JAPANESE HAiku

TWO HUNDRED TWENTY EXAMPLES OF SEVENTEEN-SYLLABLE POEMS

BY BASHO • BUSON • ISSA SHIKI • SOKAN • KIKAKU AND OTHERS • TRANSLATED BY PETER BEILENSON

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A NOTE ON JAPANESE HA IKU

The hokku — or more properly haiku — is a tiny verse-form in which Japanese poets have been working for hundreds of years. Originally it was the first part of the tanka, a five-line poem, often written by two people as a literary game: one writing three lines, the other, two lines capping them. But the hokku, or three-line starting verse, became popular as a separate form. As such it is properly called haiku, and retains an incredible popularity among all classes of Japanese.

There are only seventeen syllables in the haiku, the first and third lines contain five, the second line seven. There is almost always in it the name of the season, or a key word giving the season by inference. (This is a short-cut, costing the poet only one or two syllables, whereby the reader can immediately comprehend the weather, the foliage, the bird and insect-life — and the emotions traditional to the season: factors which almost always are important in the poem.) But there is also, in a good haiku, more than a mere statement of feeling or a picture of nature: there is an implied identity between two seemingly different things.

The greatest of haiku-writers, and the poet who crystallized the style, was Basho (1644-1694). In his later years he was a student of Zen Buddhism,
and his later poems, which are his best, express the rapturous awareness in that mystical philosophy of the identity of life in all its forms. With this awareness, Basho immersed himself in even the tiniest things, and with religious fervor and sure craftsmanship converted them into poetry. He was ardently loved by his followers, and by later poets, and his Zen philosophy has thus been perpetuated in later haiku. It is, indeed, a key to the completest appreciation of most haiku.

Following Basho in time and fame was Buson (1715-1783) — a little more sophisticated and detached than his predecessor, and an equally exquisite craftsman. The third great haiku poet was unhappy Issa (1763-1827), a continual butt of fate. He is less poetic but more lovable than Basho and Buson. His tender, witty haiku about his dead children, his bitter poverty, his little insect friends, endear him to every reader. Other masters are of course represented here too.

It is usually impossible to translate a haiku literally and have it remain a poem, or remain in the proper seventeen-syllable form. There are several reasons for this. Haiku are full of quotations and allusions which are recognized by literate Japanese but not by us; and are full of interior double-meanings almost like James Joyce. And the language is used without connecting-words or tenses or pronouns or indications of singular or plural —
almost a telegraphic form. Obviously a translation cannot be at once so illusive and so terse.

In the texture of the poems there is a further difficulty: Japanese is highly polysyllabic. The only way to reproduce such a texture in English is to use Latinized words — normally less sympathetic than the Anglo-Saxon. For all these reasons, the following versions make no pretense to be literal or complete, and some variations in the five-seven-five syllable arrangement have been allowed.

Alterations and interior rhymes, which are common in Japanese because every syllable ends with one of the five vowel sounds (sometimes with the addition of the letter “n”) have been freely used; but as in the originals, there are no end-rhymes except some accidental ones.

Although the haiku is a three-line poem, the use of a decorative Japanese design alongside each example in this edition has required (in almost every case) the doubling-up of the longer second line. The reader’s indulgence is requested for this unorthodox typography.

One final word: the haiku is not expected to be always a complete or even a clear statement. The reader is supposed to add to the words his own associations and imagery, and thus to become a co-creator of his own pleasure in the poem. The publishers hope their readers may here co-create such pleasure for themselves!
JAPANESE HAIKU
IN THESE DARK WATERS
DRAWN UP FROM
MY FROZEN WELL...
GLITTING OF SPRING
RINGAI

STANDING STILL AT DUSK
LISTEN... IN FAR
DISTANCES
THE SONG OF FROGLINGS!
BUSON

I DREAMED OF BATTLES
AND WAS SLAIN...
OH SAVAGE SAMURAI!
INSATIABLE FLEAS!
KIKAKU

IN SILENT MID-NIGHT
OUR OLD SCARECROW
TOPPLES DOWN...
WEIRD HOLLOW ECHO
BONCHO
WOMEN PLANTING RICE... UGLY EVERY BIT ABOUT THEM... BUT THEIR ANCIENT SONG RAIZAN

WILD GEESE WRITE A LINE FLAP-FLAPPING ACROSS THE SKY... COMICAL DUTCH SCRIPT SOIN

DEAD MY OLD FINE HOPES AND DRY MY DREAMING BUT STILL... IRIS, BLUE EACH SPRING SHUSHIKI

IN THIS WINDY NEST OPEN YOUR HUNGRY MOUTH IN VAIN... ISSA, STEPCILD BIRD ISSA
BALLET IN THE AIR . . .
TWIN BUTTERFLIES
UNTIL, TWICE WHITE
THEY MEET, THEY MATE

BASHO

ON THE DEATH OF HIS CHILD
DEW EVAPORATES
AND ALL OUR WORLD
IS DEW . . . SO DEAR,
SO FRESH, SO FLEETING

ISSA

BLACK CLOUDBANK BROKEN
SCATTERS IN THE
NIGHT . . . NOW SEE
MOON-LIGHTED MOUNTAINS!

BASHO

SEEK ON HIGH BARE TRAILS
SKY-REFLECTING
VIOLETS . . .
MOUNTAIN-TOP JEWELS

BASHO
FOR A LOVELY BOWL
LET US ARRANGE THESE FLOWERS . . .
SINCE THERE IS NO RICE

BASHO

NOW THAT EYES OF HAWKS
IN DUSKY NIGHT
ARE DARKENED . . .
CHIRPING OF THE QUAILS

BASHO

MY TWO PLUM TREES ARE
SO GRACIOUS . . .
SEE, THEY FLOWER
ONE NOW, ONE LATER

BUSON

ONE FALLEN FLOWER
RETURNING TO THE BRANCH? . . . OH NO!
A WHITE BUTTERFLY

MORITAKE
CLOUDBANK CURLING LOW?
AH! THE MOUNTAIN YOSHINO . . .
CHERRY CUMULUS!

RYOTA

FIE! THIS FICKLE WORLD!
THREE DAYS, NEGLECTED CHERRY-BRANCH . . .
AND YOU ARE BARE

RYOTA

HANGING THE LANTERN ON THAT FULL WHITE BLOOMING BOUGH . . .
EXQUISITE YOUR CARE!

SHIKI

APRIL'S AIR STIRS IN WILLOW-LEAVES . . .
A BUTTERFLY FLOATS AND BALANCES

BASHO
IN THE SEA-SURF EDGE
MINGLING WITH
BRIGHT SMALL SHELLS...
BUSH-CLOVER PETALS
BASHO

THE RIVER
GATHERING MAY RAINS
FROM COLD STREAMLETS
FOR THE SEA...
MURMURING MOGAMI
BASHO

A GATE MADE ALL OF TWIGS
WITH WOVEN GRASS
FOR HINGES...
FOR A LOCK... THIS SNAIL
ISSA

WIND-BLOWN, RAINED ON...
BENT BARLEY-GRASS
YOU MAKE ME
NARROW PATH INDEED
JOSO
ARISE FROM SLEEP, OLD CAT, AND WITH GREAT YAWNS AND STRETCHINGS ...
AMBLE OUT FOR LOVE

WHITE CLOUD OF MISTABOVE WHITE CHERRY-BLOSSOMS ...
DAWN-SHINING MOUNTAINS

HI! MY LITTLE HUT IS NEWLY-THATCHED I SEE ...
BLUE MORNING-GLORIES

IN THE CITY FIELDS CONTEMPLATING CHERRY-TREES ...
STRANGERS ARE LIKE FRIENDS
SEE, SEE, SEE! OH SEE!
OH WHAT TO SAY?
AH YOSHINO . . .
MOUNTAIN-ALL-ABLOOM!
TEISHITSU

GREEN SHADOW-DANCES . . .
SEE OUR YOUNG
BANANA-TREE
PATTERING THE SCREEN
SHIKI

DON'T TOUCH MY PLUMTREE!
SAID MY FRIEND
AND SAYING SO . . .
BROKE THE BRANCH FOR ME
TAIGI

TWILIGHT WHIPPOORWILL . . .
WHISTLE ON,
SWEET DEEPENER
OF DARK LONELINESS
BASHO
RECITING SCRIPTURES...
STRANGE THE
WONDROUS BLUE I FIND
IN MORNING-GLORIES

KYOROKU

MANY SOLEMN NIGHTS
BLOND MOON, WE STAND
AND MARVEL...
SLEEPING OUR NOONS AWAY

TEITOKU

MOUNTAIN-ROSE PETALS
FALLING, FALLING,
FALLING NOW...
WATERFALL MUSIC

BASHO

AMOROUS CAT, ALAS
YOU TOO MUST YOWL
WITH YOUR LOVE...
OR EVEN WORSE, WITHOUT!

YAHAA
THE LADEN WAGON RUNS BUMBLING AND CREAKING DOWN THE ROAD...
THREE PEONIES TREMBLE

AH ME! I AM ONE WHO SPENDS HIS LITTLE BREAKFAST MORNING-GLORY GAZING

MY GOOD FATHER RAGED WHEN I SNAPPED THE PEONY...
PRECIOUS MEMORY!

BY THAT FALLEN HOUSE THE PEAR-TREE STANDS FULL-BLOOMING...
AN ANCIENT BATTLE-SITE
IN THE OPEN SHOP
PAPERWEIGHTS ON
PICTURE BOOKS . . .
YOUNG SPRINGTIME BREEZE
KITO

DIM THE GREY COW COMES
MOOING MOOING
AND MOOING
OUT OF THE MORNING MIST
ISSA

TAKE THE ROUND FLAT MOON
SNAP THIS TWIG
FOR HANDLE . . .
WHAT A PRETTY FAN!
SOKAN

SEAS ARE WILD TONIGHT . . .
STRETCHING OVER
SADO ISLAND
SILENT CLOUDS OF STARS
BASHO
WHY SO SCRAWNY, CAT?
STARVING FOR FAT FISH
OR MICE . . .
OR BACKYARD LOVE?
BASHO

DEWDROP, LET ME CLEANSE
IN YOUR BRIEF
SWEET WATERS . . .
THESE DARK HANDS OF LIFE
BASHO

LIGHTNING FLASH, CRASH . . .
WAITING IN THE
BAMBOO GROVE
SEE THREE DEW-DROPS FALL
BUSON

ASHES MY BURNT HUT . . .
BUT WONDERFUL
THE CHERRY
BLOOMING ON MY HILL
HOKUSHI
LIFE? BUTTERFLY
ON A SWAYING GRASS
THAT'S ALL...
BUT EXQUISITE!

GLORIOUS THE MOON . . .
 THEREFORE OUR THANKS
DARK CLOUDS
COME TO REST OUR NECKS

WHAT A PEONY . . .
 DEMANDING TO BE
MEASURED
BY MY LITTLE FAN!

UNDER CHERRY-TREES
SOUP, THE SALAD,
FISH AND ALL . . .
SEASONED WITH PETALS

BASHO  

SOIN

BASHO

ISSA
NOW FROM CHERRY-TREES...
MILLIONS OF MAIDENS FLYING
FIERCE WAR-LORD STORM
SADAIIYE

MOON SO BRIGHT FOR LOVE!
COME CLOSER, QUILT...
ENFOLD
MY PASSIONATE COLD!
SAMPU

TOO CURIOUS FLOWER
WATCHING US PASS,
MET DEATH...
OUR HUNGRY DONKEY
BASHO

CLOUD OF CHERRY-BLOOM...
TOLLING TWILIGHT
BELL... TEMPLE
UENO? ASAKURA?
BASHO
MUST SPRINGTIME FADE?
THEN CRY ALL BIRDS . . .
AND FISHES' COLD PALE EYES POUR TEARS
BASHO

A NURSEMAID SCARECROW . . .
FRIGHTENING THE WIND AND SUN FROM PLAYING BABY
ISSA

ON HER DEAD SON
IN WHAT WINDY LAND WANDERS NOW MY LITTLE DEAR DRAGONFLY HUNTER?
CHIYO-NI

A SADDENING WORLD: FLOWERS WHOSE SWEET BLOOMS MUST FALL . . .
AS WE TOO, ALAS . . .
ISSA
DESCRIBE PLUM-BLOSSOMS?
BETTER THAN MY
VERSEs . . . WHITE
WORDLESS BUTTERFLIES
REIKAN

LEND ME WATER PLEASE?
SOME FRESH YOUNG
MORNING-GLORY,
CARELESS . . . TOOK MY WELL
CHIYO-NI

A YOUNG SISTER
PITIFUL . . . ON MY
OUTSTRETCHED PALM
AT DUSK DIES
THE LITTLE FIREFLY
KYORAI

YOU STUPID SCARECROW!
UNDER YOUR VERY
STICK-FEET
BIRDS ARE STEALING BEANS!
YAYU
AFTERNOON SHOWER...
WALKING AND TALKING
IN THE STREET:
UMBRELLA AND RAINCOAT!
BUSON

IN THE FARTHER FIELD
A SCARECROW KEPT ME
COMPANY...
WALKING AS I WALKED
SANIN

PRETTY BUTTERFLIES...
BE CAREFUL OF
PINE-NEEDLE POINTS
IN THIS GUSTY WIND!
SHUSEN

AH, UNREQUITED LOVE!
NOW ELEVATE YOUR CHIN
AND KEEN
TOM-CAT, TO THE MOON!
KYORAI
HI! KIDS MIMICKING CORMORANTS... YOU ARE MORE LIKE REAL CORMORANTS THAN THEY!

ISSA

BUZZING THE BEE TRADES PEONY FOR PEONY WITH THE BUTTERFLY

TAIGI

SUCH UTTER SILENCE! EVEN THE CRICKETS' SINGING...

MUZZLED BY HOT ROCKS

BASHO

FAR ACROSS LOW MIST INTERMITTENTLY THE LAKE LIFTS A SNOW-WHITE SAIL

GAKOKU
A white swan swimming...
Parting with her unmoved breast
Cherry-petaled pond

Roka

For a cool evening
I hired the old temple porch...
Penny in the dish

Shiki

Quite a hundred gourds sprouting from
The fertile soul...
Of a single vine

Chiyo-ni

Swallow in the dusk...
Spare my little buzzing friends
Among the flowers

Basho
OLD DARK SLEEPY POOL . . .  
QUICK UNEXPECTED 
FROG 
GOES PLOP! WATERSPLASH!  
BASHO

MY SHADOWY PATH  
I'VE SWEPT ALL DAY  
AND NOW . . . OH NO!  
CAMELLIA-SHOWER!  
YAHAN

HARD THE BEGGAR'S BED . . .  
BUT SOCIABLE  
AND BUSY  
WITH INSECT-TALKING  
CHIYO-NI

COME COME! COME OUT!  
FROM BOGS OLD FROGS  
COMMAND THE DARK  
AND LOOK . . . THE STARS!  
KIKAKU
OVER THE MOUNTAIN
BRIGHT THE FULL WHITE
MOON NOW SMILES...
ON THE FLOWER-THIEF

ISSA

STARTING TO CALL YOU:
COME WATCH
THESE BUTTERFLIES...
OH! I’M ALL ALONE

TAIGI

GOOD FRIEND GRASSHOPPER
WILL YOU PLAY
THE CARETAKER
FOR MY LITTLE GRAVE?

ISSA

A LOST CHILD CRYING
STUMBLING OVER
THE DARK FIELDS...
CATCHING FIREFLIES

RYUSUI
THE SNAKE DEPARTED
BUT THE LITTLE EYES
THAT GLARED...
DEW, SHINING IN THE GRASS

AH! BRAVE DRAGON-FLY...
TAKING FOR YOUR PERCH
THIS SWATTER
CONSECRATE TO DEATH

I RAISED MY KNIFE TO IT:
THEN WALKED
EMPTY-HANDED ON...
PROUD ROSE OF SHARON

GIDDY GRASSHOPPER
TAKE CARE... DO NOT
LEAP AND CRUSH
THESE PEARLS OF DEWDROP

ISSA
DARTING DRAGON-FLY...
PULL OFF ITS SHINY
WINGS AND LOOK...
BRIGHT RED PEPPER-POD

KIRAKU

REPLY:
BRIGHT RED PEPPER-POD...
IT NEEDS BUT SHINY
WINGS AND LOOK...
DARTING DRAGON-FLY!

BASHO

TINY SENTENCES
BRUSHING SOFT ON
MY SHUTTERS...
BUSH-CLOVER VOICES

SESSHII

MIRROR-POND OF STARS...
SUDDENLY A SUMMER
SHOWER
DIMPLES THE WATER

SORA
SADNESS AT TWILIGHT...
VILLAIN! I HAVE LET MY HAND CUT THAT PEONY

IN DIM DUSK AND SCENT A WITNESS NOW HALF HIDDEN...
EVENFALL ORCHID

NOW BE A GOOD BOY TAKE GOOD CARE OF OUR HOUSE...
CRICKET MY CHILD

WAKE! THE SKY IS LIGHT! LET US TO THE ROAD AGAIN...
COMPANION BUTTERFLY!
Can't it get away from the sticky pine-branches... Cicada singing?

Gijoen

Silent the old town... The scent of flowers floating... And evening bell

Basho

Vendor of bright fans carrying his pack of breeze... Suffocating heat!

Shiki

Voices of two bells that speak from twilight temples... Ah! Cool dialogue

Buson
DEEP IN DARK FOREST
A WOODCUTTER’S
DULL AXE TALKING...
AND A WOODCUTTER

BUSON

CAMELLIA-PETAL
FELL IN SILENT DAWN...
SPILLING
A WATER-JEWEL

BASHO

IN THE TWILIGHT RAIN
THESE BRILLIANT-HUED
HIBISCUS...
A LOVELY SUNSET

BASHO

FRIEND, THAT OPEN MOUTH
REVEALS YOUR
WHOLE INTERIOR...
SILLY HOLLOW FROG!

ANON.
BUTTERFLY ASLEEP
FOLDED SOFT ON
TEMPLE BELL . . .
THEN BRONZE GONG RANG!

BUSON

GOOD EVENING BREEZE!
CROOKED AND
MEANDERING
YOUR HOMeward JOURNEY

ISSA

SEE THE MORNING BREEZE
RUFFLING HIS SO
SILKY HAIR . . .
COOL CATERPILLAR

BUSON

OH LUCKY BEGGAR! . . .
BRIGHT HEAVEN
AND COOL EARTH
YOUR SUMMER OUTFIT

KIEAKU
THE TURNIP FARMER ROSE
AND WITH A FRESH-
PULLED TURNIP . . .
POINTED TO MY ROAD

FLOWER IN THE STREAM
THUS TOO MY LOVELY LIFE
MUST END, ANOTHER
FLOWER . . .
TO FALL AND FLOAT AWAY

I AM GOING OUT . . .
BE GOOD AND PLAY
TOGETHER
MY CRICKET CHILDREN

NOT A VOICE OR STIR . . .
DARKNESS LIES ON
FIELDS AND STREETS
SAD: THE MOON HAS SET
LADY BUTTERFLY
PERFUMES HER WINGS
BY FLOATING
OVER THE ORCHID

IF STRANGERS THREATEN
TURN INTO FAT
GREEN BULLFROGS . . .
POND-COOLING MELONS

YELLOW EVENING SUN . . .
LONG SHADOW
OF THE SCARECROW
REACHES TO THE ROAD

A CAMELLIA
DROPPED DOWN INTO
STILL WATERS
OF A DEEP DARK WELL

36
FOR THE EMPEROR
HIMSELF HE WILL NOT
LIFT HIS HAT . . .
A STIFF-BACKED SCARECROW
DANSUI

IN THE HOLY DUSK
NIGHTINGALES BEGIN
THEIR PSALM . . .
GOOD! THE DINNER-GONG!
BUSON

LIVE IN SIMPLE FAITH . . .
JUST AS THIS
TRUSTING CHERRY
FLOWERS, FADES, AND FALLS
ISSA

NIGHT IS BRIGHT WITH STARS
. . . SILLY WOMAN,
WHIMPERING:
SHALL I LIGHT THE LAMP?
ETSUJIN

37
BLACK DESOLATE MOOR . . .
I BOW BEFORE
THE BUDDHA
LIGHTED IN THUNDER
KAKEI

DIRTY BATH-WATER
WHERE CAN I POUR
YOU? . . . INSECTS
SINGING IN THE GRASS
ONITSURA

WEE BITTER CRICKET
CRYING ALL THIS
SUNNY DAY . . .
OR IS HE LAUGHING?
OEMARU

A SHORT SUMMER NIGHT . . .
BUT IN THIS SOLEMN
DARKNESS
ONE PEONY BLOOMED
BUSON
LONG THE SUMMER DAY...

PATTERNS ON

THE OCEAN SAND...

OUR IDLE FOOTPRINTS

SHIKI

ANGRY I STRODE HOME...

BUT STOOPING IN

MY GARDEN

CALM OLD WILLOW-TREE

RYOTA

OH DO NOT SWAT THEM...

UNHAPPY FLIES

FOREVER

WRINGING THEIR THIN HANDS

ISSA

SEE... THE HEAVY LEAF

ON THE SILENT

WINDLESS DAY...

FALLS OF ITS OWN WILL

BONCHO
RASH TOM-CAT LOVER...
CARELESS EVEN
OF THAT RICE
STUCK IN YOUR WHISKERS

MOON SO BRIGHT FOR LOVE!
OH, HEAR THE FARMER
BY THAT LIGHT...
FLAILING HIS LOVELY RICE!

NOW THE SWINGING BRIDGE
IS QUIETED
WITH CREEPERS...
LIKE OUR TENDRILLED LIFE

DANCING IN MY SILKS
MONEY TOSSED ITSELF
AWAY...
PRETTY, THIS PAPER DRESS!

TAIGI
ETSUJIN
BASHO
SONO-JO
THE SEA DARKENING . . .
OH VOICES OF THE
WILD DUCKS
CRYING, WHIRLING, WHITE
BASHO

WHITE MOTH, FLUTTER OFF:
FLY BACK INTO
MY BREAST NOW
QUICKLY, MY OWN SOUL!
WAFU

NINE TIMES ARISING
TO SEE THE MOON . . .
WHOSE SOLEMN PACE
MARKS ONLY MIDNIGHT YET
BASHO

WATCHING, I WONDER
WHAT POET COULD PUT
DOWN HIS QUILL . . .
A PLUPERFECT MOON!
ONITSURA
DO YOUR WORST, OLD FROST
YOU CAN NO LONGER
WOUND ME . . .
LAST CHRYSANTEMUM!
OEMARU

PEBBLES SHINING CLEAR,
AND CLEAR
SIX SILENT FISHES . . .
DEEP AUTUMN WATER
BUSON

A BRIGHT AUTUMN MOON . . .
IN THE SHADOW OF
EACH GRASS
AN INSECT CHIRPING
BUSON

YOU TURN AND SUDDENLY
THERE IN PURPLING
AUTUMN SKY . . .
WHITE FUJIMI!
ONITSURA
HERE, WHERE A THOUSAND CAPTAINS SWERE GRAND CONQUEST... TALL GRASS THEIR MONUMENT

YELLOW AUTUMN MOON...
UNIMPRESED
THE SCARECROW STANDS SIMPLY LOOKING BORED

WHITE CHRYSANTHEMUM...
BEFORE THAT PERFECT FLOWER
SCISSORS HESITATE

CRUEL AUTUMN WIND
CUTTING TO THE VERY BONES...
OF MY POOR SCARECROW

Basho
Issa
Buson
Issa
NOW IN LATE AUTUMN
LOOK, ON MY OLD
RUBBISH-HEAP . . .
BLUE MORNING-GLORY

A SINGLE CRICKET
CHIRPS, CHIRPS, CHIRPS,
AND IS STILL . . . MY
CANDLE SINKS AND DIES

FIREWORKS ENDED
AND SPECTATORS
GONE AWAY . . .
AH, HOW VAST AND DARK!

TWO ANCIENT PINE-TREES . . .
A PAIR OF GNARLED
AND STURDY HANDS
WITH TEN GREEN FINGERS

44
I MUST TURN OVER . . .
BEWARE OF LOCAL
EARTHQUAKES
BEDFELLOW CRICKET!

OH! I ATE THEM ALL
AND OH! WHAT A
STOMACH-ACHE . . .
GREEN STOLEN APPLES

NOW IN SAD AUTUMN
AS I TAKE MY
DARKENING PATH . . .
A SOLITARY BIRD

AT OUR LAST PARTING
BENDING BETWEEN
BOAT AND SHORE . . .
THAT WEEPING WILLOW

Issa
Shiki
 Basho
Shiki

AT FURUE IN RAIN
GRAY WATER AND
GRAY SAND . . .
PICTURE WITHOUT LINES
BUSON

OH SORRY TOM-CAT
BIGGER BLACKER
KNIGHTS OF LOVE
HAVE KNOCKED YOU OUT!
SHIKO

THE OLD FISHERMAN
UNALTERABLY
INTENT . . .
COLD EVENING RAIN
BUSON

WHILE I TURNED MY HEAD
THAT TRAVELER
I’D JUST PASSED . . .
MELTED INTO MIST
SHIKI
VISITING THE GRAVES . . .
TROTTLING ON TO SHOW
THE WAY . . .
OLD FAMILY DOG

ISSA

WILL WE MEET AGAIN
HERE AT YOUR
FLOWERING GRAVE . . .
TWO WHITE BUTTERFLIES?

BASHO

SO ENVIABLE . . .
MAPLE-LEAVES
MOST GLORIOUS
CONTEMPLATING DEATH

SHIKO

SHOCKING . . . THE RED OF
LACQUERED FINGERNAILS
AGAINST
A WHITE CHRYSANTHEMUM

CHIYO-NI
DRY CHEERFUL CRICKET CHIRPING, KEEPS THE AUTUMN GAY . . . CONTEMPTUOUS OF FROST
BASHO

DEEPEN, DROP, AND DIE MANY-HUED CHRYSANTHEMUMS . . . ONE BLACK EARTH FOR ALL
RYUSUI

BEFORE BOILED CHESTNUTS CROSS-LEGGED LAD IS SQUATTING . . . CARVED WOODEN BUDDHA
ISSA

DEFEATED IN THE FRAY BY BIGGER BATTLE FOR LOVE . . . TOM-CAT SEeks A MOUSE
SHIKO
ASKING THEIR ROAD . . .
SEVEN YELLOW
BAMBOO HATS
ALL TURNED TOGETHER

ANON.

TORCHES! COME AND SEE
THE BURGLAR I HAVE
CAPTURED . . .
OH! MY ELDEST SON!

SOKEI

AUTUMN MOSQUITOES
BUZZ ME, BITE ME . . .
SEE, I AM
LONG PREPARED FOR DEATH

SHIKI

NICE: WILD PERSIMMONS . . .
AND NOTICE HOW
THE MOTHER
EATS THE BITTER PARTS

ISSA

49
GRAY MARSH, BLACK CLOUD . . . FLAPPING AWAY
IN AUTUMN RAIN
LAST OLD SLOW HERON

ANON.

FIRST WHITE SNOW OF FALL
JUST ENOUGH TO BEND
THE LEAVES
OF FADED DAFFODILS

BASHO

WHAT A GORGEOUS ONE
THAT FAT SLEEK HUGE
OLD CHESTNUT
I COULD NOT GET AT . . .

ISSA

NONE BROKE THE SILENCE . . .
NOR VISITOR
NOR HOST . . . NOR
WHITE CHRYSANTHEMUM

RYOTA
IF YOU WERE SILENT
FLIGHT OF HERONS
ON DARK SKY...
OH! AUTUMN SNOWFLAKES!

SOKAN

CHILLING AUTUMN RAIN...
THE MOON, TOO BRIGHT
FOR SHOWERS,
SLIPS FROM THEIR FINGERS

TOKUKU

RAINY-MONTH, DRIPPING
ON AND ON
AS I LIE ABED...
AH, OLD MAN'S MEMORIES!

BUSON

NOVEMBER SUNRISE...
UNCERTAIN, THE COLD
STORKS STAND...
BARE STICKS IN WATER

KAKEI
FROM DARK WINDY HILLS
VOICES DRIVING
WEARY HORSES . . .
SHOUTING OF THE STORM

SLANTING LINES OF RAIN . . .
ON THE DUSTY
SAMISEN
A MOUSE IS TROTTING

OH FORMER RENTER
I KNOW IT ALL, ALL . . .
DOWN TO
THE VERY COLD YOU FELT

GRAY MOOR, UNMARRIED
BY ANY PATH . . .
A SINGLE BRANCH . . .
A BIRD . . . NOVEMBER

KYOKUSUI
BUSON
ISSA
ANON.
LONELY UMBRELLA
PASSING THE HOUSE
AT TWILIGHT...
FIRST SNOW FALLING SOFT
YAHAYA

CARVEN GODS LONG GONE...
DEAD LEAVES ALONE
FOREGATHER
ON THE TEMPLE PORCH
BASHO

FIVE OR SIX OF US
REMAIN, HUDDLED
TOGETHER...
BENT OLD WILLOW-TREES
KYORAI

PLUME OF PAMPAS GRASS
TREMBLING
IN EVERY WIND...
HUSH, MY LONELY HEART
ISSA
TEA-WATER, TIRED
WAITING WHILE WE
WATCHED THE SNOW...
FROZE ITSELF A HAT

SOKAN

COLD FIRST WINTER RAIN...
POOR MONKEY,
YOU TOO COULD USE
A LITTLE WOVEN CAPE

BASHO

WINTER RAIN DEEPENS
LICHENED LETTERS
ON THE GRAVE...
AND MY OLD SADNESS

ROKA

COLD WINTER SHOWER...
SEE ALL THE PEOPLE
RUNNING
ACROSS SETA BRIDGE!

JOSO
OLD WEARY WILLOWS . . .
I THOUGHT HOW LONG
THE ROAD WOULD BE
WHEN YOU WENT AWAY

BUSON

NO OIL TO READ BY . . .
I AM OFF TO BED
BUT AH! . . .
MY MOONLIT PILLOW

BASHO

DESCENDING SEAWARD
FAR-OFF MOUNTAIN
WATERFALL . . .
WINTER NIGHTS ARE STILL

KYOKUSUI

ALL HEAVEN AND EARTH
FLOWERED WHITE
OBLITERATE . . .
SNOW . . . UNCEASING SNOW

HASHIN

55
CONSIDERATE DOGS...
STEPPING OFF
INTO THE SNOW
AS I WALK THE PATH

ISSA

BUT WHEN I HALTED
ON THE WINDY STREET
AT TWILIGHT...
SNOW STRUCK AGAINST ME

KITO

CALL HIM BACK! AH NO,
HE’S BLOWN FROM SIGHT
ALREADY...
FISH-PEDDLER IN THE SNOW

ANON.

CROSSING IT ALONE
IN COLD MOONLIGHT...
THE BRITTLE BRIDGE
ECHOES MY FOOTSTEPS

TAIGI

56
SUCH A LITTLE CHILD
TO SEND TO BE
A PRIESTLING
ICY POVERTY

SHIKI

WINDY WINTER RAIN...
MY SILLY BIG
UMBRELLA
TRIES WALKING BACKWARD

SHISEI-JO

BUDDHA ON THE HILL...
FROM YOUR HOLY
NOSE INDEED
HANGS AN ICICLE

ISSA

THIS SNOWY MORNING
THAT BLACK CROW
I HATE SO MUCH...
BUT HE’S BEAUTIFUL!

BASHO
LOOK AT THE CANDLE!
WHAT A HUNGRY WIND
IT IS . . .
HUNTING IN THE SNOW!

SEIRA

IF THERE WERE FRAGRANCE
THESE HEAVY SNOW-
FLAKES SETTLING . . .
LILIES ON THE ROCKS

BASHO

AH! I INTENDED
NEVER NEVER
TO GROW OLD . . .
LISTEN: NEW YEAR'S BELL!

JOKUN

SNOW-SWALLOWED VALLEY:
ONLY THE
WINDING RIVER . . .
BLACK FLUENT BRUSH-STROKE

BONCHO
ROARING WINTER STORM
RUSHING TO ITS
UTTER END...

EVER-SOUNDING SEA
GONsui

ELEVEN BRAVE KNIGHTS
CANTER THROUGH THE
WHIRLING SNOW...
NOT ONE BENDS HIS NECK
SHiki

GOING SNOW-VIEWING
ONE BY ONE THE
WALKERS VANISH...
WHITELY FALLING VEILS
Katsuri

"YES, COME IN!" I CRIED...
BUT AT THE WINDY
SNOW-HUNG GATE
KNOCKING STILL WENT ON
KYorai
SEE: SURVIVING SUNS
VISIT THE ANCESTRAL GRAVE . . .
BEARDED, WITH BENT CANES
BASHO

THE ORPHAN SPEAKS:
THE YEAR-END PARTY . . .
I AM EVEN ENVIOUS
OF SCOLDED CHILDREN
ISSA

I GAVE THE GREETINGS
OF THE BRIGHT
NEW YEAR . . . AS THOUGH
I HELD A PLUM-BRANCH
SHIKI

ON JOLLY NEW YEAR'S DAY
MY LAST YEAR'S BILLS
DROP IN
TO PAY THEIR COMPLIMENTS
ANON.
DEATH-SONG:
LEAF ALONE, FLUTTERING
ALAS, LEAF ALONE,
FLUTTERING . . .
FLOATING DOWN THE WIND
ANON.

DEATH-SONG:
I HAVE KNOWN LOVERS . . .
CHERRY-BLOOM . . .
THE NIGHTINGALE . . .
I WILL SLEEP CONTENT
ANON.

DEATH-SONG:
FEVER-FELLED HALF-WAY,
MY DREAMS AROSE
TO MARCH AGAIN . . .
INTO A HOLLOW LAND
BASHO

DEATH-SONG:
THREE LOVELIEST THINGS:
MOONLIGHT . . . CHERRY-
BLOOM . . . NOW I GO
SEEKING SILENT SNOW
RIPPO