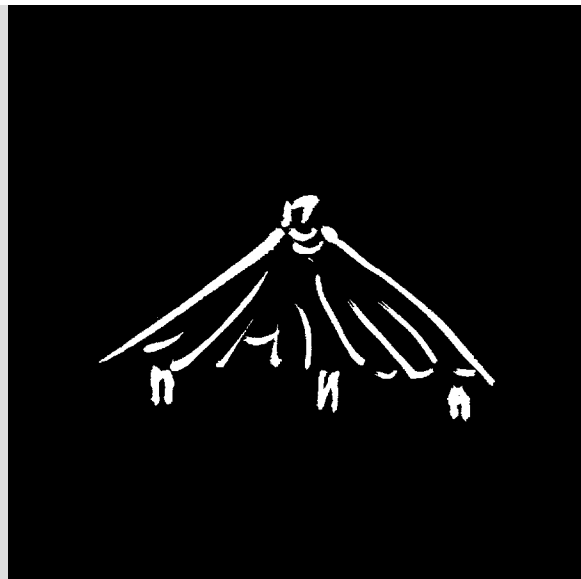

Santoka :: *Grass and Tree Cairn*



translations :: **Hiroaki Sato**

illustrations :: **Stephen Addiss**





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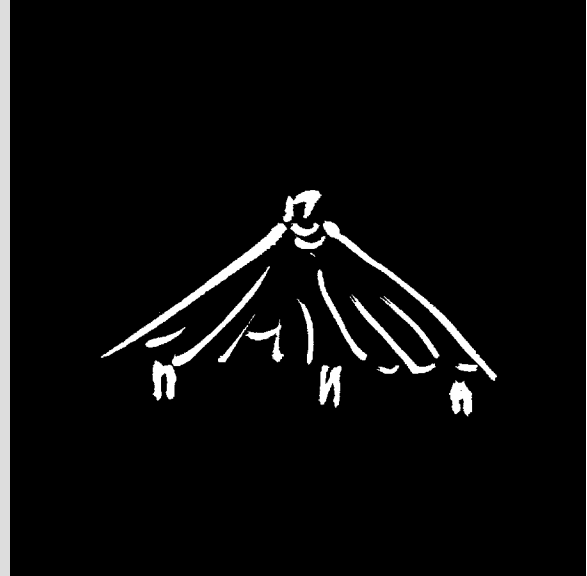
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Santoka :: *Grass and Tree Cairn*



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Taneda Santoka (1882-1940)

was born a son of a large landowner in Yamaguchi and named Shoichi; mother committed suicide when he was ten; dropped out of Waseda University, Tokyo, after a nervous breakdown; started a *sake* brewery at 25; married at 27; acquired the habit of drinking heavily at 28; first haiku appeared in Ogiwara Seisensui's non-traditional haiku magazine *Soun* (Cumulus) at age 31; moved to Kumamoto with family and started a secondhand bookstore when 34; legally divorced at 38; while in Tokyo, was arrested and jailed in the aftermath of the Great Kanto Earthquake, in 1923 (police used the quake as a pretext for rounding up and killing many Socialists); back in Kumamoto, taken to a Zen temple of the Soto sect as a result of drunken behavior at 42; ordained a Zen monk at 43; for the rest of his life was mostly on the road as a mendicant monk (in practical terms, a beggar), traveling throughout Japan; at 53, attempted suicide; his book of haiku *Somokuto* (Grass and Tree Cairn)—an assemblage of earlier chapbooks—was published several months before he died of a heart attack while asleep drunk; the book's dedication was “to my mother / who hastened to her death when young”; Santoka, the penname he began to use when he translated Turgenev, means “mountaintop fire”.

To Master Cor

Acknowledgements

The section on Ogiwara Seisensui in the introduction originally appeared in *Tundra*, and some of the translations of Santoka's haiku in *Cicada* many, many years ago.

Introduction:

Santoka, Seisensui, and Non-traditional Haiku

The man known as Santoka was born Taneda Shoichi, in 1882, a son of a landowner with large holdings in Yamaguchi, at the southwestern tip of Japan's main island, Honshu. When he was ten years old, his mother, Fusa, committed suicide by throwing herself into a well. The sight of her corpse pulled out of the well apparently reverberated throughout his life.

While studying literature at Waseda University, Tokyo, he had a nervous breakdown and dropped out. Back in Yamaguchi, he started a sake brewery at 25 and married Sato Sakino at 27. A son, Takeshi, was born the following year. About that time, he acquired the habit of drinking heavily, recklessly.

When he was 34, the Taneda family went bankrupt, and he moved to Kumamoto, in the middle of the southern island of Kyushu, with his wife and son, and started a secondhand bookstore. In 1918, when he was 36, his younger brother committed suicide by hanging himself in the woods. The following year he went to Tokyo, alone, and worked part-time at a cement laboratory. He was then employed at a library for a while, then as a city clerk. At 38, he was legally divorced. Sakino took custody of their

son and the book business.

In 1923, in the aftermath of the Great Kanto Earthquake, he was arrested as a Socialist suspect and jailed. (Police used the disaster, in which 100,000 people perished, as a pretext for rounding up and killing many Socialists, while mobs killed a great number of Koreans). Released, he went back to Kumamoto. In 1924, while drunk, he brought a streetcar to a screeching halt, and was arrested. The incident led him to a Zen temple of the Soto sect, which seeks enlightenment in carrying out daily chores. The following year he was ordained a Zen monk.

For the rest of his life he was mostly on the road as a mendicant monk—in practical terms, a beggar—traveling throughout Japan, in an old-fashioned priestly getup: a black outer robe, a large hat, a staff, and an alms bowl.

When he was 53, he attempted suicide.

In April 1940, he assembled seven haiku chapbooks in a single volume and published it under the title of *Somokuto* (Grass and Tree Cairn). He dedicated it “to my mother / who hastened to her death when young”. He then hit the road again, to hand out the book to his friends. One October night, after a haiku meeting, he went to bed, drunk, and, while asleep, died of a heart attack. He was 58.

It is said that one of his two goals was *korori oujou*, “dropping dead.” He fulfilled that goal.

Taneda Shoichi acquired the nom de plume Santoka in 1911, when he joined the local literary magazine *Seinen* (Youth) and started publishing pieces such as a translation of a passage from Turgenev's *Smoke*. Character by character, the name means "mountain-head-fire"¹. That year he also became a member of the local haiku group *Yayoi Ginsha*, March Haiku Society (later *Mukudori Kukai*, Starling Haiku Meeting), and for the haiku he employed a different nom de plume, *Denji-ko*, Lord Mud-Snail. Before long, he was using Santoka almost exclusively.

Santoka's haiku surviving from that period largely conform to the traditional requirements of *yuuki teikei*: the inclusion of a seasonal indicator and the syllabic pattern of 5-7-5. Among them:

Wagimoko no hada namamekashi natsu no cho
My beloved's skin sensuous a summer butterfly

We also find hypersyllabic pieces, such as:

Kafé ni dekanan o ronzu natsu no chou toberi
In a café we debate decadence a summer butterfly flits

which may be scanned as 5-8-8 if the number of syllables of the word *kafé*, following the original orthography, is pegged at four.

Even so, Santoka's conversion to non-traditional haiku, when it came, was swift. Ogiwara Seisensui (1884-1976), one leader of the movement to reject traditional approaches, accepted the first of his haiku in the March 1913 issue of his magazine *Soun* (Cumulus). From then on, Santoka never looked back. For a while from the latter half of the 1920s, his was among the most attractive voices in the pages of *Soun*.

Santoka's conversion, if it was that, has yet to be fully traced, as far as I know, except for the suggestion that the advocacy for freedom in Japanese poetry as a whole—freedom from syllabic patterns and classical language—had begun as early as 1907. Nonetheless it may help to look at Seisensui and his non-traditional haiku.

x



Seisensui—a nom de plume meaning “well water”—started writing haiku as an elementary schoolboy and was thoroughly versed in traditional haiku by the time he joined the *Shin-Keikou Haiku Undo*, New Trend Haiku Movement, while studying German at the Imperial University of Tokyo. The movement, which apparently began

with an article that Ousuga Otsuji (1881-1920) wrote, in 1908, to emphasize the importance of suggestiveness in haiku, lost whatever cohesion it may have had with the advocacy, by one wing of the loose and diverse group, of *jiyuritsu* (free rhythm) or the abandonment of the 5-7-5 syllabic pattern in the early 1910s.

At any rate, it was originally for this movement that in 1911 Seisensui, with the support of Kawahigashi Hekigodo (1873-1937), founded *Soun*. But in a few years the two men parted company over *jiyuritsu*, leaving Seisensui as the magazine's sole editor.² Seisensui soon renounced the role of seasonal indicators as well, and would go on to publish the two non-traditional haiku poets who would enjoy an immense posthumous popularity from the 1960s onward. One is Ozaki Hosai (1885-1926)³ and the other, Santoka. The magazine survives to this day.

To see Sensensui's approach to haiku, we might begin with some of his first two-line haiku, which he published in 1914:

Chikara ippai ni naku ko to
naku niwatori to no asa

The child crying with all his might
and the rooster crowing this morning

*Wazukano hana ga chirinureba
ume wa soushin ni meguminu*

The few blossoms having scattered
the plum has budded all over its body

Seisensui explained that he wrote these bilinear haiku under the influence of Goethe's epigrams and Schiller's couplets. He also believed, at least at the time, that a haiku was a poem conceived with a single caesura in it and that therefore breaking it into two lines was justifiable. But he put them all in one line when he republished them in a book—one of the notable developments from the standpoint of haiku lineation. (For those interested in syllabic count, the first piece consists of 12 / 10 and the second one of 12 / 12).

xii

The following is a small sampling of his haiku. The figure at the end of each piece shows the number of syllables.

Shosai o idete hon o te ni tsutsumi nagashi (18)
Out of the study a book in hand the embankment is long

Aozora ni tobitaki fuusen o shikato motsu sena no ko yo (24)
Clutching a balloon that wants to fly into the blue sky child on my back

Tombo suisui yuyake nagaru mizu nagaru (19)
Dragonflies glide glide evening glow flows water flows

Runin-ra no haka mugi tsuku usu no hibiku tokoro (20)
Exiles' graves where wheat-pounding mortars resound

Fune chikazukeri takaiwa no u-ra no uraraka ya (20)
The boat approaches a tall rock with cormorants in the balmy sun

Otoko to onna ana samuzamuto idakiau mono ka (22)
A man and a woman ah how coldly they hold each other

Yunomi hisashiku kowasazuni mochi yonjuu to naru (21)
Having had a teacup unbroken for a long time I turn forty

The Great Earthquake [1923] Strikes: Two Pieces

Sora ni utsuru hi no naka yori futon oute kuru (20)

Out of the fire reflected in the sky he comes carrying futon on his back

Goka fuketsutu kakeshi tsuki o hakeri (16)

In roaring fire the night deepens spits out a chipped moon

Mother Dies: Two Pieces

xiv

Waga kao yosete kore zo imawa no haha no kao (19)

My face up close this facing death mother's face

Kon'ya wa haha to narande neru kotokireshi hana to (21)

Tonight I sleep side by side with mother mother whose life ended

Yuzora e suto hosoi michi ga aru (16)

Into the evening sky streaks a narrow road

Tsuki ga akarukute kaeru (11)
The moon bright I go home

Amma fue fuite tori fue fuite kaeriyuku hiza naka (25)
A masseur blowing his whistle passes by blowing his whistle goes away my lap

Asa no suzume no, toyama niwa yuki no kiteiru koe (22)
Morning sparrows, their voices say the snow's arrived in the distant mountain

This last uses punctuation, a single comma in this instance. Seisensui's use of punctuation was rare, however. The same was true of Santoka. Normally, haiku writers do not use punctuation.

Seisensui became one of a handful of modern haiku writers who took Zen seriously. In the process, his German idealism gradually coalesced into what he called *shinkyō shugi*, “state-of-mind-ism”, a philosophy that emphasized the triad of nature, self, and freedom. He explained his *jiyuritsu* haiku on the basis of that notion. His haiku tended to be long later in his life, so that one editor, making a selection, declared he had decided to ignore long pieces.

Seisensui was prolific and is believed to have turned out more than 300 books in his lifetime—a great many probably self-financed. Unlike Santoka, who was close to being a pauper during his latter years, Seisensui remained financially comfortable for much of his life.

The English poet James Kirkup wrote somewhere that W. H. Auden, apparently referring to poetic forms, observed: “What’s the use of having rules if you don’t observe them? You lose the whole fun of the thing”. The majority of Japanese haiku writers evidently take the same stance about the poetic form of their choice, and very strongly at that. Their conviction sometimes rears its authoritarian head, as it did not long ago—only this time in a way that might have provoked constitutional lawsuits in the United States: Japan’s largest association of traditional haiku writers, the Haijin Kyoukai, asked publishers not to cite pieces by non-traditional haiku writers, no doubt Hosai and Santoka among them, in the school textbooks they print.

With the short poetic form of haiku, the rejection of the formulaic constraints may mean the loss of much of the magic, as some have argued. But it can also do wonders when in complete freedom it creates the sense of natural inevitability—as Hosai did, for example, when he wrote:

Seki o shite mo hitori

I cough and am still alone

The task for the translator is to recreate that sense inevitability. And it can be as treacherous as suggesting the existence of three syllabic units in translating a traditional, 5-7-5-syllable haiku without resorting to a triplet format. As I keep pointing out, the majority of Japanese haiku writers regard the haiku as a one-line poem, although this is not to suggest, as should be clear from my reference to the Auden remark, that the standard non-Japanese view of the haiku as a tercet is wrong. Let us look at some of the obstacles.

The first piece translated in this selection reads:

Matsukaze ni akekure no kane tsuite

In pine winds at dawn at dusk striking the bell

The original language has nothing unusual about it, and the piece reads like a casual utterance, except that it's unfinished so you're left wondering, "Yes? and then?"

Once you try to translate it, though, you find that there is no exact expression in English that corresponds to *akekure*, a compound noun, which is made of the “break” part of “daybreak” and “darkening” that refers specifically to the darkening of the day after sunset. *Akekure* also suggests a daily routine. And it is the routine part of the meaning of the word that goes on to modify, with the somewhat compressed use of the possessive *no*, “of”, what follows: *kane*, “bell”, and the act of striking or ringing it.

(No, the bell here is not of the kind that is suggested by Aesop in “Who shall bell the cat?” I remember to note this because Ouyama Sumita, Santoka’s friend and post-humous editor, snorted with indignation when he saw my initial translation when it appeared in *Cicada*: “In pine-wind days begin and end, and ringing the bell”. He said no non-Japanese would imagine a massive Japanese temple bell from my “bell”.)

xviii

The following piece has a stream-of-consciousness kind of compressed flow.

Shimoyo no nedoko ga dokoka ni arou

The frosty night’s bed must be somewhere

Santoka first thinks of *shimoyo*, “frosty night”, then of *nedoko*, “bed”, though the word has a somewhat greater sense of comfiness than the English word I’ve chosen. Then the thought slips into an attempt to convince himself that it’s late and frost has

already formed, yes, but there has to be a bed for him somewhere. The utterance begins with a suggestion of doubt and ends with willed hope.

Ushiro sugata no shigurete yukuka

Your back in winter shower you go I see

This, consisting of 7-7 syllables and one of Santoka's signature haiku, begins with a phrase common in Japanese but for which I can't think of any simple equivalent in English: *ushiro sugata*, the appearance of someone walking away from you, his back turned to you. This, along with the employment of an ambiguous particle (or conjunction or preposition), followed by what may or may not be a compound verb, creates an utterance which can be paraphrased but may not be possible to pull off in a translation as compressed as the original.

The particle *no*, to be grammatical, may be the specifier of the sentence subject, which is *ushiro sugata*, but it also has the possessive sense, with the suggestion of modifying the word *shigure*, which is used here as a verb. *Shigure*, as a seasonal indicator, refers to a brief, light shower that harbingers the onset of winter. Then, this word, since it is a verb, seems to go on to form a semi-compound verb with *yuku*, suggesting the continuation of the wintry shower that has just started. But *yuku* also means "go",

and in that sense it describes the movement of the person whose back is seen as he goes away. The utterance ends with *ka*, which gives the sense of “Ah, so, you are doing that, I see”.

In *A History of Haiku*, Vol. Two (The Hokuseido Press, 1964), p. 174, R. H. Blyth renders this:

My back view as I go,
Wetted with the winter rain?

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Here's John Stevens, in *Mountain Tasting: Zen Haiku by Santoka Taneda* (John Weatherhill, 1980), p. 39:

From the back,
Walking away soaking wet?

To me, both fail to give the impression that Santoka is describing himself as seen by a third party. In particular, Stevens' is a puzzler.

Aki mo owari no hae to nari haiaruku
Autumn's end-turned-fly crawls about

In this piece, the wording has the effect of a wave rolling forward, swirling up everything on its way. Autumn, too, is ending, Santoka notes. Then his attention is captured by a fly. The wording so far suggests a fly that has survived to the end of autumn. But then the poet is moved to note that the seasonal passage has congealed into the fly, which, look, is crawling about, barely alive. The transition is achieved by simple connectives, no and to. So late autumn itself is metamorphosed into the piteous movement of a fly. I can only hope that my translation doesn't sound pidgin.

There are any number of other treacherous currents, but a translator, given a chance to explicate, tends to go berserk, so I had better stop. And regardless of such currents, Santoka's best pieces fulfill the other of his two goals: to write haiku true to himself.



Santoka was an inveterate scribbler. Though he is known to have burned some of his writings and lost some, at least once by leaving them in an eatery, his surviving works required seven sizable volumes when an attempt was made, in the first half of the 1970s, to assemble his “complete works”: *Teihon: Santoka Zenshu*, published by Shun’yodo, in 1976. Five of the volumes are devoted to his diaries, one to his letters and such, and one to his haiku. One estimate puts the number of haiku he wrote at 15,000. But when he compiled *Somokuto*, really the only full-length book he published while alive, he selected a mere 701 pieces, all taken from his mature period. He was a rigorous editor of his own works.

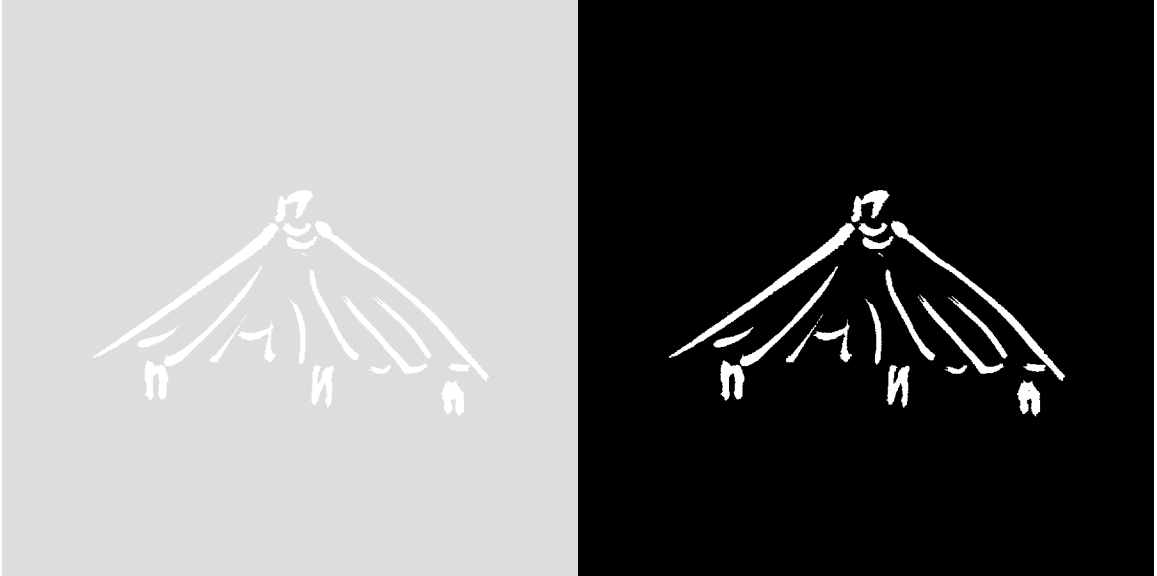
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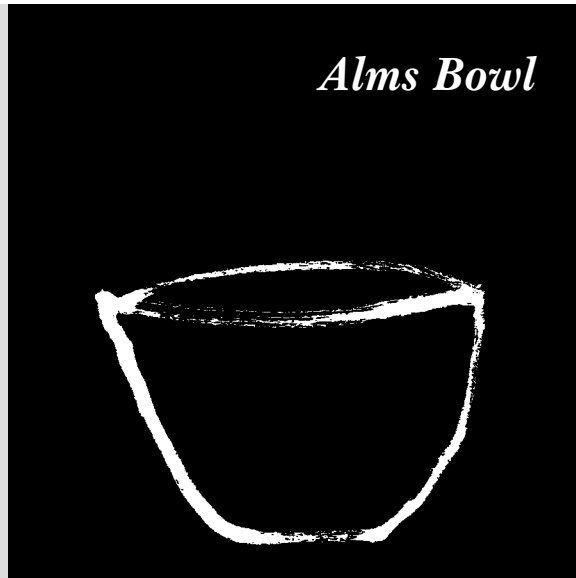
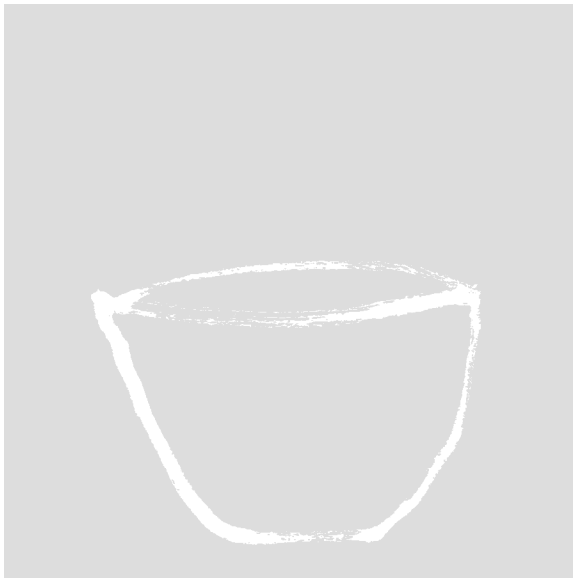
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Because of the decision not to use the macron, some of the vowels that require the diacritical mark are “spelled out”, but the system employed, such as it is, is not uniform.

Santoka :: *Grass and Tree Cairn*





In February 1925 I finally entered the Buddhishood and became the keeper of the Ajitori Kwannon Hall in a rural place in Higo. . . .

In pine winds at dawn and dusk striking the bell

Matsukaze ni akekure no kane tsuite

4

In April 1926, burdened with unsolvable illusions, I set out on a journey of alms-begging and drifting.

I go in I go in still the blue mountains

Wakeitte mo wakeitte mo aoi yama⁴

Soaking wet this a road-marker stone

Shitodo ni nurete kore wa michishirube no ishi

Burning heaven on my head I beg I walk
Enten o itadaite koi aruku

In response to Hosai's haiku⁵

A crow caws and I too am alone
Karasu naite watashi mo hitori

5

“Clarifying life and clarifying death is the Buddhist's greatest karma.”

In the midst of life and death the snow falls ceaselessly
Seishi no naka no yuki furishikiru

In 1927 and 1928 I drifted aimlessly, along the San'yo Road, along the San'in Road, and in Shikoku and Kyushu.

Alone being eaten up by mosquitoes

Hitori de ka ni kuwareteiru

Letting the dragonfly stay on my hat I walk on

Kasa ni tombo o tomarasete aruku

6

The road being straight lonesome

Massuguna michi de samishii

Wordlessly I put on today's straw sandals

Damatte kyo no zori haku

Fluttering drunk leaves scatter

Horohoro youte ki no ha chiru

Winter shower I'm still not dead
Shigururu ya shinanaideiru

The shadow in the water I am a traveler
Mizu ni kage aru tabibito de aru

The snow falls falls as I watch the snow
Yuki ga furu furu yuki miteoreba

I've received enough to eat the rain starts
Taberu dake wa itadaita ame to nari

It having survived I'm scratching my body
Ikinokotta karada o kaiteiru

In 1929 and 1930, again I had no choice but to continue walking. I wandered to this and that place in the Kyushu region.

The mountain I'll never see again grows distant
Mata miru koto mo nai yama ga touzakaru

A shrike calls there's no place to dump my body
Moza naite mi no sute dokoro nashi

8

Hopeless I keep walking
Dou shiyou mo nai watashi ga aruiteiru

The Daikan Peak

I go in and the sound of water
Wakeireba mizu no oto

I slip and fall the mountain hushed
Subette koronde yama ga hissori

Maimai's Residence

Ceaselessly dropping these large leaves
Shikirini ochiru ookii ha kana

Completely withered they are now beans
Sukkari karete mame to natteiru

On my tired leg a dragonfly has lighted
Tsukareta ashi e tomo to matta

A withered mountain with enough water to drink
Kareyama nomu hodo no mizu wa arite

My monk's robe so torn grass seeds
Houi konnani yaburete kusa no mi

That cloud dropped the rain I'm getting wet in
Ano kumo ga otoshita ame ni nureteiru

Autumn's come I sit in the weeds
Aki to natta zassou ni suwaru

Such delicious water overflowing
Konnani umai mizu ga afureteiru

With the sound of water I've come down to a village
Mizuoto to issho ni sato e oritekita

Absolutely no cloud I take off my hat
Mattaku kumo ga nai kasa o nugi

Up to the graves in rows the waves rolling in
Haka ga narande soko made nami ga oshiyosete

Drunk I'd been asleep with the crickets
Youite kourogi to neteita

The sound of the rain dripping has also grown old
Amadare no oto mo toshitotta

Ryokuhei's Residence

Holding out its branches a winter tree
Eda o sashinobeteiru fuyuki

No more houses to beg at above the mountain clouds
Mono kou ie mo nakunari yama ni wa kumo

12

Or I stop begging and am looking at the mountain⁶
Aruwa kou koto o yamete yama o miteiru

Reflections

Even my hat has started to leak I see
Kasa mo moridashita ka

This frosty night's bed must be somewhere
Shimoyo no nedoko ga dokoka ni aro

In 1931 I made efforts to settle down in Kumamoto but couldn't no matter how I tried. Once again I could only travel from journey to journey.

In Self-Mockery

Your back in the winter shower you go away I see
Ushiro sugata no shigurete yukuka

Into my iron alms bowl too hail
Teppatsu no naka e mo arare

Oura Catholic Church⁷

This the tooth that came out just like that
Horori to nuketa ha de wa aru

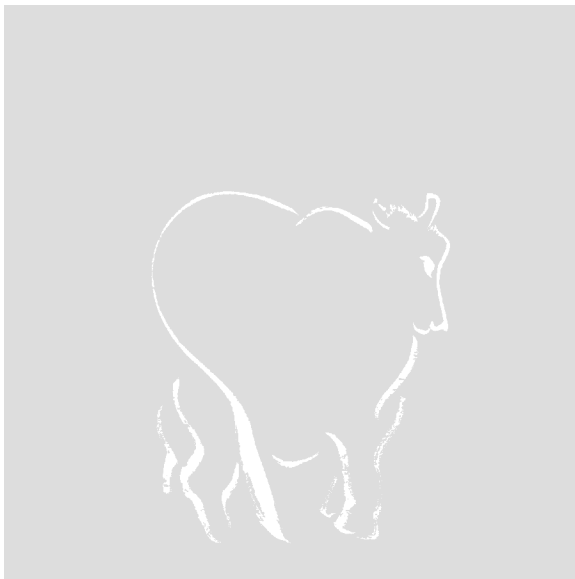
Cold clouds hurry
Samui kumo ga isogu

My hometown's distant tree buds
Furusato wa toukushite ki no me

Thump on my hat was a camellia
Kasa e pottori tsubaki datta

In autumn wind I pick up a stone
Akikaze no ishi o hirou

Along today's road dandelions have bloomed
Kyou no michi no tampo po saita



Rain falls in my hometown walk barefoot
Ame furu furusato wa hadashi de aruku

To the kitchen moonlight alone
Kuriya made tsukikage no hitori de

Morning glow rain falls I'll sow daikon
Asayake ame furu daikon makou

Dew in grass seeds, trying to calm down
Kusa no mi no tsuyu no, ochitsukou to suru

From the evening sky I accept one citron
Yuuzora kara yuzu no hitotsu o morau

The moon risen I'm waiting for nothing in particular
Tsuki ga nobotte nani o matsu de mo naku

With this and that to eat one windy day
Arekore taberu mono wa atte kaze no ichinichi

The sound of water truly I've calmed down
Mizuoto shinjitsu ochitsukimashita

The sense that someone's coming the sky cloudy loquat blossoms
Dare ka kisou na sora ga kumotteiru biwa no hana

In the snowy sky I pick the last one
Yukizora no saigo no hitotsu o mogu

Gochu⁸ snow falls as a solitary man I make a fire
Gochu yuki furu hitori to shite hi o taku

A warm day, still have things to eat
Nukui hi no, mada taberu mono wa aru

Through the moonlight's center I come back
Tsukikage no mannaka o modoru⁹

I'm in the quietness of snow falling on snow
Yuki e yuki furu shizukesa ni oru

Snow falls one by one they go
Yuki furu hitori hitori yuku

To a friend

Moonlit night, so your gift was rice

Tsukiyo, temiyage wa kome dattaka

Camellias open there's a grave

Tsubaki hiraite haka ga aru

The noise a bird that's come to eat nuts in the morning perhaps

Oto wa asa kara ki no mi o tabeni kita tori ka

I pull and pull yet I pull the grass's attachment

Nuite mo nuite mo kusa no shuuchaku o nuku¹⁰

Today I pick bog rhubarb I eat bog rhubarb

Kyou wa fuki o tsumi fuki o tabe

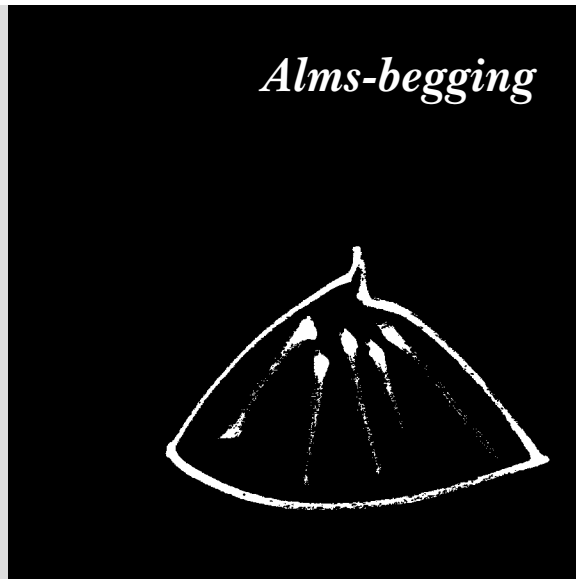
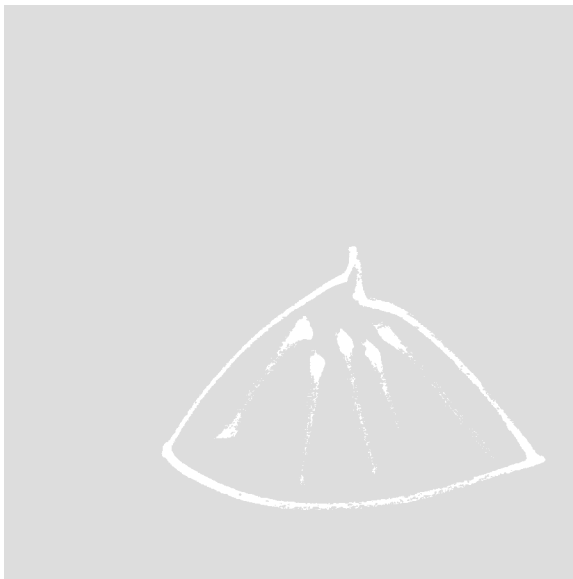
Sparrows dance yeah dandelions scatter yeah
Suzume odoru ya tampocho chiru ya

A butterfly from back to front fluttering
Tefu tefu ura kara omote e hira hira

Today also all day no one came fireflies
Kyou mo ichinichi dare mo konakatta hotaru

Dragonfly trying to light on my stark naked body are you
Suppadaka e tomo tomarou to suruka

Rustling stirring a non-chirping insect has come
Kasari kosori oto sasete nakanu mushi ga kita



Pine winds cool a man eats a horse eats
Matsukaze suzushiku hito mo tabe uma mo tabe

Which is what everything's abloom
Nani ga nani yara minna saiteiru

I walk and buttercups I sit and buttercups
Arukeba kimpouge suwareba kimpouge

With the drips from the young leaves the drips from my hat
Wakaba no shizuku de kasa no shizuku de

The temple's bamboo shoots have become bamboo
O-tera no takenoko take ni natta

Alone I listen a woodpecker
Hitori kiiteiru kitsutsuki

Kawabata Hot Springs

I'm waiting the cherries are ripening

Matteiru sakurambo ureteiru

In the mountain's embrace I become naked

Yama futokoro no hadaka to nari

On the mountain all day ants too are walking

Yama no ichinichi ari mo aruiteiru

Clouds hurry and turn it into a good moon

Kumo ga isoide yoi tsuki ni suru

Always alone and red dragonflies

Itsumo hitori de akatombo¹¹

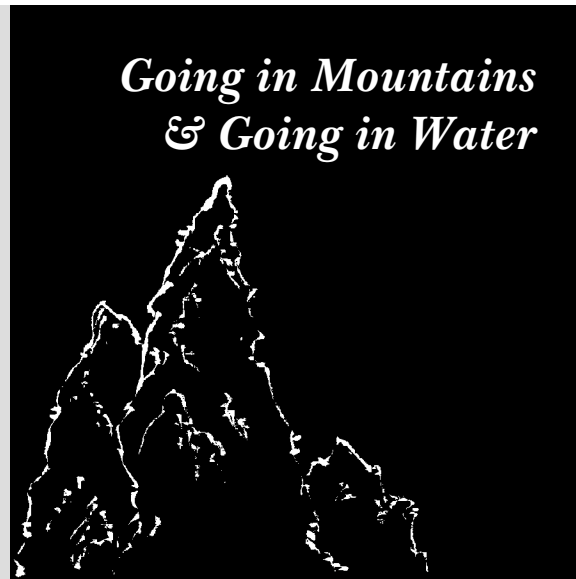
Leaving Kawabata

It moved was a bagworm
Ugoite minomushi datta yo

Back to my Hut

Grass grows thick that's a place for burning the dead
Kusa shigeru soko wa shinin o yaku tokoro

Morning dew sopping I go where I want
Asatsuyu shittori ikitai hou e iku



There's a mountain; I contemplate a mountain.
On a rainy day I listen to the rain.
Spring summer autumn winter:
Mornings are good.
Evenings are good.¹²

Burning heaven with no place to hide the water flows toward me
Enten kakusu tokoro naku mizu no nagarete kuru

28

The evening shower has washed the eggplants I pick 'em
Yuudachi ga aratte itta nasu o mogu

Crickets there's just enough rice for tomorrow
Kourogi yo asu no kome dake wa aru

I reach figs their ripeness
Te ga todoku ichijiku no urezama

Memories the tides rise at the hometown ferry
Omoide wa shio michitekuru furusato no watashiba

I see the sun off beyond the mountains and eat my meal
Yama no anata e o-hi-sama o miokuri gohan ni suru

Noon too quiet flies know the fly-swatter
*Hiru mo shizukana hae ga haetataki o shitteiru*¹³

The misery of no longer being able to get drunk the crickets chirp
Yoenakunatta mijimesa wa korogi ga naku

29

Was so good the evening shower the sounds of water here and there
Honni yokatta yuudachi no mizuoto ga soko koko

Finally the mail came and now only ripe persimmons drop
Yatto yuubin ga kite sorekara jukushi no ochiru dake

Each time a fruit ripens and drops I pick it up
Urete wa ochiru mi o hirou

After seeing someone off I return alone through the quagmire
Hito o miokuri hitori de kaeru nukarumi

Moonlit night, I wash all the rice I have
Tsukiyo, aru dake no kome o togu

The sky's depth dead leaves sunk in the water
Sora no fukasa wa ochiba shizundeiru mizu

With the moonlight from behind me I cross the water
Ushiro kara tsuki no kage suru mizu o wataru

Broken with a snap bamboo among bamboo
Pokiri to orete take ga take no naka

The moon goes behind it and there's the thicket's shadow
Tsuki ga ura e mawareba yabukage

This year too this its last night sleet starts
Kotoshi mo kon'ya giri no mizore to natta

Here like this I place myself winter night
Koko ni koushite watashi oiteiru fuyuyo

I get sick and a blue heron comes near
Yameba aosagi ga sokora made

I'm eating sake the mountain's withered
Sake o tabeteiru yama wa kareteiru

The brightness of snow everywhere the quietness
Yuki no akarusa ga ie ippai no shizukesa

Camellias fall the water flows
Tsubaki no ochiru mizu no nagareru

I wake snow falls, not that I'm lonely
Nezame yuki furu, sabishigaru dewa nai ga

The owl in the owl's way I in my way can't sleep
Fukurou wa fukurou de watashi wa watashi de nemurenai

The moon goes behind it still the tree shadow
Tsuki ga ura e mawattemo kokage

The bagworm too dripping spring has come yes
Minomushi mo shizuku suru haru ga kita zo na

Gaunt from illness I return to my hut from Shinano

Grasses and trees alive I'm back they luxuriate

Kusa ya ki ya ikite modotte shigetteiru

Ill alone a morning turns into evening green leaves

Yamite hitori no asa ga yuube to nariyuku aoba

The persimmon's young leaves glitter in the sky I'm yet not dead

Kaki no wakaba no kagayaku sora o shinazuni iru

33

Bees butterflies grasses so many blooming

Hachi ga tefucho ga kusa ga nambo demo saite

Always chained the dog has no choice but to bark

Itsumo tsunagarete hoeru hoka nai inu desu

Sprouting growing blooming happiness
Haete nobite saiteiru koufuku

Their shadows distinct the young leaves
Kage mo hakkiri to wakaba

Suddenly out of a hole a lizard is it
Hyoito ana kara tokage ka yo

34

Bath for a Thousand

Peckers and pussies overflowing hot water
Chimpoko mo ososo mo waite afureru yu

Alone hushed a bamboo shoot grows to become bamboo
Hitori hissori takenoko take ni naru

A mountain peers from behind a mountain the rainy season's over
Yama kara yama ga nozoite tsuyubare

With something to eat something to drink in the weeds rain
Taberu mono wa atte you mono mo atte zassou no ame

Under burning heaven an endless line of ants
Enten no hate mo naku ari no gyouretsu

The spider spreads his net I affirm myself
Kumo wa ami haru watashi wa watashi o kouteisuru

35

Ready to die any moment grass blooms bears seeds
Itsu de mo shineru kusa ga saitari minottari¹⁴

The sun at its most intense one leaf falls
Hizakari ochiru ha no ichimai

A cool wind passes so do bees so do dragonflies
Kaze ga suzushiku fukinukeru node hachi mo tomo mo

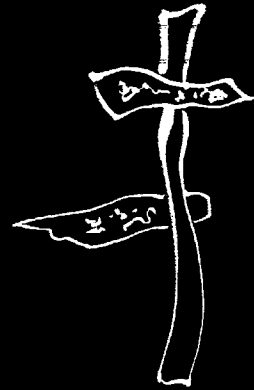
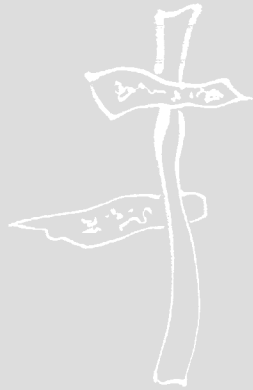
Drink hometown's water bathe in the water
Furusato no mizu o nomi mizu o abi

Make this the place to die grasses luxuriate luxuriate¹⁵
Koko o shini basho to shite kusa no shigeri ni shigeri

In an autumn wind, an angry praying mantis this
Akikaze no, haratateteiru kamakiri de

Burdened with a heavy load he's blind
Omoni o oute mekura de aru

From Journey to Journey



The road where we parted straight
Wakaretekita michi ga massugu

Wake from a nap whichever way I look mountains
Hirune samete dochira o mite mo yama

A good inn mountains everywhere and a sake store in front
Yoi yado de dochira mo yama de mae wa sakaya de

38

I sit and there's a wind autumn weeds
Suwareba kaze ga aru aki no zassou

I decide to sleep here grass seeds spill
Koko de neru to suru kusa no mi no koboreru

Bush clover and pampas grass are today's road
Hagi ga susuki ga kyou no michi

Hakusen's Residence

Leaves fall fall into my alms bowl too

Ki no ha furu furu hachinoko e mo

Nagato Valley

I walk and grass seeds I sit and grass seeds

Arukeba kusa no mi suwareba kusa no mi

Now, which way shall I go the wind blows

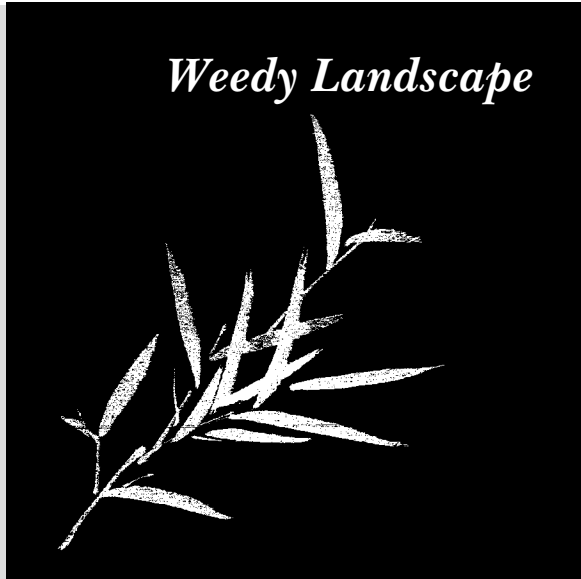
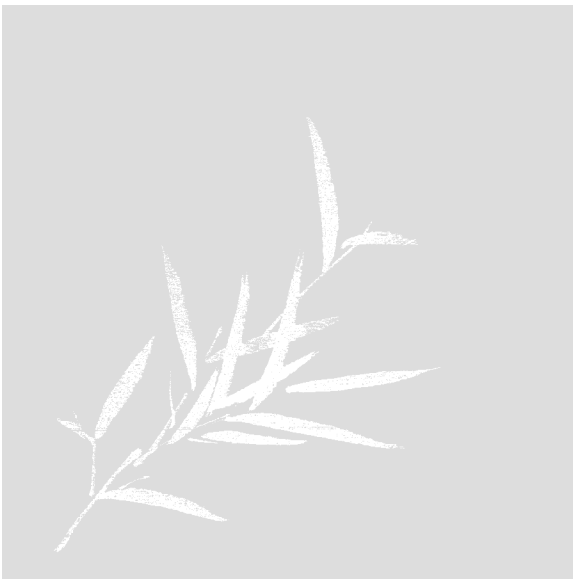
Sate, dochira e iko kaze ga fuku

There's only this road spring snow falls

Kono michi shika nai haru no yuki furu

The Kiso Road (one of three)

Because the mountain's quiet I take off my hat
Yama shizuka nareba kasa o nugu



The two or three left become ripe persimmons clouds come and go
Nokosareta futatsu mittsu ga jukushi to naru kumo no yukiki

No one comes cayenne peppers turn red
Dare mo konai tougarashi akou naru

I take ill and the pickled plums' red
Yameba umeboshi no akasa

No matter how I think it's all the same I step on dead leaves and walk on
Nambo kangaete mo onnaji koto no ochiba fumi aruku

While III: two pieces

I lie down I get up leaves fall

Netari okitari ochiba suru

Wide awake and feeling the moon right above

Hokkari samete maue no tsuki o kanjiteiru

Withering grass I sit on its beauty

Kareyuku kusa no utsukushisa ni suwaru

I live withdrawn and a wren

Hissori kuraseba misosazai

Dangling the snow falling on a bagworm

Burari to sagatte yuki furu minomushi

Just as they are weeds sprout

Aru ga mama zassou to shite me o fuku

From the mountain white flowers to my desk

Yama kara shiroi hana o tsukue ni

Into the sky young bamboo with no troubling thoughts

Sora e wakatake no nayami mo nashi

Around me all grasses every one blooming

Mi no mawari kusa darake minna saiteru

I roll on my back and there's the blue sky
Korori nekorobeba aozora

Seeking what I go through the wind
Nani o motomeru kaze no naka yuku

In the depths of the green leaves the path still then a grave
Aoba no oku e nao michi ga atte haka

The moon before you know it brightens and katydids
Tsuki ga itsushika akarukunareba kirigirisu

Butterflies entangling in the shadow in the sun
Tefutefu motsuretsutsu kagehinata

While Ill: five pieces

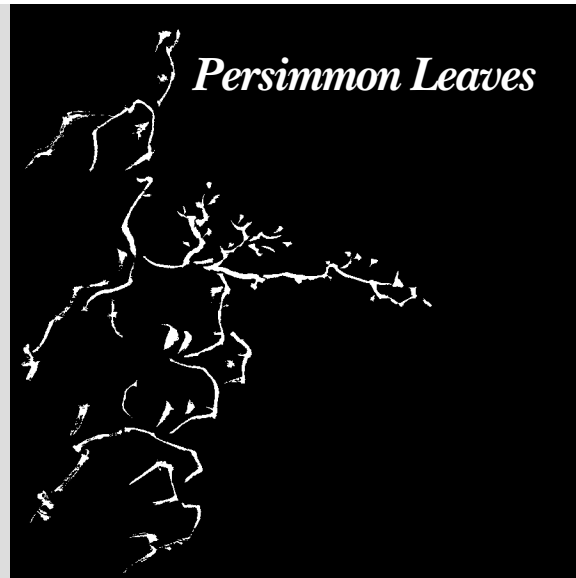
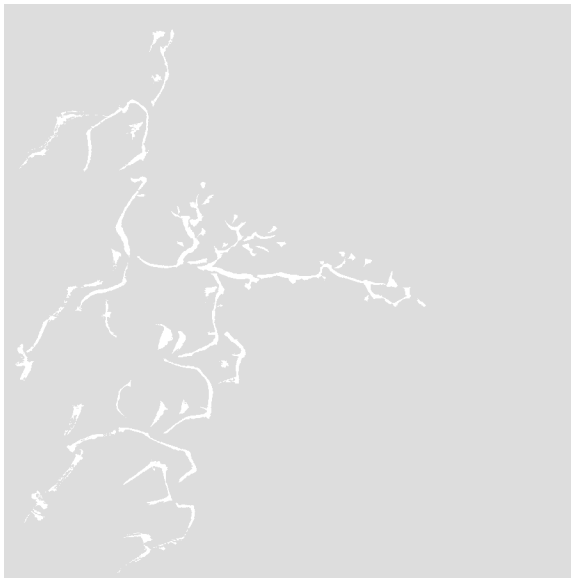
Once you die, weeds rain falls
Shindeshimaeba, zassou ame furu

Before death a cool breeze
Shi o mae ni suzushii kaze

Even while wind chimes tinkle death sneaks up
Fuurin no naru sae shi no shinobiyoru

Have no thoughts to leave the evening's sweet potato leaves aflutter
Omoi oku koto wa nai yuube no imo no ha hirahira

The wound healing turning autumnal the wind blows
Kizu ga ieyuku aki meita kaze to natte kaze fuku



On December 6, 1935, I couldn't bear sitting solitary in a hut any longer and set out on a journey.

I walk and cuckoos I hurry and cuckoos
*Arukeba kakkou isogeba kakuu*¹⁵

The Japan Sea Coast

48

Heart empty the rough waves rolling in rolling out
Kokoro munashiku aranami no yosete wa kaeshi

Crouched on a dune today I still can't see Sado
Sakyuu ni uzukumari kyou mo Sado wa mienai

Legs stretched toward the rough sea before and after the journey
*Araumi e ashi nagedashite tabi no atosaki*¹⁷

Hiraizumi¹⁸

Having come this far I drink water and leave
Koko made o koshi mizu nonde saru

49

The Eihei Temple (one of three)

A butterfly aflutter has gone over the roof tiles
Tefutefu hirahira iraka o koeta

Blaming Myself

Sobering a wind sadly blows through me
Yoizame no kaze no kanashiku fukinukeru

Solitary Sitting in a Hut

50

My heart calms down and the sound of the water
Kokoro ochitsukeba mizu no oto

I follow the bright and dark sides of a wind
Kaze no meian o tadoru

From the moon flutters down a persimmon leaf
Tsuki kara hirari to kaki no ha

Waiting for what day by day dead leaves grow deep
Nani o matsu hi ni hi ni ochiba fukounaru

Drying up the water's clarity
Karetekuru mizu no sumi yo

Wash 'em and daikon grow even more white
Araeba daikon iyoiyo shiroshi

With a shadow too desultorily late night I'm eating
Kage mo bosoboso yofuke no watashi ga tabeteiru

To Kiaki

I know the footfalls stepping on the fallen leaves coming closer
Ochiba fumikuru sono ashioto wa shitteiru

After all being alone's lonesome the withered grass¹⁹
Yappari hitori wa samishii karekusa

52

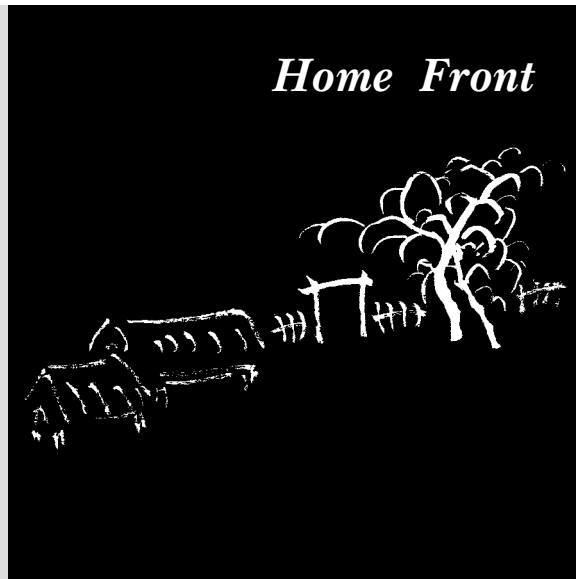
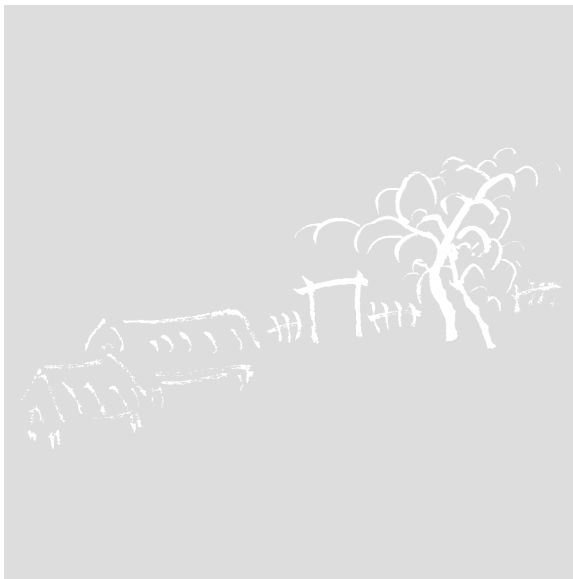
Leaves fallen all the more intimate my neighbor's light
Ochiba shite sarani shitashiku otonari no hi no

Out of the wind caw caw crows
Kaze no naka kara kaakaa karasu

The leaves fallen no more leaves to fall the sun
Ha no ochite ochiru ha wa nai taiyou

Self-portrait

Snow falls I have things to eat snow falls
Yuki furu taberu mono wa atte yuki furu



Moon's brightness I wonder where they're bombing
*Tsuki no akarusa wa doko o bakugeki shiteiru koto ka*²⁰

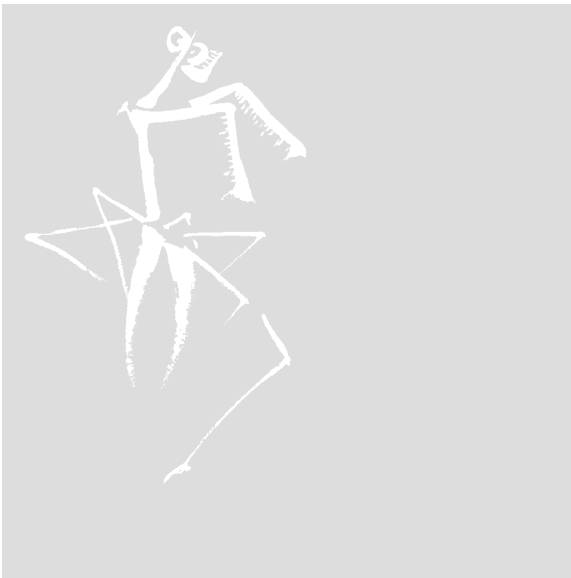
Snow falling on snow battle is about to begin they say
Yuki e yuki furu tataikai wa kore kara da to iu

The town's festive you've returned as bones have you
Machi wa omatsuri o-hone to natte kaeraretaka

Horse too requisitioned grandpa grandma
Uma mo mesarete ojiisan obasan

Wounded Soldiers

Legs and arms left in China you are back to Japan
Ashi wa te wa Shina ni nokoshite futatabi Nihon ni



Wordlessly playing a single bird in the blossoms²¹

Damate asubu tori no ichiwa ga hana no naka

The spring wind's bagworm has taken a sudden peek

Harukaze no minomushi hyoito nozoita

Taking a sudden peek the bagworm doesn't cry²²

Hyoito nozoite minomushi wa nakanai

The green of the grass I return barefoot

Kusa no aosa yo hadashi de modoru

In rows bamboo shoots turning into bamboo

Narande takenoko take ni naritsutsu

In the wind I walk blaming myself
Kaze no naka onore o semetsutsu aruku

Winter shower all the rice I got cooked good
Shigururu ya aru dake no gohan yo taketa

Death held tight the cayenne pepper scarlet
Shi o hishi to tougarashi makka na

Death's stillness is the clear sky a leafless tree
Shi no shizukesa wa harete ha no nai ki

There in front of death I put the moon
Soko ni tsuki o shi no mae ni oku

I open the window the spring filling the window
Mado akete mado ippai no haru

Stillness, bamboo shoots have all turned into bamboo
Shizukesa, takenoko minna take ni natta

60

Living alone and green green is the grass
Hitori sumeba aoao to shite kusa

A hop a single red frog
Tonde ippiki akagaeru

Traveling Heart



Near my body water comes flowing
Mi no chikaku mizu no nagarete kuru

From somewhere clouds appear autumn clouds
Doko kara tomo naku kumo ga detekite aki no kumo

Autumn wind, whichever way I want to go as far as I can go
Akikaze, ikitai hou e ikeru tokoro made

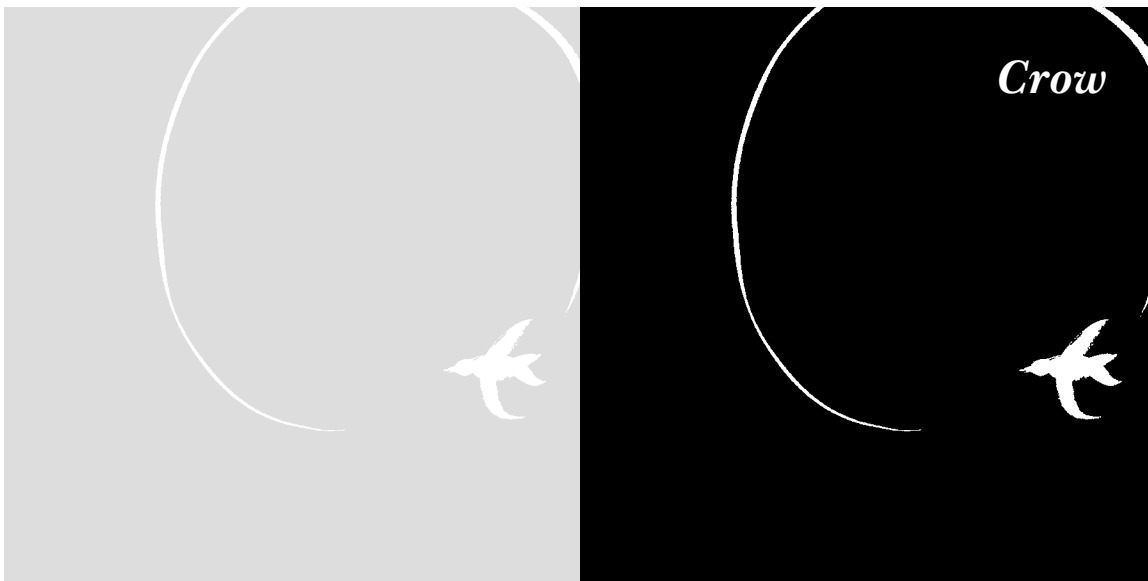
Since I stopped coming across people the mountain butterflies
Hito ni awanakunarite yori yama no tefutefu

With this body that can die any place spring wind
Doko demo shineru karada de shumpuu

Balmy the butterfly is dead
Uraura chou wa shindeiru

Cherry blossoms at their peak a prison
Sakura mankai ni shite keimusho

Of the house where I was born no trace left fireflies
Umareta ie wa atokata mo nai hotaru



Crow

Water's delicious frog croak

Mizu no umasa o kawazu naku

Letting the moon as far as my bed I decide to sleep

Nedoko made tsuki o ire neru koto ni suru

66

Eating Half-refined Rice as Everyday Food

The darkness of the rice trusty I wash it

Kome no kurosa mo tanomoshiku arau

My bellybutton a pool of sweat

Heso ga ase tameteiru

At my Gochu Hut

Walls crumbling from there vine grass

Kabe ga kuzurete soko kara tsurugusa

That's a pre-death butterfly dance

Sore wa shi no mae no tefutefu no mai

Autumn's end-turned-fly crawls about

Aki mo owari no hae to nari haiaruku

Moon invisible moonlit water brimming

Tsuki wa mienai tsukiakari no mizu manman

In March, I Set Out to Travel East.

Cawing a crow, flapping a crow, with no place to settle down
Naite karasu no, tonde karasu no, ochitsuku tokoro ga nai

68

Walking up along the Tenryu River

The sound of water today too alone I travel
Mizuoto kyou mo hitori tabi yuku

Mountain's quietness the white flower
Yama no shizukesa wa shiroi hana

A Kiso inn

Can't calm down the futon heavy I sleep

Ochitsukenai futon omotaku neru

Under burning heaven the railway track straight

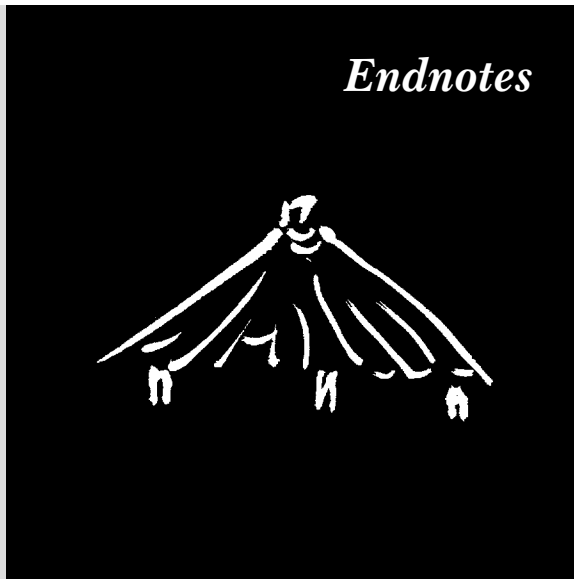
Enten no reeru massugu

69

In September, I Set out on Pilgrimage to Shikoku.

A crow flies away I'll cross the water

Karasu tondeyuku mizu o wataro



1. I haven't seen any official explanation of the origins of the name. Asked, my learned friend Kyoko Selden wrote to say: "The name Santoka reminds me of the burial fires in the mountains. *Santo* simply means head (peak) of a mountain, but in the old days it also signified a crematorium because cremation often occurred in the mountains. Toribeyama in Kyoto is an example."
2. In 1915 Hekigodo founded the magazine *Kaikou* (Quince) with another "free rhythm" advocate, Nakatsuka Ippekiro (1886-1946), though they, too, would part company. Some Japanese immigrants in California wrote haiku under the influence of Ippekiro and *Kaikou*. Their pieces are collected, with English translations, in *May Sky: There Is Always Tomorrow: An Anthology of Japanese American Concentration Camp Kaiko Haiku* (Sun and Moon, 1997).
3. I published a selection of Hosai's haiku in *Right under the big sky, I don't wear a hat: The Haiku and Prose of Hosai Ozaki* (Stone Bridge Press, 1993). Kyoko Selden kindly wrote the introduction to that volume.
4. Blyth: "Going further into them, / And further into them, / Still more green mountains." William Higginson, in *thistle brilliant morning* (From Here Press, 1973): "further in yet / further in yet / green hills." Stevens, p. 37: "Going deeper / And still deeper— / The green mountains."
5. *Karasu ga damatte tondeitta*: "A crow wordlessly flew away," and *Seki o shite mo hitori*: "I cough and am still alone."
6. This piece gives the impression that it continues the observation made in the preceding piece.
7. A Christian church in Nagasaki. Built in 1864, it is the oldest surviving Western-style building in Japan. Designated a National Treasure.

8. A hut he built with the help of his friends in 1932. *Gochu* means “in it”, “in there”.
9. Buson has *Tsuki tenshin mazushiki machi o tourikeri*, “Moon at heaven’s center I pass through a poor town.”
10. This reminds one of the Soto sect’s practice of asking its followers to focus on weeding if the task at hand is weeding.
11. Before pesticides greatly reduced their numbers, red dragonflies used to present quite a spectacle with a swarm of them suddenly materializing out of nowhere.
12. In the afterword to this section Santoka notes the four Chinese characters for the section title, “Going in Mountain, Going in Waters”, may be read either *sankou suikou* or *sangyou suigyō*, adding that for him going and walking is part of the Buddhist training.
13. The original ambiguous: Does it mean “Noon being quiet, too, the flies,” etc., or “At noon, too, the quiet flies,” etc.?
14. What is “ready to die”? Stevens, p. 63: “Weeds that may die / Any Time— / Blooming and seeding.”
15. The notion of seeking the right place to die (*shini basho*) is part of Japanese tradition. After attempting suicide with an overdose of calmotin, in 1935, Santoka set out on a journey eastward essentially to seek such a place.
16. Pairing this with “I walk and grass seeds I sit and grass seeds,” Santoka comments: “I should discard one of these but to me, both have something that makes it difficult to discard. Traveling the Tohoku Region last year, I was surprised by the great number of cuckoos and listened to their calls to my heart’s content. On the Shinano Road I even saw them, for the first time in my life.”

17. Alludes to Basho's hokku: "Rough sea: lying toward Sado the River of Heaven." Stevens, p. 67: "Thrusting my feet / Into the rough sea— / My life as a traveler."
18. The northernmost point Basho reached in his journey to the interior.
19. In the afterword to this section, Santoka couples this with *Yappari hitori ga yoroshii karekusa*, "After all being alone's good the withered grass," and comments: "I myself don't feel satisfied with the sentimentality of self-indulgence, but I have included it with the thought that such things are permissible in a personal collection."
20. Japan was getting deeper and deeper into war with China. Stevens, p. 71: "The moon's brightness— / Does it know / Where the bombing will be?" An interesting case in which the translator followed the grammar book and interpreted *wa* as the specifier of the sentence subject. In this instance, it appears better to think that particle is used with haikuesque ambiguity.
21. In the afterword to this section, Santoka says: "Even I don't think the word *kokan*, "solitary cold," is commendable, but I am wandering on the borderline the word expresses. I'd like to get out of this kind of haiku state of mind as soon as possible. Unless I transparently pass through this divide, my haiku can't achieve the state of utter freedom."
22. Alludes to the folkloric belief that the bagworm cries, "*Chichi yo chichi yo* (Father! Father!)," as in Basho's: "Come to my grass hut to listen to a bagworm cry."



Santoka :: *Grass and Tree Cairn*

A failed student, businessman, employee, and husband, **Santoka** (1882-1940) wandered through much of Japan as a mendicant Zen monk for the last quarter of his life. While doing so, he kept writing 'free-rhythm' haiku that ignored the traditional requirements of a seasonal indicator and the set form of 5-7-5 syllables. One year, he sifted 701 out of the 15,000 pieces he'd composed to make a booklet, and named it *Sumokuto* (Grass and Tree Cairn). He hit the road again to give the book to his friends. One night, he had a haiku session with some friends, drank while doing so, went to sleep, and died. He had acquired the habit of drinking heavily in his late twenties.

As a poet struck by wanderlust, Santoka has enjoyed a reputation comparable to Basho since the 1960s. He attracted the redoubtable R. H. Blyth, and a number of other translators have tried their hands at bringing across Santoka's haiku in English. Here, **Hiroaki Sato**, leading translator of Japanese poetry into English, for the first time attempts to recreate Santoka's simplicity and complexity in the original one-line format. **Stephen Addiss's** brushstroke excellence completes the experience.

Among Sato's forthcoming books are *My Friend Hitler and Other Plays of Mishima Yukio* (Columbia) and *White Dew, Dreams, & This World: An Anthology of Japanese Women Poets* (North Point).

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