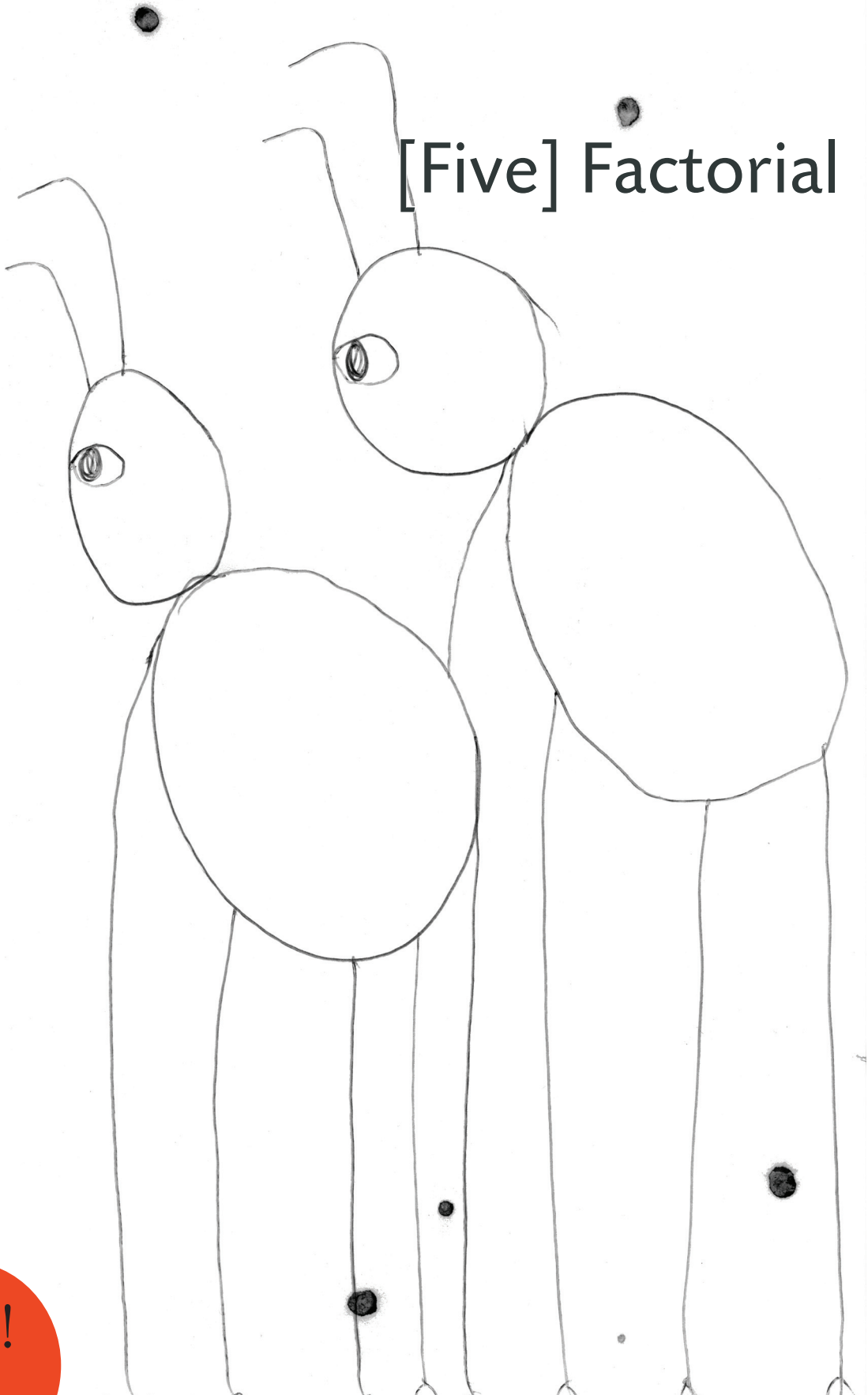
[Five] Factorial



[Five] Factorial

Summer 2006

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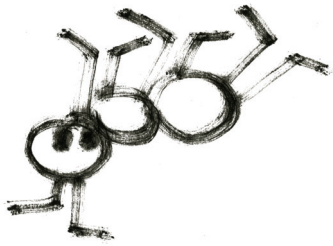

Katue Kitasono
from Conical Poems

A Cornet-Style Scandal

Disconnect the lead cone and hammer the yellow dream in a glass bottle. If even then a metal walking stick leaps up, it's best to take off your glasses and calmly lie down. In a flash, space turns to glass; pigs exhale firefly-colored gas and crack in the brilliant beyond.

Those Countless Stairs and Crystal Breasts of the Boy with a Glass Ribbon Tied Around His Neck

Snail-colored space warps, tears, flies off. Then, from a direction of total liquid, a boy with golden stripes showed the circle of a wise forehead and came sliding here into the proscenium.

Transparent Boy's Transparent Boy's Shadow

O boy whom I love! O beautiful rose boy who climbs the sky's silver line. Stare at tragedy of light of eternity's ocean, eternity's acrobat. Dream, dream is a shining wheel, with wheel of tears and crystal wheel carrying away your arch and bouquet in summer pebbles. O boy whom I love! Wake up! And then, in blotting paper, also in ink bottles, with a smile shining like death, murder the high-speed ocean?

A Boy's Death in a Flask

All of a sudden smashed into something like a wall. Then, hanging suspended, instantly fell.

Blonde Shade and then The White Circle's Program

After a perfect conversation, a dark limit tore. A summer desert was there. I don't know the asphyxiated crystal vegetable inside a globe. I don't see the octopus of insane mica inside a globe. I entertain myself. Possibility of limitlessness. Finally, panic to love stands up in the mirror. At that time, I faced my other clear boundary and leaned in the stillness.

The Feathery Head of the Sincere Angel Who Opened Light Metal Fingers and Mouth and then The Make-up of Some Sphere of Luster in the Middle of a Limit

Between limit and limit I rode a crystal parachute and hung suspended. Then in the light of a gentle breeze a completely different limit came sliding by in a pyramid shape. I straddled that peak and, while creating space with an antenna, I started training pure white spheres with a coil-like apparatus.

translated from Japanese by John Solt

Chika Sagawa

Opal

Pausing in front of the entrance
Peering into the window
And turning back repeatedly
The twilight goes home.
A sluggish waltz is played by the river.
The sound of clogs beats upon the wall.
Damp air flows past my cheek
And a cloud crosses the puddle.
My vision is about to stop.

A Plain, Moonlit Night

A butterfly landed on the pipe organ on the roof garden
The unseasonable syllables wrench the lady's heart
The bouquet is torn away The fire does not burn
Outside the window a deer passes by, trampling on the stars
At the ocean bottom, fish mock the weather People put on their glasses
This year, too, the widowed moon deceives its age

Mayflower

Full bloom inside the piano
I touch it and the keys begin to move
The impudent grass is food for the calves
Lilas flowers, a crown
Between the glass plants
Spanish tender descends

Shape of Snow

The silver arched wave is pushed open,
Rows of people walk through.

Broken-down memory sparkles
Above the rocks, the trees, the stars.

A wrinkled curtain near the window
Is gathered, then pulled apart.

A single garland sways in the radiant rays of light
Made by the city of marble.

Every day, fingertips thin like a leaf
Are drawing a map.

Seasonal Night

The last train of the light railway runs
Carrying young green leaves
Hushed like the season's back alley
Crawls along like a larch
Those with no business here
Can just go ahead and get off please
Six leagues to the dyehouse deep in the woods
With a slip of light over the dark night road
A trickle of sap

translated from Japanese by Sawako Nakayasu

Minoru Yoshioka

from *A Season of Stupor*

Spring

Morning hangs a silver coin on the legs of a butterfly
Inside the stem of a moisture-sensitive plant
A wedding without buttons begins
Oh sky that sleeps briefly in the smell of a phosphorous match
A white glove droops southward
Ennui that darkens into an artificial flower
Bodily temperature pasted upside down on the wall
The stains on the table soak up the cloudy sky
I forget the scale-shaped dream in the mirror of the railway station
And decorate the steeple with lost virginity and stars

Summer

Twelve minutes past nine on the morning of the syringe
Deep in the transparent heart of a woman on a balcony
Crushed powder falls from the eyes of a dragonfly
Idle hunters wearing abalone shells on their heads go
Along the edge of nose hairs spinning the rings of a rainbow
The sun melts on a slice of ice candy
And a chicken pecks at yellow spermatozoa on the floor tiles

A Season of Stupor 1

Up the ladder of water
The season in which dazzle is lost
And the night wearing spectacles climb
The women perish in the smoke rings from a cigar
And the specks on the light bulbs multiply
On top of a chair listlessly turning
A fish with red eyes is all dried up

A Season of Stupor 2

Inside an empty bottle of milk
Light-beams in a stupor and the acoustics of April
Penetrate like the ears of a tomcat, and faintly
Sunday collapses on the sand and is buried
When bread swells in the wind an egg flows into the water
And in the stucco, the shadow of a flower unfolds its hand and tilts
A man who has taken too many sleeping pills puckers his lips
And disgorges copper coins and wadded-up bills
Towing the night, the bats fly around the funeral flowers

from *Liquid*

Elegy

The lamp goes out
A fox awakens
On the tip of a rusty fork
Sticking out of a skull
Its distance colder
Than the Northern Cross
Clasped tightly in the surgeon's hand
Undulating toward the respiratory tract
And folded up in a wet evening paper
The young men talkatively
Kindle their wings
Inside the dirty dishes
And piled up on top of the fallen leaves
Are all swept away

The Night When Flowers Grow Cold

The trail of tears is broken
And the light in the distant window goes out
Night erupts and fills the garden
Untying its white bandages
Oh stars breathing at the tip of a needle
The flowers grow cold and cannot sleep

Melting Flowers
for Yoko Nakamura

The gods swell inside the veins of the spring leaves
Oh hills from which gold coins can be seen
A starfish sparkles atop a bible
Wetted by soap bubbles in the bath
The weathercock turns toward the night
And the youths sink into the white skin
A sock filled with holes and a butterfly
Drift ashore around the neck of an angel
The flowers melt in a cat's saliva

Liquid I

At the moment the shadow of the green snake trembles lambently in the grains of crystal the letter arrives, and as the retina grows cold, spreading out toward the lake, it covers the bright torso of a sleeping woman; from the corner a red balloon, blazing and shrinking toward a southern town, springs out inside the brain, where varieties of crushed autumn glass begin to dissolve in saliva – the faint sound is transmitted through the leaves of the sacred bo tree, wetting the morning moon forgotten on the stone table on the terrace, like a feather

Liquid II

On the tip of the finger all manner of objects melt while the gods stripped of their powers in the empty sky quiver and sway, their accumulated existence touching an image of the moment; the blood is measured below the ice, and the duet separated from the branch loses its balance in a green hat, and while the abundant skin on both sides is made transparent, the promises and twilight spilled and forgotten on the various plants are caught in an opulent crown and without delay descend onto the map; the children are supported by a metal coated in seasonal winds and the morning donkey emerges from a ventilation tube to be crushed onto the surface of the water without a sound

translated from Japanese by Eric Selland

Ichiro Kobayashi

Minoru Yoshioka's Early Poems, in Light of Katue Kitasono and Chika Sagawa

Minoru Yoshioka left behind a manuscript entitled "The Red Raven," written before his first published book, *A Season of Stupor.* In a dialogue with Makoto Ōoka called "From the Egg-Shaped World," he refers to this work as if it were a *kashū,* (a book of traditional poetry), aside from which he never specifically reveals the contents of "The Red Raven." However, in 2002, twelve years after his death, it was published in a limited edition by his widow, Yoko Yoshioka, as *The Red Raven: Poetry.*[1]

> *The Red Raven* collects Yoshioka's early *waka* (tanka and *sedōka*) and haiku written before *A Season of Stupor*, but his poems are not included. In the "Notes" to *The Red Raven,* Yoko Yoshioka writes, "The original material (for *The Red Raven*) was a fair copy that the young Yoshioka had written on B5-sized manuscript paper with pen. It was bound with a thick red cloth cover, and the black titling pressed horizontally on the spine read *The Red Raven: Poetry – Yoshioka Minoru.* The dates on the work indicate that they were written between 1938 and early 1940. About twenty pages had been torn and thrown away, but corrections in pencil in the remaining parts show that Yoshioka himself had been fond of the work. It looks like he was planning to make a second book of *waka,* but it is cut off after the first two poems."[2]
>
> Yasumasa Sōda, having viewed the handwritten manuscript, notes: "The first few pages have been cut away, and it is followed by *Kyoki,* a manuscript of collected *waka,* and *Yakkosō,* a manuscript of collected haiku." What was written on those first few pages, now missing? Considering it was imprinted clearly as *The Red Raven: Poetry,* it is natural to assume that they were poems. And judging from the production dates noted on the remaining tanka and haiku, it might be regarded that this group of poetry was probably what became *A Season of Stupor.*[3]
>
> It appears, subsequently, that *waka* under the heading *Kyoki* would later become *Sugarushō;* and haiku under the heading *Yakkosō* would later become a book of the same title. All three books were collected in Yoshioka's handwritten manuscript, though none were published in this original version. Yet *A Season of Stupor* was for a long time not regarded by the author as his first book. He considered *Liquid,* a collection of poems most likely written after *The Red Raven,* as such. Thus Yoshioka's early writings can be described through this process of eliminating first the haiku, then tanka, from this trinity of poems, before finally arriving at 'poetry.'

Yoshioka may have begun with tanka, but his process of moving through tanka to haiku, then abandoning haiku for poetry, did not proceed in such clear steps. His own haiku and tanka appear throughout his diaries between the ages of 19 and 20, where references to poetry can be found here and there. On May 31, 1939, he wrote, "I would like to publish a book of poetry before joining the army"; on September 12, "I would like to publish the tanka collection *Sugarushō*"; and on November 11, "Worked hard on writing haiku. I would like to edit the haiku collection *Yakkosō* one day."[4] Facing imminent draft, Yoshioka contemplates ways to leave behind some trace of his life.

Kyoki is a collection of 209 *waka.* The first poem, written in three lines, is in the style of Takuboku Ishikawa, revealing nothing of Yoshioka's style. Meanwhile, as a general rule in *Kyoki,* there are explanatory notes (almost like headings or subtitles) which are rarely seen in *Creel,* a tanka collection he later wrote. The following is the 136th poem, called "Loss of Sleep":

> A problem of not being able to completely become night
> The morning moon sits upon the curtains[5]

This poem is written in a style altogether different from the other poems in *Kyoki,* and seems to foreshadow the poems of *A Season of Stupor.* It is as if a crack has opened in the impregnable tanka style of the time. How Yoshioka shifted from tanka to poetry, then, is elaborated in "A Time to Seek Salvation – On *Creel* and Other Matters":

> Between the ages of fifteen and nineteen, I was taken with the world of *Paulownia Blossom.* I loved the mood and sensuality of [Poem #5], then was amazed by the savageness and vitality of [Poem #4] in *Mica Collection.* Eventually I entered what they refer to as the world of the simple and refined *shōji* from "Katsushika Kanginshū" in *The Sparrow's Egg,* and I stopped there. I wondered if it wasn't something dried, which I sought. I desired a new stimulus. Like the poignancy of a rose, up against the cruel concrete wall – if I had to describe it. I came across the new tankas of Samio Maekawa and Jun Ishihara, and immediately imitated them. But it felt lukewarm, so I quit. About that time, I discovered Picasso's poems in Mr. Kiyoshi Saitō's flat in Yotsuya, and was thrilled.…I had discovered the perfect poetic form that would bring in unknown sensations and images, better than tanka could. I finally figured out that they were surrealist poems. I had been writing in a void, without a single friend. After that I looked for work in my own country. For a while afterwards, *Collected Poems of Sagawa Chika* and Katue Kitasono's *The White Album* became my two favorite books.[6]

This clearly reveals Yoshioka's poetic turning point. For Yoshioka, who had been fond of the work in Hakushū Kitahara's selected tanka collection *Hanagashi,* and who as an artist remained interested in the development of new tanka, his own concept of poetry could no longer fit within the bounds of tanka-based literature. The poems which served as catalysts for him at the time were Picasso's poems (which Shūzō Takiguchi had translated in "Picasso Writing Poetry"). After discovering lines from this prominent painter such as "The scent hears the passing of the shadows beat up by the goldfinch inside the well, and erases the whiteness of their wings in the stillness of the coffee," or "The fighting bull that stitched his costume of light bulbs with the most beautiful needle that the fog invented in Torero,"[7] he went out and found Katue Kitasono and Chika Sagawa on his own. Yoshioka, who was fascinated by the brand-new expressions he found in Kitasono's *Conical Poems,* sought out *The White Album* and read this as well. Yoshioka himself has written, "I began to imitate the poetry of Kitasono." Let us examine that now, in "Vin" by Kitasono and "Daylight News" by Yoshioka:

Vin

Insect-eating plant held up by fingers, sucking in the moon with a long glass tube and eventually the brain becomes pale, becomes pearl-colored, and when measuring tape is applied, it splits from the spine.[8]

Daylight News

A bicycle racer gets into a collision
Mucous spurts out into the small rooms of the pomelo's sections

A child with a blue neck swallows the electrical current from the glass cup, smoky gray

Which pours from the zone of inclination into a conical hat
A sheet of wind, a promise and a stamen

And a female customer enters the corner cosmetics store.[9]

There are indeed many things that Yoshioka learned from Kitasono with regards to poetic ideas, and it is without doubt that *Conical Poems* and *The White Album* played a role in priming Yoshioka's early poems, providing him with a reservoir of poetic vocabulary and forms. However, in "Daylight News," the shifting points of view, or rather, the breaks between verses, feels similar to the breath found in the then-emerging haikus with which Yoshioka was familiar. *A Season of Stupor,* which combined poems and *wakas* in one book, samples many styles, in poems such as "Spring," "Summer," "Autumn," "Winter," or "Fragment." Yoshioka

himself comments on his discontentment with the book, in the essay entitled "*Liquid,* My First Book of Poetry": "As you can see in this poem ['Season of Stupor 2'], it is naïve, unrefined and lacking in poetic beauty. The poems are thrown together with no unity of style. Although *Liquid* was made only a year later, I believe it has a well-proportioned beauty and a style of its own, so I consider it to be my first book of poetry."[10]

How about the influence of Sagawa on Yoshioka's poetry, then? In "the poignancy of a rose, up against the cruel concrete wall," I get a sense of the brilliant woman who passed away without publishing a single book of poetry in her lifetime. (The poem in *A Season of Stupor* called "Hospital Room" may have been written in memory of Sagawa, who was only eight years his senior). In "Veiled Conversation," a work atypical of Yoshioka, one can see a resemblance to both Sagawa's "Conversation" and Kitasono's "Upper Layer Symbol Architecture." However, this is only a surface resemblance. Yoshioka himself, awaiting his number to come up in the draft, must have empathized with those forced to confront a cruel outside world. This will to look at what is unseeable, notable in Sagawa's poem "Prelude," had planted on Yoshioka what might be called "the intensity of the eye." It appeared not in *A Season of Stupor* or *Liquid*, but in the book *Still Life,* written ten years after the war. The following poem by Sagawa reminds us of Yoshioka's poem "The Past," but more than that, it anticipates the true poetry of Yoshioka that begins with *Still Life.* It could be said that Yoshioka had also internalized "the eyes of the dead."

Beard of death

A chef clutches the blue sky. Four fingerprints are left,
— Gradually a chicken sheds blood. Even here the sun is crushed.
Blue-suited wardens of the sky who inquire.
I hear daylight run by.
In prison they keep watch over a dream longer than life.
A moth slams into the window so as to touch the outside world, like the backside of an embroidery.
If for a single day the long whisker of death would loosen its hold, this miracle would make us jump with joy.

Death strips my shell.[11]

We find nothing of this sort in the Kitasono poems Yoshioka was reading at the same time. The difference between the poems of Kitasono and those of Sagawa is the absence of this viewpoint, that of death.

Like *A Season of Stupor,* Kitasono's *The White Album* is written in a variety of styles (It is amazing that "Doll, Pistol and Balloon," a poem from Kitasono's "Poésie de Theatre," already makes use of the stepwise poetic form that Yoshioka uses in *Kusudama,* late in his career). *Liquid* models itself on *Conical Poems,* and aims to achieve unity within a collection of poems. All his life he maintained this stance regarding books, which may have been the greatest lesson Yoshioka learned from Kitasono's early experimental works.

translated from Japanese by Yu Nakai *&* Sawako Nakayasu

Notes

1. In this essay, 'poems' and 'poetry' refer to contemporary free verse, unless stated otherwise. The following three quotations are from notes to *The Red Raven,* published on the website, "The Poetry of Yoshioka Minoru."

2. Minoru Yoshioka, *The Red Raven*, Kobokudō, 2002.

3. Minoru Yoshioka, *Yakkosō,* Shoshi Yamada, 2003.

4. Minoru Yoshioka, *Umayahashi Diary,* Shoshi Yamada, 1990.

5. Minoru Yoshioka, *The Red Raven*, Kobokudō, 2002.

6. Minoru Yoshioka, *Painting entitled "Stillborn Child" [enlarged edition],* Chikuma Shobō, 1988.

7. Shūzō Takiguchi, "Picasso Writing Poetry," *Mizue* #385, March 1937.

8. Katue Kitasono, *Conical Poems,* Bon Shoten, 1933. Translated by John Solt.

9. Minoru Yoshioka, *A Season of Stupor,* Sōsensha, 1940.

10. Minoru Yoshioka, *Painting entitled "Stillborn Child" [enlarged edition],* Chikuma Shobō, 1988.

11. Chika Sagawa, *Collected Poems of Sagawa Chika,* Shōshinsha, 1936. Translated by Sawako Nakayasu.

Editor's note: what is referred to as 'poetry' in English separates into two major categories in Japanese: 和歌 waka, which means traditional poetry, and 詩 shi, which generally refers to contemporary free verse. Hence a collection of traditional poetry is a 歌集 kashū, and a collection of contemporary poetry is a 詩集 shishū.

Shōko Ema

Morning Resembling Death

A swarm of stars stuck to my back
That's right I remember something like that
Certainly I was on my stomach
Each time I awoke I remembered
The very end of that summer
To my ears the music seemed
Lethargic all day
On my left shoulder stood a spire
A vision I'm sure anyone could easily see

The Dandelion's Curse

The dandelion is not a witch
But it did kill Venus
Oh children
Do not approach the drunk woman:
The gentle voice robbed me of life
That is not Venus

Venus Today

The globe's white wing
upon which the wedding of the century takes place.
Who occupied the front row?
        Is Venus alive?
    She merrily winks
    and pilots her fighter plane far from the earth.
    A late change of heart.
Two white roses glare with one eye.
Inside the machine, she straps a camera to her head
so as not to go missing.

Night Song

Above the ring of white violets, a neck.
Circling the acacia,
clouds fall into the sea –
Horses come from here.
They make earrings chime.
Steeped in sharp rays of light,
the lovely night –
Below, torn-up earth
where a crystal forest streams, aslant.
Air hardens above a weak tree's branches
like a living wing beneath the covers.

translated from Japanese by Malinda Markham

Shōzō Torii
from Alphabet Trap

J Turbulence

as gunfire fizzles
a room full of attaché cases opens
& morning swoons

after tossing out the hot exclamations of the José Corti edition
Mr. J begins to walk
while stepping on the blinding shadows of
a building inhabited by reptiles

a mellow wind melts *bon voyage*
in his head

Mrs. J's white boots are
fountains of blood brilliantly sparkling

Z Finale

after climbing a fragile ladder
Z, the aged thespian
observes from the M. C. Escher observatory

black infinity
condensed to a microscopic plane
appearing from light beams
reemerges into a world of impossibility

curtain of death

the dice come up negative
no rehearsal for Z's scrawny physique

an unmanned train chugs
through a town surrounded by iron-clad windows
after a splinter of morning pierces a soft gash

translated from Japanese by Taylor Mignon *&* Misako Yarita

Shūzō Takiguchi
Document d'Oiseaux Archive of the Birds

The angel in the constellation of the carp peeked in the plum's pistil mirror and knew me for the first time. Adorned my hair with a barley flower and ran away. When spring comes, the beautiful fish of the heart steals the clothes of an angel. This experiment occurs on the tips of my fingers, which are nearly overflowing with buds. The waves moan nearby within the glass. This is a First Supper, born from the dialogic instinct between the waterfall under my armpit and the first snowfall on top of my nails. When my eyelashes are already dyed in the colors of the evening sun, my angel becomes nearly formless and leaves the large fruit market. I deny the profession of this angel. And then I try cutting this peach-like angel as I would cleave a doll. I was the angel, filled with joy. There, a single sad green shell is destroyed. I am a dangerous maiden. The rose that artfully seduces me, however, is nothing but a flat halibut, eternally swimming. Look at my pure yellow sun, like a small stone, rising so rapidly up the nape of a neck.

This is purely a maiden's imaginings. Now I give feathers to every bird that passes through my golden earrings. I give shooting-star garments to every breeze. My miracle is to gestate abundant clusters of heaven's diamonds. The shadow of an angel falls on me by the light of fishes. The angel's smile was truly a work of the divine. In his voice was the effect of the limitless citadel of the incomparably pure spider's web. The lips, however, had already turned to stone, without losing their scarlet tint. A beautiful angel, catlike, single, anonymous. I pray that I will not pass again through your spirits of quartz-like barley ears. I give thanks to the granite that sends forth blood. The sudden shower, like an express train of hydrangeas, is the angel's assassin. I am the maiden pierced by a rainbow filled with sap. The center of the eagles already yearns for the angel's rose-colored hair. That is an ideal universal gravity. That violets bloomed again this spring on the crests of waves is its frightening result. All the seashores are omnipotent, and the pine trunks again become pregnant with a single Apollo. Look at the photograph of the guiltless devil inside his marrow. It gleams more beautifully than diamonds. Oh angel! Can we know your future by the electric advertisements under the bark of these pine trees? Oh, the blue sky corpse of an angel who reached out his hand to this place! Birds are perfection. His mother is also perfection. I who have conceived carry a bright candle along with joy into the ocean.

Is this harmful to the birds? No, now is the season when all harms are destroyed. Even the beautiful iceberg is now expecting a birth. Even the single goldfish is gleaming on top of the fortress wall. On the supreme seashore, a cigar is burning. It is a secret that this is a recent phenomenon in aquariums. The air is a beautiful princess without bones. She is a madonna inside of a straw. On the piazza of her throat I dropped gems like white roses. That white world was neither an island nor a bird. A single memory of it will probably turn me into a demon. When morning comes, all the angels rise from their beds. They once again expose their eternally immortal breasts. This is because the morning breeze was once again bracing to them.

I die because I stole a glance at a god who was making a sculpture of a peach. I am dying while holding magnificent breasts in my mouth, while embracing a bundle of roses the color of the sky. It is an adventure of youth. Neither flies nor gems are surprised by it. This is because the sea too is nothing but a single new instrument. The lion with its beautiful voice that proclaims the spring was a perfect celestial body, with its cobalt parasol raised, that cannot tell the difference between a morning glory and a human being. It is a dramatic sight. A theater on the horizon line! Outside, the four seasons, birds of love, warble their song. Let us be silent, about the fur seal becoming a seven-stringed koto. The shadowless sun is a yacht I jump aboard. On the deck I watch the pure white sacred horse leaping. When the muse is just now putting on her makeup, look at the birds' archive.

translated from Japanese by Miryam Sas

Translator's Note: This poem, first published in July 1929, draws on many of Takiguchi's classic images of poetic creation: birds, angels, fish, maidens, that appear through and over generative parts of the body. At moments the whole vision seems like an imagining; at other moments the speaker seems to be swallowed whole by the vision, as (s)he endlessly transforms. Takiguchi uses plays on words: for example, climbing the nape of the neck (*unaji o noboru*) plays on the eel-rise (*unagi-nobori*), an idiom for a precipitous climb; the characters for bird (鳥) and island(島) resemble one another closely, so that it is no longer clear if the indistinguishability or blurring takes place in the object or rather on the level of the written word.

Shūzō Takiguchi
Miroir de Miroir Mirror of Mirror

In the large mirror of the cherry tree's ashes are the footprints of a cherry tree. Long ago, a little bird with pebble ears fell on the large mirror of the forest, oh solitary horned owl of eternal future, your nakedness could be mistaken for golden glass, a great fire burns in Berlin, oh horned owl, listen to me. All of my sympathies were poems. Oh children of the horned owl, what is that lamp shining so brightly above the eyebrows of the ninth little girl? Listen to these pebbles laugh. Can you see the uncountable loves falling like snow in the winter of tomorrow? The illusion of wheat changes year after year and like the costume of a beautiful girl, year after year becomes more elegant. I came to know that snow was falling in a waterway elaborate as a heart because of a machine that smells goldfish. In the mirror where the wheat dries, the skeletal structure of a whale moves like the morning sun. Moves like the magnet of a beautiful girl. The wheat trembles. The stone breasts of the wheat are a mirror of the mackerel actress. The voluptuous sparrow that went off drawing waves was asleep there in my palm. An even more beautiful little bird of violet takes flight from my finger and returns to its nest. The fish, who sew up the torn coast with gold thread, drink from the hot springs in the rift between the clouds. The peacock of zero sucks water from the yellow mirror and a millionaire's waterfall wraps the white sail of the horned owl's head. It is the regeneration of white pelicans in the boundlessness of infinite time, and strangely breasts, the milk of the great forest that nursed the copper and the horned owl. Milk of black clouds, milk of stars,

The lady dove that bore my seven mirrors sucks my morning milk. The pasture of my mirrors now grows taller than the dove's breast and receives the brain of a butterfly, the hearts of the doves of darkness between those two feet are interchangeable. The flower of a kiss opens atop the plum flower. Time of the lady dove's nakedness, time when the iceberg speaks, it is the time when the starfish laughs. Listen to the beautiful voice of the blue flounder surrounded on all four sides by stone walls, oh children of the horned owl inside my pupils. Oh the adornments on the calendar of your skin. The love of heaven pours into the chandelier at the bottom of a swamp and the cute glove of a carp. The gold of golden treasure is a picture inside your cheek one celestial body one sign a polar bear OUI

Oh seven perfect natures on the lake the glamorous chests of infinite sun straddling animals with ripple ribs brandish feathers according to their

custom. Venus of the secret heart of thunder wrapped in clouds is related by marriage to a cactus flower. The waves of the river of my cupped hands, my hen's voice is a knee 1. that is a ruby, 2. that is marble, the flower boat on the lake visible from the window, the young man who is a natural stone kowtows to the carp child below the waves below the clouds like underground water. Inside the express train I am a field of precious stones. This is rape blossoms in midair. Oh cloud candies of the festival, descend from heaven, the bonbons hanging from the cheeks of the gentle breeze… the statue of a bird atop the circular lake of the cheeks is eternal. The boat on heaven's lake reflected in the water on land, disguising myself as a rose in one of its dressing rooms, I am an eternally tall sailor. The swift white waves shatter the monument of hydrangea the newest love. The egg-shaped bedroom of an angel where the civilization of snow's dream appears in his fairy ring grows thick and blue on the water's horizon. Oh fairy, love your fairy!

translated from Japanese by Eric Selland

George Kalamaras

"The Air is a Beautiful Princess Without Bones": Takiguchi Shūzō and Japanese Surrealism

"Poetry is dangerous," writes poet Tony Moffeit, "Poetry is dangerous because it is untouchable, unreachable, because it is the mystery that cannot be fathomed" (117). Few Japanese poets of the modernist era experienced this more profoundly than Takiguchi Shūzō[1] (1903-1979). Jailed and tortured in 1941 because he was "Surrealist," Takiguchi embodied the spirit of the Japanese libertine. He not only risked the psychological danger of entering the fathomless "mystery" we call poetry but placed his very life on the line for it, helping shepherd into Japan the excitement of Surrealism, remaining true to its tenets throughout his life.

Art critic, translator of Surrealist texts, and a poet himself profoundly affected by the use of "automatic" writing, Takiguchi helped forge a dynamic new poetry in 1920s and 1930s prewar Japan. So few of his poems have been translated into English that he is often overshadowed in the West by others belonging to the Japanese Surrealist movement,[2] especially Nishiwaki Junzaburō (Takiguchi's teacher) and Kitasono Katue (perhaps Japan's most widely recognized avant-garde artist of the period).[3] Ironically, Takiguchi himself contributed most to the relative unavailability of his verse in English translation. He wrote poetry chiefly from only 1927-1937, and then seems to have abandoned it to concentrate on art criticism from 1945 on.

An assessment of his poetic works is, thus, long overdue. Given the unique position Takiguchi occupies as art critic, translator, and poet – as well as modern and contemporary interest in "the prose poem" and other blurred-genre works in both Japan and the West – a critical assessment of Takiguchi's poetic contribution (often overshadowed by his art criticism) can help facilitate our understanding of the underpinnings of the Japanese avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s, influences that continue to nourish contemporary poetry in Japan. In recent years, Miryam Sas, in her remarkable book, *Fault Lines: Cultural Memory and Japanese Surrealism,* has reopened discussion of Takiguchi's immense contribution with the most in-depth exploration of Takiguchi (in English) to date. Such a daring, insightful analysis also implicitly points to the need for a multiplicity of engagements with Takiguchi's poetry, perhaps in conversation with one another, given his pivotal position as the unofficial beacon of Surrealism in Japan.

In particular, I want to examine the ways Takiguchi's prose poem form – a "nexus of discourses" of poetry, prose, and theory – works not only as a way to chronicle the development of Surrealism in Japan but, more specifically, as a "form" itself. That is, blurred-genre writing, I want to argue, became a *form* that enabled Takiguchi to synthesize his multiple artistic interests into a unique interaction of poetry, prose, and theory that has assured the place of Surrealism and extended its possibilities in Japan.

I will focus primarily on his earliest poetic experiments, "Étamines Narratives" (1927), discussing the visionary and transformative quality of his Surrealist imagery, with an eye toward how his poetic theories, and translations of poetry and poetic theory, informed his verse. Through this, I hope to reinvigorate interest in Takiguchi's significant contribution to the Surrealist movement. In particular, I am interested in demonstrating that the Surrealist charge to democratize writing and revolutionize consciousness manifests in Takiguchi's prose poetry as a unique vision of paradox. To do so, I will explore how Takiguchi complicates the concept of "genre," in a generative way, to forge a visionary landscape of neutralized "opposites," including those of poetry and prose themselves.

A Beautiful Princess Without Bones

Literary Surrealism was promoted chiefly by three monumental figures, Nishiwaki Junzaburō, Kitasono Katue, and Takiguchi Shūzō, with a fourth (too often over-looked), Takahashi Shinkichi, who identified in his early years primarily as a Dadaist yet displayed strong Surrealist tendencies (Kalamaras 75-85). Nishiwaki and Kitasono's activities in the avant-garde set the foundation for Surrealism in Japan. Nishiwaki, in fact, introduced the first books on Surrealism to Japan – one of the fruits of his time in France, after some years living in England in the 1920s. Kitasono was active throughout the period in various avant-garde movements in Japan, particularly Surrealism, editing the influential experimental journal *VOU,* and synthesizing various avant-garde "isms" into a unique manifestation of Surrealism.

However, Takiguchi, Nishiwaki's student, probably had the greatest impact in securing Surrealism's toehold in Japan and representing it abroad. In 1929 Takiguchi translated Louis Aragon's *Traite du style* and in the following year André Breton's *Le Surrealisme et la peinture.* He participated in the Second International Surrealist Exhibition in 1937, which traveled between Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka, and he was arrested in 1941 and imprisoned for nine months for advocating Surrealism.[4] As John Solt describes in "Perception/Misperception/Nonperception" (from the 2001 Tokyo Station

Gallery exhibit catalog, *Yamamoto Kansuke: Conveyor of the Impossible*), the Special Higher Police of the era (or *tokkō*, abbreviated from *tokubetsu kōtō keisatsu*, and referred to as the "Thought Police") were highly suspicious of Surrealism, most often equating it with Communism. When the French Surrealists became Communists, the *tokkō* rounded up local Surrealists in Tokyo and elsewhere, interrogating them and, in some cases, pressuring them to cease certain activities as they did in Nagoya with the prominent Surrealist photographer Yamamoto and his journal *Yoru no funsui* (21-25).

Takiguchi, however, was the writer who suffered most from the *tokkō*'s reprisals, as they considered him and painter Fukuzawa Ichirō (1898-1992) "to be surrealist agents working clandestinely for the international communist movement" (55). They were detained in separate detention camps, never indicted (a then-common judicial practice), and confined for months under miserable conditions, receiving the harshest treatment of all the Surrealists. However, they were both fortunate in being released prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor,[5] for detainees held into the Pacific War fared even worse because of the lack of sufficient supplies, many dying from disease and malnutrition.

Years after the war, Takiguchi journeyed to Spain, where he met Joan Miró, Marcel Duchamp, and Salvador Dalí, and to Paris to visit Breton, with whom he had shared an extended correspondence. He made works (art criticism, art objects, and some poems) in conversation with the Western artists Miró, Sam Francis, and Antoni Tapies, as well as with Japanese artists Abe Nobuya, Nonaka Yuri, and Okazaki Kazuo, and he collaborated with musicians, notably Takemitsu Toru. He wrote a series of poems for Surrealist visual artists, entitled "Nanatsu no shi" (Seven Poems).[6] In particular, his collaboration with Miró was significant, as Takiguchi wrote the first monograph on him – in any language – in 1941. Moreover, years later, Miró created a series of paintings in response to Takiguchi's poems for their 1970 joint exhibition, only one of which, "Handmade Proverbs" appears to have been translated and published in English.[7]

In 1967, he published *Takiguchi Shūzō no shiteki jikken, 1927-1937* (Takiguchi Shūzō's Poetic Experiments: 1927-1937) which appeared after at least five earlier books of his poems, though all of them were books of paintings by artists who were taken with his verse, so he preferred to consider *Poetic Experiments* his "maiden book of poetry" (qtd. in Sato 41). Takiguchi continued his Surrealist activities, especially the writing of a vast body of art criticism, until his death in 1979.

Takiguchi remained a Surrealist throughout his lifetime and appears to have adopted more of the theoretical constructs of his European counterparts than most of his Surrealist peers in Japan, especially in his interest in the Freudian unconscious. Because Freudian psychology was not widely understood in Japan during the 1920s and 1930s, unlike their French counterparts, most Japanese Surrealists concentrated less on exploring the unconscious and more on creating Surrealist imagery. However, as Michael Richardson points out, the Japanese Surrealists' interest in imagery was not "a reflection of a European form." Rather, it was,

> a response to the challenges of modernity and the violence it unfurled across Japanese society. For most Japanese attracted to it, the value of surrealism lay in the possibilities it offered to question their position in the world. It was, however, a surrealism largely perceived in aesthetic terms: it offered them tools they could use to chart out a new directions [*sic*] for their art and poetry, but it did not take the form of an adventure of the spirit as it did in Europe. (3)

Nevertheless, as Sas notes, Takiguchi's 1928 essay, "Shuruearisumu no shiron ni tsuite" (On the Poetics of Surrealism) – which predated Nishiwaki's infamous *Chōgenjitsu-shugi shiron* (Surrealist Poetics) – clearly addresses the importance of Freud and "belies a common assumption that the primary difference between Japanese Surrealism and French Surrealism was an unawareness of the work of Freud in Japan" (104). Indeed, the grasp of the unconscious seems more prevalent in Takiguchi than in the poetry of other Japanese Surrealists. Thus, although Freud may have been "in the air," Takiguchi was one of the few to have taken up the charge of exploring the complexities of the unconscious.

Solt uncovers another important layer. He argues that due to the Freud question and other dissonances between the Japanese and French encounters with Surrealism, that "the Japanese artists [of the 1920s and 1930s] are a kind of second-generation reaction to the initial experimentation of the Westerners, and the Japanese provide a valuable viewpoint on that initial production" ("Perception" 19). That is, many of the Japanese works produced during this period can be seen "as a dialogue with Western artists" (19). Solt describes Yamamoto's photo of a nude descending a spiral staircase, for example, as a kind of "translation" of Marcel Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2." The same can be said, in an even more profound way, I believe, of some of Takiguchi's early poems. Sas notes that passages of Takiguchi's work actually blur the borders between the translation of French Surrealist texts and his own imagery, and it is sometimes

difficult to say which is which: "Takiguchi, a faithful translator, was not always a literal translator. Perhaps this may be in part because the 'proper' limits or boundaries of a translation were not respected in his case – the texts he worked on spilled over into his own critical writings, into his poetry, into his way of living" (112).

In this sense, one wonders where the ideas of Breton, Aragon, and other prominent Surrealists whom he translated end and those of Takiguchi begin. Rather than dwell upon discerning nearly impossible-to-determine lines of distinction, it seems more generative to focus on the ways French Surrealism expressed itself through Takiguchi (and Takiguchi expressed himself through it), and how he allowed himself to become a conduit of Surrealist thought in Japan. Richardson notes that while Surrealism in Japan never took "a specific shape as a movement or an idea," Takiguchi "appears never to have stood still but to have been quietly and unobtrusively present in twentieth-century Japanese culture, and, principally through him, surrealism seems to have run often imperceptibly through contemporary Japanese culture like a vein…" (7). More than any Japanese poet, then, Takiguchi epitomizes the core of the movement, a notable exception, as Richardson himself attests, to his earlier point that Japanese Surrealism "did not take the form of an adventure of the spirit as it did in Europe." As Takiguchi has said of his verse, "[w]hat matters is nothing other than the embodiment of the thought that relates the surreal and the real constantly to human liberation, the idea that could only sound abstract, the concept that seems to address itself only to the eternal revolution" (qtd. in Sato 41).

Profound, elegant, and lush, Takiguchi's poetry contains a lyricism comparable to Paul Éluard, and is as hallucinatory as Breton and Robert Desnos. His blurred-genre work – in which poetry and prose unite – is like a "body" that is simultaneously embodied *and* disembodied. To say this less paradoxically, his work exudes a fascinating interaction of the concrete and the abstract, but beyond this – true to the revolutionary spirit of Surrealism – finds new forms to "embody," paradoxically, the complex *interplay* of embodiment and its lack.

In this way, an evocative line of Takiguchi's like, "The air is a beautiful princess without bones" (qtd. in Sas 7), typifies not only the kind of imagery of which he is fond but also the vision within it. He is suggesting that the core substance that sustains us all is initially *concrete* ("a beautiful princess"), but it is something concrete that is *at the same time abstract* (a "princess without bones"), illustrating a central paradox in Takiguchi's work: the existence of a liminal space between the realms of materiality and transcendence.

Thus, it is within the juxtaposition of divergent elements, or what Surrealists call "distant realities," where poetic evocation can occur. This calls to mind a primary technique of Surrealism, what Pierre Reverdy refers to as the juxtaposition of "two distant realities" (qtd. in Breton 26), a technique prevalent throughout Takiguchi's poetry (which he embraces, often relying upon paradox as a site of generative possibility). This juxtaposition in Surrealist writing often occurs as a result of "chance," or is, as Comte de Lautréamont has described in a statement much revered by Surrealists, "Beautiful like the fortuitous meeting, on a dissection table, of a sewing machine and an umbrella" (qtd. in Balakian, *Surrealism,* 191).

Takiguchi not only delved deeply into imagistic juxtapositions, but he embraced the concept of chance, in part because unlike his peers he was interested in the various Surrealist methods for mining the unconscious. Thus, his use of psychic automatism was a means not just to devise images but, through their formulation, to offer a vehicle for the expression of the unconscious and to uncover its treasures. As Solt describes in *Shredding the Tapestry of Meaning: The Poetry and Poetics of Kitasono Katue (1902-1978),* "Katue and other Japanese surrealists (with the exception of Takiguchi Shūzō) were not particularly interested in automatic writing. For them, surrealism was less an exploration of the subconscious than a conscious search for images that were strongly charged as poetry" (224). One complexity central to Takiguchi, then, in an image such as "The air is a beautiful princess without bones" is the evocation of a moment of psychic neutrality that moves beyond dichotomy, a moment of perception (arising from the unconscious) of the simultaneity of time and of the reciprocal interaction of often-divergent elements in the universe.

Breathes a Boy Breathing Us into What a Poem Might Be

One key to understanding the more complex textures of Takiguchi's verse is the concept of transformation. His poems and (especially) prose poems contain a number of transformative possibilities, immense root systems of imagery that inhabit the delicate space between what the image is and what it *could* be – that is, what the image is already *in the process of changing into.* Takiguchi's images obey the logic of the dream and, therefore, function in ways which refuse the dichotomous, and reductive, gaze of "self" and "other." Images are thus often simultaneously themselves *and* other, and in the process, neither themselves *nor* other. To cite the title of a Robert Frost poem in this regard, we might say that Takiguchi's poems arrive at a place that is "Neither Out Far Nor in Deep."

This zone of "neither this nor that," this liminal space of an image being simultaneously what it is *and* what it is not, is the core conceit throughout Takiguchi's Surrealist verse. Sas tells us:

> If the goal is a resemblance, a faithful similarity (recalling again the terms of a translation) between poem and dream, then here [in Takiguchi's resistance toward closure] the best one can hope for is a brief instant in which the shadow of one resembles the other's shadow. And this moment is reached not by logic, nor by faith, but by poetry as an act that refutes (repudiates, denies) all acts: a paradoxical moment in language that can allow one shadow to resemble another. (118)

I agree with Sas that paradox and resemblance are central to Takiguchi. At the same time, "this paradoxical moment" is a more generative condition, I believe, than Sas appears to credit it with in labeling it "the *best* one can hope for," "a *brief* instant" of "*shadows*" (emphasis added). Here, she sounds rather postmodern in her lament. Rather than a point of psychic stasis, this instant "in which the shadow of one resembles the other's shadow" is a paradoxical moment of generative possibility, an embrace of resemblance, the realm of dream or shadow being the only (and perhaps most accessible) vehicle through which Takiguchi finds reprieve. Furthermore, we indeed live a series of "instants," most of which are "brief." To fully inhabit but *one* of these "instants" with complete psychic identification with the universe and its complexities would be a tremendous gift. Rather than lament, Takiguchi's verse appears to point to possibility, and his experimental imagery and form open a series of "instants" that suggest hope.

Part of what this understanding requires, however, is a shift toward seeing the generative rather than debilitating nature of paradox, particularly as it applies to the Surrealist moment of "pure" vision, where paradox acts as a catalyst for psychological change, and through which imagistic juxtapositions create discursive gaps, or *aporias,* which open to the infinite and its possibilities.

It is this simultaneity of the image being "in both places at once" (whether in light or in shadow) that lends an air not only of simultaneity of time in Takiguchi's work (a sustained series of "instants" across a vast expanse), but also (through the neutralization of opposites) a reciprocity between various dynamic forces in the universe. This reciprocity might be described in Surrealist terms as an "interpenetration of landscapes," a development Anna Balakian, that great scholar of Surrealism, attributes to Surrealist practice in Central and South America in her "Latin-American Poetry and the Surrealist Heritage" (16) but which is also clearly present in other world Surrealisms.

In the third section of Takiguchi's most well-known early poem, "Étamines Narratives" (composed of six one-paragraph sections and written in 1927), for example, he begins:

> Breathes a boy who lays his head on a book of poetry that changes. Breathes a cup. The bird's skeleton tries to become gold. The ray does not fall. The rose and she return to the first moment in the nighttime that has come to a standstill. The fruit does not smile. The fruit is well-acquainted with poetry like a compass. The fruit becomes oblivious of the noises in the flower and bursts into laughing about the weakened green window. (Takiguchi, *Ten Japanese Poets,* 43)[8]

This passage typifies the transformative power of Takiguchi's imagery, including this sense of simultaneity and reciprocity. First, as is typical in this sequence of prose poem paragraphs, the individual sections begin "in the middle," often in a fragmentary manner, as with, "Breathes a boy who lays his head on a book of poetry that changes." Here we are confronted immediately with the concept of transformation through the image of "change," as well as with the agent of change being poetry ("poetry changes"). Along with this, the fragmentary structure of the poem itself enacts, rather than merely points to, transformation. For example, the reader must ask if the boy is breathing or being breathed. If the boy is being breathed, then the reader must ask who or what is breathing the boy. However, if the boy is breathing, then we must ask what is important about the boy's breathing. On the other hand, if we cannot with any certainty discern who is actually breathing, we must also confront the question: what is important in itself about this *ambiguity* of breathing? Sas's insight into the fragmentary structure of this poem can help clarify this:

> Takiguchi's images tempt the reader with the ends of threads of narrative and metaphors to follow, but these threads do not necessarily lead toward any determinate or determinable place, or even any exit: the threads proliferate. Without abdicating the task of reading, however, one takes up the challenge posed by the poem, to read and to follow the threads of the grammar and their initiated narratives, knowing all the while that they threaten to (or certainly will) break off at any moment. (112)

Understandably, then, the reader might attempt to answer the above questions regarding "breathing," for instance, by reading Takiguchi's text recursively, trying to connect "threads of the grammar" (in this case, the beginning of this sentence to the final phrase of the preceding section). However, the fragment that closes section two, "Cannot finally drown in

an infinitely amputatable petal" (42) offers no resolution in relation to the first fragment of the following section. Only ambiguity and a generative resistance between sentences and sections of the poem reorient the logically syntactic mind through a radical realignment, a movement forward and backward that facilitates discursive disruption and opens the poem to unconscious "presence."

What Takiguchi does, then, is set about in these "narratives" to compose a *counter-narrative* that – for one thing – disrupts syntactic expectation, a "new" kind of story-telling that relies less on "story" and more on image. Moving forward through the use of anaphora[9] ("*Breathes a* boy," "*Breathes a* cup"; "*does not* fall," "*does not* smile"; and, finally, "*The fruit does not smile,*" "*The fruit* is well-acquainted," and "*The fruit* becomes oblivious" [emphasis added]), Takiguchi embraces the incantatory formula of repetition, a key technique of the French Surrealists – and an ancient form of what Ernst Cassirer might refer to as "word magic" – which relies less on narrative sequence and more on the primordial act of conjuring or evocation (44-62). Part of what gets evoked through such repetition is the simultaneity of experience, a condition much more difficult to produce solely in narrative sequence and one certainly Surrealist.

Image and Genre "Against Itself": A Blinding Imbalance

Takiguchi's technique of setting the anaphoric quality of language within the constraint of a prose form that, by its nature, suggests exposition or, at the very least, chronological sequence, is his way of using genre *against itself.* However, the resulting onslaught of images that Takiguchi uses in addition to anaphora also batters the senses in ways that psychologically arrest any attempt to move forward in time. Again, Sas is helpful in describing the process in this sequence:

> Thus, the poetic process for Takiguchi is by definition incomplete: the unfinished ending is itself deliberate, an act, symptomatic for Takiguchi of the way the dream narratives in his works and the language of poetic transcription will necessarily cut off before their moment of closure, before logic or reflection intervenes with a solution (or method) to dissolve the uncertainty they create. (118)

At the same time, this "poetic process" of the "incomplete" is a method of using poetry as, what Takiguchi refers to in the sixth section of "Étamines Narratives," a "blinding imbalance," meaning that what is "blinding" is the ability to perceive apparent contradiction as both a hindrance *and* a luminosity. Poetry, that is, is a counter-spell that creates *a generative imbalance*

that challenges a more fixed sense of complete and incomplete, order and chaos. It suggests a paradoxical "new" order at the edge of "balance" and "imbalance," where either position loses its solidity and distinctiveness within a new, less-dichotomous relationship.

In other words, Takiguchi is using language *against itself as a redemptive act* of loving annihilation. What it annihilates is the dualistic tendency toward dichotomizing self and other, toward separating the realms of the seer and the seen. What it annihilates is the separation between balance and imbalance, between certainty and uncertainty, as well as the desire, even, to either preserve *or* dissolve balance itself. What it annihilates is time, that great divider of experience, his Surrealist sequences "destroying," that is, the poem, or at the very least making it translucent enough to expose a moment of potential that logical discourse (with its often resultant dichotomizing capacities) tends to obscure. Like the "light cotton or worsted fabric with an open mesh" that the title "Étamine" suggests, Takiguchi's form is at once as "incomplete" as open mesh and yet as "full" as that very material; by virtue of being porous, his form allows other elements, other ingredients – *other worlds* – to enter through the tiny openings the fabric of his discourse creates, in order, in effect, to *complete* itself.

Just as he did with form, Takiguchi uses surreal image sequences to overload the intellect and challenge rational understanding. The effect of this technique causes the reader to move "backward" into what may temporarily be perceived as the chaos of unresolved meaning, and paradoxically, "forward" into a richer understanding of the dynamic interplay of previously conceived "opposites," such as meaning and lack of meaning, forward and backward, and balance and imbalance. In other words, Takiguchi brings the reader to a point of balance *within* imbalance to an understanding of a kind of neutralization of either pole of possible demise that linear duality often contains. This imagistic bombardment of the senses, coupled with the anaphoric quality throughout the "Étamines Narratives," helps forge a new kind of narrative – one that speaks of the simultaneity of time and of the dynamic, reciprocal nature of Takiguchi's visionary universe, in other words one that creates "a blinding imbalance."

In the sixth and final section of "Étamines Narratives," Takiguchi continues:

> The vertical drunkenness of the mirror surface assaults the cold flower of early morning. The love of milk passes through the laconic glass windows of towns and disperses. The farmer who takes his hat off voluntarily before a blinding imbalance does not take his highest order except from

> the ground dragon from whom chlorophyll spills. Shouts gently like two stars. Becomes bashful at the evidence of resplendent life and dies like a wedding dress that does not know seasons. Two windpipes that face poetry and do not defend are there. (Takiguchi, *Ten Japanese Poets,* 43)

Unlike section three, section six does not rely as much on anaphora to explode and simultaneously to bind together the narrative structure. Rather, Takiguchi makes use of the Surrealist tactic of imagistic leaping. As Robert Bly describes in his opening essay in *Leaping Poetry,* "Looking for Dragon Smoke," "In many ancient works of art we notice a long floating leap at the center of the work. That leap can be described as a leap from the conscious to the unconscious and back again, a leap from the known part of the mind to the unknown part and back to the known" (1). The wider the arc of association, without breaking the thread of connection, Bly argues in the following essay, "Spanish Leaping," the deeper the content and more exciting the leap – that is, the higher its psychic voltage and the truer the image (14). Leaping, therefore, is not simply a matter of arbitrarily juxtaposing images from various distinct contexts but a fine imagistic dance that moves along a "thread" of association to and from a psychological center, grounded in a field of organically connected, electrified images. Nishiwaki also speaks of "association" in remarkably similar terms as Bly, yet predating him by several decades. "The Surrealism of Breton destroyed the cause and effect relationship between image and association," he tells us. "It did not merely evoke an obscure awareness, but attempted *to raise the electric potential* between the images included in the world of awareness and to produce a beautiful radiation of sparks" (qtd. in Keene 325, emphasis added).

In section six, then, we follow the electric arc of Takiguchi's journey, his "vertical drunkenness," as his attention shifts from the "mirror surface" to "milk" (a fluid surface that also may indeed act as a mirror) to a further reflective image of the "glass windows of towns" before, ultimately, "[t]he love of milk" (and with it the speaker's possible fascination with mere reflections) "disperses." Here, we see Takiguchi's beloved mirrors at work, a common image for him, perhaps most fully explored in his prose poem, "Mirror of Mirror" (103). "The farmer" in the next sentence, an image seemingly from outside the context of the poem, emerges in relation to the "milk," perhaps the milk of a goat or a cow. And the farmer finds a "highest order" of the universe only in the "*ground* dragon" (emphasis added). Here, the image of the "ground" suggests (on a directional level) the opposite of high, an image of descent that is further reinforced in the word, "spills," a movement that is always either parallel to or often, in fact, below that from which it spills. At the same time, Takiguchi juxtaposes distant realities, yoking

together "ground" and "dragon," a figure equally at home on earth and in flight. Thus, he presents an image that attempts to hold the seeming polarities of high and low.

In doing so, he almost achieves a balance of "opposites." However, as the poem progresses, there is a "blinding imbalance" to which Takiguchi refers, and he leans heavily upon the number two as perhaps one way to expose, challenge, and reconstitute the solidity of dichotomy in more reciprocal terms. He uses images like "Shouts gently like *two* stars" and "*Two* windpipes that face poetry and do not defend" (emphasis added), again foregrounding the potential collision of dualistic forces in the conscious mind's tendency to perceive experience in "two's" and, thus, to dichotomize existence. In this case, perhaps, the dichotomies may be the oppositional discourses of "expected" narrative and the associative leaping of seemingly disparate images. For Takiguchi, the latter prevails, again in part due to the collision of discourses and the obliteration of expectation that it yields as it works toward psychic emancipation through Surrealist surprise. "Opposites," or apparent contradictions, have been neutralized until time stands still, almost in the manner of a Zen koan, designed to short-circuit the rational hold on discourse so that a moment of "empty infinity" may emerge.

This is not to suggest, however, that Takiguchi is in any way a Zen poet (This is particularly important to emphasize, given the tendency of Western readers to sometimes exoticize Japanese poets by conflating "vision" or "insight" and "Zen.") His focus on Marxism and the materiality of language would, in themselves, make this a problematic claim. I am using the term koan in both an analogous and generic sense. The neutralization of opposites that ensues in Takiguchi's poem is, if anything, a *Surrealist* koan, a discursive disruption that – like meditative koans – may promote a deepening of awareness by confronting silence and cultivating the liminal, though generative, space reached at the limits of logical thought and speech. In other words, a "new" narrative is formed within Takiguchi's discursive gaps, one that outwardly resembles prose but which instinctively functions like poetry.

"On Bamboo or *Take*": Some Closing Thoughts on Form

To a large extent, Takiguchi's writing across genre constitutes one of his greatest contributions to the development of Surrealism in Japan.[10] Whether he "bends" genre (as in his prose poems) in order to create discursive gaps that evoke insight that more ordinary images and forms cannot, or traces aesthetics of art and culture (as he does in a profound way in his criticism), Takiguchi provides Japanese literature with a model for writing

within and against received rhetorical forms and, thus, within and against received forms of *knowing.*

His criticism – part essay, prose poem, epigram, art criticism, and aesthetics – becomes a site of praxis, where poetic theory and the practice of poetry unite. Takiguchi's literary oeuvre represents a "life-work" that persistently tests the borders of genre and – at least implicitly – recasts the forms of poetry and poetics in increasingly dynamic, even dialogic, ways.

We see this, for example, in *Marginalia I,* a book of essays, epigrams, poems, criticism, and remembrances – pieces selected from Takiguchi's *Marginalia* (1966) and *Marginalia 2* (1982), along with some unpublished works.[11] To name just some of the modalities on which he relies, Takiguchi: pays homage with a "piece" constituted solely of an epigram to Henri Michaux; champions poets and artists with brief paragraphs of praise, as he does for Hamada Chimei and Coetzee; writes acrostic poems for various artists such as Jean Fautrier, Yoshimura Fumio, Maeda Jōsaku, Tajiri Shinkichi, and Fukushima Hideko; composes poems in French, as with "Hommage à André Breton" and "Encompagni des étoiles de Miró"; and (in essay form) discusses art, culture, and aesthetics, as in "East Meets West in the teacup" [*sic*] and "On bamboo or *Take*" [*sic*]. Thus, he bends and blends genre, demonstrating, meta-discursively, a "literary" form (the book as a whole) that seeks to place various forms of writing in conversation with one another.

In an essay such as "On bamboo or *Take,*" Takiguchi discusses form in a more explicit, thematic way, describing the aesthetics of bamboo, with an eye toward merging its competing "doctrines" of usefulness, that is, its elements of the sacred and the profane.[12] He tells us:

> After all, bamboo has represented the most spiritual and the most ordinary, the two extremes being met there. The tea-room or tea-house was a symbolical expression of the most simple and the most luxurious combined in one.
>
> The masters of Tea believed they could contemplate about the most prodigious thing in that smallest space ever lived. The tea-house was theoretically conceived after the primitive bamboo hut as an archetype, is still now built with bamboo though chiefly as accessory materials. (109-10)

This paradox of contemplating "the most prodigious thing in that smallest space ever lived" brings to mind Gaston Bachelard's call for an "intimate immensity" (183-210). In *The Poetics of Space,* Bachelard describes the "immense" vision evoked through concentrated attentiveness to an image.

Through deep attention or intimacy, Bachelard argues, one achieves the "immensity" of the image or object looked upon. He says, for instance, that "the narrower the ray of light, the more penetrating its vigilance" (34) and "the simpler the image, the vaster the dream" (137). It is important to understand that Bachelard's depiction of intimacy and immensity is not contradictory, but rather reciprocal. He explains this vastness as a domain that can comfortably hold paradox. "The word *vast,*" he says, "reconciles contraries" (192).

Takiguchi describes the "archetype" of "the primitive bamboo hut" or "that smallest space ever lived," as being dynamically connected to the immensity of contemplating "the most prodigious thing." Thus, Takiguchi's regard for bamboo might serve as a blueprint for a core tenet throughout his poetic process – especially his Surrealist prose poems. He creates images that evoke, even require, intimate attention; lending this attention mysteriously yields a psychic immensity that is deep, complex, and paradoxical. In this way, Takiguchi's images act as a play of mirrors – mirrors of human interaction, mirrors of culture, history, and art, mirrors of the soul. He describes this immense interplay in his poem "Mirror of Mirror." "The peacock of zero," he says, "will sip water from the yellow mirror, and the millionaire's cataract will wrap the white clipper on the owl's head" (103).[13]

In many of his poems, Takiguchi nears the great "zero," and his images approach this infinity, sniff it, paw at it while moving backwards to get a safer look, avoid it momentarily and then delve back into it with increased vigor, even lift a leg, at times, onto it irreverently, and consistently leap to other "points of origin" luxuriously waiting to be apprehended through other Surrealist images of the "marvelous." One significant paradox of his poetic form is that it does not sit still, even while it talks, at times, of stillness. *Being,* for Takiguchi is not a static condition but a state of *becoming.* He describes this predilection toward paradox and reciprocity that appears in his verse in his admiration of Montonaga Kiitsu Suzuki's paintings. He says, "There must be a secret interplay even between such fatally fixed dualities as Matter and Life or Mind and Body. I might even say that I believe this interplay to be an unceasing process.…I swear that I love most the fascination that his paintings have when the moving is unmoved and the unmoved is moving simultaneously" (*Marginalia I* 59).

Notes

1. Japanese names throughout this article are presented in the traditional manner, surname first.

2. As but one example, even mention of Takiguchi is conspicuously absent in Donald Keene's sweeping *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature in the Modern Era,* while he details Nishiwaki Junzaburō's significant contribution to Surrealism, as well as analyzes other (admittedly important) modern poets who have a less-sustained connection to the movement.

3. See John Solt, *Shredding the Tapestry of Meaning: The Poetry and Poetics of Kitasono Katue (1902-1978).*

4. Reports on the length of Takiguchi's incarceration vary between six, eight, and nine months, with the latter being most often cited.

5. "According to one account," Solt explains, "both men were apprehended on the same day (March 5, 1941) and released on the same day (November 11, 1941)" (*Shredding the Tapestry* 164).

6. The poems – "Salvador Dalí," "Max Ernst," "René Magritte," "Joan Miró," "Pablo Picasso," "Man Ray," and Yves Tanguy" – appear in English translation in *Ten Japanese Poets* (49-55).

7. See the American literary journal *Ironwood,* Issue 2, 1972 (45).

8. Here, I am relying upon Hiroaki Sato's earlier translation of this poem because I prefer certain nuances of diction. However, for a comparable and equally compelling version, see Sato's later translation in *From the Country of Eight Islands: An Anthology of Japanese Poetry* (532-33).

9. While Takiguchi's lines are anaphoric in English translation, only some are so in Japanese, with the repetition often occurring at the ends, rather than beginnings, of some phrases. I will use "anaphoric" more generically throughout to depict the incantatory dimension of his poetry rendered into English, which is also captured when, in Japanese, the repetition on occasion occurs at the ends rather than the beginnings of phrases.

10. In this way, he is perhaps most like French poet Henri Michaux, to whom Takiguchi dedicates a "piece" in his blurred-genre prose work, *Marginalia I,* "à Henri Michaux" (4).

11. Special thanks to Eric Baus who helped me locate a copy of *Marginalia I* several years ago, along with some other difficult-to-find Takiguchi materials.

12. Here, I am borrowing terms from one of Mircea Eliade's great works, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion.*

13. Interestingly, Sato's earlier translation of this poem, then entitled, "Miroir de

Miroir: Mirror of a Mirror" (rather than simply "Mirror of Mirror") and included in *From the Country of Eight Islands,* reads as a fascinating "mirror" itself when compared to this later version which Sato published in *Arsenal: Surrealist Subversion.* First, in the earlier version, the inclusion of the original French with the English translation (presumably from Japanese) allows both languages themselves (and by implication French and Japanese Surrealism) to reflect one another and act as "mirrors" on either side of the colon. Second, this line has been revised, chiefly toward the use of definite rather than indefinite articles; it earlier reads, "*A* peacock of zero will sip water from *a* yellow mirror, and *a* millionaire's cataract will wrap the white clipper on *an* owl's head" (536, emphasis added). Thus, even through the process of translation, Takiguchi's continual attention to the realms of the "definite" and "indefinite" manifests in yet another way as the two realities mirror and converse with one another.

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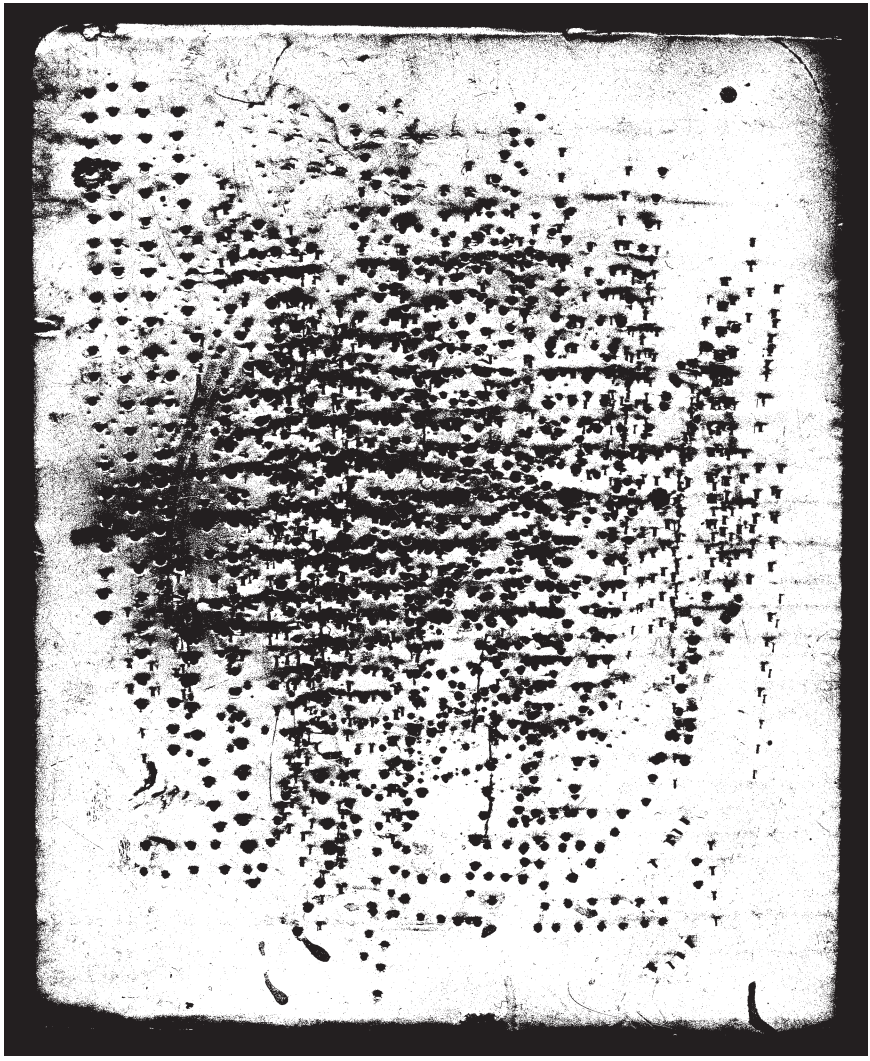
Michael Sumner



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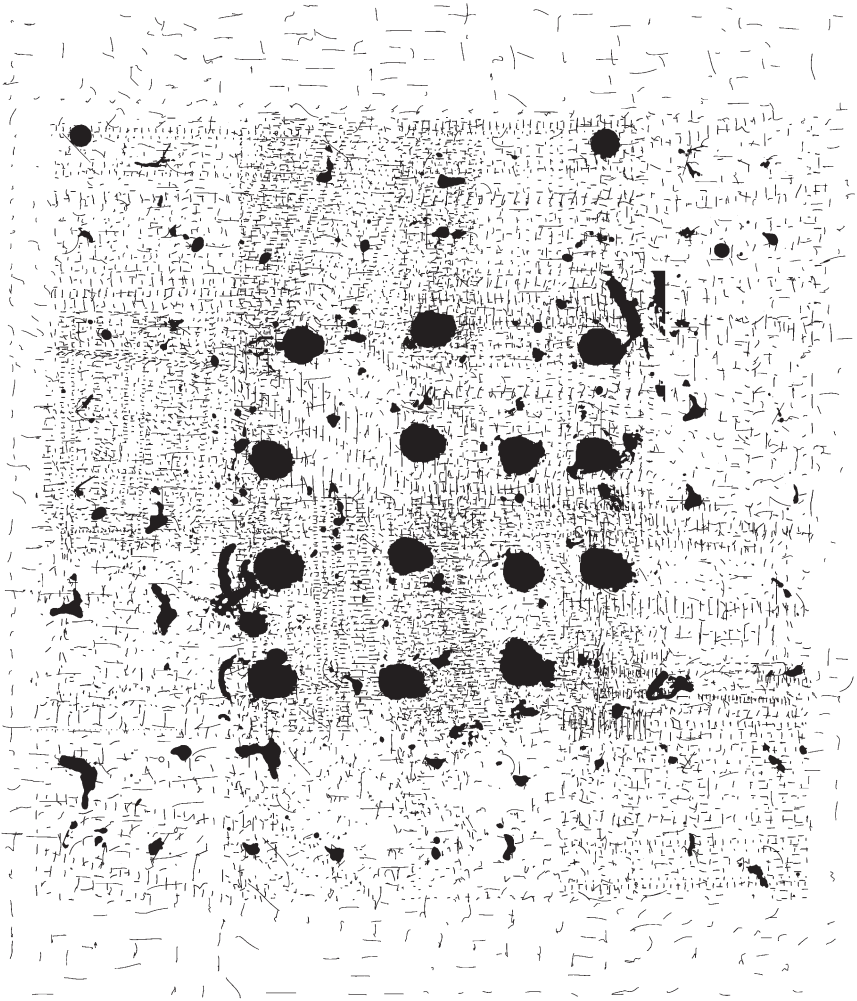

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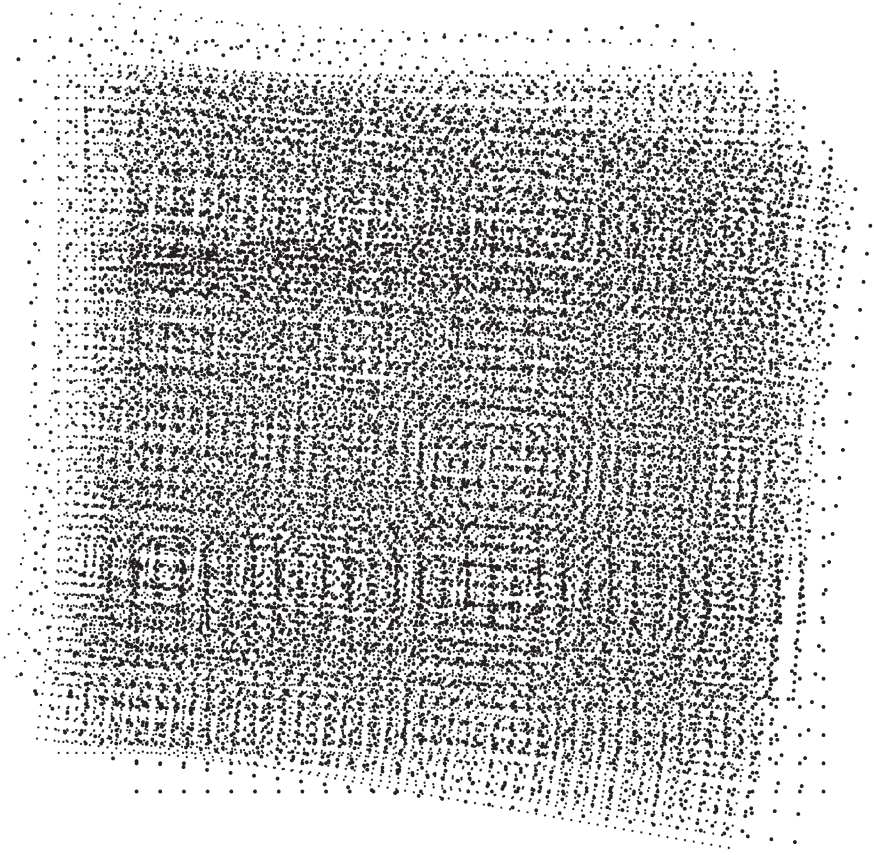
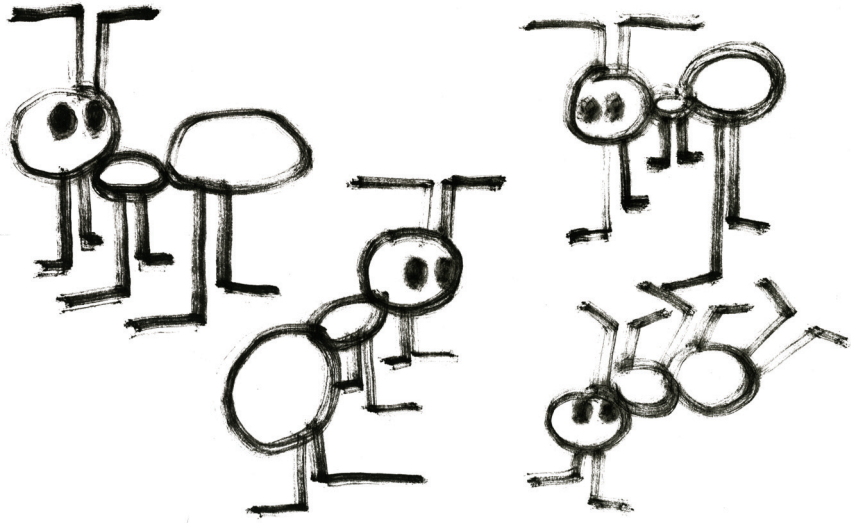


Point System

Kenjiro Okazaki

Ants



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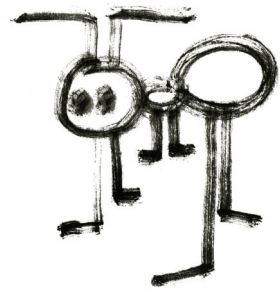
Prose from Three Continents



Kerri Sonnenberg
After a Lecture by Matthew Goulish

When walking I lose authorship.
— Lygia Clark

R and I linger in the building to be a surface for one another's ideas that must out, ricochet after the reading. His composition of peripheries. A process, a method of memory and history. "A force captured by juxtaposition."[1]

I remember this building at 280 S. Columbus that I first came to in 1991, summer, a junior seeking refuge from high school, taking a class called Mixed Media. All manner of materials were made available in a cavernous room with stained floors and scuffed walls, appearances unimportant in a place devoted to making things. This was a refuge from suburbs of slipcovers and lemon-scented Pledge. It's curious what becomes memorable. A cavernous room with stained floors where anything was possible. We were told to make whatever we wanted. Everything was possible. There was no stipulation for form or content.

I spent the summer hammering nails into a board because that was my only reference point for making things. The last time I had hammered nails into a board was 1979 or 80, in a basement, in a suburb called Justice, with my dad, making bookshelves. Not meant to endure, those shelves or this memory, flimsy and yet I took them for myself when I moved away from the suburbs in 1996. And the seven different apartments I would have in the city.

And two in Providence. Providence, winter 2001, sleeping next to them full of books. The overpowering presence of them, the reason I was there and J was elsewhere. The audacity of hope that brought me there. The phone call that would be received in 2000, spring. It was just a message, J wrote down some numbers for me to return, but. We knew that this was would be an offer that I couldn't let go. It would make us leave Chicago.

The message of some numbers I don't remember. When I wasn't home. When I was working. At the Art Institute, mounting and masking slides for one of its libraries. The overpowering presence of books, being a whole wall of a little room, where I felt small against the miles between a place I called

home and there. It became too much. I had to mask them too. My extra set of sheets, black, fit them perfectly, held at the top by some sort of end I don't remember and draping resolutely to the floor. Those bookshelves the size and shape of a bed.

R and I walk out into the night, briefly warm before the next cold front due soon, rain turning to snow and back to rain again in the minutes we linger before parting ways at the corner. I open my umbrella over both of us. She remarks on its preposterous size. I know, I say. It was bought for two. On a day that J and I walked the streets of Evanston in a heavy rain looking for an apartment for him the year we would spend apart. It would be 2001-2002. A courtyard building, an English Garden unit, almost as much as we had paid for an entire coach house for ourselves and full of instruments a year before. English Garden here denotes a sunless basement rampant with centipedes and anchored on either side by retirement communities. Big enough for one person and a few instruments, but instruments that had to be quiet. Like the accordion with moth-eaten bellows. It would be three blocks from where he would go to school. 846 miles from where I went to school. "History is the history of possession, as survival seeks to possess life."[2] We had planned to see more of each other, but those plans were made before September 11.

I leave R off at Jackson and walk south on Columbus. I don't pass a single other person the entire way home. The floodlights on the ridiculous volleyball fields are staging some sort of precipitation. Rain, snow. Across the street down a slight hill are the softball fields featured prominently in the brat pack vehicle "About Last Night." This was one of the first R-rated films I ever saw. I would see it on cable late at night, curiously, because I was at an age without an inkling about sex. Movies like this fascinated me because something was happening just below the surface of what I directly understood. This generic word was an unseen force that made people nice to each other and then angry. It made things indecent. "Some people would probably want to put pants on a horse."[3] It submerged a language I thought I understood. Insinuation, innuendo, curse words – all made possible. A language I thought I understood. It made people move out of perfectly nice apartments. Learning the mechanics of it all, the health books, the urban legends, caused a disappearance. How long – several years – before I'd realize I would miss this.

This is the feeling, that something is just below a surface, more perceptible really with the imagination than with actual data, that I still relish in as many other places as I can find it. It makes me a little cautious about knowledge. A double edge one is up against in either thought or

flesh coming to a state of pregnancy. A leavened celebration. What I mean is that which is conceived is also given mortality. With experience comes memory. With memory comes the possibility of forgetting.

Notes

1. Matthew Goulish, from the lecture "Larry Steger: Remix," The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 16 February 2006.

2. Ibid.

3. Superior Judge Joseph B. David on the indecency case of Sally Rand's performance of the fan dance at the 1933 Century of Progress World's Fair in Chicago, from the lecture "Larry Steger: Remix" by Matthew Goulish, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 16 February 2006.

Sumiko Yagawa

Wings

I've begun to grow wings, said the husband. Just how aware was he of his impending death. After becoming bed-ridden, he reported pain in his back, and lately it was the wife's job to help prevent his bedsores by shifting his position, massaging him. Alas the husband never regained conciousness. The wife, attempting to kiss him one last time, placed her hand on the nape of his neck and detected a pair of protuberances. "How about an autopsy?" The wife swallowed these words which nearly came out of her mouth.

Today, a Day of White

Some day in February. All day today, I'm going to try to capture everything around me that is white, just as I see it.

I wake up and am already inside whiteness. I live in a house with white walls, which is enveloped by a still larger whiteness. Outside, there is a blanket of snow right now. I open the white casement, and watch for a while as something still whiter snows down upon the white earth.

My sheets, unfortunately, are pale blue. I'd like to say that I take off my white pajamas, but they are not quite pure white. The other day I accidentally washed them with a patterned handkerchief made in India. It had very pale pink stripes, and I didn't think the colors would bleed anymore. It doesn't quite sit right with me that something that's supposed to be white isn't completely white. It's wasteful, but I might throw them out.

The sink. The toilet bowl. You could say they keep a certain whiteness. That reminds me of some housewife I heard about, who died from chlorine gas poisoning – all too easily – in her scrupulous attempts to maintain this whiteness.

I open the white refrigerator door, take out the milk, and, because I am out of bread, a frozen ball of rice. The idea is to pour white milk atop the white rice, making a milk porridge. A small, flat, white pot of heat-resistant glass. Instead of a regular spoon, a white chinese spoon. The ivory chopsticks were not quite white in the first place, but nowadays it has picked up a brownish tint.

Eleven o'clock. A fourth-grader who lives nearby comes over. He is delivering eggs from the white Leghorn chickens they keep at home. And since there was no school today, he asked if there might be some shoveling work for him to do, since he's here anyway. That's perfect. I had just been thinking that I'd like to clear a path to the garbage incinerator three meters from the back door.

While watching from the window as the boy shovels snow, I wash the eggs and put them in the refrigerator. Of the ten, three are what you can call pure white. The rest are various shades of home-grown chicken-egg color. I wonder what accounts for the variation in eggshell color.

The great efforts of the snow-shoveling boy are over in about ten minutes. I toss in my crumpled manuscripts, tissues, packaging from books that were mailed to me, and a general pile of whitish wastepaper – and light the fire. Issuing from the chimney, also, is a whitish smoke. For both the boy and myself, this is our ninth winter since moving to this mountain village. What amounts to one-sixth of my life accounts for nine-tenths of the boy's. During this time, the babbling baby has caught up to me in height, and has begun to offer me his snow-shoveling services.

The white margins of his heart must be filling in as such, little by little, every winter. I wonder which is whiter, the whiteness of the snow, or that of his pure soul. "At home they give you 120 yen? Just for today – I'll give you 150 yen." The boy nodded with a smile, showing his white teeth.

translated from Japanese by Sawako Nakayasu

Kyong-Mi Park
from A Window to the Pojagi

The colors of chima chogori

I can't think of Korean colors without thinking of *sek-tong*.

The blue, red, yellow, white, green, and azalea stripes are easily recognized as traditional colors. Of these colors, the bright green and azalea in particular make the *sek-tong* colors unique.

Azalea is similar to what we call pink, yet it is not pink; it is the color of azalea flowers. I've been thinking lately that the Korean sensibility is expressed well in the way that this color is named.

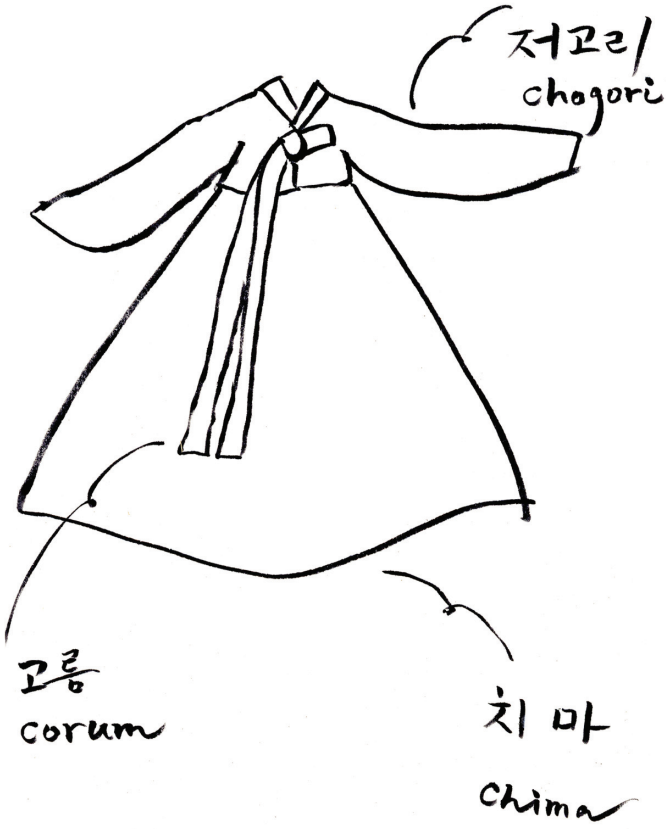
Like azaleas that bloom in fields in the spring, it's a color that breathes in the space. For example, women wear a traditional dress called *chima chogori,* where the lines of the shoulder and arm show through beneath the light silk, accentuating their lively beauty.

The *chima* is like a wrap skirt that gently drapes down from the chest to the feet. The *chogori* is a short, long-sleeved jacket. At the bottom of the V-necked collar you make a loop with the *corum,* a wide ribbon, which hangs down low. The *chima* takes in air as a person moves or gestures, drawing curves, and the *corum* sways gently along. It is just like an angel's raiment. Because there is space between the body and the fabric, it is also quite comfortable to wear, too.

The *chima* always appears to be full of air, breathing. It makes me want to agree with those who claim that the white porcelains of the Yi Dynasty possess a figurative beauty that was imagined out of the voluminous figure of the *chima chogori*. And because the fabric of the *sok-chima* and *sok-paji* – the skirt or trousers that are worn underneath – are white, the fabric on the surface lets in the light and the colors stand out, come to life.

So the beauty of the azalea-colored *chima chogori* is the clear color of the flowers in the field as they are hit by the light, and is the beauty of the air itself containing this color.

I was talking about this discovery about color to a Korean friend, and her eyes lit up. In Korean there are two words to describe color, *sekkal* and *pikkal*. *Sekkal* refers to color in general, while *Pikkal* refers to light as color, or color with light passing through it. We looked at each other: *That's right!*



A white chima chogori

I can't think of the *chima chogori* without thinking of *halmoni*, my grandmother, in Jeju-do.

Born in a town of shell divers, *halmoni* spent her days under the water, well into her 70s. When she came all the way to Tokyo, Japan, from Jeju-do, to see her son and his family, she was already over 80, but as my father led her by the hand, her footing was sure.

Halmoni wore a white, cotton *chima chogori*. Beneath the quiet smile of *halmoni*, her white *chima chogori* was itself like a bright light.

I wonder when it was, when I first learned that Korean people like to wear the color white.

I've been to the Korean countryside a number of times, but when I recall the countryside lined with broom-shaped poplar trees standing tall, I always see, like an incidental detail in the picture, flickers of a figure of a person dressed in white.

The Korean sensibility which favors bright colors is well-expressed through the *sek-tong* colors (blue, red, yellow, white, green, and azalea). But at the same time, the color white, or the unbleached color, is highly valued. This sensitivity – transcending boundaries of time and class – has been passed down through the generations with pride. The more I learn about this, the more I sense in this "Korean white" sensibility something closer to a strength of will, rather than an element of grace.

Of course, ever since Sōetsu Yanagi presented his theory about 'The beauty in the pathos of ethnic Koreans,' it has generated considerable debate about this fancy for the color white, and white dress, among Koreans.

There is the theory about a people who used to worship the sun, seeking "the pure color of the sun."

There is the theory of "the unhealthy color" of a culture that suppressed emotions, valuing the order of a Confucian society.

Each has an interesting point of view, and all of it keeps me thinking about *halmoni*'s white *chima chogori*.

White kimono

In Japan, we immediately think of white as the color of the bridal dress. In Korea the bride does not wear white. On top of her red *chima* and green *chogori*, she wears a red robe with elaborate embroidery. The sleeves are very long (longer than the arms), and they use the *sek-tong* color scheme. To those of us used to the white kimono or the white wedding dress, these colors are intense, and it almost makes you 'wow' out loud.

It feels like it is tugging at the roots of my own values, and now that I think about it, this was also the time when I was first drawn to Korean colors.

In a non-Christian society, though, red for the bridal dress is fundamental. Even in Japan, there is the vermilion red *uchikake* (a gown worn over the kimono) with glamorous gold and silver embroidery, as well as the black kimono with brightly-colored designs on the bottom.

In Japan, now more than ever, white is representative for a wedding – for example, the white kimono is a symbol of a virtuous woman who 'can be dyed to any color.' It stands alone from the other Chinese-based cultures that use red for the bridal gown. This must be due to the recent influence of western cultures.

At the same time, I learned of this opinion: when a daughter goes off to get married, it is as if the daughter has 'died,' and this is part of the meaning behind the white dress. It's true that a white shroud is also worn when facing calamity, or when departing for death.

In the back of the mind of Sōetsu Yanagi, who sensed the 'beauty in the pathos of Korean usages of white,' he may have been recalling the white shroud in Japanese culture. He may have felt a painful sadness in the white dress of these people, tossed about in the severe history of a war-torn era. And I can't help but think that the sentiments of Yanagi, he himself Japanese, must bleed over into that gaze of his.

White, a color of pride

It seems that white is not just a single color.

If you think about the white porcelains of the Yi Dynasty, there are many names for it – milk-white, egg-white, pure-white, ash-white. I've heard about a time when a western researcher of the white porcelains from the Yi Dynasty went to visit a rustic Korean farming village, and he was amazed to find that even your regular old farmer could discern the subtle differences between twenty different shades of white porcelain. More than anything, it must be that white is a color that is nurtured and cultivated in the daily lives of those on the Korean peninsula.

I keep getting drawn to the fact that through the long history of the Korean peninsula, white was a color of daily life, and the white *chima chogori* and *paji chogori* were preferred and worn by men and women in their daily lives.

White is certainly easily affected by its environment; it dirties easily. It's no easy task to maintain that whiteness in the midst of our busy daily lives. But then perhaps all the more so, the color white sharpens our senses, makes us more sensitive to subtle changes in color.

To have preserved this fine, noble color in their lives – in spite of the difficulty of their war-torn circumstances – must have given the people a sense of pride in their life, a grace of spirit.

Actually, the mourning dress in China and Korea is also white. (To be precise, this color is called *soshoku* (*so-sek* in Korean), and refers to the undyed, natural color of the fabric). This of course demonstrates both a lament and respect for the deceased, but I can't help feeling that it is a different use of the color from the Japanese *shiro-shōzoku*, the white shroud. For starters, in Japan, the person departing for death wears the white shroud, while those seeing them off wear black…

I imagine there are many more things to think through, regarding the color white. It is clear that this is the color that holds the key to the hearts of the people on the Korean peninsula.

translated from Japanese by Sawako Nakayasu

Ryoko Sekiguchi
The Education of Touch

I still remember the slight discomfort caused by the rubbing of my black gabardine vest sleeve, a vest ineluctably familiar to girls from my high school in Japan. I also recall, at this very instant, the feeling of the cuff that would stick to my skin at the slightest sign of sweat, a feeling that would persist from May through late October.

I wore a uniform during middle and high school. Others had to wear one as early as elementary school, which means twelve years of life in a uniform. We would literally wear it from dawn to dusk, since after school some of us would take part in clubs, while others would go straight to preparatory classes, and still others would attend both until ten at night. In order to keep an eye on students, some middle schools would even force them to wear the uniform on Sundays, when they would go out in the commercial district without their parents. For girls, there were two main standard styles: the navy suit and the vest with pleated skirt ensemble, most often of a dark indigo, in serge or gabardine, that went down well below the knees. Each school had its own model, a sign of immediate differentiation. Apart from gym class, no pant version of the girls' uniform was to be found, even though high school girls often had to ride a bicycle to school.

As it was, wearing the same outfit every day only accentuated the weight of routine, which we did not know yet if we would one day escape. Furthermore, wearing the same vest every day does not seem very hygienic. Since these outfits had to be ordered specifically from certified tailors who would deliver them at unreasonable prices, let us note that we did not own a dozen others and that we wouldn't leave the outfit at the dry-cleaner's every night. In summer especially, the feeling of having to wear the same skirt as the previous day would evoke slight disgust, at the very least psychologically.

In addition, the uniform was meant to absorb any expression of sensuality whatsoever, not only by covering and wearing away corporeal appearance (well-hidden neck and arms, ample vest, hair cut at a certain length in specifically determined hair salons, with the express forbiddance of curling or dyeing hair), but also by the complete neglect of comfort and pleasure that clothing should theoretically offer. In everyday life, one chooses an item of clothing both according to material and to color or model. Yet for the

uniform, we clearly had no choice in the matter. The uniform kept us from discovering the diversity of sensations created from contact between the body and various materials, ranging from cotton, linen, wool, and silk to synthetic fibers, viscose, lycra, nylon, or polyester, or even different types of woven fabric, tweed, finette, or denim, lace, taffetas, fuller or stitch; in my opinion, ignoring this richness must have played a large role in desensitizing us.

When I think back on each timid attempt that I would make in the summer to attend class in another shirt of a light-colored linen, using the extreme heat as a pretext, I felt freed from a material to which we were overly accustomed: a mix of cotton and low-quality synthetic fabric. Similarly, during freezing-cold winters, when some of us would wear large mohair pastel sweaters, multicolored wool sweaters with coarse stitch, or beige cashmere sweaters with Mao collars instead of the accepted V-necked wool indigo sweaters, we were seeking refuge in another feeling to escape from the disgust caused by a sense of attachment to a world eternally the same.

Of course, girls took risks at transgressing the rules for various reasons. Some would wear vests different from the official one; some would wear a little makeup, colored or oversized socks. Others would alter their hemlines or sew their vests to curve at the waist and show off their figures. In my high school, a movement even rose to abolish the uniform under the initiative of students and certain teachers. However, when parents countered the movement they were even joined by some students who were excessively attached to the comfort of not having to think of what they should wear.

Evidently, all of this belongs to the well-known functions of the uniform. Yet to experience the feeling is another story. And we have all experienced it quite enough.

The day after our high school graduation, we no longer had to wear the uniform. Rather we would never wear it again, since it clearly meant belonging to a community from which we had just extracted ourselves. It was a strange feeling. Of course, I felt no particular attachment to the uniform, but it felt as if a practical tool we had unconsciously relied upon to establish our identity had been taken away from us.

When my high school friends and I saw each other again after some time, each of us was surprised to discover one another's idiosyncacies, which were much more pronounced than during high school. It was as if we were seeing each other for the first time after having shed our disguises. Of course,

during high school, we would see each other outside of school, but the occasions were so rare and limited to weekends that private clothing was restricted to the status of a bathrobe, whereas it was now elevated to first rank. The experience made me consider that not only I, but all the girls who were gaining consciousness of their bodies, had to work at adapting ourselves. Even if they had always tried to bypass it, the circumvention only made sense in relation to the uniform and was haunted by it when the time finally came to forge one's identity through choice of clothing. We needed a while before establishing the clothing style that would suit our character and our body's desire to express itself. This explains why during our first year in college, all the girls seemed rather ugly and still unable to adjust coordination details, especially for color or makeup, a clumsy way to enhance their personality and to calibrate how much sensuality they should suggest.

The feeling that I had well forgotten has often come back to me these days. It took me a while to realize that seeing veiled girls was what produced the effect. I recognize the same kind of negligence or indifference of some girls toward the veil's color and especially material that resembles our own attitude toward the uniform we used to wear. The material – cotton or acrylic – appears uncomfortable. It does not easily wrinkle and is consequently functional, yet unpleasant to touch. Like us, these girls do not seem to find pleasure in wearing it. While covering their hair as dictated by their beliefs, they could at least wear a material that is nice to touch, or is it also forbidden to wear a muslin veil (from "Mosul"!)?

One day, in Afghanistan, I entered a small store that sold *burqas.* I touched the fabric of the *burqa*, now on the market for the first time. I was surprised by its poor quality: 100% synthetic material, which can only increase the heat and provoke hair loss and facial skin irritation by stifling. The same functional demands for some types of veils and uniforms demanded by the back's crease cannot justify such stifling imposed on women. It depressed me to imagine this fabric as the only contact between the body and the outside, between the body and others. By contrast, pants for men are for the most part made from natural fabrics. The absurd yet sincere idea of having the veils made in a less stifling material then crossed my mind, because the condition of women who feel obligated to wear the *burqa* will not in itself change anytime soon.

Inasmuch as they are manufactured with total neglect for fabric, some veils and burqas truly function as uniforms that standardize the body, the sensation between the body and the outside, and sometimes the feeling of the

outside itself. And if the liberal young women of Tehran, for example, leave me less with the impression that they are forced to wear the veil, they do so because they are free to choose model, color, and especially material, all while respecting the minimal Islamic code. This allows them to vary ways to wear it, according to taste and to the fabric's characteristics, letting the tip gently outline the curve of the shoulders or draping themselves amply as with a shawl, without tying the knot so as to let it negligently slip and reveal hair "by accident," in a thousand different ways that reveal the singularity of each girl's bodily gestures. It also lets them learn what is pleasant or not to their bodies and gives them contact with the outside, a type of "education of touch."

In matters regarding the veil, women are often asked, "Why do you wear it?" I think that to understand the question in its entirety, one should instead ask, "How do you feel while wearing it?"

translated from French by Laura Mamelok

Che Chen
Talking Turkey in the New Age

If we check our deep, heartfelt attitude towards what we desire, we will discover a habitual grasping for permanence that remains basically untouched by whatever intellectual understanding of the process of change we may have.

— Lama Yeshe, from *Introduction to Tantra*

It will be lovely it will be true it will be infinitely repeatable and nothing can disturb me nothing can disappoint me nothing will interfere it will be lovely it will be true it will be infinitely repeatable and nothing can disturb me nothing can disappoint me nothing will interfere it will be lovely it will be true it will be infinitely repeatable and nothing can disturb me nothing can disappoint me nothing will interfere it will be lovely it will be true it will be infinitely repeatable and nothing can disturb me nothing can disappoint me nothing will interfere it will be lovely it will be true it will be infinitely repeatable […]

— Melody Sumner Carnahan, from *The Time is Now*

Words float in and about a space. They can be made of sound or, with some effort, light. Articulation of the oral cavity will produce changes in overtone structure. Harmonics can be made to sound louder than the fundamental. This is part of the method (no, I am not shitting you). The experience of great bliss/non-dual wisdom is analogous to the universal male/female principle (what's love, after all, got to do with it?).

Practitioners of the Method are instructed to visualize, upon each inhalation, the generative force of creation (procreative sexual embrace; you love her), exhaling, the adept must learn to reverse the flow, and imagine the equally awesome power of death and decay (the one you love – the flesh putrifies), each cycle of breath containing within it the bloom and hush of birth and annihilation, creation and destruction, emergence and dissolution (she holds you in her mouth now, where she breathes and where you both, in a moment, die). These visualizations are repeated, with every cycle of breath, for as long as possible. (Get comfortable. Both of you.)

well everyone (everyone)
cleans (cleans) up (cleans up)
real nice (real nice)

Other ways of exercising the Method include (Yes) and (No). Perhaps you do still love her. After all, two waves that do not harmonize often make the more interesting music. Eternity is a similar kind of fiction.

it is possible
even easy
it is manageable
even light
it is bearable
even enjoyable
it is desire
that distorts
our perception
of the object.

Yes, I am a long way from home.
I would like to stay here, with you.
No, I would like to go.

» » » » » » » » » »

Some memories, too oddly proportioned for the delicate furrows of gray matter, are often stored in the more arcane reaches of the body: in the fascia, the gnarled knuckles of toes, or the sinewy, silver nerves buried deep beneath the shoulder blades, the warm cradle of the groin, places that some part of us believes we will never find. Just as the body squirrels away toxins it does not know how to process, so the mind buries those experiences it finds too strange or disturbing, too full of joy or devoid of meaning to digest, buries them deep wherever it can, anywhere empty and dark, away from the light of consciousness.

arcs to avoid, but still
(but still) has back broken
on steps (progress, see also, entropy)

Of course, the Method has given rise to radical sects; those that do not eat meat, or sleep, taking cold medicine and arranging their identical shoes at the feet of their empty beds.

all thought is desire.
to think is to want.

Their aim, as far as we can understand it, is to eliminate from their lives all but the most carnal of desires. No breads or sweets, aspirations, or self-edification, just end on end of days of transubstantiable fucking.

I am looking at you through a window. You are moving to the counter now where in a moment you will pick up a nickel-sized piece of mica and hold it in your hand. Wandering in the desert, Acoma Indians would suck these smoothed stones to quench their thirst, but for now, you do not yet know that a stone can fool the mouth into thinking it is water.

the hardest thing / was leaving you / while I still / wanted you.

we are come to this, even.
cannot here, or make whole.
try not to keep that you
cannot be promises.

» » » » » » » » » »

A man is walking when suddenly, the memory of something terrible (something terrible) that has been lodged, energetically, in the fat (fat) of his armpit for several years (in the fat of his armpit), is suddenly and irrevocably, chemically (for several years) resurrected: said memory floods (when suddenly) not just the mind (memory), but said man's senses and body; cigarette and steak sandwich (senses and body), two elements not combined (chemically resurrected) in said man's body (sandwich) since that fateful day when (something terrible) happened.

Sees red, then green, then white, reaches for something to hold onto, does not see life flash before eyes, just

flashes.

is now hoping to break (diamond mind,
like an egg-tooth) the thresh-hold,
exposing the flayed

pink

world that our world so
tenuously (like a layer of gauze,
not quite clear) conceals.

But back to the method: there are several mutually exclusive systems. One can be likened to the Holy Trinity, with all the colors in the world springing forth from the same original three:

Roy (the Father)
Gee (the Son)
Biv (Holy Ghost)

The system we are looking for, however, and the one most pertinent to the Method, finds a better analogy in the Four Elemental Fluids of the Body:

phlegm (C)
blood (M)
yellow bile (Y)
black bile (K)

When these colors (and blac-K) are projected, our corresponding humors are proportionately excited, producing a variety of physiological and psychosomatic effects, for example, the simultaneous sensations of bodily motion and stasis.

You can see yourself as being made of light, but think that this is just a game you play with your mind. Upon leaving here, you will grow in ways that no one will be able to comprehend. Soon, you will be a giant, but you must realize that this will bear the cost of its own being.

A tiny valve at the back of the throat, when slightly contracted, produces a low hissing with the breath. In this way, the adept is encouraged in his or her practice by hearing the sound of the ocean.

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Eventually, your ability at the Method will plateau. This happens to all of us and it is okay. The idea of a vehicle is that it takes you from one place to another. If you heard the music that I hear now, coming through the veil, you would have no complaints at all. It becomes enough to hear what's on

the other side, without having to see or touch it.

Now you are looking at me. Your eyes are open but you don't need them to see me (I am more like a feeling to you; you are more like a feeling to me).

Sound, like light, spills out in all directions (you will sing / from an awesome spire). These can be words, or images. Visions of radiant text, scrolling across the field of vision, are common among initiates of a specific temperament. But it is important not to ritualize the reception of these transmissions. One should always assume that they will never come again (don't you know a war is on?).

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In answer to your question, I'm somewhere (somewhere) in space. I don't have a body in the usual sense, but sometimes I can feel that I'm in a space (body) within a space (sometimes). By that I mean (within a space) it's not all infinite, at least, not all the (time) time, though things don't quite have edges (at least, not all) like I remember them either. I wish (like I remember) we could have met (being) here. It would have been so much (being here, with you) simpler. We could have loved one another (so) and that (much) could've been all (all) there was to it. But there is so much we would've missed if we'd met on this side of things. For starters, we would have never felt that mad rush to become one. It's our bodies that create the impossibility of absolute (whatever that means) union. Physical form is the threshold beyond which we believe exists a perfect and complete kind of un-loneliness; without the boundary of flesh there can be no desire, and no urgency (fear of death: function eventually splitting form at the seams), and the awful ecstasy of trying to make unity out of duality can never exist, still:

A lot of beautiful things happened didn't they?
Yes, and I believe they are happening all the time.

PS: Somewhere, more highly evolved versions of our selves are sharing a meal that they eat with their hands. They will chew a sprig of raw herb at the end of it and go to a clean bright space where they will make love with their eyes open, missing nothing about one another. Afterwards, in a smooth wide basin, they will bath each other with equal attention in preparation for the descent into becoming (you) and (I) again, and we will wake in the morning, hundreds or perhaps thousands of miles apart, not realizing that (they) are who (we) are.

Melody Sumner Carnahan

Words on Music

May 6, 2006

It begins: I'm two or three years old riding in the backseat of a brand new two-tone '56 Chevy. We – I'm called Melody and my sister is Carol, so named by our mother, Gini – are in motion on the back roads through Texas, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Colorado, inundated by the songs coming in through the radio.

Gini and Court (he courted her all his life; never quite won her over) both love to sing, know all the songs, a handsome couple. "They should have been in movies," said envious in-laws. Danced together like a dream singing being airborne…*from this moment on, you and I babe, we'll be flying high babe.* Songs made and paved their ongoing going on together and brought me to life.

Both had fine singing voices, untrained, well-matched, with an ear for the subtleties of postwar love songs that filled the airwaves. She was a "Wave" in Navy whites when he first set eyes on her in a serviceman's club in Tulsa. Nine-piece-band gearing up for "One O'Clock Jump." She, willowy, sipping a ginger ale, he, downing whiskey, lighting up a cigarette, whispers to his pal that he's just spotted the gal he will marry. Dark-eyed Irish coal-miner's daughter from Whiting, Indiana, away from home for the first time, barely twenty-one. *It must have been moon glow, way up in the blue, it must have been moon glow, that led me straight to you.* VJ Day intercepted his overseas duty and they married. Beauty and the beast – Courtney Edward, blue-eyed son of English sailor-turned-farmer, received his Air Force "wings" flying B-25s, loved being at the wheel, rowdy to the core. Mary Virginia, his first and ever love, cars weighing in a close second over the years. We spent a lot of time driving around, learning love songs. A friend remarked to me recently, "But all your stories are about love!" I hadn't realized. *Night and day you are the one, here beneath the moon or under the sun, whether near to me or far, it's no matter darling where you are, I think of you, day and night.*

There was an old upright piano that no one played in the basement. Dad took a stab at vibes, organ, electric guitar – popular with my junior high school boyfriends. Dad had a super collection of 78s and 33s: early Ella, Cole Porter, Earl Bostic on alto sax, Sarah Vaughan, Lionel Hampton, Artie Shaw, all the big bands. Carol and I started collecting 45s in our preteen

years: Motown at first, then early Beatles and Dylan. Dad introduced me to Dave Brubeck's *Time Out* recording, which I credit for my stylistic excursions in prose. I remember sitting alone at the living room window, sudden spring snow, wet erratic crystals intermittently pinging the glass. I toggled between "Take Five" and "Blue Rondo A La Turk" again and again on the stereo, thinking: This is a way to go. I'd been writing poems for years and started making bolder statements: crushing whole stories into paragraph form, enumerating furtive joys and woes, embracing ambiguities. Always wanted to write songs but couldn't think in terms of notes and timing. Words flooding in at midnight, during a fever, in dreams, easier.

Court died of a broken heart. Strong as an ox, a bull in a china shop, lone wolf with his fleet of cars and Harleys. There were three books in our house: the Bible (we were not allowed to place anything on top of it), Emily Post's *Etiquette,* and Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking.* Dad spent most of his after-work hours in the garage, souping up engines, "tuning" parts. Always the music playing, in the garage, in the house: whistling, singing, radio, tapes, recordings. The last time I saw him all was quiet. He no longer cared for cars or music, anything, only his devoted blue-heeler mutt. Mr. Bojangles, dance.

Three long years before, a dream early morning: *Heaven, I'm in heaven, and my heart beats so that I can hardly speak, and I seem to find the happiness I seek, when we're out together dancing cheek to cheek*. . . . Mom singing, holding out her arms to me. Then the phone call, dream ending. Dad's voice, steady, resigned: "She's gone." She had been in hospice for months, return of a vicious brain tumor. We sat around her bed trying to get her to recall things: songs came back, if not all the words at least the tunes, humming favorites… *and now the purple dusk of twilight time steals across the meadows of my heart, high up in the sky the little stars climb, always reminding me that we're apart. You wandered down the lane and far away, leaving me a love that will not die. Love is now the star dust of yesterday, the memory of days gone by*. . . . Carmichael's "Star Dust" (1929).

I married the drummer from Pandora's Box, a local rock-n-roll band. He's also an artist and graphic designer, decades later we are still in love and happily working together on books and recordings. I started collaborating with musicians and vocalists in the early 1980s when my first story collection came out and I asked friends to present my words musically rather than doing readings myself. I was in graduate school at Mills College, Center for Contemporary Music; Robert Ashley was the director. Earlier I'd heard on radio his prototype recording of "The Backyard" from his masterwork,

Perfect Lives ("Private Parts," Lovely Music, 1977). His voice, hypnotic, piano and tablas, elemental. Mind-expanding words. I thought: There's a way to do it. Words with music turned out to be my career: musicians, composers, vocalists seem to *get* what I do, they like taking the words and doing something with them. These collaborations have resulted in performance works, recordings, radio pieces, film and video soundtracks, all of which exceed my expectations for words on a page. People ask, but why don't you want to read the words yourself? The answer is, I'm not good at it.

Gini won prizes for her singing, was tapped for the Miss America pageant back in 1939, but her mother – Kentucky schoolteacher, devout Pentecostal – wouldn't let her participate. I tried singing and being in school plays but my "performances" ended in tears. The voice failed me even on my wedding day. The congregation laughed when I nodded vigorously to indicate "I do." I did and do manage to put my voice, and the voices of others into my stories. I focus on the rhythm and a clarity of voice to elaborate intricacies of persona and the moment. I'm always surprised and delighted by the interpretations vocalists, performers, and composers give to my prose poems and stories: the different takes made by Joan La Barbara, Elodie Lauten, Laetitia Sonami, Morton Subotnick, the band Arkansas Man, a quartet of Australian actors, and most recently, an entire conducted improvisational ensemble, Out of Context, directed by Dino J. A. Deane, taking on my latest story collection, *One Inch Equals 25 Miles,* in an entirely musical interpretation. I envy the way musicians work together: revising songs, quoting musical phrases, improvising. Writing is lonely. Imagine gathering a group of writers together to collaborate on a revision of Sylvia Plath's scathingly beautiful poem, "Daddy." I don't think so. Words cling jealously to meaning, to personality, to the solitary entity who labors extracting favors from the demons within. Gertrude Stein struggled inventively at releasing words from meaning and her words are deeply musical, and undeniably underread. Easier to enjoy, as is true with Joyce and Beckett, when heard aloud.

All or nothing at all, here I am in the depths of this ecstasy … the pencil suffers the tortured grip in pursuit of a feeling, thought, or perception too fleeting for the page. For me, the words, phrases, sentences first form at the back of my throat and are sub-vocalized during writing. The editing process is dependent on the same sensation (though I can't write and edit at the same time). When I feel it in my throat, when the words flow round inside my mouth I know it's right. I see my friend Chris Jonas rocking, jumping, rising to his toes, swaying swinging his torso while he persuades notes from his saxophone. His is a dance. Other musicians tell stories, wordless complex tales. Miles for example. Working with music people I am part

of "a band." My instrument is words, the others work out their parts to their own satisfaction. Sometimes there is a back-and-forth but mostly it's the perfect collaboration: Each pleases self completely and thereby pleases others equally.

I made notes about approaches to this essay: Search computer for sentences containing the word "music." Scour Machlis (*The Enjoyment of Music,* Norton, 1970) for esoteric terminology to divide and spice rambling prose. Replace vowels in the essay with corresponding musical notes. Poemize scribbled thoughts… *digital waves of type on a trajectory / audio-verbal potentiometry* …. Instead, I woke up this morning, grabbed my space pen (it writes upside down, useful for reclining) and let it roll. I don't want to be myself anymore. I used to spend time figuring out a concept about an idea in order to begin a process. No more of that. We writers do a lot of sentencing: sentencing ourselves to the past, to the page, to the form, to the world. The first word, the first note, and what follows after, is the path unknown. Some days it flows without regret, without reconsidering. And it ends: This sentence is the final sentence of this essay.

Contributors

Melody Sumner Carnahan has six books in print and numerous works published in magazines and anthologies, including the *City Lights Review, Leonardo Music Journal,* and *At A Distance.* She has worked with composers and performers for 25 years to present her writing "live," as well as in recordings from Tellus, NonesuchElectra, 4-Tay Records, Frog Peak Music, HighMayhem.org., and in Morton Subotnick's *Gestures* (Mode Records, 2001). Her book and CD, *The Time Is Now,* won a 1998 Independent Publisher Award for Audio-Fiction. She was Creative Media Arts Fellow 2000 at ABC/University of Technology, Sydney, Australia. Woody Vasulka commissioned "The Maiden" for his *The Brotherhood* installation and catalogue for NTT/ICC in Tokyo (1998), and other commissions and acknowledgements have come from New American Radio, Experimental Intermedia Foundation, Nonsequitur, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago. She lives in New Mexico and is, with Michael Sumner, a founding editor of Burning Books.

Che Chen lives in a cramped, awkardly converted loft space in Brooklyn, NY with two friends. He is founder and editor of the zine, *O Sirhan, O Sirhan,* and one-half of the band, True Primes. His artwork has appeared on the covers of *No: A Journal of the Arts.* "Talking Turkey in the New Age" was written while he was in residence at MacDowell Colony in the Spring of 2006. He can be reached by e-mail at chen_che@hotmail.com

Miryam Sas highlights **Shōko Ema** 江間章子 (1913-2005) as "one of the few women participating actively in the avant-garde poetic movements associated with Surrealism in the pre-war period." Her work extends from Surrealist and Futurist poetry and prose poetry to song lyrics and children's poems. Her keen intelligence reflects influence from politics, geography (notably Iraq and her travels there), art, and the place of women (and all humanity) in the modern world.

George Kalamaras is the author of five books of poetry and prose poetry, three of which are full-length, the most recent of which is *Even the Java Sparrows Call Your Hair* (Quale Press, 2004). Professor of English at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, Kalamaras is the recipient of creative writing fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts (1993) and the Indiana Arts Commission (2001), as well as first prize in the 1998 *Abiko Quarterly* International Poetry Prize (Japan) for two prose poems based on the lives of Minoru Yoshioka and Hideo Oguma.

Katue Kitasono 北園克衛 (1902-1978) was a major Japanese avant-garde literary figure whose career spanned from the 1920s to the 1970s. He was known in Japan for his Futurist, Dadaist, and Surrealist-inflected work. He maintained a number of correspondences with American poets for most of his life, most notably Ezra Pound,

Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, and Kenneth Rexroth. Pound promoted Kitasono and the VOU poets extensively in Europe and the United States. After World War II, Kitasono became a strong advocate for the Japanese avant-garde on the international scene.

Ichiro Kobayashi 小林 一郎 was born in 1955, and is the publisher of the journal 『文藝空間』 *Literary Space*. His publications include 『樹霊半束』 *Tree Spirit Semi-Lattice,* a collection of haiku published under the name Kenji Moroda. Kobayashi is also the editor of 『吉岡実全詩篇標題索引〔改訂第2版〕』 *The Complete Minoru Yoshioka Poem Title Index,* including a revised second edition, and maintains a website devoted to extensively archiving information regarding Minoru Yoshioka: http://members.jcom.home.ne.jp/ikoba/

Half-French, half-American, **Laura Mamelok** grew up in New York and currently lives in Paris. She has worked on various translations in both English and French, including poetry, literary criticism, and historical non-fiction. Aside from translating, Laura works for the Sarah Lawrence College study abroad program in Paris and is planning to pursue a PhD in French and Comparative Literature on representations of the city in literature and film.

Malinda Markham has an MFA from the University of Iowa and a PhD from the University of Denver. Her first book of poetry, *Ninety-five Nights of Listening,* won the Bakeless Prize and was published by Houghton Mifflin in 2002. She recently finished a second manuscript, *Those Who Came Running.* Her poems have been widely published in the US, and translations have appeared in *Antioch Review, Denver Quarterly,* and on the web. She currently works as an equities translator at a major securities firm in Tokyo.

Chris Martin is a painter, writer, and performance artist who lives in Brooklyn, New York. In 2006, he has shown his work in one-person exhibitions at Uta Scharf Gallery (New York), Sideshow Gallery (Brooklyn), Daniel Weinberg Gallery (Los Angeles), and Bernard Toale Gallery (Boston). His essays and interviews have been published in the *Brooklyn Rail.*

Taylor Mignon's articles, translations, and original poems have appeared in *Atlanta Review, Gendaishi techō, Japan Times, Kyoto Journal, Manoa: A Pacific Journal of International Writing, Prairie Schooner,* and online at Karl Young's *Light and Dust Anthology, Milk Magazine,* and Sendecki.com. Most recently, he edited a section on Japanese poetry for *Vallum.* His column "Japan Poetry Currents" appears at http://nakaharachuya.com.

Born in Japan and raised in the UK and Mexico, **Yu Nakai** 中井 悠 is a composer and performer. His works include *why not gramophone* and *pictogramophone,* performed at BankArt in Yokohama in 2004. As a scholar, his extensive research on the work of John Cage focuses on the composer's use of media technology and its relationship to his notational methods. The result has been assembled in his 2006 MA thesis, "The medium of silence/Silence of the medium – The manner of operation in John Cage's work." Since 2001, Nakai has been involved with the Yotsuya Art Studium in various capacities – as a student, researcher, translator, instructor and

an editorial for the magazine *artictoc.* His current interests include P2P networks, Brazilian music, and the lottery.

Sawako Nakayasu is the author of *Nothing fictional but the accuracy or arrangement (she,* (Quale Press, 2005), *So we have been given time Or* (Verse Press, 2004), and *Clutch* (Tinfish chapbook, 2002). In 2006 she was awarded a Witter Bynner Foundation poetry translator residency and a PEN Translation Fund Grant. Current projects and goals include an Ant collaboration with the painter Chris Martin, "researching" at the Yotsuya Art Studium, getting back to making performance pieces, and working less. She can be reached by e-mail at sawako@factorial.org.

Kenjiro Okazaki 岡崎乾二郎 (b. 1955) is a visual artist whose works span over several genres, including painting, sculpture (which includes reliefs and constructions), as well as landscape design and architecture. Many of his works are featured in public collections throughout Japan. In 2002, Okazaki participated in the Venice Biennale as the director of the Japanese pavilion of the International Architecture Exhibition. He is also extremely active as a theoretician and critic, and is the author or co-author of several books, including『ルネサンス 経験の条件』*Renaissance: Condition of Experience* (Chikuma, 2001), featuring his analysis of Filippo Brunelleschi, and『絵画の準備を!』*Ready for Painting!* (Asahi Press, 2005), a dialogue with the artist Hisao Matsuura. He has also created picture books in collaboration with Japanese poets, including『れろれろくん』*Little Lellolello* with Kyong-Mi Park (Shōgakukan Inc. 2004), and『ぽぱーペ ぽぴぱっぷ』*Popahpe Popipappu* with Shuntarō Tanikawa (Crayon House, 2004). Since its inception in 2001, Okazaki has been energetically directing the Yotsuya Art Studium, an innovative art school in central Tokyo. He is currently working on a collaborative performance with the choreographer Trisha Brown, to be premiered in early 2007.

Kyong-Mi Park ぱくきょんみ (b. 1956) is a second-generation Korean living and writing in Tokyo. Since publishing her first book of poetry『すうぷ』*Soup* (Shiyōsha, 1980), she has continued to publish numerous works of poetry and prose in major Japanese publications including *La Mer, Waseda Bungaku, Ginka,* and *Asahi Weekly.* She is noted for her translations of Gertrude Stein: *The World is Round* (1987) and *Geography and Plays,* (co-translation, 1992), in addition to other translations such as *Over the Moon* by Mother Goose (1990). Her essays have been collected in『庭のぬし—思い出す英語のことば』*The Guardian Spirit in a Garden: Words to Remember* (Quintessence Publishing Company, 1999) and『いつも鳥が飛んでいる』*There are always birds in the air* (Goryu Shoin, 2004). Recent collections of poetry include『そのコ』*That little one* (Shoshi Yamada, 2003), and『ねこがねこ子をくわえてやってくる』*The cat comes with a baby cat in its mouth,* forthcoming from Shoshi Yamada in 2006. Park's work has been translated into English, Korean and Serbian, and she currently teaches at Wako University and the Yotsuya Art Studium.

Chika Sagawa 左川 ちか (real name Chika Kawasaki) was born in 1911 in Hokkaido, Japan. Through the encouragement of her brother, Noboru Kawasaki, a poet and editor himself, she moved to Tokyo in 1928 and became a member of the lively community of writers surrounding Katue Kitasono, and was highly esteemed by many of her contemporaries. In addition to her own poetry, she translated litera-

ture from English, including prose by James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. Stomach cancer took her life at the age of 25, at which point her poems were collected and edited by Sei Ito and published as『左川ちか詩集』*Collected Poems of Sagawa Chika* (Shōshinsha, 1936). Later a more complete collected works — including prose, eulogies, and a complete bibliography — was published as『左川ちか全詩集』*Collected Works of Chika Sagawa* (Shinkaisha, 1983).

Miryam Sas is an associate professor of Comparative Literature and Film Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. She received her PhD in Japanese and Comparative Literature in 1995 from Yale. Her book *Fault Lines: Cultural Memory and Japanese Surrealism* was released by Stanford University Press in 2001. Areas of interest include Japanese, French, and English twentieth-century literature, film, performance and and critical theory. She is currently writing a book on the central issues in Japanese postwar experimental arts from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Ryoko Sekiguchi 関口涼子 was born in 1970 in Tokyo, and has lived in Paris since 1997. Her books in Japanese include『カシオペア・ペカ』*Cassiopia Peca* (1993),『(com)position』(1996),『発光性diapositive』(2000),『二つの市場、ふたたび』*Two Markets, Once Again* (2001),『熱帯植物園』*Tropical Botanical Garden* (2004), all published by Shoshi Yamada. Since 1999 she has translated her own writing into French, including *Calque* (P.O.L, 2001) and *Cassiopée Peca* (cipM/Les Comptoirs de Nouvelle B.S.), *Héliotropes* (P.O.L., 2005, Paris), *Deux marchés, de nouveau* (P.O.L., 2005, Paris), *Série Grenade* (Al Dante/Les comptoirs de la nouvelle B.S., 2006), as well as *The Other Voice* by Yoshimasu Gozo (Caedere, 2002), and other works by Japanese poets. *Apparition* is the title of a collaboration with Rainier Lericolais (Les cahiers de la Seine, 2005). She has also translated from Dari to Japanese the book *Earth and Ashes* by the Afghan writer and filmmaker Atiq Rahimi (Inscript, 2003).

Eric Selland is a poet and translator living just south of San Francisco. His translations of contemporary Japanese poets have appeared in a variety of journals and anthologies, in print and online. He has also published articles on Japanese Modernist poetry and translation theory. He is the author of *The Condition of Music* (Sink Press, 2000), and an essay in *The Poem Behind the Poem: Translating Asian Poetry* (Copper Canyon Press, 2004).

John Solt's poetry is available in *Third Rail* (literatureandarts.com), *Light and Dust Anthology of Poetry*, and elsewhere. He is the author of *Shredding the Tapestry of Meaning: The Poetry and Poetics of Kitasono Katue, 1902-78* (Harvard University Asia Press, 1999). Solt's translations of Kitasono's poetry, *Glass Beret* (Morgan Press) was awarded the 1996 Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission Prize for the Translation of Modern Japanese Literature. A hugely expanded version, *Oceans Beyond Monotonous Space,* introduced and co-edited by Karl Young, will be issued by highmoonoon in the near future. Solt introduced the photography of Kansuke Yamamoto (1914-87) in a ground-breaking exhibit at Tokyo Station Gallery in 2001. John runs a website, www.highmoonoon.com, which is known for its fascinating products and abysmal sales. He believes that the rat race is for rats and agrees with philosopher Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) that humans in a technological society should work only two hours a day and spend the rest of the time cultivating their minds.

Kerri Sonnenberg lives in Chicago where she directs the Discrete Reading Series. Her work has recently appeared in *Magazine Cypress, Unpleasant Event Schedule,* and *MiPoesias.* Her first book, *The Mudra,* was published in 2004 by Litmus Press.

Michael Sumner's artwork includes prints, drawings, film, and video. He has also worked as a graphic artist and book designer, producing books for publishers and museums. In 1979 he co-founded Burning Books with writer Melody Sumner Carnahan in Oakland, California, which has published nineteen books of and about avant-garde music, art, and literature. He currently lives in New Mexico where he continues to collaborate with Carnahan to produce books, audio works, and installations under the Burning Books banner.

Poet, translator and art critic **Shūzō Takiguchi** 瀧口 修造 (1903-1979) was an important advocate of Surrealism in Japan. In 1941, he was imprisoned for several months for his support of Surrealism. From 1945 onwards, he concentrated mostly on art criticism, publishing, among other works, *Paul Klee* in 1960. In 1967, he published『瀧口修造の詩的実験1927–1937』*Shuzo Takiguchi's Poetic Experiments: 1927–1937*. His poetry, which often blurs the boundary between poetry and prose, is characterized by radical juxtapositions, associative leaping, and use of the Surrealist practice of "automatic writing."

Shōzō Torii 鳥居 昌三 (1932-1994) was a member of the influential avant-garde coterie VOU, led by Kitasono Katue. Torii's first book, published at the age of 22, was『愛書家の手帖』*A Bibliophile's Notebook* (1954), a book of essays on aesthetics and the books he loved. Eight volumes of his poetry, mostly in limited editions of between 125-300 copies, were published between 1955 and 1994. He was a private publisher of fine, rare poetry books either specially leather-bound or printed on washi paper, such as the journal he edited, *Trap.*

Poet, novelist, and translator **Sumiko Yagawa** 矢川 澄子 (1930-2002) studied English literature at Tokyo Woman's Christian University, German literature at Gakushuin University, and Art History at the University of Tokyo. She wrote over fourteen books of fiction, poetry, essays, criticism, and children's books, as well as literary translations from German and English. Her translations of childrens' books include the Babar series, works by the Brothers Grimm, Michael Ende, Paul Gallico, and Reiner Zimnik. Yagawa's works include an experimental book of poetry『ことばの国のアリス』*Alice in Word-land* (Gendai Shichōsha, 1974), fiction『兎とよばれた女』*Woman called Rabbit* (Chikuma Shobō, 1983), and essays and critical biographies of female authors such as Naoko Nomizo, Mari Mori, and Anaïs Nin, which contributed to developing her own unique feminist theories on literature.

Misako Yarita ヤリタ ミサコ is a visual, lexical and performance poet who publishes and performs widely in Tokyo and throughout Japan. She has translated the works of e.e. cummings and Allen Ginsberg into Japanese. A translation of her poem "I Didn't Give Birth to my Mother" was published in the online journal *Third Rail.* Some of her visual work can be found in *Delta: revue internationale pour la poesie*

experimentale, Rain Tree (online), and the anthology *Poésie Concrète Japonaise.* Her translation into Japanese of John Solt's groundbreaking book, *Shredding the Tapestry of Meaning: The Poetry and Poetics of Kitasono Katue, 1902-78,* will be published by Shichōsha in 2007.

Minoru Yoshioka 吉岡実 (1919-1990) published his first book of poems,『昏睡季節』*A Season of Stupor* in 1940. After the publication of『静物』*Still Life,* his first postwar publication, he quickly became a major figure in the avant-garde and is now considered one of Japan's most important postwar poets. His influence reached into other genres through his close friendships with major figures in contemporary Japanese painting and dance, including the Butoh pioneer Tatsumi Hijikata. *Kusudama* (Shoshi Yamada, 1986) may be Yoshioka's most important work, and is representative of his later experiments with quotation and collage.

Editor's Production Notes

Every year I produce a *Factorial,* it ends up being a mad(cap) flurry of book-production craziness, and I start wondering if this will be it, the last issue ever. This year I got sick in the midst of it all, my eyes gave out, and I went out of commission for about a week. Which caused me even more stress, and so out of a desperate desire to get back to work, I put all my energies into regaining my health (which just meant eating and sleeping a lot…) But somehow during this quest to 'get healthier,' I found myself inclined to take that to its logical extension: to become a better person all around.

Actually it was John Solt who gave me the idea. He says he received this advice from Kenneth Rexroth, his mentor: "There are a lot of shitty people who are good poets; try to be a good human being rather than a good poet."

It's sort of a fun process to explicitly think about what that entails, like shopping for human traits and characteristics and actions. It's also not unlike what we do weekly in my first-ever art workshop: take a piece of art, try to figure out why it's good, dissect it, look at it from various angles, and see if you can't do something similar. Or better. (Though when I tell people of my new plan, the first thing they ask is, 'Are you a bad person?' – which was puzzling to me, but apparently the only people who ever make such proclamations are those fresh out of jail.)

*

The Yotsuya Art Studium is a place where I spend a lot of time these days, and a lot of great art happens here. One day there was a bunch of us waiting for the light to turn so that we could cross the street. (The following takes place in some kind of quickness of a moment) – the light turns, we start to cross – one of the guys is missing, has strayed from the group, but I find him only a few feet away. The name of the young man who has lent his arm to help a blind woman cross the street is Susumu, which means progress.

*

Keith and Rosmarie Waldrop, who publish Burning Deck books, have been nothing but inspiring to me. During the "40 Years on the Burning Deck" celebration, poets flew in from all over to read, talk, and spread the good gospel. It was a crazy few days, a poetry extravaganza, but one of the things I remember most clearly was Lisa Jarnot, when she got her turn at the mike. She said something very simple about the Waldrops being good people – as if the press, the amazing books of poetry, were just by-products of their goodness.

*

There's something about that which resonates with the time I spent teaching at The Grauer School: it was a small school, and I taught a variety of subjects: English, Math, even Choir and Japanese – but at some point I figured it out: that these subjects were the medium, not the message. I wasn't teaching Math, I was teaching high school students – young people – *through* math. I'd asked Stuart, the principal of the school, how I might respond to the kids who hated math, explain what relevance it had or why they had to do it – and he said, 'Why not just for the beauty of it?' That's when it struck me that this innovative school could just as easily be considered one big art project…

*

This February, I was fortunate to get to spend a month at the Santa Fe Art Institute on the Witter Bynner Translator Residency, for my translations of Chika Sagawa – some of which are included in this issue. I am extremely grateful not only for this, but also for the timing and confluence of events (which included an electro-acoustic music festival at the College of Santa Fe) which led me to discover yet another inspiring publishing couple, Melody and Michael Sumner, of Burning Books. Che Chen was a visual artist who spent his time at the SFAI working on the first issue of his zine, *O Sirhan, O Sirhan.* He had just recently acquired, after a long hunt, one of the legendary Burning Books publications from the 80s, *The guests go in to supper,* only to suddenly find himself in the home of the people who had made the book.

*

Limited-time book production has its shortcomings, but it's the only way I can do it: the only way I can continue this is to continue, no matter what. This time there were a few casualties: the Japanese originals to all the

translated work have been cut out. A wonderful essay by Kenjiro Okazaki, connecting Asian folk art and Buddhist chanting and Spielberg's *A.I.,* translated by Yu Nakai and myself, didn't make it to print. (Please look for it elsewhere – it's going to be great, when we finish it!)

…and then there are the angels who descended at the very last minute to help me out: their names are Ben Basan and Naoki Matsumoto.

*

The other thing on my mind is my cousin Kaoru, who passed away last year. She was only 44, and at the time was living in Virginia with her husband and two lovely 5-year-old girls. The official cause was pneumonia, but it was a complication from the same virus that had knocked out the rest of her family, too – but only for a couple of days.

Kaoru would often work too hard, to the point of collapse – we used to joke about that, about how similar we were – now it feels like no joke, and my health strikes me, in a rather obvious way, as one of the most valuable things I have. Chika Sagawa died when she was 25 years old. Sometimes I'll be walking along thinking about her, and those poems she wrote during that short life of hers – and I wonder what more she might have written, had she been given more time.

I once fell in love with someone who used to say, in all honesty, 'Glad to be alive!'

When I turned 16 in Cupertino, California, I got my driver's license as fast as I could. We all did – in California you can't get anywhere without a car. Driving around all over the place with my friends was fun, no doubt, but I am also thankful that I survived those years of youthful reckless driving – my adult life is a gift I received each day I didn't get into a major freeway accident out there. Glad to be alive!

*

We all miss Kaoru very much, but we get to stay close to her by being near her children. These days I spend 1-2 days a week with Yu and Aya – I watch them learn to read and write, say please and thank you, cross the street without getting run over. They sing and draw and dance and, when they are truly happy, they jump up and down. They are in the midst of learning how to be human, and it makes me re-learn it – so after all that

I don't have to be a better poet, artist, editor, translator, hockey player, any of it – just a good human being. Work less, spend more time with the people I love. This is something Kaoru was very good at: she was always the one who got us cousins together for dinner.

I dedicated last year's issue to my uncle Haruhiko and to Kaoru, but last year it was too soon to write about her. It still brings tears, but I am still dedicating this journal in loving memory of my beautiful cousin.

May 30, 2006
Sawako Nakayasu

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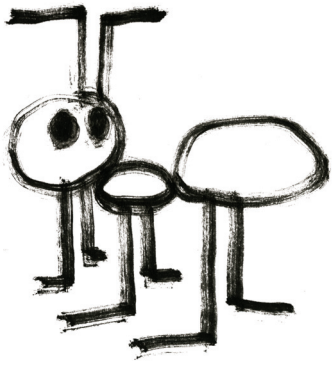

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