

KYOTO JOURNAL Sponsors TELS 12th Annual Poetry Contest

Poetry is now being solicited for the TELS Twelfth Annual Poetry Contest. This year's contest will be sponsored by the KYOTO JOURNAL. Poems of all styles and genres are welcome—there are no limitations as to theme and length. Each poem will be judged exclusively on its own merits. We'd like to see a wide variety of submissions—from traditional to experimental, serious to humorous, children's to adult, Shakespearean sonnets to ultra avant garde. The following prizes are being offered by the KYOTO JOURNAL:

First Prize: ¥10,000

Second Prize: ¥5,000

BOOK PRIZES WILL ALSO BE AWARDED
TO HONORABLE MENTIONS

The best poems submitted will also be published in the
KYOTO JOURNAL.

Any number of poems may be submitted, but each poem must be accompanied by an entry fee of ¥200 in stamps. There is no special entry form. All poems should be typed or printed on A-4 size paper (8 1/2 x 11) with the name, address, and phone number of the poet appearing on the top. The poems will be coded and photocopied to insure anonymous judging. *No poems will be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope and sufficient postage.* Poems meriting publication may appear in future issues of PRINTED MATTER, even if they were not prize winners.

All entries must be postmarked by October 31, 1988 and sent to:

TELS POETRY CONTEST
c/o The Second Story
Nakajima Bldg. 2nd Fl.
1-26-7 Umegaoka
Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 154

For more information call TELS at 03-706-5055.

SPECIAL ISSUE: Women in Japan



PRINTED MATTER

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Butterfly Spring

here we are
after your pedaling hours
and hours on the heavy bicycle
me behind you
with your dirty shirt as a seat
me behind you
stuck to your sunburnt back —
here we are
with skies high above us clouds
low above us birds
together with us the waterfall
sounding around us
and evening light
is solid as the stone stairs
as voices' laughter
spills over the tops of green leaves
children from faraway
maybe by the lake
and your bathing in springwater
as a cockoo
is telling us then
to look up, look up, look up

You never did that to me

as we stood on deck
remembering throwing stones
remembering you
rinsing your red socks
after pounding them
with a rock

the boat pulled away from the dock
leaving a mother and her baby
running our way

we braked, circling
to come back
to where it was
"Hey. . . You never did that to me. . ."
you looked up to the bow
the captain in his white uniform
smiled
I saw him smile
but you
you were watching the spot
where the lady and her baby stood
after climbing down
and over the rocks

— Fumiko Tachibana

Fumiko
Tachibana
is
a
teacher,
poet,
&
student
of
shakuhachi
in
Tokyo

photo by P. Minnis



Shall We Wait?

Cigarette smoke curled into my eyes
as he appraised me carefully
over the bridge of his nose.
I stared back.
We sat.

"You are very beautiful."

Not important.

"The question is, can you pour sake and
make the customers feel. . .
comfortable?"

I blinked.

"Is it difficult to pour something from
a bottle? And —

Do I make you. . . uneasy?"

(How much easier to pour something out
than to keep it in!)

"Oh, no, why, no, but you don't drink?"

I wonder, that is all.

And how old are you anyhow? The employer may ask."

He smiled then.

I am tired already. My feet hurt,
shoes to impress, outer illusion.

And with the pain the old knowledge returns
to memory.

I see myself
singlehanded,
raising children in a vacuum of isolation,
raising money in the face of hostility,
raising the walls of new rooms
in a vain attempt to restructure
the shape of my vision.

And
raising hell in sudden defiance

as I see again a line of women
dying for others
unnoticed,
across millenia,
for reasons denying reason,
eclipsing wisdom,
transcending truth.

But could they pour sake . . . ?
Who cares.

— Susan Wright



Susan
Wright
is
a
teacher,
poet,
&
bar
hostess
in
Tokyo

photo by P. Minnis

Untitled

through the gap water ripples
soft pounding
something runs
red blood

on a leaf
a painted face
the cardinal's eye
in the underbrush
a screech

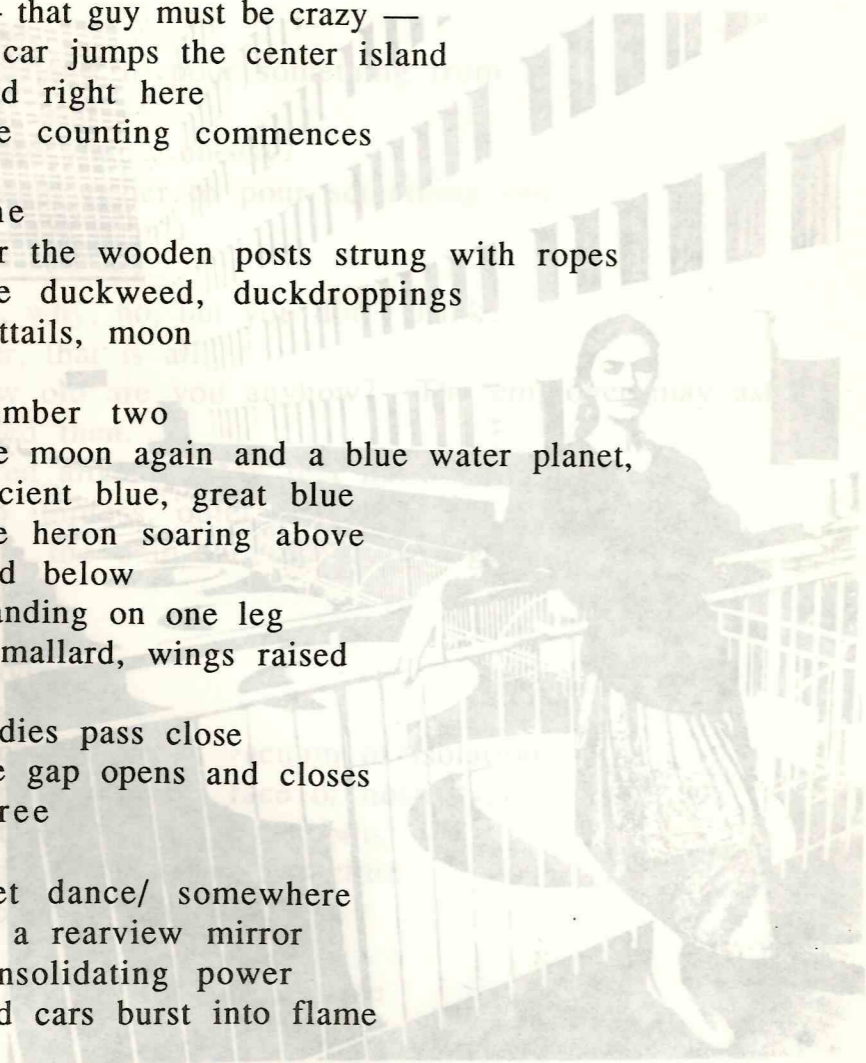
the man mutters
— that guy must be crazy —
a car jumps the center island
and right here
the counting commences

one
for the wooden posts strung with ropes
the duckweed, duckdroppings
cattails, moon

number two
the moon again and a blue water planet,
ancient blue, great blue
the heron soaring above
and below
standing on one leg
a mallard, wings raised

bodies pass close
the gap opens and closes
three

feet dance/ somewhere
in a rearview mirror
consolidating power
and cars burst into flame



he starts to shake
he shakes uncontrollably
four

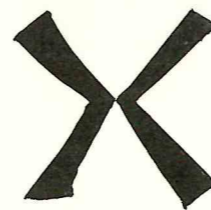
the gap opens and closes
water ripples

a red fox
trotting down the path
stops short

in a parking lot
a man slams his car door
the side window shatters

leaving only a jagged hole
so that five
the wind begins to blow
it keeps blowing
blowing without let up
and the hole
cannot be
covered

— Marilee Boole Morinaga



"her divine wings," design on goddess sculpture
in pre-his-toric Europe five to eight millenia
ago, adapted from Marlene Mountain's recreation,
she is one and she is two : signs from the ancient

Jail

inside
red outside
painted white
the ashtray
is half full
of not-blood
pssht
I stub out
my not-cigarette

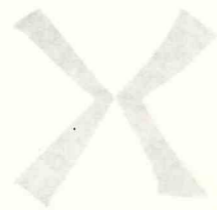
I smear mustard
and blood
on my not-hot dog
take a bite
it goes down
tangy as ketchup

love without wounds is impossible
yet there is no love
why then the wounds
guilt not balloons escaping in the not-sky
guilt my not lover's embrace

short recess

now let me prove
I was not there
the knife I could
not reach was not
the wound was not
therefore
I am not

the crime of stabbing
my not-lover
is punished
in the not-jail
I steal not-paper
spread it out



behind the guard's back
write wounding
words in red ink
only the red
ink is real

Merry-Go-Round

careening past stars
we can fly
I nuzzle his neck
water him at the fountain
this horse galloping
on the rim
of the vast world
surrounding us

the beginning
the end
could be anywhere
the perfect circle
round and full
we sketch forever
in the park
in the night sky
in the white prairie
of the page

oh the horse
flecked with sweat
the glorious moment
when beginning
and end unite
comes round again

— Sachiko Yoshihara
Translated by Anna Watson

Catherine Lombard is an editor & writer living in Oceanside, California

photo by P. Minnis



Thoughts on Writer's Block

- Q. Pen stuck, thoughts clogged.
Muses mocking empty journals.
Where did my creativity go?
- A. It's a chore.
Start with the remnants of your dreams.
Let the child/devil emerge.
Ignore the editor gods.

Ramble on paper for 20 minutes everyday.
Grab the rat's tail inside your mouth.
Pull. Steadily pull.
All that good stuff from your inner gut.
Choke on it if you must.
Stream of consciousness flow.

It's a discipline. Meanwhile,
Take hot baths. Hug trees.
Burn incense. Pray for peace.

Lost in Translation

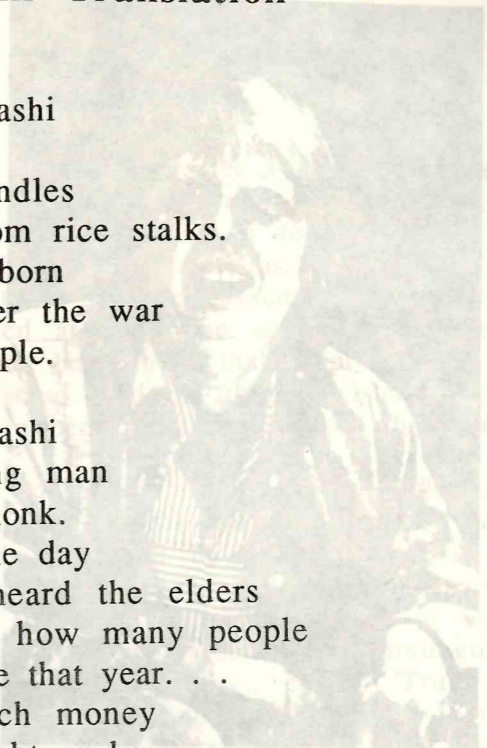
Mr. Hayashi
the boy
wore sandals
made from rice stalks.
He was born
soon after the war
in a temple.

Mr. Hayashi
the young man
was a monk.
Until, one day
he overheard the elders
counting how many people
might die that year. . .
how much money
they might make.

Mr. Hayashi
the Japanese
tried to be modern.
Chameleon changing color
but never changing form.

Mr. Hayashi
the feudal artifact,
saw women as objects
to crowd up against
on the subway.
Baby makers.

Mr. Hayashi
the man
was an English teacher.
We often spoke.



— Catherine Lombard



Marlene
Mountain
is
a
writer
&
poet
living
in
Hampton,
Tennessee

photo by R. Conners

Night

your hardon after our talk of nuclear disaster
my wetness still thinking about it

Morning

your question do you want me to kiss you down there
my answer barely audible

self portrait one

shrill uppity bitchy selfrighteous fed up strident loudmouthed
foulmouth disgusted braburner up to here with it (& then some)

self portrait two

better to curse the darkness than to light one candle
alone middle of the night i can do it all (i guess)

essay

out in/ah

More than once it has been asked why, since I live "out in the mountains," my haiku are about things out in the world. I have even been told that this is a strange phenomenon. It's also been asked, in a related context, why I don't write like I used to write, i.e., about these mountains, Nature, and so on (*at dusk hot water from the hose*). Further, it's been asked more than once why I am angry, to which I have attempted at least one answer (*why am i now angry why are you not angry*). It has been more than implied that being out here and "away" from the world is some kind of idyllic existence, that I'm in the midst of a haven. I am about to begin asking people if they have all of their marbles.

In spite of my wish to get mean and tough (*tired of being nice*), I will attempt again to clarify my situation. Yes, I can walk out my door and "be in nature" and walk farther into my land and be "more" in nature. But, unlike people who visit botanical gardens and parks, I don't have maintenance crews to come in and tame nature so that I can sit in the yard or walk on a path. Beyond that, I, too, deal with problems (seemingly humungous), red tape, bullshit, brick walls, disappointments, stress, etc., etc. Truly. I even live beside a blacktop road (which is now a state highway), am two miles from a major highway, and see and hear airplanes overhead. I also live near a nuclear submarine fuel plant (*another uranium leak fifteen miles from home*).

As far as writing about the "positive" aspects of where I live—I have and still do (*first day of spring opening her letter earth on my hands*). I doubt, however, that I will "go back" to how I saw the world which I assume includes "my" world and write accordingly. Quite simply, my consciousness is different and continues to change (*first snow if i could begin at 20 even 25; i was fortyfive before i heard of matilda joslyn gage; solstice at 47 the new belief in myself*). It is, of course, impossible to observe and comprehend everything at once. As artists we can do no more than record what it is we know and feel as we know and feel it.

I did not ask for the world to be as I know it to be. I, as most people, do not want it to be as it is. The world, however, is what each of us has helped make and continues to make—we are colluders in the very world we wish were different. And until on a grand scale we absolutely and quite simply quit perpetuating it, it can do nothing but get worse. (I would recommend Sonia Johnson's recent *GOING OUT OF OUR MINDS* to see how change indeed can happen.)

There is a confession to be made: haiku itself (which I've "taken seriously" since I first became aware of it) is a reason I see what I now see and I write what I now write—just like in the "old" days. I believed and still believe in "moments keenly perceived" and "things as they are." It is haiku that has helped me see reality. More precisely, the ideas within haiku have given me the basis for expressing what has taken place in my consciousness—as a result of what brave and intelligent women have offered to the world of thought. I firmly believe that creative art is a process rather than an end product. Poems and paintings merely show where one is in that process. But

only some of it. Much is sorted in the head and is never recorded (some might sigh at this point regarding what has not been recorded), and at other times only the leaps are recorded (*not ready to hear a woman sing until I've heard her scream*—sound carries well in the mountains).

Two more observations. Perhaps trying to survive out in the mountains makes me more aware of the need to protect them by at least pointing out what is happening (*acid rain less and less i am at one with nature; less and less nature is nature*). Perhaps living away from downtown art makes me more aware that art is what I make it.

Ah, Oneness. Oneness is a concept within haiku—and several other secular as well as so-called religious institutions—which certain thinkers have established and, in fact, have glorified as something worth attaining. We, experiencing the world as it is, had no clue about oneness until these kind thinkers appeared. Apparently, if we “do right,” it is possible to see beyond the misty “un”reality of madness which we believe to exist, to a place of light where one is all and all is one, or something like that. We need only admit to a grand design, excuse (rationalize) ourselves from our misperceptions of life, and follow—but not obviously strive. We may even write poems to prove to ourselves and others that this grand design of oneness can be glimpsed. Had, even. Now that we have been made aware that it is a possibility.

It is not impossible that oneness did exist at some time in the universe. The vast amount of extant spiritual art from matrilineal times points (if we're not thrown off by the many misinterpretations of male-identified archeologists, *et. al.*) to a deep identification of people with their surroundings. These people dressed themselves and made images of their divine female counterparts as animals, put “nature” on their divinities and on their own bodies in life and in death, created a wide variety of highly symbolic designs, and in countless other ways were closely merged with nature. (For this discussion, I'm not considering a belief within the scientific community that humans and the universe are not made of the same matter.)

If oneness has existed, it existed before the male rebellion. All pursuits of oneness since then have been self-deceptive pursuits—perhaps from an honest and deep longing to belong again, but nonetheless, deception—because under/within patriarchy, oneness can not exist. Indeed, oneness is not something to be found. . . it must already exist. And exist for all.

Alienation is a much used word. It has been primarily applied to men by men. Oddly enough, “scholars” have associated women with nature, denigrating one or the other or both with this identification for the purposes, among many, of subduing and controlling. (Denigration is all-encompassing, and includes such terms as “mom and apple pie” and nuclear submarines as female). If oneness did indeed exist, it ceased when male separated himself from the life force/source female by, among other means, physical, mental and spiritual intimidation, shortly before the end of what is termed the Neolithic Revolution. Study the artifacts of at least 30,000 years before that time and the “creation” stories thereafter. The former, worldwide, show a deep correspondence between woman and nature and divine—and a deep, deep respect. The latter are particularly revealing of the extent to which the patriarchal take-over changed the course of several million years. It's mind-boggling.

By the time writing was used for “literature,” the esteemed place women

held in society was on the decline. Though a female most often is recorded as creating the universe and giving all life and death, she successively lost power and was destroyed by a male, and/or was blamed for all the ills of the world—until eventually she became merely a vessel for a baby god. Quite a transformation.

Truly, men have gotten themselves in a pickle. (It is primarily men who search for this “lost” oneness.) Though all of us suffer from this profound reversal of truth, the heaviest burden falls upon the women of the world. And not just in so-called undeveloped countries—what a sham to imply America is developed (even in male studies it ranks only fifth in least human suffering). In America a male rapes a female every three seconds. In America it is a male relative or “friend” who sexually molests one female out of every three by the age of eighteen [perhaps sixteen]. (These statistics show that a few weirdos cannot possibly be responsible.) In America it is most often male “lovers” who murder and violate women. And, in America men spend \$10,000,000,000 a year on pornography—the “how-to” for all of the above actions.

“Not me,” I can imagine “good guys” saying. Yet, it is a carefully guarded secret that male power derives not merely from the acts of rape and violence in themselves, but from the ever-present real threat to which all females are subjected, and from which *all* men—and particularly the good guys who can hide behind the cover of not being the specific actuators—benefit.

The following haiku comes from a moment of patriarchal oneness keenly perceived:

fearing her and all women he rapes her and all women

— Marlene Mountain

(phrases in italics are from previously published poems & essays)

essay

Recklessness

No one will take this seriously, so I can only tell it these days as a funny story: how once when I was a child the firemen burst into our dining room.

It was dinner time and the four of us, Mother and three children, were sitting in silence at our meal when we heard a number of fire sirens mingling and merging. The sounds came rapidly closer as we listened without particular interest. Since our house was on a wide street it wasn't unusual to hear police cars and emergency vehicles speed by. But normally they continued on into the distance.

As the family wondered idly where the fire could be—it was clearly a big one—for some reason the sirens stopped in front of our house. All those fire engines must have pulled up outside. Oh no, it was the house next door or opposite that was on fire! We leaped up panic stricken. At almost the same

instant the front door crashed open, footsteps tramped and the firemen ran in with hoses at the ready—to be met by the alarmed family. Too startled to know what was happening, for a moment I couldn't even take in the fact that these men were firemen. The murderous-looking giants in their strange garb had scared me out of my wits. I expect I wasn't the only one. The four of us, my mother included, were stupefied by terror, not unlike Ann Frank's family when the Gestapo raided. Great heavy boots trampling the tatami mats. The dull gleam of silver suits. The weaponlike hoses. These were not things that should be seen in anyone's home—while we, far from having weapons, were a woman and three children in our bare feet.

Leaving the family to gape unnoticed as reinforcements trooped in, the tense-faced fire-fighters were rushing from room to room. But they searched in vain. There wasn't any fire, a fact which eventually came to their attention. Concluding that something was wrong, one of the men addressed our mother, "Where on earth is the fire?"

I know it seems silly, but Mother had been unable until then to utter a word. By now the house was overrun with firemen.

She answered shakily that our house was not on fire.

Someone, it transpired, had spotted smoke pouring over the wall and promptly called the fire department. Oh, explained Mother, that would most likely have been the garden clippings she'd burned earlier in the evening.

Mother was upset enough herself, but the firemen had a look of downright disgust. They demanded to know whether she realized what one false alarm cost. What did she take the fire department for? What—they were determined to blame somebody—did she think she was doing lighting bonfires in a built-up area?

Mother couldn't help rejoicing, "But we've always had bonfires here."

The argument went back and forth, both sides fuming over the trouble some scatterbrained passer-by had given them, until the firemen reluctantly withdrew. Outside I saw a row of fire engines (I think it was four) standing at the curb, a curious crowd, and the frustrated firemen dousing the bonfire site and kicking stones. The scene, there in the dark of night, sent another shiver through me and set my legs trembling.

It is not my intention here to condemn the firemen for their actions. I don't suppose they can afford to show a polite regard for people's property when there's a fire to be fought. If there had been an actual fire there wouldn't have been a moment to lose. So I suppose one could say they were the very model of good firemen, ablaze with their sense of vocation. The greater their dedication, the angrier they'd be at having their calling elude them.

I was reminded of this episode the other day when I happened to see a TV documentary that followed illegal immigrants from Korea. For the first time ever, we were told, the Justice Ministry had allowed a camera crew inside one of the buildings where detainees were held. The program also showed us what happens when immigrants who are secretly making a life for themselves in Japan are taken into custody.

Tucked quietly away in some corner of a big city, a family is having a meal. A woman and children. Suddenly four armed men burst in on them—the family's terror. Before they can protest, the men have bundled them into a patrol wagon just as they are. In the wagon the dazed woman sobs.

Watching the scene, I found myself cowering involuntarily, for this, I recognized, was a nightmare of my own. That was how I came to recall the

incident with the firemen—only now I seemed to have glimpsed the solid reality of what I'd been dreading all this time.

I live in the midst of an immense violence. I'm allowed small pleasures in this life, but if ever I should have the temerity to do what I please I'd be snuffed out just like that. I don't know how universal such a fear is; perhaps it's an inborn trait of all human beings as social organisms. Being in any case a timid person, I've had nightmares since childhood in which I'm suddenly sentenced to death or attacked by a stone giant. What makes it worse is that I can't entirely dismiss these as mere nightmares. And meanwhile I attempt to go on writing fiction, in which one cannot lie. I try to poke and prod the nightmares with my writing. This is scarier still: sheer recklessness.

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Translated by Geraldine Harcourt

Reprinted from the *Webster Review*

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SUNBURY. A poetry magazine. Box 274 Jerome Ave., Bronx, New York City, NY

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WOMAN POET. Elaine Dallman, editor. P.O. Box 60550, Reno, NV 89506 U.S.A.

Poetry, photos, criticism, interviews.

— David Silverstein

Announcements

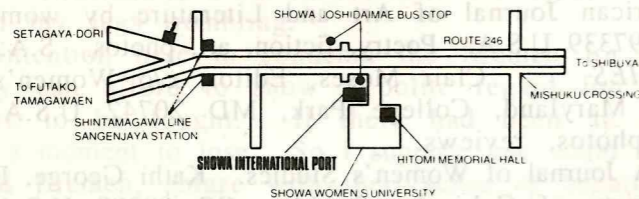
Enjoy the autumn semester courses at Showa International Port culture center on the campus of Showa Women's University near Shibuya [see map in ad below]. Courses cover stress management, superconsciousness, financial planning, men's discussion, Japanese literature, Japanese cooking, haiku, Buddhism, shiatsu, jewelry making, business, watercolor painting and tarot. For brochure and/or information, phone SHIP at 03-411-5400.

HUNGRY POETS' BOOK AUCTION

Sunday, October 30, 1988 — doors open from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. at Showa International Port (Showa Women's University)

TELS Autumn Book Fair and Auction! Books of all types and genres will be auctioned off at prices set by *you* the bidders. Space will also be available for individuals to bring, display, sell/trade their own books, in addition to tables of books for browsing. Join us for an afternoon of bidding, barter, and bargains. Plus — live musical entertainment, eats and drinks, tension-breaking moments of comic relief, perhaps even spontaneous outbursts of poetry.

Already hundreds of books — from serious lit to popular sci fi and everything in between — have been assembled for the auction. You're welcome to clean off your own shelves and donate books to the auction too — arrangements can be made by calling the TELS office at 03-706-5055. Proceeds will be used to help promote and publish the work of writers in Japan and elsewhere through TELS publications.



Admission: ¥500 — includes smile at the door, glass of real undiluted wine or juice, eats, entertainment — and the chance to out/over/underbid for the books of your choice. For more info, call TELS at 03-706-5055.

This coupon is worth
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Poets' Book Auction

Meetings

TELS monthly meetings are held the second Sunday of each month on the 4th floor of the Shinjuku Bunka Center, 6-14-1, Shinjuku-ku. Both members and non-members are invited to attend. Donation: ¥400 (includes coffee). For directions and further info, telephone 03-706-5055 or 044-933-1254. The next meetings are as follows:

- October 9 & November 13 1:00 Poetry Workshop. Bring along at least 15 copies of your poem(s). Everybody's work is welcome.
- 3:00 General Meeting and Fiction Workshop. Bring along at least 15 copies of your short fiction. Everybody's work is welcome.

TELS

<i>Workshops:</i>	John Evans Hideko Urushibara	<i>Editor:</i>	Richard Evanoff
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Nakajima Bldg., 2nd Fl.
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