Cherry-Blossoms

Japanese Haiku Series Three
JAPANESE HAIKU
SERIES III
TRANSLATIONS OF
POEMS BY BASHO •
BUSON • ISSA • SHIKI
AND OTHERS

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A NOTE ON THIS BOOK OF HAIKU

In Japan cherry-blossoms are a favorite subject of paintings and poems, and are indeed a symbol to the Japanese people of the transitory delight of the “floating world” — as they have called this life on earth. For cherry-blossoms last only three days, and the Buddhist Japanese thinks of his own life as an equally brief flowering in the endless cycle of reincarnation and dissolution.

Because the haiku is a poem only seventeen syllables long, and is usually a brief poignant insight into the universality of this endless cycle, the title Cherry-Blossoms has been given to this our third collection of haiku translations.

Japanese poets of the present continue to write haiku: Harold G. Henderson has estimated that perhaps a million new haiku are published commercially in magazines each year. But the present collection is taken from the famous poets of the past. Thus the reader will find the names Basho, Buson, Issa and Shiki much in evidence, for these four are the greatest practitioners. A few facts about these men, and a discussion of the difficulties of haiku translation, are to be found in our two previous collections.
Here it is necessary only to remind the reader that the poems are not intended to be clear statements. They are fleeting responses or impressions which usually illuminate the poet's awareness — and our own — of the identity of life on different planes. It is the Buddhist doctrine (and most of these poets are Zen Buddhists) that all things and creatures in this world are temporary manifestations risen from the eternal, infinite ocean of Life; and that everything, — from a mountain peak to a cherry-blossom, from a beautiful girl to the little excrement of a bird, — is a part of the universal and inter-related brotherhood of creation.

Of course, not all these poems have this subtle quality. There are a number purely humorous or descriptive.

The haiku almost always has a season keyword. Here these have often been omitted, but the poems are arranged by seasons. Since the New Year traditionally begins the Spring, a few cold poems start the book; but the snow soon melts and leaves and blossoms appear.

The interested reader is referred to our Japanese Haiku: Series I and The Four Seasons, Haiku Series II.
DECORATIONS AND
LETTERING BY
JEFF HILL
NEW YEAR’S EVE
I CAN SNORE IN PEACE . . .
THERE NEW YEAR
WON’T CONFRONT ME
TILL TOMORROW NOON

BUSON

NEW YEAR'S DAY . . . POET
THOUGH I BE
I’LL PROUDLY WEAR
MY FATHER’S SCABBARD

KYORAI

IN THE NEW YEAR DAWN
SOLEMN AND
DELIBERATE
TALL CRANES GO MARCHING

KIKAKU
FROM THE MOUNTAIN PASS
SEE THE SUNLIT
CASTLE TOWN...
FLYING NEW-YEAR KITES
TAIGI

SEEING MY BIRTH-CORD
KEPT AT OUR OLD
NATIVE PLACE...
NEW YEAR'S DAY I WEPT
BASHO

NO YOU DON'T! GET OUT!...
THUS THEY WARMLY
WELCOMED ME
TO THEIR NEW-YEAR FEAST
ROTSU

SNOW IS MELTING...
FAR IN THE MISTED
MOUNTAINS
A CAW-CAWING CROW
GYODAI
SPRING AT EARLY DAWN...
ON THE TIPS OF
BARLEY LEAVES
LITTLE LAST PALE FROST
ONITSURA

UP FROM APRIL SNOW
RISING UDO SPROUTS...
TENDER
PURPLE SUCCULENT
BASHO

AT DEAR BASHO’S GRAVE
PALE THIN TRANSIENTS
WE PAUSE...
SPRING MIST, SAD PUPIL
JOSO

HEAR THOSE BABY MICE
HUDDLED IN THEIR
NEST... PEEPING
TO THE SPARROWLETS
BASHO
ABOVE THE HAMLET:
GREEN THE SILENT
BAMBOO-GROVE...
WHITE LINGERING SNOW

TAIGI

SPRING COBALT OCEAN...
ACROSS SNOW-WHITE
MOUNTAINS FLY
BLACK RETURNING BIRDS

SHIKI

IMMEDIATELY...
ON THEIR SPRING
RETURN TIRELESS
SWALLOWS ZIG-ZAGGING

TAIGI

SEE: OUR CANDLELIGHT
ILLUMINATES
THE SAPLING’S
FRESH-UNFOLDED GOLD

BUSON
TROOPS OF TOURISTS COME
FOR APRIL
FLOWER-VIEWING...
OH, THEY’RE SPARROW-MEN
BASHO

GUSTY SPRING BREEZES...
BUT THE STUBBORN
PLUM BUDS STILL
GRIPPING THEIR THIN TWIGS
ONITSURA

SPRING UNFOLDS ANEW...
NOW IN MY SECOND
CHILDHOOD
FOLLY, FOLLY, TOO
ISSA

BONY BRUSHWOOD TWIGS
CUT DOWN AND STACKED
IN BUNCHES...
YET BRAVELY BUDDING
BONCHO
PLACING THE KITTEN
TO WEIGH HER
ON THE BALANCE...
SHE WENT ON PLAYING

ISSA

SPRING EVENING BEACH...
HELPING FISHERMEN
UNLOAD
LIVING SEA-treasure
RANKO

IT IS SPRING AGAIN...
GAY IN THE GARDEN
GATHER
SUN-BATHING SPARRoWS
ONITSURA

TREMENDOUS FORCES...
STONE-PILED FENCE
ALL TUMBLED DOWN
BY TWO CATS IN LOVE

SHIKI
AFTER THE SHOWER...
SPRING-ENCHANTED
SPARROW-FOLK
CHATTER ON THE EAVES
UKO

SILENT CHERRY-BLOOM...
AGAIN WITH YOUR
OLD ELOQUENCE
ADDRESS MY INNER EAR
ONITSURA

HAVING SCOURED MY SKIN
AND BOWED MY SKULL
TO BUDDHA...
NOW FOR CHERRY-BLOOM!
ISSA

AFTERNOON GARDEN...
PLANTING PERHAPS
SEVEN SEEDS...
I'M CONVALESCENT!
SHIKI
THIS BABY . . . EVEN
WHEN WE SHOW HIM
CHERRY BUDS . . .
OPENS EAGER LIPS
SEIFU-JO

MOUNTAIN-TOP OF CLOUDS
TOWERING BEHIND
THE HEDGE . . .
OR A FLOWERING PLUM?
SHIRO

DANCING: THE FOX TREADS
AMONG THE PALE
NARCISSI
IN GARDEN MOONLIGHT
BUSON

AFTER SPRING SUNSET
MIST RISES FROM
THE RIVER . . .
SPREADING LIKE A FLOOD
CHORA
THEN THE PLEONIES
EXTINGUISHING
ALL OTHERS...
OPENED THEIR PETALS
Riichii

ENDLESS MAYTIME RAIN...
SNEAKING BACK ONE
NIGHT, THE MOON
PERCHED IN THE PINE-TREE
Ranko

NOW THAT I AM OLD
EVEN TENDER DAYS
OF SPRING
SEE... CAN MAKE ME CRY
Issa

BEAUTIFUL LADY
BUFFETED BY RUDE
SPRING WINDS... WHAT
SWEET STORM YOU MAKE!
Kito
ON THE SHINING ROOF
THE BOY'S ABANDONED
STRING-BALL
SOAKING UP SPRING RAIN
BUSON

SWEET SPRING SHOWER...
ENOUGH TO WET
THE TINY SHELLS
ON THIS LITTLE BEACH
BUSON

ERE SPRING GUESTS ARRIVE
WE LIGHT THE
SUPPER CANDLES
EACH FROM SHINING EACH
BUSON

DULL-DREARY RAIN-DAY...
DRIPPING PAST
MY GATE A GIRL
BEARING IRISES
SHINTOKU
YES: THE YOUNG SPARROWS
IF YOU TREAT THEM
TENDERLY...
THANK YOU WITH DROPPINGS

ISSA

FOLLOWING THE BANK...
FOR MILES NO RIVER-
SPANNING BRIDGE
THIS LONG SPRING DAY

SHIKI

AT TAKIGUCHI
VOICES CALLING
FOR A LIGHT...
DARKENING SPRING RAIN

BUSON

PATTERING SHOWER...
THEY ARE PUTTING
OUT THE LAMPS
ALL DOWN DOLL-SHOP LANE

BUSON
FLOODED PADDY-FIELDS...
THE LAKE HAS COME
TO TOWN ALL GREEN
WITH SEEDLING RICE

BAKUSUI

VANISHING SPRINGTIME...
WISTFULLY
THE LONELY WIDOW
POUTS AT HER MIRROR

SEIBI

BLOWN CHERRY-BLOSSOMS
FALL AND FLOAT
UPON THE COLD
RICE-PADDY WATERS

KYOROKU

THE GAY WATERWHEEL
IN THE VALLEY
POURS PETALS
FROM MOUNTAIN CHERRIES

CHOGETSU
O SPRINGTIME TWILIGHT...  
PRECIOUS MOMENT  
WORTH TO ME  
A THOUSAND PIECES  
SOTOBÁ

REPLY:
O SUMMER TWILIGHT...  
BUG-DEPRECIATED  
TO A  
MERE FIVE HUNDRED  
KIKAKU

BOUNCING BAMBOO DIPPER  
IN THE WATER-TUB...  
FOLLOWING  
A FLY-AWAY BIRD  
HORO
A BABY SPARROW . . .
HOPPING
WITH CURIOSITY
TO WATCH MY BRUSHWORK
SHOHA

HOW COOL . . . SWEET GRASSES
SCYTHED IN FIELDS
AT EARLY DAWN
ENTERING OUR GATE
BONCHO

ON THE GIDDY SWING . . .
TINY GIRL-CHILD
CLUTCHING TIGHT
HER SPRAY OF BLOSSOMS
ISSA

AH ROADSIDE SCARECROW
WE'VE HARDLY
STARTED GABBING . . .
AND I HAVE TO GO
IZEN
Perhaps this voiceless wanderer dreams of flowers...

Butterfly Dozer

Reikan

Sometimes the farmer trots out to see his scarecrow...
Slowly he walks back

Buson

That dark waterfowl although appearing weighted...
See how it can float!

Onitsura

Ah bold Nightingale...
Even before his lordship you won’t mend your song

Issa
THAT FAT OLD BULL-FROG
SAT THERE STARING
BACK AT ME
WITH A SOUR FACE

IN FLAT SUNSET LIGHT
A BUTTERFLY
WANDERING
DOWN THE CITY STREET

SOMEONE IS WALKING
OVER THE WOODEN
BRIDGE . . . HEAR
THE DEEP FROG-SILENCE

A WAGON RUMBLING . . .
AND OUT FROM
SILENT GRASSES
A SUDDEN BUTTERFLY
INTO THE BLINDING SETTING SUN THE SCARECROW STARES . . . STILL INDIFFERENT

SHIRAO

GAY . . . AFFECTIONATE . . . WHEN I’M REBORN I PRAY TO BE A WHITE-WING BUTTERFLY

ISSA

SQUATTING LIKE BUDDHA: BUT BITTEN BY MOSQUITOES IN MY NIRVANA

OEMARU

AT THE ANCIENT SHRINE TARNISHED GOLD-FOIL . . . AND GREEN LEAVES AWAKENING TIME

CHORA
EVEN WITH INSECTS... SOME ARE HATCHED OUT MUSICAL...
SOME, ALAS, TONE-DEAF

PLANTED ROWS OF BEANS AND RANDOM CLUMPS OF LILIES...
PROSPEROUS ISLET!

NIGHTINGALE WEEPING AND CEASELESS OCEAN MOANING...
SOON O SOON THE DAWN

IN SUMMER MOONLIGHT...
GLITTERING BROOKLET RUNNING
DOWN OUR VILLAGE STREET
TWO JADE-GREEN HILLTOPS STAND IN THEIR SUMMER LEAFAGE MIRROR-IMAGES

KYORAI

YELLOW FIREFLY . . . LITTLE LAMP-FLAME THAT TO THE HUMAN TOUCH IS CHILL

SHIKI

SUNNY FIELDS AND WARM . . . SEE THE MONK'S FACE PEEPING OUT FROM THE TEMPLE FENCE

ISSA

A CRABLET CRAWLING UP MY ANKLE-BONE . . . AH COOL MEANDERING BROOK

BASHO
IN MY NATIVE PLACE
THERE'S THIS PLANT:
AS PLAIN AS GRASS
BUT BLOOMS LIKE HEAVEN

ISSA

PITIFUL BLIND CHILD...
AND SO BRIEF
THE ROSE OF SHARON
GARLANDING HER PORCH

SHIRAÓ

DAYLIGHT AT THE INN...
THROUGH MY LOOPED
MOSQUITO NETS
A MORNING-GLORY

SHIRO

TWILIGHT WATERING...
AND PLEASE,
A COOLING SPRINKLE
FOR WRENS AND CRICKETS

KIKAKU
HAVING TUMBLED OFF
HIS GRASS-BLADE . . .
THE FIREFLY
BUZZES UP AGAIN

BASHO

MOONLIGHT NIGHTINGALE
CASTS A WHISTLING
LINE OF SOUND
OVER THE MILLPOND

BASHO

LIGHTNING FLASHES . . .
ZIG-ZAG SCREECHES
OF THE HERON
FLYING IN THE DARK

BASHO

HEREBY I ASSIGN,
IN PERPETUITY,
TO WIT:
TO THIS BIRD THIS FENCE

ISSA
STUBBORN WOODPECKER...  
STILL HAMMERING  
AT TWILIGHT  
AT THAT SINGLE SPOT  

ISSA

AT SILENT NOONTIDE...  
FAR ACROSS  
THE FLOWER-FIELDS  
HEAR THE SIGHING SEA  
BUSON

HEAR THE HUMMING  
AS HONEYSUCKLE  
PETALS FALL...  
DISTURBED MOSQUITOES  
BUSON

THE SICKLY ORCHID  
THAT I TENDED SO...  
AT LAST  
THANKS ME WITH A BUD  
TAIGI
POT-IMPRISONED NOW... PALELY DREAMING OCTOPUS IN SUMMER MOONLIGHT

BASILIO

CURLED ON THE FAN... AHA! I'VE CAUGHT YOU TOM-CAT FAST ASLEEP AGAIN!

ISSA

HIGH SUN STILL BURNING IN THE FALCON'S EYES... DOWN TO MY EARTH-BOUND WRIST

TAIRA

BUT SEE THE MOUNTAIN... SHAKING WITH THE WAVES OF HEAT WHERE DAY HAS GONE

ONITSURA
WHAT A MONSTER KITE!
EVEN THE BRAVEST EAGLE
WOULD NOT DARE ATTACK!
SHIKI

YELLOW BUTTERFLY...
FLUTTERING
FLUTTERING ON
OVER THE OCEAN
SHIKI

COOL ON BLUE WATER
THAT OVERHANGING ISLET
WITH ITS PINE ASKEW
SHIKI

WHAT A COOLING BREEZE!
NOW ALL STIFLED GRASSHOPPERS
GAILY SING AGAIN
ISSA
I WILL NOT FORGET
THIS LONELY SAVOR
OF MY LIFE'S
ONE LITTLE DEWDROP

BASHO

MOONLIGHT SLANTING
THROUGH ALL THIS
LONG BAMBOO GROVE . . .

AND NIGHTINGALE SONG

BASHO

IN THE RAIN-PINKED POND
STILL-UNSLAUGHTERED
SILLY DUCKS
REJOICE WITH QUACKING

ISSA

SPARROW FAMILY . . .
PLAYING AT HIDE
AND SEEK
IN THE TEA-BUSHES

ISSA
TWILIGHT FLOWER-FIELD...
MOONRISE IN
THE EASTERN SKY
SUNSET IN THE WEST

BUSON

NIGHT IS DARKENING...
SILENT IN
THE PADDY POOL
SHINES THE MILKY WAY

IZEN

ON THAT INCH OF LAND
BEANS GREW TO
OUR VERY DOOR...
YET GRAND IN MOONLIGHT!

ISSA

WITH ME ON THE CLIFF
ANOTHER POET...
FELLOW-GUEST
OF THE SUMMER MOON

KYORAI
INQUIRING WREN
LOOKING HERE AND
LOOKING THERE...
HAVE YOU LOST YOUR BAG?

THE SADNESS OF IT...
UNDER THE
HERO'S HELMET,
TARNISHED NOW, A CRICKET

TWO WATER-LILIES
SHINING SERENELY
GOLDEN...
RAINDROP-DIMPLED POOL

WHILE THE BOBOINK
SINGS CHEERILY
HE GIVES MY SHACK
THE COLD CRITIC'S EYE

ISSA
FLOATING BUTTERFLY
WHEN YOU DANCE
BEFORE MY EYES...
ISSA, MAN OF MUD

SUPERNATURAL
COOL BREEZE...
BUDDHA'S PARADISE
MUST LIE THATAWAY

INSECTS POOR INSECTS...
HOW WISE TO PURGE
YOUR KARMA
CRYING PENITENCE
OTOKUNI

WE HARK TO CRICKET
AND TO HUMAN
CHIRPINGS...WITH
EARS SO DIFFERENT
WAFU
SLOW HOT SILENT HOURS...
IN THE AFTERNOON
A PHEASANT
SETTLES ON THE BRIDGE

THE SOFT SUMMER MOON...
WHO IS IT MOVES
IN WHITE THERE...
ON THE OTHER BANK?

AT MY HUT I FEAR
ALL I CAN REALLY
TEMPT YOU WITH...
SMALLISH MOSQUITOES

WHILE I SWOOP MY NET,
DELIBERATE
BUTTERFLY...
YOU NEVER HURRY
AH . . . MORNING-GLORY
GLOWING WITH
THE INDIGO
OF SOME MOUNTAIN POOL

BUSON

SILENT THE GARDEN
WHERE THE
CAMELLIA-TREE
OPENS ITS WHITENESS

ONITSURA

FROM THE DAY IT'S BORN
OF ABANDONED
STICKS AND RAGS . . .
ELDERLY SCARECROW

NYOFU

NOW THIS GOOD SEA-SLUG
HAS BOTH HEAD
AND TAIL . . . BUT GOD
KNOWS WHICH IS WHICH

KYORAI
THAT NIGHT WHEN I HAD
SOLD MY LOWER
FIELD... I LAY
WAKEFUL FROM FROG-CALLS

HOKUSHI

HEY! WHY DON'T YOU HELP
THAT BUZZING
HORSE-FLY OPEN
THE STICKING SKYLIGHT?

ISSA

DAWN-TWITTERING BIRDS...
OUR OVERNIGHT
BIG-CITY GUEST
ALONE IS STIRRING

SHOIA

TENDER BAMBOO-SHOOTS
AND BABY'S TENDER
GUM-PINKS...
TINY TOOTH-CUTTING

RANSETSU
BOUNCING THE BALL...
SHE BENDS TO MAKE
A FACE AT HER
MEOWING KITTEN

IN THE SUDDEN BURST
OF SUMMER RAIN...
WIND-BLOWN BIRDS
CLUTCHING AT GRASSES

LIKE A BUTTERFLY...
THE PILGRIM'S
TOMBOY YOUNGSTER
TROTS UNEVENLY.

THE MONKS EXHIBIT
BUDDHA'S IMAGE...
SPARROWS TOO
ARE DAWN-LIGHT LOOKERS
Autumn

ON THE EBB-TIDE BEACH
THE HURRYING CRAB
STOPS SHORT . . .
THERE IS A FOOTPRINT!

BRACED IN THE WATERS . . .
SCARECROW IN
THE FLOODED FIELD
GRIMLY ENDURES IT

AH MY FOREST HUT . . .
WHERE THE FRIENDLY
WOODPECKER
KNOCKS AT DOOR AND POST

ROFU
SHIKI
BASHO
ON THIS STILL WATER
SEE WHERE
HIS REFLECTION
MEETS THE WATERFOWL

MAHARA

QUITE THE STUPIDEST
OF ALL LIVING
CREATURES IS
A DRY OLD SCARECROW

SHIKI

AUTUMN NIGHTS ARE COLD . . .
CRUSHING THE TINY
CHILD TO ME . . .
WARM LOVELY YOUNGLING

SHIKI

BEHIND THE TWISTED
BRANCHES WITH
THE EAGLE’S NEST . . .
RED SINKING SUN-BALL

BONCHO
AS I LIGHT THE LAMP
BEHOLD... TO EVERY
SINGLE DOLL
ITS OWN REAL SHADOW
SHIKI

MOTHER LOST, LONG GONE...
AT THE DEEP DARK SEA
I STARE...
AT THE DEEP DARK SEA
ISSA

AH SACRED SWALLOW...
TWITTERING OUT
FROM YOUR NEST IN
GREAT BUDDHA'S NOSTRIL
ISSA

TEA-KETTLE HANDLE...
I’LL CUT IT FROM
THE BAMBOO
OF THAT BUBBLING WREN
KIKAKU
WEEPING...WILLOWS
KNEEL HERE BY
THE WATERSIDE
MINGLING LONG GREEN HAIR
KYORAI

GATHERING STARLINGS
CRY AS THEY
SPRINKLE BERRIES
FROM THE AUTUMN TREE
SHIKI

SILVERY HERRINGS
POURING...
A LIVE WATERFALL
FROM NET TO BASKET
KIKAKU

AH LEAFLESS WILLOW...
BENDING OVER
THE DRY POOL
OF STRANDED BOULDERS
BUSON
O YOU SNUB-NOSE DOLL!
MAYBE YOUR
MOTHER DIDN’T
PINCH AND PULL ENOUGH

PERCHED ON THE BAMBOO
MARKER OF A
NEW-DUG GRAVE . . .
THE WAITING DRAGONFLY

ALL ALONG THE BEACH . . .
PLOVERS PLAYING
AT SOME GAME
INVOLVING WET-FOOT

WITH PHILOSOPHY
HE CONTEMPLATES
THE MOUNTAIN . . .
OLD PROFESSOR FROG
AT THE SETTING SUN...

WASHING DOWN HIS WEARY HORSE IN THE AUTUMN SEA

IN THIS PLAIN OF MIST NOTHING BUT FLAT ENDLESSNESS...

AND RED-RISING SUN

SHIRO

FROM THIS HUT AS YET UNWALLED I WILL VIEW IT WELL

SIIIRO RISING HARVEST MOON...

SHIRAO

DAY IN DAY OUT THE FALLEN BITTER BROKEN REEDS...

FLOAT AWAY... AFAR RANKO

DAY IN DAY OUT THE FALLEN BITTER BROKEN REEDS...

FROM THIS HUT AS YET UNWALLED I WILL VIEW IT WELL

SIIIRO RISING HARVEST MOON...

SHIRAO

DAY IN DAY OUT THE FALLEN BITTER BROKEN REEDS...

FLOAT AWAY... AFAR RANKO

FROM THIS HUT AS YET UNWALLED I WILL VIEW IT WELL

SIIIRO RISING HARVEST MOON...

SHIRAO

DAY IN DAY OUT THE FALLEN BITTER BROKEN REEDS...

FLOAT AWAY... AFAR RANKO

FROM THIS HUT AS YET UNWALLED I WILL VIEW IT WELL

SIIIRO RISING HARVEST MOON...

SHIRAO
PENETRATING HOT SEPTEMBER SUN... ON MY SKIN FEEL THE COOLING BREEZE

I AM GROWING OLD... O SWEET BIRD DISAPPEARING INTO AUTUMN DUSK

WHO IS THAT, HUDDLED IN A STRAW-COAT... STARING AT OUR HOLIDAY PARADE?

SEE THIS DRAGONFLY... HIS FACE IS PRACTICALLY NOTHING ELSE BUT EYES
COMPANION CUCKOO...
KEEP YOUR EYE COCKED
ON MY HUT
UNTIL I COME BACK

REDDISH MORNING SKY...
RAIN FOR YOU TODAY
I GUESS,
LITTLE LUCKY SNAIL!

WITHIN PALE SILENCE
SPREADING FROM
EVENING MOONLIGHT...
SUDDEN CICADA

WET MORNING GARDEN...
MY SUNNY
CHRYSANTHEMUMS
ARE SEA-MIST-SHROUDED
WITH THE MOON-RISING . . .
LEAF AFTER LEAF
AFTER LEAF
FALLS FLUTTERING DOWN
SHIKI

I DIDN'T ENTER . . .
BUT I STOPPED
IN REVERENCE . . .
AUTUMN-LEAF TEMPLE
BUSON

SUDDEN RADIANCE . . .
AFTER OCTOBER
RAINSTORM
RE-REDDENED PEPPERS
BUSON

THE PEOPLE, WE KNOW . . .
BUT THESE DAYS
EVEN SCARECROWS
DO NOT STAND UPRIGHT
ISSA
ONLY WITHERED GRASSES IN YOUR CAGE?...
O CRICKET CAPTIVE MY APOLOGIES!

SHOHA

FROM FISH-BOAT TORCHES SPARKS ARE FALLING...
POOR TETHERED SCORCH-FACE CORMORANTS

KAKEI

THIS IS MY OWN PLACE...
MUD-HUT AND COMPANION TREE SHEDDING AUTUMN LEAVES

CHORA

FROM THE HAUNTED HUT SMOKE IS SEEPING IN THE RAIN...
SOMEONE IS INSIDE!

BUSON
SEPTEMBER LIGHTNING ...
WHITE CALLIGRAPHY
ON HIGH
SILHOUETTES THE HILL

JOSO

SEE . . . SIX GAPPING BEAKS
WAITING FOR
THE MOTHER-BIRD
IN COLD AUTUMN RAIN

ISSA

SILENT AUTUMN AIR . . .
HERE AND THERE
AMONG THE HILLS
RISING THIN BLUE SMOKES

GYODAI

THE FISHERMAN’S HUT . . .
WHERE LIVELY CRICKETS
MINGLE NOW
WITH DRYING SHRIMP

BASHO
ANNIVERSARY OF DEATH
RISING AUTUMN MOON...
LIGHTING IN MY
LAP THIS YEAR
NO PALE SICKLY CHILD

ONITSURA

FOR FALL FESTIVALS
OUR RELIGIOUS
DRAGONFLIES
DON RED GARMENTS TOO

ISSA

WILD GEESE O WILD GEESE
WERE YOU LITTLE
FELLOWS TOO... WHEN
YOU FLEW FROM HOME?

ISSA

BY ABANDONED ROADS
THIS LONELY
POET MARCHES
INTO AUTUMN DUSK

BASHO
TELL ME: WHERE DOES THIS 
UNEXPECTED COLD SNAP 
COME FROM . . .
WEATHERWISE SCARECROW?

ISSA

WINE-DRINKING-WAKEFUL 
ALL ALONE THAT 
BITTER NIGHT 
I STARED AT SNOWFALL

BASHO

SNOW-ISOLATED . . .
ONCE MORE I PRESS 
MY BACK AGAINST 
MY THINKING-POST

BASHO
BACK TO MY HOME TOWN
AND BURIAL
IN MY HUT . . .
FIVE COLD FEET OF SNOW
ISSA

WINTER WOODCUTTER . . .
WHEN YOUR AXE CUTS
HOME I SCENT
UNEXPECTED SPRING
BUSON

MY OLD FATHER TOO
LOOKED LONG ON THESE
WHITE MOUNTAINS
THROUGH LONELY WINTER!
ISSA

FEEBLE FEEBLE SUN . . .
IT CAN SCARCELY
STRETCH ACROSS
WINTER-WASTED FIELDS
BARUSUI
WINTER-SOLITARY...
I FIND SOLACE
IN THIS OLD
CHINESE-PAINTED PINE

THE MOURNING FATHER
DEEP UNDER ASHES...
BURNING CHARCOAL
CHILLED NOW BY
HIS HISsing TEARS

IN THE RAINY DAWN
SEE WHERE I CREPT
OUT OF BED...
HOLE IN THE BEDCLOTHES

A MOUNTAIN HAMLET...
UNDER THE GREAT
WHITE SNOWDRIFT
A GURGLING BROOK
AT FREEZING MIDNIGHT
HEAR THAT RAT
GO RUMMAGING...
DIRTY KITCHEN DISHES

EVEN MY LAMP-LIGHT...
HIBERNATING
IN A FROZEN
WINTER-WHITE HALO

LAST NIGHT A SNOWFALL...
TODAY CLEAR COBALT
HEAVEN AND
WHITE-MANTLED PINES

A BITTER NIGHT... BUT
LONG PRACTICE
WITH COLD HUNGER
PERMITTED ME TO SLEEP
SOFT SNOWFLAKES SETTLE DOWN ON THESE UNSTIRRING DUCKS . . .
A WORLD OF SILENCE

WET SNOW IS SWEEPING OVER THE RED-BERRY BUSH . . .
TWO SPARROWS CHIRPING

OVER AND OVER
FROM MY BED
I ASK MY NURSE:
NOW, HOW DEEP THE SNOW?

AT THIS DREARY INN
A HOUND KEEPS WAILING . . . LIKE ME LONELY IN THE RAIN?
THE VERY PLANETS
GLEAMING THROUGH
ITS SILHOUETTE...
FROZEN WILLOW-TREE
CHORA

EVERY SINGLE STAR
IS QUIVERING NOW
WITH LIGHT...
O HOW BITTER COLD
TAIGI

BRIGHT SOUL OF WINTER...
MOONLIGHT
PUNCTUATED BY
PATTERING HAILSTONES
GYODAI

BITTER WINTER WIND...
WON'T IT BLOW
RIGHT OFF THE SKY
THAT DAY-OLD CRESCENT?
KAKEI
NOW AT DAWN THE TIDE
FLOATS INCOMING
LAYERS ON
OUR NIGHT-FROZEN COVE
SHIKI

POLISHING THE BUDDHA . . .
AND WHY NOT
MY PIPE AS WELL
FOR THE HOLIDAY?
ISSA

ON A RAINY DAY
THE DrippiNG
SCARECROWS SEEM LIKE
ORDINARY MEN
SEIBI

REMEMBERING
THEIR PAINTED FACES . . .
SHE UNWRAPPED
HER OLD PAIR OF DOLLS
BUSON
IT IS WARM TODAY...
BUT I THINK
I FEEL THE CHILL
OF THAT WINTER SUN
ONITSURA

CHILDREN, COME ON OUT:
CLATTERING
ALONG THE LANE
SEE... IT'S HAILING PEARLS
BASHO

ICY WINTER NIGHT...
I UNFREEZE
THE WRITING-BRUSH
WITH MY TWO GOOD TEETH
BUSON

OUT OVER THE LAKE
LONG COLD
HOLLOW EMPTINESS...
A SOLITARY CROW
SHIKI
THOSE TWO TIRED DOLLS
IN THE CORNER
THERE... AH YES
THEY ARE MAN AND WIFE

ISSA

SILLY HAILSTONES...
FLEEING INTO
MY FIREPLACE
FAST AS THEY CAN RUN

ISSA

IN ICY MOONLIGHT
PIN-POINT-PATTERING
PEBBLES
CRUNCHING UNDERFOOT

BUSON

COLD WINTER RAIN-LINES
ARE LIFTED
HORIZONTAL
BY THE HOWLING GALE

KYORAI
WITH HIS HAT BLOWN OFF
THE STIFF-NECKED
SCARECROW STANDS HERE
QUIET DISCOMFITED
BUSON

ICY-WINTER NIGHT...
PERHAPS THE WATER-
BIRDS, LIKE ME,
ARE LAKESIDE HUDDLERS
ROTSU

DARKENING SNOW-CLOUDS...
OVER THIS WAITING
LAKE AND LAND
BLACK BIRDS WHIMPERING
OTOKUNI

BLUE-SHADOW-BOLTED...
THE CASTLE GATE
OF EDO
IN FROZEN MOONLIGHT
KIKAKU
MY NEIGHBORS HATE ME...
HEAR THEM BANG
AND RATTLE PANS
IN THE ICY NIGHT

THAT SNOTTY URCHIN
LEFT UNPICKED
BY EITHER TEAM...
AH THE BITTER COLD!

BEFORE THE BUDDHA
EVEN GOOD SPARROWS
BOW... PARENTS
AND CHILDREN BOTH

A HARSH-RASPING SAW...
MUSIC OF
COLD POVERTY
IN WINTER MIDNIGHT
YEAR-END REVELLING...
STILL IN PILGRIM’S CAPE MUST I ROAM MY ENDLESS ROAD
BASHO

SINCE DEAR BASHO DIED
WHAT POEM-MAKER DARES TO WRITE “YEAR-END REVELLING”? BUSON

DEATH-SONG
I WAS ALLOTTED TWO AUTUMNS MORE THAN AVERAGE MAN
THE HARVEST MOON SAIKAKU

DEATH-SONG
ON THE LAST LONG ROAD WHEN I FALL AND FAIL TO RISE...
I’LL BED WITH FLOWERS SORA
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