

# **GOZO YOSHIMASU**

**BORROWING A MELODY\* FROM THE HEARTS  
OF THE THREE GRACES\*\***

**TRANSLATED BY SAWAKO NAKAYASU**

(Athénée Français “Film House,” second installation. June 21st. With thanks to Alicia Vega, from all of us)

<<When a <sup>CACHORRO</sup> dog <sup>コマ</sup> passes under a frame of paper. I SAW <sup>カミ</sup> the Three Graces of Film, smiling>>  
<sup>メガミ</sup> <sup>CINEMA</sup>

“The eternity of waiting for the arrival” of a train is connected like a band to “The eternity of watching  
the departure” of a train, the knot on a band of beautiful lacquer,.....,  
<sup>OBI</sup> <sup>MAKI-E</sup>  
<sup>スズ</sup> <sup>シタ</sup> <sup>オビ</sup> <sup>カゲ</sup> <sup>シアワセ</sup>  
that which passes under the obi, “the shadow of a small, white, happiness,” .....

<sup>Griffel\*\*\*\*</sup>  
“Style”\*\*\* ----- perhaps we are circling quietly around a “flower.”  
<sup>MAWARI WO</sup>

I moved closer to certainty, with a premonition that I would one day understand

Three-thirty, it appears that the eye of the typhoon is passing nearby

\*\*\*\*

The quietude of “Lullaby for Birds, Insects, Fish”--- by Fumio Kamei

It was a quiet that layered the blindness of the typhoon and the blindness of my heart

The young portrait of Christ had also been put away, and I was listening to the voice of a distant,  
<sup>KASURETA</sup> <sup>uno</sup> <sup>dos</sup> <sup>tres</sup>  
crackly mic check, “one, two, three,.....” and why, why do the little birds know the beginning, the  
beginning of quietness. Is it not the case that “the hearts of birds” also begin with “no” or “no not even  
once.”

A voice letter from Alicia Vega arrived and I went to the Hachioji post office to retrieve it

The small packAGE of the frames of film is pretty  
<sup>コマ</sup>

I learned, to tilt slightly, I had begun to take photos, peering in)

(From Nobuyoshi Araki

\*\*\*\*\*

Comes through, still. When you tilt the frame, the neck <sup>コマ</sup> the nude self grows pathetic <sup>ハダカ</sup>

<sup>ウマ</sup> <sup>ハダカ</sup>  
Horses are nude (THE RUBIES, ARE VERY, BEAUTIFUL.....)

<sup>シタミチ</sup> <sup>シアワセ</sup>  
Comes through, still. I wonder what kind of small roads under the shadow of white happiness “The  
Spanish language dog” walks

Gabriela Mistral

“For the amber people”  
What can I say, and how

Dylan Thomas, poet from Wales

“For some reason I have been transformed into a bird”--famous words from the later years of Fumio Kamei

事 koto、事 koto

“The chirping of small birds” = “the green blood vessel of my heart” = the clickety sound of “old films,”

(According to the musical notes, “kew” is the song of the owl)

I hope to write brilliant words like Yukio Mishima, in old, dream-like characters

HOU-OU (Imaginary bird considered as an auspicious bird in ancient China)

鳳凰台上

鳳凰遊ブ (plays)

鳳去ツテ (leaves) 台空シ (emptiness)

江自流ル (flows)

(Poem by Li Taibai, while regarding the handwriting of Yukio Mishima.....)

(Referring to plants. Thus called because they grow upside down with their necks to the ground) (“Marquis de Sade”) (“Confessions of a Mask”)

Tilt/ anatropous/ a light that shines from a different direction/ devoted to this (“peephole”.....) “the  
“Kinkakuji”  
key to the space between the internal and external” and its “sound/ creaking,” your innocent eyes, that  
departed from it,...../ were those of a great painter

“For the amber people”

ガリ

What can I say, I had the slightest feeling that I was one of the “amber people,” as I cut a stencil,  
smelling the pencils of slate and metal,.....

I watched it

I spread out the *Vision* of a thin film like a screen, and with long eyes, -----the secret to breathing, I am  
certain, is in the phonetic soundings

An empty <sup>TAKO</sup>kite, -----

“To the amber people”

コマ

クビ

ハダカ

Comes through, still and even more. When tilting the frame, the neck my naked self grows pathetic.

ウマ ハダカ  
Horses are naked (THE RUBIES, ARE VERY, BEAUTIFUL.....)

If I had grown up listening deeply to a <sup>MISTRAL</sup> *mi Niño* or <sup>ALICIA</sup> *de Niño*,  
“Becoming a body that finds difficulty in dwelling upon the same branch for all eternity—leaves and wet  
leaves”

has been something that is no longer to be spoken of

But, you see today I pick up <sup>コマ</sup> one single fallen leaf. It’s like a frame of paper from a film,.....  
Again, seated, the <sup>マタ</sup> faint <sup>HONOKANA</sup> human shadow, that is <sup>HITOKAGE</sup> “myself”

Alicia, I’m envious of such a beautiful sweater, and the underlay (for shoe polish), I mumbled <sup>burning grains</sup>

“Ghosts are so, passé,.....”

Did I hear the <sup>NIWATORI</sup> chicken crying?!

From <sup>EGAO</sup> smile to <sup>EGAO</sup> smile, the <sup>BIN</sup> Coca-Cola bottle feels ashamed,.....

You were looking straight at it, “the beginning of the ‘film,’ ” the beginnings for each of the “small <sup>SEQUENZAS</sup>  
gatherings” <sup>SOREZORE</sup>

I just learned that for Mr. Mekas to film as if he were dancing meant that film is a band of eternity <sup>オビ</sup>  
And then, again, one sheet, again, one sheet, .....

\* \* \* \* \*  
Long, gray, ..... “I stood still for another line,” saying “I am a line of deception!”

Having feared “Small beginnings,” ----- I felt like I was beginning to understand the thinking of the  
Council of Chilean Film, who deemed it appropriate only for those above the age of twenty-one

Dear Alicia, -----

<sup>low-income housing</sup>  
The way the wooden classrooms of the *poblacion* are bathed in the extreme radiance (of lightning, and

the Andes, a little damp, again, <sup>マタ</sup>dries, the light <sup>マタ</sup>repeats) is, very.

Very is *muy bien*?

<sup>コ</sup>The old violin, too, reminisced about its homeland, <sup>FURUSATO</sup>sang of it, .....

And then

That  
<sup>TAKO</sup>Kite, -----

Dear Alicia, -----  
<sup>有難度う</sup>

Thank you.

In thanks, I would like to fill a large bus, to the brim, with <sup>モモ</sup>peaches, and send it to you. Filling the spaces with our impoverished hearts.

<sup>グラシアス</sup>  
Gracias

\*\* “The Three Graces” – from “The Dead” in James Joyce’s *The Dubliners*. In a speech given during a Christmas Eve party, Gabriel refers to “the Three Graces of the Dublin musical world.” Also with John Huston’s great work, one day, “in this Athenian film house”..... Our “Three Graces,” here, are Alicia Vega, who sent along a message all the way from Santiago; Gabriela Mistral, likewise a very dear and important poet also from Chile; and Akiko Yosano, from whom this writer was inspired to attempt to write in this form. \* Add to that a “Melody” according to the composer Toru Takemitsu.

\*\*\* The day after the first “Film poem” event, I was doing a talk for the first time with Masaki Tamura, famous as the cameraman for the “Sanrizuka” series, “Nipponkoku Furuyashikimura (Country of Japan – Village of old houses),” and “2/Duo,” that was to be in the republication of *Eiga Geijutsu* magazine. I was mumbling to Takeshi Shono, the moderator, that he should read the Celan translations by his father, Kokichi Shono. And so then it was that I was re-reading Kokichi Shono’s translation of Rilke and Paul Celan. “That single word, *stylus* (Griffel) in the final section strikes a bolt of some strange, cruel feeling

in me. Sharing the same Latin roots as *graphic*, the word *Griffel* also carries the meanings of slate pencil or carving knife, but in form it seems to be somewhat similar to the Old High German word *Graf* (to grasp). And yet the thing that deeply impressed me was the strangeness of the sound of this word..." ...I was re-reading this, and quoting it. Stylus, slate pencil, metal pencil – writing implements not dependent on sumi or ink. The fact that we attempted to gather and make in a single night this mimeographed copy that you hold in your hands today is perhaps connected to this idea of a “pen that does not come through” or “the strange creakings of the pen that does not come through.” \*\*\*\* A “posthumous” work, created after a silence of twenty years, in his later years (He died in 1987 at the age of 79). “For some reason, I was recently transformed into a bird” (Fumio Kamei). \*\*\*\*\* Gabriela Mistral “Lonely lips sunken voice/ my knobby knees embarrass me/ You are here right now/ I feel sorry for my naked self (Translated into the Japanese by Masamichi Arai). \*\*\*\*\* *Anthology of Golden Age Poetry* (first published in Bungei – May, 1969) Around dusk last night as I was writing this text, the fax started up, informing me of the wake and funeral of Taro Kaneda. For a while I was just stunned, recalling the memory of this excellent editor, this dignified, high-spirited person who I owed so much to. The final two lines of *Anthology of Golden Age Poetry*. I wrote them standing on the train to Ochanomizu, and hurried so that I could hand it over to Mr. Taro Kaneda at Kawade Shobo, which was then located in Surugadai. Yes, Taro Kaneda was also the editor for Toshio Shimaō as well as Yukio Mishima (the following day at the wake, I confirmed this with Hiroshi Terada. I had made up the part about him being Mishima’s editor. However, .....postscript.) I hadn’t seen him these last two or three years. By writing this, while praying that he rest in peace, I hope that I might possibly be repaying him just a little bit in this poem – is the small thought that came upon me (6.21. ’97, 10:00 A.M.)

## NOTES

This text is a poem, a performance script, comments on film, rememberings, quotes, and responses to the film “100 children waiting for the train,” a film by Ignacio Agüero portraying the filmmaker Alica Vega as she engages impoverished Chilean children in the art of filmmaking. The talk followed the screening of the film, as part of an ongoing series of discussions on film and poetry held at the Athénée Français in Tokyo, Japan. Texts and transcripts from Yoshimasu’s talks were collected in a book 『燃えあがる映画小屋』 (*Film house in flames*) (Seidosha, 2001), from which this piece is taken.

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This excerpt is from the forthcoming *Alice Iris Red Horse*, published by New Directions.