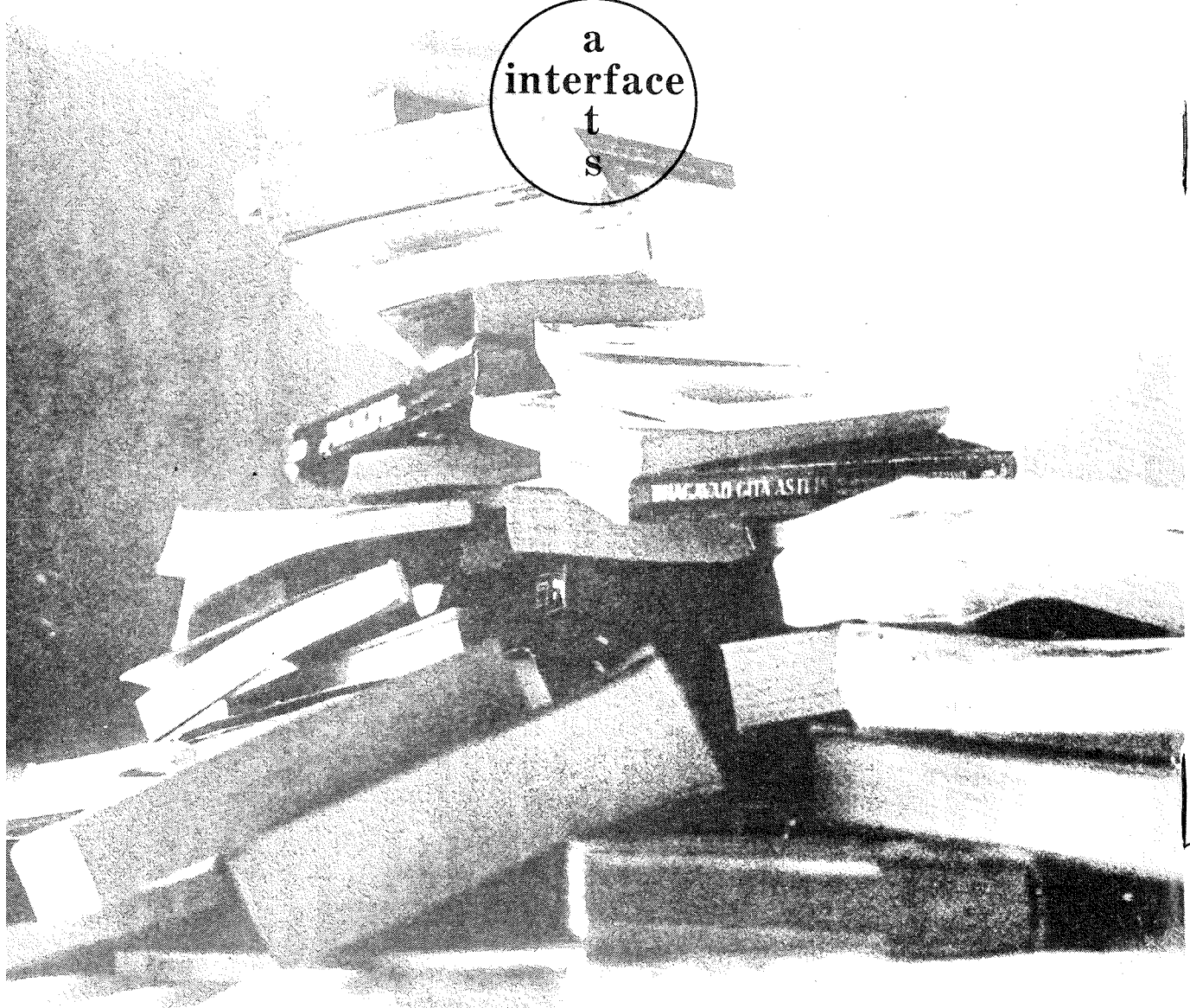


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a literary forum for Japan



SUMMER 1989

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**edge**

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Bob Arnold

**Senior Citizen**

Probably 1,000 carpenters  
Live in the southern part  
Of this state, a lot of them  
Hip and young with a brand new  
Leather apron, heavy duty  
Trucks, wives or companions  
That are weavers or potters  
Or dancers, and of course they  
All have a story to tell.  
Though yesterday I was in  
An old woman's house high off  
From the back road, and she  
Lived alone and missed all  
Her grandchildren and braided  
Rugs in the back of the house  
With a hand needle and years  
And years of wool, and the  
Story she had to tell was  
Already written in her choice  
Of words, the rope of her hands,  
And the scar above her left eye  
Made thirty-five years ago  
By the shuttle of a textile loom.

Without a sound  
I made myself walk  
A day in the sun  
The thin pale grass breeze  
An axe along to trim dead limbs

Moving beneath pines  
I stopped when I saw its wings  
Spread straight for me and  
Grip itself 10 yards away  
With no idea we were face to face

Black water of the eyes opening and seeing  
Spotting easily what wasn't right

In a skiff of wind  
She dropped and floated  
Low to the ground  
Lost my eye in blending flight  
With feathers like the woodland

Picture

I remember you  
The only person  
For miles standing  
In the Athabasca River  
Because you wanted to  
Warm late October day  
South of Jasper  
Sandals in your hand  
White-checked dress  
Just off the roadside  
Car waiting and you  
Freezing for a moment  
In the water melted  
Out of surrounding  
Mountains of snow

Scout

Here you are again  
Late at night  
Snow falling in the valley  
Life on snowshoes

Hardly faraway from home  
In fact, isn't that the glow  
Of the kitchen lamp  
Lighting through the trees

I've spent the better part  
Of darkness stamping in  
A mile wide circle enjoying  
The measure of going nowhere

Stand with me  
Waste some time  
Everything you've always wanted  
Is all around you

While self-employed as a stonemason, Bob Arnold has made a home in Vermont for many years with his wife Susan and their son Carson. His latest book *On Stone*, a builder's notebook, was published in 1988 by Cid Corman's Origin Press. "Scout" and "Senior Citizen" are from his book, *Back Road Caller*; "Barred Owl" appeared in *Sky*; and "Picture" was published in *Coyote's Journal*.

Way

After a long rain  
The refreshed sky sheds its robes.  
There is a resurrected blink, a pause  
That moves into the shifting end of the season of the Hydrangeas.

In the deep pools of dreams  
I am chasing a time I can't recall.  
To the shore of my dream I creep,  
*Andante cantabile*,  
I approach a slope of semi-transparency;  
Rousing one more dream  
As I retrace the far time past  
I go into yet another trip.

When have I come here before?  
Are these my memories? Or am I  
Tracing the path of my grandmother's, greatgrandma's  
Memories?  
The people who are smoothing over the maze of memoires  
Are creating misunderstandings,  
Permitting ceremonies of unjust behavior.  
From the memory that opens from infinity  
And shrinks through the crevice of time to a vanishing point  
There is one unmuddled road.  
Isn't it the only way that comes crouching  
From ancient times, bathed in sourceless light?  
Here's where Euclid's axle came off.  
Time spins along the curve of memories upon memories;  
Fired arrows need not be married to the will of war.  
My time begins to turn late.

The conversations of living things from  
An unknown sea gather in the echoes of caves  
Becoming clearer, through the spray of aberrations.  
My body that gives up on the speed of thought,  
The me that yesterday was a man  
Is wrapped in the thin skin of a woman.  
Even if the poeple who gently jab into the  
Craggs of conviction  
Cheer my creations of accumulated sand,  
I can't respond to the  
Transparent shadow I've become.  
From the container of anti-Euclidian dreams,  
The pressure of memories drains out.  
From distant memories of memories  
Hushed talk about the one unmuddled road.

On and on, the edge of the axle  
Moves on toward night  
Tracing the one bright way, erased as it is drawn.

Yuko Shima is a psychologist and a professor at Daito Bunka University, Saitama-ken. She has been active in feminist and writers' groups in Japan and has published widely in scholarly and literary journals.

Barbara Yates is a full-time instructor in American literature at Daito Bunka U. and is also a teacher of aikido in Japan and internationally. An active feminist, she was instrumental in publishing *New Yarn*, a journal of women's art and literature, in Tokyo in 1983-4.

Invitation to a New Yarn (*Shotai Atarashii Nagare E*), a bilingual book of the two women's poetry in mutual translations, will be published this summer by Doyo Bijitsu-sha.

Morgan

Morgan am I  
from Welsh sea-dwellers  
Breton mermaids  
Irish moon-goddesses  
Celtic mirages

and Fata Morgana  
of many forms, many lovers  
sorceress-healers  
bearing world-treasure  
from womb-caves in the sea:

the son of singing  
Mary Elizabeth  
(mothers of Jesus and  
John the Baptist)  
enchantress of children

daughter of Clay  
Morgan Leeper  
(sorceress-healer  
of babies and lillies  
leaper of faith).

George Morgan Gibson  
am I, the last  
son of sons of the  
protesting Word of  
George who stabbed the dragon.

Matsui Keiko  
("pine-well good-child")  
wed me in Heian  
reflecting the sun  
of Goddess and Buddha.

All in the name that I am.

Morgan Gibson, Ph.D., poet, writer, scholar, critic, educator, and practicing bodhisattva, is professor of English at Chukyo University, Aichi-ken. He studied world lit and philosophy independently with Kenneth Rexroth and Paul Goodman, and spent time in Kyoto with Buddhist philosopher Masao Abe. Recent publications include Revolutionary Rexroth: Poet of East-West Wisdom (Archon Books), his autobiographical Among Buddhas in Japan, and translations Tantric Poetry of Kukai (Kobo Daishi), (both by White Pine Press). Forthcoming is Pacific Letters: Kenneth Rexroth to Morgan Gibson 1957-79.



One-Breath Poems

from Dark Window to the World

Who stares at  
me?  
Who  
me?

\*

Whose  
blank eyes  
shine mine?

\*

Whose  
mute lips  
echo?

\*

Whose  
frown webs  
the window?

\*

Whose  
head floats  
in the night?

\*

In the pane of night  
I stare at me  
more real than me.

\*

Fly  
in web of window  
I?

\*

I  
buzz and  
die.

\*

Webbed  
in the window  
to the world.

\*

Who  
hears my buzz  
as anyone's?

\*

Who's moved?  
Who buzzes  
back?

\*

Whose  
words rip webs  
off the world?

\*

Where am I?  
In world or  
word?

\*

In world  
I'm webbed.  
In words  
I fly.

\*

Darkly  
webbed  
in world.

\*

Bright  
words  
fly.

\*

Where are we  
if not here?  
Not here!

\*

Where am I go-  
ing sitting still  
so long?  
So long!

Returning

I.

Down the long and hedge-lined road  
Far from the shabby gay old city,  
A straggle of houses, a looming church,  
An empty street with breeze-blown signs.  
Here in the rural heart of Ireland,  
Wild and wet and windswept,  
See the locals dine on spuds and bacon,  
Take a last quick look at the form sheet,  
And attack the cabbage.  
By night, by God, in smoke-filled pubs  
They sing the old and wild songs yet,  
Still for themselves, not for the tourists,  
And not for strangers  
The haunting airs of the crossroad.

And in other pubs, not a score of miles  
Across these dark and silent fields,  
The same old songs rise in the night  
With the shots and sudden shouts of command  
Of an alien army in the streets.  
There it's the old and cruel Ireland  
Where weapons take the place of words,  
Where the past can still breathe new fanatics,  
New sorrows, new anger,  
New graves.

Changes, but so little change.

II.

Are tales still told by the fireside,  
Merry eyes in the weathered gentle faces,  
The caps pulled down, the drinks on the hob,  
The smell of the slowly burning turf?  
No more, it seems, with the cars and the telly,  
The lino'ed kitchens, the electric range;  
But still no change in the flow of the talk,  
In the needling, cheerful banter,  
And none in the love of the lilt of a song,  
The expectant silence that greets a verse:  
Slaves are we still to the gods of language,  
To the rush and the rhythm of eloquent words  
That sweep all things before.

*Flow over them with your waves and your waters,  
Mananaan, Mananaan McLir*

Slipping out the door from Sunday Mass  
As the priest begins his sermon:  
A smoke on the steps, a chat with the lads,  
Then back to the mumble of responses,  
To the blend of incense and damp clothing.  
Faith of our fathers, thirsty work,  
But soon the pubs will open.  
(The pubs will always soon be open.)  
And soft the same familiar rain  
Will fall on the fields of vivid green,  
On the grey, untidy streets.

III.

The smell of the porter would fell a horse  
In the gloom of T. P. Flanagan's:  
Sure, welcome home, and what'll ye have?  
Says the man himself behind the bar,  
When wrapped around the remains of a pint  
An oul' fella ups from the corner:  
Ah, sure, Jaysus God, says he,  
This country's gone to hell in a handcart,  
(Smiles of delight run around the room)  
G'wan! Get away back out of it,  
I'd go meself only the age that's in it.  
From the bar: True for you, John Joe!  
Now hold yer whisht and have another.  
The pints, unbidden, line up on the bar.  
If a man won't drink he should wear a badge  
In the decent, sensible Irish way,  
For an offer spurned is a cold-hearted thing  
Where there's little forgiven, even less forgotten.  
God's curse on the IRA!  
(the oul' fella still in the corner)  
Tis well for them Yanks to be sending them money,  
Tis our lads do the dying.  
Our lads. Not me. And not these others  
Standing by, musing  
On the wreck of a tribal dream  
Defiled by murder:

Changes, but so little change.

IV.

On the cloud-touched cliffs of Dun Aengus,  
See the woman old and lonely as she sits upon the lea,  
White-haired, gazing on the great wide ocean.  
O Cathleen, where is thy beauty now?  
The ivory skin, the raven hair,  
The lips like blood upon the snow?  
Turn again those fine deep eyes,  
Turn once again those fearless eyes  
And look upon this land.

For Christopher

My child smiles like a  
chalk, wordless,  
emits a saintly sound  
without a bulk of  
voice, echoing the  
pain waiting to  
accept him, him alone.

He weakens, a  
forced martyr  
among myriads of  
the unborn,  
sinks like an  
ocean that sucks life  
imminently,  
unknown except  
by me.

The Circle

Love is where the  
circle is,  
nothing to be  
had except to give  
and be. The  
circle where  
commotion ceases to  
exist, the sun  
sinks into  
my body and  
sits briefly.  
I lie next to  
you, place my  
heart on your  
heart. Once the  
circle is cut,  
the zero hour  
starts to tick.

*A teacher by profession, a mother of two children by choice, and a poet by necessity, Mari Ochi Moosreiner is an atypical Kyotoite. A believer in "free will," Milton was the subject of her master's thesis at Drake University in Iowa. Her poems have been published in small presses in the U.S. and Japan, winning various prizes.*

The Letting Go

by Sanford Goldstein

Sensei still seemed unhappy with the arrangements Derek had made for tomorrow's conference, not that Derek was the least bit surprised. Even Estelle had misgivings about not getting the Zen master's full approval of the three other speakers. Sometimes Derek had the feeling Sensei wanted to be the only one to speak on the conference theme: Zen in Modern America. After all, the colloquy had been Sensei's idea in the first place.

As they were finishing lunch at home, Estelle had mentioned that the poet and the philosopher were to arrive at the college airport at four-thirty. Sensei had not said a word for or against them, and Derek had also remained silent. It was the third guest lecturer, Wayne Harrison, that Derek was most worried about. Harrison, due to arrive by private plane from Chicago in time for tonight's cocktail party, was the most popular spokesman for Zen in the country, and his three books Derek had read at least twice. In them Zen had been reduced from the mumbo-jumbo of the temple Zennists to something as clearly evident as a clothesline of white shirts on a windless day. Yet Derek remembered Sensei's first reaction a month ago when he had learned Harrison had agreed to come: "His Zen's all right for beginners."

Derek himself had long had his own doubts, for when he had telephoned Harrison out in Seattle to ask him about coming to speak at New Forest, the immediate question at the other end was, "How much you paying me?" Later in talking to Estelle after dinner, Derek had confessed that the haste with which Harrison had asked about his fee had given him pause about American Zen, for poverty and the begging bowl and life pared down to a simple robe and straw sandals by a temple gate still clung to Derek's own readings of the early Zen masters. Dish-towel in hand, he had been surprised when his wife, washing the forks and knives under the hot running water, had been more sympathetic: "It's what Harrison says about Zen that's important."

But Estelle's support seemed to fluctuate, going along mostly with their Zen master, who the moment he had arrived at their home five months ago had said, "Call me Sensei. That's *teacher* in Japanese." It had been the first in a long catalogue of injunctions. At supper two months later, while the three of them had been discussing the idea behind the one-day conference, Sensei had complained, nibbling on a

piece of cauliflower too big to thrust into his mouth, "Aren't all these American names in Zen using Zen rather than being Zen?" He alone had laughed, pointing the forked cauliflower at Estelle.

"Well, aren't we using Zen too?" Derek had broken in. His wife immediately looked annoyed. Ever since sensei's arrival she had often reminded Derek that newcomers to Zen ought to keep their mouths shut. He imagined her voice even then as if by rote: "Just keep your ears tuned to what the master says." And often before the lights were turned off in their upstairs bedroom, she had told him, "Follow Sensei's lead." Arguments over some blunder or other made during the evening always left her back stone-rigid, and he too would turn away, annoyed again over the long list of mistakes he seemed stuck with.

During the last five months Derek had often wondered what in the world had made them invite the master to come live with them. They had met him at a conference on art at Manchester College, a hundred miles upstate. Listening to Sensei's talk on Zen and art, Estelle had suddenly taken fire, an enthusiasm in her Derek had not seen since the beginning months of their marriage six years ago. Watching her face in that small auditorium, her short bobbed hair giving her a momentary sibyl-like assurance, Derek felt as if she were hearing something ancient, something lost but miraculously found. She had not soon recovered from the miscarriage in their second year, and he had to go slow with her as if something delicate twice jarred might shatter, crystal destroyed by sounds too loud, too shrill. Yet that startling image of their future Zen master on the stage in kimono and formal skirt had stirred something in Derek as well. It was a figure he might have seen walking across a Japanese *ukiyo*e print.

Estelle had started their reading on Zen shortly after she had lost the child in the fourth month. Zen had cropped up in some of the Latin American novels she had read, so she was not a newcomer to Zen complexity. Derek had reluctantly gone along with the Zen books, at first merely glancing at them. His lack of response had irritated her, and she had gone so far as to make him read several passages aloud to her. Actually he had little time, for he was trying to publish a book on a small group of artists, the postwar Actionists in Vienna, hoping it might gain him tenure at New Forest.

The Zen master's talk at Manchester had been in surprisingly sophisticated and fluent English, and what he had said he said well. Though on leave from a Japanese university, he had been in no hurry to return to Japan, but that he would ultimately settle like a stone bonze in their home had not been foreseen even by Estelle. She had actually done the inviting, in the innocence of a moment over coffee after Sensei's Manchester lecture. "We'd love to hear you speak at New Forest, wouldn't we, Derek?" she had said, and that remark had turned into a maze-like five-month flow of Zen maxims and anecdotes from morning to night in their cavernous kitchen.

Sensei's presence had certainly become a force in Derek's life, but it was the early reading and rereading of Harrison's constant theme of "letting go" that had finally attracted Derek to Zen. He had recalled a favorite line in an Emily Dickinson poem, "First chill, then stupor, then the letting go," and that thick line had begun to make real sense only after reading Harrison's books.

When Derek and Estelle had discussed Harrison's major theme about letting go, she had remained noncommittal. She still seemed to be cradling her lost child, still seemed submerged in a mood that she was relying on Zen to help her incorporate into her every moment, and that mood, that dark sameness, seemed to hover over all of their personal moments together. At times Derek felt she wanted to break away, go somewhere, even join her unborn child.

Two months earlier she had said to Derek after he had complained about the length of Sensei's encampment, "Can you reach *satori*, enlightenment, without a Zen master? It's *ta-riki* we need, you know." Derek had become increasingly aware that Estelle had been tying herself to the Zen master's strong and heavy jargon, and words like "the power of other," which she had just mentioned, kept up their cliché-like bombardment in his eardrum.

His answer in their dim living room had not been satisfying enough, and she had pursued the question. "Well," she repeated, "there's getting at Zen by yourself, *ji-riki*, as Sensei would say. But I have my doubts." And she had suddenly whispered, "self and other, other and self," and those words, strangely affecting Derek, made him stop the discussion from getting too serious by saying, "Well, I guess Long Sleeves will tell us we need him more than he needs us."

But Estelle missed the humor, and she began again: "Yes, Sensei would probably give up even himself to help us." She suddenly paused as if reminded of something else. "On the other hand, he might even let us go our own way. Well, it's the *when* that's probably most important in all this. Can we let go of Sensei without more training, more sitting, even more lecturing, the stick even?"

Derek's smile faded, recalling the first time he had asked Sensei to use the *keisaku* on him. He and Estelle had been sitting in their dark carpeted living room, sitting on thick Zen cushions the master had brought with him. Derek had never been able to do the full lotus position, and his legs were in a kind of lotus of heel against opposite thigh but without the soles raised high enough. Only the bare light from the study lamp threw off a slant of illumination, and that soft light had given Estelle's brown hair a sad radiance. That image had caused Derek to bring his palms together in a gesture of supplication, a signal for Sensei to bear down on Derek's back with the long stick. Derek knew the *keisaku* blow was meant to return the acolyte to concentration. His legs ached, he had lost track of his breathing, and he was suddenly thinking about tomorrow's lecture on Correggio. He saw before him the Zen master lifting the stick, lifting and coming down, and Derek felt the forceful thud against his back, three times in the same place. And for a moment the sound of that stick against his back was the deepest sound Derek had ever heard.

That the cocktail party at their home was going smoothly that evening was a relief to Derek, who had imagined the two major speakers, Sensei and Harrison, might come to their own verbal blows. All the invited participants had eaten the Japanese delicacies the wives of some graduate students had taught Estelle to make, had drunk cup after cup of Japanese tea or something stronger, had informally roamed through Derek and Estelle's bare living room and study, and had talked even Zen blue in the face for more than three hours before Derek was able to get out the old Honda and drive the three Americans to their rooms at the student union.

When Derek returned, he felt like another night cap. A slight tremor went through him as he realized that come nine a.m., he would have to introduce the Dean for the welcoming address. As Derek lifted his gin-and-tonic, Estelle suddenly came into the kitchen.

"Sensei wants to see you."

"What? Oh no! We'll be up all night at this rate!"

He followed her into Sensei's bedroom, the smallest downstairs room at the back of the house. Derek was conscious of the bed, the dresser and its nimbus-like mirror, the Zen master's desk and cushion with its silk cover—the one they had hesitated twenty minutes before buying while Derek debated stubbornly if they could afford it or not, finally agreeing to only if they left New York one day earlier than they had planned. In the few times he had come into Sensei's bedroom, Derek always felt in it something of the poverty of Zen, and with it the stale odor of pomade, yellow soap reduced to broken pieces, the battered sweater Sensei had worn most of the fall and even during the winter. The cold of the February

midnight seemed pressed into its brown color. Not once had Derek ever heard the Zen master in the shower or bath, had never once thought about who supplied him with fresh towels and washcloths. Seeing Estelle's obedient face before the master now, Derek found it strange to suddenly realize with what devotion she had been performing duties for the master.

She stood by Derek as he waited. She was looking down as usual, as if all thought were concentrated on a spot in the brown carpet.

"He doesn't like any of them, especially Harrison," Estelle finally said since Sensei merely sat at his desk. He sat barefoot in baggy pants and an undershirt. For a moment Derek felt nothing was sacred to them. The hour itself called for directness, for hitting the bull's-eye without aiming.

"He says it's only the money they've come for," Estelle continued. It was as if his wife were reciting from a prepared script, only it was wrong for midnight, and Derek ached to fall into bed, even a bed that had somehow turned loveless in the past five months.

"Well, Sensei's getting money too! Every lecture I've arranged for him since September—and there have been several I might add—he's been paid for. No disrespect of course. They're doing us a favor by coming to New Forest!"

Sensei still did not enter into any of the talk. Was his silence, Derek wondered, because the problem was beneath Zen's dignity? And yet certainly Estelle had been told everything to say, merely repeating the master's complaints.

"And what about your own pay-off?" Sensei said, looking directly at Derek for the first time.

"There is no pay-off! What's going on here?"

"You've done all this not for me, not for Zen, but for your own self-aggrandizement, for promotion, tenure, whatever!"

Derek's right hand firmed into a fist. "My name's not even on the program as chairman!" As he was about to press on, Estelle whispered to him, "Don't answer back. Just listen." And she touched his shoulder as if to settle him. But Derek was in no mood to be conciliatory. The ridiculous hour and his impossible exhaustion made him ready to hurl objects, even that silk cushion on which the master's tight little buttocks had rested so securely all these months. A catalogue poured through Derek—the frustrating interludes of silence around the dinner table as they ate, the master's eternal monologue about the gateless gate, the blue mountains running about, ephemerality, the sound of one hand clapping, tapping, rapping! And the catalogue included his wife as well: her special Zen dishes, her long-distance phone calls for the right kind of Japanese mushroom, the lunches she carried on the master's excursions for stone-gathering, stones the master

rubbed and polished every night. And for what? For her husband to be abused at midnight in a cramped bedroom!

But it was the Zen master this time whose anger soared. He was smaller in stature when dressed in those battered brown pants, his chest smaller too in the white undershirt than in the sweater, yet at that moment Derek's own height was outrageously dwarfed. Sensei was transformed into a face confronting him, a face with eyes sharpened in their passionate authority. And suddenly the socket of Sensei's right eye was undulating, back and forth, back and forth. At first Derek thought it cartoonish, something out of a samurai comic book, and he wanted to laugh. Yet he was stunned too, held by that moving socket like a magnet strong enough to pull him into some realm beyond the real, a realm where conviction was jostled and shattered, converting all mundane belief. The words of refutation that Derek wanted to land with such force could not get past a tongue that seemed to have dried up, lips parched as with desert sand. Derek's heart raced, yet he stood rooted. He suddenly realized Estelle was trying to make him leave.

As radically as the image of that impossible eye had come on, it relaxed, and the Zen master smiled. "Oh, I can work with all of them if I wish. Now go to bed. We've a long day ahead of us!"

And the day seemed too long already at eight-thirty as Derek watched the lecture room fill. It was a Wednesday morning, so many of the students were in scheduled classes. Last night's snow hadn't helped. Carrying a tape recorder, Derek had almost fallen on the steps to Recitation Peak. Yet he was counting on a larger audience in the afternoon and evening, especially the latter when the four speakers would join in a discussion on questions from the audience. The morning session would be devoted to the philosophers, Sensei first with his five general principles of Buddhism, then the invited scholar's summary of American responses to Zen since 1900. Derek thought the students would be more interested in the Zen poems and the Harrison talk, both in the afternoon.

When Harrison stepped into the hall during the Dean's welcome, a sizeable audience already there, he moved directly to the Zen master. "Oh? I see you're in kimono and skirt. Quite a change from last night. Very fitting, very appropriate." Derek caught the sarcasm in the greeting of the taller man and recognized its deliberateness, the typical Zennist battle, the testing of the other's poise, the understated confrontation.

Sensei remained silent, an oriental strategy, it seemed to Derek, for holding off the moment of thrust. Harrison looked amused, leaving to sit by the poet and the philosopher. The Zen master's eye,

Derek realized with relief, was not about to break into its spasmodic dance. And so the morning passed and the special luncheon too, to which several faculty members had been invited. Even the *koto* number performed by the Japanese wife of the physical education instructor came off without a hitch. Derek's early morning headache disappeared with his second cup of black coffee while the *koto* offered its famous melody of falling cherry blossoms.

But the Zen master's unsettled and unsettling eye had somehow stayed with Derek even as the poetry reading of *satori* poems continued, forceful evocations of death and enlightenment, of logical stalemates opening up as if by magic, a breakthrough toward clarity.

As Derek noticed numbers of students coming in for the Harrison talk, he thought with further relief that Sensei's eye would be lost forever in a flood of youthful faces. Harrison was obviously the star of the series, his talk fluent, his phrases gems of clarity about Zen and letting go. He had several catchwords that resonated once the books had been read, and Derek heard these again, the lecture delivered with such skill that an audience might go away feeling all the anxiety and suffocation of twentieth-century life could be left behind. Harrison's concretes were enough to make him win over any audience. "If a door is open, who needs a Zen key?" said Harrison with a shrug. "And what happens to your lap when you stand?—it of course lets go, the same with any problem if you chuck away the surrounding fields of gravity." And Harrison paused as if waiting for verification, but then he went on: "The logical impulse sticks and sticks, holds on, is heavier and heavier, imprisons." Harrison's "Dump it!" found the audience applauding.

It was during one of these catch-all phrases that Derek noticed the Zen master look up, eyes fully on the fluent Harrison. Derek had been taking notes during much of the talk and was about to write down another gem when Sensei's back became rigid, suddenly stiffened as in the *zazen* meditative posture even though he was sitting on a hard wooden chair in a large lecture room. He was in the third row from the stage, the lecture platform a mere four feet from the floor. Harrison leaned against the lectern, his confident flow all sparkle. Obviously he had not noticed the Zen master's reaction, but Derek had and so had Estelle, who was sitting to Sensei's right. Derek leaned behind Sensei to whisper to her, "What does that mean?" but the Zen master's arm forced him back.

Harrison had been on about thirty minutes, and Derek knew the speech would last another twenty minutes with a half-hour question-and-answer period to follow. Already Derek was worrying about the special smorgasbord dinner he and Estelle had arranged for the speakers, the Dean, and six other

colleagues. Should the talk get bogged down in an argument now, what would happen next? Besides, all of them had to return for the evening colloquy at seven-thirty.

True to his word, Harrison ended on time, and Derek stood to ask for questions. Before anyone else had a chance, the Zen master was on his feet, the three rows from the lectern much too close for Derek's comfort.

"Mr. Harrison," the Zen master called out, "Mr. Harrison please." The master's kimono sleeves were quietly hanging, and the thought suddenly came to Derek that those sleeves were a synecdoche of a race, dignified, unruffled, confident. "You said that one can let go of restraints, desires, vicissitudes, as easily as letting go a sigh of breath?" Derek's spine froze, aware of much more than the master's meticulous English.

"Well, maybe two sighs," Harrison said. The audience tittered.

"And if the restraints consist of letting go of life itself"—and Sensei paused to emphasize his point—"well, what then?"

"Suicide, my dear Zen master, is outside the realm of what we may refer to as restraints, even vicissitude, for behind each suicide is a call to life, to freedom. The suicide is demanding a recognition of himself as a feeling being, a living human being. Besides, you know as well as I do that a drowning man will take the rescuer under. Yes, we have to let go."

"Well, then, just how do you go about letting go of that suicide?"

Derek looked for a satiric twist in at least the master's left eye but found none.

"You let go," Harrison said quite calmly, eyes not showing the least annoyance. Watching those eyes, Derek sense the impending explosion. "Let go even if it means the other kills himself."

"Harm to the body is not part of Zen's ethic."  
"Yet what to me is this quintessence of dust?—as the young man in Shakespeare says. Or as Buddhism equally insists."

"Then we are not to prevent the suicide from carrying through his intention?"

"Well, the Bodhisattva saves of course, yet the Bodhisattva can actually say kill yourself, kill even the Buddha. Here's wood for the fire. Get out your axe. Or here's the arsenic. Or rat poison if you prefer. It's letting go pure and simple. Even in childbirth, the woman lets go, lets the child go."

Derek felt some nameless chemistry rising in him, in the audience too. The two authorities on Zen, at first seemingly engaged in pedantic theory, had entered the darker channels where swimmers claw for breath.

"I have had several disciples on the verge of suicide," Sensei said, facing the audience rather

than Harrison. "And each one I kept by me, kept by these kimono sleeves, and nursed through to health."

"Obviously," Harrison interrupted, "you yourself did not let go. But you might have, and I dare say there must be many a poor soul the temple gate has been slammed shut against because there's always the tradition of the Zen master having nothing to teach. There's no need to tell any of us that this vale of tears is so utterly meaningless."

"Meaningless? Meaningless?" said the master, his rhetorical slur echoing through the hall.

Derek heard the audience all murmur, both men standing firm, refusing to cave in.

"My Zen group in Kobe, Mr. Wayne Harrison, has discussed this problem of suicide for twenty-five years, and we still have not reached an answer!"

The Zen master sat down. Derek felt the confrontation, or whatever it was, had settled nothing. An hour later, selecting some cold shrimp and cucumbers in vinegar from the smorgasbord salad bar, Derek remembered the master's shriek under his breath, "That *baka yaro!* That fool!"

Still, it was Estelle who remained almost speechless throughout the dinner. Both the Zen master and Harrison, seated to her right and left, had at times tried to say something to her, but she had not fallen for the bait, had simply sat at the table picking at her food as if holding slippery lacquered chopsticks instead of a fork.

And later during the evening session, Derek had watched her even as he sat in the middle of the fourseome on the platform and handled the flow of questions from the audience. She continued all the while to look down. He thought he knew. Of course she was recalling, and for a moment the Zen world was blotted out, and Derek saw only Estelle against hospital pillows.

After his shower, when he finally climbed wearily to their room, he found Estelle in bed, her back again stone-rigid. Ought he to switch off the light and face his own wall? Or ought he to try and cut across her flow of heavy thought?

"Estelle," he called out in bed beside her. She had not even turned for the kiss that also turns off.

"He was wrong," she said without bothering to look back at him.

"Wrong? Who? Sensei? Harrison?"

For a moment Derek again saw that dizzying eyeball, and even in the dim light of the bedside lamp he was reluctant to look closely at his wife. But he moved to touch her shoulder, her back. It came to him briefly then: her short hair would never turn gray. No, never turn gray.

"What is it you mean?" he said into her hair, his voice softer this time, his open palm hesitant.

"In letting go, you idiot!" she screamed at him. "In letting go!"

"The Zen master? Harrison?"

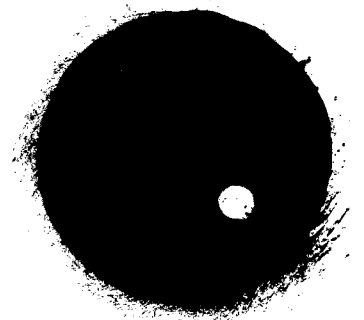
Derek's words seemed to set up an echo of his wife's *koan*, her own *koan*, her own Zen puzzle she had to work out. Should he let the question go or pursue it as the Zen master and Harrison had done in their debate on suicide? It occurred to Derek suddenly, and with more force than a *keisaku* blow, that the two men had both pursued and let go, had let go and pursued.

"Estelle," Derek began again, those verbs like some endless rhythm in his mind, only this time she was turning to him, holding on to him, holding on with more force than he had felt from those arms before.

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*Sanford Goldstein is on a 2-year leave of absence from Purdue University, where he teaches creative writing and literature. Currently at Niigata University in Japan, he is translating Masaoka Shiki's tanka. Goldstein's short stories have appeared in Arizona Quarterly, Western Humanities Review, Texas Quarterly, and Chaminade Literary Review.*

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Featured Poet: Bill Shively

In This Wan and Tired Light

gravel rattles in the milk river thaws	winds of Jupiter
the sound of all the guns and bombs falling silent	the improvised jazz at the edge
the scrape of chairs as people sit to supper	the sound of snow in dirty brick alleys
summer night susurru-susurru susurru-ru	cracking the pot of gold
the sound as disease slams the door on the way out of the bones	hammer and chisel and carrerra marble
after the train has left the station	old monk raking sand the young monk raked
coon dogs baying in the bacon moon	a potter's wheel in the cold of morning
after the rain before the swan	steamer groans as duffle hit the dock
sunset high and golden honking	that frog Basho was talking
	the fresh baked wind lifts the mist

More Fog

The more fog (there is)  
the more Japanese  
my neighborhood

this morning it  
is. . .  
    ahhh soooo

a few wood storefronts  
watch thatch  
and the river drifting

swirling  
chuckling  
under

mallards near *Togetsu*  
that have never been  
shot at and two red-headed webbers

near the heron  
old pine branches  
crutched and bandaged

hold the weight of the  
departed night  
in the glicker of

diminishing halos  
an old man fishes fingerlings  
at the foot of the glassy

cascade  
where three cans and a happy  
face ball dance in the spill

a calico cat that couldn't  
score ranges the far bank  
under cherry trees

burdened  
with  
early buds

I glide by one last lantern  
one last pond  
before the station

"ohayo gozaimasu"  
cuts the cold damp as if  
he really meant it

Turtle Zen

It's not so much the turtle  
as being able to see  
it float in the sun bloated moat.  
Little tiny turtle nose,  
little tiny turtle eyes,  
pinprick the shimmer.

And all these uniform  
jobs and all these houses  
in uniform towers and all these polyesterdays  
coming together like five people with bad breath.

Perhaps it's the drifting, carefree,  
non-suicidal zen  
lazy and two on the gray rock  
baking. And if turtles can be happy  
these are, or at least they  
don't seem to mind

all the garbage  
floating in the water.  
And the stench on the south end  
isn't just swamp smell,  
it's human craziness  
completely unpaid for.

Nipples

fried eggs, fire plugs or raisins

muscled pecs;  
firm, supple, brown  
a light, shining down  
of short curls

cigaret, toothpick, the mouth of a bottle

peppercorn mole  
to the south south west  
of the left  
    . . . no, the right

candlelight, Debussy and the wind off the river

the two of them quiet  
in a crowded room  
respond to the tongue

. . . the thought of the tongue

The farmer with a Steinway  
is working on  
a patent application

to change the way  
we hear things, to  
fill the vibrant silence

by dividing all that's synchronous  
into portraits  
and their footprints.

Muddy boots and well-hoed beds,  
in his mind the *daikon* and  
*kyuri*

huge  
and crisp  
and sweet. He leans

towards analytical,  
he wants to know,  
he wants to understand

the feelings in the music—  
what it is about her playing  
might take another lifetime,

even as he plants his onions  
straight  
in rows.

Bill Shively is  
primarily an oral  
poet who, living  
in Kyoto, has  
faced the need to  
shift his focus  
back to the  
printed page.  
This shift has  
taken the title *Us  
Old Frogs* and is  
currently hopping  
from editor to  
editor making old  
frog splash  
sounds.

photo by Charlie Cunniff



## Keki

They'd been in Japan awhile. She  
bought a How-to-in-Japan book. She  
bought many, one was a guide to *Buying  
Food in Japan*  
Thirty-five-hundred yen.  
Two days groceries was one way to look at it.  
Not a very popular way, though.

Two days later  
and pretty damn hungry  
she went to the markets.

Apples?  
Oranges?  
Bananas?

No way, Jose, she bought *ringo*  
*mikan*  
*banana*.

A very fruitful purchase was another way to look at it.

This went on for several weeks.  
They were getting their money's worth.  
And an awful lot of *banana*. She even  
claimed to know how much everything cost.  
He usually just emptied his pockets,  
hoped for the best.

*Sake.*

*Biru.*

*Wiskey.* The clatter of change. Wads of bills.

And *Sparkalingu Wino. Whito.*

*Arigato.*

Nothing to it. A piece of *keki*.

## fiction

# 2 x 2

two short-shorts by two authors

### Chris Ames

## Lemon juice straight

The old man lay in the bright red sand with one boot off. He had fallen on the slope some time ago, and his beret had rolled a little farther on down. The heat of the summer sun had brought him to his senses. Ungluing his eyes he discovered to his disappointment that he was still in this world.

"Blue sky," he registered, "too bright," and he clamped his eyes shut. "Wet, bad smell back of head," was the next sensation entering, and he sniffed awhile before he realized it distinctly had the aroma of olives and gin. He cracked a toothless grin, and excruciatingly turned his head away from the sunlight. His right ear took in all the pain of a gang of noisy kids playing down at the school and he began to remember who and where he was.

"You bastard," he thought to himself, "why didn't you fall where you wouldn't wake up?" He unglued his eyes and took in the line of clay houses hanging to the cliff's edge of Old Cuenca, descending like a gradual staircase to the new town. A dry wind started up and blew at his bald scalp. This soothed him as long as it lasted, but it would stop and start and swirl in little whirlwinds. His beret started rolling further downhill, and finally wedged itself between two rocks. He was trying his best to be a dead man, but voices brought him back to the living.

"Pablo, Pablito, wake up. Time to go to school," the first one said.

"Leave him in peace," the second one said.

"Pa—blo. Where are you Pablito? Dinner's rea—dy." The first voice imitated a worried mother.

"I still think we should leave him in peace," the second man went on in a serious tone. "He seems to be thinking about something important."

"Pablo," the voice of the first man resumed its masculinity. "Pablo, tell me, what is the meaning of life?"

"He told us that last night. Pablo are you trying to tell us the meaning of death?"

"Leave me!" Pablo choked, making a great

effort to wave his free arm. "Leave me or I'll slug you one."

"It looks like you've slugged yourself one," the second man said, stepping down off the road to help. The first man followed, picking up Pablo's boot and trying to stick it on while the second man looked around for the beret. It had perched on the old man's head for as long as he'd known him. He saw it down in the rocks and sidled down to get it while the first man tied Pablo's bootlace then took to stroking the bald man's noggin.

"Pablo," he spoke as softly as possible into the man's ear. "What happened Pablito? You were so happy last night."

Pablo grunted and clamped his free hand on the ear, opened his eyes but kept them on the clay houses. The second man came up, brushing the dust off the black beret. He brought it down to the hairlines above his buddy's ears, careful to wipe away what vomit he could with a handkerchief. They tilted him up to a sitting position.

"To your bed Pablo," the second man said. "Think hot shower and those freshly ironed sheets."

"Yeah Pablo," the first man said, "your sister irons the sheets all the time. Your sister irons everything."

The two men wedged their arms into his armpits and brought him to his feet, then half-dragged him to the road.

"Now *dejame por favor*."

"No, we'll take you home."

"No, I can get there by myself."

He straightened his eyes out on the road and felt the weight of his body on his feet. The red dirt blazed around their shadows.

"Let's see if you can walk."

"See, I can walk."

He loosened himself from their grip and pigeon-toed down the road in a zigzag, not looking back. The second man watched, then folded up his handkerchief and ran to catch up with the first man, who had already gone over a rise.

With the wind at his back helping him, Pablo soon made it to the clay houses. The beret kept the sun off his head, and he picked himself up a bit.

"Now all I need to do is throw myself over and that will be that," he thought out loud, but his feet

continued trodding the middle of the street. A few dogs wagged from doorways. A stone got in his way and he stumbled but didn't fall. "You're a graceful man." The weight on his feet was tremendous, and his head had broken bottles in it. Emilio's was a little farther on, on the left. It was open. It always seemed to be open, that's why Pablo liked it. He pushed the heavy door open and staggered into the dark cool.

"Pablo, Jesus what happened to you?" Emilio came out from behind the bar and sat him down. "Hombre, I'll get you a coffee, a double."

"No. Don't bother. You got some lemons?"

"Sure. You want some aspirin? I got some strong stuff."

"No, thanks. Just squeeze two or three lemons and give me that. Can you turn that radio down?"

"Sure man." Emilio moved quickly behind the bar and turned the radio down, then cut up some ready lemons and started squeezing them.

Pablo sifted his eyes through the darkness of the place, happy Emilio hadn't bothered to turn on the lights. The radio was still too loud for him, though. It droned on in a fast voice.

"Emilio, por favor."

Emilio had stopped halfway through the lemons and was writing down the winning lottery number being delivered by the quick Castilian voice. Two hundred and thirty million pesetas was being given away that week. The past two weeks no one had claimed the prize so the money kept coming in from around the country.

"Emilio, *fijate*."

"*Espera*."

Emilio ran the number down the list of tickets he'd distributed to his patrons. The lead of his pencil broke halfway down. He checked the nine numbers, then double-checked.

"Pablo man, you won!"

"*Emilio, cajo en la leche joder!*"

"Pablo, you have your ticket?"

"I don't have my lemon juice."

"Your ticket won, your ticket!"

"My what?"

"Check your pockets."

Pablo patted his vest pockets as if searching for a tissue to blow his nose with.

"Pablo, you just won two hundred thirty million pesetas, where's your ticket?"

"Where's my lemon juice?" He held his head in a big hand to keep it from crumbling like an old donut. "And turn that radio off!"

Emilio poured the juice in a beer glass then brought it over and set it down in front of the old man. It barely filled a third of the glass. Pablo downed it in two gulps.

"Another," the old man sighed, revived. "And

turn that radio off, *vale?*"

"Sure."

Emilio moved behind the bar and with a quick movement switched the radio off.

## Suomessa

The flurry swept out of the dark, swirling powder up against the north window of the sauna. The lanternlight swayed on the pinewood sill, and when they tossed a ladleful of water on the rocks the steam sang.

"Why you go?"

"Why don't you come with me?"

"Answer."

"You answer."

"You don't need to go."

"Yeah. Why do you need to stay?"

Katariina didn't answer. She stood up and paced around the plank boards, then stepped out into the storm and jumped into the hole they had chipped out of the icy lake. The water came up to her taut nipples, and she dunked her head once then sprang back onto the wooden pier and ran back inside the sauna.

Her friend ladled more water on the rocks, then he too went out to dunk himself. She lay on the top planks, the wood hot on her tingling back. He came back in and built up the steam.

They didn't speak for a long time. He rubbed the steam off the window and snow blew against the glass like stars that immediately melted.

"You're a part of this place."

"I don't understand."

"Yes, you do. You know better than I do."

Kata, you're *Suomelainen*. I can never be."

She sat up and breathed in the hot air deeply, then went back out. He followed and they both jumped in the lake.

"We're *hullu!*"

"Yes! How you say? Crazy!"

She dunked him, then climbed back on the pier. In seconds they were back inside.

"I want the top, girl."

"We have to go in soon. No more coals."

"How can you do this every day?"

"I don't."

Kata paced around, kissed him on the shoulder. He sat up to ladle more water on. The steam sang more quietly. "You're right."

"Right?"

"I should stay."

"You say this, then say that!"

"But I haven't done anything."

"You always writing letters and things."

That's something."

He didn't say anything.

"You can't come like this, then go away," she went on, "you can't, no."

"No. Nice how it snows."

"You crazy."

"It gives light to the nights. I forgot my towel."

"Here."

She took the lantern into the small dressing area and they got ready to head back to the cabin.

"Why you say I'm *Suomelainen* in such a way?"

"Because you *are*."

"So what's so special about that?"

"You know better than I do."

Katariina walked ahead, the powder almost to her knees. The flurry had passed, and the northern lights draped over the sawtooth edge of the woods they disappeared into. ■

*Utah native Chris Ames is widely traveled, having spent the last few years exploring Asia, and several before that in Europe, something reflected in his stories and poetry. Although he currently calls Japan home, he is in Indonesia as we go to press, working on his tan and a second collection of palm of the hand stories. "Lemon Juice Straight" and "Suomessa" are from his first collection, "Awakenings."*

## Thomas I. Bradley

### Hugh of Provo

A disturbed adolescent, the daughter of an inbred clan of survivalist neighbors of ours, has been creepy-crawling our backyard with her cat. She has stolen the few wads of grapes that our single vine managed to grunt up before the first frost, and she has been leaving signs of herself, spoors, among the unmown pear mush: Brooke Shields-brand perfume atomizers and toy Tampax tubes.

Even allowing for the accelerated maturation rate among rural polygamist Jack-Mormon females, I would estimate she's too old for toys. Everynight, all night, her ashen cat copulates with everything furred the neighborhood has to offer, right underneath our bagged air conditioner, though my wife seems to sleep through it.

Sometimes at night when my wife is asleep, these two marauders seep through the drapes in vaporous form and reintegrate on the skin of my chest, where the larger, more anthropomorphic one squats in a vulgar position, something furred, taloned coiling around her plump limbs. She hisses into my ear:

Medieval times are coming to your neighborhood, Tom. We can tell from the videocassette of a teen slasher movie that we stole from my dad's

liquor cabinet. Your wife, a Catholic, who believes in spirits and can therefore dismiss them, will snore through it all. But you, you aging acid head, with your garden full of secular humanist *psilocybin cubensis*, you are in for it. Some night soon it will be *Walpurgisnacht* erupting in your yard, not mushrooms.

We will turn into a sweet-singing boy, and you into a Jew. The prefab fiberglass of your greenhouse will melt down into a cesspool, and we'll see who seduces whom.

## Eugenic Admonition

To the dusty eleven- or twelve- or thirteen-year-old girl who is leaning against the community bulletin board outside Mini-Mart in the nighttime, displaying her lobster claw:

Your parents do not love you. I can tell from the way the stuffing is coming out of your little parka. I'll bet your dad is military. I'll bet you gestated around someplace nuclear.

Now no matter, child, the name: congenital or inherited, Daughter of the Age or inbred. In either case, never doubt that lobster claw betrays some corresponding bend or rift in the essential fiber of your soul. Don't deny it: that lobster claw is you. And if you're already mature enough to appreciate your own rareness, you can't ignore the fact that you will always be somewhere deeply repellent.

Lean for hours outside Mini-Mart and watch people intensely to see if their eyes blench away. Until somebody with singular tastes—not necessarily old or filthy, but definitely suffering self-image problems—comes along.

Like for example me. I didn't look away. I got a good long careful look:

One lonesome finger- and/or thumbnail peeping out from under a hood of wrinkles, clipped back. Webs of pores in weird configuration with flecks of grit.

I knew you wanted me to. And the only reason I didn't say hello, is that I never do.

Whatever becomes of you, do keep in mind that you are an organism. Maybe more so than most of us. Claim your individual rights as an organism and much of your physical discomfort may be avoided.

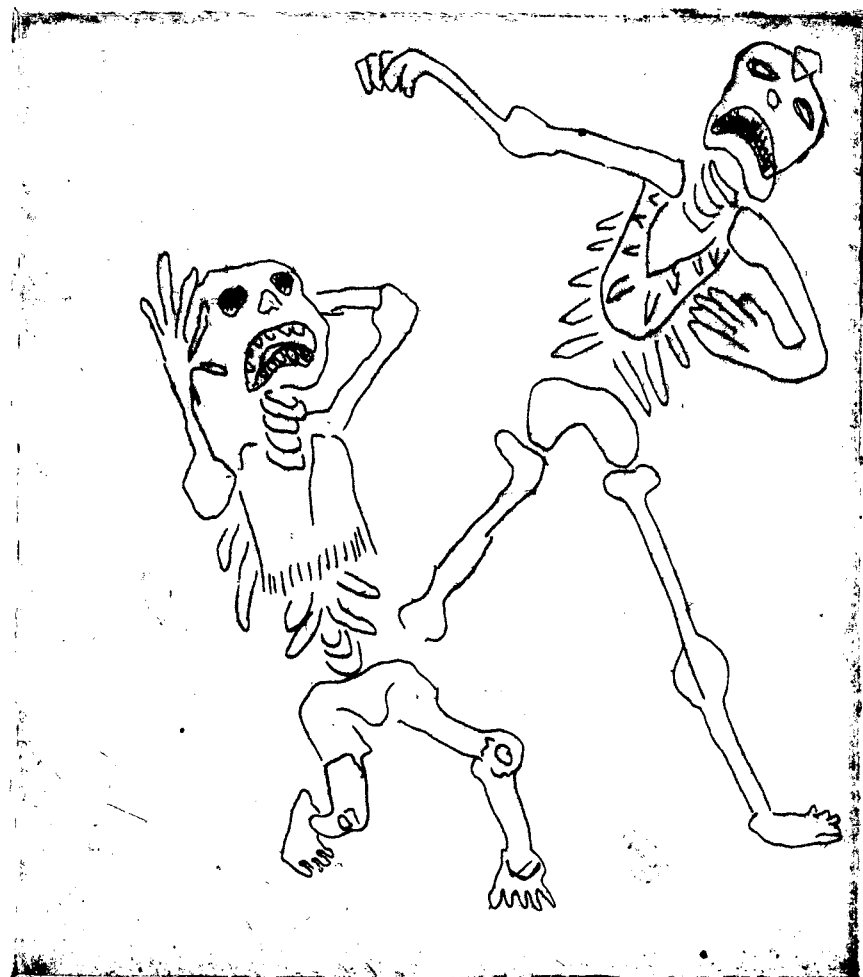
That you're outside Mini-Mart already, at your age, seems auspicious. ■

*Thomas I. Bradley plays classical harp and jazz piano, and adopts daughters when he isn't writing prize-winning novels, novellas, and short stories. His work has appeared in / been honored by (among others) Quarterly West, Kansas Quarterly, Touchstone, the Utah Arts Council Literary Competition, and a previous TELS Short Story Contest.*

*images:*

woodcuts by Margaret Chavigny





Margaret Chavigny has a B.A. in art from Berkeley and will be finishing up an M.F.A. in Rome this fall. She's had a one woman-show in Oakland, California and will have her M.F.A. show in Philadelphia.

essay

## Getting Started with Renku An Inventory of Basic Techniques

by Tadashi Kondo

An increasing number of poets whose native languages are not Japanese have become interested in writing renku. The trend is reflected by the many renku which have been written in English both in the United States and Japan during the last decade. The purpose of this article is to provide a basic ground for beginners to start writing renku in an international community. I have made substantial reference to Japanese traditional renku, but my main concern is with the possibility of applying these techniques to international renku.

Because there are elaborate guidelines in Japanese traditional renku, beginners often get cold feet. But I believe we don't necessarily have to know all of the guidelines before we begin writing renku. It might be more appropriate in fact to regard the traditional guidelines of Japanese renku as techniques which can be employed at the writer's own discretion. In this article I'll limit myself to providing a catalogue of some of the basic techniques of linking and to discussing the construction of renku.

### LINKING

#### TYPES OF LINKING

Linking is the most essential element in renku, and historically there have been three major ways in which links could be formed:

**Formal linking (*monozuke*)** connects a base verse with the succeeding verse by relating words or objects. (The number of verses in renku varies, with poems of 36 or 100 links being common. In this article [BV] represents the base verse, that is, whichever of the links is under discussion. The succeeding verse [SV] is the verse which comes after the base verse; the previous verse [PV] is the one which comes before.)

- [BV] the cook opens the back door  
to look at the snow —Robert Reed
- [SV] cat tracks  
crisscrossing  
the alley —Kris Kondo

The "the back door" is linked here with "the alley."  
**Semantic linking (*kokorozuke*)** is based on the similar meanings of two verses, including puns

and twists of meaning. For example,

- [BV] hundreds of bugs  
end of their lives
- [SV] burning a dead tree  
the smoke  
in the evening

The fleeting sense of "end of their lives" is repeated in the image of the transient smoke fading away.

**Overtone linking (*nioizuke*)** depends upon similarities resonating between verses. There are five subcategories:

(1) The *scent (nioi)* is a kind of link in which the overtones of two verses harmonize.

- [BV] rice leaves lengthening  
in a feeble wind
- [SV] a convert to begin with  
going over  
Suzuka Pass

The weakness implied by the feeble wind is superimposed on the image of a young monk. The lines also remind readers of the young Saigyō who made the following poem when he first went over Suzuka Pass:

Suzuka Pass  
the world indifferently  
cast off

how will it come out?  
what will become of me?

The place name is a key word which provokes the image of a young monk, who may be feeling helpless in this uncertain world, just as the young Saigyō felt. The overtone in turn interacts with the rural scene in which no wind sweeps across the growing rice fields under the sweltering summer sun.

(2) The *echo (hibiki)* is the same as the scent in terms of the mode of interaction, but different in terms of the quality of the overtone. In the echo, the quality of the overtone is characterized as sharp, intent, grand, and refreshing, while that of the scent

is soft, delicate, pastel, and evanescent.

[PV] look at  
the determined craze for death —Fumikuni

[BV] in azure sky  
the waning moon's  
daybreak —Kyorai

[SV] in the autumn lake  
Mt. Hira's first frost —Basho

Fumikuni's verse focuses on a violent image from a battlefield. Kyorai follows by contrasting the insane intensity of the human world with a cool, sharp natural object—a moon hung in the sky. The wild warrior who is determined to fight to death swings around his bloody sword, curved like a crescent moon which brightens just before dawn and soon fades into a white shadow. In the succeeding verse Basho focuses on the crisp atmosphere provided by the base verse and responds by presenting cool and clear images in a grand scenery.

(3) The *transfer (utsuri)* is an overtone which flows one-way from the base verse to the succeeding verse.

[BV] look at the moon  
taken out of bed  
feeling shy

[SV] having her hair fanned  
dew on translucent robe

The base verse presents the image of a lady who has been taken out of her bed by her husband to look at the bright moon. It evokes a scene from classical times when sex belonged to the dark side of night. The lady feels shy in the bright moonlight, while her husband satisfies his visual desire. In the succeeding verse another private scene is displayed: the woman has just had her hair washed; she has a light robe on and is having her maid fan and dry her hair.

Tomoji Nose, in his book *Renku Geijutsu no Seikaku (The Nature of Renku Art)*, finds two sub-categories in the transfer technique. One is the *reflection* in which the overtone has a soft quality; the other is the *run* in which the quality of the overtone is more intense. The above example represents the reflection, and the following example shows the run:

[BV] enemies attacking,  
roar of the winds in the pines

[SV] daybreak,  
putting on  
the soft helmet

The scene is a battlefield. Enemies are ap-

proaching like the gushing winds, building the intense feeling up to its limit. On the other hand the succeeding verse projects the image of a warlord who has his soft helmet on, and is calmly waiting for the right time to move his army. The clear and cool air in the morning sky heightens the intense feeling.

(4) The *class (kurai)* relates two verses to each other on the basis of social class.

[BV] cutting vegetables  
to put on rice  
emptyminded

[SV] a day with no work for the horse carriage  
love blooms indoors

The base verse presents an image of a young girl who is preparing a meal but thinking about something else. Having vegetables on top of rice indicates that she belongs to the working class where physical laborers take simple meals. In the succeeding verse a horse carriage worker is introduced to represent a crude person who will woo any young girl he sees.

(5) The *image (omokage)* draws upon one's historic imagination, not by a direct reference but by subtle suggestion.

[BV] having dwelt  
in a grass hut for awhile  
then took it down —Basho

[SV] happy to be alive  
news of a new anthology —Kyorai

The base verse provides the image of an itinerant person who moves from place to place like the clouds or water. Kyorai first attempted to write the succeeding verse as "I know not the secrets of waka poetry"—a reference to a famous reply given by Saigyō to a question the Shogun Minamoto no Yoritomo put to him. Basho felt the reference was too direct, and suggested that Kyorai use a concrete image instead.

#### THE FOUR WAYS

The "four ways" are specifically concerned not with the *type* of link but with its *quality*. In juxtaposition and extension the relationship between the base verse and succeeding verse is close, while in conversion and reversion there is a break between the two verses which suggests a more distant relationship.

(1) In *juxtaposition (sou)* the base verse and succeeding verse are based on similar ideas and there is a symphonic interaction of overtones between them.

[BV] longing for old days  
sleeves with dew

[SV] village deserted  
flowers alone  
fragrant in the field

The lonely melancholy feeling of the base verse matches the feeling of the succeeding verse, even though the images are completely different.

(2) In *extension (shitagau)* the theme introduced in the base verse is unfolded in the succeeding verse.

[BV] in Musashino Plain  
how many autumn days  
will be spent?

[SV] on the tip of a thatch leaf  
the daybreak moon

The succeeding verse zooms in on one particular feature of the wide landscape presented in the base verse.

(3) In *conversion (hanatsu)* the theme in the base verse gets completely changed in the succeeding verse in order to explore an unexpected context.

[BV] a stream  
flows through  
a purple garden

[SV] irises in bloom  
the village of eight bridges

The eight bridges provide a visual transition between the stream of the base verse and the village of the succeeding verse. Continuity is provided by linking the irises to the purple garden.

(4) In *reversion (sakarau)* the idea of the succeeding verse is opposite from that in the base verse.

[BV] will miss these geese  
going back over  
the northern mountains —Chosetsu

[SV] chirping swallows  
my spring sky —Socho

The geese returning back over the dark mountains are contrasted with the swallows arriving with the bright sun.

#### SHIKO'S LINKING TECHNIQUES

Overtone linking, described above, was the technique most often used by Basho at his renku parties. One of Basho's disciples, Shiko, however, elaborated on overtone linking in order to create a completely different set of guidelines which use a different terminology. By combining Basho's and Shiko's techniques, it may be possible to come up with a comprehensive set of simple and universal guidelines which will be of value to international renku. Here's an outline of the techniques developed by Shiko:

The *Seven Ideas* are divided into three groups: the first three are collectively called humane heart, the next three salutation, and escape forms its own category. Thus they are also called the three modes.

(1) The *humane heart* picks up a humane implication in the base verse and introduces another characteristic of the same person in the succeeding verse.

[BV] lord as he is,  
bad at go

[SV] a merchant  
bows at the gate  
where he suffered a loss

The base verse shows what the merchant thought of the lord while playing a game of go with him. But in the end the merchant is forced to pay the lord a compliment and loses the game.

(2) The technique of *matching person* is the same as the humane heart, except that an additional character is introduced.

[BV] lord as he is,  
a playboy in thin robes

[SV] deliberately humble  
with a meal of wheat,  
an old man's simplicity

The lord in the base verse is received in a humble temple where an old monk is living a simple life. Another example:

[PV] before finishing  
the second weeding  
rice is in ears —Kyorai

[BV] tapping the ash off  
a piece of sardine —Boncho

[SV] silver coins  
not recognized around here,  
how inconvenient —Basho

The preceding verse sets the scene as being in the country, the base verse describes the lunch of farmers, and the succeeding verse introduces a person from the city. The economy of the region is so simple and primitive that "city money" isn't recognized.

(3) With *unfolding feelings* one finds hidden human elements in landscapes or events.

[PV] a shower passing over a village  
streaks of sun rays (landscape)

[BV] five or six pine trees  
in the fields  
here and there (landscape)

[SV] am I being bewitched  
by a fox? (feelings)

The landscape projected in the first two verses is simply too beautiful to be real. A second example:

[BV] a tall paulownia tree  
a clear moon —Yaba

[SV] fun  
to close the gate  
and go to bed quietly —Basho

(4) *Salutation* focuses on clothing, food, or tools and is light in tone. About 60-70% of renku are linked by salutation.

[PV] tapping the ash off  
a piece of sardine —Boncho

[BV] silver coins  
not recognized around here,  
how inconvenient —Basho

[SV] the sword  
extraordinarily long —Kyorai

Since the person in the base verse is traveling, he must be carrying a sword. The length of the sword gives an indication of the owner's personality.

(5) *Rhythm* is a variation on salutation, but it involves repeating the rhythm of the words from one verse to another.

(6) *Color* is another variation on salutation in which certain colors are repeated. Here's a self-explanatory example from a renku originally written in English:

[BV] bamboo pinwheel  
the color of a rainbow —Tadashi Kondo

[SV] brand new little red  
puddle-hunting boots —Robert Reed

(7) *Escape* is similar to salutation, but is much lighter. When the progression of events or feelings gets too complicated or overlaid, the linking poet can "escape" by introducing climate, time of day, or time of year.

[PV] now the squire's mouth  
tightly shut

[BV] the bell-seller  
first hitting  
the bell

[SV] fluttering, fluttering  
the snow starts falling

The Eight Materials are represented by the following examples. *Person* focuses on the quality of

the life, class or age of the person in the base verse, and is usually in the humane heart mode. *Place* explores the physical location of the base verse, usually in the salutation mode. *Time of day* includes day and night, morning and evening, and light and dark, and is in either the humane heart or the escape mode. *Time of year* includes the four seasons and holidays, and is also either in the humane heart or the escape mode. *Fashion* incorporates current fads and usually uses the salutation technique. *Climate* includes reference to heavenly objects and the weather, usually in the mode of escape. *Physiognomy* reflects the happiness and sadness of life or of the world, in the humane heart mode. *Image* is the same as Basho's overtone linking and relies on images of historical persons or events.

[BV] season's first hunting  
a double-barreled gun  
shining on the shoulder

Using these lines as the base verse, any of the following would qualify as succeeding verses:

[SV] a sharp  
young president (person)

[SV] hanging bridge  
over the gorge rebuilt (place)

[SV] the autumn coolness  
deep mountains' daybreak (time of day)

[SV] mighty fine days,  
autumn holidays (time of year)

[SV] autumn daybreak  
the sky getting clearer (climate)

[SV] passing thought  
the second generation's family line (physiognomy)

[SV] receiving the Akutagawa literary award,  
a newsman retires (image)

[SV] just perfect  
modern dandyism (fashion)

The **Key Point Method** is a practical method to be used when linking is very difficult. On the basis of the overtones contained in the base verse, the linking poet comes up with a key word implicit in the base verse itself and which crystalizes the meaning of the base verse and acts as a catalyst in producing the succeeding verse.

[BV] sun rays reflecting  
on nightgown of twill

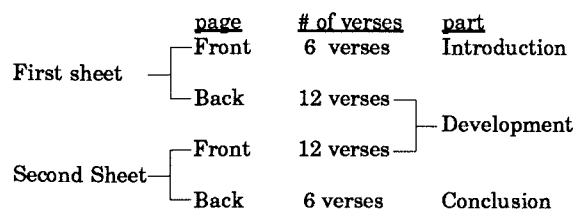
[SV] crying, crying,  
unable to find  
small straw sandals

When no one could come up with a suitable succeeding verse in this example, Basho suggested that the base verse was about a traveling courtesan. That rekindled Kyorai's imagination enough to enable him to write the succeeding verse.

## CONSTRUCTION

### KASEN STRUCTURE

The Kasen Structure is currently the most common form of renku construction. It consists of 36 verses and is divided into three parts: introduction, development, and conclusion. The structure was derived from classical theories of *noh* drama and music. Since the writers would use two sheets of paper, each folded in a particular manner, a standardized way of presenting the verses developed:



The three parts correspond to social manners when visiting someone's house. The introduction corresponds to the greeting, a time when provocative verses should be avoided. In the development gossiping is permissible and the greater the variety of topics the better. The conclusion corresponds to the time of departure, when the participants would try to sum up the topics and bring the renku writing to a satisfactory end.

The writers connected with the Basho school of renku tried to avoid the following topics on the front of the first sheet: the gods, Buddha, love, mutability, effusiveness, nostalgia, place names, personal names, and sickness. The contemporary renku master Shuko Tamura adds the following taboos to the classical list: travel, military affairs, foreign words, obscenity, and extraordinary events. The point of having these taboos is that in the introduction communication must first take place in a shared domain, that is, with subject material which is common to all the participants who are writing the renku.

### MAINTAINING VARIETY

**Progression tables.** There are five seasons in renku: New Year, spring, summer, fall, and winter. The opening verse of a renku may refer to any of these seasons, but the choice will determine how the remainder of the renku is constructed. Progression tables have been developed to assure that there can be an even distribution of reference to the seasons throughout the renku.

There are a total of four elements which the pro-

gression tables attempt to arrange. The five seasons comprise only one of these elements. The other three elements are "flower," "moon," and "love." The four elements had cosmological significance in classical times, when culture was centered around agriculture. Different progression tables could be developed which reflect a more modern cosmology, however. Traditional progression tables show how reference can be made to each of the four elements in an orderly fashion. It should be noted, however, that actual renku almost never conform exactly to the arrangements provided by progression tables.

#	Models					18-S	S	S	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	19-S	S	S	S	S
1	N	S	U	A	W	20-X	X	X	X	X
2	N	S	U	A/M	W	21-X	X	X	X	X
3	S	S	X	A	X	22-X	X	X	X	X
4	S	X	X	X	X	23-W	W	U	U	W
5	S/M	A/M	A/M	X	A/M	24-W	W	U	U	W
6	X	A	A	U	A	25-X	X	X	X	X
7	X	A	A	U	A	26-X/L	X/L	X/L	X/L	X/L
8	X/L	X/L	X/L	X/L	X/L	27-X/L	X/L	X/L	X/L	X/L
9	X/L	X/L	X/L	X/L	X/L	28-X	X	X	X	X
10	U	X	X	X	X	29-A/M	A/M	A/M	A/M	A/M
11	U	X	X	X	X	30-A	A	A	A	A
12	X	X	X	X	X	31-A	A	A	A	A
13	A/M	U/M	W/M	W/M	U/M	32-X	X	X	X	X
14	A	U	W	W	U	33-X	X	X	X	X
15	A	X	X	X	X	34-X	X	X	X	X
16	X	X	X	X	X	35-S/F	S/F	S/F	S/F	S/F
17	S/F	S/F	S/F	S/F	S/F	36-S	S	S	S	S

Progression Table showing the distribution of seasonal and poetic references in a typical 36-stanza renku. Each of the five models shown here begins with a different season. N=New Year, S=Spring, U=Summer, A=Autumn, W=Winter, F=Flower, M=Moon, L=Love, X=non-seasonal references, including landscapes and human affairs.

**Distance between the same material.** The world is at every moment in a process of creation, moved by the forces of chance and love. Chance provides for freedom, love for harmony or unity. Renku demands both freedom and unity. To maintain variety the excessive repetition of similar material should be avoided. In traditional charts based on classical cosmology, there are limits on the maximum number of times a particular subject can be referred to in the course of the entire renku. There is also a minimum number of verses which must separate verses containing similar subject matter. Reference to mountains, for example, may be repeated three times in the course of one 36-verse renku and there must be at least three verses separating each of these references. A reference to love, however, must be repeated at least two times and the maximum number of repetitions is five.

**References to human and non-human**

**subject matter.** References to human and non-human subject matter are divided into three subcategories: human-self, human-others, and non-humans, including landscapes. Before Basho's time non-human verses were the norm, but beginning with Basho more attention was paid to human verses.

In any sequence (consisting of a preceding verse, a base verse, and a succeeding verse) the same subcategory may be repeated in both the preceding verse and the base verse or in the base verse and the succeeding verse. But the preceding verse and the succeeding verse should always make reference to different subcategories. It's also possible for a sequence to utilize all three subcategories in succession.

In the following example, both the preceding verse and the succeeding verse repetitiously refer to the human-self:

[PV] pension alone  
not enough for bread

[BV] studying  
the celestial sphere,  
a misanthrope

[SV] anywhere I go  
in old jeans

The same human-self implied in the the preceding verse is explicitly mentioned in the succeeding verse (the misanthrope of the base verse is a human-other). But the redundancy can be avoided by rewriting the succeeding verse in a non-human subcategory:

[SV] jeans  
with a lot of patches

The rationale behind these three categories is not clear. But my own understanding is that the balance between mind and body or between subject and object has been one of the main themes of Eastern art. The mind and the subject are represented by the human-self and human-other, the body and object by the non-human. The fact that more human verses began to be written in Basho's time may imply an attempt on the part of renku to achieve a balance between human feelings and the physical environment. There's an interesting correspondence between this and the increased appearance of human affairs in *ukiyo-e* in the middle of the 17th Century.

### CONCLUSION

I take the position that there is a universal renku, of which Japanese renku is one species and English renku is another. Universal renku has both historical and geographical manifestations. Historical varieties of Japanese renku, including those by

Basho, Buson, and modern writers, can be regarded as spinoffs of the timeless universal renku, while regional varieties—including those written in Japan and the U.S.A.—are culture-specific instances of universal renku (the differences in languages are simply accidental elements).

This article is the first of a three-part inquiry which I am currently conducting into a universal renku. The second part will be on the modern development of Japanese renku, and the third on modern Western renku. Modern Japanese renku has evolved shorter varieties of renku, reflecting the busy lifestyle of Japan. This trend of writing shorter renku requires an updated set of concepts concerning linking and construction. As English renku is still in its infancy, the quantity of raw data is limited and it is too early to be conclusive about what particular forms it will take. Yet the distinct developments so far must nonetheless be described. If there is a universal renku, of which Japanese renku is one species and English renku is another, we may be able to explore possible forms for English renku by drawing analogies with Japanese renku.

When Japanese haiku was first introduced to Western poets in the late nineteenth century, it took the genius of Ezra Pound to create the Imagist movement. Pound studied haiku, not renku. Since I now see an increasing number of Western poets participating in writing renku in English and other languages, I cannot but think that the great wheel of history is turning around to again witness the rise of a movement of new poetry which was originally represented by Japanese renku.

International renku must develop a new set of guidelines written with a new terminology. To simply copy the guidelines of traditional Japanese renku will not be adequate. However, the traditional guidelines cannot be ignored, and I believe traditional Japanese renku can provide the basis for a set of criteria for international renku. In this article I have reviewed only a few of the guidelines which I think are important for beginning to write international renku. Traditional knowledge and theoretical study must go hand in hand with practice, that is, with the actual writing of renku. The principle of renku is grounded in a logic of dynamic relation, and renku begins at the moment when a new image unfolds its potential reality in one link and leads to the creation of another image in the following link. This process is a mysterious one which can only be experienced through practice.

*Tadashi Kondo is a recognized renku authority. His poetry has appeared in numerous books and magazines, including The Haiku Anthology, edited by Cor Van Den Heuvel. He has also addressed the Haiku Society of America and written an article with William Higginson, "The Structure of Classical Kasen."*

### events

## Visitations: a musician, a philosopher, & a poet come to Japan

### Sting

A group led by Sting and Kayapó Indian chief Raoni were in Tokyo in May on the Japanese leg of a world tour aimed at directing public attention toward the plight of the Amazon rainforest.

The group, which also includes Belgian filmmaker Jean-Pierre Dutilleux and Sioux Indian leader Red Crow, represents the Rainforest Foundation, an international organization which seeks to establish a park on the Xingu River near the existing Xingu Preserve founded by Claudio and Orlando Villas-Boas.

The park, as proposed by the Foundation, will cover 180,000 square kilometers (roughly half the size of Japan) and will require \$4 million in maintenance costs for the first three years. After this time, the Foundation hopes the park will sustain itself.

Sting and his colleagues have thus far received pledges of financial support from the governments of Britain, Spain, Norway, and the Netherlands. Here in Japan, they met with Masahide Aoki, head of the Environmental Agency, but failed to procure any concrete support from him. The group had asked Aoki for \$3.5 million, as well as assurances that Japan will not contribute directly or indirectly to the further destruction of Amazonia.

Of special concern are plans to extend the BR 364 highway from Brazil's western state of Acre to Lima, Peru, thus linking the Amazon to the Pacific coast. Also of concern are proposals for a series of dams on the Xingu River which would flood the territories of indigenous Indian groups including those of the Kayapó.

At a press conference in Tokyo on May 17, Sting, Raoni, Dutilleux, and Red Crow each delivered a short statement appealing for help for the Amazon. Sting joked with reporters about his celebrity, but his statement comparing the destruction of the rainforest to the burning of the library at Alexandria was sober and thoughtful. "The Indians of the forest have no writing," Sting said. "Their library is the forest."

Raoni and Red Crow also spoke poetically, using the image-laden style of Indian leaders from a simpler time. "When the sacred mountains are covered with the talking wires, the time is near," said Red Crow, quoting chief Seattle. Raoni added, "When the forest is destroyed there will be no more shade. When there is no more shade, a big wind will come. The sun will become hot and we will be unable to breathe."

It was the straight-forward Dutilleux, however, who most effectively conveyed the magnitude of what is being lost in the Amazon. After Sting refused to name "culprits" on the grounds that "we are all responsible," Dutilleux took command and said, "Well I am going to do it." He then read a partial list of Japanese companies involved in Amazon "development," a list which by its sheer length established the complicity in the destruction of the Amazon of anyone who enjoys the material comforts of modern Japanese life. Dutilleux then explained that when he first visited Raoni's



Sting (left), Raoni (second from right), and Dutilleux (right) at Tokyo press conference photo by Hiro Kanagawa

people ten years ago, it was a four-hour flight over virgin forest to reach the Kayapó from Brasilia. "Today it takes five minutes," Dutilleux said, "because for three hours and fifty-five minutes, you're flying over devastation."

A special Symposium for the Amazon, produced by One-Heart Productions (which will also be producing a special concert and poetry reading in conjunction with the For the Earth Poetry Contest—see the inside back cover of this issue for details) was held at the Pia Intermedia Theater in Shimbashi on May 18.

—Hiro Kanagawa

### Arne Næss

Between his arrival in Tokyo on March 7 and his departure exactly one month later, Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss managed to squeeze in a number of visits to areas of environmental concern in Japan, including the Shiraho coast, and quite a few discussions and exchanges with environmentalists, anti-nuke activists, alternative farmers, Green party members, and others.

Næss is known as one of the founders of the "deep ecology" movement. Whereas "shallow" ecology uses utilitarian arguments to defend sound environmental policies ("it's in humanity's own interest to protect the environment"), deep ecology regards nature as having intrinsic value in its own right, apart from human interests.

Næss has also contributed to the development of a philosophical outlook which gives high priority to environmental concerns: ecosophy. Unlike most twentieth-century philosophers who have stressed the "objectivity" of science over the "subjectivity" of value judgments, Næss regards values as the foundation for action. It is inevitable in choosing between various courses of action that our choices are determined to a large extent by our values. There is definitely a need for a precise knowledge of environmental problems—but scientists who postpone acting on such obvious problems as the greenhouse effect by saying "we need more research" do nothing to contribute to the solution. Ecosophy, then, urges scientist and scholar



to come out from behind the closed door of "pure research" in order to apply their knowledge to the practical solving of environmental problems.

"Deep ecology" has recently been engaged in something of a debate with "social ecology," as promulgated by the American anarchist thinker Murray Bookchin. Bookchin and other social ecologists have emphasized the fact that social inequalities are often the root cause of environmental problems—eg., rainforest destruction is caused both by multinational corporations in search of profits and by displaced workers whose only realistic alternative to working in the forests is poverty. Næss, however, sees the debate as simply a difference in emphasis and, in the same conciliatory spirit he brings to a number of "schisms" in the environmental movement, feels there is important work to be done by both "deep" and "social" ecologists.

An interview with Arne Næss appears in the summer issue of *Kyoto Journal*.  
—Richard Evanoff

## John Ashbery

Before going to the John Ashbery lecture at Shirayuri Women's University on May 19 I thought I'd better refresh my memory about his work. Not that Ashbery's poetry isn't memorable, but it had been eight years since I'd read one of his books, *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*. Despite the title, I finished the book feeling I hadn't really gotten a good look at Ashbery the man (even though I did perhaps get a glimpse or two into Ashbery the poet). The self-portrait in *Self-Portrait* wasn't a realistic one—nor was it intended to be. Like an abstract painter more concerned with the arrangement of paint on the canvas than with what the painting "depicts," Ashbery's poetry is more concerned with arrangements of words as sound and image than with what the poems "mean."

No surprise, then, when I looked up *Ashbery, John* (1927 - ) in the venerable *Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry* and found Ashbery described as ". . . often cryptic and unconfiding, even impenetrable." The surprise was in actually meeting him and discovering that Ashbery is both unassuming and accessible. He is serious and "deep" to be sure, but totally without pretense. He read from the manuscript of his speech, "Poetic Phenomenology and Ashbery Himself," obviously preferring, both as a poet and as a speaker, to make sure his words have been premeditated on rather than to deliver them spontaneously. The high-sounding title of the lecture was a bit puzzling to me and apparently to Ashbery as well—the theme had apparently been suggested by the moderator of the conference, Junichiro Takachi. Ashbery successfully skirted around both of the proposed topics ("poetic phenomenology" and "Ashbery himself") by professing to know little about either. Dismissing the notion that poets can legitimately talk about their own work—"Birds do not make good ornithologists," Ashbery declared—he talked instead about artistic and poetical space. Weighty, intellectual—but no pretentious erudition.

Admitting that he had originally intended to be a painter and had earned a living as art critic [for the Paris edition of the *New York Herald Tribune* and *Art News*], Ashbery compared/contrasted the limitations a painter faces in dealing with space on the canvas with the almost limitless vistas of poetical space. "Poetry is free to make its own universe and the rules that govern it," Ashbery stated. Defining poetry as a "kinetic act between people," Ashbery suggested that poetry allows the imagination of the reader to be linked with the imagination of the poet. The reader's

own imagination can fill in the spaces which the poet has created; that is, the poem creates space for the imagination of both the poet and reader to expand in. This expansion is in principle endless. It is precisely because poetry is so unlimited that it "needs tethers." As art grows more and more fantastic while exploring its own possibilities, poetry must "ballast" itself by creating its own internal limitations.

At the reception in Harajuku after the lecture, Ashbery was easy to approach and talk to, providing a pleasant contrast to the Ginsberg reception in Tokyo last November, at which time Ginsberg seemed to be more interested in solidifying his reputation with the Japanese university crowd than in meeting with practicing *gaijin* poets. It's understandable that poets visiting Japan will want to meet with "real Japanese" rather than spend time talking to expatriates from their own country. Understandable too that Japanese don't have many opportunities to meet living American poets. But then neither do most foreigners living here, who relish the chance to meet and talk with a visiting poet and to reconnect with what's going on in their own cultures. Gratefully, Ashbery didn't make anyone feel like a literary groupie just for wanting to talk to him. Ashbery's traveling companion David Kermani, who has compiled a bibliography of Ashbery's work, confided that Ashbery actually feels more at home with "subversives" than with establishment-types—a categorization which certainly makes more sense than one along nationality lines. It's unfortunate, though, that there wasn't more publicity aimed at the foreign community. Even the brochure for the May 20 reading in Aoyama prepared by the American Information Service was in Japanese and distributed almost exclusively to members of the American Center (which exists to promote American culture in Japan and therefore discourages non-Japanese members—even if they are U.S. citizens residing in Japan!).

Anyways, you can't always judge a poet by his reputation and, refreshingly, Ashbery didn't live up to his reputation as an "establishment, New York poet" (any more than Ginsberg lived up to his as an "anti-establishment, New York poet.") A lot of people I talked to said they had a completely different impression of both Ashbery and his work after having had the chance to meet and hear him. Quite a few said they wanted to get into some of Ashbery's more recent work (which even the critics say is less "cryptic, unconfiding and impenetrable" than the earlier work), such as *A Wave*, which includes haiku and haibun. Personally, I don't intend to let another eight years go by without reading (quite a bit) more of Ashbery's poetry.

—Richard Evanoff



Ashbery in Tokyo



photo by Sherry Reniker

## review

# Art vs. God: Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*

Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*. Published by The Viking Press, New York.  
Reviewed by Hiro Kanagawa.

When a work of art comes under siege for non-aesthetic reasons, the choice to decide whether or not the work is any good is supplanted by the obligation to take a political stand, either in defense of artistic freedom or in defence of society's right to protect itself from misguided and offensive expressive efforts.

In the secular West, one is usually obliged to take the side of artistic freedom, especially because, under the modernist project, we want our artists to try to scandalize us, knowing full well that we will accept everything they dish out. (We already have.) But when everything is acceptable, there is nothing left for art to transgress, and the subversive spirit under which it has been operating for the past 150 years has no meaningful expression. Perversely, then, both the Western public and artists alike secretly welcome vehement, even violent rejections of art. We want to believe, after all, that art still matters, that it has the power to threaten social values. Recently, there has been no clearer indication of this secret wish than the spectacle of Norman Mailer declaiming for us all, grandly, and rather happily, that the attacks perpetrated by Islam against Salman Rushdie and *The Satanic Verses* had ". . . renewed our faith in the power of words."

The weirder-than-fiction developments of the Rushdie Affair have thus beclouded any reading or discussion of *The Satanic Verses* not only with political issues, but with issues of faith as well. The book is caught in the centuries-old ideological struggle between Islam and the formerly Christian, now secular West. And, as with the film *The Last Temptation of Christ* before it, Rushdie's book is also caught

in a new conflict between a modernist culture in which meaning is sought through transgression, and traditional cultures of devotion in which meaning is maintained through the observance of social values. This is more than most books can live down, and more than a reviewer wants to talk about. Besides, Rushdie himself has said that he doesn't want *Verses* turned into a "pamphlet." Unfortunately, the book can no longer be separated from its public role, or what we might call its



With all the hullabaloo over Rushdie's book, how does *The Satanic Verses* stand up as literature?

"historic" role.

With *The Satanic Verses*, Salman Rushdie has attempted to write the first book of a world migrant culture: stories of the East in the context of, and using the modernist language of the West. What is at issue, then, in the book and in the controversy surrounding it, is the relationship of forces Kipling decreed would never meet and, more crucially, the relationship between a morally pluralistic secular world in which spirituality is expressed through devotion to art, and a religious world in which spirituality is expressed through devotion to God—on the one hand, the primacy of art and the freedom of the artist to create; on the other, the primacy of God and

the freedom of religious devotees to worship God and rejoice in his creation without ridicule.

At this writing, the demonstrations, book-burnings, bombings and the likes of Norman Mailer and the Ayatollah have served to reduce *The Satanic Verses* to an ambiguous symbol, burning or not, of either freedom or oppression. What is needed, however, is a fuller picture of the book's complexity and depth.

Happily, remarkably, *The Satanic Verses* manages to loom larger than the bizarre events which have affixed themselves to it. The book is wonderful, brimming with myriad unexpected pleasures, not the least of which is one, Salman the Persian, who seems uncannily to have foretold the present tribulations of his creator.

The book begins inspiredly with the expulsion of Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha, two Anglo-Indian actors, from Bostan, a jumbo jet named after one of the gardens of Paradise.

After surviving a 29,002 ft. freefall, the two men wash up on an English beach to find themselves transformed. Gibreel has been cured of his famed sulphuric halitosis, and a halc now emanates from the back of his head. Saladin, now suffering from Gibreel's former ailment, has furthermore acquired horns, hooves, shaggy hair, and other caprine/satanic features.

Gibreel and Saladin find refuge with a kindly widow and are briefly enthralled by her hallucinations of her younger days on the Argentine pampas. The spell is broken, however, when racist immigration officials raid the widow's home and take Saladin away. Significantly, Gibreel fails to intervene.

Saladin winds up at a detention center for immigrants where he discovers that all the detainees suffer from animal transmutations—apparent victims of witches' covens in the Metropolitan Police. Saladin escapes from the center and makes his way to London, only to find that his Anglo wife, Pamela, is sleeping with his best friend, Jumpy Joshi. Embarrassed, Joshi conceals Saladin in an Indian café harboring other illegal aliens. As Saladin's confinement stretches to weeks and months, he grows evermore satanic in appearance and the Asians of the neighborhood begin to sense his presence and see him in their dreams.

Meanwhile, Gibreel has also made his way to London and is living with Alleluia Cone, a mountaineer haunted by her own ghosts and the idea of a one-woman ascent of Everest. Gibreel himself is suffering from serial dreams in which he is the Archangel. He has had these dreams ever since a previous illness destroyed his faith in God and compelled him to gorge on pig meat. In London, Gibreel is put under psychiatric care and is treated for paranoid schizophrenia, but his delusions grow worse and begin "leaking" into his waking life. At last he is convinced that he really is the Archangel and, with a trumpet named for the angel of destruction, he sets out to transform London and confront his "Adversary."

Along this more or less linear baseline, the rest of the narrative spins and corkscrews its way to its ultimate acts of revenge, hatred, and love, while race riots rage. It is during these looping digressions that Gibreel reimagines the life of the prophet Muhammed and the origins of Islam. But there are other, more fantastic dreams: the story of Ayesha, a butterfly-shrouded epileptic beauty who leads an Indian village on an impossible pilgrimage to Mecca; and the story of a Khomeini-like Imam hiding out in London, awaiting the day when he will return to his homeland and wage a messianic war of love.

Rushdie handles all of these stories with an astonishing capacity to reinvent language. He mixes Indian locutions and interjections with ad industry jargon, teenage street lingo, and literary wordplay until the English language becomes as unfamiliar to the Anglo palate as Indian food. In Rushdie's able hands, words are as malleable as dough and, suddenly, the Rolling Stones' paean to the Prince of Darkness sounds like a cabalistic

incantation: "Pleasechu meechu, the radios sang, *hopeyu guessma nayym*." Or, as tired a device as a stutter is infused with loony energy, and simple statements boggle the mind with their possibilities: "Fact is. . . religious fafaith, which encodes the highest ass aspirations of the human race, is now, in our cocountry, the servant of lowest instincts, and gogo God is the creature of evil."

This is where Rushdie is at his best: using language like glue, slapping cultures together. The sheer sensuality of sound which results is exhilarating:

Proper London, bhai! Here we come! Those bastards down there won't know what hit them. Meteor or lightning or vengeance of God. Out of thin air, baby. Dharrraamm! Wham, na? What an entrance, yaar. I swear: splat.

Rushdie's use of imagery is energetic, too, but unfortunately not as original as his use of language. In fact, anyone who has read any Garcia Marquez, or even a lesser talent such as Isabelle Allende, will be on familiar territory in Rushdie's pages, perhaps a little too familiar.

The universe of *The Satanic Verses* is populated by characters and abounds with phenomena which are becoming stock in magic realism. Ayesha, the white-haired epileptic beauty, resembles too closely Allende's Rosa the Beautiful, or Marquez's Remedios the Beauty, or Innocent Erendira. The milk-colored tears of Saladin's Indian lover, Zeeny, the hair on Saladin's wife and dog simultaneously turning white, a perpetually youthful wicked Empress, the butterflies, rain that falls in such torrents that breathing is difficult—the hyperbole becomes predictable and one is baffled and a little disappointed by how closely the magical details resemble things seen elsewhere. It is peculiar that Rushdie can be so imaginative in his use of language, yet so limited in his imagery, by archetypes—if that is indeed what they are.

A more serious problem is the leveling effect that the "special effects" tend to have on the emotional contents of the book as a whole. Indeed, at times, *The Satanic Verses* reminds one of a movie with too many flashy tricks. This is especially true towards the end when, in contrast, Rushdie forgoes the fireworks and stuns the reader with a simple scene

of a son learning to love a father, after a lifetime of hate, by watching the old man die with courage and dignity. Gone are the hyperbolic floods of bodily excretions in rainbow colors, the geo- and meteorological expressions of human pain, the butterflies. Just a quiet death, love left unexpressed, the doctors attempting the usual resuscitations. "If only he could have been this person all his life," Rushie writes. "How hard it was to find one's father just when one had no choice but to say goodbye." The power of this scene lingers, and one sits staring at the pages, appreciating that quietness of literature that can make your ears ring. Here, and as one finishes the last few pages, one wishes there had been more such scenes grounded in reality, and less phantasmagoria.

As I've already mentioned, what is original about Rushdie's conception and what one admires as his achievement is his fusion of East and West, past and present. The latter are timeless, although in different ways: the past because it is eternal, the present because it is ever-changing. In Rushdie's London (alternately "El-lowen Deeowen" or "Proper London, Capital of Vilayet"), we see what it means to be an Asian immigrant in a modern Western city.

When Mishal Sufyan, a spike-haired Ango-Indian girl in a Madonna T-shirt, is done with her martial arts lesson at the community center, she returns to a home in which a physical manifestation of her mythological heritage (Saladin Chamcha as chimera) hides sadly in her attic. The juxtaposition is astonishing. And, when Mishal and her sister Anahita take Saladin's dinner up to him on a tray, exchanges such as the following take place:

"Thing is," Anahita resumed, and then, faltering, "Mean to say, well, we just think it's great."—"You, she means," Mishal corrected. "We think you're, you know."—"Brilliant," Anahita said and dazzled the bewildered Chamcha with a smile. "Magic. You know. Extreme."

Or:

. . . Mishal confided: "Bangladesh in't nothing to me. Just some place Dad and Mum keep banging on about." — And Anahita, conclusively: "Bungle-ditch." — With a satisfied nod. —

"What I call it, anyhow."

In these London sequences, which are the finest of the book, Rushdie ventures far from the typical magic realist territory of timeless backwaters. Or, more precisely, he emigrates. He takes the collective myths, faiths, and customs of a very old and unchanging culture, and transplants them en masse into a perpetually new and fluid one. Television, cinema, advertisements, Madonna T-shirts, weird haircuts, discos, Indians with perfect Oxford accents, but, in the air, the smell of turmeric and cumin. And in one's attic, a very embarrassing reminder of home.

It is no surprise, then, that given such hybrid images as have been discussed, *The Satanic Verses* has attracted global reaction. The media has thus far attributed the vehemence of this reaction to instances in the book in which persons revered in Islam are allegedly defamed. In the first instance, the prophet Muhammed is called "Mahound," a derogatory term coined and used by early Christians. In a rebuttal to protesters which appeared in *The New York Review*, Rushdie explains his use of the term by quoting from his own book:

To turn insults into strengths, whigs, Tories, Blacks all chose to wear with pride the names they were given in scorn; likewise, our mountain-climbing, prophet-motivated solitary is to be. . . Mahound.

Unfortunately, Rushdie misquotes himself. The passage as it actually appears in the book, sans ellipsis, reads like this: ". . . our mountain-climbing, prophet motivated solitary is to be the medieval baby-frightener, the Devil's synonym: Mahound."

Since Rushdie expurgates his own writing in his disingenuous, conciliatory explanation, his insistence that he meant no offense is compromised. Moreover, there is a world of difference between calling yourself a chump, and being called a chump. Rushdie's problem here, I think, is the same one William Styron had with *The Confessions of Nat Turner*: to presume to speak for a minority group to which one does not belong is to disenfranchise that group of its voice. And Rushdie is definitely not a Muslim today. (Imagine what might have occurred if Styron were actually a black man passing as white, or if *The*

*Last Temptation of Christ* had been directed by Jerry Falwell.)

There are other instances. Mecca here is called "Jahilia," meaning "darkness," (i.e., ignorance). Jahilia's whorehouse is called "Hijab," after the article of clothing with which Muslim women veil themselves. And, to increase business, the twelve whores at Hijab adopt the names and personality of Mahound's (Muhammed's) twelve wives. Eventually, they forget their own names and become so enamored of their roles that they marry Mahound's greatest enemy, the satirist Baal, and thus create a profane mirror-image of Mahound's domestic life. A fiction to be sure, but no offense meant? I do not suggest that Rushdie be tried or censored; when I am not playing Devil's Advocate, I am on the side of the angels (artists). But I believe the freedom to practice religion without harassment ought to be as inalienable a right as any other. And in this case, I am convinced Rushdie has only himself to blame if push has come to shove.

This brings us to the main issue. Specific details aside, *The Satanic Verses* has come under attack because it explicitly equates artistic creation with God's creation, and human dreams with divine revelation. When Mahound speaks to the Archangel, the Archangel is none other than our equivocal Gibreel Farishta, for whom it is all a movie, and he an actor, unwitting and unwilling. Then, when Mahound recites his revelations to his scribe, the aforementioned Salman the Persian, Salman makes deliberate errors in his transcription to test the absolute divinity of Mahound's message. The mistakes, of course, go unnoticed; there is no difference between the Word of God and words of a man.

These are not at all new ideas in the West where, since the Renaissance, history has been experienced (to quote John Berger) as a "relay-race of geniuses." The West forgets, however, that the notion of history as a race is as mystical as the idea of God as an engine. We liberals and artists, usually so sensitive, so respectful of spirituality, still commonly suppose that artistic creation is the only game in town (since God is dead), and that the art devotee is capable of prophecy and revelation (words we have borrowed from religion), but that religious devotion itself is for weak, backward minds. I think it was Dumas Père who said, "Next to God, Shakespeare created most." These

days, we are likely to forget those opening words. It's our loss.

Meanwhile, the vehemence of the protests against *The Satanic Verses* or *The Last Temptation of Christ* shows a growing resentment toward the secularization of God through art. The violence of these protests is to be decried, but we must also recognize that these acts are committed by people who perceive their entire way of life to be under siege from the totality of secular culture. And secular culture has declared that history is to be a contest to see who is truest, winner take all, power the prize. Religions need not participate, God having been previously eliminated. Under such conditions, we all behave badly, we are all prone to chauvinism—Khomeini has no monopoly on hate-mongering and narrow-thinking.

It should be noted in this context that Rushdie has always had one eye on history; he is no stranger to controversy or acclaim. His two previous novels, with which *The Satanic Verses* forms an unofficial trilogy, were both nominated for the Booker Prize (as was *Verses*) and banned in parts of the Muslim world: *Midnight's Children* (1980) in India, and *Shame* (1983) in Pakistan. Moreover, though *Midnight's Children* was awarded the Booker, when *Shame* failed to follow suit, Rushdie is said to have disrupted the awards ceremony with a loud protest. He is immensely talented, then, and arrogant, and he knows what he has wrought, if only from past experience. And, as I have suggested, he may even have suspected that his book would cause people to want to kill him. Consider the satirist Baal, about to be executed for ridiculing Submission (i.e., Islam):

"Whores and writers, Mahound. We are the people you can't forgive."

Mahound replied, "Writers and whores. I see no difference here."

Or consider this passage, describing Mahound's discovery of Salman the Persian's crime:

Mahound shakes his head. "Your blasphemy, Salman, can't be forgiven. Did you think I wouldn't work it out? To set your words against the Words of God."

And finally, this exchange between the two apostate writers:

Baal asked: "Why are you sure he will kill you?"

Salman the Persian answered: "It's his Word against mine."

It is art against God, and there is no question but that Salman Rushdie has achieved art. But, what if, to invoke Lionel Trilling, "... art does not always tell the truth or the best kind of truth and does not always point out the right way?" It is time to ask. As more and more intellectuals from the non-Western world join the modernist project and the ranks of our writers-in-exile, controversies such as the Rushdie Affair can only increase. Modernism, having broken every available taboo in Western society, will be unleashed on other cultures—cultures unaccustomed to the idea of a profane and subversive art, an art centered on the "I." As with *The Satanic Verses*, the reaction will likely be one of anger, bewilderment, violence. Books will burn for all the things art has burned metaphorically. How will the West behave then? Will we rejoice again in the power of words?

In the present case, Rushdie has professed that the saddest irony for him is that the book-burners are precisely the ones who might find pleasure and recognition in the book's pages—if only they would read, and not burn. But this is to ignore the tremendous distance—at present, irreconcilable—between the West's culture of transgression, and Islam's culture of submission. One may as well wish that Americans would read the Koran (An impossible proposition, considering that the denizens of Rushdie's Jahilia refer to it as "The Rule Book.")

Sadly, although *The Satanic Verses* describes a world in which, with wondrous results, East and West are bridged, in life the book has, if anything, driven the two sides wider apart. This is especially unfortunate because Rushdie is a writer of great skill, one capable of integrating disparate worlds with extraordinary facility. He is also a scathingly funny and subversive writer, but on this occasion we have no choice but to believe those who insist that Rushdie has used laughter cruelly, to exclude.

Rushdie himself is excluded now from the fame he sought. In *The Satanic Verses*, he has this to say about the condition:

Who is he? An exile. Which must not be confused with. . .

émigré, expatriate, refugee, immigrant, silence, cunning. Exile is a dream of glorious return. Exile is a vision of revolution: Elba, not St Helena. It is an endless paradox: looking forward by always looking back.

One wonders what Rushdie is thinking of, there, in his Elba. But if we are to continue believing in the primacy of art, and that it is the duty of art to subvert that which is false,



photos by the reviewer

## commentary

### Two Tongues Reading

March 19, 1989—Ako Studio, Harajuku, all in cedar. Two tongues mingled in the air. Lights dimmed. Hiro Kanagawa, in appealing rough-spun voice, belted out three originals along with inspired 6-string finger-picking. "I Saw James Dean in Tokyo" should be the first single release. Memorable.

Masaya Saito next read rambling verses of European influence, Mogi accompanying on flute. Then, a highlight, Saito's renku-like work in three voices as two women in kimono joined him and all three rolled out scrolls of words in a superb play of voices, spaces.

With little fanfare, poet Tsuneko Yoshikawa, member of the Japan P.E.N. club, took the stage in a floor-length pink dress. In an emotional vibrato her voice became that of an unforgiving atomic bomb-victim in her powerful "Moshi mo" ["If"], John Evans providing counterpoint with a steady reading of Steven Forth's excellent translation. Unfortunately, some of the preceding performers had left the studio to chat, and their laughter could be heard during the performance—distracting. Ms. Yoshikawa read two other dark/heavy poems. For these Evans read his own translations, made with Katsuya Hiramoto.

At a half-hour intermission people "mixed" in that guarded way that Tokyo people do. From 8:00, the Valiant Poachers, who happily live up to their name, mixed original songs with traditionals. Matthew Zuckerman's ballad "Tired of Waiting for You" inspired audience members to join in. Mogi's bottleneck and Evans' remarkable singing voice brought additional delight.

Finally it was time for Kazuko Shiraishi, a cagey and talented performer who was born and raised in Vancouver. Resplendent in red crushed-velvet suit and hat trimmed in black, she brought political concern, humor, and a certain whackiness to the proceedings. She seemed to want to talk as much as read her work. The first poem "Today's Ulysses," about a Palestinian, was prefaced by a long story of a Chinese she'd met at a party in the snowy Midwest. For her next poem she used a bit of a Noh voice and was accompanied by Mogi's violin.

Her translator Sally Ito, also of Vancouver, provided a willing foil to Shiraishi's comedic shenanigans. Ito brought out a bird whistle for Shiraishi's reading of "Parrot" and then Shiraishi pulled another one from her hat! At 9:00 there was time for only one encore, a poem about fluorocarbons, leaving us wishing for more (poetry, not fluorocarbons) as the lights came up.

—Sherry Reniker

then one hopes that in Rushdie's dream of glorious return, there is the laughter that reaches out to embrace, and subverts all differences.

Hiro Kanagawa is art editor of *EDGE*. Born in Japan, he is a Canadian citizen, but has lived in the U.S. longer than in any other country. He has a B.A. from Middlebury College, but fled grad school without a degree.

## Marginalia: literary notes on Japan and abroad

**Survival International**, an NGO with consultative status at the U.N., works for the rights of threatened tribal peoples, self-determination, fair representation. 8,000 members worldwide—only 8 so far in Japan! More info for an SASE (¥62 stamp) to SI, Takenoko House, 8-26-28 Kinuta, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 157.

**Quantum Leap Pictures** is interested in connecting with individuals interested in filmmaking. For more info phone: 03-207-5951, or write Quantum Leap Pictures 105 Copo Iwatatsu, 1-19-2 Nishi Waseda, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 169.

**Looking for actors** as well as crew to collaborate on the production of original short films and videos. Also looking for experienced *shodo* calligrapher to paint backgrounds for still photo se-

quences. Contact Paul Takeuchi at 03-320-5193 or 03-986-1604.

**A total of 166 entries** were received for the 1989 *EDGE* Short Story Competition. Winners will be notified by July 31, 1989 and announced in the next issue of *EDGE*. The winning story will also be published in an upcoming issue of the *Tokyo Weekender*. Other stories will appear in future issues of *EDGE*.

**The International Shadow Project** invites submissions of literary/visual works about peace and nuclear disarmament. "As artists and responsible human beings, the participants in the International Shadow Project want to make the dangers of nuclear annihilation vivid. . . We need to draw the connection between the present arms build-up and the inevitability of the same

sort of nuclear holocaust that occurred at Hiroshima and Nagasaki." Deadline: July 15. All works will be displayed at the San Diego State University Art Gallery. Submit to Harry Polkinhor, 720 Heber Avenue, Calexico, CA 92231 U.S.A.

**EDGE needs artwork!** Send black and white photographs, drawings, prints, or other two-dimensional images to:

Hiro Kanagawa, Art Editor  
c/o *EDGE*  
1933-8 Hazama-cho  
Hachioji-shi, Tokyo 193.

If you want your work back you must enclose a self-addressed envelope and sufficient postage.

## NETWorks: a look at the largest of the little literary mags

Quality is what counts, but just for the record and in order to give a fair indication of what "large" means in small press publishing, *EDGE* came up with this list of ten leading small press literary journals abroad in three separate categories:

8. *Stories* (30-36—no poetry)
9. *Amelia Magazine* (24-36 stories, 100-160 poems)
10. *Facet* (30 stories, 36 poems)

### Circulation

1. *Arrival* (75,000)
2. *Boston Review* (10,000)
3. *Threepenny Review* (10,000)
4. *Letters Magazine* (6,500)
5. *Fiction Network* (6,000)
6. *Stories* (5,000)
7. *North American Review* (4,000)
8. *PulpSmith* (4,000)
9. *Ploughshares* (3,800)
10. *Sewanee Review* (3,400)

### Manuscripts published per year

1. *Fiction Network* (100—no poetry)
2. *Iowa Review* (65-85)
3. *Ohio Review* (75)
4. *PulpSmith* (65 stories, 100 poems)
5. *Ploughshares* (25-50)
6. *Confrontation* (25-50 stories, 60 poems)
7. *Triquarterly* (25-50)

### Payment

1. *American Voice* (\$400/story, \$150/poem)
2. *Paris Review* (\$250/story, poetry: \$35 [1-24 lines]; \$50 [25-59 lines]; \$75 [60-99 lines] \$150-175 [over 100 lines])
3. *Stories* (\$150+/story, no poetry)
4. *Arrival* (\$50-200/story, \$25-100/poem)
5. *Boston Review* (\$50-200/story, poetry according to length and author)
6. *Alaska Quarterly Review* (\$50-\$50/story, \$10-50/poem [subject to funding])
7. *Malahat Review* (\$35/1000 words for stories, \$15/page for poems)
8. *The Gamut* (\$25-150/story, \$25-75/poem)
9. *Western Humanities Review* (\$25-150/story, \$50/poem)
10. *Dinosaur Review* (\$15-125/story, \$5-75/poem)

Full addresses and additional info are available in the 1988 *Writer's Market* (Writers Digest Books, 9933 Alliance Rd., Cincinnati, Ohio 45242 U.S.A.) from which the data was taken.

# Happenings

## Tokyo

Poetry and fiction readings previously held at Richard's Books are in the process of moving to a new location. For specific details contact Douglas Lamont at 03-991-7483.

Newly - organized theater / performance group seeks actors, dancers, creative people of all kinds. Those interested in theater and/or multi-media performance should contact Hiro Kanagawa at 0422-53-9596.

Tokyo Writers' Workshop meets on the second Sunday of each month at the Shinjuku Bunka Center. Poetry from 1-3 pm, fiction from 3-5. For details phone John Evans at 044-987-4337.

## Kobe

A group of writers in the Kobe area have begun meeting for regular discussion and feedback. For info on future meetings, contact Alan Fisher at 078-821-6527.

## Kyoto


Kyoto Connection will get together June 24 and July 29 from 8-12 pm at Studio Varie. The Studio will be undergoing renovations in August and September, but it's possible another temporary location will be found. For more info or a spot on stage (all performance arts welcome) contact Ken Rodgers at 075-822-0898 or Ian Ropke at 075-561-7557.

Reading and interaction for poets and others interested in poetry happens on the fourth Sunday of each month (the day after the Kyoto Connection) at Honyarado, on Imadegawa just west of Teramachi. Call Barry MacDonald at 075-712-7445.

## Abroad

Bumbershoot—The Seattle Arts Festival, September 1-4, features performances of music, theater, dance, comedy, film, visual arts, special projects, children's arts, literary arts, food and crafts. International, national, and regional work. Includes Writers' Forum, Open Mike, Bookfair, and more. Selections by literary arts participants are published in *Ergo!* For more info write to Bumbershoot at P.O. Box 9750, Seattle, WA 98109 U.S.A.

**Bookbinding & manuscripts.** Leverett Reed, 5-19-17 Ogawa Nishi Machi, Kodaira City, Tokyo. Phone: 0423-42-7353, Fax: 0423-42-7352. Prof IBM LQ/Daisywheel/Graphics, Sp/Gram ck analysis free. Leg hndwrtn or draft ¥850 ds/pg. Mscritps/Dissert/Tech. Free disk storage, Free return. Fast, accurate, confidential.



**THE BOOKWORM**, Tokyo's most popular used bookstore for English readers, has over 20,000 volumes in its constantly changing inventory. Everything from escape thrillers to philosophy can be found on its shelves. Paperback fiction averages a reasonable ¥350. It's well worth a special trip to Nagayama on the Odakyu Tama or the Keio New Lines.

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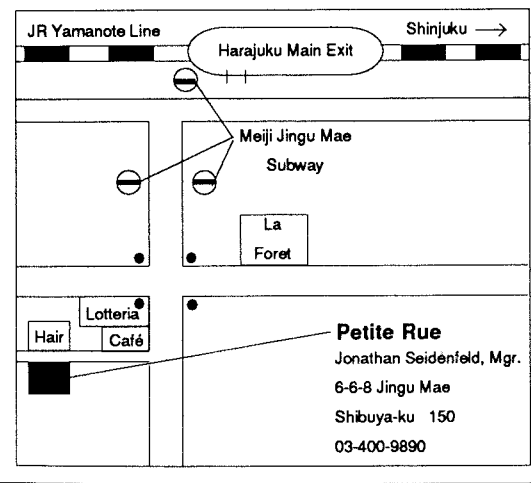
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## ARTS INTERFACE Poetry Reading

featuring Poet Bill Shively from Kyoto  
(Edge's featured poet this issue)

At Petite Rue in Harajuku, Sunday, July 30,  
from 2:00-4:30 pm.

All are welcome! The program will include an **OPEN MIKE** (—and a few other planned surprises). Persons wishing to read their poetry or present other performance art will be scheduled on a first-come, first-serve basis. Slots for performances can also be reserved in advance by writing or calling EDGE. **NO RESERVATIONS NEEDED TO COME & LISTEN!** Admission: ¥500. Drinks and snacks sold separately.



# OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 14, 1989

## "For the Earth" Poetry Contest Opens

TOKYO – July 31, 1989 has been announced as the deadline for a poetry contest on the theme "For the Earth." Cash prizes totalling ¥35,000 will be awarded to the best poems.

The winning poems will be published in *Tokyo Journal* and read live at a special concert in September at Hitomi Memorial Hall on the campus of Showa Women's University. Proceeds from the reading and concert, which is being produced by One-Heart Productions, will be donated to the Japan Tropical Forest Action Network (JATAN).

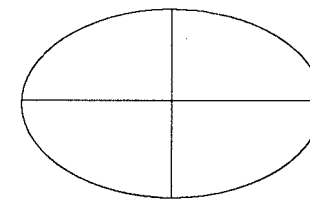
Other poems meriting publication will appear in the literary magazines *Edge* and *Printed Matter*, which are jointly sponsoring the contest and providing judges. Prize money is also being donated by *Kyoto Journal* and JATAN.

Any number of previously unpublished poems may be submitted, but there is an entry fee of ¥200 in postage stamps per poem. Poets who wish to have their poems returned should also include a self-addressed envelope and return postage. Poems should be typewritten, single spaced, on A-4 size paper, with the name, address, and telephone number of the poet appearing on a separate sheet of paper.

Submit entries to: "For the Earth," c/o EDGE, 1933-8 Hazama-cho, Hachioji-shi, Tokyo 193 Japan. For further information, please call John Evans at 044-987-4337.

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