

EDGE

international arts interface

GOLD STANDARD

I live in a kalei-
doscope of
empty alleys

Where is dimension?

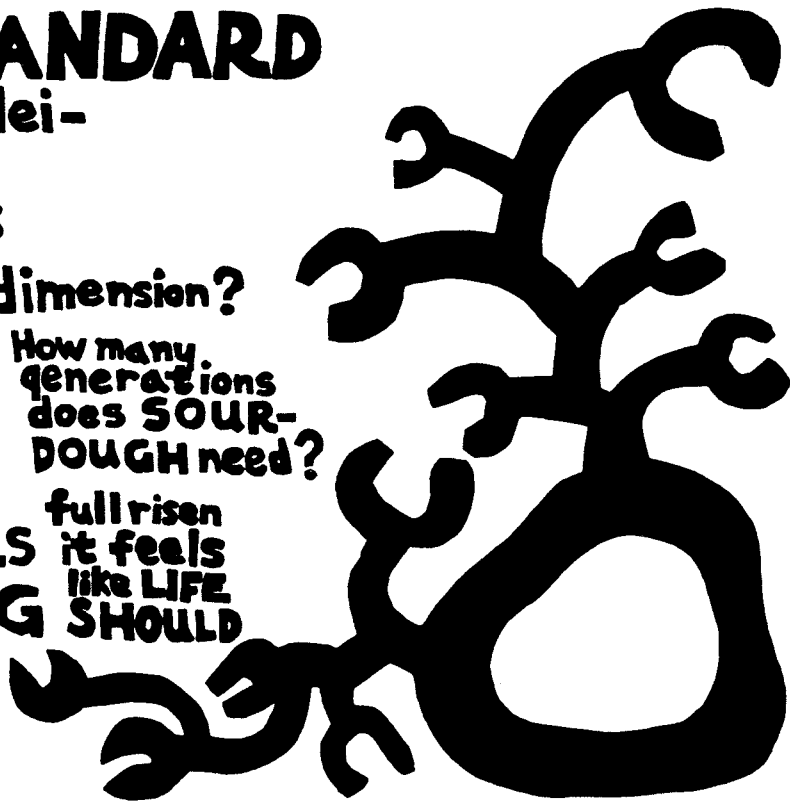
Lover's ashes
amongst shards
of EGYPT/Nevada

How many
generations
does SOUR-
DOUGH need?

A BED OF
FOSSIL SNAILS
SCREWING

full risen
it feels
like LIFE
SHOULD

INTO
ROCK



EDGE

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EDGE

International arts interface

Autumn 1990 Vol. 3, No. 3

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Seamus Heaney



Seamus Heaney with feminist scholar, Akemi Tomioka, at the recent conference on Irish literature in Kyoto *photo by Mariko Hori*

The Ship in the Air

from Lightenings

The annals say: when the monks of Clonmacnoise
Were all at prayers inside the oratory
A ship appeared above them in the air.

The anchor dragged along behind so deep
It hooked itself into the altar rails
And then, as the big hull rocked to a standstill,

A crewman shinned and grappled down the rope
And struggled to release it. But in vain.
"This man can't bear our life here and will drown,"

The abbot said, "unless we help him." So
They did, the freed ship sailed, and the man climbed back
Out of the marvellous as he had known it.

"No poet enjoys greater popular and critical acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic than Seamus Heaney," states an article by Peter McMillan in the August 24, 1987 issue of The Japan Times. Recently Heaney has been making waves on this side of the Pacific as well. "The Ship in the Air" was read by Heaney as part of a lecture given at a conference on the theme "Irish Literature as an International Literature," held in Kyoto this past July and sponsored by IASAIL-Japan. The conference included presentations by more than 60 scholars from around the globe on various aspects of Irish literature. Heaney's lecture, entitled "Keeping Time: Demands of Poetry" included the thought "Poetry is not a watchband holding the watch of ideology, but poetry is the watch itself."

Amelia Haller

Waiting on the Banks of the Yakima
for a Ride across the Cascades

I do not want to arise
from this perch,
this day between country road and river.
Red as blood, sumac
and vine maple claim the river's edge.

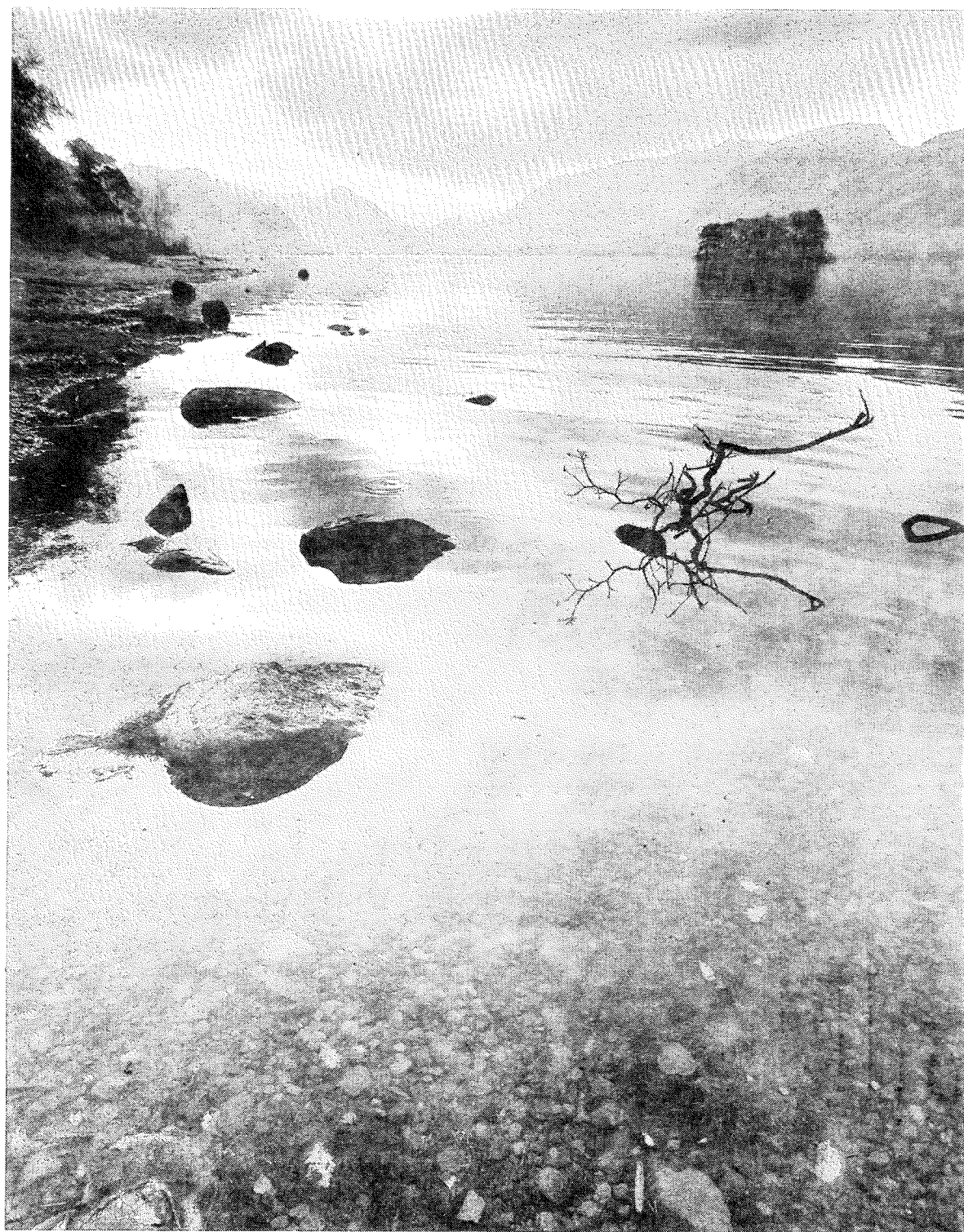
Magpies crack the air,
dart from sagebrush
to Russian olive trees,
unaware that they startle in the sky.

In slow motion I gather
my feet beneath me,
leave my imprint on dried grass,
a part of which
does not release its hold.

Oleasters burnish in the sun,
stir an immigrant's boundaries.
With binoculars I focus one last turn
on a blue heron separating water,

one leg stiffened against currents
like a lost ancestor
encountered in an old photograph.

Amelia Haller's poems have appeared in magazines such as The Bellingham Review, National Bluegrass, and Old Time Fiddler. Her most recent book is Now Time Is Blending (Nova Press). She lives in Tacoma, Washington, USA.



"Derwentwater" by Fred Bean

fiction

The Triangular Wave

by Kuniko Mukoda

translated by Neil Blacknell

There were two pigeons perched on the electricity cable. One had landed, then the other had alighted a few inches away. The cable swayed a little, and the two pigeons bobbed as if riding on a wave. The swaying stopped, and one of them started preening itself. "I wonder if they're a couple?" Makiko thought, pressing her forehead against the window. Looking down, she felt very happy. "The one preening itself looks the smaller of the two. Its sloping shoulders and body are rounded," she thought.

The window was on the fifth floor. It was the window of the ladies toilet at work, so this square scene was very familiar to her. The stock company skyscrapers and the office blocks crowded the Stock Exchange on the left as if to crush it. It was a small, flat building, struggling obstinately to stay in its hollow. Although it was the season of blue skies and thunderclouds, a smog had fallen and the town was a monotone grey. It should have been a depressing scene, but it seemed to inspire her. "Maybe because it's my last look," she thought. In the three years she had been working, she had visited that toilet three or four times a day, but she had not noticed that pigeons used the electricity cable just outside the window. "Maybe there's something else I've overlooked," she thought as she looked out.

The day before had been Makiko's last day. They had already held her farewell party and sung "Auld Lang Syne." She had cried and they had shaken hands in parting. Makiko was embarrassed to have returned unannounced, but she still had to sort out her unemployment insurance. "Oh, you're back," they had said.

"I hate this feeling. It's like being on the platform after you've said good-bye, but before the train has pulled out," she thought. "Just don't come and see me off on my honeymoon," she asked earnestly. The wedding was the next day.

The two pigeons were still perched slightly apart. "If they're a couple they should move a little closer," she thought. "He's just like Tatsuo." This thought amused her. Although she used to allow herself to be persuaded to go to a hotel once a week, since they had fixed the date for the wedding he always went straight home after dinner and a cup of tea. "He's just doing the respectable thing," she thought, but still, she was a little dissatisfied.

Tatsuo was blinkered in all respects. "He'd be better suited to a military uniform than a business

suit," her grandmother had said the first time she had brought him home. "He's not particularly tall, but he's sturdy and thick-set, maybe because he used to practise kendo."

His greetings were always impeccable. "Ha!" he would say when he met them and bow stiffly from the waist. Her grandmother gave him the nickname Chrysanthemum Doll, after an old wooden puppet theatre character.

Another pigeon landed. It alighted near the one that was preening itself. The cable swayed strongly with the force of its landing. The three pigeons started to swing. The newcomer rose up, as if using the recoil of the swing, and mounted the one preening nearby. For a moment Makiko averted her gaze. "So this is mating. I once read about the time of the year when the birds of the sky join together. I wonder if the pigeons in the city pick the right season," she thought.

The cable swayed and the pigeons let the sway govern their bodies. Just when she was starting to find the whole scene uncomfortable, the pigeon on top suddenly flew away. As if to follow, the one underneath took off after it. Two or three grey feathers fell to the ground. The solitary bird had not been watching, just staring into space. Makiko realized that her cheeks were flushed. "The one left behind is Tatsuo, the one preening is me and the latecomer is Hatano," she thought. Hatano was one of Tatsuo's subordinates.

"Something bothering you?" a voice called from behind. It was Kayoko, a girl from the office who was a few years older than herself.

"Oh, nothing, just reminiscing," Makiko hastened to explain.

"Reminiscing and leaning on this dirty toilet window don't really go together," said Kayoko. "From behind you look distressed." She stared into Makiko's eyes.

Suddenly Makiko felt like talking. Kayoko's words had hit the nail on the head. "It's not surprising," she thought, "my anxiety has increased the intoxication of my joy." They arranged to meet in the coffee shop in the basement. When she looked out the window again, the remaining pigeon had gone.

"It's one of Tatsuo's juniors, I can't tell you his name, but I think he's fallen for me." Like unravelling the wool of a sweater, once she started she found she could go on easily. Hatano had come

between them since the date for the wedding had been fixed. Before that he had been acting as a driver for Tatsuo. If it rained when Tatsuo was waiting somewhere, or if he could not find a taxi outside the cinema late at night, he gave Hatano a call. He always came in a well-kept car.

Hatano appeared to be a young man of breeding who had led a sheltered life. He never once showed any displeasure and always turned up looking tidy. He was also polite to his boss's girlfriend, Makiko. He politely opened and closed the door for her like a chauffeur. Makiko felt a little embarrassed, but Tatsuo took it all as a matter of course. He was not grateful at all and there were times when he sent Hatano home without so much as a cup of tea. To make matters worse, Tatsuo was really strict with him. He complained if he was late and grumbled about his carelessness if he went to the wrong place. This worried Makiko. "It's okay, I'm looking after him, so I can afford to treat him this way." Tatsuo spoke as though he was paying him special attention at work.

Hatano did not show the slightest sign of concern. "The boss is always scolding me like that," he said, turning back from the driving seat and showing his gentle, smiling face. Tatsuo even scolded his smiling face.

"You're blinking again, I told you not to blink!" he reprimanded. "Blinking is proof of cowardice in a man. It shows you're a crook and don't have the makings of a stockbroker."

"It must be tough being scolded even for blinking," Makiko said. Looking at his eyelashes, which were long for a man, she felt sorry for him. Practical Tatsuo no doubt thought that eyeballs alone were sufficient for humans; he having only token eyelashes.

The two men were a contrast in every way. Even as a young man Tatsuo's ability had lifted him above the flock. He made manager around thirty. He was one of the elite. Hatano was three years his junior and got into the company through a connection. He was the sort who puts hobbies before work.

Tatsuo could hold his drink and was proud of the fact. However, on the way home from their weekend dates, the fatigue of the week seemed to catch up with him, and he often dozed off in the car. Hatano, in the driving seat, would switch on the radio and casually start to talk to the bored Makiko. He had a sensitivity absent in Tatsuo, so when Tatsuo opened his eyes in mid-conversation, she sometimes wished he would sleep a little longer.

"I first noticed his feelings towards me about the time of our engagement. Up until that day he'd opened and closed the door for me without a sound, like a chauffeur, but on that day he slammed it with a bang. He said 'Congratulations,' but his face was strained. He stared straight ahead and didn't look at me at all," said Makiko.

"Is that all?" Toying with the empty coffee cup, Kayoko laughed. "If a single, young man is used ferrying a couple around in the evenings, of course he'll be angry," she said, feigning worldly knowledge.

Makiko was not amused. "If it was just envy or anger, you'd expect him to refuse to do it after our engagement, but he didn't, he continued and it was more intense than before. When a film was finished, we'd go outside and the car would glide to a halt in front of us," said Makiko.

Kayoko put a cigarette between her lips and lit it. If she inhaled deeply she coughed out the smoke in small puffs. She seemed to think inhaling deeply was cool.

"He started to look at me differently," continued Makiko. "His angry stare pierced me like a ray. Nevertheless when we moved our stuff into our new house, he helped out incredibly."

"He just wants to impress the boss. All company men are like that," said Kayoko.

"Maybe that's all," said Makiko dubiously. She told Kayoko about the time they had gone to choose the presents for their wedding guests. In her lunch hour, she had arranged to meet Tatsuo and go to the department store's gift delivery department. Hatano came along with Tatsuo. Hatano, with uncharacteristic forcefulness, pushed them to choose a silver spoon that he liked. "He's usually a moderate person, but really, it was as though he was the one getting married," she said. "I think he was trying to make friends," she added.

Kayoko sat still, listening. If she would just say, "Well, you're a very attractive woman," or something, Makiko would have let it drop. People said that Makiko was easygoing and boyish, and that her own experiences had made her sensitive to others. No one ever said that she was beautiful or sexy. She suspected that Tatsuo had chosen her because she was healthy, had no ageing relatives to look after and was a meticulous and useful woman. This was why she wanted to hear those words so badly.

"The other evening something dangerous happened," continued Makiko. "He was driving the two of us and then suddenly he accelerated. He almost crashed into an oncoming car. Even Tatsuo, who suddenly woke up, was surprised."

"Spare the two of us from a love suicide before the wedding, will you?" he snarled.

"I'm not going to kill the three of us," said Hatano in a low voice, without looking back.

Kayoko exhaled a large cloud of smoke. "That's why no one comes my way. Some women get more than their share of men," she said.

Makiko's irritation finally began to abate. There was no doubt that she was in love with Tatsuo, but she was well aware of his insensitivity and lack of mystique. Consenting to marriage was due to her being twenty-four. In her innermost self she knew

that the practical advantages of marrying him had rung up on the little till inside her with a ching! All these things weighing on her mind in this, the springtime of her life, made her a little too sad, so when she talked to Kayoko she laid the emphasis more on a handsome young man than on the real Hatano. Kayoko let out a sigh as she put her cigarette out in the ashtray. Makiko added one more episode.

It had happened just two days before. They had arranged to meet to discuss the wedding. Makiko called in at Tatsuo's company. In the spacious office only Tatsuo and Hatano were doing overtime. Tatsuo had to work late because of their three-day honeymoon. When Tatsuo went into the corridor to buy some cigarettes, Hatano, who had been working in total silence, suddenly spoke.

"Ah, women are splendid." He seemed as though he were trying to laugh, but his face was strained. "They can look so unknowing, when really they know exactly what's going on."

"It was such a sudden thing. While I was still searching for an answer, I heard Tatsuo's footsteps."

Makiko said no more. Kayoko asked the question she had been counting on. "If he asked you to marry him, what would you do?"

"I'd be happy, but I'd refuse, of course," she replied.

Without telling Kayoko about the female pigeon who had flown off with the newcomer, leaving her husband, Makiko went home.

But she had not told Kayoko everything. There were some parts she had omitted because they did not fit in with the plot. There was that time when she had gone to Tatsuo's office. When he saw her, he leaned back and picked up his cigarette packet, as if for a break. The box was empty. He stuck his hand into his pocket, looking for money, but he was out of change, too. Without breaking stride, he slipped out the purse that was sticking out of Hatano's pocket, who was bending over the photocopier right in front of him. Then Tatsuo went out into the corridor. Just when she was thinking that Tatsuo ought to say something about borrowing some change, Hatano came out with his "Ah, women are splendid." Makiko had only told Kayoko this part of the story.

There was another thing she had not told Kayoko. When she was leafing through the pages of a magazine or newspaper, it seemed that the three characters of Hatano's name were printed in bold face. That very morning, when she was reading the newspaper the character for "wave," the first part of Hatano's name, seemed to jump out at her. "Can We Solve the Mystery of the Perilous Waters?" was the article's title. Off the coast of Nojimazaki, Chiba Prefecture, strange things have happened in the last ten years. A thirty-thousand-ton ore trans-

porter's hull was split neatly in two. Where it sank, nobody knows. Furthermore, the reason seemed to be that it met with a triangular chopping wave. She had heard the phrase before. "What on earth is a triangular chopping wave?" she thought to herself.

She was surprised to find herself looking for the character "wave" merely because it was part of Hatano's name. Finding the triangle connection once more gave her a start. Looking out the window and comparing the three pigeons to Tatsuo, Hatano and herself, the memory of the article about the triangular wave drifted back from her distant memory.

She was not a woman who had to go through a tearful formal farewell with her parents. Another man's feelings were providing the icing on the cake. She was confused and she felt sorry for Hatano. "In the twenty-four years of my life, this must be the happiest time," she thought.

Hatano was absent from the wedding. He was running a fever and his tonsils were swollen. Makiko knew it was because he did not want to see her as a bride. It was a lively reception, yet Makiko felt that something was missing.

On the bullet train going off on their honeymoon, Tatsuo slept, snoring. At Tokyo Station the younger members of his kendo club had tossed him in the air in celebration. All the movement had stimulated the alcohol and made him drunk. So now he slept. Makiko stared out of the window, alone. Her face, reflected in the dark glass, was a little more heavily made up than usual. She had made up in the ladies room and when she put on the white wedding dress, somewhere inside her she had the feeling that she wanted to show Hatano.

Tatsuo was sleeping, open-mouthed, as though receiving dental treatment. When he was acting in high spirits he seemed very confident, but his sleeping face was unexpectedly innocent. He seemed to have shaved in a hurry and nicked himself. Makiko stared at the greasy, rough skin of his chin. She looked at his bristly, stubby fingers. "I've entrusted my life to this man. He's simple, but he's not a bad person. This is where I must *wave* good-bye to Hatano," she forced herself to say.

They arrived at the hotel in Shima. After dinner they played ping pong. Tatsuo, being a man of regular habit, had decided that they would go to bed between eleven thirty and twelve o'clock. The suggestion of ping pong, albeit perfunctory, had come from Tatsuo. There was no enthusiasm in his smash, either.

"He's like a different person," she thought. At Tatsuo's company, the three of them had once played ping pong. Makiko had just been in the middle keeping score, but Tatsuo had smashed the ball with all his strength. Hatano slammed the ball back. With open rivalry, Tatsuo sent the return

back with all his might. Hatano's pale cheeks became bright red. It was less of a game than a duel. Hatano was putting his thoughts about Makiko into his bat. Makiko remembered the intoxication of two men fighting over her.

Tatsuo and Makiko soon tired of their apathetic game and went back to their room. The phone rang as if it had been waiting for their return. Makiko picked up the receiver. "Hello?" There was a short silence.

"This is Hatano." He used the same voice as always. Tatsuo took the receiver from the speechless Makiko.

"What do you want?" Tatsuo pretended to be calm, but he also was clearly hiding something. Hatano was calling to check on a document for a client. Makiko felt that it was timed to correspond with the time they went to bed.

Tatsuo said nothing. He switched off the bedside lamp and then reached for Makiko with the same hand, but it seemed forced. She also seemed guilty in her response. Just as when the two of them had played ping pong together, something was not quite right. Dissatisfied, they lay side by side in the double bed and stared at the dark ceiling. Makiko felt as though Hatano were there beside her.

The two pigeons perched slightly apart. The newcomer alighted right beside the one that was preening itself, then the cable swayed. The feathers of the two mounted pigeons scattered. The scene of the grey town floated before Makiko's eyes. The pigeon had made no attempt to repel the intruder. The silent, perched pigeon looked the same as the husband sleeping beside her. Tatsuo knew but was being forgiving. Or was it an authentic call about work? Makiko could not calculate the true feelings of Tatsuo, who was soon snoring.

Their new home was a rented house in the suburbs. One of Tatsuo's seniors at university had bought a house on an estate and then been transferred overseas. He would be back in two years, so the rent was a little lower than normal. Tatsuo had a long commute, but the house had a garden, which

pleased Makiko.

"I haven't opened shutters since I came to Tokyo from the country. It's so many years, I've probably forgotten how," she said, opening one shutter. She was frozen to the spot. Outside the shutter, Hatano was standing. He was not looking at Makiko. He was staring at Tatsuo, who had got up and was standing behind her. Tatsuo was in his pyjama bottoms, naked from the waist up, holding the morning paper in one hand: Chrysanthemum Doll. He also was motionless. A strange noise came from Hatano's throat, as though he were being strangled. Then he took to his heels and fled from the garden.

Like the positive and negative of a film, everything suddenly inverted. It was not Makiko that Hatano loved, but Tatsuo. The deserted pigeon was Makiko. "The fierce competition at ping pong; the harder they smashed the ball, the more intense their excitement became. This could be a kind of love," thought Makiko. Hatano had certainly been in the double bed, but he had not been the one sleeping next to Makiko, he had been the one sleeping next to Tatsuo.

"Have you heard of a triangular chopping wave?" Makiko asked, trying to disguise the tremor in her voice as she opened the shutters.

"A triangular chopping wave, triangular chopping wave. It's a kind of wave moving in the opposite direction to all the other waves. It crashes head-on with the oncoming waves. Sounds pretty dangerous. I've heard that if it's caught, even a big ship can be split right in two and sink. I think they happen right before a storm," Tatsuo explained.

"We're right before a storm now," Makiko thought. "I wonder if a ship definitely sinks if there's a triangular wave," she said. She opened all four shutters and the garden and surroundings could be seen—rows and rows of identical whitewashed walls, blue roofs and red roofs, of the houses of the estate.

"They don't always sink. Some ships have survived," he said. He put his hand on her shoulder.

"Shall I throw it off, or believe in its warmth and let it be?" she thought.

"Two bottles from today, right?" I forgot them at first so I'm a bit late, but here they are. I'll get it right from tomorrow." It was the cheerful voice of the milkman at the back door.

Kuniko Mukoda is well-known in Japan for her television dramas and also as a writer of fiction. "The Triangular Wave" is, to EDGE's knowledge, the first of her stories to be translated and published in English. It is from her collection Otoko-doki, Onna-doki ("Man-time, Woman-time") published by Shincho-bunko in 1982. Mukoda died in the Korean Air crash of 1983.

Neil Blacknell is from England and presently works in Tokyo as a financial writer. He first became interested in Mukoda's work when watching her drama, Funa. He has translated other fiction by Mukoda and also writes short stories himself.

Fujii

Dark Country

translated by Christopher Drake

In the same inn
prostitutes, too, staying—
bush clover and moon

Basho (*Oku no hosomichi*)

The wandering blind women singers
left behind their songs,
songs that encircle our visible world.

In Takada in Joetsu near the Japan Sea
the trees climbed all at once by visionary children
the dark beyond the told legends
colder than chilled saké—the human chests . . .

Out of luck, it's raining,
but you can hear screams
from after the songs.

I've never been in this town before
but I feel at home already.
When I imagine how thousands
of pale faces must be lying asleep,
you bear visionary children.

"Dark country?
It's right here, the north country.
A dark night you have to go through."

You move
down my belly
like words.

"This is a winter town.
Ha-ha, I sell my spring body
and your *mara*,
your prick's bent, Karl Marx!"

You play the way words do,
the way words . . .
But what are my words?
Now, my words, where are they?

Hearing the blind women's frank songs,
a moment's sensual vision.

Sadakazu Fujii was born in Tokyo in 1942 and pursues dual careers as a poet and professor of classical Japanese literature at Tokyo Metropolitan University. This poem is from his book Where is Japanese Poetry?, published (in Japanese) in 1982. Drake's translation of the entire book will be published next year by Katydid Press.

Chris Drake got a Ph.D. in Japanese Literature from Harvard University in 1987. In 1984, Katydid Press published his translation of poems by Ryuichi Tamura, Dead Languages. He is now at work on Saikaku's A Thousand Haikai Alone in a Single Day and recently received an N.E.A. grant to translate Saikaku's The Life of A Sensuous Man.

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peter bakowski

On the road to Lhasa

A cup of tea
is a bright lantern burning
in the muddy room
of our stomachs.

World-traveller Peter Bakowski's poems are often seen in little mags in his native Australia or here in Japan in Yusuke Keida's Blue Jacket.

Barry MacDonald

wild candle

her smiles

only

tease

of unknown origin:

sky water

each morning

Yoshiko combing

her hair

I caught a glimpse of Surrealism while in the bath

(for Jim Warren)

Surrealism is
a tall soldier against the darkness,
he is sentinel and seducer
upturning
the dull card players' table
in the cowboy movie,
he gnaws at the Brooklyn Bridge
and the Eiffel Tower,
his tuxedo flaming . . .

reduces the earth
with its too serious
frown-lines of mountains
to happy, basketball size.

He is
the voyeur that smells of pencil shavings
walking under
the tonic of the moon.
he is always one step ahead
and
—instead of footprints
he leaves behind
lagoons.

places that were
were not just places
but were where we
grew

zipping mountains
on my motorcycle

flat on a beach
mind zipping

master of the world
slave of zip

Barry MacDonald has been a member of Cid Corman's poetry group in Kyoto for one year, since the beginning.

fiction

Notes on Love

by Leza Lowitz

At first, it starts like this: there is a couple. Say there is a woman, skin and bones and brains and passion, and there is a man. They meet, not in some crowded college lecture hall or on a ski slope but in a more pedestrian way. In transit. Home from work, or combing the streets at some odd hour, the hour of disappearances and thick airs, morning stillness, the indecision of people not quite willing to give up on a lonely evening.

This woman, she sees this man on the street, thinks she recognizes something familiar in his eyes. She decides she'd like to sleep in his arms, him holding her. She decides to trust her instincts, to follow her heart. Much later, after they have been living together for years, her lover will hold their first meeting against her, as circumstantial evidence of her impetuosity. How can she meet a stranger on the street and take him to her home? How could she have slept with a man about whom she knew nothing? Not even his name? What kind of judgement does a woman like that have? And if she slept with *him*, why wouldn't she do the same with other men? The litany is predictable, obvious, laughably true. There is nothing she can say.

At night, in bed, she tells him the story she heard about Christopher Columbus, how when he was a child he held an orange in his hands, turning it over and over, feeling the smoothness of the circle in his palms. A white butterfly flew up behind the orange, its wings cutting the sharp circle. Instead of wings, Columbus saw in his mind's eye the sails of a ship. The world must look similarly, he thought. It must be round.

The world is still round, she tells her lover. It is a circle of possibilities, an endless horizon of adventure. Round and around and around again. A million revolutions in the sky. She cuts smooth arcs in the air with her hands as she tells him the story. His eyes follow her hands, around and around and around, growing wide with worry. She laughs at him, until he mentions a woman with whom he had made love (or did he say: had sex) for hours/days/weeks, until they had burst out of their skins, the hours at once irretrievable, yet somehow never forgotten, alive in his mind, to be recreated at any given moment. Like that? he asks, picking his words slowly like blackberries. Is my love round too? Does it come back to me like a boomerang, a double helix? he asks angrily.

She laughs nervously and says of course, his

love is not immune from circularities, all the while the fire of jealousy burning inside of her. She will tell herself it is ridiculous for her to be jealous of someone she has never met, especially since she had just made love with the man in question. But, it is unimportant in light of this new information.

It is the thought of another woman that makes her jealous, makes her dislike the theory of circles.

He puts his arms around her and nuzzles his face into her back, pretending that he still loves her. She looks in her old junkshop mirror on the dresser, combing her hair behind her ears like Louise Brooks. She looks deeply at her own face, so intently that her own face disappears and she thinks she sees other faces, far more beautiful than hers, passing before her like ghosts. If only mirrors could speak, she thinks. Would they tell her who had been sleeping in her bed when she was gone? Her love quotes Joni Mitchell, saying he doesn't like weak women because he gets bored too quick, and he doesn't like strong women because you know. . . . She wonders which one she is.

A couple of detours. That's what her friends call them, in kinder moments. When they go out to dinner she holds her thoughts close to her body like a purse, making smalltalk along the way. The content is unimportant, it could be anything. It usually is. What matters is that they eat spicy food to remind them that they are each alone in their own deserts and there is but one glass of water between them. Communication becomes a matter of survival. If she wants the glass, she will have to ask for it. Or she will have to steal it. No matter which. Procuration is a function of necessity. She is used to evasion. The thought of sharing, sadly, does not occur to either of them.

This was once the stuff of passion, she remembers. It was once the result of pent-up energy. The law of thermodynamics tells her that pent-up energy is released proportionate to the force which contains it. When they go home, they will make love and she will have five consecutive orgasms in a world that demands of her twelve. He will have one in a world that demands of him one. He is pleased with himself, yet convinced he has somehow failed to satisfy her. The expectations are inequitable, but she will try not to think about it. She is not even sure that he hasn't failed to satisfy her, or if it even

matters.

When you are in love, he once told her, it is axiomatic that you take chances. When was the last time they had taken any chances with each other? Once, he had tied her up with striped shoelaces he had taken out of his red Converse hightops. All the while they were having sex, she kept thinking of the laces, and how after they were through, he would put them back into the shoes. Somehow, a part of her would travel with him that way, in and out of alleys and dark, smokey clubs. Where would she go? What would she see? she wondered. Who was he when she was not there to watch him?

He told her that all relationships are doomed because we fall in love with the image of ourselves that our lover has. Once the lover discovers the reality of us, the reality seeps in and we are left with who we really are and who they really are and who she really is, he is convinced, is a *fugitive of herself*. Who's running from whom? she wants to scream, but she doesn't. Instead, she tells him that she is not in love with an image of him, hoping to hear the same from him. He says nothing, looking at her reflection in the mirror.

* * *

At a dinner party in her lover's honor she sits sandwiched in between two people—one, a distinguished professor of Rhetoric who suffers from perennial psoriasis, the other, a visiting female law student from Italy who happens to look like Sophia Loren, for whom she has an instant and irrational dislike, bordering on hatred. In the dinner-table patter, the men talk and joke freely as the women sit silently, popping up every now and then like small kernels of popcorn asking the hostess can they help? Clear or serve?

She wears black to the dinner. The Rhetoric professor asks her why she prefers darkness. She blushes. Sophia Loren says she thinks that black is no longer fashionable in America, that the primary colors are "trend." She wants to correct her by saying "trendy," carrying the "eeee" out in a long scream like a banshee, but she doesn't. She restrains herself. Sophia Loren asks her if she agrees that black shows a total *lack* of imagination. Is it a statement against interpretation? She looks at this woman's bright red blouse, the color of blood, of aggression, of passion. How can she tell her she has read her thoughts? How can she tell her that she doesn't want to be understood, or interpreted, or noticed even. She wants to disappear, like the invisible ink of the promises he had made her when they first met.

She says that, yes, she *is* in mourning. She mourns the four-door sedan with its luxurious front seat, reduced to scrap-iron and junkheaps. She mourns the decline of the American family,

which can be attributed to nothing less than the invention of bucket seats. She tells the incredulous beauty that her family used to have a big American car, and that all four of them: her mother, father, brother and she, had fit into the front comfortably. When her family had gotten a compact car with bucket seats, things fell apart. The stick shift was the least of what came between her parents, she tells the Italian, who just sits there mouth agape.

The professor is smiling, stupidly, at her. He asks her why is it that you never see pictures of politicians smiling? He is rubbing her knee under the table. Smiles are aggressive, she says with conviction, staring directly at the twitching lips of her Italian nemesis. And politicians are sneaky, she says with equal certainty. Look at the bared teeth of this dinosaur. She picks up the papier-mache candlestick on the table and raises it over her head like a club. Her lover is twirling his pasta around and around his fork in concentric circles, leaving a hole in the center of his plate, staring down.

Revolutionaries don't smile, do they? the professor asks. Has anyone ever seen a picture of Che Guevara smiling? "Not I," her lover says, eyeing the Italian's chest as she breathes. When the professor asks the Italian beauty if she's ever read Aristotle, the woman asks Onassis? She smiles at her lover, as if to say *you get what you deserve*, but her lover is smiling at the Italian woman, enraptured. The professor of Rhetoric speaks of Aristotle's three kinds of lifestyles: that of reason, that of honor, and that of appetite. He mentions this because he's leaning towards the latter and who knows how appetite can change a man. The hostess takes the hint and refills his plate with steaming pasta.

But his appetite is of a different order, and she pretends not to notice the professor's hand creeping up her leg. She thinks of herself as a female version of Andrew Carnegie: a woman of iron, with nerves of steel, who can hold back a train of men if she wanted to. She can generate enough steam and energy to power a locomotive that will take her away from here. In her mind, she is lying in the top bed of a sleeper car rubbing lemon on her elbows to keep them soft. What is it that attracts you to me? the professor whispers in her ear. Here, as an expert in the uses of language, he knows that it will be what she says, or fails to say, that is important. She, as an expert in the art of evasion, ignores him, for he is begging the question.

When she finds the letter in her lover's desk drawer, smelling of female and lion and mozzarella, she reconsiders. It is a drawer she is never to have looked in, a drawer upon which betrayal and trust are written like the graffiti of a drunken man. It is a drawer, like memory, which is better left unopened. . . .

But I think of you when I'm here, listening to music, wondering what you're doing. Smell this paper . . . Ahhhh. . . Does it smell like me?

She locks herself in her room, refuses to answer the phone, counts the hang-ups on her answering machine like sheep. Her best friend comes over, beats at the door with her fists like a lion tamer. They sit nude on the roof of her apartment in Chinatown, watching the world below. People are selling electronic watches and colored marbles, tv's, radios; hot things. High above the world of commerce, they are talking about love. Each time you are in love, your heart opens up a little more like the aperture of a camera. It's such an old song by now. He obviously has a guilty conscience. Why didn't you suspect it? How could you not know that was why he suspected you?

She is hearing nothing of her friend's questioning, for she has known all along. Instead, she is imagining her lover and Sophia Loren in Venice, sitting over an espresso in a cafe where love leaves its mark everywhere, like the watermarks of floods on the city's crumbling walls. She imagines the two of them sitting, watching the faded fishing boats break up the water, watching the parade of old fat couples who wear their lives together like espadrilles, worn and unravelled but too comfortable to discard.

When her friend leaves, she turns on the tv where Vanessa Redgrave and Timothy Dalton are performing *The Taming of the Shrew*. O Vanessa, the way she moves her body, her presence on the stage, her movements . . . this power is what she wants! She wonders why her lover has taken up with the Italian, wonders if love for him is just a question of exploring another's world and then when one's curiosity has been satisfied, when the land is no longer interesting or exotic, the body no longer mysterious, the face somehow old and familiar, one moves on to some new territory.

He apologizes, says he'll stop seeing the Italian woman, mentions marriage under his breath, like a stymied laugh at a funeral. He asks her if she could start all over, what would she do differently? She tells him the story of a couple she knows, a couple he might even recognize.

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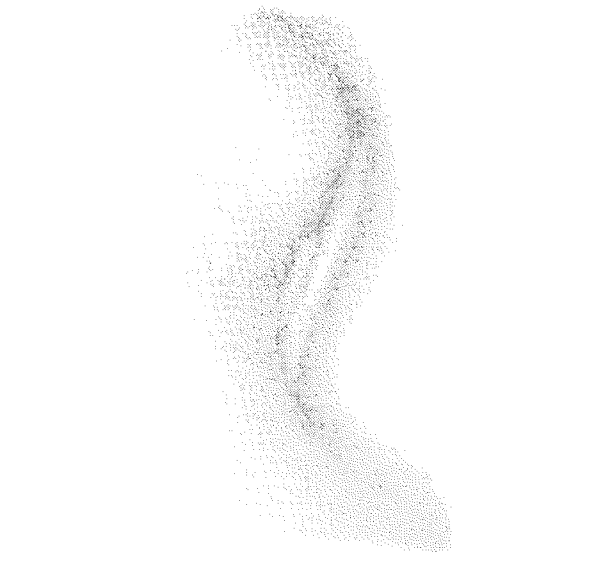
At first, she says slowly, it would start like this: there would be a woman, skin and bones and brains and passion, and a man. They would meet, not in some crowded college lecture hall or on a ski slope but in a more pedestrian way. In transit.

This woman, she would see this man on the street, thinking she recognized something familiar in his eyes. She would decide she'd like to sleep in

his arms, him holding her. He'd take her home, and before she climbed into bed with him, she would cover the mirror on his dresser with her scarf so that no trace of her would be left when she was gone. They would make love, slowly and passionately, and she would imagine that she was an explorer, on some sort of mecca by herself. She would be climbing an endless snow-capped mountain. A man would whoosh down the mountain on a toboggan, just when she was convinced that she was all alone. He would tell her that he was not there to save her; but he would offer her warmth and companionship if she needed it on her journey. She would thank him and continue her ascent by herself, until she came to a plateau where many flags were stuck in the snow, flags from all over the world.

He would take one of the flags and wrap it around her, the thousand colors of its rainbow surrounding her. He would hold tightly onto the flag and release her, and she would fly into the air like a kite. The wind would carry her around and around in circles. She would hear the man telling her that she was a peacock, fanning her beautiful wings behind her, unable to see or appreciate them. Turn and see! Turn and see! he would yell from the mountain. He would show them to her! But this time, she would not turn to find herself in him. She would know that if she ever looked back, she would tear her wings and never fly again.

Leza Lowitz was born in San Francisco in 1962, grew up on a Navy base in Key West, and later attended Malcolm X Elementary School, U.C. Berkeley, and San Francisco State, where she received an M.A. in creative writing and taught until last year. She received a PEN fiction award in 1989, and other awards for her poetry. Currently she is Tokyo correspondent for Manoa and is putting together an anthology of Japanese women's poetry.



Featured Poet: Michael Corr



original artwork by Michael Corr

Gampi Plum

Where are you
 Who brought this fine gampi plum from Tainan
 Your brush work was damp and blotted out
 Fully
 Yes the trunk has bones but a carver can sense
 The fullness of the rosy wood
 Beneath its blanket of tattered bark
 Through mature it has been well cared for
 Pruned with discretion
 Strong and unencumbered
 Cut at each turn an upper
 Branch
 Falls in steps
 Like an oblique cascade
 Branches foam with
 White and pink blossoms
 Mei
 Plum
 It is a real tree
 It hasn't been trained into helixes
 A couple shoot straight up while
 Others bend gracefully carrying
 Waves of flowers into an immediate distance
 Where are you
 Plum woman
 Critique the seal for me
 Read your poem in Mandarin

Spur Raven

From this 8,000 foot spur
 Those who were said to
 Dwell within are near
 A roar evokes memories of the family
 Of bears
 The inner dwellers from whom
 Raven purloined the moon
 The gun metal blue crescent of raven
 Strutting on the hyperbolic snowfield
 Is heralded by the trumpeting of
 Volcanic thermal steam or the roar
 Of a Mount Rainier avalanche
 Thousands of bears struggle within the
 Mountain because raven stole
 Their inner light and fled out the
 Mountain smokehole
 Otherwise it couldn't be so noisy
 Taken to flight raven slips with hawk
 Back and forth from the Paradise
 And Nisqually Glacier canyons to either
 Side of the spur riding the powerful
 Late afternoon snowfield draft
 Can't keep track of her

Leaving the Capital

Amidst the spare pillars in the glade
 Tapered fingers which caress a friendly
 Arm may pull a parquet instrument
 To your earnest bosom notes
 Strummed from the depth of your heart
 Stanzas echo from plaster walls through
 The jade translucent leaves pure
 Like dreams about mathematics
 If I look away your poised lips
 Crystallize like apple blossoms amidst
 Declinations for stanzas about the flowers
 Leaning toward one's arm the light
 Dances with contrast about your
 Shoulders rhapsodically your carriage
 Hinting at a profound knowledge of poise
 Brushing your cheek the cool breeze
 Brings a thought of rustling silk
 And tall broad paintings
 You pluck my heart strings
 By leaving for Moscow

Singing Bear at Bogachiel Peak

Lover look down
 There on the Bogachiel River meadows
 Where I saw a dozen elk last year
 When the Roosevelt Elk did keep us
 Awake all night in our bunk with
 Its long bellicose peal
 Need thee not mind my meaning
 When I remember them there
 Not gorge locked for their powerful
 Legs which
 Leave deep tracks all up and down
 The canyon side
 When will another one bolt across the
 Switchbacks
 Nudge us off the trail
 Whirl its antlers aloft in the forest
 Or leave enmass from a sheltered patch of
 Swordferns as Roosevelt Elk are prone to do

Crooning catches my ear oh lover
 Aloft I look where you complain
 "What's that?"
 Sitting by a log stuck on the
 Bogachiel Canyon side half a day
 North of Hoh Lake and three days
 In from our old parked French car
 Sitting there is a singing bear
 Perhaps eighteen months old
 I listened to your heartbeat on
 The canyon side as you begged to leave
 Forgetting to bring your box camera
 To bear on the object of my wondrous
 Admiration

Peak
 Bogachiel Peak
 At Bogachiel Peak
 Bear at Bogachiel Peak
 Little bear at Bogachiel Peak
 Singing little bear at Bogachiel Peak
 Crooning singing little bear at Bogachiel Peak
 You crooning singing little bear at Bogachiel Peak
 I love you crooning singing little bear at Bogachiel Peak
 Oowouuuu I love you crooning singing little bear at Bogachiel Peak
 With the musty Alpine blueberries ripe just around the bend

Woodcarver, translator (see EDGE, Spring 1990), scientist, poet, and teacher, Michael William Corr, originally from the Seattle area, hung out with Gary Snyder and Nanao Sakaki in Kyoto in the '60s, was a River Styx poet in St. Louis where he worked on Environment magazine in the '70s, received a Ph.D. in Asian Medical Phyto-geography from the University of Washington in the '80s, and is currently living with his wife in Nagoya. Three collections of his poetry have been published; these poems were selected from unpublished manuscripts, Singing Bear at Bogachiel Peak and Thresholds At Our Fingertips, with the aid of Michael Castro.

That Evening's Cognac

by Shusaku Endo

translated by Etsue Tsukada and Mary Fujimaki

There was another air raid that night in Tokyo. . . .

He was a student, but only in name. He was forced to make parts for military machines in a mobilization factory every day.

That day, he stained his hands with machine oil as usual and returned home feeling exhausted. After a poor supper, a porridge of rice and vegetables, he studied French under an electric lamp. The shade of the lamp was covered with a black cloth in case of air raids.

He had a few days left before his enlistment. There was no sense in studying French; he knew that. But it only made him the more obstinate to study. He was no more than a poor student and study was the only resistance he could offer against the ominous force pushing him along the flowing path of the war's dark days.

While using the dictionary, the strain of working in the daytime began to tell upon him. Besides the effects of Morpheus, he felt impatient and hungry.

"In that period, the land upon which Versailles Palace stands today was deserted. There was nothing there but a cloud of dust. Louis XIII used it as a hunting ground and built a palace of red brick with a blue roof in 1624. Louis XIV expanded this building, which was known as Castle Carta, into Versailles Palace."

When he had finished reading that part in his consulting dictionary, the young man heard his father speaking downstairs, "It would be better for you to go to bed soon. I'm afraid there will be an air raid tonight."

"Okay," he replied, but he intended to continue his study. A sense of honor he thought strange obliged him to do so.

"I will tell you a little bit about the daily meals of the King. Breakfast was bread and soup, but the lunch was far more luxurious. Louis XIV was such a great eater that there was *pate de foie gras* and beef stew for appetizers. Next, the waiters carried in chicken pie, fried turkey, roast chicken, and five pounds of beef."

When he read that part of the description, because he had eaten only a poor porridge of rice and vegetables for dinner, an uncontrollable feeling of envy forced him to close the book. He and his family had seen nothing from that menu for a while.

He gave a dry swallow in his throat and thought that he would never eat such luxurious dishes again in his life, because he had to enter the military. Sitting under the dim light, he quietly meditated with indescribably complicated thoughts, comparing his trivial life to that of other people's.

The air raid came at midnight, fulfilling his father's expectations. The young man had fallen into a deep sleep. His father's voice awakened him. Struggling with languor, he changed his clothes in the darkness. He heard a long low-toned siren curse warning of the air raid and then the footsteps of people running outside.

He froze, then moved with his parents into the shelter of a cave they had built in the garden to wait for the approach of the enemy's airplanes. But the airplanes seemed to have flown above Tokyo already because the windows of the house rattled only with the rumbling of the ground. They heard the sounds of shells exploding although the sound of the airplanes did not reach them.

His mother chanted a Buddhist prayer. When he stealthily stuck his head out of the door of the shelter, his father scolded him.

"Dangerous," his father said.

The dark red tint of the eastern sky frightened him. He heard many people screaming. The noise they made was like surf mixed with the sound of splitting beans.

"It's a terrible air raid," he said to his father.

His father heard him, but kept silent.

"We will not survive tomorrow, even if we can escape tonight," the young man said.

"You may be right," his father replied.

"We should give up hope," said the young man.

His words silenced his father once again.

Then, his father said, "Wait," and suddenly ran from the shelter.

"Why did he leave?" the young man asked his mother.

His mother stopped chanting and replied, "Perhaps he went to the house."

His father soon returned carrying a black bottle in his right hand and a glass in his left hand. The young man recognized the bottle at a glance.

It was the bottle of cognac that his uncle had brought to his father from Europe two years before. His father had stored it carefully in a wooden box after deciding to save it to drink when the war was

over.

The young man and his mother heard the bottle open. Cognac was poured into the glass in the darkness of the shelter. An indescribably wonderful fragrance diffused through the shelter that had previously been filled only with the silence of death.

"Drink it," his father said. His voice was painfully tender as he handed the young man the glass.

It was the first time in his life he had tasted cognac.

He drank it slowly, without haste, as if it was the last thing he would taste for the rest of his short life. And he thought that he was tasting something more wonderful than the gourmet, Louis XIV, ever tasted.

He felt giddy.

Outside the shelter, the flames of death were burning the town and scorching the sky.

Twenty years passed after that night. He was in Paris on a business trip.

After finishing work, he visited Versailles Palace, accompanied by a friend of his who lived in Paris. He viewed the large palace among many

other tourists. They also visited the country-style detached palace that had been a much-love home of Marie Antoinette.

He said to his friend, "I heard that Versailles was expanded from Louis XIII's palace."

"Really? I've never known that," the friend replied, in a voice that expressed admiration of his knowledge.

The memory of that evening returned to him. And the fragrance of the cognac he had tasted that evening returned, too.

But he didn't say anything about it to his friend. As if it was a very important personal secret.

Graham Greene has called Shusaku Endo "one of our finest living novelists." Endo was born in 1923, moved to Manchuria as a child, and returned to Japan to receive a degree in French literature from Keio University. He continues to live in Tokyo. Many of his books have been translated into English, including Silence, Volcano, and A Life of Jesus.

Mary Fujimaki's original story, "Pagan Babies," appeared in the Spring 1990 issue of EDGE. Etsue Tsukada is an ear, nose, and throat specialist who previously studied English with Fujimaki.

Winners of PSJ Tanka Contest Announced

The Poetry Society of Japan has announced the results of its Second International English Tanka Contest. Over 100 tanka were received from the United States, England, Canada, and Japan. Judges for the contest were Edith Shiffert, Neal Henry Lawrence, Koji Suzuki, and Atsuo Nakagawa. Comments and analyses of the contest will appear in *Poetry Nippon*, No. 92, available from the Poetry Society of Japan, 5-11, Nagaike-cho, Showa-ku, Nagoya 466 Japan. Annual subscriptions are ¥3,500; the membership fee for one year (including subscription) is ¥5,000.

The society is also holding its 22nd General Meeting and Poetry Fair '90 in Ashiya (near Kobe) on Saturday, November 3, 1990. The event will include lectures by Dr. Philip Williams on Robert Penn Warren and by Dr. Marie Philomène on Empress Michiko's poetry, in addition to a symposium on the subject "Is the English Haiku Poetry?" An application form and more information about the society's activities can be obtained from the above address. New members are welcome!

Here are the winning poems from the tanka contest, reprinted from the press announcement circulated by the Poetry Society of Japan. Also receiving honorable mention were Dee Evetts of England, Stephen Forster of Tokyo, and Kenneth C. Leibman of the United States.

First prize (¥20,000)

I knew nothing
of the ginkgo
until autumn
laid a thousand fans
at my feet

Leroy Gorman, Canada

Second prize (¥10,000)

soon after moon down
faint scent of jacaranda:
gently steaming sun
in dawn mist slowly shifting,
the old fisherman still there

George Ralph, U.S.A.

Honorable mention

last night i felt
the first autumn chill
or was this my way
of understanding
what you said to me

George Swede, Canada

Langston Hughes—The Dream Keeper Speaks

The poetry of Langston Hughes, who died at the age of 65 in 1967, was brought back to life in a series of dynamic readings given by American performer John Patterson at the Petite Rue in Hara-juku this past May 25-27. "The Dream Keeper Speaks: The World of Langston Hughes," sponsored by the International Anti-Apartheid Group, the Japan Afro-American Friendship Association, and the Africa Tree Center Support Group, is a 90-minute one-man show, based entirely on 80 poems by one of the twentieth century's leading black poets. The show has been performed extensively throughout the United States, including at the Smithsonian Institute and the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, and now has finally made its way to Japan.

Patterson succeeds in transforming poetry from a literary art to a performing art: this was not the dull stuff of someone standing behind a podium holding a piece of a paper and reading poems from it. Patterson, who is an actor by profession, actually *performs* the poetry, taking on the expressions and the voices of Hughes' characters, bringing them to life with dance, song, and drama. I've read Hughes' poetry before—nose in book—but never really *heard* it with my ears until hearing Patterson's rendition, which picks up on Hughes' use of blues and jazz rhythms in a voice that oscillates from soft to loud, masculine to feminine, humor to pathos.

Patterson, a political activist involved with CORE during the civil rights movement and now working with the pro-gay, pro-socialist, pro-minority-rights New Alliance Party, makes Hughes' poetry sound as if it were written days, not decades, ago. The times haven't really changed all that much, only the names, as the following excerpts from the reading testify:

"James Powell shot dead by a New York City policeman's bullets . . . how many bullets does it take to kill a 15-year-old kid?"

"The little boy who sticks a needle in his arms seeks it out in otherworldly dreams."

"It's easier to get dope than to get a job."

"Memo to Third World people: they let have babies because they are quite willing to pauperize you."

"In Johannesburg there are 240,000 natives working in the mines. Hey, what kind of poem do you make out of *that*?"

"The gangsters of the world are riding high—it's not the underworld of which I speak. They leave that loot to smaller fry."

"Hungry child: I did not make this world for you. You didn't buy any stock in my railroads. You didn't invest in my corporation. Where are your shares of Standard Oil?"

—Richard Evanoff

Petite Rue in Tokyo schedules regular performances, exhibitions, concerts, and more. Contact Jonathan Seidenfeld at 03-400-9890 for info on upcoming events. The sponsors of the Langston Hughes reading can be contacted at the following numbers: the International Anti-Apartheid Group, 03-325-9832; the Japan Afro-American Friendship Association, 03-577-2383; and the Africa Tree Center Support Group, 0467-76-0811 or 0424-84-7913.

The personal, the political, and the poetical

An interview with John Patterson

EDGE: A lot of the things you were reading tonight sounded very contemporary.

John: One of the really wise things that I think Langston did, and was part of what he was trying accomplish in terms of literature, was that he based his poetry squarely on blues and jazz. That's really great music and it doesn't die. It grabs you. I think that's really what makes it live, combined with the fact that he had such a spare style.

EDGE: Where do you get the vocal cues for what you do?

John: Actually when I started out I didn't even feel it was acting—I was using models. These were all people I had grown up with. I grew up in a small black community in upstate New York—in Syracuse. My adolescence was the late '40s, '50s, and that was the time of a lot of what Langston wrote. So I just recognized the people he wrote about, and I guess even more than that I recognized the social situations that he wrote about.

EDGE: Apart from the style and the sound, there's also a political message that seems obvious in what you're doing.

John: Instead of poetry being about the "grands" of the world, Langston choosing to have his poetry be about the ordinary people is right at the heart of that message. It's not an overt message about taking specific political action, but it's very political in that it reassesses the value of a group of people who are despised. It's not just black people; it's working-class people. That's really what it's about when you get right down to it.

EDGE: What was Hughes' actual political involvement?

John: He was involved with a lot of the left, but he was not a member of any party, although he had a lot of fights about that with Congressional investigating committees. One of the things that always bothered them about Langston was that he was not a black activist, but he was merely a progressive person who approached things from a broad political spectrum. That's what I feel comes out of this show, because he does what any writer who writes about a nation does (in a way he treated black America as a nation): he writes very specifically about it, but it's so good you can abstract and generalize from it to appreciate any people or the decency and the life lived by working-class people anywhere. He did not conceive of freedom as being divisible—that you can have black people be free and oppress the white people who had been the oppressors. That's the reason that I do this show and

it's one of the things that I want to get across: that Langston really could look at the world and write about the very unpleasant things he saw—the lynchings, the shootings, the drugs, and all this—but he could also look at that and end up having hope for humanity. It's not a despairing, bleak view of the world.

EDGE: No, that didn't come through in the performance at all.

John: I don't think it's in the material either. I think that's one of the things that attracts me to it. I think this is where he parted company with other writers of the '50s. He departed with the bleak "Wasteland" view of the world. That was not his view at all. There was this sense on his part that there's always a crazy spark in human beings that can push a little harder, bear a little more, go a little further, and that the people who are really that way are the working-class people—the ones that make the world go round.

EDGE: Is the problem more class or race?

John: I definitely see it as more class. I think about this a lot because of my political activities, but as the '80s have gone on and we're now into the '90s, it really seems to me that to concentrate a lot on race confuses matters, that you have to talk first about class divisions. And then within that you have all the problems that have to do with race, ethnicity, religion, and and so on. But the way the

world is getting reorganized, if you're not one of the people who's got some of the goods of the world, it's pretty hard to get them right now and pretty well divided up.

EDGE: In light of that, are you still hopeful?

John: Oh, very much so. One of the things about the show is discovering how similar my responses to the world are to Langston's. I think it's this sense of irony, this laughing to keep from crying. Some stuff is so serious and so heavy that you talk about it and then you laugh. I mean, you don't talk about it and then go commit suicide. What's the point of *that*? . . . Langston did so successfully what I would like to do, which is to have no division between politics and art. There never is really, but he was able to bring the two together very skillfully. You can't do a broad "party" political struggle and say that's enough, when it's disconnected from people's personal struggles. Just because you get people the right to vote, doesn't mean they're personally free. There's another struggle that goes on. And you can't just say, well, my personal struggle's enough—I don't care who's president. So I want to say that these things are joined—they have to be joined or neither one can be effective.

EDGE: The political is the personal and the personal is the political.

John: Exactly.

EDGE: A lot of poets tend to be very introspective, I guess especially white poets. One approach to poetry is the

"expose-my-soul" type. But what you're doing seems to connect up with a larger cultural, political, and social matrix.

John: It's very easy for performers, especially actors, to get totally preoccupied with getting a job and making it—

EDGE:—which is just like people trying to make it in a big corporation—

John:—yeah, being a salaryman sort of thing. I look for poetry where people are talking about the world that communicates about the condition that we're living in. It may be true that some white men are becoming very introspective, but it's not true of the white women who are writing or of gay writers. They're really struggling with central questions in the society and culture of the times.

EDGE: A lot more interesting than just playing with language, isn't it?

John: Definitely.



John Patterson performing Langston Hughes at Petite Rue

Even So

Down the road
a man
builds a stone wall.
Each day
he sizes the stones,
finding the balance,
mixes his concrete
with a trowel, and
one or two new stones
appear beside the others.
My wife and I
laugh to see
how slowly
he builds this wall,
but every day we return
to see how it grows.
Once, while he was working,
I heard him tell a neighbor,
One skin clothes us all.
I went home
and sat by myself
for hours. When
my wife came
I told her what he said.
Then we stood
side by side
cutting vegetables.
The carrot pieces
fell from the blade
until they made
a small pile

on the cutting board.
Then the green onions
did the same.
And the peppers,
cucumbers, beans, asparagus,
tomatoes, broccoli,
red leaf lettuce, spinach,
cheeses, and finally,
after throwing it all
into a wooden bowl,
I placed a handful
of sunflower seeds
at the center
in a small mound.
All this time
we did not speak
of the man
down the road,
or his stone wall,
or what I heard
him tell the neighbor.
Sometime before he finished
the wall, my wife moved
away to live in another city.
Even so, I've lived
this man's way
ever since
we made that salad,
and the hunger's
not as bad
as it was before.

The Wedding

The space
a gone love
fills .

You can't place a ring around that

One of six writers to receive a 1989 Lannan Literary Award and Fellowship, Peter Levitt's published books include Bright Root, Dark Root and Homage: Leda As Virgin. As a translator, he is currently working on a tanka mss. by Teruyama Shuji and the Zen text Shodaka (the latter with Kazuaki Tanahashi). He is a longtime Zen Buddhist practitioner. Two of his "poetic fictions" will be in the Well/Free Anthology.

Dance of the Earwigs

The children fear them almost
as much as they dread Bloody Mary,
that devouring mother they've fitted
with a lampshade head
and ice-tong fingers.

But I say, let the earwigs
dance, let them snap their pincers
like Spanish castanets,
let them gorge themselves on roses.

The children don't understand
all this fol-de-rol over earwigs.
They've learned to shower their love
on tadpoles, garter snakes: fleet-tailed
creatures, deft at shedding lives and skins.

But I say, let the earwigs
dance, let them snap their pincers
like Spanish castanets,
let them gorge themselves on roses.

The children have rolled themselves
up like sow bugs, have seen inchworms
measure their palms, have voiced
freckled alarm over a ladybug's death.
They say Bloody Mary eats earwigs.

But I say, let the earwigs
dance, let them snap their pincers
like Spanish castanets,
let them gorge themselves on roses.

Riddle

There's a burning lamp
smouldering through my flesh.
I wear its sulphur stamp
as a medallion round my neck.

All day its fierce mirror
chases me away,
blinds my cold desire,
and turns my feet to clay.

When smoke and ash dissolve
in water, in twilight's mouth,
my black breath invades all
the corners of my house.

What do I know of time?
Stars are my only friends.
And this my only crime:
I burn at both ends.

(Answer: night)

Speaking in Tongues, Maurya Simon's third book, will be out this month from Peregrine Smith Books. She spent the first half of 1990 in Bangalore, South India as an Indo-American Fellow. Living with her husband at Mt. Baldy, in her native California, she continues to teach in U. C. Riverside's Creative Writing Program.



The Idiot

by Tom Irwin

It was nighttime, on top of a hill. The sky was mostly clear and the moon was bright. Below the hill and way off to the right were the lights of a town, from where the faint sound of car horns could be heard now and then.

Two men shining flashlights, one 2-3 steps behind the other, stepped from a path leading to the top of the hill. They walked slowly to a large clearing. The man in front was Allen; the man in back was Mike. Mike carried a spade.

The two stopped. Then Allen slowly took a few more steps forward, looking about the hill as he did. The moon shone brightly enough on top of the hill to see without the flashlight.

After a while Allen seemed to find what he was looking for. He pointed toward two trees.

"That spot over there," he said. "Dig there. Not halfway between the two trees, but closer to the smaller one."

Mike walked to where Allen pointed.

"Here?" he asked.

"Yes, right around there. Maybe a little more to the left."

Mike moved about a foot to the left and stuck the spade into the ground. Then he took off his jacket and laid it at the foot of the smaller tree.

"He's bugs, he is," he thought, "but if this is what he wants," and started digging.

Shawn M. Gabriel taught English literature at Glendale High in unorthodox ways. He often closed the classroom curtains, for example, turned off the lights and had his students use flashlights to read Gerard Manley Hopkins, Dylan Thomas and other poets. He told his students that since they were in the dark about literature anyway, why not start off admitting that and then work together to throw a little light on the subject. The students responded enthusiastically, the principal reason why Headmaster Weggen hesitated to dismiss Gabriel, although he wished Gabriel's batteries would go dead.

Allen leaned against the bigger tree. The moonlight threw jagged shadows of bushes, branches and digging Mike to his right. Except for the digging sound, everything was still. The great quiet of country night.

"Peace, peace," Allen thought. "If only living

were always a clear mask and a reed.

In outline, Allen's plan was simple: a hole, someone to fill it, a mask and a reed.

"Sacrifice, sacrifice," Allen thought. "How far back was it less than this? Work, art, music, love? Family? The sounds and sights? Ah, yes, the wonderful sounds and sights. Motors, brakes and horns less than singing kids and ticking clocks. But pizzicato, Vivaldi, blocks of color, the seasons, shingles, swings, bugs, locks, ink? Do they all go?"

The Burkes down on 22 Spring St. kept a chicken named Joey in their back yard. He was skinny and mean. God he was mean. He'd come tearing, half-flying to peck mightily at anybody or anything that came in the yard. But Joey had another side, too. He loved 2-year-old Bonnie and Vivi the Maltese puppy. He was their Great Protector. The three played in the yard for hours at a time, Bonnie toddling from spot to spot, babbling to the others about each new discovery, sometimes falling back ba-bom on her bum. Vivi sniffing and peeing, wagging her tail, staying always near Bonnie, and Joey erect and alert, strutting sometimes in front sometimes in back, protecting his two friends. Round and round the yard they'd go. The wonder of it, day after day.

Mike thought back as he dug.

Saturday night he was in the Little Brown Jug drinking and having fun with Molly and the others when this guy came in. It was Allen. He stood out because of how he looked around, like he was casing the joint. He wasn't a cop, but he was dressed different from the regulars. He sat at the bar at first, and then moved to a booth. Maybe five or ten minutes later he had one of the waitresses take a drink to Mike and tell him he'd like to talk to him.

Mike waited a while before going over. He didn't recognize the guy, and didn't trust strangers. But he knew the guy might know him through someone, and he didn't want to make any wrong impressions. That wouldn't be smart.

He walked up to Allen's booth

"Thanks for the drink," he said. "The waitress said you wanted to talk to me. You know me from somewhere?"

Allen looked up but stayed seated.

"No, we've never met. Can you sit and talk for a couple of minutes?"

Mike tensed.

Allen sensed his nervousness.

"You can relax," he said. "I've got a business deal to talk to you about. That's all. If you don't like it you can say no and go back to your friends."

Mike's first impression of the guy was mixed, but he loosened up and slid into the booth.

Tony Lucci owned Tony's Auto Shop on Walnut Terrace. Every day he cursed automakers in Italian and English for making new cars so goddam difficult for mechanics to service. He remembered the good old days, when cars had enough room under the hood so you could get goddam in, find out what's wrong by looking, and fix it. Wrenches, screwdrivers and lots of oil and grease. Dirty hands that even goddam sand soap couldn't clean, with cuts in them turned into black lines. If anyone had told Hank thirty years ago he'd employ mechanics one day who wore white shirts and ties to work he'd have called them goddam nuts.

"You know my name?" Mike asked.

"Yes, the waitress told me," Allen said.

Allen then introduced himself and told Mike he had a proposal, something he said would give Mike money for drinking and eating. He asked if Mike was interested.

Mike didn't care about the eating part, but money for drinking wasn't a bad idea. Trouble was he didn't know this guy, and his deal might be something hot.

"Yeah, sure I'm interested," Mike said. "So long as it ain't too illegal or dangerous. Y'understand what I mean? Like I don't want nuthin to do with coke or crack."

"No, nothing like that. No drugs," Allen said. "Nothing illegal."

"Whadd'ya want then?"

"I just want you to go with me to Foley's Hill and dig a hole."

Mike stared at Allen.

"Dig a hole? Whadd'ya mean? What kind of hole?"

"Just a hole. Nothing special."

"Yeah, sure, you want me to go all the ways to Foley's Hill with you to dig a hole. How's come you don't dig your own hole?"

"If that's all I wanted," Allen said. "I wouldn't be sitting here talking to you."

Mike thought for a second.

"Maybe yes, maybe no. What else d'ya want?"

"After you dig the hole," Allen said, "I want to get into it. And then I want you to fill it."

"You want me to dig a hole and fill it again, huh?"

"Yes."

"With you in it."

"With me in it, yes."

Mike couldn't believe what he was hearing. It had to be either his ears were bad or Allen was a wise-ass.

"Wait a minute," Mike said. "Let's go through this again."

Allen didn't say anything.

"Okay, we go together to Foley's Hill. You tell me where you want a hole, I dig it, you get into it, and then I cover you up with dirt. Is that right?"

"That's right."

"You gotta be shitting me."

"No, I'm dead serious."

Professor Reginald Burton was an expert on American revolutionary history. Although he was a bit eccentric, people traveled long distances to hear his tour lectures. Last week a capacity audience gathered at the Civic Auditorium in Cambridge to listen to him talk about the true meaning of independence. Even as he walked down the side aisle, up the stairs to the stage and over to the podium, however, he was already lost in thought. The large American flag he saw on the stage when he walked in had started his mind's eye traveling the route Paul Revere took from Boston, across the Charles River to Cambridge and all the towns west, along today's Route 2 to the commons of Concord and Lexington. He stood at the podium staring straight ahead for fifty minutes, without saying a word. He was still standing there thinking about the significance of the shot fired heard round the world when the audience emptied the auditorium, filled with admiration and awe for the far-sighted, lanky man of silence and profound thoughts, Professor Reginald Burton.

Mike looked hard at Allen.

"Listen," Mike said, "d'ya mind if I ask you a coupla personal questions?"

"Yes, I do mind," Allen said. "I'm offering you a deal, that's all. I don't want a lot of personal questions."

Once more Mike saw Allen as a wise-ass and considered whacking him then and there right smack between the eyes. At the same time, he kind of liked Allen's no-nonsense approach to things. Nothing complicated: just listen to the deal, and say yes or no. Besides, Mike punched out a guy the night before at the Little Brown Jug and the owner told him any more trouble and he was barred.

"Anyway, let me tell you what you get for digging the hole," Allen said, "and then you tell me whether or not you want the job."

"Yeah, okay," Mike said.

Allen then told Mike that in return for having him dig the hole and fill it with him in it, he'd arrange for Mike to have a room, two meals and all his booze, "Every day, to death."

"The rest of my life," Mike said.

"Yes, until the day you die."

"No catches?"

"Only one condition."

"What's that?"

"If you spill one word, if you say anything, anything at all about this to anyone, the party's over. All payments will immediately be stopped. That you have to understand."

The Mystic River Rapids run due south about three miles west of Glendale. Twice a week, Agnes Merrimac, the reigning State Female Rafting Champion, religiously shoots them in a homemade raft, and the many raft-shaped trophies decorating her living room sideboard attest to her rafting prowess. Agnes swears by rafting. She says it outdoes aerobics for keeping fit. Secretly, though, she frets a bit because her love affair with rafts keeps her too busy to date men. But she believes God is fair and that if she is good He will take care of her. Agnes couldn't know it, of course, but her entry in the Spring Tri-State Raft Meet was destined to change her life.

Mike understood, of course, but he still had some questions. He hesitated to ask them because he didn't want to turn Allen off. In short, he liked the deal and didn't want to lose it, but he had to ask how he was going to get paid. If Allen was buried in the hole, who was going to pay him? And how could Allen know whether Mike ever told anyone afterward?

"Yeah, sure, I understand," he said. "I won't talk to no one. Like I'm a clam. I don't know nuthin. But, listen, I got one question. Nuthin personal."

"You're probably wondering how you're going to receive your money," Allen said.

"Yeah, that's right. I'm not nosey, you know what I mean. But I don't know you from Adam, and if you're not gonna be around, I'd like to know what's gonna happen for me to get what you say I'm gonna get."

"Who said I won't be around?" Allen said. "I never said that."

"Well, you know what I mean. You being buried and everything."

"Look, Mike, I'm not planning on going anywhere," Allen said. "You don't have to be concerned about what happens to me. In fact, don't concern yourself about anything except digging the hole and then filling it. That's all I'm asking from you. You can forget everything else. If you can't handle that approach, say so."

"I jus' thought . . ."

At last Sunday morning's High Mass at Glendale's Sacred Heart Church, young Fr. O'Neil directed his sermon toward the "wayward." He urged his parishioners to remember that although God was All-Forgiving it behooved man to enlighten himself, admit the error of his ways, demonstrate true repentance and ask sincerely for forgiveness. Do thusly, he said, and there will be a place in Heaven for you. Not everyone understood everything Fr. O'Neil talked about, but everyone agreed his fine sermons would eventually win him an appointment to the Archbishop's staff in the Diocese.

"You don't have to think," Allen said. "Look, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll hand you five hundred dollars in cash before I get into the hole, which even by itself is not bad for digging a hole. Friends of mine will contact you afterward about the rest."

"Who's your friends?" Mike asked. "How they gonna know me?"

"They already know you."

Mike glanced around. He didn't see any unfamiliar faces.

"There's no one here," Allen said.

"I was just wondering, okay?"

"Mike, why don't you do us both a favor?"

"Like what?"

"Like don't worry so much. You've got everything to gain and nothing to lose."

"Okay, okay. Don't get excited. I was jus' trying to cover myself."

"It's a deal, then?" Allen asked.

Mike thought about the five hundred dollars. Like the guy said, even if the other money didn't come in, five big ones ain't bad for digging a hole.

"Yeah, okay, you got a deal."

"Good," Allen said.

He reached into his pocket.

"Here's twenty dollars. Buy a shovel and a couple of strong flashlights in the next couple of days. Do you have wheels?"

"Yeah, I got an old pickup."

"Good," Allen said, sliding out of the booth and standing up. "Pick me up at the clock tower in front of the Trade School on Temple Street at seven p.m. Tuesday. Any problems with that?"

Mike also slid out and stood up.

"No, no problems."

"Okay. I'll be waiting," Allen said. "Thanks for the conversation. Sorry to interrupt your fun with your friends."

"Don't worry about it," Mike said. "They ain't going nowhere."

Mayor Robert E. Greene, running for reelection in Glendale, made the Gazette last week when a

scandal broke surrounding construction of the town's first downtown underground parking garage, a major public works project scheduled to begin in FY91, with substantial state and federal aid. The article cited clear evidence of vendor bid-rigging related to supplying the concrete for the garage. It named a first cousin of the father of Mayor Greene's only son-in-law as a principal in the scandal. He owns an agency that leases industrial vehicles, including forklifts and cement mixers. The Gazette's City Editor tried to fit the forklifts into the story.

Up on Foley's Hill, Mike hummed as he shovelled.

"Ha, ha, ha, you and me,
Little brown jug, how I love thee."

"He's involved, the idiot," Allen thought, and said, "Mike, don't hum."

A grunt from Mike, and then only the digging.

A slight wind chilled Allen in his wet boots. He buttoned another overcoat button. Time passed.

Mike finished digging. Without saying a word, Allen handed Mike an envelope, looked around, stepped into the hole, and laid down. He put on the mask, tested the reed, and motioned to Mike to shovel the dirt in. Mike looked at the strange sight of Allen with the mask on, stretched out the length of the hole, the fingers of his left hand holding a long reed in his mouth. He then started shovelling the dirt back into the hole, being careful about the reed.

When Mike finished he gave the mound a last spade pat, glanced at the reed sticking out, and then turned, put his jacket on, and headed down the same path he and Allen had come up.

Over three hundred people, mostly parents and relatives of the players, watched Sunday's Little League playoff game for the New England Regional title at Glendale Park between the Glendale Atoms and the Melrose Swallows. The local team won the title, the first time in sixteen years, in a see-saw game that saw a combined total of 17 hits, six home runs, five errors, nine walks, three passed balls and two balks. Little Billy "Bubba" Shapiro (12) whiffed ten while belted a sixth-inning inside-the-park bases-loaded home run.

In limited space, Allen wondered. He added one and one; eight and one; two and two; two and four. Then he turned them around, tried dark and light, wrong and right. He probed pro and con, back and forth. Up and down his scale of values he sped, his fingers the while on the reed.

An hour passed. Two, three hours passed.

Pi = 3.14159 26535 89793 23846 26433 83279
50288 41971 69399 37510 58209 74944
59230 78164 06286 20899 86280 34825
34211 70679 82148 08651 32823 06647
09384 46095 50582 23172 53594 08128
48111 74502 84102 70193 85211 05559
64462 29489 54930 38196 44288 10975
66593 34461 28475 64823 37867 83165
27120 19091 45648 56692 34603 48610

Mike was in the Little Brown Jug, pert Molly on his lap, his first highballs in his belly. He sang,

"Ha, ha, ha, you and me,
Little brown jug, how I love thee."

"What about me, Mike?" asked Molly. "Don't you love me?"

"Whadd'ya talking about, Molly, lass, you know I love thee," Mike said, and squeezed her ass.

Up on Foley's Hill, Allen squeezed the reed.

A dog bayed at the moon.

Two lovers trying to sleep grumbled at the din.

A baby boy was born at the Whidden Memorial Hospital.

Tom Irwin is the president of Dynaword, a Tokyo-based translation company. Originally from Boston, he has been in Japan 20 years and according to one unnamed source, "speaks Japanese better than most natives." In addition to translating, he has also published extensively.

Biodata on artists with work in this issue of EDGE

American artist Donna Mitchell exhibited a series of photocollages at Dentsu Ad Art Gallery in Tokyo this past February. She also works with blue-printing, the medium of her pencil drawing in this issue of EDGE.

Fred Bean is president-elect of the Sheffield Photographic Society. His photograph, "Derwentwater," which appears in this issue of EDGE, won a prize in the Sheffield 1989 Annual Photo Exhibition.

Originally from New York state, David Chesnow now lives in Hokkaido and works as a freelance copy editor for Kodansha. He is a regular contributor of political cartoons to the Asahi Evening News.

Japanese woodblock print artist Hitomi Yoshikado has had work published in Kyoto Journal, including illustrations for the "Two Days into the Rainy Season" in the Summer 1988 issue.

Michael Corr illustrated Gary Snyder's Pulitzer Prize winning book, Turtle Island. His graphics also appeared in the Spring 1990 issue of EDGE and he is this issue's featured poet.

The work of Paul Takeuchi was featured in the Autumn 1989 issue of EDGE. He is originally from Washington, D.C., and is interested in filmmaking as well as photography.

Paul Rossiter

In the Mountains: Five Days

1
 teeth chatter in the freezing dawn
 hoarfrost on boulders
 around my sleeping bag
 morning star
 hung in the brightening sky
 sunlight
 starlight
 the huge wheel of days

2
 black crags coarse mountain grass
 all these miles
 of empty sky and stone
 sheep startle I watch me pass
 through tattered yellow eyes
 cloud of unknowing
 bound up in hoof and horn
 sinew bone and fleece

3
 white sky raven's call
 scores
 a single charcoal mark on emptiness
 mountains stone centuries
 millennia
 eroding into silence
 only a toehold cliff face
 the weathering mind
 a sudden small landslip
 a skitter of stones
 dislodged from a scree slope

4
 midday:
 doze on warm stones by a tarn
 the waves speak out loud
 I am stone
 I am empty mountain air
 (who invented the wind?)

5
 coming down to the valley
 once again
 it must have been a dream
 all those miles of empty sky and stone
 five days
 hidden
 somewhere back up there
 between the mountains and the sky
 (we've made love how many times
 and still
 I feel I've never touched her)
 as though I'd never been there
 mountains
 empty places
 barren places
 inexhaustibly fertile

Paul Rossiter studied literature at Oxford University and currently teaches poetry at the University of Tokyo. He is the coordinator of the Tokyo Writers Workshop.

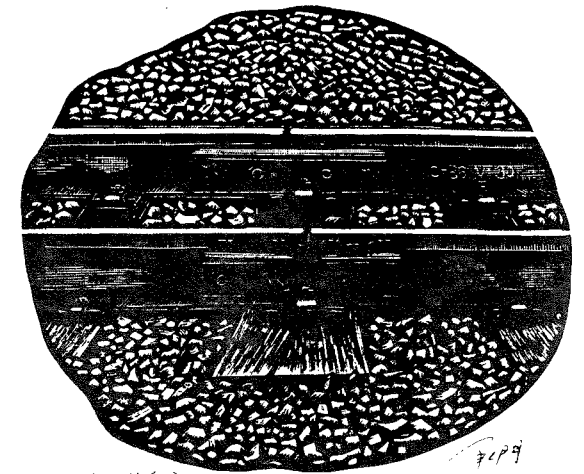
David Gonsalves

Scrub

Waiting. Four seasons
 turn beneath snow

drifts. Clean sheets
 crawl toward the family

infirmary. Bodies, carefully
 wrapped in newsprint.



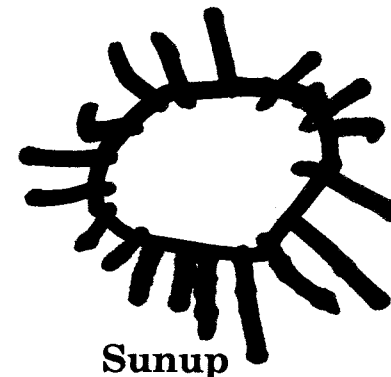
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"Rail" by Hitomi Yoshikado

David Gonsalves lives in Albany, New York, USA and is the editor/janitor of Tin Wreath, a unique little mag he distributes free of charge, urging readers who would like to make a donation to send a couple of bucks to their favorite poets. (For more details on Tin Wreath see page 37 of this issue of EDGE.)

Richard Evanoff

A Couple of Poems for the Kids



Sunup

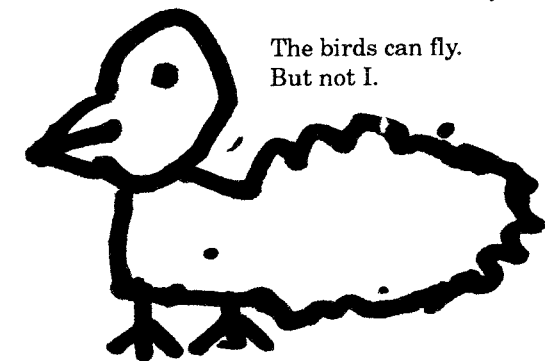
The sun's coming up
 like a big ripe persimmon.
 The light's pouring down
 like juice from a lemon.
 The horizon's the color
 of apricot jelly.
 The blueberry sky
 looks just right for my belly!

Why Can't I Fly?

Why can't I fly?
 I don't know why.
 I try and try and try.
 But I can't fly.

So I sit here and cry
 "My, oh, my!
 Why can't I fly
 like a bird in the sky?"

The birds can fly.
 But not I.



Richard Evanoff lives on Hatsuzawa-san, one of the many mountains west of Tokyo where he often goes backpacking with his four children. While he has written numerous reviews of, articles about, and interviews with other writers as editor of Edge, this is his first (and last) original poetry to appear the magazine. [Artwork by Hugh and Kai]

Nothing

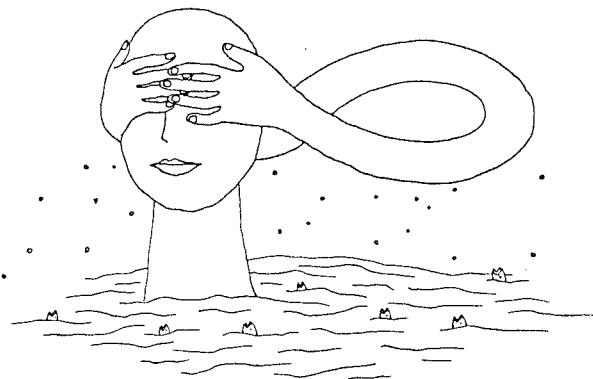
I have nothing to say for myself.
 I believe in nothing.
 That's why I always have nothing on my mind.
 I just remembered something, however,
 and if I may, here's something to show for it,
 a little something from nothing.
 Mind you, it's nothing to write home about,
 and it's nothing to speak of, either;
 it's really about nothing in particular.
 For once you try everything from A to Z,
 you find that nothing really works,
 and that with nothing up your sleeve,
 nothing is what it seems—
 it leaves everything to the imagination
 and nothing to be desired.
 Now if you think this has nothing to do with
 you
 or is much ado about nothing,
 well, you ain't seen nothing yet.
 As any good-for-nothing can tell you,
 I'd like nothing better than to offer you nothing,
 but timing is everything.
 Before you get all worked up over nothing,
 you should know something first:
 I used to have nothing to be ashamed of and
 nothing to fear.
 I mean, I used to think I was really something,
 that I had everything going for me,
 that anything was possible;
 I used to believe that if one couldn't have
 everything,
 at least something was better than nothing,
 and that as long as there was something for
 everyone,
 who could ask for anything more?

One day, however, I began hearing sweet nothings
 whispering in my ear, to the tune of
 "All or nothing? All or nothing? All or nothing?"
 At first something in me said, "Oh, it's nothing,"
 and I tried to act as if nothing had happened.
 But day and night I kept hearing sweet nothings
 in my ear
 until I knew I had nothing to worry about,
 since nothing was standing in my way
 and I was already next-to-nothing.
 Finally I decided, since it was all for nothing
 anyway,
 that there was nothing left for me to do
 except to take nothing personally.
 So I slipped into something a bit more comfortable
 and, after thinking of everything,
 I said to myself, "Here goes nothing!"
 And suddenly, in a blinding flash, nothing
 happened.
 Absolutely nothing.
 And, in a word, everything changed:
 I had nothing more to gain,
 nothing more to lose,
 nothing more to hide,
 for nothing was new under the sun,
 nothing more and nothing less.
 And all I could say was, "Thanks. Thanks for
 nothing."
 That's why, now, I can believe everything I hear,
 for everything reminds me of something else.
 And that's why I can take nothing for granted,
 for I know that nothing really matters,
 that nothing's perfect,
 that nothing lasts forever.
 After all, nothing is sacred.

*Alan Saitoh should not be invited to parties—he's always reciting his own poetry. With his wife, Minako, he has written *Mamaist*, a collection of poems and illustrations which, in short, are advertisements for the imagination.*

Minako Saitoh is an artist/illustrator living in Kamakura. She spent four years in New York, where she met Alan, and was the "open sesame" for the world of mamaist. She presently is working as a commercial artist.

The Saitoh's are also busy raising their son, Sage.



"Grappling with the Concept of Infinity" by Minako Saitoh

Radical Art

An Aesthetic for Liberation and Survival

by Alex Shishin

I begin this essay with a major assumption—that whoever reads it to the end believes as I do that a socialist revolution is not only a desirable but a necessary alternative to the capitalist system of the West and the statist systems of the East. The socialism that I believe in does not exist and never has for any great length of time. It's primary characteristics are: (1) everything used in common is owned in common and democratically administered; (2) production is for use and not for profit. This essential vision is shared by a variety of schools of radical thought (i.e., industrial unionist, syndicalist, communitarian anarchist, etc.) though they usually disagree on means and ends. What they have in common is not being subordinate to any major power calling itself "socialist," "communist," "social democratic," or "labor." They are independent; their vision of socialism is an anathema to the members of all ruling classes, be they capitalists or commissars.

There are many moral reasons favoring their view of socialism. The most compelling—and the only one I'll mention here—is the ecological one. Simply put, we can no longer afford a system that requires increasing and unending economic expansion ("growth") as necessary to its well-being. "Growth" essentially means making us buy more, and this in turn is predicated on creating artificial desires for that which we do not have, which means convincing us to constantly discard that which we have. Planned obsolescence—waste of natural resources and energy—is at the heart of the market economy—be that economy in private or state hands. Western capitalism—by far the most powerful economic system in the world—is causing irreparable damage to the earth. The U.S., for example, comprising only 6% of the earth's population uses 25% of its resources. If we are to survive we need socialism, which doesn't create for profit but only for use, and thus has no need for "growth" and the horrendous waste it entails.

Where there is a way there must first be a will. And the will to establish socialism must fight the powerful (and ultimately self-destructive) will of ruling classes who will do anything to preserve their powers and riches. This fight requires not only the logos of social science but also the pathos of art. This is understood in the Third World. In the

English-speaking world, particularly its American side, radical art is most conspicuous by its virtual absence, the major exception being Black literature.

Why? Is it simply that artists in the frightfully "enlightened" West have a natural tendency to be above politics, to engage in "pure art?" In truth, art is political no matter how neutral it may seem—and for the most part it is conservative. That is, it does not challenge the legitimacy of the social order to the extent that it urges people to overthrow it. This is hardly surprising since patrons, publishers, customers, etc., belong to the rich and powerful. (Yes, we all know the archetypal bohemian artist who delights in shocking and insulting his rich patrons; chances are he'll be "above" organizing strikes.) It's most unfortunate that when artists do want to create radical art their largely (or entirely) unconscious subjugation has all too often robbed them of the very language with which to create it. Too often their efforts are crude, or at any rate not convincing.

Ruling classes distort artistic expression. This doesn't necessarily create bad art, aesthetically speaking; it does create timid art and as such establishes models of what "immortal" art should be. One thinks of distorted art as bad art as a matter of course and "Socialist Realist" literature invariably comes to mind—stuff which is neither socialist nor realistic. Capitalism distorts art in more subtle ways. "Didactic" art, the general line goes, is boring. The poet Allen Tate has even given us the "communication fallacy" which says it's fallacious to attempt to communicate a political ideal through art that could be properly communicated through a political tract. This is not a dictum against political art, but for conservative art. An art that doesn't excite the baser emotions, as Aristotle might say, because it poses no radical challenges to the audience's conscience. The "communication fallacy" is, in short, an invitation to self-censorship.

Apolitical literature is the stuff of English departments and of creative writing programs and of commercial publishing. "Don't be didactic," is really an indirect invitation to self-censorship. And self-censorship is the essence of contemporary English and American literature. (This includes the "private rebellion" of the Romantics such as William Blake. Today the "private rebellion" in our literature deals with lurid sex and violence, which are

shocking but do not touch the political order.) If anything, with the current propensity for takeovers of publishers by giant corporations, this problem is bound to get worse.

So whither radical art?

First let us admit this: as Karl Marx and Wallace Stevens have told us, ideas lag behind reality. Art, however, lags behind ideas. There have been great revolutionary artists but no really great revolutionaries who were artists. The revolutionary artist, like the conservative artist, is not a leader but a follower. Art might give revolution a beautiful aroma, but the real stuff of revolution is written by dull people usually in dull tracts.

Artists, in other words, are peripheral people in revolutions as elsewhere. But they are not superfluous.

To create a revolutionary literature in the English language we must first create a revolutionary conscience by other means. Yet a literature that is not truly revolutionary can still be radical. It can be the literature of protest. The literature of protest is primarily destructive. But it is balanced by Utopian literature, which is primarily constructive. The direction that the radical artist takes—that of destruction or of dreaming utopias—will depend on his or her tastes. Either is going to be valuable. The revolution requires disillusionment but it also needs dreams.

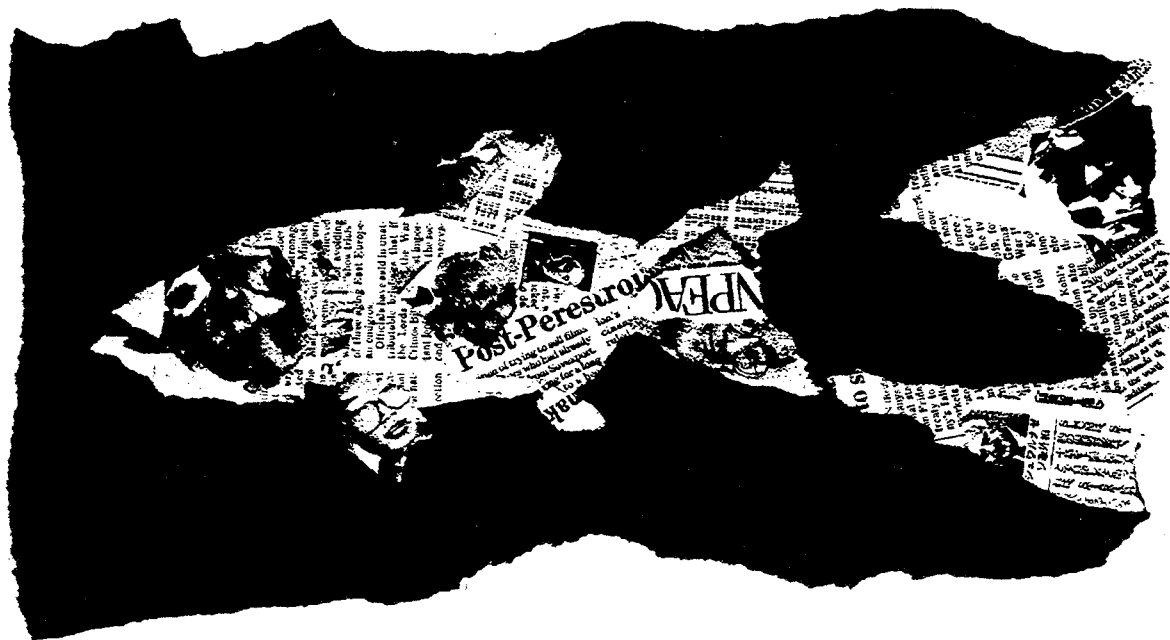
How does one begin creating radical art? One quick and dirty way, I suggest, is by lowering your standards. That means not being afraid of creating

art that is “didactic” and “polemical”—the sort of stuff, in other words, that your teacher told you never to do. Guaranteed you will create a great deal of shit. But you will also free yourself from many unconscious strictures of self-censorship in the process. Of course in creating radical art, you may never create great art. Yes, your sacrifice to the future survival of humankind may be predicated on your forsaking of “immortality.” You will most certainly never become rich. You may never reach a big audience. Your efforts may in the end have less effect than a clever bit of graffiti spray painted on a public wall. But what the hell, your immortality is doomed anyway if the human race is doomed. And the human race is surely doomed if it doesn’t establish the kind of socialism I was talking about at the beginning of this essay.

The creation of radical art begins with the destruction of all conventional notions of what the function of art and the artist are. You may find in the end that you cannot create “art” as such and must go after documenting real life, in which case you will most likely leave journals like this one behind you.

One thing for certain, you will not create radical art simply by experimenting with techniques—but with consciousness.

Alex Shishin teaches at Kobe Women's University and has written extensively on literary and political themes. An excerpt from his novel, Jo-chan, appears in the Summer 1990 issue of Kyoto Journal.



collage by David Chesanow

reviews

Let the Dangerous Disks Begin!

Chris Mosdell, *Laa . . . The Dangerous Opera Begins* (Tokyo: Soseisha Publishing), and *The Oracles of Distraction*—compact disk package (Tokyo: MIDI, Inc.) Reviewed by Karl Young.

“Laa . . . The Dangerous Opera Begins”: that’s the title of Chris Mosdell’s book, and of the first long poem in it, and that long poem’s refrain. “Laa”: finding a reference point for a poem that insists it’s just beginning and that seeks a point where “you are oblivious and godless for one whole minute,” when it is possible to be Buddha and Elvis at once. The search for a fixed reference point seems essential to Mosdell’s Rococo Surrealism, and that is found precisely in “Laa . . .”—a vocal test signal. This densely packed excursion into the nature of time and certainty, identity and ceremony is similar to all but one poem in the book.

The variant poem is “The Oracles of Distraction,” a work better apprehended in the compact disk package than in the book. The package contains a CD and 77 numbered cards, with texts by Mosdell on one side and collateral texts by Shuntaro Tanikawa on the other. Tanikawa composed his poems in response to Mosdell’s. Mosdell’s music was inspired in part by the possibility of presenting it along with the poems in CD form by MIDI, Inc. [English translations by Sherry Reniker of some of Tanikawa’s poems appeared in the Winter 1990 issue of EDGE.]

Mosdell’s Oracles texts share features with his other verse: intricate puns and word games, the opposition of sound to semantics, a density of imagery and intellection that can by turns be cloying and enlightening. But this CD publication has several important advantages over the book. The breaking up of the oracles onto cards relieves some of the density of the printed poetry. The collaboration with Tanikawa adds extra dimensions to the work. Not only is Tanikawa brought into the process: the reader/auditor also participates. You can shuffle the cards in any order you like. You can program your CD player to play the music in any order you choose, and read the cards either with the matching music or against the original order. I find the music (which goes from rock to new age to minimal) much more interesting when played outside linear sequence, and the poems more lively when read in conjunction with the music. The best way to proceed may be to shuffle the deck, put your CD player on random sequence, and jam. The name of this piece is “The Oracles of *Distraction*”—all efforts

in it lead away from each other. Perhaps in this piece Mosdell is learning to get along without *Laa . . .*: you provide the vocal reference tone.

This package may be historically important. Apparently it is the first time Compact Disk technology has been used in conjunction with serious poetry. The potential extensions of this union are mind boggling—particularly considering the huge body of work done being not only in Japan but also in the U.S., Canada, Brazil, Italy, and Germany that almost cries out for just such a medium. You might consider that when looking at the compact disk’s playing surface where you can see your own face emanating rainbows—perhaps imagining yourself as Buddha and Elvis for one minute.

Akiko Yosano’s Love Poems

Tangled Hair: Love Poems of Yosano Akiko, translated by Dennis Maloney and Hide Oshiro, illustrated by Hide Oshiro, (White Pine Press, 1987, \$7.50). Reviewed by Charles Aschmann.

Tangled Hair contains some fine translations of excellent poems, and one wishes for more of the poems and less of the art, which in many ways distracts from and even cheapens them. Even though the drawings are by a Japanese (albeit Americanized) artist, they seem to be a reinforcement of American stereotypes of things Japanese and an extension of the old Hollywood adage, “Throwing in a little tit makes anything better.”

Certainly these poems are often erotic, beautifully so, and that comes through in the translations, a real credit to those who did them. But this is an eroticism on an artistic plane that contrasts with the “Ukiyoe-like” drawings, some with their “I’m gonna cum” faces. The drawings themselves, though acceptable, are not particularly interesting and a mismatch for the poems. I think the artist should take a look at the first edition of *Midaregami* for a

hint of what might be appropriate.

Though most of the poems appear to be from the first section of the original, they are arranged very well, giving the reader an arc through the relationship from which they arise. Yosano's skill at being thoroughly classical and at the same time new, fresh and modern within the tanka form comes through here, even in the poems that contain no particular references:

From the silk gauze
of a young girl's sleeve
a firefly drifts out,
floating in the blue evening breeze

* * *

sweet wind coming through
the pitch dark spring night
for awhile, please, do not blow
through that girl's hair

The translators' choice of a four-line free verse form is also very good. The consistency of the four lines lends a formality to the collection as a whole, while the elasticity of the lines allows the natural rhythm of the language to work for itself. Thus, these are lovely short poems in English, whether the reader knows anything about tanka or not.

Aiming High, Aiming Low

(1) *Sasaki Mikiro, Demented Flute: Selected Poems 1967-1986, translated by William I. Elliott and Kazuo Kawamura (Katydid Books, 1988).* (2) *Lucien Stryk, Of Pen and Ink and Paper Scrap (Swallow Press / Ohio University Press, 1989).* Reviewed by Charles Aschmann.

One could hardly hope to find a better contrast of aims and degrees of success than these two volumes of poetry. The first reaches far and misses, and the second plays it safe but gets what it's after.

Most of Sasaki's book is prosaic, like the two penultimate lines in the book:

Today a journeyman painter astride a bridge rail
elegantly mixing paint *the color of water*

There is an occasional arresting line, however,

like the last full line which follows:

as though blending the souls of fish.

What is most disturbing is the fact that the poet often has good subjects, fine approaches, and I feel "this should be a good poem, why isn't it?" In the end I'm just not pulled into it, and it feels a bit like failed philosophy. Part of it may have to do with the fashionable nature of these poems: The "I"-centered protest of the sixties, right in vogue, the smart "sound-chant" poems that come later. The poems flow with the fashion, and present little that distinguishes them from the run of the mill. Yet one always feels a lost potential, and that is most disappointing.

On the other hand Lucien Stryk's poems, especially what we find in this volume, could be called easy listening poems. They are poems that do not reach for much, but they accomplish very well what they seek to do. The reader is not challenged beyond typical American liberal bounds, and these are not poems of ideas. Stryk's poems are based in a clear reality, and his voice is one that can glide through images and events, bringing them together seamlessly. The smoothness of association is what makes the original pieces in this book "one" with the middle section of haiku translations from Issa. In fact we feel there is no change of voice, just form.

All of the original poems in this collection are in short 2-, 3-, and 4-line stanzas, which adds to the continuity, as does the continual use of natural and homey objects throughout. The reader passes a pleasant time going through these images, occasionally attracted by one that is sharper or more apt than others. He or she feels a sure hand at work, well within what it is accustomed to doing. Stryk is like the painter he describes:

As sunset dissolves
in waves, the painter

dips his brush in
the wash of horizon,

sends fishing boats
over the canvas edge.

One enjoys the imagery, the easy rhythms, and though this is not poetry that strives to be great, it is a poetry we can read to sooth ourselves after a hard day, with confidence that there will be no offensive bloopers or mind-straining challenges. Without having any particular condemnation in mind, one might say that Stryk is a kind of Longfellow our time, and that kind of poetry is undoubtedly not without its place.

New Anthology Features Writers from EDGE

The *WELL/FREE Anthology* is 150 pages of poetry and photos that will be out for Thanksgiving. The anthology features new work by poets who appeared in *EDGE* (Adnan, Antler, Cormán, Castro, Evans, Kantaris, Murphy, Silliman, etc.) and who worked with *EDGE* (Evanoff, Forster, Gibson, Lowitz, O'Rourke, Young), along with translations by Drake, Solt, and Gordon, photos by Einarsen and

Parker, and a lot of surprises! Edited and published by Sherry Reniker, it can be pre-ordered now at a special rate for *EDGE* supporters: 1,000 yen (post-paid). In Japan, send order and payment to: Word Press, c/o Reniker, 318 Noborito, Amenity 2B, Tamaku, Kawasaki 214. In the USA, send \$5 per copy to: Membrane Press, 7112 - 27th Ave., Kenosha, Wisconsin 53140 USA.

Winners of the 1990 EDGE Fiction Contest

EDGE is pleased to announce the winners of its 1990 Fiction Contest:

SHORT STORY CATEGORY

First prize of ¥25,000 donated by *Tokyo Weekender*
"The Appointment" by David Cozy

Second prize of ¥10,000 donated by *EDGE*
"Notes on Love" by Leza Lowitz

Honorable mentions

"Lifeguard" by Kathleen Mary Toomey
"The Idiot" by Tom Irwin
"Upriver" by Chris Ames

TRANSLATION CATEGORY

First Prize of ¥25,000 donated by *Winds*
"The Accordion and the Fish Town" by Fumiko Hayashi, translated by Janice Brown

Second Prize of ¥10,000 donated by *Winds*
"Days of Living, Days of Dying [Part III]" by Tsutomu Mizukami, translated by Jacqueline Ruyak

Honorable Mentions

"Her" by Eimi Yamada, translated by Mona Tellier
"A Sudden Mute" by Kenzaburo Oe, translated by David A. O'Brien
"The Triangular Wave" by Kuniko Mukoda, translated by Neil Blacknell
"Dead Chrysanthemums" by Mikihiko Renjo, translated by Yasuko Mizuno and Mary Fujimaki

A total of 121 stories and translations were submitted from writers and translators both in Japan and abroad. David Cozy's "The Appointment" is being published in the *Tokyo Weekender*. "Notes on Love" by Leza Lowitz, Tom Irwin's "The Idiot," and Neil Blacknell's translation of "The Triangular Wave" by Kuniko Mukoda appear in this issue of *EDGE*. Other stories from the translation category are being considered for publication in *Winds*, the in-flight publication of Japan Air Lines.

Judges for the short story category were Corky Alexander, editor of *Tokyo Weekender*, and Joyce Taniguchi, contributing editor for *EDGE*. Judges for the translation category were Tom Chapman, editor of *Winds*, and Richard Evanoff, editor of *EDGE*. We would also like to thank Michael O'Rourke, *EDGE*'s previous fiction editor, for help in setting up and organizing the contest.

Special thanks to everyone who contributed short stories and translations to this year's contest!

NETWorks: recommended reading from Ireland

Poetry Ireland Review, 44, Upper Mount St., Dublin 2, Ireland. Quarterly—£3.00. Presents a great deal of new Irish poetry from established and developing talents (including Irish language poetry) and also work from outside of Ireland. It has an increasingly critical dimension with reviews and overviews which attempt to make its readers aware of what is happening elsewhere in the world of poetry and perhaps to place the work of Irish poets in a larger, more international context. Its most recent issue concentrated on French poetry. Its present editor is Michael O'Shiadual, whose work in Irish and English has been published widely. Published by Poetry Ireland, an organisation which promotes poetry through publications, readings, and the recent establishment of a poetry library at its base in Dublin.

Honest Ulsterman, 159, Lower Braniel Rd., Belfast BT5 7NN, UK. Quarterly—£1.50 (sterling). A long established and influential poetry and criticism magazine out of Northern Ireland. The poetry content tends to be the lesser in proportion to the critical content. It does not, however, merely present work from Northern Ireland but includes poetry from the Republic of Ireland and Britain in fair measure. In the past it has been associated with, and indeed often central to, the burgeoning of poetic talent in the North with names such as Seamus Heaney, James Simmons, Derek Mahon and Paul Muldoon.

Cyphers, 3, Selskar Terrace, Ranelagh, Dublin 6, Ireland. Quarterly—approximately £2.50. This magazine presents a wide range of new poetry from Ireland and overseas. It also includes some short fiction and occasional reviews. Among its editors are Eileen Ni Chuileanain and MacDara Woods, both established names in Irish poetry.

Salmon, Auburn, Upper Fairhill, Galway, Ireland. Quarterly—£1.50. The brainchild of Jessie Lendennie, an American poet based in Galway, whose efforts extend also to the publication of poetry collections. An international literary quarterly, it describes itself as tending more "towards work of social reference and less towards that of purely personal content than other contemporary Irish literary journals." It includes work from around the world but mainly from Ireland, along with a fair proportion of Irish language poetry. Some short fiction is also published. In addition the graphics of major Irish artists such as John Behan and Brian Bourke has been featured.

Riverine, Garter Lane Arts Centre, 22A O'Connell St., Waterford, Ireland. 2-3 per year—approximately £2.50. A more recent magazine which is based in, and features mainly the work of poets and short fiction writers of, the South East of Ireland. Its editor is Edward Power, poet and short story writer. The magazine tends to fill a large gap in the publication of work by writers outside of the larger centres.

Passages, Caldo Publications, 49 Botanic Ave., Belfast BT7 1JR, UK. 2-3 per year—£2.25. The one exclusively short story magazine published in Ireland which features work from around the country, though based in Belfast. There are no review or critical sections but the magazine fulfils a highly laudable function in presenting work from new fiction writers whose avenues of access to publication are severely limited in Ireland. More prominent writers have also been featured, including Bernard MacLaverty, Sam McAughtry and Fred Johnston.

—Mark O'Sullivan

Marginalia:

Afternoon, the hypertext novel by Michael Joyce (interviewed in the last issue of EDGE) is now available in a definitive edition from Eastgate Systems, Inc., 134 Main Street, Watertown, Massachusetts 02172 USA. Price is \$25 (Visa/Mastercard accepted). A limited supply of auto-graphed, first-edition copies is available.

At the Riverside: A Hundred Haiku in English by Ikuyo Yoshimura was recently published by Ko-no-Kai, 1-36-7 Ishida-cho, Mizuho-ku, Nagoya 467. The price is ¥1,500.

Saru Press may finally be coming out with long-promised books by two of EDGE's featured poets. The

notes on Japan and abroad

grapevine has it that David Silverstein's *The Suspicious Sympathy of White* and Judy-Katz-Levine's *When the Arms of Our Dreams Embrace* will be out this autumn. Plans to publish the books were first announced by Saru Press two years ago, but they will definitely be worth the wait. The books can be ordered from Drew Stroud, c/o Temple University, 1-16-7 Kamiochiai, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 161.

Please Note! A number of complaints have come in with regard to our listing of *The Plowman* in the NETWorks section of the last issue of EDGE, including charges that the publication is anti-Semitic in content and irresponsible with both subscriptions and manuscripts. Potential subscribers and contributors be forewarned!

More on Alternative Publications for Japan

Readers who missed the *Autumn and Winter 1989* issues of EDGE, which contained listings of a dozen literary magazines currently being published in Japan, can still obtain a copy of those listings free upon request by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope (¥62 stamp in Japan) to EDGE. Here's a partial, and somewhat selective, listing of more alternative press publications (and a few "mainstreamers") being published both in Japan and abroad, all of which we've been in personal contact with recently and can recommend to readers of EDGE. For an exhaustive directory, the Japan English Publications in Print lists nearly 6,000 books and 2,600 periodicals from 2,270 publishers and is available for ¥26,000 from Intercontinental Marketing Corp., IPO Box 5056, Tokyo 100-31.

Periodicals in Japan

Eros Nihon, William Corr, Editor, 502 Edenheim Mansion, 330-10 Shirahama-cho, Shirahamanomiya 672 Himeji, a quarterly journal of sensually erotic prose, poetry and graphic art, will commence publication in Winter 1990/91. Contributions in Japanese, English, French, Italian, Spanish, and German are solicited, as is tasteful and sensuous artwork. Arousal, not smut, is what the editor wants. Subscriptions to *Eros Nihon* will be ¥6,000 per year, preferably in banknotes.

Insights, c/o IRF Labs, Takaoka Bldg. 4 F, Yushima 2-22-2, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113, is a network to bring about personal, community, and planetary change. It publishes material under the headings: arts, calendar, community, education, environment, health, "hikari listings" (networking info on activities and groups), letters, now-age tools, and reviews. They invite submissions and will also consider poetry and fiction, especially work that's empowering. Published quarterly; a one-year sub is ¥3,000.

Sujin Express, 453 Tsuboya-cho, Oike-sagaru, Ogawa-dori, Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto 604. The most recent issue has articles on the Dow problem and other racial/environmental issues. No subs as such—membership is ¥1,000. "Members can contribute any kind of article to the magazine and we guarantee that it will be published."

Japan Environment Monitor, 18-11 Saiwai-cho, Kofu, Kofu-shi, Yamanashi-ken 400, pulls the plug on the stereotype that Japanese culture is in "harmony with nature" by documenting the extent to which corporate and development interests are selling out the environment in Japan. Well-researched reporting, plus info on the grassroots struggles and citizens movements working to solve them. They're also interested in art and poetry submissions on ecological themes. Published more or less monthly; annual subs are ¥3,000.

SWET Newsletter, published by the Society of Writers, Editors, and Translators, 2-19-15-808 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150, keeps people informed of all aspects of writing and publishing in Japan in English, as something of a trade journal for both professionals and freelancers. Annual dues are ¥3,000, which includes a subscription to the newsletter.

Terra, 1-29-21-204 Soshigaya, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 157, "a distillation of some of the most exhilarating work being done in areas such as intercultural studies, media

and communications, the new physics, health and fitness, environmental protection and the fine arts [—including poetry and fiction]", began publication this past June and will be published every two months. Subscriptions are ¥4,000 domestic, ¥5,000 overseas.

Tokyo Weekender, Oriental Building 55-11, Yayoi-cho, 1-chome, Nakano-ku, Tokyo 164, a regular sponsor of fiction contests past and present, including the past two EDGE Fiction Contests, describes itself as "a weekly publication for the foreign and English-speaking Japanese community in the Tokyo area, plus visiting businessmen and tourists." Annual subscriptions are ¥15,000 for regular delivery; ¥26,000 for special delivery.

Winds, Emphasis Inc., Central Roppongi Building, 1-4-27 Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106, the inflight magazine of Japan Air Lines and a sponsor of this year's EDGE Fiction Contest, publishes articles related to Japan and Asia, including some fiction and translations. About 90% of the material is freelanced, but query first.

Periodicals from Abroad

Dream International Quarterly, previously published in Hiroshima, has moved to Australia (with one co-editor still in the USA). Dream-related fiction, poetry, and articles should be sent to Les Jones, 256 Berserker Street, North Rockhampton, Queensland 4701, Australia. Subs are ¥1,800 for one year, ¥3,000 for two.

Left Green Notes, P.O. Box 5566, Burlington, Vermont 05402 USA, one of many publications being produced by the growing Green movement in the USA, is a forum for news, information, and opinion for Left and Green activists. They are currently soliciting articles that address theoretical and cultural issues in the international Green movement. Subs are \$10/year. Correspondent for Japan is Richard Evanoff, who can be contacted at the EDGE address for more information.

Lynx, P.O. Box 169, Toutle, Washington 98649 USA, a magazine of renga in English mentioned in the last issue of EDGE, recently sent us a copy. It's definitely first-class and worth a serious look, treating renga in English as a distinct form not merely derivative of Japanese models. The magazine has ongoing participation renga for subscribers. Quarterly—subs are \$15.

Social Anarchism, Atlantic Center for Research and Education, 2743 Maryland Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21218 USA, promotes "community self-reliance, direct participation in political decision-making, respect for nature, and nonviolent paths to peace and justice." Each issue also has a substantial poetry section on related themes. Published biannually—\$10 for four issues. Great Atlantic Radio Conspiracy, at the same address, has tapes on a variety of current social topics, as well as recorded poetry readings, including an anthology of the best poetry from *Social Anarchism*. Write for a catalogue.

Tin Wreath, P.O. Box 13401, Albany NY 12212 USA, is "a free-of-charge every-other-month selection of poetry from the natural, social, psychological, spiritual and linguistic margins of late XXth century America." Truly inspired—put out by a dedicated group of editors.