

to have the *Liefde*'s survivors crucified. Luiz had previously worked in Malacca and Macau; by the time he met Oliver van Noort he was a resident of Nagasaki, the predominantly Christian city founded by the Christian *daimyo* of Omura and the Jesuits in 1571.

A pair of Dutch ships arrived at Hirado, near Nagasaki, in 1609 and established a *factory*, or trading outpost, there. In 1613 the English of the East India Company arrived and also established themselves at Hirado. Commanding the tiny outpost of the East India Company throughout the decade, one Briton to remain in Japan was Richard Cocks, as outstanding a diarist as Pepys (Farrington):

I bought a wench ysterday, cost me 3 taies, for w'ch she must serve 5 yeares & then repay back the three taies, or som frendes for her, or else remeane a p'petuall captive. She is but 12 yeares ould, over small yet for trade, but yow wold littell thynke that I have another forthcominge that is mor lapedable.

Farrington's excellent notes explain *lapedable*: 'a variant from "lap-clap", a seventeenth-century slang expression for sexual intercourse.' Was this young woman the redoubtable Matinga, who was to be Cocks's mistress for over seven years, only to be denounced — as in a Restoration comedy — by her bondmaid, Oto, for having 'abused herself' with six or seven other men?

Jacobean times at Hirado could be unruly; Cocks had the *daimyo*'s permission to enter any house, even the stew run by one Bastian, to curb the drunken and licentious behaviour of the British seamen. Still, duels were fought, a whore was thrown out of a window and the British and Dutch fought in the streets after a British ship was captured at sea and brought into Hirado harbour with great ostentation. Best of all, journals were kept and letters were written. Anglo-Japanese children were born; men died violently; Carwarden and Peacocke sailed off on a trading voyage to Vietnam and Peacocke was almost certainly the first — but not the last — English speaker to die a violent death there. And Anjiro, the first convert, ended his days as a pirate on the China coast, an awkward fact for Christian biographers to have to write.

There is more than enough in these two works, and those of Cooper and Boxer, to keep a of busful of creative novelists busy for years to come.

Derek Massarella *A World Elsewhere: Europe's Encounter with Japan in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Yale University Press.

Anthony Farrington *The English Factory in Japan 1613-1623*, The British Library.

WORDS ACROSS THE WATER

Richard Evanoff

Etel Adnan, *Going deep into the World*

Cid Corman, *For Size*

Hiro Kamimura, *Stillness*

Judy Katz-Levine, *A Whisper Reconstructing Eyelids*

Leza Lowitz, *Talking about the Wives of Famous Poets in the Waiting Room of Keio Hospital*

Ikuo Mori, *Unfolding*

Arthur Sze, *The Silk Road*

Hiroshi Tanabu, *Condition*

Michael Winkler, *Where Signs Resemble Thoughts*

POETRY PUBLICATION in the ubiquitous shape of the book and magazine has long been a commonplace, but what about as *pescia* or *lienzo*? Word Press in Japan, together with Light and Dust Books in the United States, is reviving these older publishing forms to put the work of contemporary poets into print. A *pescia* refers to a self-contained section from a medieval book, and a *lienzo* was one of the first bookforms of the Americas. Word/Light is also experimenting with scrolls, broadsides and screenfolds as alternative ways of bringing words, images and paper together. So far two screenfolds, three *pescias* and four broadsides have been published in their collaborative efforts.

The broadside series includes Cid Corman's *For Size*, which implants seven gems on an 8-1/2 x 11-inch quarter-folded sheet. Corman has the wonderful ability to evoke metaphysics from ordinary speech. 'Party of the Last Part' reads in its entirety:

Do what you
like or will—
I'm staying

here.

Doing, liking, willing. Ethical relativism and commitment to place. Or perhaps the poem's speaker is simply tired? Or stubborn!

The women's broadsides include the work of Etel Adnan, Judy Katz-Levine and Leza Lowitz. Adnan's *Going deep into the World* is serious/playful. She wants to 'suspend History on a nice rope in the garden, yes, like a piece of linen.' Yes, let's lynch the past and get on to a future that 'will be married to all the peoples of the world'! Katz-Levine is herself the prophetess she writes of in *A Whisper Reconstructing Eyelids* who 'walk[s] in someone else's dreams.' Her poems have an odd way of seeping into one's consciousness. You read them, your sensibilities are changed by them, but you can't explain why. She uses the ghazal — a Near Eastern poetic form that relies on metaphorical jumps from couplet to couplet (somewhat like Japanese *renku*, but the jumps are more in the mind than in the poem) — to accomplish this poetic telepathy (the whisper that carries out its reconstruction of the eyelids). Lowitz's work is serious/serious. *Talking About the Wives of Famous Poets in the Waiting Room of Keio Hospital* is a poetic dialogue in prose-letter form between the poet and a woman who has breast cancer. The juxtaposed images are also serious/serious: the woman's breast is removed in August, on the anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima.

Arthur Sze's screenfold, *The Silk Road*, opens out top-to-bottom in six panels. The physical structure of the production makes the eyes feel as if they're travelling the Silk Road in reading the poem, even though the contents wander fairly far afield. One of the poem's characters travels 'from Mindanao to Macao to avoid staring into himself,' and the poem seems to have the same problem. The marine-blue ink on fluorescent-white paper also flows in couplets (like Katz-Levine's ghazal), but there's little to help the reader make the necessary metaphorical jumps for a coherent poetic journey.

The screenfold by Michael Winkler, *Where Signs Resemble Thoughts*, is an exercise in semiotics. Winkler has arranged the letters of the alphabet in a circle, with the vowels forming a pentagram. Words are spelled by drawing lines from letter to letter. These ideographic renderings give each word a particular shape, and the similarities and differences between shapes in the text are intended to help the reader make unconscious associations/disassociations. Ancient Japanese ideographs probably do a better job of this than Winkler's modern efforts, but the text which Winkler offers in this new style of writing speaks sincerely and convincingly, of 'mystical shapes', 'the miracle of coincidence', 'inexplicable convergence' and 'the magic formula of archetypal design'. Winkler states that

the 'conjunction where signs resemble thoughts defines the essence of art at the core of meaning.' My own belief, however, is that the reverse is also true, namely that the disjunction of signs and thoughts ineffable-izes the existence of life beyond meaning.

The really heavy work in semiotics is being done by the Japanese poets who contributed to the three *Word/Light* have published to date. Most of the work is pictorial, visual poetry. The examples which follow aren't necessarily the most interesting, but they're easier to explain in a review such as this than some of the other pieces (the publishers have included the meanings of Japanese words in English). In *Condition*, Hiroshi Tanabu superimposes the Japanese character for 'hard' onto the character for 'happiness' to yield the English 'no pains, no gains.' Hiroo Kamimura achieves considerably more complexity in *Stillness* with his symmetrical pictograph combining the characters for 'footpath', 'ricefields', 'soil', 'insect' and 'frog'. In *Unfolding*, Ikuo Mori expresses the 'Wish for Freedom' by printing the Japanese character for 'prison' — which is made by putting a box around the character for 'person' — thirty-five times. One of the 'person'-characters manages to escape from its box, however. The image is probably fairly close to the actual ratio between individuality and conformity in society at large (poetically speaking, if not sociologically). One of Tanabu's images, incidentally, is remarkably similar to Marlene Mountain's well-known 'unallowed' haiku :

rain
dr p
o

Tanabu writes the Japanese character for 'drop' with a long stem and a brushmark shaped like a drop for the last stroke

Sherry Reniker of Word Press and Karl Young of Light and Dust Books have also put out a joint collection of their own work, *a few short lines*. The book consists of Reniker's *Vanishing Peace* (selected poems 1982-1992) and Young's *What to Whisper until It Rains* (poems written 1963-1972, recently revised). The various collaborations between these two publishers, whose efforts stretch from one side of the world to the other, are making a significant effort to link readers and writers across the Pacific divide.

All of the publications are available from Word Press, Noborito 318, #2B, Tama-ku, Kawasaki 214 Japan (¥200 for Adnan, Cormon, Katz-Levine,

Lowitz, Sze; ¥250 for Kamimura, Mori, Tanabu, Winkler; ¥500 for a signed Corman; add ¥100 for postage). Orders in the United States should be sent to Light and Dust Books, 7112-27th Ave., Kenosha, Wisconsin 53143 U.S.A. (all publications \$3.00). Reniker's and Young's *a few short lines* sells for ¥750 in Japan (postpaid), \$5.00 in the U.S.

A distant crane, a piling babel of steel frames,
You are here, and absent, more than a head in a pillory.
You are here, and transparent, more than a chained line of war
prisoners.
Choked Lebanese cedars and Sinai copper, a bird's shrill call
appeals to the world.
Forgotten words. The sacred meanings words have forgotten!

EXCERPT REVIEWS

Sakura: Japanese Poetry Review

New biannual journal of poetry and essays, largely by Japanese contributors in English (Takuroh Ikeda, 133 Itohpia, Tohtari, Itoh-shi 414), ¥500, 32 pp, vol.1, no. 1, spring 1993. Here an extract from 'Notebook for the Dead' by Shigeo Washisu translated by Takuroh Ikeda and Robert L. Yellin:

Tombstones will speak again,
Like obedient kindergarten children, their own names.
The rain that goes blurring into sunshine kindly soothes
The world's memories, life's convulsions.

At last when numberless deaths negate death,
Many carved names secure charms in unknown civilizations.
And the conversations between flowers and birds
Are, inside transfigurations, ever vivid.

Tombstones will speak again. As kindergarten children speak
Their carved names they no longer know.
Therefore, birds will sing on lovingly,
As if meaningless songs were esoterics the most beautiful and
holy-shaped

*

The reed field where the scarred heat haze shimmers.
You wear your fingernails black and walk, a mask on.

Tel-Let

Two small-format (16 pp) chapbooks *A World in Prose* by Didier Cahen translated by Cid Corman and *Gamma Ut* by Theodore Enslin (1818 Philips Pl., Charleston, IL 61920-3145), no price. Here one extract from Cahen followed by two from Enslin:

All comes
the day descends
night keeps its face

without you
memory doubts
love verges upon vertigo

man's still a word
the mouth a perspective
language is born upon earth

Musette on Midsummer's Eve

Look well it's not too hard
to say it well enough
to look through branches
where the trees are thin
to catch the glint of light
that follows water
out where more than water is

How it is to love
a lover does not know.