A Bundle of Charcoal: Volume I

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Abstract

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This thesis presents the first English translation of the first volume of *Sumidawara* (translated as “A Bundle of Charcoal” here), Matsuo Bashō’s (1644-1694) last published linked verse anthology, and part of the poet’s “Seven Great Haikai Collections”. A distinctive aspect of *Sumidawara* is that it is the work that best exemplifies *karumi* (“lightness”), the poetic style that Bashō envisioned and disseminated among his followers in the last years of his life. However, the lack of familiarity with this work and its closeness to other aesthetic principles associated with Bashō’s poetics, such as *zoku* (“folk”), make this a hazy concept for most Western readers. Moreover, while some critics have traditionally associated *karumi* with formal aspects such as simplicity in diction and structure, the sociopolitical implications of this style have been largely ignored. In sum, *Sumidawara* stands as a missing link in Basho’s repertoire to readers in the West but, perhaps more importantly, it denotes a significant conceptual gap in our understanding of Japanese poetry.

A Bundle of Charcoal

Volume 1

A Translation by

Juan Felipe Arroyave

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Introduction

Matsuo Bashō's *Sumidawara*:

Lightness and Folk

Sumidawara ("A Bundle of Charcoal") was Matsuo Bashō's (1644-1694) last published linked verse anthology and is considered one of his seven great *haikai* (popular linked verse) collections. Despite its importance within the poet's oeuvre and Bashō's singular prominence in the West, René Sieffert's *Le Sac à Charbon* (1993) was, until now, the only existing translation of this work to a European language.

A distinctive aspect of *Sumidawara* is that, as the last poetry collection completed during Bashō's lifetime, it has long been assumed to be the work that best exemplified *karumi* or "lightness", the poetic style that Bashō actively disseminated among his followers during the last years of his life. The careful curation of Bashō's work by his own disciples and succeeding *haikai* poets during the "Bashō revival" movement, the lack of familiarity of with linked verse, and the popularization of other aesthetic principles associated with Bashō's poetics, such as *sabi,* "lonesomeness", make *karumi* a hazy concept for most

Western readers, and partially explain why *Sumidawara* remains obscure to this day. As such, the lack of availability of the text and the enigmatic quality of *karumi* stand as a missing link in Basho's poetics to most English readers and, perhaps more consequentially, illustrate a significant conceptual gap in our understanding of Japanese poetry.

In the first section of this introduction, I will present an overview of the study of *karumi* in the West and attempt a definition of it supported by the contents of *Sumidawara*. Then, I will describe the aesthetic features of this concept and contrast it with other poetic principles championed by the Bashō school, such as *sabi*. Afterwards I will explore the rhetorical characteristics of *karumi* and its effects on the structure of *Sumidawara* and, from there, touch upon the socio-political implications of the text's penchant for folk language and imagery. Finally, in the last section of this text, I will try to elucidate Bashō's motivations for developing and pushing *karumi* among his followers, and the reasons why the concept was largely abandoned by the next generation of *haikai* poets.

I. What exactly is *karumi*?

While there is a significant number of scholarly works about *karumi* in Japan, only a few Western authors have tackled the concept directly or engaged critically with its impact in Bashō's oeuvre and legacy. One of the most important pieces of

literary criticism in this regard is Makoto Ueda's *Literary and Art Theories in Japan*, where the author reproduces the various examples and metaphors that Bashō employed to describe *karumi* or "lightness" to his pupils, and where the hazy nature of the concept becomes evident. On one occasion, for example, Bashō was asked by one of his disciples how to apply *karumi* in a poem; the master's response was "simply observe what children do". On another time, a few weeks before departing on his final trip, he described the style to other poets in his circle as "a light one both in form and in structure, like the impression of looking at a shallow sand-bed river". He also likened to "vegetal soup", when contrasted with "duck stew". For Ueda, the common objective of all these indications was to persuade his followers to "see the beauty of lightness in the world of common men", something that would only be possible "after attaining a high stage of enlightenment" (166). The lingering question, I believe, is whether Bashō's disciples were able to successfully translate these nuanced statements into their poetic production.

Steven D. Carter ties Bashō's lack of definiteness to the possibility that even himself was not certain of exact nature of this style by the time of his death. Regardless, the verses produced by Bashō and the people gathering around him during this last stage of his life do appear to operate under a different aesthetic paradigm; Carter describes it as "a self-conscious return to the carefree spirit of youth, albeit a youth tempered with the darker wisdom of age" (*Traditional Japanese Poetry*, 349), and suggests that *karumi* was perhaps more important to Bashō in terms of the development of a new rhetoric that no

longer relied upon “erudite references or the distraction of figurative language” (*How to Read a Japanese Poem*, 234). The main implication of this reasoning is that *karumi* would not operate then on the way poets in the Bashō school observed things (that is, their poetic sensibility), but rather on the ways they represented the worlds (their discursive approach to poetry). This rhetorical progression has been noted by other scholars like Jane Reichhold, who defines *karumi* as “the beauty of ordinary things spoken in a simple way” (414). Adam L. Kern, on the other hand, believes that the “lightness” invoked by the style went beyond structural aspects like diction, and did incorporate previously unexplored subject matter, as well as a new intellectual approach to poetry (404). This last aspect was also noted by Nobuyuki Yuasa in the introduction to his translation of *Oku no Hosomichi* (known in English as “The Narrow Path to the Deep North”), where he describes *karumi* as “a strange sense of detachment from life, which sometimes produced a slightly comical effect” that, at times, turns into “a somewhat somber effect” (45). While it is widely accepted that *karumi* allows for more comedic verses, its association with words like “detachment” and “somberness” adds an unexpected layer of complexity to the concept; indeed, other aesthetical principles from the Bashō school, in particular *sabi*, are often described using similar terminology.

For Haruo Shirane, *karumi* did mean a strong shift from Bashō’s early poetry. *Karumi*, he claims, meant a “deliberate avoidance of abstraction and poetic posturing” that attempted to return *haikai* poetry “to everyday subject and diction”, and to develop a closer intermingling of poets and human affairs (269). Crucially, Shirane also indicates that *karumi* was not a

late development in Bashō's career and tracks its origins to the 1689 journey recorded in *Oku no Hosomichi*, when the poet began to actively seek a response to what he perceived as *furubi*, "oldness", in the poetry he and his disciples were creating. To Shirane and others, the theoretical results of these considerations, as well as the first verses that can be properly labeled under *karumi*, appear as early as in *Sarumino* ("Monkey's Straw Coat"), where Bashō's stress for plain language is already apparent. A "late stage" of *karumi*, leading towards the construction and publication of *Sumidawara*, would in turn materialize into additional, conscious efforts to "find poetry in the midst of [⋯] commoner language and life" (269). *Karumi* could then be seen as the result of a series of stylistic decisions that, eventually, led Bashō to embrace a new repertoire of themes and subjects, with contemporary societal issues being chief among them.

Readers in the West, however, do not usually associate Bashō's poetry with human affairs; in fact, it is his nature poetry, the one more emphatically impregnated with *sabi*, which first comes to mind. Ueda, perhaps the scholar that has made the biggest effort to elucidate Bashō's stylistic goals, defines *sabi* as "the concept that one attains perfect spiritual serenity by immersing oneself in the egoless, impersonal life of nature" (*Matsuo Bashō*, 30). Nevertheless, in order to accommodate humans as subject matter and represent the lives of people around him, a new style had to be brought forward. "*Sabi* urges man to detach himself from worldly involvements" explains Ueda. "*Lightness* makes it possible for him, after attaining that detachment, to return to the mundane world" (*Matsuo Bashō,* 34). The fundament for this development was prescribed in

one of Bashō's most famous poetic principles: *kōgo kizoku*, which can be translated as "awaken to the sublime, and then return to the popular". In this sense, *sabi* would stand for the sublime heights to which his poetry aimed for most of his life and *karumi*, with its interest in everyday life, for the popular. In this sense, *karumi* is also the end goal of his poetics: it attempts to reach humans beyond the impersonality of *sabi, re*cognizing, perhaps, that only humans can be aware of *sabi* in the first place.

It carries, then, that spirituality and materiality, respectively manifested in nature and man, were seen by Bashō as two converging and at time diverging forces in his work. In his chapter devoted to Bashō in *Literary and Art Theories in Japan*, Makoto Ueda explains that Bashō's goal was to "overcome that conflict, to reach a realm where those two sets of values are not antithetical but dialectical" (148). While Ueda recreates *karumi* as a sort of counterforce to *sabi*, I do not find their relationship to be always antagonistic. Bashō sought to avoid the extremes embodied by traditional, intellectual *renga*, which no doubt inspired his own early poetry, and the puerile *haikai* that was popular before him and later made a resurgence among his own disciples. Amid this dichotomy, Bashō set out to represent a realm where man and nature, subject and object, could coexist, without favoring detachment over humanity but also without disregarding the effect of nature in man. In sum, with *karumi* Bashō did not intend to depart radically from *sabi* but rather to create a region where objectiveness and subjectiveness,

detachment and attachment, nature and man, could integrate. And it is right in that equator of sorts where the verses in *Sumidawara* dwell.

II. "Lightness" as a style: the aesthetics of *karumi*

"Lightness" in theme and diction, as we have seen, are the most invoked characteristics when describing *karumi*. Indeed, the themes are more quotidian; indeed, the language is simpler and more direct. What I believe merits further exploration is the effect that these stylistic decisions have on the poems collected in *Sumidawara*, and how they compare to previous production from Bashō and his disciples.

The first issue that *karumi* forces us to deal with is that of the types of naturalism that this new style brings to the fore: the description of the natural world and the objective description of everyday human life. The first one, intent in pursuing objectivity, leads both the poet and the reader towards the dissolution of the self into the observed natural world; the second one seeks to highlight subjectivity, and focuses on the sympathetic relationship of both the poet and the reader with an observer of the natural world. Take, for instance, the *hokku* or opening verse from the first *renga* sequence in *Sumidawara*, often presented as the archetypical *karumi* verse:

むめがゝにのつと日の出る山路（やまぢ）かな

Amid the scent of plum blossoms,
Boom! The sun rises
Over the mountain path.

All the things described in this verse belong to the natural, objective world: the blossoms, the mountain path and the rising sun are all part of the landscape. On a bare linguistic level, there are no indications of the presence of an observer: there a no pronouns, and the only verb in the poem is *deru*（出る）, to go out, which expresses the movement of the sun within the poem. However, and in a stark contrast with Bashō's previous poetry, the presence of an observer is heavily implied by one key word: *notto*（のっと）, a colloquial adverb denoting suddenness. The vernacular quality of this "suddenness" implies the presence of a simple, man-of-the street type of observer; furthermore, the "suddenness" of dawn is, in itself an entirely subjective impression, for the movement of the sun is constant in nature. The lyrical impact of this scene, then, depends upon the acknowledgment of a fleshed out human speaker, and their surprise while walking along the mountain path being described. The "suddenness" also highlights an important transition from detachment to attachment: the fragrance of the plum blossoms, which had gone unnoticed until sunrise, denotes the awakening of the observer to their surroundings.

In some of Bashō's most celebrated poems from previous anthologies, nature is often described as a hermetic unit where the observer has either disappeared or, for readers approaching haiku from a metaphysical perspective, merged with the objects described. A good example is this famous *hokku*:

枯枝にからすのとまりけり秋の暮

On the withered branch
A crow stops.
Autumn evening.

This purports to be an objective description of an objective scene where the observer is not only not present but not needed. The poet, and by extension the reader, dissolves into the *sabi*, the lonesome beauty of the landscape. However, Bashō believed that this approach was not entirely honest, for it left out the "feelings" or affective resonance of any given subject/object interaction. Here is what Dohō, one of his disciples, records him as saying:

> Even a poem that lucidly describes an object could not attain a true poetic sentiment unless it contains the feelings that spontaneously emerged out of the object. In such a poem the object and the poet's self would remain forever separate, for it was composed by the poet's personal self" (*Literary and Art Theories in Japan*, p. 157-158).

The aesthetic challenge that Bashō undertook at the end of his life, thus, was finding a way in which both the object's nature, and the perception of that nature by a subject, could be accounted for within a poem.

This presented Bashō's disciples, and perhaps even the master himself, with a difficult conundrum to resolve. *Karumi* advocates for a "lightness" of expression that implicitly forbids sentimentality and overt displays of emotion. As Ueda points out, this often meant that inexperienced poets in Bashō's circle ended up composing descriptive poems "so plain and trite as to evoke no feeling at all" (*Matsuo Bashō*, 160). The *sabi*-infused poetry of Bashō's early production was easier to identify and recreate for his disciples, who found themselves floundering when presented with the challenge of finding and communicating emotions that factored in their own subjective feelings. By this time Bashō had perceived several pitfalls related to the poetics of *sabi* that he codified with an ever-growing set of concepts. Susumu Takiguchi lists, for example, *amami* ("saccharine-ness"), extravagant and overly florid diction inspired by classical Japanese poetry; *umami* ("cockiness"), pedantic and gimmicky poetry; and *furubi* ("oldness"), conventional and poetry (163-164). While *karumi* is not a direct, one-size-fits-all type of solution to these issues, it definitely sought to address the general feeling of *omomi* or "heaviness" produced by the amalgamation of all these negative tendencies. In that sense, *karumi* should be understood as an extension or revision of *sabi*, insofar it sought to include, as Ueda explains, "all things, human and non-human" (Matsuo Bashō, 65), and augmented the poetical scope of Bashō's early work.

This has not stopped some scholars from establishing a binary relationship between *karumi* and *sabi*. Susumu Takiguchi, for example, posits that Japanese literature has experienced, throughout its history, a pendulum-like fluctuation between the sublime and the vulgar. He takes the abandonment of Sōgi's solemn *renga* in favor of flippant *haikai no renga* and the explosion of commoner culture at the outset of the Edo period as evidence for a movement of the pendulum towards the vulgar; Bashō's championing of *sabi*, seen as the logical, historical continuation of Fujiwara no Shunzei's *yugen* ("mysterious profundity"), Fujiwara no Teika's *ushin* ("sincerity"), and the lofty poetic ideals advanced by figures like Shōtetsu, Zeami, and Shinkei, would be the movement of the pendulum in the direction of the sublime (155). What follows, logically, is that *karumi* represents yet another movement on the pendulum within the microcosm of Bashō's poetics, and a voluntary withdrawal from the lofty standards of *sabi*, after succeeding in raising *haikai* to the realm of classical *waka*.

The problem with this analysis, though, is that the "lightness" of *karumi* does not equal a total, fully rounded up mood, and instead depends on its interaction with *sabi* to fully manifest itself. As a result, in *Sumidawara* "light" verses are often intentionally played against "heavy" ones, and "objective" scenes tend to precede "subjective" ones. In fact, the movement from *sabi* to *karumi* and vice versa patterns the text due to both the compositional dynamics of linked verse and what I believe was a concerted interest in studying specific settings from different artistic sensibilities.

桐の木高く月さゆる也　　野坡

High over the paulownia,
The moon grows cold.

Yaba

This verse from the first *kasen* or 36-verse poetic sequence in *Sumidawara* establishes a situation that is loaded with *sabi*. “Cold moon”, a seasonal word for early winter, gives the landscape a sharp, chilly air. There are no signs of human life; only the haunting, barren silhouette of the paulownia tree in winter stands within the poem. Bashō, then, adds the following to the scene:

門しめてだまってねたる面白さ　　芭蕉

The delight
Of shutting the gate
And going to bed without speaking.

Bashō

Some loneliness lingers, but the focus is now placed on the subject, who presumably observes the moon from their garden. Social gatherings slow down during the winter, and the speaker happily goes to bed early, enjoying their new-found solitude.

Yaba, then, caps Bashō's verse in the following manner:

ひらふた金(かね)で表(おもて)がへする　　野坡

With the money I found
I will resurface my tatami.

Yaba

Yaba's verse identifies the speaker as a petty thief who, after finding some money in the street, hurries back home avoiding everyone in their path. With the front gate locked, he is now free to start planning how to use the money. This verse takes the sequence further in the direction of subjectivity, and the melancholic mood that dominated the sequence two verses ago has been completely turned into its head. This fluctuation between the two moods should be traced to one of Bashō's most famous maxims: *kōgo kizoku*, which can be translated as "awakening to the sublime and then returning to the popular". I believe that with this, rather than describing the evolution of his style over the years, Bashō aspired to summarize the process

that a good poet from his school should observe when writing a verse. The relationship between *karumi* and *sabi*, then, is not as wide ranging as Takiguchi suggests, for the pendular movement he proposes can be identified even in the limited scale of a single *renga* link within *Sumidawara*.

III. "Lightness" in form: *karumi* as a rhetorical device

The links above also illustrate something that Ueda identified in Bashō's latter anthologies; a desire to represent man not as an "spiritual bystander", but as a subject that, despite being subjected to the grievances of everyday life, "just smiles them away" (Matsuo Bashō, 34). This "smiling at life" attitude is often manifested through humor, albeit in an almost accidental manner; instead of bending for puns or punchlines, the insertion of humans in solemn scenes often ends up reflecting our inadequateness, posturing, or shallowness. This doesn't mean, naturally, that the "lightness" that Bashō and his disciples imprint into the poems translates into "making light" of human life. As Shirane puts it, *karumi* carries within it a return to "the mundane but not trivial" aspects of everyday life (278), and sure enough, the normal, imperfect humans that populate this collection are invariably depicted with tenderness and compassion.

To accomplish this, language and tone were crucial. Sanpū, one of his disciples, writes how the master warned that

> As the form of one's verse becomes heavier, it falls into the trap of logic and reason, and one creates difficult, overly intricate verse. When that happens, one should abandon the poetic style that one has used until that point and compose lightly and gently, with ordinary words. That will give the poetry a sense of immediacy" (In Shirane, 276)

Using "ordinary words" imbues the poetry with a sense of authenticity; composing "gentle" poetry that felt "immediate" makes it easier for readers to see the world they inhabit reflected in social situations and character archetypes. There are two direct consequences of this approach. First, that most of the comedic situations in *Sumidawara* will fall within the realm of what we call today "observational humor", and favor the tired, sometimes absurdist aspects of daily life. The second is that humor is often deployed as an efficient way of shifting moods and linking disparate verses together. Consider, for example, this section from the second *kasen* in the text:

奉公のくるしき顔に墨ぬりて　嵐雪

Smeared coal
In the apprentice's
Weary face.

Ransetsu

抱揚(だきあぐ)る子の小便をする　利牛

The child, being held up,
Pees.

Rigyū

The first verse shows an exhausted scribe in training, his face smeared with charcoal ink, at a busy Edo shop. If read with a political eye, this may very well be a critique of the oppressive working conditions that lower-middle class *chōnin*, "commoners", experienced at the time, and which had become entrenched in other works of popular literature during Bashō's time. Yaba, Ko'oku, and Rigyū, the compilers of *Sumidawara*, worked as accounting clerks in Edo, and must have been especially keen to the pathos of the scene described by Ransetsu; however, the mood suddenly lightens when it is Rigyū, one of the clerks, who must write a connecting verse. Working against expectations (one of the basic premises of humor), he transforms the scribe into a young maid who has been taken into a private residence. After cooking all morning her face is covered with soot from the stove; she then rushes to comfort her master's newborn, who pisses on her as she lifts him. We obviously feel bad for the poor maid, but the slapstick nature of the scene elicits a chuckle, too.

Much like in the example above, humor is rarely attained in *karumi* through puns, wordplay, or satire. The language used by Bashō during this period is so simple that, as Jane Reichhold notes, some practitioners of *haiku* assert that a poem lacking a verb has *karumi* because "the active or emotional aspect has been removed" (414). Nevertheless, this does not appear to be the case in *Sumidawara*, where humor and emotion are discovered precisely in the actions that us humans, be it accidentally or in purpose, find ourselves performing:

客を送りて提(さぐ)る燭台(しょくだい)　岱水

Leading the customer out,
The hostess holds up the candlestick.

Taisui

今のまに雪の厚さを指(さし)てみる　孤屋

Suddenly,
He pokes the snow
To check its thickness.

Ko'oku

At a teahouse, the hostess has entertained a customer all night and now, exhausted, leads him out of the establishment. To her chagrin, the high-spirited customer stalls at the door and playfully pokes the snow with his cane while making chit-chat. It is precisely from this action that the humor in the link springs: we are amused by the ineffable social friction between hostess, who cannot get rid of the customer, and the customer, who cannot take the hint and leave.

Another rhetorical aspect that is often mentioned in relation to *karumi* is its preference of not only vernacular language and themes but, at least to some scholars, a conscious avoidance of classical references at all. Shirane, for example, finds that *Sumidawara* “almost never allude[s] to history or the literary classics”, and that when it does, it strives to not “give the appearance of doing so” (276). The shared heritage of *haikai* with *waka* and other traditional forms means, naturally, that if one looks hard enough there will always be the possibility of finding a verse in the *Kokinshū* that mentions one of the many flowers and birds that appear in *Sumidawara*; in fact, this constitutes one of the main fixations of Bashō’s followers and interpreters when studying the poems in the collection. While the first aspect of Shirane’s reading of classical influence in *Sumidawara* may be up for debate, I find that the second point, related to the way such influences were expressed, amounts to one of the structural elements of the text. Take for example this link, which appears in the third *Kasen* in the anthology:

娣(いもうと)をよい処(ところ)からもらはるゝ　孤屋

My younger sister
Will be taken
By a good family.

Ko’oku

僧都(そうづ)のもとへまづ文をやる　芭蕉

Before anything else,
I will send a letter to the bishop.

Bashō

In the context of classical Japanese literature, it is almost unavoidable to think of the *Tale of Genji* when young maidens, marriages, and bishops converge in the same scene. In the so-called “Uji chapters” from the novel, the Bishop of Yokawa saves Ukifune, the princess that both Kaoru and Niou are courting, after she attempts suicide. Kaoru then meets the bishop and asks him to write to her, since he has been sent her to a monastery. It should be noted that it was Bashō and not one of

his disciples who decided to pursue the linking of the first verse with classical literature, suggesting that he was in no way adverse to referencing classical works in his *karumi* phase. What is important, though, and falls in line with Shirane's position, is the simplicity of the linking and clarity of the images that Bashō crafts when pursuing interactions between *haikai* and highbrow literature.

Here is another example from the same sequence where the master, again, seems interested in recreating a topical scene from the classics:

ふとん丸(まる)けてものおもひ居(い)る　　芭蕉

I roll the futon,
Lost in deep thought.

Bashō

The scene lacks the ornamentation in language and setting that could be expected from classical *waka*, but the scene is unmistakable: a young woman, after waiting fruitlessly all night for the visit of a lover, sits on top of her bedding in the morning. Unfulfilled love is perhaps the most common topic of Heian period poetry, and Bashō must have been aware that

his verse established a very specific “poetic scent” (*niou*) for the person that had to write the next verse in the sequence. That person was Taisui, who added the following:

不届な隣と中のわるうなり　　岱水

The relationship
With our uncouth neighbors
Has gotten worse.

Taisui

This is a successful development of the situation that Bashō presented his disciple with from the standpoint of *karumi*. Taisui chose to push the scene further into domesticity without overwriting the romantic overtones of his master’s verse: the infatuated woman is now a young girl, which lifts some of the dramatic tension. The reason for her suffering is brought to the fore: she’s in love with one of her low-ranking neighbor’s sons but her family, perhaps of samurai origin, does not approve of the union. We pity her, for irrational social conventions, even in a small village, have conspired to make her suffer. Didn’t Murasaki suffer in *Genji* for similar reasons? Wouldn’t we all suffer, too, in this situation? In the end, what Bashō and his disciples accomplish through their allusions to classical Japanese literature is entirely didactic: it reminds us that everybody,

even the daughter of a humble farmer, can connect emotionally with the characters and situations described in the classics, for love, death and sorrow are not exclusive to a historical period or social class.

We can see hints of this attitude towards the classics in Bashō's previous collections of poetry, too; in fact, Bashō's most famous poem serves as a suitable example. Kikaku, one of the disciples closest to Bashō's, recommended including the word *yamabuki*, "globeflowers", in the master's famous frog poem. The reasoning behind this was that a poem from the *Kokinshū*[1] mentioned the *kawazu*, the native species of frog that Bashō had fixated upon, alongside *yamabuki*; Kikaku's suggestion was to evoke the classics by having the frog sit under the flowers. Bashō's decision to have his frog jump into a pond, as Shirane indicates, amounts to a successful repurposing of "the old associations of the frog with classical poetry, thus establishing a new perspective" (Shirane, 15). Because of this, Takiguchi suggests that "freedom" would be a more appropriate English translation for *karumi*. "After all," he opines, "a function of *karumi* is to liberate haikai from the tedious fetters of rules and conventions of the past" (167). Regardless, knowing the classics is an essential stage in that process, and Bashō's development of the frog poem is analog to the way he treats his poetic influences in *Sumidawara*. Since classical

[1] Spring II, 125. Shirane's translation: At Ide, where the frogs cry/ the yellow globeflowers/ have already scattered/ If only I had come/ When they were in bloom! (14).

references cannot be ignored or avoided, when they appear they should be treated with lightness, and presented in a key that regular folk could understand.

One final aspect I want to touch on before advancing to the next section is that both Shirane (273-274) and Takiguchi (172), have called attention to the musical qualities of Bashō's *karumi* verses, although I am not entirely convinced the examples that have been brought forward establish a direct link between the careful diction of a master poet like Bashō and the style itself. I do agree with Takiguchi's claim that the concerted effort to make the verses sound more colloquial carried along an increased use of onomatopoeias and, as such, there definitely are sections where an intentional repetitiveness in sound and rhythm is noticeable.

IV. The sociopolitical dimension of *karumi*

In his article on *karumi*, Takiguchi proposes that one of the forces driving the development of this new style was Bashō's desire to increase the literary methods of *haikai* "to such an extent that it would be ranked not only as one of the highest forms of Japanese poetry but also as one of the most important branches of Japanese literature itself" (162). I find that such lofty goals were improper of a poet who, as Ueda demonstrates, had serious difficulties reconciling his condition of

an aesthete with his desire to lead a life free from attachment (*Literary and Art Theories in Japan*, 171). Instead, I am inclined to think that the main impetus behind *karumi* is essentially ethical: the desire to make truly "popular" poetry that, without giving up an inch of its aesthetic merit, still appealed to the folk living outside the main cities of Japan.

Let us consider the sociopolitical climate of the country during Bashō's time, as described by Shirane:

> Vast alterations in literary and cultural paradigms gave birth to a whole new body of vernacular literature, the foremost of which was *haikai*, or popular linked verse. The seventeenth century witnessed the emergence of the urban commoners (*chōnin*) as an economically and culturally powerful class; the spread of mass education [⋯]; and the advent of printing—all of which led to the widespread production and consumption of popular literature" (3).

The "commoner" culture that Shirane mentions is at the heart of *Sumidawara*. Bashō's disciples were largely of *chōnin* origin, starting, as we have seen, with the three chief compilers of the text. Bashō, whose endeavors in Edo depended on the patronage of people from this growing socioeconomic elite, was unsurprisingly sympathetic to their ethos. Nevertheless, he himself was not a commoner and his humble rural origins, ever-present in his demeanor and poetic production, constitute one of the most notable elements of the *karumi* style. Because of this, Andrew Fitzsimons sees Bashō, the poet, as leading two different lives:

> There is [⋯] Bashō the sociable, involved in the serious fun of the haikai no renga social world, at gatherings with friends and followers, with the elite, but also with the rising mercantile class of Edo-period Japan, with doctors, with priests; and through his poems we also catch a glimpse of the Edo demimonde, and the less fortunate: poor farmers, abandoned children, the disregarded and the discarded old (xiv).

Indeed, and as Shirane (11) and others have remarked, marginal figures of the kind Bashō grew up around and encountered on his trips to the countryside occupy the majority of the poems in *Sumidawara*. Commoners and samurai make sporadic appearances, but the human focus of the text is set clearly set on the people living in the periphery of Edo period society. There are, for instance, poignant descriptions of financial issues and their effects on society:

隣へも知らせず嫁をつれて来て　野坡

Without sending word to the neighbors,
I brought home a wife.

Yaba

Here, a groom is forced to take a wife (and the dowry provided by her family) to pay the annual taxes and make ends meet. Since it would be obvious to the neighbors that he is marrying for money, he brings her home clandestinely to protect himself from embarrassment.

屏風の陰にみゆるくはし盆　芭蕉

In the shadow of the folding screen
A tray with sweets is visible.

Bashō[2]

This completes the link and, since the motivation of the groom is no longer explicit, we are allowed to read the scene as a depiction of the first night together of a modest young couple. Although the folding screen suggests that they are not destitute, they may have found a modest, if not intimate, way to celebrate their union.

The following is a link in which debt collectors, widely despised figures of the time as Saikaku's prose shows, are compassionately represented:

五百のかけを二度に取けり　野坡

Had to collect twice
This five-hundred *mon* debt.

Yaba

[2] This verse features a "cutting word" that splits it into two distinct phrases, hence its translation as a two-line stanza.

Five-hundred *mon* was a meager sum at the time, and the lengths to which the debt collector had to go to get the money elicits some degree of sympathy. However, it is in the connecting verse that their humanity and pathos are fully displayed:

綱ぬきのいぼの跡ある雪のうへ　嵐雪

In the surface of the snow
There are traces
Of snowshoe spikes.

Ransetsu

New Year's Eve was the deadline for setting one's accounts. The debt collector, busy running from house to house in a mountainous region, happens upon the tracks left behind by his colleagues, who are also out in the cold during the last day of the year; the desolation of the scene mirrors that of the person entrusted with such a job. *Karumi* poetry, then, is "popular" insofar as it deals with regular people and shows a genuine concern for their lives that transcends the decorative or picturesque.

But the term "popular" should also encompass Bashō's efforts to spread the themes and images of classical Chinese and Japanese poetry among the masses. *Haikai* itself, as Shirane reminds us, "emerged from the interaction of socially and temporally disparate worlds, from the intersection of a seemingly unchanging, idealized past (that included China) with a constantly, rapidly changing present" (5). We have observed this diachrony in the elastic relationship between *karumi* and *sabi*, with the first standing for the "modern" elements and the latter for the "classical" elements of Bashō's verse; the reformulation of these "classical" elements, however, often meant that social conventions and ideals had to be revised, which in turn led to new attitudes towards well established tropes within his followers, like that of the recluse.

"*Sabi*" explains Ueda, "had suggested that man turn to primitive nature and submerge himself in the vegetable and mineral worlds and thus dissolve his ego, the source of all tormenting desires"; that is, to escape from society and become a recluse. Bashō's goal at the end of his life, however, was "trying to devise a way in which man could remain in the mundane world and still attain peace of mind" (*Matsuo Bashō*, 66). Bashō may have been aware of the unavoidable ethical and political implications that reclusiveness carries within; leaving the human world implied either an open disapproval of contemporary society (which amounts to a contrarian or even reactionary stance) or an immoderate fixation with the aesthetic appeal of nature (a hedonistic stance). Abstracting oneself from the mundane, or rather, selectively observing nature, went against the very essence of haiku as devised by Bashō; an aesthetic and spiritual realm that, in Ueda's words, "includes all things in

existence, elegant or not elegant; it contains warblers, blossoms, and the moon, but it does not exclude a muddy crow, a bird's droppings, or a horse's dung" (*Literary and Art Theories in Japan*, p. 164). This differed greatly with the poetic inclinations of some of Bashō's disciples and his admirers from subsequent generations of poets, who preferred to craft idealized worlds that departed from the popular (what Yosa Buson termed *rizoku*), where they could roam freely without the constraints, messiness, or sheer ugliness of the human world.

Bashō may have agreed with such a sentiment at some point but, consciously or unconsciously, the romantic figure of the recluse seems to have been replaced by that of the ordinary neighbor in *Sumidawara*:

宵(よひ)の内(うち)ばらばらとせし月の雲　芭蕉

They have scattered all over
The early evening sky;
A cloudy moon.

Bashō

This early spring scene, with storm clouds retreating to reveal a glimpse of a pale moon, would typically have connected in previous anthologies with verses centered on flowers, animals, or solitary figures, like that of the monk or the ascetic. However, the direction the sequence takes is rather unexpected:

藪越(やぶごし)はなすあきのさびしき　野坡

Chatting across the hedge;
Autumn's loneliness.

Yaba

Crucially, and despite the word "loneliness" explicitly appearing at the end of the verse, the nature and behavior of the person marks a stark deviation from Bashō and his disciples' previous *haikai*. In the first place, this person lives in a community, and as such is surrounded by other people; secondly, and perhaps more importantly, this is a person that, instead of retreating to a place in nature where they can savor the lonely atmosphere that the first verse describes, chooses to chase the loneliness away by going out to their garden and actively trying to strike up a conversation with their neighbor. While such an attitude may be incompatible with the way Bashō, and haiku as a whole, has traditionally been presented in the West,

it shows a conscious effort to explore how regular folk connect with nature, dealt with loneliness, and strived to connect with others.

V. *Karumi* after Bashō

One of the biggest difficulties in assessing Bashō's aesthetics, and in particular his conception and use of *karumi*, are the spiritual overtones in which his work was framed by the first translators and enthusiasts of haiku in the West. Here is, for instance, the way in which R.H. Blyth, one of the early champions of Japanese poetry in the English language, introduced Bashō to his readers:

> When therefore we come to Bashō, we do so because he is the Way, the Truth and the Life. (328)

The quasi-theological tone in which Bashō and his poetry has traditionally been discussed has led many readers into seeking profound, esoteric meaning in his verses—much like a pious reader would do with a sacred text. Such entanglements, however, may only add to the "heaviness" that *karumi* itself purported to oppose.

This phenomenon, however, is not entirely the fault of Western translators and scholars. Contemporary followers of Bashō contributed to a figurative deification that, in 1793, became literal as he was declared a god by the Shinto hierarchy of

Japan. Unfortunately, such a process involved a conscious curation of the master's biographical details and his published works, and for the poets involved in the *shōfu kaiki* or "Bashō revival" movement some 50 years after the master's death, *karumi*, and in particular the way it was applied by some of his disciples, was considered almost heretical. There are also indications that *karumi* itself may have been too hard to comprehend for Bashō's younger students, and too plain for the more senior ones. Proof of this is a letter sent to Kyorai in which Bashō laments that his followers in Edo "have not yet been able to accept the karumi style, and their halfhearted efforts have resulted in nothing but mediocre verses. I am worried" (*Bashō and His Interpreters*, 372). As Ueda puts it, the failure by Bashō's disciples to apply themselves and popularize *karumi* derived in a "dark age of haikai" (*Matsuo Bashō*, 173). It was only until the emergence of Buson and his group that a coordinated effort to study and propagate Bashō's work was put in place, albeit with the shunning of *karumi.*

Buson's "return to Bashō" maxim was especially consequential for the fate of *Sumidawara* in the West, as it fixated in *Sarumino* as the anthology that they believed best represented *shōfū* or "the Bashō style". This opinion later influenced Masaoka Shiki's development of modern haiku or, as Kern calls it, "the invented tradition of Haiku" (xxix). This "invented tradition", which deliberately downplayed the role of *karumi* in Bashō's oeuvre and all but erased the inherent relationship of haiku with linked verse, is one of the main reasons why this will be *Sumidawara*'s first English translation, exactly 330 years after the first publication of the text.

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Translation Notes

Base Text

The base text of my translation is Iwanami Shoten's 1990 anthology of Bashō's "Seven great collections" (芭蕉七部集, *Bashō's Shichibushū*), edited and annotated by Shiraishi Teizō and Ueno Yōzō, part of the publisher's New Compendium of Classical Japanese Literature (新日本古典文学大系, *Shin Nihon Kotenbungaku Taikei*).

Commentary

The commentary on this work is derived, with minor changes and additions, from the extensive scholarly work by Shiraishi Teizō's on the *Bashō's Shichibushū* and, to a lesser extent, from Itō Hiroshi's online "Bashō Database" (芭蕉 DB). The reader should assume that the interpretations and allusions presented in the notes reflect Shiraishi's original commentary unless explicitly noted.

Sumidawara is made up of two types of texts that, while intimately related, are presented separately. The first type are *renga* or linked verse sequences, constructed communally by two or more poets, and made out of a set metric pattern: the opening verse (発句, *hokku*) in a sequence will follow the familiar three phrase, 17 syllable structure (5-7-5) that we have come to associate with haiku; the subsequent verse (付句, *tsukeku*) will then add two 7 syllable phrases (7-7) to complete a coherent, 31 syllable poetic link. The next verse, then, will return to a three phrase, 17 syllable structure and connect to the previous two phrases, (7-7-5-7-5), creating a new link. In the case of *Sumidawara*, this pattern will be applied to either 36 (歌仙, *kasen*) or 100 (百韻, *hyakuin*) linked verse sequences.

I must note that the word "verse" above is being used in a very deliberate manner. In Japanese, both the 5-7-5 and the 7-7 lyric structures are written as single strings of text, in the same way that an alexandrine verse is made out of a single string of 12 syllables that observe internal stresses. Readers of Japanese can elucidate individual phrases within a verse by counting syllables or identifying "cutting words" (切れ字, *kireji*) that, just like punctuation, mark the end of individual phrases. Due to this, I have opted to present my translations of the poems in a way that makes the phrasal distribution of the originals evident; 5-7-5 phrase verses in Japanese will, then, be rendered as three-line stanzas, and 7-7 phrase verses as two-line stanzas.

Versification of individual *hokku*, such as the ones included in the two sections at the end of this volume, calls for a slightly different approach. Sometimes, cutting words appear in the middle of a 17-syllable *hokku* and, much like a caesura in Western poetry, divide a single verse into two distinct halves. In those cases, the English translation will, accordingly, be presented as a two-line stanza. The reasoning for this is that the poetic value of most of the poems constructed in this way resides in the comparison or contrast between the two halves and would be diluted if I were to follow the Western convention of presenting haiku as a strict three-line stanza.

A final note pertains to what is perhaps the most conspicuous (and perhaps unconventional) formatting decision that I took for this translation: the presentation of *renga* sequences as a stream of stanzas flowing downward from left to right on a landscape-oriented document. The reason for this is twofold: first, and since the main appeal of *renga* is the creative linking of two individual verses, that the diagonal distribution makes it easier to isolate independent links from the rest of the sequence without breaking the sequence altogether. In fact, in manuscript linked-verse sessions during Bashō's time, a poet would write their verse on the edge of a piece of paper, fold it, and pass it on to the next poet in the sequence, who would then repeat the procedure; by focusing on specific "folds" or links, the reading of complete sequences becomes easier and more enjoyable, which is the main goal of my translation. Second, that the wider formatting allows me to present commentary alongside specific links rather than at the end of the page, which I consider more distracting.

炭俵序

Preface to A Charcoal Bundle

此集を撰める孤屋・野坡・利牛らは、常に芭蕉の軒に行かよひ、瓦の窓をひらき心の泉をくみしりて、十あまりなゝの文字の野風をはげみあへる輩也。霜凍り冬どのゝあれませる夜、この二三子庵に侍て、火桶にけし炭をおこす。庵主これに口をほどけ、「宋人の手亀らずといへる薬、是ならん」と、しのゝ折箸に煻のさゝやかなるを、竪にをき横になをしつゝ、「金屏の松の古さよ冬籠」と舌よりまろびいづる声の、みたりが耳に入、さとくもうつるうのめ鷹のめどもの、是に魂のすはりたるけにや、これを思ひ立、はるの日のゝつと出しより、秋の月にかしらかたふけつゝ、やゝ吟終り篇なりて、竟にあめつちの二まきにわかつとなん。是をひらきみるに、有声の絵をあやどりおさむれば、又くぬぎ炭の筋みえたり。けだしくも題号をかく付侍事は、詩の正義にいへる五つのしな、あるはやまとの巻々のたぐひにはあらねど、例の口に任せたるにもあらず。竊により所ありつる事ならし。ひと日芭蕉旅行の首途に、やつかれが手を携えて再会の期を契り、かつ此等の集の事に及て、「かの冬籠の夜、きり火桶のもとにより、くぬぎ炭のふる歌をうちずしつるうつりに、「炭だはらといへるは誹也けり」と独ごちたるを、小子聞をりてよしとおもひうるとや、此しうをえらぶ媒と成にたり。この心もて宜しう序書てよ」と云捨てわかれぬ。今此事をかうかがへ、其初をおもふに、題号をのづからひゞけり。さらに弁をつくる境にはあらじかしとくちをつぐむ。

元禄七の年夏閏さつき初三の日
素　龍　書

The compilers of this anthology, Ko'oku, Yaba, and Rigyū, were constant visitors to Bashō's hut, where they lifted the tiles[1] and drew from the fountain of his mind, diligently applying themselves, as comrades, to the seventeen-syllable style. In the dead of winter, on a certain frosty night, a few of these gentlemen gathered at the hut and proceeded to stir up the ashes in the brazier. The master of the hut would then loosen his tongue: "I wonder if this is what in the Song Dynasty they called 'the medicine that prevents hands from cracking'", he would say, while clumping the embers on top of each other and then spreading them with a bent bamboo twig.

How old the pine
on the gold-leaf folding screen—
Hibernation.[2]

These words rolled down from his tongue in a hum and entered the ears of the three men watching attentively, like sharp-eyed hawks or cormorants. And then, perhaps feeling their souls settle upon this poem, they envisioned making this collection. From the moment the spring sun came up with a pop to the autumn moon, keeping their heads bent, little by little they completed their verses and collected them into this work, breaking them into two volumes: one for Heaven, one for Earth.

When one opens this anthology and gazes into its artfully arranged vocal paintings, traces of oak charcoal can be seen again. Granted, our giving it its present title does not conform to the "five types", as stated in the commentary to *The Classic*

[1] Lifted the tiles: 瓦の窓 (*kawara no mado*), literally "a tiled window", indicates a hermit's dwelling or the hermit themselves. Soryū plays on this metaphor by stating that the visitors would "lift the tiles" to look inside, that is, peer into the interior of Bashō.

[2] This poem seems to have been composed during a renga session with Yaba in 1693. Pines are a symbol of longevity, and its existence within the gold leaf makes it appear ageless. It looks, the poet seems to suggest, that it is solemnly taking refuge from the winter, the season when nature shrivels and dies.

of Poetry[3], or to the types found in the Yamato collections[4], but that does not mean it was chosen on a whim. There was, indeed, an underlying principle behind it.

One day, when Bashō was setting out on a journey, I held his hands and, while vowing to meet with him again, brought up the matter of the present anthology. And he said: "on that night of hibernation, as we sat by the paulownia wood brazier and recited old songs by the oak charcoal fire, I muttered to myself: 'a bundle of charcoal—that truly is *haikai*[5]', which sounded agreeable to the disciples there and served as the criterion for this collection. Take this into consideration and please write the preface" he said over his shoulder, and we parted ways.

Now, as I reflect on this and think back to the beginnings of this anthology, its title resonates naturally. And since I realize that this is not the place to offer any further explanations, I will shut my mouth.

Written on the 7th year of Genroku
Summer, 3rd day of the supplementary 5th month[6]

Soryū[7]

[3] This passage seems to the section dedicated to titling poetry in the 毛詩正義 (*Mōshi Seigi*), the official commentary to *The Classic of Poetry,* one of the five Confucian classics. The phrase "five types" is enigmatic, for nothing in this section of the text is strictly at odds with the title *Sumidawara* (炭俵). What Soryū may be stating is that the title of this anthology does not observe Chinese or Japanese tradition, which would make the mention of these "five types" simply a rhetorical flourish.

[4] Yamato collections: the imperial anthologies of Japanese-style poetry (waka).

[5] *Haikai*: 俳諧, literally "harmonic play" or "organized wit", refers to *Haikai no renga*, popular or humoristic linked verse poetry. Bashō considered himself a *haikai*, or folk poet; its portrayal as a Zen master took shape in the centuries after his death.

[6] June 25, 1694.

[7] Soryū (birth date unknown; died 1716) was a samurai from Awa province (present day Tokushima prefecture). A talented scribe and poet, he produced two manuscript copies of *Oku no Hosomichi* ("The Narrow Road to the deep north") and was the main copyist for the first edition of *Sumidawara*.

誹諧炭俵集上巻

A Bundle of Charcoal, A *Haikai* Collection

Volume I

1

むめがゝにのつと日の出る山路かな　芭蕉

Amid the scent of plum blossoms,

Boom!

The sun rises.

Bashō[1]

2

処々に雉子の啼たつ　野坡

Here and there

The cry of pheasants as they fly away.

Yaba[2]

3

家普請を春のてすきにとり付て　仝

In the lull of spring,

House building

Begins.

Yaba, again[3]

[1] Matsuo Bashō (1644-1695), in the role of *haikai* master, writes the *hokku* (opening verse) of the sequence. The scene depicts a mountain path at the beginning of the spring, and references a previous poem of his own that appeared posthumously in the *Oinikki* (笈日記, "Records in a Knapsack"):

> 梅が香の朝日は余寒なるべし
>
> *In the morning sun/ With the fragrance of the plum blossoms/ It seems that the winter lingers*

While this verse favors the detached tone typical of the *sabi* style, the diction of the one in *Sumidawara* is colloquial, emphasized by the onomatopoeia のっと (*notto*, "suddenly").

[2] Yaba (1662-1740) was a native of Echizen (an area shared by modern day Gifu and Fukui prefectures). His father placed him as a clerk at the Echigoya, the predecessor of the Mitsukoshi department store in Nihonbashi, Tōkyō; it was there that he met Rigyū and Ko'oku and joined them in studying *haikai* under Bashō. As the most senior disciple in attendance, Yaba got the privilege of writing a complete *kasen* or 36-verse renga sequence vis-à-vis Bashō. Here, he amplifies the sensorial intensity of light and smell from the previous verse with the rising voice of the Pheasants hidden in the bushes.

[3] Since there are only two poets, Yaba must reply to his own verse. He bases the link on the pheasants: they are now escaping as the villagers, with no outstanding tasks until the summer, build houses deep in the mountains. Insights like these on rural life, physical work, and folk customs are characteristic of *karumi*.

3

家普請を春のてすきにとり付て　野坡

In the lull of spring,

House building

Begins.

Yaba, again

4

上のたよりにあがる米の直　芭蕉

News come from the North

And the price of rice climbs.

Bashō [4]

5

宵の内ばらばらとせし月の雲　仝

In the evening sky

They scatter it:

Clouds on the moon.

Bashō, again[5]

[4] The word “North” (上, *kami*) here stands for Kamigata (上方), a locative expression used during the Edo period to designate Kyōto and its vicinity. Within this area was the Dojima market at Ōsaka, where the main buyers and sellers from the country gathered and prices for grain were determined for the rest of the country. Bashō has placed the villagers from the previous verse in a rice-farming town, where the vigorous housebuilding is explained by the anticipation of a very profitable year.

[5] The season changes: it is now autumn, as the moon, scattered by dark clouds, indicates. The clouds shading the full moon are ominous, as they anticipate rain, and it may spoil the newly planted crops. With the sky, the mood in the village darkens at the possibility of losing on the current prices.

5

宵(よひ)の内(うち)ばらばらとせし月(つき)の雲(くも)　仝

In the evening sky

They scatter it:

Clouds on the moon.

Bashō, again

6

藪越(やぶごし)はなすあきのさびしき　野坡

We chat across the hedge,

Autumn’s loneliness.

Yaba[6]

7

御頭(おかしら)へ菊もらはるゝめいわくさ　野坡

How vexing,

Now the boss asks

For my chrysanthemum.

Yaba[7]

[6] Late at night, an autumn shower has just stopped. The speaker ventures to the garden and, struck by loneliness, calls out to their neighbor across the hedge. The cold moon, barely distinguishable beneath the clouds, gives the scene a desolate feeling.

[7] The speaker, a low-level samurai, was minding their own business when their superior (御頭, *okashira*, literally “the head”) calls to them across the hedge. Their chat quickly turns to the speaker’s prized chrysanthemum, which the boss has noticed in their garden, and is now requesting in a not too subtle manner.

7

御頭へ菊もらはるゝめいわくさ　野坡

How vexing,

Now the boss asks

For my chrysanthemum.

Yaba

8

娘を堅う人にあはせぬ　芭蕉

I strongly refuse

To let my daughter meet anyone.

Bashō[8]

[8] The request from the chief is now, explicitly, the hand of the speaker's daughter, who he calls "my chrysanthemum" (菊, *kiku*): either a euphemism or the girl's actual name. Bashō has turned the spineless samurai from the previous link into a stubborn, jealous father.

9

奈良がよひおなじつらなる細基手　野坡

Going back and forth to Nara,

They all look the same to me.

Small time peddlers.

Yaba[9]

[9] Yaba chooses to retain the topic of the jealous father but changes the link setting. Since the peddlers go to Nara to get their merchandise, it is safe to assume that the speaker and his daughter live in Ōsaka, which would make them a wealthy merchant family, or in Kyōto, which would make them minor aristocrats. Unfortunately for the father, all of his daughter's suitors rank below them in status and appearance.

9

奈良(なら)がよひおなじつらなる細基手(ホソモトで)　野坡

Going back and forth to Nara,

They all look the same to me.

Small time peddlers.

Yaba

10

ことしは雨のふらぬ六月(ろくぐわつ)　芭蕉

This year we have had

A rainless sixth month.

Bashō[10]

11

預(あづ)けたるみそとりにやる向河岸(むかふがし)　野坡

It's time to send

For the miso I stashed

On the other shore.

Yaba[11]

[10] The speaker changes; in Bashō's verse it is the traveling salesmen who comment on the weather, which makes the previous verse merely the observation of a bystander. In cinematographic terms, focalization switches from one shot to the next on this link. In the Japanese lunisolar calendar, the six month is, quite literally, the rainless month (水無月, *minazuki* or "month of no water"). Nevertheless, it is hard to pin down the mood of the peddlers; are they complaining about the heat, or happy that the road will be dry. Fabrics, especially bleached cotton, were among the most famous products from Nara; the dry weather would, in that case, be certainly good for business.

[11] The drought has the river's current running low. A miso merchant, hoping to take advantage of the favorable shipping conditions, sends his servants to fetch the stock of miso he had paid for and kept in storage at a shop on the other shore.

11

預けたるみそとりにやる向河岸　野坡

It’s time to send

For the miso I stashed

On the other shore.

Yaba

12

ひたといひ出すお袋の事　芭蕉

All of a sudden, I blurt out

Something about mom.

Bashō[12]

13

終宵尼の持病を押へける　野坡

All night long,

Tending

To the nun’s illness!

Yaba[13]

[12] The speaker in the second verse is a young servant, sent across the river to retrieve the miso. The reason why he starts talking about his mother is because the owner, presumably and old man, is acquainted with her; however, a darker undertone may be that something tragic has happened to the mother and the young man, unable to contain himself, notifies the old man right away. According to Shiraishi (362) Bashō was very proud of this link, as he found the linking of the two scenes to be particularly clever.

[13] The setting is now a roadside inn. The speaker is a woman, perhaps one of the employees, watching over a nun that has taken ill while traveling. The woman, unconsciously, starts musing about her late mother, who resembles the nun either in age or appearance.

13

終宵尼の持病を押へける　野坡

All night long,

Tending to the

The nun's illness!

Yaba

14

こんにやくばかりのこる名月　芭蕉

Konjac is all that's left

Of the harvest moon.

Bashō[14]

15

はつ雁に乗懸下地敷て見る　野坡

As the first geese fly by,

I lay out the riding cushion

And test it out.

Yaba[15]

[14] The harvest moon（名月，*meigetsu* or, literally, the "famous moon"）celebrated on the 15th day of the 8th month in the Japanese lunisolar calendar, marks the end of summer and is at the center of a number of celebrations and seasonal festivals. Here, Bashō gives a humorous twist to Yaba's solemn verse; at a Buddhist convent, right before the start of a moon-viewing gathering, a young nun has been asked to take care of one of the elder sisters, bedridden with a sudden illness. When the young nun returns to the feast at dawn she discovers, to her chagrin, that everybody has gone to bed and the only food left is konjac jelly, which she does not seem to appreciate.

[15] "First geese"（はつ雁，*hatsukari*）is a seasonal word for autumn, which Yaba sets up to link with the harvest moon in the previous verse, and to indicate both dawn and traveling. Here, a traveler leaves a banquet (hence the leftover konjac) and sets up the cushion (乗懸, *norikage*) that Edo-period riders used in lieu of a saddle.

15

はつ雁に乗懸下地敷て見る　野坡

As the first geese fly by,

I lay out the riding cushion

And test it out.

Yaba

16

露を相手に居合ひとぬき　芭蕉

Against the dew

He thrusts once and sheaths his sword.

Bashō[16]

[16] The traveler from the previous verse is now identified as a young samurai, practices his swordsmanship on a grassy field before departing. The "first geese" from Yaba's poem, flying in a flash across the morning sky, are linked to two images in Basho's: the dew and the samurai's unsheathed sword.

17

町 衆 のつらりと酔て花の陰　野坡

The local bosses line up,

Drunkenly,

In the shade the blossoms.

Yaba[17]

[17] The season changes to spring. In a small town, a group of wealthy merchants go cherry blossom viewing and sit down to drink under the trees. One of the attendants (or perhaps a street performer), gets up and starts performing tricks with their blade to the amusement of those present.

17

町衆のつらりと酔て花の陰　野坡

The local bosses line up,

Drunkenly,

In the shade of the blossoms.

Yaba

18

門で押るゝ壬生の念仏　芭蕉

People press against the gates

For the nembutsu at Mibu.

Bashō[18]

19

東風々に糞のいきれを吹まはし　仝

The eastern winds

Carry

The steam of manure.

Bashō, again[19]

[18] The “nembutsu at Mibu” was a famous Kyōgen (farcical theatre) tradition at Mibu temple in Kyōto, were local performers chanted/mimicked the chanting of the nembutsu, the name of Amida Buddha as per the doctrines of the Pure Land tradition. The popularity of this performance meant that people from other towns in the Kansai area would travel expressly to see it, with wealthy merchants and samurai taking the betters spots within the temple’s precincts. In contrast, the poorer locals, as shown in this link, end up pressed against the gates around the temple.

[19] Keeping with the spring motif, the rice fields are being fertilized. Mibu temple sat at the outskirts of Kyōto and was surrounded by a prosperous farming area, and it would be expected that the smell of fertilizer would carry during this season. With this, the chaos from the previous scene is further developed, with the stench of the fields merging with the noise of the crowds.

19

東風々に糞のいきれを吹まはし　仝

The eastern winds

Carry

The steam of manure.

Bashō, again

20

たゞ居るまゝに肱わづらふ　野坡

Just sitting around,

His arm hurt.

Yaba[20]

21

江戸の左右むかひの亭主登られて　芭蕉

Gossip from Edo.

The shop owner from across the street

Is back in the capital.

Bashō[21]

[20] The fertilized fields surround an old farmer who is currently incapacitated, perhaps due to rheumatism. Unable to work, he stays restlessly at home while the rest of his family tends to the fields.

[21] The shop owner has just returned from Edo, where he was on a business trip. The speaker has hurt his arm and, with nothing else to do, is now listening closely to his neighbor’s stories from Edo, the shogunate’s administrative center.

21

江戸の左右むかひの亭主登られて　芭蕉

Gossip from Edo.

The shop owner from across the street

Is back in the capital.

Bashō

22

こちにもいれどから臼をかす　野坡

We need it here, too,

But I will let you use our rice mortar.

Yaba[22]

23

方々に十夜の内のかねの音　芭蕉

It's everywhere,

The sound of the bell

During the ten nights.

Bashō[23]

[22] Rice was sold in its husk, and people would typically line up to use public rice mills; however, some families kept rice mortars at home for convenience. The shop owner, having just come from Edo, cannot use the public mill and instead asks his neighbor across the street for help. These urban scenes of civility and neighborly relations are a staple of *Sumidawara* and *karumi* aesthetics as a whole.

[23] The "ten nights" was a ritual associated with pure land Buddhism, which involved the chanting of the nembutsu at night from the sixth to the fifteenth day of the tenth month. Rice would be presented as an offering, and people visiting the temples would be gifted rice gruel at the temples. This serves as a background, both in terms of content and atmosphere, to the borrowing of the rice mortar in Yaba's verse. In classical Japanese poetry, "ten nights" is seasonal word for early winter.

23

方々に十夜の内のかねの音　芭蕉

It’s everywhere,

The sound of the bell

During the ten nights.

Bashō

24

桐の木高く月さゆる也　野坡

High over the paulownia,

The moon glimmers coldly!

Yaba[24]

25

門しめてだまってねたる面白さ　芭蕉

Fun is

Shutting the gate

And going quietly to sleep.

Bashō[25]

[24] Yaba sticks to the early seasonal mood with the insertion of the cold moon. The resulting scene is pregnant with *sabi*, the elegant sense of loneliness that characterized Bashō’s oeuvre before the development of *karumi* (see introduction).

[25] Since it is now winter, social gatherings have stopped. The speaker, an introvert, seizes the chance and goes to bed early, without speaking to anyone. This sense of placidness in solitude pushes this verse against the darker undertones of Yaba’s, and echoes another famous verse by Bashō:

> 朝顔や昼は錠おろす門の垣

Makoto Ueda translates it like this:

> *The morning glory—/ in the daytime, a bolt is fastened/ On the front yard gate* (*Matsuo Bashō*, 33).

25

門しめてだまってねたる面白さ　芭蕉

Fun is

Shutting the gate

And going quietly to sleep.

Bashō

26

ひらふた金で表がへする　野坡

With the money I picked up

I reface the tatami.

Yaba[26]

27

はつ午に女房のおやこ振舞て　芭蕉

On the first day of the horse,

I am hosting

My wife's parents.

Bashō[27]

[26] The speaker changes; no longer an introvert, we discover that the reason they hurried to fasten the lock at their gate is that they found (or stole?) someone's money in the street. They made it back home safely and are free now to start scheming.

[27] "The first day of the horse" refers, in accordance with the old lunisolar calendar, to the first occurrence of a "day of the horse" during the second month of the lunisolar calendar. Traditionally dedicated to the Inari goddess, this day was observed with festivities and banquets around Kyōto, especially in the Fushimi ward. With the money from the previous verse, the speaker plans to resurface his tatami and put on airs when his in-laws visit. Bashō bases his link in part on the figure of Inari, the goddess of prosperity, whose presence is implied by both "the first day of the horse" and the money picked up in the street.

27

はつ午に女房のおやこ振舞て　芭蕉

On the first day of the horse,

I am hosting

My wife’s parents.

Bashō

28

又このはるも済ぬ牢人　野坡

This spring, yet again,

The rōnin finds himself uncommissioned.

Yaba[28]

29

法印の湯治を送る花ざかり　芭蕉

The high priest leaves

For the hot springs.

Peaking cherry blossoms.

Bashō[29]

[28] A rōnin is a masterless samurai. Although at the top of the social pyramid during the Edo period, their subsistence depended almost entirely on the patronage of a lord or a noble. In Bashō’s time there were anywhere from 200,000 to 400,000 rōnin in Japan waiting to be taken into service, further complicated by the lack of conflict or any urgent defense needs. The plight of the rōnin from this link elicits our sympathy: it has been more than a year since he last was in service, and will now have to explain himself to his in-laws.

[29] While the rōnin suffers, a high-ranking Buddhist priest leaves for the medicinal baths in the mountains. The insertion of the cherry blossoms suggests that both characters observe the same flowers. In the eyes of society both the rōnin and the priest are drifters, but drifting brings along different outcomes: sorrow for the warrior, fulfillment for the cleric.

29

法印の湯治を送る花ざかり　芭蕉

The high priest leaves

For the hot springs.

Peaking cherry blossoms.

Bashō

30

なは手を下りて青麦の出来　野坡

Down the path between the paddies,

Kernels in the young wheat.

Yaba[30]

31

どの家も東の方に窓をあけ　野坡

Every single house

Opens its windows

Towards the east.

Yaba[31]

[30] The season is still spring and the priest, travelling on foot, proceed towards the hot springs through a narrow, straight path lined by rice paddies. In front of him, expanding as he approaches, is a lush wheat field heavy with ears of grain. A pleasant spring scene, punctuated by the cherry blossoms from the previous verse.

[31] According to the Chinese *wuxing*（五行，“five directions”）tradition, winds coming from the east are characteristic of spring, and the residents of a small farming village leave their windows open to enjoy the fragrant spring breezes.

31

どの家も東の方に窓をあけ　野坡

Every single house

Opens its windows

Towards the east.

Yaba

32

魚に喰あくはまの雑水　芭蕉

Tired of eating fish,

Rice gruel on the seashore.

Bashō[32]

33

千どり啼一夜一夜に寒うなり　野坡

The chirp of the plover.

Night after night

The cold grows.

Yaba[33]

[32] Bashō moves the hamlet from Yaba's verse to the seaside. All the houses, lined up parallel to the coast, maintain their western windows closed to avoid taking in directly the sea breeze, and open their eastern windows for ventilation. The "rice gruel" (雑炊, *zōsui*) here indicates a concoction of rice with vegetables and small fish, but Bashō has chosen to use the Chinese character for water（水）to further emphasize the coastal landscape.

[33] The plover is a seasonal word for early winter, and its voice is usually associated with the height of autumn. At nighttime, a fisherman (or his wife) warms up the rice gruel when the plover sings; the passage of time, highlighted by the phrase "night after night", carries along an increasing sense of discomfort: the food grows tiring, and the days colder.

33

千どり啼一夜一夜に寒うなり　野坡

The chirp of the plover.

Night after night

The cold grows.

Yaba

34

未進の高のはてぬ算用　芭蕉

Unpaid taxes,

Unfinished calculations.

Bashō[34]

35

隣へも知らせず嫁をつれて来て　野坡

Without sending word to the neighbors,

I brought home

A bride.

Yaba[35]

[34] Taxes, a trope of Edo-period popular literature, mesh well with the sympathy for lower classes characteristic of *karumi* poetry and, as a result, appear several times in *Sumidawara*. The rice harvest is over, and the last night of the year, deadline for settling debts and paying tribute to the authorities, is approaching fast. The inhabitants of a small village stay up deep into the night trying to figure out a way of gathering enough rice to pay tribute and avoid receiving any fines or punishment. The song of the plover at night further calls to mind the impending deadline.

[35] This verse features a *kireji* or “cutting word” that splits it into two distinct phrases, but I chose to present it as a three-phrase poem to avoid confusion. Here, the speaker has decided to take a wife (and the dowry that comes with her) as a last resort for his ongoing financial hardships; the marriage is kept under curtains as it would be obvious to the neighbors that the main motivation is money. The previous verse, dark as it was, is presented under a humoristic light here.

35

隣へも知らせず嫁をつれて来て　野坡

Without sending word to the neighbors,

I brought home

A bride.

Yaba

36

屏風(びやうぶ)の陰(かげ)にみゆるくはし盆　　芭蕉

In the shadow of the folding screen,

A tray with sweets is visible.

Bashō[36]

[36] As the last verse of the sequence (挙句, *ageku*), the mood is positive and celebratory. The scene has changed, and the folding screen may suggest that financial issues are no longer the reason for this secretive marriage; modesty, instead, seems to be the reason. Proof of this is the tray of sweets, a remnant from the celebration, which is partially obscured by the folding screen; an apt symbol for the hidden bride and, by extension, the intimate nature of her union with the speaker in Yaba's verse.

三吟

Three poets

37

兼好(けんかう)も莚織(むしろおり)けり花ざかり　嵐雪

Even Kenkō

Wove straw mats;

Peaking cherry blossoms.

Ransetsu[1]

38

あざみや苣(ちし)に雀鮨(すずめすし)もる　利牛

In thistle and lettuce leaves,

I serve sparrow-style sushi.

Rigyū[2]

39

片道(かたみち)は春の小坂(こざか)のかたまりて　野坡

Making my way out through

The hardened mound

In spring.

Yaba[3]

[1] Ransetsu (1654-1707) was a samurai from Awaji province (present day Hyōgo prefecture) who, while serving as a retainer of Inoue Masatoshi, lord of the Kasama state, met Bashō in Edo. At the time of the master's death, he was his most senior pupil and was regarded as Bashō's official successor. It is fitting, then, that he writes the *hokku* of the second sequence. The focus here is Yoshida Kenkō (1283-1350), was the author of the famous miscellanea *Tsuretzuregusa* (徒然草, known in English as "Essays in Idleness"). It is said that Kenkō, a monk, would often go to a pine grove known as Abeno and weave straw mats there to support Tenno-ji, the temple in Ōsaka to which he was affiliated. The spring motif here betrays the speaker's guilt at sitting leisurely under the blossoms when Kenkō, in contrast, sat under pine trees and worked.

[2] Rigyū (dates unknown) was the head clerk at the money-exchange division of the Echigoya, which means he was probably Yaba's direct superior. He joined Bashō late in the master's life and was most influenced by *karumi*-style poetics; alongside Yaba and Ko'oku, his co-workers at the Echigoya, he is one of the main compilers of *Sumidawara*. Ransetsu's haiku salutes Rigyū, a hard-working commoner who, like Kenkō, cannot fully devote his time to beauty. Rigyū's verse, then, greets Ransetsu back, presenting "sparrow" sushi (old-style sushi shaped like a bird) a delicacy from Ōsaka that acknowledges the reference to Kenkō; the insinuation, perhaps, is that this is what Kenkō would have eaten under the blossoms.

[3] The sparrow-style sushi from the previous verse is the food packed by a traveler coming down the same hill he crossed a few days earlier, when snow lingered. The slush has dried, and the earth is now dry.

39

片道（かたみち）は春の小坂（こざか）のかたまりて　野坡

Making my way out through

The hardened mound

In spring.

Yaba

40

外（そと）をざまくに囲ふ相撲場（すまうば）　嵐雪

Clumsily guarded from the outside,

The sumo ring.

Ransetsu[4]

41

細々（ほそぼそ）と朔日（ついたち）ごろの宵（よひ）の月　利牛

Just a sliver,

The evening moon

At the beginning of the month.

Rigyū[5]

[4] The speaker descends to a small village where an autumn festival is taking place. Ritual sumo matches would be held at shrines on these occasions, and the speaker notes the rough enclosure, done with grass mats or curtains, built around the ring to stop outsiders from entering. The phrase “hardened mound” in the previous verse links nicely with the image of the sumo ring.

[5] The new moon marks the start of months in the lunisolar calendar, which is why the moon is so thin around this time. The locution “The evening moon/at the beginning of the month” (朔日ごろの宵の月, *tsuitachigoro no yoinotsuki*) is likely inspired by an almost identical expression in the Ukifune chapter of *The Tale of Genji*, which frames Kaoru’s visit to Ukifune at her residence in Uji at the beginning of the second month.

41

細々（ほそぼそ）と朔日（ついたち）ごろの宵（よひ）の月　利牛

Just a sliver,

The evening moon

At the beginning of the month.

Rigyū

42

早稲（わせ）も晩稲（おくて）も相生（あひおひ）に出る　野坡

Early rice and late rice,

Come up together.

Yaba[6]

43

泥染（どろぞめ）を長き流（ながれ）にのばすらん　嵐雪

Mud dye threads

Stretched long,

Just like a stream.

Ransetsu[7]

[6] The moon typically indicates autumn, the time of the rice harvest. As farmers reap the early yield at a paddy, late ears of rice start developing on another. Abundance is the main theme of this link.

[7] Before the peak farming season, as people start filling out the rice fields with river water, cotton thread was dyed in puddles prepared with “mud dye” (泥染, *dorozome*), an agent high in iron that gives clothes a greyish black or dark brown color; threads or pieces of fabric would then be rinsed in ditches with flowing water to clear out excess coloring or create patterns. This is what the speaker observes here: long lines of colored thread flowing along the current of the ditch.

43

泥染(どろぞめ)を長き流(ながれ)にのばすらん　嵐雪

Mud dye threads

Stretched long,

Just like a stream.

Ransetsu

44

あちこちすれば昼のかねうつ　利牛

Running up and down,

The midday bell rings.

Rigyū[8]

45

隣から節々(せつせつ)嫁を呼(よび)に来る　野坡

From next door,

Every waking moment,

They call upon the young bride.

Yaba[9]

[8] The speaker from the previous verse, busy dying thread, has been running up and down along the ditch all morning. The bell from a nearby temple rings indicating midday, and they can finally take a break.

[9] A young married couple lives next door to the husband's parents, who keep calling on their daughter-in-law for help with the household chores. The girl, running back and forth all day, has not had time to take care of her own chores and is dismayed when she hears the midday bell signaling her husband's return for lunch.

45

隣から節々(せつせつ)嫁を呼(よび)に来る　野坡

From next door,

Every waking moment,

They call upon the young bride.

Yaba

46

てうてうしくも誉(ほむ)るかひわり　嵐雪

The split-shell knot of her kimono

Is excessively praised.

Ransetsu[10]

47

黒谷(くろだに)のくちは岡崎聖護院(しやうごゐん)　利牛

The mouth

Of the town of Kurodani

Is Okazaki’s Shōgo-in temple.

Rigyū[11]

[10] *Kaiwari* (貝割, literally “split seashell”) was a type of kimono sash knot in vogue during Bashō’s time. The wife next-door, a fashionable young woman, ties her kimono this way and receives all kinds of empty praise every time she is called over by her neighbors or in-laws.

[11] This clever but obscure link works essentially as an overwrought geographical joke. The premise is that Kurodani, a village to the east of Kyōto, is where Hōnen, the founder of the Pure Land sect in Japanese Buddhism, once resided. A pilgrim trying to reach Kurodani from Kyōto had to pass by force through Okazaki, where Shōgoin, a Buddhist temple in an area famous for its daikon radishes, was located. Rigyū’s link hinges on the word *kaiwari*, which gives name to the kimono sash knot from the previous verse but is also homophonous with the word for “radish sprout”. The mention of Shōgoin at the very end of the pilgrim’s journey must have been unexpected and amusing to contemporary readers, but the connection is much harder to make nowadays.

47

黒谷のくちは岡崎聖護院　利牛

The mouth

Of the town of Kurodani

Is Okazaki’s Shōgo-in temple.

Rigyū

48

五百のかけを二度に取けり　野坡

I had to collect twice

A meager five hundred *mon* debt.

Yaba[12]

49

綱ぬきのいぼの跡ある雪のうへ　嵐雪

There are marks

Of shoe spikes

ln the snow.

Ransetsu[13]

[12] The speaker here is a hapless debt collector who must leave the capital to collect, for the second time, a meager five hundred *mon* debt from a morose debtor living deep in the mountains. A *mon* was equivalent to one thousandth of a *kan*, the highest currency at the time. Debt collection is a common topic of Edo period literature, and *Sumidawara* is no exception (see verse 34); what is truly innovative here is that the commonly reviled debt collectors are presented in a sympathetic light.

[13] The traces on the snow are those of fellow debt collectors; we know this because the last day of the year was the deadline for settling all accounts and paying tribute, which meant that collectors were at their busiest, transversing long distances on foot as they struggled to reach small towns and villages deep in the mountains. Ransetsu further pours sympathy on the men entrusted with such a thankless job.

49

綱ぬきのいぼの跡ある雪のうへ　嵐雪

There are marks

Of shoe spikes

ln the snow.

Ransetsu

50

人のさはらぬ松黒(くろ)む也(なり)　　利牛

Undisturbed by people

The pines turn black.

Rigyū[14]

51

雑役(ざふやく)の鞍(くら)を下せば日がくれて　野坡

As I unsaddle

The errand-running horse,

The sun sets.

Yaba[15]

[14] In the middle of a mountain, an isolated pine grove grows thick without people coming for wood. Their trunks look dark under the shade but loom darker still when contrasted against the snow. The subject is now someone living deep in the mountains, likely a *matagi*, the traditional hunters of the Tōhoku region, who are known for wearing spiked shoes in the snow.

[15] An “errand-running horse” (雑役馬), unlike a regular post horse, was used for private, urgent matters that were not limited to carrying goods or transportation, such as transmitting urgent news. The speaker here is likely the stable boy who, after receiving back the horse, leads it back to the barn. As the sun sets, the pine grove from the previous verse darkens.

51

雑役の鞍を下せば日がくれて　野坡

As I unsaddle

The errand-running horse,

The sun sets.

Yaba

52

飯の中なる芋をほる月　嵐雪

The moon, digging

For the yams within the rice.

Ransetsu[16]

53

漸と雨降やみてあきの風　利牛

At last

The rain has ceased

And the autumn wind blows.

Rigyū[17]

[16] "Moon" is a seasonal word for autumn that refers here to the "yam harvest moon" (芋名月, *imomeigetsu*), the full moon of the 15th day of the 8th month in the lunisolar calendar. After unsaddling, the speaker sits to eat under the moonlight, which penetrates deep into the rice as if looking for the yams inside. The superposition of a beautiful moon with a modest rural meal creates an unexpected but gentle contrast between high and low, typical of *karumi*.

[17] Here, the harvest moon is not incidental but anticipated. Taro yams were sometimes presented to the harvest moon as *shinsen* (神饌, "God's food"), ritual offerings to Shinto deities. Here, the rain stops and the wind carries the clouds away, letting the full moon shine over an offering of rice and yams.

53

漸(やうやう)と雨降(ふり)やみてあきの風　利牛

At last

The rain has ceased

And the autumn wind blows.

Rigyū

54

鶏頭(けいとう)みては又鼾(いびき)かく　野坡

He was looking at the cockscomb

But now snores again.

Yaba[18]

[18] “Cockscomb” is a seasonal word for autumn. Kept from going to work by the rain, the owner of the house takes a nap on the verandah. He wakes up for a brief second and glances at the cockscomb in the garden, and before long falls asleep again.

55

奉公のくるしき顔に墨ぬりて　嵐雪

Smeared ink

In the servant’s

Weary face.

Ransetsu[19]

[19] This humorous verse presents a young live-in accounting apprentice who, exhausted, has fallen asleep on the job. His co-worker, as a prank, has smeared the black ink with which they are taking notes on his face; the first boy, however, is so tired that even then he does not wake up. This verse too reads like an acknowledgement by Ransetsu, a samurai, of Yaba and Rigyū’s life as accountants at the Echigoya department store.

55

奉公のくるしき顔に墨ぬりて　嵐雪

Smeared ink

In the servant’s

Weary face.

Ransetsu

56

抱揚る子の小便をする　利牛

The infant, held up,

Pees.

Rigyū[20]

57

ぐはたぐはたと河内の荷物送り懸　野坡

Toddling back and forth

As we prepare

The order to Kawachi.

Yaba[21]

[20] The scene changes: the live-in trainee is now a house servant in charge of housekeeping, The “ink” in her face is soot from the stove; while she cooks, she tries to comfort her master's crying baby, who pees on her. While the image may elicit a laugh, it is a guilty one because we feel her exhaustion patently.

[21] This is now the storefront of a small family business. The storekeeper, busy with the preparations for a big order to Kawachi province (the eastern part of present-day Ōsaka prefecture) a major business hub, which insinuates that this is important business. The family’s infant runs about on steady feet, getting in the way of his parents; however, when they pick him up, the toddler instinctively pees. This lively scene references, again, the daily life of the merchant class with which Yaba, Rigyū, and Ko’oku were well acquainted, and which is characteristic of *karumi* poetry and *Sumidawara* as a whole.

57

ぐはたぐはらと河内(かはち)の荷物送り懸(かけ)　野坡

Toddling back and forth

As we prepare

The order to Kawachi.

Yaba

58

心みらるゝ箸(はし)のせんだく　嵐雪

I'll wash up the chopsticks

That best show who we are.

Ransetsu[22]

59

壻(むこ)が来て娘の世とは成(なり)にけり　利牛

We took in a son-in-law,

And this has now become

My daughter's world!

Rigyū[23]

[22] The owner of the shop from the previous verse runs back and forth while entertaining a distinguished customer. Choosing the right chopsticks is crucial, as it will display the shop owner's sense of style and hospitality; in fact, the word *sendaku*（せんだく）hints at both cleaning and choosing however, may also mean "choose"; if that were the case, the chopsticks are not being rinsed but carefully inspected in order to determine which ones would make a better impression on the visitor.

[23] A family adopted a young man and married him to his daughter, a common practice when households did not have any male heirs. The speaker, here, is likely the mother; when the new member of the family arrives, she tries to impress him favorably by carefully preparing the best chopsticks they have for his first dinner at the house, an act that anticipating the inevitable change of roles now that her daughter, and her husband, are the sole proprietors of the family business.

59

壻(むこ)が来て娘の世とは成(なり)にけり　利牛

We took in a son-in-law,

And this has now become

My daughter’s world!

Rigyū

60

ことしのくれは何も囉(もら)はぬ　野坡

It’s the end of the year,

But we didn’t get anything.

Yaba[24]

61

金仏(かなぶつ)の細き御足(みあし)をさするらん　嵐雪

Perhaps I should rub

The gilded buddha’s

Delicate feet.

Ransetsu[25]

[24] The season is winter. The speaker may still be the mother of the daughter, or the father, or maybe both parents; what is clear is that now that her daughter and her husband have taken the reins of the family they have been relegated, not even receiving a year-end gift (お歳暮, *oseibo*).

[25] The speaker from the previous verse considers visiting a temple and prostrating themselves in front of a gilded Buddha statue to wish for a better year and see if their fortunes improve. Another plausible reading is that the speaker here may be the chief priest at a poor Buddhist temple who, having not received any donations and feeling at a loss on what to offer the Buddha on the new year, they kneel and rub the cold feet of the stature, its feet as if they were those of a sick person.

61

金仏の細き御足をさするらん　嵐雪

Perhaps I should rub

The gilded buddha's

Delicate feet.

Ransetsu

62

此かいわいの小鳥皆よる　利牛

The little birds from around these parts,

They all gather.

Rigyū[26]

63

黍の穂は残らず風に吹倒れ　野坡

The ears of millet,

Every single one,

Blown down by the wind.

Yaba[27]

[26] "Little birds"（小鳥，*kotori*）is a seasonal word for autumn. In a mountain temple, the birds gather around a priest as he carefully cleans a statue of the Buddha. Shiraishi believes that this sudden grouping of birds may be a vision of Nirvana (369); a reward, perhaps, for the monk's pious actions in the first verse.

[27] The season is still autumn; the heavy ears of grain make the thin stalks bend under the wind. The birds from the previous link notice this and come flying to peck at them in the ground.

63

黍(きび)の穂は残らず風に吹倒(ふきたふ)れ　野坡

The ears of millet,

Every single one,

Blown down by the wind.

Yaba

64

馬場(ばば)の喧嘩(けんくわ)の跡にすむ月　嵐雪

Over the traces of a fight

The moon sets at the racetracks.

Ransetsu[28]

[28] Yaba's verse is incorporated into the link as a metaphor for the current state of the racetrack, which got swept away by a big riot earlier the same day. It is night now, however, and the contrast between the earlier chaos and the quiet autumn moon incites an uncanny, eerie feeling.

65

弟はとうとう江戸で人になる　利牛

My little brother,

In Edo, at last,

Will become a man.

Rigyū[29]

[29] The eldest son of a rural family, having inherited control over the household, thinks about a younger brother who has been forcibly sent to Edo. The reasons for this are apparent in the previous verse: the younger brother gambled and quarreled at the tracks, and its dissolute lifestyle became a concern for the family. His going to Edo may even indicate that he has escaped the authorities, with the quiet moon indicating that the dust surrounding this scandal has finally settled.

65

弟はとうとう江戸で人になる　利牛

My little brother,

In Edo, at last,

Will become a man.

Rigyū

66

今に庄やのくちはほどけず　野坡

Even now, the village headman

Will not budge.

Yaba[30]

67

売手からうつてみせたるたゝき鉦　嵐雪

The salesman

Hits the gong for us

On and on and on.

Ransetsu[31]

[30] In order for the younger brother to leave the village (or, if he has escaped, to avoid being punished by his actions), the eldest brother pleads to the village chief, unsuccessfully, to receive permission to take out the younger brother's name out of the family registry (戸籍, *koseki*). During the Edo period, strict controls were put in place to keep track of people's whereabouts and limit their movement within the country. The census was the main tool to enforce these controls and, as the highest official in the village, the chief had authority over modifications of the family registry at the local level.

[31] A traveling salesman visits a temple and demonstrates a *tatakigane* (敲鉦), a small gong that is placed flat in the floor and hit with hammer. Among the people witnessing this is the village chief, who remains unimpressed; the salesman must obtain the chief's approval to peddle his goods. The boisterous eagerness of the salesman is contrasted with the silent disapproval of the village chief, creating an endearing scene full of local color.

67

売手からうつてみせたるたゝき鉦　嵐雪

The salesman

Hits the gong for us

On and on and on.

Ransetsu

68

ひらりひらりとゆきのふり出し　利牛

Fluttering,

Snow starts to fall.

Rigyū[32]

69

鎌倉の便きかせに走らする　野坡

They sent me out running

Upon hearing

The news from Kamakura.

Yaba[33]

[32] It is now the beginning of winter. In a mountain village, the salesman is trying to sell his goods when, unexpectedly, the first snow of the season falls.

[33] At a samurai household, a vassal is sent to confirm urgent news from Kamakura, despite the snow. This verse was likely inspired by “The potted trees” (鉢木, *hachinoki*), a famous Nō play by either Zeami or his father Kan'ami, and which tells of a traveling monk that is suddenly caught under a snowstorm. Seeking refuge, he calls on Sano Tsuneyo, the owner of a shabby house nearby. Tsuneyo takes the monk in and offers him proper hospitality; sensing the cold growing and lacking firewood, Tsuneyo goes as far as throwing three beautiful bonsai into his fire pit. When the monk asks about the trees, Tsuneyo reveals that he was once a high-ranking official who lost everything because of a relatives’ involvement in an embezzlement case; the bonsai were, in fact, the last remains of Tsuneyo’s fortune. He insists on his innocence and tells the monk that, even after falling out of grace, he is prepared to return to Kamakura, the seat of the shogunate, and fight for the shogun should he ever be called back. The monk leaves and, in the spring, a messenger shows up to summon Tsuneyo to Kamakura. He dons his old armor, grabs his rusty naginata and rushes out atop an emaciated horse; he then discovers that the monk he sheltered during the snowstorm was no other than Hōjō Tokiyori, regent of the shogunate, who reappoints Tsuneyo as the lord of his former lands plus three additional territories, as a way of paying him back for the three bonsai he burnt that night.

69

鎌倉の便きかせに走らする　野坡

They sent me out running out

Upon hearing

The news from Kamakura.

Yaba

70

かした処のしれぬ細引　嵐雪

A roll of packing string

That I can’t remember who I lent to.

Ransetsu[34]

71

独ある母をすすめて花の陰　利牛

I led

Mother, all alone,

To the shade under the blossoms.

Rigyū[35]

[34] The link with the previous verse hinges on the word *tayori* (便): news, tidings, but also “mail” or “parcel”. In order to ascertain the news, the speaker hurries to mail a note to Kamakura. Once the note is written, however, they realize that their packing string is gone and cannot roll and tie the paper; because of this, they rush about knocking on doors and asking about the string. After Yaba’s erudite verse, Ransetsu attempts to return to lighter topics.

[35] The season changes to spring. This link focuses on filial piety: despite her reluctance, a son takes his old mother, recently widowed, to see the cherry blossoms. The string from the previous verse is needed to pack the snacks for the trip, but the mother, still distraught, cannot remember who has it.

71

独(ひとり)ある母をすすめて花の陰　利牛

I led

Mother, all alone,

To the shade under the blossoms.

Rigyū

72

まだかびのこる正月の餅　野坡

Some mold remains in what’s left

Of the new year’s mochi.

Yaba[36]

[36] The son and the mother sit under the blossoms and eat the leftover mochi they had prepared for new year's, about two months before. Mochi was associated with longevity and treated as a religious offering, which means that the mother saved the mochi expressly for the occasion. Renga sequences try to end on a high, celebratory note, and longevity is an appropriate topic. As such, we may dismiss the mold as simply a by-product of preserving the mochi for a long time, but it may also insinuate that the mother’s ability to take care of herself is declining.

ふか川にまかりて

Coming Down to Fukagawa

73

空豆(そらまめ)の花さきにけり麥の縁(へり)　孤屋

The fava beans

Bloom—

The edge of the wheat field.

Ko’oku[1]

74

昼の水鶏(くひな)のはしる溝川(みぞかは)　芭蕉

In the ditch, the water rails

Run at noon.

Bashō[2]

75

上張(うはばり)を通さぬほどの雨降(ふり)て　岱水

Rain of the kind

That doesn’t soak one’s jacket

Is falling.

Taisui[3]

[1] Ko’oku (dates unknown) was an Edo native. Like Yaba and Rigyū, his fellow compilers of *Sumidawara*, he worked at the Echigoya.

“Wheat” is a seasonal word for summer. Basho's hut was in Fukagawa, on the edge of Edo. In this context, the fava beans may represent Bashō himself: a small, unassuming plant putting forth beautiful violet and white flowers. Another way of reading this *hokku* is to take the wheat field as representation of the vast knowledge and skill of Bashō, which his disciples admire from the perspective of the humble fava beans, hoping to bloom by the side of the great master.

[2] Bashō completes the link with a greeting to his disciples. The call of the water rail, a nocturnal bird species, resembles the sound of knocking on a door. The speaker, presumably Bashō himself, feigns surprise at receiving a visitor during the day, as the only time where he hears knocking is at night, when the water rails roam about.

[3] The ditch where the water rails gather is now overflowing with rain. It is, however, gentle rain, constant but not hard enough to penetrate the ticker fabric of an *uwabari* (上張, literally “put on top”) an additional layer of clothing similar to a jacket. The speaker, perhaps a traveler, crosses a field under this rather pleasant rain, catching the voice of the water rail nearby.

75

上張(うはばり)を通さぬほどの雨降(ふり)て　岱水

Rain of the kind

That doesn’t soak one’s jacket

Is falling.

Taisui

76

そつとのぞけば酒の最中　利牛

When I steal a glance,

The drinking bout is at its peak.

Rigyū[4]

77

寝処(ねどころ)に誰(たれ)もねて居(ゐ)ぬ宵の月　芭蕉

In the sleeping area,

Not a soul;

Moonlight at dusk.

Bashō[5]

[4] It is a slow, rainy day. When the speaker, who has been walking outside, peeks into a room, he sees a group of people merrymaking in the middle of the day. Who can this speaker be? Their surprise at the drinking party suggests that it is either the boss or the wife of one of the participants.

[5] The stage for this verse is either a roadside inn or the common sleeping area of a big store in the city, where servants and migrant workers would room together. Although they said they were going straight to bed, a drinker or group of drinkers secretly opened a bottle and enjoyed themselves. The speaker, that is, the person doing the peeking here, could be the workers’ boss or, in a somber tone, a co-worker who was not invited to the party.

77

寝処に誰もねて居ぬ宵の月　芭蕉

In the sleeping area,

Not a soul;

Moonlight at dusk.

Bashō

78

どたりと塀のころぶあきかぜ　孤屋

Thud! Goes the wall,

Knocked down by the autumn wind.

Ko'oku[6]

79

きりぎりす薪の下より鳴出して　利牛

The grasshopper

Starts chirping

Under the firewood.

Rigyū[7]

[6] When the wall comes down, it is revealed that no one was inside; relief is intertwined with loneliness as the moon shines into the empty space. Connecting the autumn moon with strong winds was a common poetic motif in classical Japanese literature, but here is treated with lightness through the use of the onomatopoeia *dotari*（どたり, "thud"）.

[7] "Grasshopper" is a seasonal word for autumn. The scene described in this verse should be taken as consecutive to the wall in the previous one; the wall falls, and, on cue, the grasshopper starts chirping. The wall used was part of a dwelling, now in ruins, where a pile of unused firewood remains. This reminds us that a person, perhaps a family, used to live there. The chirping of the grasshopper, another common autumn motif, emphasizes the desolation of the scene. This verse may be a callout to one of Bashō's famous poems from *Oku no Hosomichi*:

むざんやな甲の下のきりぎりす

How pathetic!/ Under the samurai's helmet/ a grasshopper

79

きりぎりす薪(マキ)の下より鳴出(なきだ)して　　利牛

The grasshopper

Starts chirping

Under the firewood.

Rigyū

80

晩の仕事の工夫するなり　　岱水

I will figure out

How to work at night.

Taisui[8]

[8] The voice of the grasshopper announces nighttime during the autumn season. Soon it will be too dark to keep working, which prompts the speaker, a farmer or woodcutter living in the countryside, to ponder different ways they can stay busy until late now that the nights will start to get longer.

81

娣(いもうと)をよい処(ところ)からもらはるゝ　　孤屋

My little sister

Will be taken in

By a good family.

Ko’oku[9]

[9] A younger sister marrying is a felicitous occasion for the speaker; however, it would also mean they will now have to provide her with sufficient money for the dowry, which is why they work day and night. Another possible reading is that the speaker of each verse is a different person. In the first verse, we would then be presented with the thoughts of the hard-working husband-to-be; in the second, with the older brother’s proud realization that an extremely reliable person has asked for his sister’s hand in marriage.

81

娣(いもうと)をよい処(ところ)からもらはるゝ　孤屋

My little sister

Will be taken in

By a good family.

Ko'oku

82

僧都(そうづ)のもとへまづ文をやる　芭蕉

Before anything else,

I will send word to the bishop.

Bashō[10]

83

風細(ほそ)う夜明(よあけ)がらすの啼(なき)わたり　岱水

In a still-winded dawn,

The cry of

The passing crows.

Taisui[11]

[10] After receiving a formal proposal, the speaker from the previous verse decides to write to a high-ranking priest for advice. It is possible that the conspicuous pairing of the words "bishop" and "letter" references the Uji chapters from *The Tale of Genji*, where the Bishop of Yokawa saves Ukifune, the princess that both Kaoru and Niou are courting, after she attempts suicide; the bishop, then, ordains her as a nun. When Kaoru finds out about this, he meets with the bishop and asks him to write Ukifune a letter encouraging her to leave the monastery.

[11] The ominous cry of the crows prompts the speaker, perhaps the caregiver to a sick person, to call for the bishop at once and start preparing funeral rites. After an erudite verse like Bashō's, there is a conscious effort to change the tone and transition into a natural scene.

83

風細う夜明がらすの啼わたり　　岱水

In a still-winded dawn,

The cry of

The passing crows.

Taisui

84

家のながれたあとを見に行　　利牛

I go to see what’s left

Of the house after the flood.

Rigyū[12]

85

鰌汁わかい者よりよくなりて　　芭蕉

Loach soup,

And you’ll feel better

Than a young man.

Bashō[13]

[12] It's not clear if the speaker is referring to a single house (probably their own) or to the houses, plural, in a small village ravaged by a storm; what we see in the first verse of the link is the landscape at end of the storm. Another simple but powerful verb that illustrates the plight of the people living in the countryside.

[13] There are two different ways to approach this link: the first identifies the speaker as an old man who, after a catastrophic flood, busies himself catching the loaches stranded among the ruins. The second reading of the link, much darker, sees the speaker as a thief that is looting the ruined houses and finds a pot filled with the soup. Despite pursuing different emotions, both readings coincide in that certain people can see good things even in the worst calamities.

85

鰌汁(どぢやうじる)わかい者よりよくなりて　芭蕉

Loach soup,

And you’ll feel better

Than a young man.

Bashō

86

茶の買置(かひおき)をさげて売出(うりだ)す　孤屋

I’ll put on sale

My stock of tea.

Ko’oku[14]

[14] This link stays in the realm of old-age wisdom and thriftiness. The speaker from the previous verse, still healthy in body, proves here to be also healthy in mind as he displays his business savvy.

87

この春はどうやら花の静(しづか)なる　利牛

This spring,

Somehow,

The blossoms are quiet.

Rigyū[15]

[15] In this verse, by way of metonymy, the word “blossoms” denotes the flower-watching gatherings that traditionally take place beneath cherry blossoms in spring. Tea was copiously consumed on this occasion and, as such, it was a good season for tea merchants. This year, however, the economy is stagnant, and people are not in the mood for merrymaking; this forces the seller from the previous verse to put on sale the tea he had preserved for this occasion.

87

この春はどうやら花の静なる　利牛

This spring,

Somehow,

The blossoms are quiet.

Rigyū

88

かれし柳を今におしみて　岱水

The withered willow,

How I miss it now!

Taisui[16]

89

雪の跡吹はがしたる朧月　孤屋

The last bits of snow,

Blown away

With the hazy moon.

Ko’oku[17]

[16] This link alludes to a famous *waka* by Sosei, one of the 36 poetry immortals in Japanese tradition:

> 見渡せば柳桜をこきまぜて都ぞ春のにしきなりける
>
> *As I look over/The willow and cherry trees/Twine together:/It's the brocade/Of the Capital in spring.*

In Taisui's verse, the speaker laments the withering of the willow tree he kept in his garden, thinking about how beautiful its green branches would have looked now that the cherry trees around it are in full bloom.

[17] The mention of the hazy moon (朧月, *oborozuki*), a seasonal word for spring, indicates that the snow is the product of a lasting cold season, which the willow from the previous verse could not endure.

89

雪の跡吹はがしたる朧月　　孤屋

The last bits of snow,

Blown away

With the hazy moon.

Ko’oku

90

ふとん丸けてものおもひ居る　　芭蕉

I roll up my futon,

Lost in deep thought.

Bashō[18]

91

不届な隣と中のわるうなり　　岱水

Our relationship

With the brutes next door

Has gotten worse.

Taisui[19]

[18] The scene suggests a female speaker. Edo-period futons did not fold as modern futons do; that’s why the speaker rolls up hers. Spring is the season more strongly associated with love; here, the woman worries about a romantic relationship, a common interpretation of the phrase *mono omoi*（ものおもひ, to “think about things”）.

[19] The speaker, likely a samurai（the word 不届, *futodoki*, “brutish” indicates a class-based moral judgment）, is the father of the girl from the previous verse. She is in love with the son of the low-ranking next-door neighbor, but her father would oppose such a union on the grounds of social hierarchy. Here, popular Edo-period motifs intersect with Heian-period literary tropes and are presented in a casual, semi-colloquial register. An exemplary *karumi* link.

91

不届な隣と中のわるうなり　　岱水

Our relationship

With the brutes next door

Has gotten worse.

Taisui

92

はっち坊主を上へあがらす　　利牛

The mendicant monk

Is asked to come in.

Rigyū[20]

93

泣事のひそかに出来し浅ぢふに　　芭蕉

Someone cries

Quietly

Amid the reeds.

Bashō[21]

[20] Because of their lack of affiliation to a temple and their laid-back demeanor, mendicant monks were looked at with suspicion and it was uncommon to invite them into a private residence uncommon. The difference here is that this family, in order to hear the latest gossip about their neighbors, bring the monk in as he has just visited their residence.

[21] The monk is asked in because someone in a poor house, surrounded by reeds, has just died. It is likely that this link refers to the folktale *Asaji ga Yado* (浅茅が宿, traditionally rendered as "The House in the Reeds" in English). The story, which originated from the *Chien Teng Hsin Hua*, a 14th century collection of Chinese ghost stories, was well known during Bashō's time and eventually appeared in Ueda Akinari's famous *Ugetsu Monogatari* (雨月物語, "Tales of Moonlight and Rain") in 1776. In Akinari's version of the story, a man wishing to increase his fortune goes to the capital, leaving behind his wife in their humble village house. Many years pass; when the man finally returns home, the village has fallen to ruin, but his house surprisingly remains in pristine condition. He goes in and meets his wife, who has been dutifully waiting for him, and they go to sleep. When he awakens the next day, his wife is gone, and the house decayed. A neighbor then explains that the house has been abandoned since his wife's death several years ago. It must also be noted that in *The Tale of Genji* Kiritsubo's mother, who is also Genji's grandmother, lives and eventually dies at a residence that is referred to as "the house amid the reeds".

93

泣事のひそかに出来し浅ぢふに　芭蕉

Someone cries

Quietly

Amid the reeds.

Bashō

94

置わすれたるかねを尋ぬる　孤屋

I rummage about

Looking for the misplaced money.

Ko'oku[22]

95

着のまゝにすくんでねれば汗をかき　利牛

Since I slept curled up

In full dress,

I am now drenched in sweat.

Rigyū[23]

[22] This verse, purposedly straightforward after the literary references preceding it, gives out the reason for the subreptitious weeping: the dweller of this poor house, perhaps an old woman, has forgotten where they hid the little money they had managed to save over the years.

[23] The speaker, a traveler, has just woken up from a bad dream and is drenched in cold sweat. Worried about being robbed, they chose to sleep in their regular clothes, with the money stored in the breast pocket; Ko'oku's verse is incorporated as a description of their nightmare, where the speaker's concerns about the money materialized. A skillful link.

95

着のまゝにすくんでねれば汗をかき　　利牛

Since I slept curled up

In full dress,

I am now drenched in sweat.

Rigyū

96

客を送りて提る燭台　　岱水

Leading the customer out,

The hostess holds up the candlestick.

Taisui[24]

97

今のまに雪の厚さを指てみる　　孤屋

All of a sudden,

He pokes the snow

To check its thickness.

Ko'oku[25]

[24] There are two possible interpretations for this link: the first identifies the location as a tea house where an unrefined customer fell asleep after having too much to drink and is now being led out in the state described in the preceding verse. The second possibility identifies the sweaty person as an attendant at a similar establishment who, having fallen asleep waiting on a patron all night long, is now leading them out to the street.

[25] The point of view moves from the hostess to the customer; in high spirits, he stalls and playfully pokes the snow (perhaps with a cane?) as he leaves the teahouse. We are invited to sympathize with the tired hostess, who cannot get rid of the person and return to sleep.

97

今のまに雪の厚さを指てみる　孤屋

All of a sudden,

He pokes the snow

To check its thickness.

Ko'oku

98

年貢すんだとほめられにけり　芭蕉

Paying the annual tribute

Earns me a word of praise.

Bashō[26]

99

息災に祖父のしらがのめでたさよ　岱水

Free from disease,

Grampa's gray hair

Is such a wonderful sight!

Taisui[27]

[26] This verse describes a farmer that has paid his taxes before the end of the year and is congratulated by a visiting official. This goes again a common trope in literature of the time: that of the insolvent man who goes to great lengths to avoid the tax collector, as seen in Saikaku's *Seken Munezan'yō* (世間胸算用, "Worldly Mental Calculations"), a humorous story on the year-end anxiety surrounding tax collection. This is also not the only link in *Sumidawara* that deals with the annual tribute, as seen in verses 34 and 48.

It was believed that abundant snow in the early winter was the result of a dry fall, which is good for the crops; this would explain why the farmer has managed to pay his taxes in advance. Nevertheless, the snow from the previous verse allows Bashō to portray the nonchalance of the satisfied tax collector.

[27] Life expectancy for males in Edo-period Japan was about 50 years old, which makes it unusual for the patriarch of a family to be healthy enough to work. However, when looked at in the context of the previous verse, a darker thread appears: this year, the family was only able to pay the tribute on time because of the old man's efforts, but what will happen to them when he is not around? This link highlights the economic frailty of people in the countryside, where health and finances were tightly interconnected.

99

息災に祖父のしらがのめでたさよ　岱水

Free from disease,

Grampa's gray hair

Is such a wonderful sight!

Taisui

100

堪忍ならぬ七夕の照り　利牛

I can't bear it—

The clear sky on Tanabata.

Rigyū[28]

101

名月のまに合せ度芋畑　芭蕉

I hope they make it in time

For the harvest moon:

A yam field.

Bashō[29]

[28] Even though Tanabata, the most important autumn festival, has arrived, the summer heat lingers and work on the fields during the harvest season is hard to endure. This contrasts the old man from the previous verse with the speaker who looks in awe at his elder's resilience.

[29] In the Edo period, farmers made offerings of yams (specifically taro yams) during harvest moon celebrations and considered them a sign of a bountiful harvest. Here, the speaker worries about the effect the enduring summer heat will have on them. For reference, the taro yams are presented in a very similar context in verse 52 in this collection.

101

名月のまに合せ度芋畑　芭蕉

I hope they make it in time

For the harvest moon:

A yam field.

Bashō

102

すたすたいふて荷ふ落鮎　孤屋

One-two, one-two they hurry,

Bearing a catch of sweetfish.

Ko'oku[30]

103

このごろは宿の通りもうすらぎし　利牛

These days,

Traffic around the station

Is fading out.

Rigyū[31]

[30] In true *karumi* fashion, the rapid trotting of the fishermen carrying the sweetfish is reproduced through the onomatopoeia *sutasuta* (すたすた), which conveys the sound of rapid footsteps. The sweetfish here are *ochiayu* (落鮎) or "falling sweetfish" because they have matured and are moving downstream to spawn. "Falling sweetfish" was a delicacy of the autumn season, which explains the rush of the fishermen; after tying them to a pole, they hurry to the market so that they can sell it in the "yam harvest moon" celebrations (see poem 52).

[31] The scene places the reader at one of the relay stations in the Edo-period highways. The number of travelers and pilgrims dwindles with the arrival of the autumn and the fishermen, instead of stopping at the station to peddle their fish, hurry past it. This link shades the bustling, celebratory spirit of the previous verse with a hint of economic anxiety.

103

このごろは宿(しゅく)の通りもうすらぎし　利牛

These days,

Traffic around the station

Is fading out.

Rigyū

104

山の根際(ねぎは)の鉦(かね)かすか也(なり)　岱水

From the foot of the mountain

The sound of the bell wanes.

Taisui[32]

105

よこ雲にそよそよ風の吹出(ふきいだ)す　孤屋

Into the trail of clouds

Gently, gently,

Blows the wind.

Ko'oku[33]

[32] This link picks up the lonely atmosphere from the previous verse and punctuates it with the distant sound of a temple bell, coming from a mountain across the plains. The weakening quality of the reverberations is presented in sync with the economic decay of the highway station.

[33] This link transposes the increasingly unsettling autumn imagery with a bright, almost cheerful spring setting. The gentle sound of the bell is no longer ominous, marking instead the beginning of the day. The clouds here evoke the romantic imagery at the beginning of Sei Shōnagon's *The Pillow Book*:

> "In spring it is the dawn that it is most beautiful. As the light creeps over the hills, their outlines are dyed a faint red and wisps of purplish clouds trail over them" (as translated by Ivan Morris).

The treatment of the topic is nevertheless light. An example of this is the onomatopoeia *soyosoyo*, (そよそよ) which mimics the sound of gentle wind but for which there is no English equivalent.

105

よこ雲にそよそよ風の吹出(ふきいだ)す　孤屋

Into the trail of clouds

Gently, gently,

Blows the wind.

Ko'oku

106

晒(さらし)の上にひばり囀(さへづ)る　利牛

Above bleached fabrics

The skylark chirps.

Rigyū[34]

107

花見にと女子(をなご)ばかりがつれ立(だち)て　芭蕉

Towards the blossoms,

It's all young girls,

Flocking together.

Bashō[35]

[34] This link establishes a delicate visual metaphor: the trailing clouds introduced in the previous verse are matched with the sprawling clothes set to dry next to each other. The introduction of human activity in this verse is accentuated by the song of the bird, which makes the people working on the ground stop and look up to the clouds.

[35] Bashō overlaps the chirping of the birds in the sky with the excited voices of the girls gathering on the ground to go see the blossoms. The bleached cotton fabrics from the previous verse（晒，*sarashi*）are the garments that they wear for the occasion, in a bucolic scene that exudes a type of innocence and purity typical of the poetry recorded in the *Man'yoshū*.

107

花見にと女子(をなご)ばかりがつれ立(だち)て　　芭蕉

Towards the blossoms,

It’s all young girls,

Flocking together.

Bashō

108

余(よ)のくさなしに菫(すみれ)たんぽゝ　　岱水

No plants here

But violets and dandelions.

Taisui[36]

芭蕉	Bashō
孤屋	Ko’oku
岱水	Taisui
利牛	Rigyū
各九句	Nine verses each.

[36] The *ageku* puts forth a climax of spring imagery. Taisui pairs Bashō’s metaphor for the girls with one of his own: the group is now being compared to a field where only wildflowers bloom. The phrases “it’s all young girls” and “no young girls” serve as the hinge holding the link together.

百韻

A Hundred Verses

109

子は裸父はてゝれで早苗舟　利牛

The child is naked

And papa wears an undershirt

As they push the seedling boat.

Rigyū[1]

110

岸のいばらの真ッ白に咲　野坡

The wild roses in the riverbank

Bloom so whitely.

Yaba[2]

111

雨あがり珠数懸鳩の鳴出して　孤屋

After the rain

The rosary-collared dove

Starts cooing.

Ko'oku[3]

[1] The sequence opens in the summer. In a rice paddy, a man and his young infant push a small vessel carrying rice seedlings. Not mentioned in the *hokku* is the mother, who is inside the paddy planting the seedlings. The heat and the muddy waters of the field explain why the child is not wearing any clothes and the light dressing of the father; it is also entirely possible that the young boy or girl are sitting atop the rice seedling boat. The word *tetere* (てゝれ) is a northern dialect variation of the word *tedera*, (てでら) the type of undergarment that the father wears. Linguistic deviations from standardized or classical diction are one of the main characteristics of *karumi*.

[2] The rice planting season coincides with the blooming of wild roses, which populate the bank of the small brook flooding the rice paddies. The link takes a step back to show us, from the flowering edge of the brook, the family working in the rice field downstream.

[3] This link takes us to the rainy season, still at the beginning of summer. "Rosary-collared" (珠数懸鳩, *juzukakebato*) is a direct translation of the bird's name in Japanese. In English, this species is known as the "Eurasian collared" or "barbarian" dove; its Japanese name, however, denotes the similarity between the streak of dark plumage in the bird's neck and a Buddhist rosary. The common element between this and Yaba's verse is the bird's whiteness, which overlaps with the color of the wild roses.

111

雨あがり珠数懸鳩(じゅずかけばと)の鳴出(なきだ)して　孤屋

After the rain

The rosary-collared dove

Starts cooing.

Ko’oku

112

与力町(よりきまち)よりむかふ西かぜ　利牛

Coming from Yorikimachi,

The western wind.

Rigyū[4]

113

竿竹(さをだけ)に茶色の紬(つむぎ)たぐりよせ　野坡

Reeling in

The brown pongee

On the bamboo pole.

Yaba[5]

[4] Yorikimachi is a district in Ōsaka that formed around the residence of the *Yoriki* (与力), a class of samurai officials who assisted local daimyo with law enforcement and other administrative issues. Beyond any geographic reasoning, the place name “Yorikimachi” was likely used because of its assonance with the word *yori*, “from”, which appears right afterwards. This link describes the situation of a traveler who, stopped temporarily by the rain, resumes their journey; folk beliefs associate western winds with rain ceasing. Additionally, since Amida’s paradise was assumed to be in the West and the previous verse’s explicitly mentions a Buddhist rosary, Shiraishi (376) suggests that the link could be read as a religious allegory.

[5] Pongee (紬, *tsumugi*) is a woven, textured silk cloth typically used for kimono. Somebody has left the brown pongee up to dry; the Western wind then rises suddenly, pushing the brown piece of fabric from one end of the bamboo pole to the other.

113

竿竹に茶色の紬たぐりよせ　野坡

Reeling in

A brown *tsumugi* kimono

Hanging on a bamboo pole.

Yaba

114

馬が離れてわめく人声　孤屋

A voice cries

“the horse has bolted!”

Ko’oku[6]

115

暮の月干葉の茹汁わるくさし　利牛

Under the evening moon

The radish-leaf broth

Reeks.

Rigyū[7]

[6] The reeling of the pongee is now done by a woman who, while hanging up her freshly done laundry, is startled by the voice of alert about the loose horse. She hastily draws her kimono from the drying pole and runs inside.

[7] The moon tells us it is an autumn scene. The word 干葉（*hiwa,* literally “dried leaves”）refers to the leaves of the daikon radish, typically used to make broth when no better ingredients, like pork, fish, or seaweed, are available. This is not, therefore, a very appetizing dish, as its smell and the bolting horse demonstrate. The link, then, could be read in two ways: as a desolate scene where a poor traveler’s horse bolts and knocks down his meager dinner, or as a humorous explanation for the horse’s escape: someone was trying to feed it the concoction described in the second verse.

115

暮(くれ)の月干(ひ)葉(は)の茹汁(ゆでしる)わるくさし　利牛

Under the evening moon,

The radish-leaf broth

Reeks.

Rigyū

116

掃(はけ)ば跡(あと)から檀(まゆみ)ちる也(なり)　野坡

I sweep and then

The spindle tree leaves fall.

Yaba[8]

117

ぢゝめきの中でより出(だ)するりほあか　孤屋

From the bird basket

I pick out

A blue flycatcher, a red-cheeked bunting.

Ko'oku[9]

[8] A poor farmer is going around their house performing their daily duties. After setting up the pot with their humble dinner, they now sweep the garden. However, the red leaves of the spindle tree leaves keep falling right as they swept them; this, and the uninviting smell of the boiling broth, keeps him from sitting down to eat.

[9] The "bird basket" (*jijimeki*, ぢゝめき) was a wicker tube used for transporting sparrows, the typical fodder of trained hawks, or ornamental birds like the flycatcher and the bunting from this poem, which were appreciated for its singing. It is possible that the birds have been attracted to the fruit of the spindle tree from the previous verse, where the speaker has set up a bird trap; another possibility is that the servant from the previous verse is simply going around with his errands, which include taking care of the birds. Incidentally, the Japanese names of the blue flycatcher (瑠璃, *ruri*) and the red-cheeked bunting (頬赤, *hoaka*) are probably an allusion to red glass beads (赤瑠璃 *akaruri*), which resemble the spindle tree fruits.

117

ぢゝめきの中でより出するりほあか　孤屋

From the bird basket

I pick out

A blue flycatcher, a red-cheeked bunting.

Ko'oku

118

坊主になれどやはり仁平次　利牛

He might have received the tonsure,

But at the end he's just Niheiji.

Rigyū[10]

119

松坂や矢川へはいるうら通り　野坡

This is Matsuzaka;

The backroad there

Leads to Yakawa.

Yaba[11]

[10] In this verse it is revealed that the person responsible for setting up the bird trap is a young boy who, despite having been ordained recently, can't give up sinful, worldly habits like bird-catching. "Niheiji" was a common given name during the Edo period, written with the characters for benevolence (仁), just (平), and successor (次). After taking the tonsure he received a new, Buddhist name, but his actions demonstrate that it is easier to change one's name than one's ways.

[11] Mitsui Takatoshi (1622-1694), a native of Matsuzaka in Ise province (present day Mie prefecture) was the founder of the Echigoya, where Yaba, Rigyū, and Ko'oku worked; Yakawa was purportedly a red-light district in the same area. This link further explores on the lingering attachments of the young monk from the previous verse, who is a frequent visitor of the area.

119

松坂や矢川へはいるうら通り　野坡

This is Matsuzaka;

The backroad there

Leads to Yakawa.

Yaba

120

吹ゝる胼もつらき闇の夜　孤屋

Hit by the wind, even my calluses hurt

In this harsh, dark night.

Ko'oku[12]

121

十二三弁の衣裳の打そろひ　利牛

In full assembly,

Twelve or thirteen officials

In formal dress.

Rigyū[13]

[12] Yakawa, from the previous verse, sets the stage for this link. A low-level prostitute stands up in red-light district on a winter night, and the cold wind hits her— a wind so cold that it even pierces through the thick skin in her hands and feet.

[13] This verse brings to mind an aristocratic ceremony during the Nara (710-794) or the beginning of the Heian (794-1185) periods, when the Ritsuryō administrative system was in place. Taking the winter cues from the previous verse, these bureaucrats, part of the Oversight Department (a division of the so-called Department of State), have gathered in the cold for the *Tsuina* (追儺, "driving of evil spirits") ritual that takes place on the last night of the year. While it may simply be a historical verse, it seems that reenactments of this ceremony were still conducted during the Edo period.

Shiraishi (p. 377) puts forth two explanations for the seemingly arbitrary "twelve or thirteen" (十二三, *jūnisan*) at the beginning of the verse, both of them stemming from a passage from the 5th century *Book of the Later Han*, one of the Twenty-Four Histories of classical Chinese historiography. There, a ceremony resembling the *Tsuina* is described, mentioning that the participants where children aged 10 to 12, but that would not account for the word "thirteen". Another part of the ritual mentions officials dressed as "Twelve Divine Beasts", who would be led by the court's official exorcist; if this is the intended reading, then the previous verse would describe the attendants to the officials, observing the ritual behind them.

121

十二三弁(べん)の衣裳(いしやう)の打(うち)そろひ　利牛

In full assembly,

Twelve or thirteen officials

In formal dress.

Rigyū

122

本堂はしる音はどろどろ　野坡

Someone rushes, and it booms

Inside the main hall.

Yaba[14]

123

日のあたる方はあからむ竹の色　孤屋

Where the sun hits

It turns reddish;

The color of bamboo.

Ko'oku[15]

[14] The ceremony that the officials are attending takes place within a large temple, perhaps Tōdaiji in Nara; if that is the case, then it was intended to place the scene in the second month of the lunisolar calendar, when the *Shuni-e*（修二会）or second month service is observed. Although it is relatively quiet when the monks hurry about barefooted, when one of the officials rushes while wearing shoes the sound of his footsteps booms inside.

[15] As part of their training, a group of monks jogs around the temple's main hall while reciting prayers. Here, one of them is struck by the difference in color between a small bamboo grove in the shade of the temple and another one on the opposite side, which is being hit directly by the setting sun. A discovery with spiritual undertones, perhaps?

123

日のあたる方はあからむ竹の色　孤屋

Where the sun hits

It turns reddish;

The color of bamboo.

Ko'oku

124

只奇麗さに口すゝぐ水　利牛

Just for the sake of purity,

I rinse my mouth with this water.

Rigyū[16]

125

近江路のうらの詞を聞初て　野坡

For the first time I hear

The dialect of the shores

By the Ōmi road.

Yaba[17]

[16] The previous verse is used to set up a summer scene. In the mountains, a person stops by a clear spring not because they are thirsty, but because the water is so clean that they cannot help themselves.

[17] Ōmi province was the name given to the land that corresponds to modern Shiga prefecture. Lake Biwa, the biggest lake in Japan, is located there. The water that the speaker from the previous verse rinses their mouth with is that of Lake Biwa; as they refresh themselves, they listen to the chatter of the locals passing by. Shiraishi (378) points out that this poem references a short prose segment in the *Fūzoku Monzen* (風俗文選, "A Selection of Popular-style Writings") by Riyū Kōno, a follower from Bashō and head priest of Menshō-ji temple, which celebrates the purity of Lake Biwa's waters. It seems that it is in this text where the term "dialect of the shores" (うらの言葉) was first used.

125

近江路のうらの詞を聞初て　野坡

For the first time I hear

The dialect of the shores

By the Ōmi road.

Yaba

126

天気の相よ三か月の照　孤屋

A sign from the skies!

The glow of the crescent moon.

Ko’oku[18]

[18] This link places the traveler from the previous verse under an open sky, where the shining crescent moon indicates both that it the season is autumn and that the weather will remain clear the next day.

127

生ながら直に打込ひしこ漬　利牛

Though alive

Dunked straight into the barrel,

Pickled anchovies.

Rigyū[19]

[19] “Pickled anchovies” are a seasonal word for autumn, which connects this poem with the crescent moon motif in the previous verse. In this maritime link, fishermen aboard a returning vessel prepare the freshly caught anchovies without bothering to clean or disembowel them first. It is the early evening, and clear skies welcome them back into the harbor.

127

生ながら直に打込ひしこ漬　利牛

Though alive

Dunked straight into the barrel,

Pickled anchovies.

Rigyū

128

椋の実落る屋ねくさる也　野坡

The muku tree seeds fall

And the roof is rotting.

Yaba[20]

129

帯売の戻り連立花ぐもり　孤屋

Kimono sash peddlers

Come back and band together

Under the spring's hazy sky.

Ko'oku[21]

[20] The fishermen store their catch in an old hut with a thatched roof. A cluster of falling seeds from a muku tree growing nearby sit rotting on the roof, which amplifies the image of the pickled anchovies fermenting inside. Additionally, the *ku* sound from the word *muku* alliterates with the *ku* sound in the verb *kusaru* (くさる, to rot).

[21] During the Edo period, itinerant salespeople visited small villages in the countryside selling fashionable or decorative products made in the big urban settlements. A notable product were *obi* or kimono sashes. Here, the peddlers return from their rounds and group together near a temple or shrine. The roof here may be that of a *hokora*, a small shrine, set up under the muku tree.

129

帯売(おびうり)の戻り連立(つれだつ)花ぐもり　孤屋

Kimono sash peddlers

Come back and band together

Under the spring's hazy sky.

Ko'oku

130

御影供(みえいく)ごろの人のそはつく　利牛

People are restless

Around the time of the holy *eiku*.

Rigyū[22]

131

ほかほかと二日灸(ふつかやいと)のいぼひ出(いで)　野坡

Piping hot,

The second day moxa's wart

Comes up.

Yaba[23]

[22] The peddlers here are gathering to watch the *eiku* (here *mi-eiku*, after the addition of the prefix 御, "holy") services, the yearly Shingon Bhuddism observance of the death of its founder, the monk Kūkai (774-835). This event traditionally took place on the 21st day of the third month of the lunisolar calendar, peak spring season: cherry trees would also bloom around this time. The *eiku* was strongly associated with Tōji temple in Kyoto, where multitudes would congregate every year; this, conflated with the cherry blossom season, would have contributed to the people's "restlessness".

[23] In Japanese folk medicine there was the belief that moxibustion (the burning moxa, a compound of herbs, close to the skin) was especially effective on the second day of the second month of the lunisolar calendar. More than a month later, the sore left by the moxa stops festering and turns into a wart: an indication that the treatment was effective. The speaker, likely an old man, first notices the wart while looking outside his window at the *eiku* festivities.

131

ほかほかと二日灸のいぼひ出　野坡

Piping hot,

The second day moxa's wart

Comes up.

Yaba

132

ほろほろあへの膳にこぼるゝ　孤屋

The *horohoroae*

Crumbles on they tray.

Ko'oku[24]

133

ない袖を振てみするも物おもひ　利牛

I even try to wave

The sleeves I don't have,

Out of longing.

Rigyū[25]

[24] *Horohoroae* (ほろほろあへ) or *horoae* is a dish consisting of boiled butterbur leaves and other vegetables mixed with miso paste. The word *horohoro*, by itself, in an onomatopoeia denoting a crumbling, spilling state. This link rests on the phonetic correspondence of the onomatopoeias ほかほか ("very hot") and ほろほろ, with the connection between the moxa from the previous verse and the *horoae* here harder to ascertain. Shiraishi (378) proposes that it may indicate that discomfort from the brushing between the kimono sleeves of the person eating with the warts or sores caused by the moxa makes it hard to serve the dish without it falling in chunks from the chopsticks into the tray.

[25] The situation switches to an austere residence, where a fretting woman cooks a simple meal. "You can't wave sleeves that you don't have" is a popular saying in Japanese referring to the impossibility of giving things one does not possess. Here, it is adjusted to convey the idea that the speaker's sense of longing (ものおもひ, *mono omoi;* cf. poem 90) is so strong they wish to do the impossible. Waving one's sleeves, incidentally, is a way of indicating the reluctance of parting or sending a cue to a loved one; the woman in this link, lovesick, distractedly spills the *horoae* as she thinks of ways of sending a sign to their lover.

133

ない袖を振てみするも物おもひ　利牛

I even try to wave

The sleeves I don't have,

Out of longing.

Rigyū

134

舞羽の糸も手につかず繰　野坡

The thread in the loom, too,

Spins out of my hands.

Yaba[26]

135

段々に西国武士の荷のつどひ　孤屋

Higher and higher,

The baggage of the Western warriors

Piles up.

Ko'oku[27]

[26] *Maiba* (舞羽, literally "dancing feathers") is the name of a type of loom. The waving of sleeves from the previous verse is matched to the "dancing" implied in the name of the tool. The inability to grasp the thread describes the female speaker's emotional state, as she feels her lover is disconnected, no longer tied to her.

[27] This verse portrays the excursion of a feudal lord and his retainers towards Edo. The Tokugawa shogun's *sankin kōtai* or "alternate attendance" system forced provincial feudal lords to alternate residing in their domains and the capital every year. This meant being on a constant move across the country alongside their entourages. Here, the speaker from the previous verse is identified as a female attendant at a port station or an inn, who is forced to neglect her duties due to the arrival of the feudal lord's caravan and their belongings.

135

段々に西国武士の荷のつどひ　孤屋

Higher and higher,

The baggage of the Western warriors

Piles up.

Ko’oku

136

尚きのふより今日は大旱　利牛

Even worse than yesterday,

Today’s dry weather.

Rigyū[28]

137

切蜣の喰倒したる植たばこ　野坡

The crane fly larvae

Have feasted on

Our tobacco leaves.

Yaba[29]

[28] The season is summer now. Under the extreme heat, a porter labors bringing in and sorting out the luggage of the warrior caravan.

[29] In this simple verse we are presented with a glimpse of a rural landscape in the summer. However detached the link may appear, the human element is still at its center: the tobacco plants that the larvae are eating are a farmer’s crop, and this, paired up with the heat from the previous verse, expresses sympathy for the tough living conditions of the people living in the countryside.

137

切蟯(きりウジ)の喰倒(くいたふ)したる植(うゑ)たばこ　野坡

The crane fly larvae

Have feasted on

Our tobacco leaves.

Yaba

138

くばり納豆(なつと)を仕込広庭(しこむひろには)　孤屋

In the temple’s courtyard

They prepare the complimentary natto.

Ko’oku[30]

139

瘧日(おこりび)をまぎらかせども待(まち)ごゝろ　利牛

I try not to worry

About the ague fevers,

But my mind awaits.

Rigyū[31]

[30] During the summer, the parishioners of a rural temple gather in its courtyard to receive free natto from the monks. People in this town are suffering the consequences of a catastrophic pest, and they need the complimentary natto more than ever.

[31] The ague or malarial fevers (瘧, *okori*) are intermittent and will recur over periods of two to three days. The unidentified speaker, either someone associated with temple or a sick parishioner waiting for the free natto, is feeling healthy at the moment but knows that the fever will return; such a thought rarely leaves the mind of a patient.

139

瘧日(おこりび)をまぎらかせども待(まち)ごゝろ　利牛

I try not to worry

About the ague fevers,

But my mind awaits.

Rigyū

140

藤(とう)ですげたる下駄(げた)の重(おも)たき　野坡

So heavy,

This wicker-strapped sandals.

Yaba[32]

[32] The speaker is the person infected with malaria in the previous verse. They feel so weak that even putting on *geta*, or traditional Japanese sandals is too much of a burden; even this particular pair which, to boot, are tied with lightweight wicker straps.

141

つれあひの名をいやしげに呼(よび)まはり　孤屋

Crudely,

She goes around yelling

Her husband’s name.

Ko’oku[33]

[33] A woman walks around the neighborhood loudly calling out for her husband. She’s wearing the *geta* from the previous verse, too big for her feet as they are likely her husband’s; this, paired out with her cries, gives her a most undignified appearance.

141

つれあひの名をいやしげに呼(よび)まはり　孤屋

Crudely,

She goes around yelling

Her husband’s name.

Ko’oku

142

となりの裏の遠き井の本(もと)　利牛

Far behind the neighbors’ home,

The base of the well.

Rigyū[34]

143

くれの月横(よこ)に負(ヲイ)来る古柱(ふるばしら)　野坡

Under the sunset moon

He bears sideways

An old pillar.

Yaba[35]

[34] The humorous tone from the previous link turns somber. The distraught woman is looking for her husband around the neighborhood, but Rigyū superimposes the image of the distant well; is the husband collecting water there or has he perhaps fallen in?

[35] The speaker in this verse has left their home to draw water from the village well, but the sun has fallen and a stranger, carrying a wooden pillar across their back in a way that it completely blocks the narrow path back, approaches. The link with the previous verse reminds us that the speaker is far from his home, which increases his vulnerability and our suspicions towards the approaching stranger.

143

くれの月横に負来る古柱　野坡

Under the sunset moon

He bears sideways

An old pillar.

Yaba

144

ずいきの長のあまるこつてい　孤屋

An oxen, taller

Than taro stems.

Ko'oku[36]

[36] "Taro" is a seasonal word for autumn. Its stems can reach up to 5 meters in height; this also opens the possibility that the measure here does not refer to height of the oxen but to length of the pillar.

145

ひつそりと盆は過たる浄土寺　利牛

Quietly,

Obon has passed

At this Pure Land temple.

Rigyū[37]

[37] Obon is an autumnal festival centered on the remembrance of one's ancestors. It is celebrated on the eight month of the lunisolar calendar, and as such is a seasonal word for autumn. The link depicts a small Buddhist temple affiliated to the Pure Land sect; with the Obon rites completed, activity has quieted down. The speaker, likely one of the monks, is either working at the temple's fields or tending to their cattle.

145

ひつそりと盆は過たる浄土寺　利牛

Quietly,

Obon has passed

At this Pure Land temple.

Rigyū

146

戸でからくみし水風呂の屋ね　野坡

The roof of the small bath,

Doors cobbled together.

Yaba[38]

147

伐透す樅と 檜 のすれあひて　孤屋

Cutting through

The brushing of

Fir and cypress.

Ko’oku[39]

[38] In this humble temple, the detached *suifuro* (水風呂, a small bathtub heated with firewood from below) is a makeshift construction whose roof is made from old doors nailed together. However, and regardless of its simplicity, it is a placid refuge for the monks now that the cooler autumn days have come.

[39] The setting is now a mountain. A woodcutter trims the branches of valuable trees like the fir and cypress and clears the unwanted ones growing in between; he works near his hut, where he has built the bath described in the previous verse.

147

伐透す樅と檜のすれあひて　孤屋

Cutting through

The brushing of

Fir and cypress.

Ko’oku

148

赤い小宮はあたらしき内　利牛

The small red shrine

Is still new.

Rigyū[40]

149

浜迄は宿の男の荷をかゝえ　野坡

All the way to the coast,

The man from the inn

Carries my luggage.

Yaba[41]

[40] The mountaineer has cleared the trees at a sacred ground where a freshly painted, vermillion *hokora* (a small Shinto shrine not associated with a major deity or a major religious site) has been placed. The emphasis of the verse is that the *hokora* should be appreciated now, while its colors are still bright.

[41] Leaving a nearby inn, a young servant leads the speaker to the pier while carrying their luggage. When the guest points at the small red shrine on the road, the only insight the humble servant can offer is what is relayed on the previous link: that it is still new.

149

浜迄は宿の男の荷をかゝえ　野坡

All the way to the coast,

The man from the inn

Carries my luggage.

Yaba

150

師走比丘尼の諷の寒さよ　孤屋

In the twelfth month, how cold

The song of the bhikkhuni is!

Ko'oku[42]

151

餅搗の臼を年々買かえて　利牛

Every year,

He buys a new

Mochi-pounding mortar.

Rigyū[43]

[42] The bhikkhuni are fully ordained but destitute Buddhist nuns who, much like itinerant monks, walk around the cities singing songs and begging for alms. There were also cases, it seems, in which they engaged in prostitution. This verse retains the speaker from the previous link, a wealthy tourist who now runs into a group of bhikkhuni. Their song (*uta,* written here with the Chinese character 諷, which means "chanting") can comprise anything from the *nembutsu* (see poem 18) to *kouta*, traditional ballads accompanied by the shamisen. It is the winter, and they cut a particularly sad figure in the cold; the traveler cannot help feeling a chill down his spine when he hears them singing.

[43] Pounding mochi is an activity traditionally associated with the winter. A mochi pounding mortar is a heavy and sturdy stone object that can last for generations; only an extremely wealthy person, or the owner of a prosperous mochi shop, would go out of their way to buy a new stone mortar every year. The stark contrast between this wasteful person and the poor mendicant nuns is noted by the speaker, who watches them converge in a busy street.

151

餅搗の臼を年々買かえて　利牛

Every year,

He buys a new

Mochi-pounding mortar.

Rigyū

152

天満の状を又忘れけり　野坡

He forgot again

The letter to Tenma!

Yaba[44]

153

広袖をうへにひつぱる船の者　孤屋

The boatsman comes

With his wide sleeves

Tied up.

Ko’oku[45]

[44] Tenma is an area in modern day Ōsaka known since the Edo period as an eminent industrial and commercial area. Here we realize why the person from the first verse inexplicably keeps buying mortars: their memory is failing them. The relationship between this and Tenma, however, is harder to grasp; being a business center, this may indicate that their business is failing as well.

[45] This boatman, likely the captain of a ferry judging from his sharp wide-sleeved kimono, has just landed. His sleeves as raised to avoid getting them wet as he gets off the boat. A person on the pier inquires about a business letter they have been expecting, but the boatsman has failed to bring it yet again.

153

広袖をうへにひつぱる船の者　孤屋

The boatsman comes

With his wide sleeves

Tied up.

Ko'oku

154

むく起にして参る観音　利牛

Rising from bed

To pay his respects to Kannon.

Rigyū[46]

155

燃しさる薪を尻手に指くべて　野坡

I turn around

The burning firewood

And push it to the rear.

Yaba[47]

[46] A devotee of the goddess Kannon wakes up and, putting on a wide-sleeved kimono, leaves almost immediately for the nearby temple. As a sailor, they will surely pray for safety at sea before setting out to sea.

[47] The firewood may be in an incensory or brazier at the temple dedicated to Kannon, but it would be unusual for a parishioner, rather than a monk, to tend to them. This means that it is likely that the scene is playing out at the residence of the subject of the previous verse, where someone (their wife, perhaps?) takes care of the hearth. Shiraishi, on the other hand, suggests that the verse takes place at a teahouse in front of the temple, where the proprietress starts a fire to tend to the customers coming early to pay their respects to the goddess (382).

155

燃(もえ)しさる薪(マキ)を尻手(しりで)に指(さし)くべて　野坡

I turn around

The burning firewood

And push it to the rear.

Yaba

156

十四五両のふりまはしする　孤屋

With a capital of 14 or 15 *ryō*

I make ends meet.

Ko'oku[48]

157

月花(つきはな)にかきあげ城(じろ)の跡ばかり　利牛

In moon and blossoms,

Just the ruins

Of the little earthen castle.

Rigyū[49]

[48] *Ryō* was a gold-based currency that, at the time *Sumidawara* was written, was equivalent to the price of one *koku* of rice, the approximate amount needed to feed a person for a whole year. While 14 or 15 *ryō* was no fiddling amount, it was also not enough to consider oneself rich. The setting here is the house of a small-scale trader or business owner, whose wife, while living comfortably, keeps frugality in mind. Instead of putting off taking out the embers, she skillfully readjusts them inside the home furnace.

[49] The castle mentioned in the verse is a *kakiagejiro* (かきあげ城), a small fortress with earthen walls and a rudimentary moat. It is spring, and there are no other places in this small town to enjoy the moon or the blossoms than the picturesque ruins of the castle, but that doesn't mean that it lacks grace. The person in the previous verse may describe the living conditions of a small business owner in the area or perhaps reflect on the financial precarity of the former master of the castle.

157

月花にかきあげ城の跡ばかり　利牛

In moon and blossoms,

Just the ruins

Of the little earthen castle.

Rigyū

158

弦打颪海雲とる桶　孤屋

Downward wind from Tsuru'uchi

Hits the seaweed bucket.

Ko'oku[50]

159

機嫌能かひこは庭に起かゝり　野坡

In good spirits,

The silkworms

Are waking up in the garden.

Yaba[51]

[50] Seaweed, and specifically the *mozuku*（海雲）seaweed mentioned in this verse, is a seasonal word for spring. Mount Tsuru'uchi (弦打山), on the other hand, is an *utamakura* or "poem pillow": a reference to a place or geographical feature mentioned in classical poetry for Sanuki province (present day Kagawa prefecture). In this picturesque verse, wind coming down from the mountains hits an old seaweed bucket left forgotten on the beach. The ruins of the old castle lying at the foot of the mountain are perhaps a reference to the Genpei war (1180-1185), of which a major battle was waged in nearby Yashima Island.

[51] "Silkworms"（かひこ, *kaiko*) is a seasonal word for spring, which helps connect this verse with Ko'oku's. In a small ocean front town, a sericulturist rejoices as his silkworms shed their skin after the fourth and last molt and seem ready to start crafting their cocoons. At the same time, by the beach, fishermen are busy collecting seaweed: a bustling seaside scene.

159

機嫌能(よく)かひこは庭に起(おき)かゝり　野坡

In good spirits,

The silkworms

Are waking up in the garden.

Yaba

160

小昼(こびる)のころの空静也(しづかなり)　利牛

The sky turns quiet

Around midmorning.

Rigyū[52]

161

縁端(えんバナ)に腫(はれ)たる足をなげ出して　孤屋

Over the edge of the veranda,

He hangs down

His swollen feet.

Ko'oku[53]

[52] Rigyū's verse focuses on the short refreshment break between breakfast and lunch. The activity of the silkworms is contrasted to that of their keepers, who have stopped their work momentarily under a bright and serene morning sky.

[53] Since Japanese does not make strong distinctions between singulars and plurals, it's hard to tell if the subject in this verse hangs down one swollen foot (due to injury) or both (due to disease or old age). Regardless, the image is the same: while everyone else in the household has left early to work, this individual, unable to help, sits by the veranda and looks pensively at the garden. The mood is similar to that of poem 20 in this collection.

161

縁端に腫たる足をなげ出して　孤屋

Over the edge of the veranda,

He hangs down

His swollen feet.

Ko’oku

162

鍋の鋳かけを念入てみる　野坡

Watching intently

The mending of the pot.

Yaba[54]

163

麦畑の替地に渡る傍尓杭　利牛

Stretched around the land

I got for my wheat field,

Edge markers.

Rigyū[55]

[54] The subject of the verse is the same as the previous verse: a sick person who, unable to work, finds himself absorbed by a blacksmith patching an old pot across the street.

[55] *Mugibata* (麦畑, “wheat field”) is a seasonal word for summer. This verse presents a person inspecting the land they received in exchange for a requisitioned wheat field. The connection with the previous verse is based on a visual simile: that of the stakes being laid neatly around the land with the rivets of an iron patch being placed on a broken pot.

163

麦畑の替地に渡る傍尒杭　利牛

Stretched along the land

I got for my wheat field,

Edge markers.

Rigyū

164

売手もしらず頼政の筆　孤屋

That seller wouldn’t recognize

The brushwork of Yorimasa.

Ko’oku[56]

165

物毎も子持になればたゞくさに　野坡

When pregnant,

Every single thing

Turns to weeds.

Yaba[57]

[56] The Yorimasa mentioned here is Minamoto no Yorimasa (1106-1180), an aristocrat famous for his literary and military exploits during the late Heian period. Ko’oku takes the previous scene as the result of a private land transaction. The mention of Yorimasa can be taken as the self-satisfied remark that the buyer, an astute businessman, makes after inspecting his purchase; Shiraishi (383) understands it more literally, as the description of a scroll left behind by the careless seller, perhaps the heir of a respected family.

[57] Yaba’s verse focuses on the transaction from the previous verse, but offers an explanation: a pregnant woman, too busy, or tired, or desperate to pay attention to an old scroll, sells it for nothing to a cunning buyer. The word たゞくさ（*tadakusa*, “simple weeds”）is an expression used for things sloppy or disorganized; I chose to translate it literally to preserve is poetic resonance.

165

物毎も子持になればたゞくさに　野坡

When pregnant,

Every single thing

Turns to weeds.

Yaba

166

又御局の古着いたゞく　利牛

Once again, I receive

A courtesan's old clothes.

Rigyū[58]

167

妓王寺のうへに上れば二尊院　孤屋

When you climb to the top

Of Giōji temple,

Nison-in temple is there.

Ko'oku[59]

[58] A woman's lifestyle is suddenly hindered by an unexpected, perhaps unwanted, pregnancy. As a result, she receives a gift of fashionable clothes from another lady. Although the connection with the previous verse is straightforward, this is a difficult link to analyze due to the ambiguity of the term 御局 (*otsubone*), which can refer to both a lady-in-waiting at an aristocratic residence like that of the emperor or the shogun, or to a low-ranking prostitute. While the consensus seems to be that the donor is indeed a high-ranking court lady (making the particle *no*, の, possessive) it is worth considering that this word had been used in *haikai* writing during the Edo period (most notably in Karai Senryū's *Haifū Yanagidaru*, "The Willow Barrel", published in 1765) to describe prostitutes (making the particle *no* a subject marker). Furthermore, the word "again" (また, *mata*) at the beginning suggests that this a common occurrence, as one would expect at a tea house or brothel. Since the word "courtesan" indicates court life at least at the etymological level, I chose it to represent the ambiguity of the term here.

[59] Both Giōji and Nison-in temples are located in the Saga district of Kyōto but, as Shiraishi (383) indicates, Giōji actually sits higher than Nison-in on mount Ogura. While this would suggest a geographical error by the poet, it is also possible that it is the speaker, perhaps a woman visiting the imperial capital for the first time, who gets it wrong. Their wearing of borrowed, fancy clothes gives credit to this alternative.

168

妓王寺(ぎわうじ)のうへに上(のぼ)れば二尊院(にそんゐん)　孤屋

When you climb to the top

Of Giōji temple,

Nison-in temple is there.

Ko’oku

169

けふはけんがく寂しかりけり　野坡

Today, it feels

Rather lonely.

Yaba[60]

170

薄雪(うすゆき)のこまかに初手(しょて)を降出(ふりいだ)し　利牛

Into a thin layer of snow,

Faintly, the first

Snowfall.

Rigyū[61]

[60] Yaba identifies the speaker as a tourist visiting the Saga area in the eastern side of Kyōto. The word けんがく (*kengaku*, “rather”, “distinctively”) carries along an implicit comparison to a previous state: is it the experiences of the tourist on the previous day, when they visited the western part of the city, which is livelier? Are they perhaps reflecting on a previous visit to these temples, and the way they have changed? It is hard to tell.

[61] It is now winter, and the speaker, a hermit or someone living in seclusion, contemplates the first snow of the season. The implicit comparison from the previous verse is not applied to the weather; snow, while beautiful, emphasizes the speaker’s isolation.

170

薄雪のこまかに初手を降出し　利牛

Into a thin layer of snow,

Faintly, the first

Snowfall.

Rigyū

171

一つくなりに鱈の雲腸　孤屋

In a single clump,

The cod's cloudy viscera.

Ko'oku[62]

172

銭ざしに菰引ちぎる朝の月　野坡

For a coin string,

A strand from the mat I pull

The morning moon.

Yaba[63]

[62] 雲腸（*Kumowata,* literally "cloud of bowels"）is both a winter delicacy and seasonal word. This clever link riffs on both the winter motif and the appearance of the thin layer of snow from the previous verse, which resembles this "cloudy viscera": a whitish, puffy mixture obtained from the mashing and pickling of cod intestines and other entrails.

[63] 銭ざし（*zenizashi,* "coin string"）refers to a short hemp thread used to string together coins that, like most minted currency during the Edo period, were holed to facilitate their collecting and storage. This link recreates a market scene; the moon, still visible in the early morning, indicates that it is Autumn. A humble fishmonger, having sold the cod's viscera from the previous verse, tears a thread from the edge of the rough, straw mat in which they sit to string the payment from the buyer with the rest of the day's earnings.

172

銭ざしに菰引ちぎる朝の月　野坡

For a coin string,

A strand from the mat I pull

The morning moon.

Yaba

173

なめすゞきとる裏の塀あはひ　利牛

I pick a mushroom

From the nook between back walls.

Rigyū[64]

174

めを縫て無理に鳴する鵙の声　孤屋

The voice of the shrike,

With its eyes stitched shut,

Crying to no avail.

Ko'oku[65]

[64] *Namesuzuki* (なめすゞき) is another name given to *enoki* mushrooms. To culture them, a straw mat would be placed in a dark, humid place, and covered with a thin layer of rice paste. The speaker resides in a crowded urban area, where they have set up a mushroom farming business in the back alley behind their home. In order to collect a customer's coins, they proceed as Yaba's verse describes: they pluck a strand from the mat where the enoki mushrooms are growing and thread the money together.

[65] Both *namesuzuki* and shrikes are seasonal words for autumn. Right after harvest time, the owners of a farm have captured a shrike, a species known for preying on smaller birds, and intentionally blinded it. They then keep it in the same alley where the mushrooms grow, and make it cry in order to scare away any bird coming for their grain. It is no secret where the poet sympathies lie in this verse.

174

めを縫て無理に鳴する鵙の声　孤屋

The voice of the shrike,

With its eyes stitched shut,

Crying to no avail.

Ko’oku

175

又だのみして美濃だよりきく　野坡

I beg once more

To hear the news from Mino.

Yaba[66]

176

かゝさずに中の巳の日をまつる也　利牛

Without fail,

I follow the rites

Of the second Day of the Snake.

Rigyū[67]

[66] The shrike in Ko’oku’s verse may indicate that the speaker here is a bird hunter, but at a deeper level serves as a metaphor for his life. Mobility between provinces was highly restricted during the Edo period and this bird-hunter, too poor to return to his hometown or perhaps a fugitive, must rely on others for tidings about his family, friends, and possibly his own standing with the authorities in Mino province (nowadays the southern area of Gifu Prefecture). The captive bird and this individual also connect at the metaphorical level: they share the same sense of desperation and hopelessness. An interesting alliterating pattern starts on this verse and continues onto the next two: the repetition of the sounds *no* (の) and *mi* (み) as in *danomi*, to rely on, and the placename *Mino*.

[67] The second Day of the Snake (中の巳の日, *naka no mi no hi*) was a religious festival observed during the third month of the lunisolar calendar (the “second” here indicates that this day would come in the second 12-day week of the month). Rigyū continues the same alliterative pattern from the previous verse: the phonemes *no* and *mi* appear in *minohi*, “day of the snake”. It seems that, beyond the alliteration, there is no deeper association between Mino province and this festival.

176

かゝさずに中の巳の日をまつる也　利牛

Without fail,

I follow the rites

Of the second Day of the Snake.

Rigyū

177

入来る人に味曾豆を出す　孤屋

To the people coming in

We serve boiled soybeans.

Ko'oku[68]

178

すぢかひに木綿 袷 の龍田川　野坡

Slanting across

The cotton-lined kimono,

Tatsuta river.

Yaba[69]

[68] In order to prepare miso paste, soya beans are boiled first; the implication seems to be that the fragrant smell of the beans attracts visitors, and the hosts oblige (perhaps as a prank?) by serving the beans rather than miso itself. There does not appear to be any specific connection between the second Day of the Snake rites and miso, so it is very likely that Ko'oku chose this word simply because the *mi* sound in "miso" further sustains the alliteration from the past two verses.

[69] The Tatsuta River is a famous *utamakura* (see poem 158) commonly associated with autumn foliage. The foremost poetic representation of this river comes from a famous *waka* by Ariwara no Narihira (825-880), anthologized in both the *Kokinshū* and the *Hyakunin Isshu*, which describes its waters as "flowing under red brocade" referring to maple leaves either falling into or giving shade to the riverbed. Because of this, any reader acquainted with the Japanese lyrical tradition will immediately know that the kimono mentioned here is scarlet red. This is another example of how *karumi* aesthetics intentionally deviated from classical themes but, instead, happily revisits them by creating new associations with contemporary subjects. In this link, Yaba abandons the heavy wordplay from the previous links and turns his attention towards one of the patrons of the place outlined in Ko'oku's verse, which he sees as a small restaurant. The stunning pattern and color of the kimono indicate that the customer is a female, and by no means an ordinary person: she is most likely a geisha.

178

すぢかひに木綿袷の龍田川　野坡

Slanting across

The cotton-lined kimono,

Tatsuta river.

Yaba

179

御茶屋のみゆる宿の取つき　利牛

A teahouse appears

Upon reaching the post town.

Rigyū[70]

180

ほやほやとどんどほこらす雲ちぎれ　孤屋

Smoking hot,

The new year decorations flare up

Under tearing clouds.

Ko'oku[71]

[70] The lady from the previous verse is conclusively identified as a geisha, working at the teahouse at a post town along one of the main Japanese highways. During the Edo period, post towns were seen as essential to authorized travelers, in most cases government officials, as well as the feudal lords and their entourages for their yearly processions to the capital (see poem 135). The teahouse and the enticing kimono of the woman from the previous verse conflict the speaker, a male official traveling solo: should he go straight into his lodgings and rest, or cross the street and enjoy himself?

[71] Both *kumochigire*, (雲ちぎれ), "scattered clouds"), and *dondo (*どんど), the tradition of burning new year's ornaments on the 15th day of the new year, are seasonal words for early spring. The scene takes place on the edge of a post town, where the young servants of a tea house excitedly celebrate the *dondo*, commonly dubbed as the "little new year" by the main road.

180

ほやほやとどんどほこらす雲ちぎれ　孤屋

Smoking hot,

The new year decorations flare up

Under tearing clouds.

Ko’oku

181

水菜に鯨まじる惣汁　野坡

Mixed into our hotpot,

Whale meat with spider mustard.

Yaba[72]

182

花の内引越て居る樫原　利牛

It’s blossom season,

And I have moved

To Katagihara.

Rigyū[73]

[72] *Sōjiru* (惣汁, literally “communal soup”), was a hot pot-like dish prepared in great quantities and with no set ingredients during the “little new year”. The apparent incongruency between the 水菜 (*mizuna*, known in English as spider mustard or Japanese mustard greens) and the whale meat is reconciled by the very nature of the dish. In this festive link, a family and their neighbors get together to celebrate the *dondo*, everyone throwing something different into the pot.

[73] Katagihara was a secluded, green area west of Kyōto. In classical literature, Katagihara is commonly associated with Shōji-ji temple, also called *hananotera*, “temple of the flowers”. The season is spring, as disclosed by the word 花 (*hana*), flower, which is synecdoche for cherry blossoms (see poem 87). The speaker, wishing to be away from the bustle of the city during this time, temporarily leaves central Kyōto for Katagihara, where they can watch the flowers in peace and share a meal with friends and family; *mizuna*, incidentally, is a staple of Kyōto cuisine.

182

花の内引越て居る樫原　利牛

It’s blossom season,

And I have moved

To Katagihara.

Rigyū

183

尻軽にする返事聞よく　孤屋

A zippy answer,

So pleasant to hear.

Ko’oku[74]

184

おちかゝるうそうそ時の雨の音　野坡

Before it pours,

The sound of the rain

When it starts getting dark.

Yaba[75]

[74] The “lively response” here comes from an employee of the master of a house who, having just moved to Katagihara as per the previous verse, is busy settling in and conditioning his new home. This is a rare verse in the sense that the speaker seems to be the master and not the servant, although the expression 尻軽に (*shirigaru ni*, literally “light hips”), used here to denote the servant’s promptness, is very colloquial; this indicates that the speaker is a *chōnin* (see introduction, page 18) rather than an aristocrat.

[75] *Usousodoki* (うそうそ時, literally “the uncertain hour”) is a poetic term for either early morning or early evening time, when sunlight is faint and it becomes necessary to use artificial light. In this link, a few drops of rain are noticeable and the speaker, rushing to close their shop before it starts pouring, issues a brisk command to their attendant, which elicits an immediate response. This is pleasant not just due to the lively disposition of the subordinate, but because their company is appreciated during a dark, rainy afternoon.

184

おちかゝるうそうそ時の雨の音　野坡

Before it pours,

The sound of the rain

When it starts getting dark.

Yaba

185

入舟つゞく月の六月　利牛

A procession of incoming boats,

Under the moon of the sixth month.

Rigyū[76]

[76] We move to Edo, where the harbor is busy with boats and people hoping to catch a glimpse of the full moon during a warm summer afternoon. A storm, however, is brewing, and the boats hurry back to port.

186

拭立てお上の敷居ひからする　孤屋

Swiping away

At the threshold to the main floor,

Makes it shine.

Ko'oku[77]

[77] A servant cleans the entranceway to the tatami room, the area where guests are typically hosted, of a trading business by the harbor. The volume of people coming in and out, as announced in the previous verse, indicates that this is a reputed establishment. In a stylistic flourish, Ko'oku uses the verb *hikaru*, (ひかる, "to shine") to link his verse to the shining summer moon of Rigyū's; linguistically, this leads to the speaker making the wooden floor shine but also making the moon shine on the floor.

186

拭立てお上の敷居ひからする　孤屋

Swiping away

At the threshold to the main floor,

Makes it shine.

Ko'oku

187

尚云つのる 詞 がらかひ　野坡

Words piling at each turn,

A vocal dispute.

Yaba[78]

188

大水のあげくに畑の砂のけて　利牛

After the flood,

Clearing sand

Off the fields.

Rigyū[79]

[78] Inside a prosperous business, an argument has broken out. There are two possibilities: are two female servants arguing with each other as they polish, or is it the boss and a customer who argue as the servant, trying to appear nonchalant, cleans beside them?

[79] In a rural area, a river has flooded two adjoining farmlands, burying everything under sediment and sand. This makes it hard to determine where the boundaries between properties originally were, which causes a bitter fight between two farmers.

188

大水のあげくに畑の砂のけて　利牛

After the flood,

Clearing sand

Off the fields.

Rigyū

189

何年菩提しれぬ栃の木　孤屋

Only God knows how old—

A horse-chestnut tree.

Ko'oku[80]

190

敷金に弓同心のあとを継　野坡

I put down the deposit

To inherit the title

Of bowman.

Yaba[81]

[80] This verse is built upon a fixed poetic phrase: 何年菩提（*nannenbodai*, literally " enlightened for so many years"), which appears in contemporary *haikai* collections such the *Senmaifundō*, " One Thousand Pieces of Copper", edited by the poet Banji in 1704. This expression is always used in the context of an old tree, which are perceived as buddha-like and, as such, enlightened. My translation is a clumsy attempt to retain the religions dimension of the phrase without adding unnecessary weight to the poem. In this link, a group of farmers team up to clear their fields after they are hit by a devastating flood. They are surprised to find a massive, perhaps centuries old, horse-chestnut tree amid the debris.

[81] 弓同心（*Yumidōshin*, literally "archery corps"）was one of the regiments within the shogun's army. Since war was unlikely, this position held little military significance but still accredited the holder as a member of the samurai class. While the "stock" or right to belong to the corps was inherited within a given family, it could be transferred either as a dowry or by paying to join a family of this rank without an heir; this basically meant that it could be bought as a regular commodity. The speaker of this verse, presumably a commoner, happily purchases a stock to join the ranks of bowmen, a title he would then be able to pass onto his descendants. The tree from the previous verse, which grows in the speaker's garden, illustrates the notion that this hereditary title, much like the tree, will stay in the family for generations to come.

190

敷金に弓同心のあとを継　野坡

I put down the deposit

To inherit the title

Of bowman.

Yaba

191

丸九十日湿をわづらふ　利牛

For a full ninety days,

Suffering from scabies.

Rigyū[82]

192

投打もはら立まゝにめつた也　孤屋

Even hurling things about,

When upset,

He’s reckless.

Ko’oku[83]

[82] Rigyū decides to rain on the parade of the man from the previous verse; immediately after the purchase of the archery corps stock, the patriarch of an ascending family catches 湿 (*shitsu*), or scabies, a very painful skin condition. The drama (and the humor) perhaps resides in the fact that scabies are easily transmittable; much like the archery title, it will stay within the family.

[83] This verse merely elaborates on the situation of the subject from the past three verses; something unusual in linked verse, where topics and people are typically scrapped after a full link. The man, after a suffering for three full months without improvement, is starting to lose their composure.

192

投打もはら立まゝにめつた也　孤屋

Even hurling things about,

When upset,

He’s reckless.

Ko’oku

193

足なし棊槃よう借に来る　野坡

He keeps coming to borrow

The footless *go* board.

Yaba[84]

194

里離れ順礼引のぶらつきて　利牛

Away from the village,

Pandering to pilgrims

He saunters about.

Rigyū[85]

[84] The link between the two verses of this link is the game of *go* (棊), which bears many similarities with checkers. It is played in a gridded square board, where players take turns placing pieces, or “stones”, in the intersecting points of the grid. The one the speaker owns is very basic, as it doesn’t have legs to prop it from the floor. Or is the board “legless” because somebody broke them? *Go* was a fairly common topic in *haikai*, and it was frequently associated with two of the words that appear in the previous verse: *haratatsu* (はら立つ, to be upset) and *utsu* (打つ, to throw). The speaker of the first verse in the link, in all likelihood the neighbor who keeps coming to borrow the board, is a sore loser and tends to throw away the go stones (and maybe even the board) when he is defeated. The speaker of the second verse, on the other hand, has no choice but to keep lending him the board.

[85] A local man, perhaps self-appointed touristic guide or a barker from a cheap inn, walks around the outskirts of a village looking for pilgrims who he can offer his services to. The *go* game from the previous verse can serve two functions here: the panderer asks for it to either entertain customers at the inn or entertain himself as he waits for pilgrims to arrive at the closest relay station.

194

里離れ順礼引のぶらつきて　利牛

Away from the village,

Pandering to pilgrims

He saunters about.

Rigyū

195

やはらかものを嫁の襟もと　孤屋

Look how soft it is,

The collar of the bride’s kimono.

Ko’oku[86]

196

気にかゝる朔日しまの精進箸　野坡

It weighs on my mind,

On the first day of the month,

Plain mourning chopsticks.

Yaba[87]

[86] The collar of a kimono was usually made of the highest quality fabrics, and could, for the expert eye, be a reliable marker of a person’s class and wealth. The panderer from the previous verse is studying his potential clients when a bridal procession suddenly catches his attention.

[87] According to traditional Japanese marriage customs, the eldest son of a family, as the main heir, would bring his bride home and live along with his parents. Thus, the point of view of this link is consistent with that of a mother-in-law who is quietly appraising her son’s new wife. The word *imoibashi*, “rustic chopsticks”, is written here with the characters 精進 (*jōshin,* “devotion”, “abstinence”), and 箸 (*bashi*, “chopsticks”). During a period of mourning, or in the anniversary of the death of a close relative, these plain, unadorned chopsticks would be used to show one’s respect for the departed and religious zeal. The mother-in-law is startled because the first days of the month were considered auspicious occasions, and the positive mood is somewhat tampered by the new bride’s chopsticks; since she has just joined the family, the reason for her mourning is still unknown.

196

気にかゝる朔日（ついたち）しまの精進箸（いもひばし）　野坡

It weighs on my mind,

On the first day of the month,

Plain mourning chopsticks.

Yaba

197

うんぢ果（はて）たる八専（はつせん）の空　利牛

Clouded until the end,

The sky of the *hassen* days.

Rigyū[88]

198

丁寧（ていねい）に仙台俵（せんだいだはら）の口（くち）かゞり　孤屋

Carefully sewn down,

The mouths of the sacks

Of Sendai rice.

Ko'oku[89]

[88] The *hassen* (八専) days were those in which the elements (wood, fire, earth, metal, and water) of the "ten celestial stems" that served as a basis for the old lunisolar calendar coincided with the characteristics of the 12 signs of the Chinese zodiac. For instance, the "water rat" day, the 49th day in the calendar, is a double "water" day. It was believed that these days attracted rain and were generally unlucky, and people took extra precautions to observe them diligently. The first day of the month for the speaker of this link happens to be a *hassen* day, and as such they have been instructed to use rough chopsticks instead of the regular, lacquered ones. The grey skies and general inauspiciousness of the day keeps them inside, and they are growing tired.

[89] On a slow, rainy day, a worker is tasked with unpacking a cargo of rice coming from Sendai, a prominent rice-producing area during the Edo period. He marvels at, and laments, the neatness of the stitching on the sacks: opening them open will be an exhausting job.

198

丁寧に仙台俵の口かゞり　孤屋

Carefully sewn down,

The mouths of the sacks

Of Sendai rice.

Ko’oku

199

訴訟が済で土手になる筋　野坡

The lawsuit is settled,

And this stretch will turn into an embankment.

Yaba[90]

200

夕月に医者の名字を聞はつり　利牛

Under the evening moon,

A half-heard

Doctor’s surname.

Rigyū[91]

[90] Due to a dispute with neighbors or officials, a project to build an embankment has been long postponed. The sacks marked “Sendai rice” in the exterior, have been filled with sand and sewn shut. There is an interesting pun hidden in the second phrase of this verse. The word *dote* (土手), “embankment”, is followed by the particle *ni* (に); *doteni* is a type of stew made with beef tendons. This riffs on the word *suji* (筋) at the end of the verse, which means line or stretch, but also “tendon”.

[91] The moon intimates it is autumn. A person, looking for a doctor, runs about an unknown neighborhood without knowing the doctor’s address or even their full name. The previous verse should be taken as the geographical indications the speaker received from a local. Is this lawsuit somehow related to a case of malpractice by the doctor? Or is it related to an injury the person or a third party sustained, hence the need for a doctor in the middle of the night?

200

夕月(ゆふづき)に医者の名字(みやうじ)を聞(きき)はつり　利牛

Under the evening moon,

A half-heard

Doctor’s surname.

Rigyū

201

包(つつん)で戻る鮭(さけ)のやきもの　孤屋

Still wrapped on the way back,

Grilled salmon.

Ko’oku[92]

202

定免(ぢやうめん)を今年の風に欲ぼりて　野坡

The winds this year,

Lusting

For the fixed tribute

Yaba[93]

[92] The person from the previous link is looking for the doctor that helped them recover from a serious illness, bringing along a humble present of grilled salmon. However, they only have a vague recollection of the doctor’s last name, and after fruitlessly trying to locate him, it has grown dark outside. The gift of salmon returns home, untouched.

[93] A penny-pinching farmer returns home with the salmon after failing to bribe the tax collector and have him lower his taxes even though they are fixed. This “fixed tribute” (定免, *jōmen*) was an annual tax that, rather than being calculated on yearly earnings or market prices, used the average income thorough a set number of years (typically 5 or 10) to determine the amount citizens had to pay. While this ensured constant revenue for the shogunate and, at least on paper, appeared to be fairer, it was often catastrophic for small businessmen and farmers, since having a relatively good year would mean being punished with higher taxes for an extended period. This is the basis for the farmer’s request, and what the poet means by the winds “lusting” for the tribute. As seen in poems 34, 48 and 98, the plight of peasants, commoners, and land collectors is a distinctive topic in *Sumidawara* and *karumi* aesthetics.

202

定免を今年の風に欲ぼりて　野坡

The winds this year,

Lusting

For the fixed tribute

Yaba

203

もはや仕事もならぬおとろへ　利牛

I can’t even work anymore—

I’m weak.

Rigyū[94]

204

暑病の殊土用をうるさがり　孤屋

The heat makes me sick, so

I especially hate

The dog days of summer.

Ko’oku[95]

[94] In this straightforward link, an old man, when questioned by the tax collector, explains why they won’t be able to meet the required amount for that year’s standard tribute. For him, the weather did affect his ability to cover the fixed tribute.

[95] Dōyō（土用）here refers to the summer season’s Day of the Ox in accordance with the Japanese lunisolar calendar, typically regarded as the hottest day of the year. Since it also includes an animal, “dog days” seemed like an apt translation, and explains why the old man from the previous verse cannot presently work outside. There is a drastic season change as taxes leave the mix and we move from winter to midsummer.

204

暑病(あつやミ)の殊(ことに)土用をうるさがり　孤屋

The heat makes me sick, so

I especially hate

The dog days of summer.

Ko'oku

205

幾月(いくつき)ぶりでこゆる逢坂(おふさか)　野坡

After many months away,

I cross Ōsaka, the meeting hill.

Yaba[96]

206

減(へり)もせぬ鍛冶屋(かぢや)のみせの店(たな)ざらし　利牛

No price reduction in sight—

At the blacksmith's shop

Deadstock on the shelves.

Rigyū[97]

[96] Ōsaka, literally "the meeting (逢ふ, *au*) hill (坂, *saka*)" is a mountain to the northeast of Kyōto that is often featured in classical Japanese poetry because of the lyrical implications of its name. It is completely unrelated to Ōsaka city, which is written with a different set of Chinese characters (大阪). The speaker is likely crossing Mount Ōsaka as they leave Kyōto, seeking to escape the brutal summer heat in the capital.

[97] The speaker of the previous verse is a traveler returning home after a sustained absence. Back in their hometown, they are both amused and moved when they realize that the prices at the old blacksmith's store remain the same from when they left.

206

減もせぬ鍛冶屋のみせの店ざらし　利牛

No price reduction in sight—

At the blacksmith’s shop

Deadstock on the shelves.

Rigyū

207

門建直す町の相談　孤屋

The town meets to talk

About rebuilding the gate.

Ko’oku[98]

208

彼岸過一重の花の咲立て　野坡

After the equinox,

Single-layered blossoms

Break out.

Yaba[99]

[98] City officials approach the blacksmith, perhaps intending to help his business, to try to convince him to fix the town or district gate. However, even in this context, the stubborn blacksmith will not negotiate his prices; this goes to explain why his shop is packed with unsold goods.

[99] Both *higan*（彼岸）, the equinoctial week when Buddhist services are observed in Japan, and *hana*（花）, “flower”, are seasonal words for spring. The word “gate”, from the previous verse, is frequently associated in *haikai* with temples; In this link, a blacksmith or handyman has been asked to repair the gate of

208

彼岸過一重の花の咲立て　野坡

After the equinox,

Single-layered blossoms

Break out.

Yaba

209

三人ながらおもしろき春　執筆

All three of us,

A wonderful spring.

The authors[100]

an old temple, right around the time when the cherry trees within its precinct start to bloom.

[100] In their closing verse, the authors reflect on the enjoyment of completing the sequence but also riff of the previous verse: the cherry-blossoms described by Yaba come in a single-layer; they, on the other hand, come in a group of three. They humorously assure the reader that while they are not anything like the blossoms, they are also not completely out of place with the season.

春之部発句

Spring Hokku

立春

On the First Days of Spring

210

蓬莱に聞ばや伊勢の初便　芭蕉

In Hōrai

I would like to ask

The first news from Ise.

Bashō[1]

211

東雲やまいら戸はづすかざり松　濁子

Daybreak—

I unlock the louvered door.

The new year pine.

Jokushi[2]

[1] This poem references a *waka* that the Abbot Jien (1155-1225) composed while visiting the shrine at Ise, and supposedly included the word 初 (first), which inspired the phrase "first news" from Ise. However, if we assume the poem to be the one published in the *Shūgyokushū* ("Collection of Selected Jewels"), the word Bashō takes from Jien is "news", and not "first":

> このごろは伊勢に知る人おとづれて便りいろある花柑子かな
>
> *Recently/An acquaintance from Ise/*
> *Visited me:/ News of colorful/Tangerine blossoms!*

The speaker in Bashō's poem (traditionally taken to be Bashō himself) notices Hōrai-style new year arrangements in the alcove in front of him. These decorations represented Mount Hōrai, where the elixir of eternal life was kept, and consisted of an arrangement of rice with vegetables, seafood, and fruit, among which tangerines could be found: another possible link to Jien's *waka*. Bashō was a native of modern-day Mie prefecture, which explains why the speaker demands.

[2] Jokushi (dates unknown) was a samurai from the Ōgaki domain (present day Gifu prefecture) who, thanks to the system of alternative attendance (see poem 135), had a chance to meet Bashō at Edo. *Mairado* (まいら戸), "louvered doors"), a feature of *Shōin* style architecture, feature slightly raised horizontal boards against the frame, dimming outside light and letting air circulate inside. In this poem, a hint of daybreak passes through the gaps in the door, prompting the person inside to wake up and open fully. At the entrance of the residence, sits an adorned pine sapling, a traditional new year decoration, embraced by the sunlight.

212

みちのくのけふ関越ん箱の海老　杉風

Today at Michinoku

It must have passed the barrier.

A box of shrimp.

Sanpū[3]

213

春や祝ふ丹波の鹿も帰とて　京 去来

It's spring！Celebrating,

The deer at Tanba

Return too, they say.

From Kyōto

Kyorai[4]

214

刀さす供もつれたし今朝の春　膳所 正秀

To display my sword

I want to bring along a servant.

Spring this morning.

From Zeze

Masahide[5]

[3] Sanpū (1657-1732) was a wealthy Edo fish wholesaler who owned the land where Bashō's Fukagawa cottage was erected, supporting him financially until the master's death. In this autobiographical poem, Sanpū wonders about the status of the shipment of shrimp he sent at the end of the year to Michinoku (another name for Mutsu province, present day Fukushima, Miyagi, Iwate, and Aomori provinces). The barrier mentioned here is an actual checkpoint used by the Shogunate to control the movement of people across the country, but it also references the historic Shirakawa barrier, a classic *utamakura* ("poem pillow", words that allude to famous geographical sites in poetry) that was commonly associated with the place name "Michinoku".

[4] Kyorai (1651-1704) was one of Bashō's "Ten great disciples". His *Kyoraishō* ("Kyorai's notes") is one of the best first-hand accounts of Bashō's life and his work. "The deer of Tanba" (丹波の鹿, *Tamba no shika*) is a reference to *Heike Monogatari*: when the snow covered the pastures of Tanba province (present day central Kyōto and eastern Hyōgo prefectures), the deer would move to neighboring Harima province (southwest of present-day Hyōgo prefecture). Their return to Tanba was taken, then, as an auspicious sign for the beginning of spring.

[5] Masahide (1657-1723) was a high ranking official in the Zeze domain of Ōmi province, present day Shiga prefecture, who often hosted Bashō in Ōmi. While this poem may simply describe Masahide's pride in his status as a member of the samurai class on a spring festival, it may also intend to make fun of an anonymous, lower-ranking samurai's display of status during a new year parade.

215

いそがしき春を雀のかきばかま　大坂 洒堂

A busy Spring

For the Sparrow

In its persimmon-colored skirt.

From Ōsaka,

Shadō[6]

216

喰(くひ)つみや木曽(きそ)のにほいの檜物(ひのきもの)　岱水

New year decorations—

The scent of Kiso,

From the cypress stand.

Taisui[7]

217

猶(なほ)いきれ門徒坊主(もんとばうず)の水祝(みづいは)ひ　沾圃

Splash some more!

The pure-land sect monk's

Water offerings.

Senpo[8]

[6] Shadō (1668-1737) was a physician based in Zeze, Omi province who, after meeting Bashō, moved to Ōsaka to become a full time *haikai* poet. "Persimmon-colored skirt" (*kakibakama*, かきばかま) was a fashionable, orange-color skirt for men. By comparing its plumage to a skirt worn by *chōnin* or townsfolk, the sparrow is personified as a diligent worker that does not skip work, even if it is the first day of the year.

[7] Taisui (dates unknown) was a minor disciple of Bashō who lived nearby the master's hut in Fukagawa. *Kuitsumi* (喰つみ) was the name used in Edo for the Hōrai-style decorations described by Bashō in poem 210. In Taisui's case, the fresh wooden smell emanating from the decorations transports him not to the mountain where the immortals lived but to Kiso, a forested area in present day Nagano province.

[8] Senpo (1663-1745) was a renowned Nō actor, the son and heir of Hōshō Shigemoto (1619-1685), one of the most famous performers of all time. He joined Bashō's entourage in Edo while simultaneously heading the Hōshō school of Nō and acted as the main compiler of *Zoku Sarumino* ("Sarumino Continued"), another representative work of *karumi*-style *haikai*. During Bashō's time, a newlywed man would splash water on himself on the second day of the year as a celebratory ritual. The person conducting this ritual, however, is a monk, which may appear odd. The key lies in the word *monto* (門徒, "believer"), which was typically used for followers of *jōdo shinshū* or Pure Land Bhuddism, the first (and only, until the Meiji period) sect that allowed monks and priests to marry.

218

目下にも中の詞や年の時宜　孤屋

Even the servants

Talking among themselves—

Season’s greetings.

Ko’oku[9]

219

初日影我茎立とつまればや　利牛

In the light of the first sunrise,

Like the young herbs,

I would like to be plucked!

Rigyū[10]

220

長松が親の名で来る御慶哉　野坡

That kid we called “Tall Pine”

Returns under his father’s name.

New year’s greetings!

Yaba[11]

[9] Since it is the new year, people exchange seasonal greetings in slightly more formal Japanese— even the servants, who would speak very casually among themselves. Ko’oku finds this charming in its incongruity.

[10] The speaker in Rigyū’s poem evokes a typical new year scene described in classical Japanese literature, where young aristocratic maidens would raise early to pick up the seven herbs of the spring (Japanese parsley, shepherd’s purse, cudweed, chickenweed, nipplewort, turnip, and radish) that would then be made into a porridge typically consumed on the night of the sixth or the morning of the seventh day of the year. The affectation here is that the speaker himself wants to be an herb so he could meet one of these legendary beauties.

[11] 長松（*chōmatsu,* “Long Pine”）was a common name for shop apprentices during the Edo period, where young boys would be taken as helpers until they were adopted into a more prosperous family or became the heir and successor at his own parent’s business. Here, a young man returns to pay his respects at the shop where he worked until recently. He is now independent and presents himself, perhaps a bit awkwardly, under a fancy new name; a situation that may have appeared particularly charming to Yaba, a former clerk at the Echigoya in Edo.

梅

Plum Trees

221

梅一木つれづれ草の姿かな　露沾

A single plum tree.

It surely has the air

Of the one from *Essays in Idleness*.

Rosen[12]

222

むめ咲や臼の挽木のよきまがり　曲翠

The plum is blossoming;

For a mortar wooden pestle,

It has about the right girth.

Kyokusui[13]

[12] Rosen (1655-1733) was the pen name of Naitō Yoshihide, the second son of Naitō Yoshimune, *daimyō* or feudal lord of the Iwakitaira domain (present day Iwaki city in Fukushima prefecture); as such, Rosen was by far Bashō's highest ranked disciple. *Essays in Idleness* was a collection of short essays, anecdotes, and narratives by the monk Yoshida Kenkō. Plum trees and blossoms appear in several of the sections (66, 139, 154, 240) of this book and it is hard to pin down the specific reference the poem is going for. Shiraishi (390) proposes section 154, in which a crooked bonsai captures the attention of Kenkō for its beauty but also for its defiance of nature; 姿, *sugata,* ("shape") would be the word linking both texts. However, if we take *sugata* to mean "air", or "appearance" in more general terms, Rosen may just as well be referring to section 139, where Kenkō talks about the "single flowering" plum trees that the poet Fujiwara no Teika (1162-1241) supposedly kept near his home.

[13] Kyokusui (1659-1717) was a high-ranking samurai from Bashō's circle at Zeze, in Ōmi province. He is responsible for hosting Bashō at Zeze for four months in 1690, after the master finished the trip consigned in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. This humorous poem, depicting a philistine uncapable of appreciating the beauty of the blossoming plum tree, references the Kyōgen play *Hagidaimyō* ("Lord Bush-clover") in which a clueless feudal lord from the provinces visits the capital and, among other blunders, suggests chopping down the prized plum tree of one of his hosts to make a mortar pestle.

223

むめが香の筋（すじ）に立（たち）よるはつ日哉　支考

I stop on the path
Of the plum blossoms' scent.
First day!

Shikō[14]

224

窓のうちをみこみて

むめちるや糸の光の日の匂（にほ）ひ　伊賀 土芳

Looking inside through an open window

Plum blossoms scattering;
The scent of the sun's
Threads of light.

From Iga

Dohō[15]

225

梅さきて湯殿（ゆどの）の崩れなをしけり　利牛

The plum blossoms opened,
And I had the cracks in the bath
Fixed.

Rigyū[16]

[14] Shikō (1665-1731) was one of Bashō's "Ten Great Disciples". He was by Bashō's deathbed in Ōsaka and helped draft his will; the Mino school of Haiku, which he founded after the master's death, remains active to this day. This poem, highly reminiscent of Basho's first verse in the first sequence of *Sumidawara*, describes an observer stopping in the direction the plum blossoms' scent seems to be drifting towards, just at the time when the first sunrise of the year takes place.

[15] Dohō (1657-1730) was a samurai who was so impressed after meeting Bashō that he retired from his duties at age 30 and dedicated the rest of his life to poetry. He became the leading figure of *Shōmon*, or Bashō-style *haikai* in Iga, and published several poetry anthologies after the master's death. The speaker in the verse inadvertently looks inside a dark room, where both the scent of the falling plum blossoms and the afternoon sun's rays are condensed.

[16] The opening of the plum blossoms signals the arrival of favorable weather, which prompts the master of a house to call a carpenter or handyman to fix the dilapidated bath at their property.

226

赤みその口を明けりむめの花　游刀

I opened the lid

Of the red miso paste—

Plum blossoms.

Yūtō[17]

227

みなみなに咲そろはねど梅の花　野坡

Although they all

Open in disarray,

Plum flowers

Yaba[18]

228

紅梅は娘すまする妻戸哉　杉風

Red plum blossoms,

The paired doors

Where a maiden is forced to live!

Sanpū[19]

[17] Yūtō (dates unknown) was a minor figure in Bashō's group of *haikai* enthusiasts at Zeze. In this poem, a jar of red miso paste has been left to ferment during the winter. Now that spring has come, the owner opens the lid and is hit with the earthy aroma of the red miso, which mixes with the sweet scent of the plum blossoms.

[18] The concessive aspect of this poem (咲そろはねど, *sakisorowanedo,* "although they don't bloom together") poses a tacit comparison between plum trees, whose branches bloom unevenly, and cherry trees, which blossom in a uniform way. For the author, plum trees are charming regardless of how they bloom.

[19] This poem references chapter 43 of *The Tale of Genji*, entitled *Kōbai* (紅梅), "Red Plum Blossoms". The chapter focuses on the Inspector Grand Counselor, nicknamed "Kōbai"; there is also a red plum tree growing by the eaves on the east side of his residence, near to his adopted daughter's chambers. Niou, Genji's grandson, is interested in Kōbai's adopted daughter, but the latter would rather match him with one of his own daughters. The lady that Niou is pursuing lives in almost total seclusion at the residence, which is what Sanpū refers to with the mention to "paired doors"; the verbal compound *sumasuru* (すまする, "to have someone reside") is causative, meaning that Kōbai keeps her in the house against her will and despite Niou's interest.

229

おなごどもの七くさはやすをみて

とばしるも顔に匂へる薺哉(なづなかな)　其角

Watching girls during the seven herbs celebration

Splashing sap
Ended up dying my face.
Shepherd's purse!

Kikaku[20]

230

七種(なゝくさ)や粧(けは)ひしかけて切刻(きりきざ)み　野坡

The seven herbs!
In full makeup
And chopping.

Yaba[21]

231

うちむれてわかな摘(つむ)野に脛(すね)かゆし　仙杖

Bunched together,
Their lower legs itching
From picking young herbs at the fields.

Senjō[22]

[20] Kikaku (1661-1707) was one of Bashō's most prominent disciples. He resisted *karumi* and, after the master's death, quickly shifted to a wittier, worldlier style that earned him enormous popularity and made him the leading figure in the Edo *haikai* scene. The "Seven herbs celebration" consists in lining up in a cutting board the ingredients for the "Seven herb porridge" (see poem 219) and then clapping and hitting the board with a mallet while chanting. The idea here is that the celebration has gone out of hand and some of the juice from the herbs being chopped has landed on the speaker's face, which is both dyed green and perfumed, two possible uses of the *verb niou* (匂ふ).

[21] A distinguished lady, perhaps a lady-in-waiting participating in the *Gosekku* ceremonies (spring rites held at the imperial court), prepares porridge while dressed in her best clothes.

[22] Very little is known of Senjō (year of birth unknown; dies in 1734), an acquaintance of Bashō from Iga province. This poem riffs on an almost identical waka by Fujiwara no Ietaka (1158-1237) in the *Minishū*, a private poetry anthology:

> うちむれて若菜つむ野の花かたみこのめも春の雪はたまらず
>
> *Bunched together in/ The flower baskets for/ Picking young herbs in the fields/ The leaf buds won't stand/ The spring snow.*

Senjō adds the perspective of the flower pickers, who, annoyed by the itching, have stopped and are now sitting down together.

232

洛(らく)よりの文(ふみ)のはしに

朧月(おぼろづき)一足(ひとあし)づゝもわかれかな　去来

Written on the edge of a letter I sent from the capital—

The hazy moon,
Step by step,
Separation!

Kyorai[23]

233

大はらや蝶の出てまふ朧月　僧 丈艸

Ōhara—

The butterfly takes flight.

The hazy moon.

The monk

Jōsō[24]

234

おぼろ月まだはなされぬ頭巾(づきん)かな　仙花

The hazy moon,
With its veiled hood
Still on!

Senka[25]

[23] Under the hazy spring moon, the speaker has bid farewell to a loved one. On the way back, each step intensifies the feeling of separation from the other party.

[24] Jōsō (1662-1704), a native of Owari province (nowadays Aichi prefecture) was one of Bashō's "ten great disciples". Born into a lesser, rural samurai figure, he suffered a series of hardships that led him to take Buddhist vows at 27. While not as prolific as some of Bashō's other disciples, his work was highly praised by the master and is held in great esteem by contemporary critics; Ryūnosuke Akutagawa, for example, considered him the top *haikai* poet of the Bashō school. Ōhara is a *utamakura* typically associated with Yamashiro province, which encompassed the southern part of present-day Kyōto province. There are precedents for the association of Ōhara with butterflies, to which the poet superimposes a hazy spring moon.

[25] Senka (dates unknown) was a disciple of Bashō based in Edo, mostly known as the compiler of *Frog Contest* (蛙合, *kawazu awase*), an extremely popular *hokku* anthology centered on Bashō's famous "old pond" poem. The word 頭巾 (*zukin*) denotes a specific type of combined headdress and face covering worn by both men and women during the Edo period, not too different from a *hijab*.

235

深川の会に

長閑(のどか)さや寒(かん)の残りも三ケ一(さんがいち)　利牛

At a gathering in Fukagawa

Warmth—
The cold now comes
Once every three days.

Rigyū[26]

236

十五日立(たつ)や睦月(むつき)の古手売(ふるてうり)　大坂 之道

Fifteen days
Have passed; secondhand stores
On the first month.

From Ōsaka,

Shidō[27]

237

猫(ねこ)の恋初手(こいしよて)から鳴(めい)て哀也(あはれなり)　野坡(のつつみ)

Cat’s love.
They cry from the very start,
So pitiful!

Yaba[28]

[26] Fukagawa was, of course, the site of Bashō’s hermitage in Edo (see poem 73). The weather has started to change and, on days like the one when this meeting takes place, the promise of balmy temperatures can be felt.

[27] Shidō (ca. 1660-1708) was a wealthy Ōsaka merchant, specializing in medicinal products. He hosted Bashō for a few days during the master’s final trip to the town and was one of the disciples by his bedside in 1694. This ironic verse contrasts the new year with the old things for sale; while everything is supposed to be renewed with the arrival of spring, it is only fifteen days into the new year and the secondhand stores are back in business as usual.

[28] “Cat’s love” (猫の恋, *neko no koi*) was a seasonal word for spring, as the new year largely coincided with the beginning of the cats’ mating season. The speaker observes, with a layer of sympathy, how cats cry from the very beginning of their search for a partner; the nuance is that humans, in contrast, cry at the end of their romantic relationships.

238

ねこの子のくんづほぐれつ胡蝶哉　其角

The kittens'

Grappling,

A butterfly!

Kikaku[29]

[29] "Butterfly" (胡蝶, *kochō*) is a seasonal word for spring. A pair of kittens are frolicking under a ray of sunlight; the speaker looks up and notices a butterfly floating calmly above them. The poem contrasts the spatial position of the kittens with that of the butterfly, while also contrasting the formers' energetic play and the latter's quiet flight linguistically.

鶯

Bush Warblers

239

うぐひすにほうと息(いき)する朝(あした)哉(かな)　嵐雪

To the bush warbler

Ah! I take a deep breath

This morning!

Ransetsu[30]

240

鶯に薬(くすり)をしへん声の文(あや)　其角

To the bush warbler

I offer medicine

To correct their pitch.

Kikaku[31]

[30] In poetic tradition, the chirping of the bush warbler signals the arrival of the morning and, perhaps unconsciously, makes the speaker sigh. Is it because they have been woken up, or on the contrary, because they have spent up all night?

[31] The bush warbler's singing feels slightly off to the speaker who, either out of pity or annoyance, metaphorically offers their help.

241

うぐひすの声に起行(おきゆく)雀かな　桃隣

The sparrow

Wakes up to the voice

Of the bush warbler.

Tōrin[32]

242

うぐひすや門(かど)はたまたま豆麩賣(とうふうり)　野坡

The bush warbler—

By the gate, just then,

The tofu salesman.

Yaba[33]

243

鶯の一声(ひとこゑ)も念を入(いれ)にけり　利牛

Every single cry,

Of the bush warbler

Is so scrupulous!

Rigyū[34]

[32] Tōrin (1639-1720), born in Iga province, was a disciple and perhaps also relative of Bashō. He eventually moved to Edo where he was active in Bashō's circle, and after the master's death he retraced the by celebrated journey from *Oku no Hosomichi* ("The Narrow Road to the Deep North"). The song of the bush warbler appears again as the marker for the break of dawn. Awaken by it or perhaps not wanting to be outdone, the sparrow adds its voices to the chorus of morning birds.

[33] The bush warbler sings its beautiful song in someone's garden and then, by chance, a tofu salesman stops by the gate and calls in a hoarse, loud voice. The poem juxtaposes the beauty of birdsong against the brashness of human language but, ultimately, intends to find humor in the misfortune of the speaker, likely the owner of the residence. A slice of urban life.

[34] While not entirely clear, the first phrase in this poem may reference a line in *Naniwa*, a Nō play by Zeami:

> 実に名にしおふ難波津に、鳥の一声をりしもに、鳴く鶯の春の曲
>
> ("at the famous harbor of Naniwa, at this very moment the voice of a bird, the crying bush warbler's song of spring").

If indeed a reference to Zeami's play, it may intend to compare the complex tonal fluctuation of the warbler's song with that of a Nō performer, and flaunt Rigyū's literary pedigree.

柳

The Willow

244

こねりをもへらして植し柳かな　湖春

The sweet persimmon trees

Were cut, to plant

The willow!

Koshun[35]

245

障子ごし月のなびかす柳かな　素龍

Trough the sliding door,

Swayed by the moon,

The willow!

Soryū[36]

[35] Koshun (1648-1697) was the eldest song of Kitamura Kigin (1625-1705), one of the precursors of *haikai* and an earlier teacher of renga to Bashō. As an adult, he wrote poetry with both Bashō and his father, who received several literary commissions from the shogunate. Although Bashō publicly distanced himself from Kigin and the Teimon-school style of *haikai*, Koshun try to present himself as a living link between his father's and Bashō's poetry. こねり (*koneri*) is a seasonal word for autumn, and describes a specific variety of persimmon tree highly valued for its sweet fruit. In Koshun's verse, the owner of a garden had their prized persimmon tree cut and replaced with a willow; now that spring has arrived and the buds are starting to come forth, they feel at peace with their decision.

[36] At night, the moon projects the shadow of the swaying willow branches against the sliding paper doors. From the perspective of the observer, it is as if the moon is playing with (or manipulating, another possible meaning for なびかす, *nabikasu*) the willow.

246

五人ぶちとりてしだるゝ柳かな　野坡

My wages may cover

Only five people, but

Ah, this weeping willow!

Yaba[37]

[37] *Gojin Buchi*（吾人ぶち）was a colloquial name for the stipend assigned to low-ranking samurai, which would amount to the rice consumed by five people in a year. In terms of Edo-period wages, this was very low as the samurai had to, in addition to his own family, take care of a number of servants and expenses. Regardless, the speaker of the poem feels like a rich man; it is now spring, and the stunning weeping willow in his garden is leafing out.

247

せきれいの尾は見付(みつけ)ざる柳哉(かな)　一風

The wagtail's tail

Can't be spotted.

The willow!

Ippū[38]

[38] Very little is known of Ippū (dates unknown), other that he was a merchant from Nagoya and was associated to Hokushi, one of Bashō "ten great disciples". This is his only poem in *Sumidawara*. This simple poem presents a wagtail, a bird with a very long tail, standing on a branch of an imposing willow: so imposing that even the long tail of the bird is covered by its foliage. The desired effect is to contrast the drooping branches of the willow with the stiff, horizontal tail of the wagtail.

248

町(まち)なかへしだるゝ宿(しゆく)の柳かな　利牛

To the heart of the city—

The inn's willow

Drops!

Rigyū[39]

[39] The speaker is a traveler stopping at a relay station near Edo on the Tōkaidō, the road that connected the city with Kyōto and the provinces of the West. Outside, an impressive willow grows. The bent of its branches points towards the capital, almost as if beckoning the traveler to continue its journey.

249

傘に押わけみたる柳かな　芭蕉

With a paper umbrella

I tried to open a path through

The willow!

Bashō[40]

[40] On a rainy spring day, the speaker passes under a dropping willow and gently pushes its branches aside with a paper umbrella. While the logical consequence is that the paper will rip, Bashō wants us to suspend our disbelief and expend the branches of the willow to caress the umbrella, just like the rain.

椿

Camellias

250

土はこぶ籠(ふご)にちり込(こむ)椿かな　孤屋

On the soil I carry

On this bamboo basket, it falls.

A camellia!

Ko'oku[41]

251

枝長く伐(き)らぬ習(ならひ)を椿かな　湖春

Custom says the branches

Shouldn't be cut long—

Camellias!

Koshun[42]

[41] Rather than springing from the soil, this camelia flower has fallen into it; a motion emphasized by the verb *komu* (込む, to move inward).

[42] In traditional flower arrangements, only the tips or shorter branches of a camellia bush should be cut to highlight individual flowers; the custom says, specifically, that there should only be one flower per branch. The speaker feels, however, that a whole, fully blossomed branch would be more beautiful.

252

念入て冬からつぼむ椿かな　曲翠

With great care,

It has been budding since the winter.

The camellia bush!

Kyokusui[43]

[43] The speaker here expresses their admiration for the long flowering process of the camellia, which starts during the winter. It is now spring, and the bush is in full bloom.

253

鋸にからきめみせて花つばき　嵐雪

It gives the saw

A hard time,

The blooming camellia bush.

Ransetsu[44]

[44] The camelia bush wood is extremely hard and its flowers fragile enough to fall if the branches are shaken. This presents a tremendous challenge to the person, represented through metonymy as “saw”, in charge of pruning it for gardening or for its use in flower arrangements.

254

鳥のねも絶ず家陰の赤椿　支考

Nonstop birdsong—

The red camellias

Behind the house.

Shikō[45]

[45] *Yakage* (家陰, literally “house shade”) denotes a secluded space within a property, usually behind the main residence. A camellia tree sprouting red flowers grows there, attracting all kinds of birds.

255

はき掃除してから椿散にけり　野坡

Right after

Sweeping and cleaning,

A camellia flower has fallen.

Yaba[46]

[46] The effort to clean the garden has been interrupted in the most delicate way: by the falling of a single camellia flower.

花

Cherry Blossoms

256

うえのゝ花見にまかり侍しに、人々幕打さはぎ、
ものゝ音、小うたの聲さまざまなりにける、
かたはらの松かげをたのみて、
四つごきのそろはぬ花見心哉　芭蕉

Having gone to enjoy the cherry blossoms at
Ueno, the uproar of people setting screens,
the sounds of things, popular ballads, and
many other things reached my ears. I took
shelter on the shade of a pine tree by the
road, and wrote:

Like a wandering priest's
Incomplete tableware set; my heart
While watching the blossoms…

Bashō[47]

[47] Buddhist wandering priests and monks carry with them a set of four nested bowls (四つ御器, *yotsu goki*). A set of this is, by itself, humble enough; an incomplete set would appear meager and desolate-- the way Bashō felt amid the bustle in Ueno. The first line after the preface presents the bowls, leading the reader to assume that, once Bashō found the shade of the pine, he took out a modest lunch he had packed for the occasion.

257

めづらしや内で花見のはつめじか　杉風

So lovely!
At home, the first catch of young tuna
Of the flower-watching season.

Sanpū[48]

258

うかうかと来ては花見の留守居哉　丈艸

Not realizing
I stopped by; out flower-watching,
They left a house-sitter…

Jōsō[49]

259

何がしのかうの殿の花見に侍りて

中下もそれ相応の花見かな　素龍

Going flower-watching to the residence of a certain high-ranking official

Flower-watching
Suits just fine
The middle or lower classes too!

Soryū[50]

[48] Sanpū, a fish wholesaler (see poem 212), again writes a poem that has to do with his profession. It is the peak of spring, and masses of people flock the parks, temples, and other famous spots for watching the cherry blossoms. The speaker, on the other hand, is content to sit by the cherry tree in their own garden while enjoying a fresh catch of fish. The adjective *mezurashi*（めづらし）can mean both “lovely, charming” and “unique”; the second nuance reinforces the sense of originality in the speaker’s decision to stay home.

[49] One must plan carefully during cherry blossom season. Visiting someone casually risks finding out that the whole family is out flower-watching.

[50] This “high ranking official” is, naturally, a member of the warrior class. Soryū served as the retainer of the fifth Tokugawa shogun and, as such, must have been accustomed to socializing with powerful samurai; his poem, however, should not be taken as an indictment of the ruling class, but rather as a reflection on the popular appeal of the cherry blossoms, whose beauty could be enjoyed by everyone regardless of their social standing.

260

花守(はなもり)や白きかしらを突(つき)あはせ　去来

The flower guards—

Their white heads

Are well matched.

Kyorai[51]

261

朝めしの湯を片膝(かたひざ)や庭の花　孤屋

Drinking the breakfast’s

soup on one knee!

The blossoms in the garden.

Ko’oku[52]

262

あすと云(いふ)花見の宵のくらき哉(かな)　荊口

“Tomorrow” we said,

But the evening before flower-watching

Is so dark!

Keikō[53]

[51] The heads of the old men tasked with protecting cherry trees during blossom watching season match the white petals of the flowers. Cherry blossoms are pinkish in the bud, gradually turning white before falling from the tree; beyond the visual aspect of the poem, Kyorai may be commenting on the passage of time for both the guards and the petals. Bashō famously praised this poem as an outstanding example of *sabi* aesthetics (see introduction).

[52] A traditional Japanese breakfast will include a soup (typically miso) to which vegetables, tofu, mushrooms, and other ingredients can be added. The speaker, captivated by the cherry tree in their garden, has eaten breakfast in a hurry and has started to get up without even finishing the broth.

[53] Keikō (birth date unknown; died 1725) was a wealthy samurai from the Ōgaki domain in Mino province (present day Gifu prefecture), one of the places Bashō visited on the trip described on *The Narrow Path to the Deep North.* Keikō headed a Bashō-style *haikai* society in Mino, of which his sons Shikin, Sensen (poem 2492 in this collection), and Bunchō were also prominent members. The speaker has arranged to go flower-watching with an acquaintance on the following day, but on their way back home they are taken aback by an unusually dark early

263

だかれてもおのこゞいきる花見哉　斜嶺

Even in his mother’s arms,

The little boy can’t hide his excitement.

Flower-watching!

Sharei[54]

264

柿の袈裟ゆすり直すや花の中　北枝

Tugging over and over

At the persimmon-colored stole!

Surrounded by blossoms.

Hokushi[55]

265

牡丹すく人もや花見とはさくら　湖春

Even those

Who love peonies agree;

“Flower-watching” means cherry blossoms.

Koshun[56]

evening. They may not be blessed with good weather during their outing.

[54] Sharei (birth date unknown; died 1702) was a member of Keikō’s circle in Mino province. He hosted Bashō during the master’s third visit to Mino in 1689. Sharei’s poem describes the thrill of a baby seeing the flowers, perhaps for the first time. A straightforward verse, advocating for the universal appeal of cherry-blossoms.

[55] Hokushi (birth date unknown; died 1718) was one of Bashō’s “ten great disciples”. He was based in Kanazawa, where he ran a sword-polishing workshop-- the final stage in the wordsmithing process, where the blades are given their characteristic gleam. When Bashō visited the town during his *Narrow Path to the Far North* trip, both Hokushi and his brother joined him in the road for 25 days. A monk, wearing a rough persimmon (柿, *kaki*) colored *kasaya* or Buddhist stole, stands absent-mindedly amid cherry blossoms in full bloom. The stole, suspended only from one shoulder, is slipping, but he is so captivated by the flowers that he cannot move. All he can do is to adjust it briefly and stand there, enraptured, until the robe starts slipping again.

[56] While people (and particularly poets) may sometimes argue about the superiority of one flower over another, even those who favor peonies would readily agree that when it comes to “flower watching”, the meaning of the word 花 (*hana,* flower) can only refer to the さくら (*sakura*), “cherry blossoms”.

266

あだなりと花に五戒(ごかい)の桜かな　其角

Fickle they are, or so they say,

At the time of the flowers, the five precepts.

Cherry blossoms!

Kikaku[57]

267

花はよも毛虫にならじ家桜(いへざくら)　嵐雪

Blossoms all around,

They wouldn’t turn into caterpillars, right?

The cherry tree at home.

Ransetsu[58]

268

やまざくらちるや小川の水車(みづぐるま)　大津 あま 智月

Mountain cherries scatter—

The brook’s water wheel.

From Ōtsu, the nun

Chigetsu[59]

[57] *Gokai* (五戒), “the five precepts”, are the five basic moral principles that lay Buddhist believers are expected to adhere to. These are, in their traditional order: to refrain from killing; to refrain from stealing; to refrain from sexual misconduct; to refrain from lying; to refrain from substance abuse. The first phrase of this poem comes from a famous *waka* by Ariwara no Narihira (825-880), which was in turn glossed in the *Tales of Ise*, and subsequently referenced in *Izutsu*, one the most famous Nō plays:

> あだなりと名にこそ立てれ桜花、年に稀なる人も待ちけり
>
> *Fickle / They are called, / The cherry blossoms, / Who yet have waited / For someone absent all year round.*

The word あだなり (*adanari*), “fickle” refers to the temporary nature of the blossoms and, in equal measure, to the evanescence of human devotion. What Kikaku implies is that the cherry-blossom season is ephemeral not only because the flowers scatter quickly, but because people’s observance of the “five precepts” goes astray: they will first kill animals for the meals they consume under the trees (first precept), get drunk (fifth precept), start boasting (fourth precept), tear a branch (second precept) and go home, where, they will seek sexual gratification (third precept).

[58] Cherry trees attract caterpillars at the time of their blossoming. Worried about the tree in his garden, the speaker feigns ignorance and wonders, rhetorically, if it is that the petals eventually turn into caterpillars; the answer, of course, is “there is no way”.

[59] Chigetsu (1633? - 1718) was the leading female disciple of Bashō and one of the most prominent poets in his *haikai* circle at Zeze. After her husband’s death, she took vows to become a nun and adopted her younger brother Otokuni (author of poem 353). This verse is split into two single phrases by virtue of a *kireji* or “cutting word”; therefore, I have presented it as a two-line poem in English. Here, a drowsy morning is punctuated by the constant sound of the water wheel and a stream of blossoms falling from the mountain cherries.

269

老僧も袈裟かづきたる花見哉　大坂 之道

Even the old monk
Wearing a stole,
Flower-watching!

From Ōsaka

Shidō[60]

270

誰母ぞ花に珠数くる遅ざくら　祐甫

Whose mother is she?
Spinning a rosary under the flowers,
Late cherry blossoms.

Yūho[61]

271

山桜小川飛こすおなご哉　越前 福井 普全

Mountain blossoms
Jumping across the brook,
The young girls!

From Echizen, Fukui,

Fuzen[62]

[60] The similarities between this poem and Hokushi's (264) make one wonder if this is a direct response or refiguring. Hokushi's composition is visual: there is vertical balance between the blossoms above and the monk below, and a strong contrast between the color of the monk's stole and the flowers. Shidō, on the other hand, focuses more on symbolism: like the baby in Sharei's poem (263), the old monk serves as proof of the universal appeal of the cherry blossoms.

[61] Yūho (1632-1710) was a merchant from Ueno, Bashō's hometown in Iga province (nowadays Mie prefecture). *Osozakura* (遅ざくら) are late blooming cherry trees; the idea of being late, however, (*okureru*) is often used as a euphemistic way of denoting the death of someone close. In other words, they have already departed and one is late, but will eventually catch up. In this highly figurative poem, an old lady prays under the late blossoms, a symbol of her late child; this is why the author identifies her immediately as a mother.

[62] Practically nothing is known about Fuzen, other than he was, as per his signature, residing in the Fukui domain, Echizen province (nowadays Fukui prefecture). The mountain cherry trees are in bloom and their flowers shower a stream by the foot of the mountain. The word *tobikosu* (飛びこす, "to leap/fly over") works as a predicate for the first phrase of the poem (the petals flying over the stream) and as a modifier for the last one ("the leaping girls"); the blossoms appear, therefore, as a simile for the young, innocent girls jumping over the narrows.

272

昆布だしや花に気のつく庫裏坊主　利牛

Kombu stock—

Noticing the blossoms,

The monk on kitchen duty.

Rigyū[63]

273

おちつきは魚やまかせや桜がり　仝

At the entrance,

The fishmonger's recommendation—

Hunting for cherry blossoms.

(Rigyū again)[64]

274

折かへる桜でふくや台所　孤屋

My kitchen,

Covered in blossoms—

It's the branch I brought home.

Ko'oku[65]

[63] A young monk takes over his kitchen shift at a monastery and, per usual, starts boiling the kombu algae to make stock. However, and in stark contrast to the darkness in the kitchen, he notices that the cherry trees outside are blooming. This poem skillfully contrasts the humble constancy of the monks' daily meals with the flashing beauty of the cherry blossoms. The emphasis on the "noticing" of the blossoms also drives home the idea that, even to one that has renounced the world, the flowers are hard to ignore.

[64] The word *ochitsuki*（おちつき）denotes the refreshments given to a guest as they arrive at a residence and wait for the host to call them in. Here, a visitor is surprised to be offered fish of the best quality at the entrance; it is obvious that the host was not paying attention when they sent their servant. The explanation comes in the last phrase: the impending flower-viewing season has them fully focused on the search for the best cherry blossom spots.

[65] The verb *fuku*（ふく）is polysemic, and it is hard to pinpoint exactly what it is expressing in this poem. It can mean "to wipe", giving way to the possibility that the speaker cleans their kitchen with the *sakura* branch; it would be a most unusual depiction for the blossoms, and goes against the way the poem has been traditionally read; Shiraishi posits that it could mean that the speaker feels compelled to clean the kitchen so that it matches the beauty of the blossoms. A third possibility is the one I chose for my translation: according to the *Hyōchūshichibushū*, a late Edo commentary on Bashō's seven great anthologies, *fuku* can mean "to scatter", especially in connection to wind, snow, or rain.

275

祭まであそぶ日なくて花見哉　野坡

Until the festival season

There will be no time for playing around…

Flower-viewing!

Yaba[66]

276

食の時みなあつまるや山ざくら　仝

It’s mealtime

And everybody reassembles—

The mountain blossoms.

(Yaba again)[67]

[66] In Kyōto and Edo, more than two months would have to pass from the flower-viewing season in the early spring before commoners would have the chance to relax again during the summer festivals. This simple poem reads like an invitation to go all out during flower-viewing, as the upcoming stretch of the year will offer no chances for merrymaking.

[67] The members of an excursion to the mountains disperse as everyone seeks their own path towards the blossoms. However, and as the time to eat approaches, they all come back in perfect sync.

上巳

On the First Day of the Snake[68]

277

帯ほどに川のながるゝ塩干哉　沾徳

Like a sash,

The river flows into

The low tide!

Sentoku[69]

278

昼舟に乗るやふしみの桃の花　桃隣

Riding the daytime

Boat; the plum blossoms

At Fushimi.

Tōrin[70]

[68] In the old lunisolar calendar, and taking after Chinese convention, there were three “snake” (巳, *mi*) days in each month. In the third month, the first snake day marked one of the five major seasonal festivals and was strongly associated with riverside purification rituals. These, which were originally rooted in Chinese beliefs, were eventually condensed and replaced by *Hinamatsuri* or the “Dolls’ Festival”, still in practice today.

[69] Sentoku (1662-1726) was born into a lesser samurai family and initiated into haikai writing at an early age. After deciding not to pursue an official position in the government, he became a protégée of several feudal lords, which made him a major figure in haikai writing during the Genroku period and arguably, alongside Kikaku, the main actor in the different haikai circles in Edo after Bashō’s death. The people congregated by the riverside observe the undulating, muddy flow of a river into the low tides. The shape of the river current and the difference in color with the sea water resembles an *obi,* or kimono sash.

[70] The plum trees at Fushimi, planted in 1623, received considerable literary praise some 50 years later during the Genroku era. Visitors today can see some “weeping plums” of the same species at the site. The speaker rides a riverboat along the Uji river (which becomes the Yodo river as it enters Ōsaka), from where they catch a glimpse of the trees in full bloom. From Kyōto, the length of the river would usually be covered southward in daytime, after which the traveler would return northwards during nighttime. This suggests that the boat is moving downriver, towards the sea.

279

かづらきの神はいづれぞ夜の雛(ひな)　其角

Which one is

The god of Kazuraki?

The dolls at night.

Kikaku[71]

280

鬼の子に餅を居(すう)るもひゐな哉(かな)　みの 如行

Placing mochi

For the little demon, too.

Is it also a doll?

From Mino,

Jokō[72]

281

日半路(ひなかぢ)をてられて来るや桃の花　野坡

I've come under the sun

Half a day on the road—

Peach blossoms.

Yaba[73]

[71] Hitokotonushi, the deity enshrined at mount Kazuraki (an alternative spelling of Katsuragi) was believed to possess a very ugly face, which prompted him to hide during the day and only manifest itself at night. In *Oinobukumi*, one of his travel anthologies, Bashō wrote the following poem when visiting the Katsuragi temple:

> 猶見たし花に明行神の顔
>
> *Even more I want to see/In the flowers, at daybreak/The face of the god who leaves.*

Kikaku's verse, likely influenced by Bashō's, revisits the motif of the shy god. At night, the speaker scrutinizes the faces of the dolls on a traditional display, looking for the face of the elusive god. These displays, in which male and female dolls are arranged on a red stand, was an important element of the rituals observed on the third month's first day of the snake during the Edo period, which in turn served as the basis for the contemporary *Hinamatsuri* or "Dolls' Festival".

[72] Jokō (birth date unknown; died 1708) was a high-ranking samurai from Mino province (present day Gifu prefecture). He likely became acquainted with Bashō during the 1680s and, in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, the final stop of the master's 1689 trip is Jokō's home in Mino. Is the "little demon" (鬼の子, *oni no ko*) a demon figurine placed alongside the dolls to which a visitor duly presents *kusamochi*, the rice and mugwort cakes traditionally crafted for the dolls' festival? Or is it a misbehaving boy who, perhaps tempted by the rice cakes, has climbed the dolls' display? The poem does not provide a clear answer.

[73] The First Day of the Snake marked the start of the Peach Festival (桃の節句, *Momo no Sekku*), the time when peach trees were expected to start blooming. The speaker has travelled for half a day under the temperate spring sun and admires the peaches blossoming here and there.

282

麻の種（たね）毎年踏（ふま）る桃の華（はな）　利牛

Hemp seeds,

Stepped on each year.

Peach blossoms.

Rigyū[74]

[74] The season for planting hemp, essential to Edo-period textiles, coincided with the florescence of peaches. Unfortunately for the hemp seeds, the admirers of peach blossoms would trample over the fields as they tried to get closer to the flowers.

283

藪垣（やぶがき）や馬の皃（かほ）かくもゝの花　孤屋

The wicker fence—

Brushing my horse's face,

Peach blossoms.

Ko'oku[75]

[75] In the countryside, a peach tree grows behind a rustic wicker fence. One branch, covered in blossoms, juts over the fence and grazes the face of the horse that the speaker rides.

284

青柳の泥にしだるゝ塩干（しほひ）かな　芭蕉

The green willow

Drooping into the mud

Of the low tides…

Bashō[76]

[76] Low tides marked the beginning of the spring and were expected around the First Day of the Snake. Bashō elegantly contrasts the high (the green, majestic weeping willow) with the low (the earthy, muddy riverbed, exposed after the tides lower) in a direct, unadorned poem.

題しらず

Untitled

285

滝つぼに命打（うち）こむ小あゆ哉（かな）　嵯峨 田夫 為有

Life plunges

Into the waterfall basin.

Little sweetfish!

From Saga, the farmer

Iyū[77]

286

春雨や蜂（はち）の巣つたふ屋ねの漏（もり）　芭蕉

Spring rains—

Drip along the beehive.

A leaky roof.

Bashō[78]

[77] Iyū (dates unknown) was a disciple of Kyōrai from Yamashiro province (the area located to the south of present-day Kyōto prefecture). Three of their poems appear in *Sumidawara*. Sweetfish are also known as “year fish” (年魚, *nengyō*) as their lifespans are typically one year. In the autumn they hatch in riverbeds, and the currents drive their larvae into the sea. They develop during the winter and in the spring, as young adults (the stage in which they appear in this poem), return to the rivers. The poet, perhaps noticing the young fish in the basin or simply reflecting on the season and the imposing sound of the waterfall, expresses sympathy about the difficult upstream trip the sweetfish must complete.

[78] This poem seems to allude to a famous *waka* by Saigyō that appears in the Shinkokinshū:

> つくづくと春のながめの寂しきはしのぶにつたふ軒の玉水
>
> *Softly/ The loneliness of/ The long spring rains/ Drip along the ferns/ Water droplets on the eaves.*

According to Yaba, this famous poem should not be seen as a contrast between the rain and the beehive, and especially not as reflection on the bees inside. In correspondence with Kyoroku, one of Bashō “Ten Great Disciples”, he remarks that the silent atmosphere of the poem is emphasized by the fact that these are the spring rains, and the beehive, presumably built the summer before, is abandoned. This scene, Yaba believes, was something the old master witnessed many times in his hermitage at Fukagawa.

287

散残(ちりのこ)るつゝじの蘂(しべ)や二三本　子珊

Still hanging on,

The azaleas’ stamens;

Two or three filaments.

Shisan[79]

288

ほそぼそとごみ燒門(たくかど)のつばめ哉(かな)　怒誰

Little by little,

Burning trash in front of the gate

A swallow!

Dosui[80]

289

鳥の行(ゆく)やけのゝ隈(くま)や風の末(すゑ)　伊賀　猿雖

The birds go,

The smoke clouds from the burnt fields—

On the tip of the wind.

From Iga,

Ensui[81]

[79] Shisan (birth date unknown; died 1699) was a a disciple of Bashō based in Edo. In 1694, just before Bashō’s departure on his final trip, he hosted a farewell party attended by the master’s closest disciples from Edo. Shisan collected the poems composed on this occasion in the 別座鋪, *Betsuzashiki* (“A Separate Room”), a brief, one volume anthology of *karumi*-style verse. The preface of this text is the provenance of Bashō’s famous characterization of *karumi*: a style that is like “a shallow sand-bed river. These verses are light in both form and content. That is what makes them meaningful”. The petals of the azalea are conjoined and often wilt outwardly, without touching the internal part of the flower. This is what the poet observes: the flower is long gone, but the stamens remain up.

[80] Dosui (birth date unknown; died 1743) was the younger brother of Kyokusui, the author of poems 2398 and 2428 in this sequence. Alongside his brother, he led the haikai scene at Ōmi and helped him host Bashō at Zeze in 1690. This is his only poem in Sumidawara. The speaker has piled the trash at the gate of their property and is preparing to set fire to it; however, they realize that a swallow has built its nest under the eaves. Despite the extra time and effort it will take, the speaker breaks the pile and burns it slowly, to prevent the smoke from choking the swallow out of the nest.

[81] Ensui (1640-1704) was a wealthy trader and influential member of Bashō’s Iga province haikai circle. In 1690, he took monastic vows and dedicated himself fully to poetry and painting. Five of his poems appear in *Sumidawara*. The unspecified birds on this poem are migratory, flying north as temperatures gradually increase in the spring. The phrase 鳥の行く（*tori no yuku*), “the birds go/leave” may lead the reader to think that they are escaping the burning fields; it is, however, an expression that indicates grouping or competition, as Shiraishi points out. The migratory birds left first, but the smoke from the fields being prepared chases them, riding the same winds.

290

気相よき青葉の麦の嵐かな　仙華

In good spirits,

The storm on the fresh

Wheat leaves!

Senka[82]

291

旅行にて

法度場の垣より内はすみれ哉　野坡

On the road

Inside

The enclosure’s fence;

Violets!

Yaba[83]

[82] A storm blows over the wheat fields, shaking the young, green stalks. Rather than menacing, the poem reinforces the auspiciousness of the crop as the fields appear to come alive under the winds.

[83] There are no verbs in this rather unusual poem, perhaps because the action performed by the speaker is obvious: they see the violets on the other side of the fence while on a trip. The emphasis of the poem is between this inside-outside dynamic, where the speaker seems both disheartened by the artificial separation between themselves and the flowers, and amazed at the realization that they grow there precisely because nobody disturbs them.

292

此集いまだ半なる比、孤屋旅立事ありけるに、
品川までみ送りて、
雲霞どこまで行もおなじ事　野坡

Around the time this collection was halfway complete, I walked up to Shinagawa with Ko'oku and saw him off as he left on a trip

Clouds and mist

Regardless of where you go,

It's the same.

Yaba[84]

293

梅さくらふた月ばかり別れけり　利牛

Plum and cherry blossoms

Are parted

By two months.

Rigyū[85]

[84] Shinagawa was the relay station before last on the Tokaidō road connecting Edo and Kyōto; it is implied that Yaba has walked the first leg of the trip with Ko'oku, before finally sending him off. In classical Japanese literature, "clouds and mist" suggest the melancholy attached to seeing a loved one disappearing in the distance; for example, in the first of the *Wakana* chapters of *The Tale of Genji*, a messenger from Akashi no Nyūdō (Genji's father-in-law trough Akashi no Kimi, the "Akashi Lady") describes how his master "[…] withdrew into the clouds and mists of a certain distant mountain" (taken from Royall Tyler's 2001 translation, p. 612). What stays "the same" here are not the "clouds and mist"; is the sadness of seeing a friend leave, regardless of the length of their trips. It is important to note that, beyond their poetic connection as disciples of Bashō and compilers of *Sumidawara*, Yaba and Ko'oku were coworkers at the Echigoya in Edo.

[84] Despite being major poetic themes for spring, plum and cherry blossoms appear two months apart according to the lunar calendar: plum blossoms in the first month and cherry blossoms in the third. Underlying this observation, and following the tone of Yaba's poem before, is the idea that the compilers, too, will unfortunately disband once *Sumidawara* is complete— a poetic conceit, since all three worked at the Echigoya.

夏部之発句

Summer Hokku

首夏（しゅか）
Early Summer[1]

294
塩（しほ）うをの裏ほす日也（なり）衣がへ　嵐雪

Under the sun
We flip salt-sprinkled fish to dry them.
Changing clothes day.

Ransetsu[2]

295
衣がへ十日はやくば花ざかり　野坡

Changing clothes day.
If it had been ten days earlier,
Blossoms would have been in bloom.

Yaba[3]

[1] The term 首夏 (*shuka*, "head of summer") was also used to denote the first day of the fourth month in the lunar calendar, which marked the start of the summer season and the day where people changed into the lighter, two-layer *Awase* (袷) kimono.

[2] In a small fishing town, folk bustle around drying fish under the sun. It's the first day of the fourth month, when people usually change into early summer clothes; however, this poem suggests that the inhabitants of these small villages pay little attention to seasonal customs.

[3] Temperatures increase rapidly from the moment when the cherry-blossoms are in peak (the middle of the third month) and the robe-changing day. The speaker muses about how delightful it would have been to enjoy the blossoms in warmer temperature.

296

綿をぬく旅ねはせはし衣更　九節

At night on the road

I hurry to take out the cotton padding.

Changing clothes day.

Kyūsetsu[4]

297

雀よりやすき姿や衣がへ　雪芝

Lighter even

Than a sparrow—

Changing clothes day.

Sesshi[5]

298

花の跡けさはよほどの茂りかな　子珊

Once there were blossoms,

But this morning, the trees

Are in full leaf!

Shisan[6]

[4] Kyūsetsu (birth date unknown; died 1704) was a wealthy merchant and member of Bashō's poetry circle at Iga province. This is his only contribution to Sumidawara. In contrast with the villagers from the first poem in this collection, the speaker here is an urbanite. While on the road, he hurries to adjust his dress to receive the first day of the fourth month appropriately; unfortunately, this means staying up all night taking out the heavy padding from the winter kimono they had when they left home.

[5] Sesshi (1670-1711) owned a sake brewery in Iga, where he became acquainted with Bashō. This is his only poem in *Sumidawara*. In 1694, a few months before the master's death, he hosted him at his residence in Ueno (present day Iga city). As a token of gratitude, Bashō composed the following poem while sitting on the veranda overlooking Sesshi's garden:

> 涼しさや直に野松の枝の形
>
> *Coolness; / Right in front of me, the contour / Of the wild pine branches*

Deeply impressed, Sesshi named his home "The Wild Pine Pavilion" and, perhaps as an attempt to riff on the masters' verse, inserts in his poem a phonetic reference: both "coolness" (涼しさ, *suzushisa*) and "sparrow" (雀, *suzume*) start with the sound "*suzu*". Furthermore, at the heart of both texts is the idea of cooling down and feeling refreshed: in Bashō's case by sitting by the pine, in Sesshi's by changing into lighter, unpadded summer clothes.

[6] While the cherry trees are at their most beautiful when in full bloom, noticing them covered in green leaves is splendid, too.

299

扇屋の暖簾（のうれん）白し衣がへ　利牛

A white curtain

At the entrance of the folding fan shop.

Changing clothes day.

Rigyū[7]

[7] The owner of a folding fan shop, aware that the best season for his business has arrived, has hung up a pristine new curtain at the entrance of the folding fan shop. This, too, is a sign of summer's arrival.

うの花

Deutzia Flowers

300

卯の花やくらき柳の及（および）ごし　芭蕉

Deutzia flowers—

The darkened willow's

Bent back.

Bashō[8]

[8] *Oyobigoshi*（及ごし, "Bent back"）is used as an epithet for the willow, which appears to incline towards the beautiful deutzia flowers blooming near the ground. Or is it perhaps the representation of an old man with an arched back, contrasted with the youthful charm of the flowers? In this poem, Bashō synthetizes both space (high for the willow, low for the deutzia) and color (black for the willow in the evening, white for the flowers against the dark).

301

うのはなの絶間（たえま）たたかん闇の門　去来

Should I knock at the gap

Between the deutzia flowers?

A gate in the dark.

Kyorai[9]

[9] The speaker pays a nightly visit to an acquaintance, but it is pitch dark and they cannot make out the contour of the gate; the only indication about where it might be is the gate-sized gap between the bright white deutzia flowers in the hedge surrounding the property. Kyorai's poem is indebted to the technique of *mitate*（見立て）from classical waka, where a sense of "elegant confusion" is often feigned in order to highlight a poetic observation or simile.

302

旅行に

うの花に芦毛(あしげ)の馬の夜明哉(よあけかな)　許六

On the road

Daybreak!

Like deutzia flowers,

My horse’s dapple-gray coat.

Kyoriku[10]

303

卯の花に扣(たたき)ありくやかづらかけ　支考

Around the deutzia flowers,

He walks, banging on a bucket—

The barrel maker.

Shikō[11]

[10] Kyoriku (1656-1715) is considered one of Bashō’s “ten great disciples”. A samurai from Hikone in Ōmi province (present day Shiga prefecture), he initially studied *haikai* under Kitamura Kigin, himself an early master for Bashō. Kyoriku wrote this poem in 1693, as he set on a trip from Edo to the Hikone domain (present day Shiga prefecture). In the dim light of dawn, the white spots on the horse’s dapple-gray skin look just like the wild deutzia flowers popping up on the side of the road.

[11] As in many other poems from this collection, the central figure here is an urban artisan. *Kazurakake* (葛かけ, literally “vine affixers”) was a colloquial name for barrel makers or, more precisely, those who were trained in repairing and fixing in place the hardware of old, leaky barrels. The speaker here is peddling around a quiet neighborhood, walking around the wild deutzia shrubs and banging the bottom of a barrel. In a display of skill, Shikō links the word *unohana* (卯の花), “deutzia flowers”, in the first phrase of the poem with *kazura,* “vine”, in the last, leading the reader to the image of a hedge or wild clump of grass where both the deutzia and the vines are growing, before the word *kazurakake* is completed and the full sense of the poem realized.

題しらず

Untitled

304

棹(さを)の歌はやうら涼しめじか舟　湖春

The fishermen's song

At the cove, as it starts to cool down.

Tuna boats.

Koshun[12]

305

髭宗祇(ひげそうぎ)池に蓮(はす)ある心かな　素堂

Like Sōgi's for his beard,

Is my love

For a lotus on a pond.

Sodō[13]

[12] This "fishermen's song" (棹の歌, *sao no uta*; literally "song of the oars") may be a reference to Zeami's Noh play *Eguchi*, where there is a sung passage evoking a similar scene:

> 秋の水みなぎり落ちて去る舟の月もかげさす棹の歌
>
> *Autumn waters/ rise and fall/ on the departing boats/ the moon casts its light / the fishermen's song.*

In Koshun's poem, fishermen aboard small boats designed for the catch of young tuna (*mejika*, めじか; see poem 257) return to bay as the sun starts to set, making their song audible for those on the shore.

[13] Sodō (1642-1716) was the presumptive heir of a wealthy sake-brewing family in Kai province (present day Yamanashi prefecture) but chose instead to leave his hometown and devout himself to the study of the Chinese and Japanese classics. He was already a major poet and scholar in Edo by the time he became acquainted with Bashō and his disciples and went on to create the Katsushika school of haikai, which followed his own aesthetic ideals. He famously loved lotuses and even gave himself the nickname "*Renchi-ō*" (蓮池翁) or "Old Man of the Lotus Pond". In this verse, Sodō playfully evokes the figure of Sōgi (1421-1502), considered by many the greatest renga poet, who is reputed to have never shaven and, as such, is typically depicted with a long beard. However, the relation between lotuses and beards in Japanese literature goes further back; as Shiraishi points out, it is very likely that Sodō is also riffing on a famous waka from the Man'yoshū, written in the voice of a court lady who makes fun of Prince Niitabe's account of seeing lotuses during his visit to the Katsumata Pond in Nara:

> 勝間田之池者我知蓮無然言君之鬚無如之
>
> I know / The pond of Katsumata. / There are no lotuses/ As you have said / And just as you have no beard.

306

うぐひすや竹の子藪(やぶ)に老(おい)を鳴(なく)　芭蕉

The warbler—

Cries about growing old

From a grove of young bamboo.

Bashō [14]

[14] Bush warblers are a seasonal word for summer. This is a sparse verse that leaves a lot up for interpretation; is the warbler crying from a grove of bamboo shoots, or is it crying *at* it? The particle *ni* (に) can express both location and the direction of action of a transitive verb like *naku* (鳴く), "to chirp". The verb itself adds another layer of meaning: here it is written with the Chinese character that denotes with animals sounds, but which is homophonous with 泣く, "to cry tears" or "to lament". The warbler, aware of the passage of the seasons, laments growing old (made explicit with the noun *oi*, 老, "old age") in juxtaposition with the bamboo's youth (made explicit with the word *ko*, 子, "infant"). This poem was written during Bashō's final trip, a few months before his death. The warbler's role here is, no doubt, shared by the author.

郭公

The Cuckoo

307

聞までは二階にねたりほとゝぎす　桃隣

Just to hear you

I kept sleeping on the second floor,

Cuckoo.

Tōrin[15]

[15] Hearing the cuckoo's first cry of the year was a sought-after experience and the speaker of the poem, looking for a favorable spot to hear it, has temporarily moved their futon to the second floor of their residence. The cuckoo is the quintessential summer bird, and accounts of nobles and poets writing poems about its song and even going on trips to hear it (as Sei Shōnagon describes in *The Pillow Book*) abound in Japanese literature.

308

ほとゝぎす一二の橋の夜明かな　其角

The cuckoo,

One, two bridges,

At daybreak!

Kikaku[16]

[16] The "one, two bridges" of this extremely straightforward *hokku* are a bit of a puzzle. Scholars have proposed several locations around Kyōto where two successive bridges were built; inscriptions found in Tōfuku-ji temple are used as evidence that these phrasing was using to describe a portion of the road leading to the Fushimi area in the old imperial capital. Nevertheless, it is entirely plausible that mention of these bridges did not purport to indicate a specific place but, rather, the idea of bridges slowly becoming visible in the early dawn, the time when the cuckoo sings.

309

行灯を月の夜にせんほとゝぎす　嵐雪

With paper lanterns

We want to make a moonlit night;

The cuckoo.

Ransetsu[17]

310

挑灯の空に詮なしほとゝぎす　杉風

There is no point

In lifting paper lanterns to the sky.

The cuckoo.

Sanpū[18]

311

木がくれて茶摘も聞やほとゝぎす　芭蕉

Behind the shrubs,

Did the tea pickers, hear it too?

The cuckoo.

Bashō[19]

[17] On a moonless night, the speaker sets up standing paper lanterns with the hope that they will trick the cuckoo into thinking the moon is out, and make it sing. There is a long poetic tradition associating the cuckoo with the moon in Japanese literature; while this practice predates Haiku by centuries (take, as an example, poem 81 in the *Hyakunin Isshu*), the most famous verse related to this motif appears in *Saga Diary*, one of Bashō's travelogues:

> ほととぎす大竹藪をもる月夜
>
> *The cuckoo / Through a thick bamboo grove / the moonlit night leaks.*

[18] In contrast with the stationary paper lanterns from the previous verse (*andon*, 行灯), the type of lantern mentioned here is a portable, hand-held one used when traveling at night (*chōan,* 提灯). Here, a traveler hears the song of the cuckoo above their heads while on the road; they immediately raise their paper lantern but to no use: the bird is nowhere to be seen.

[19] Looking from a distance, the speaker describes a tea field in which the women picking tea appear and disappear behind the plants as they work. The silence of the scene is then broken by the cry of the cuckoo; the women, however, appear unperturbed. Tea picking would be mostly done during the spring, but there is a second, smaller crop in early summer. This may be why the song of the cuckoo takes the speaker by surprise: the same effect that the unusual pairing of tea pickers and the bird, which only materializes in the last phrase of the poem, may have had among readers of *haikai*.

312

青雲(あをくも)や舟ながしやる子規(ほととぎす)　素龍

Blue skies—

Our boat moves downstream.

The cuckoo.

Soryū[20]

313

時鳥(ほととぎす)啼(なく)々風が雨になる　利牛

The cuckoo

Cries once, then twice, and the wind

Turns into rain.

Rigyū[21]

314

子規顔の出されぬ格子(かうし)哉(かな)　野坡

The cuckoo.

But I can't push my head

Through the latticework…

Yaba[22]

[20] It is unclear whether the song of the cuckoo is heard by those on the boat or by someone looking from afar. In any case, the author recreates the familiar effect of seeing a quiet, subdued scene, being ruptured by the bird's mournful cry.

[21] The word *hototogisu,* "cuckoo", is written here with a non-phonetic pairing of Chinese characters: time (時) and bird (鳥), an orthographic convention that focuses on the meaning of the characters rather than on the way they should be read. The purpose here is to highlight the effect that this "bird of time" has on the weather the speaker experiences: while the winds announcing rain were already blowing, it is not until the cuckoo cries that rain finally pours.

[22] The speaker hears the song of the cuckoo and rushes to the window, but the wooden latticework covering it does not allow them to peek outside and locate the bird. Shiraishi (405) points out that, at the time *Sumidawara* was written, windows with elaborate latticework were typical of merchant townhouses (町家, *machiya*) in larger urban settlements like Edo. Is the speaker, like Yaba, a clerk working at his boss' home?

麦

Wheat

315

柿寺に麦穂いやしや作どり　みの 荊口

At the “persimmon temple”,

So unbecoming to have ears of wheat—

They reap only for themselves.

From Mino,

Keikō[23]

316

麦の穂と共にそよぐや筑波山　千川

Ears of wheat

Along with them it sways—

Mount Tsukuba.

Sensen[24]

[23] “Persimmon Temple” is the byname of Zuirin-Ji temple in old Mino province (present day Gifu prefecture) near Sekigahara, the site of the decisive battle that saw Tokugawa Ieyasu, the eventual victor, ascertain his rule over the country and with it the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate. It is said that representatives from the temple offered some of the temple’s persimmons to him before the battle; stemming from this (and previous gifts of persimmons to the medieval Ashikaga shoguns and Ieyasu’s precursor, Toyotomi Hideyoshi), the temple enjoyed numerous benefits, chief among them a permanent exception from annual tributes, like those applied on crops and income. As a native of Mino, Keikō was perfectly aware of the temple’s history and takes a playful shot at the abbot for taking advantage of these fiscal benefits to sow an inordinate, almost obscene amount of wheat over their lands, which clashes with the refined historical associations of their persimmons.

[24] Sensen (birth date unknown; died 1706) was the second son of Keikō, author of poem 2438 in this collection. He was a retainer of Toda Ujinari (1659-1719), feudal lord of the Ōgaki domain at Mino province (present day Gifu Prefecture). Mount Tsukuba, located in Ibaraki prefecture, is one of Japan’s most famous mountains. Its double peaks are taken as the manifestation of Izanami, a female goddess, and Izanagi, a male god. These deities are taken as the progenitors of Japanese people and, because of their paired nature, as the symbolic inspiration for linked verse. Accordingly, the first collection of *renga* was *called The Tsukuba Collection* (筑波集, *Tskubashū*). The speaker in this poem looks at the wheat field at the foot of Mount Tsukuba. The heat and the swaying ears of wheat under the wind make it look as if the mountain is fluttering as well.

317

麦跡の田植や遅き螢とき　許六

Amid cut wheat, rice planting!

Late, the time of fireflies.

Kyoriku[25]

318

翁の旅行を川さきまで送りて

刈(かり)こみし麦の匂ひや宿(しゆく)の内　利牛

As the Old Master set out on a trip, we walked along and saw him off at Kawasaki

At the post town,

The scent of

Freshly cut wheat!

Rigyū[26]

[25] This year's crop of wheat was cut late and the fields, which are immediately flooded and prepared for rice planting, are full of fireflies.

[26] As described in the poem's preface, Bashō's Edo disciples walked with him to Kawasaki, the second relay station along the Tokaidō road, from where he would set off the next morning towards Ōsaka in what ended being his final trip. Although now part of the extended metropolitan area of Tōkyo, Kawasaki was then surrounded by fields, and the air has carried the scent the harvest into Bashō's lodgings, where his disciples composed commemorative verses and bade him farewell. The poems by Yaba and Taisui following Rigyū's were also written during this final meeting.

319

おなじ時に

麦畑(むぎばた)や出ぬけても猶(なほ)麦の中　野坡

On the same occasion

The wheat field;

Even when you cut across,

You are still surrounded by wheat.

Yaba[27]

320

おなじこゝろを

浦風やむらがる蝿(はへ)のはなれぎは　岱水

With the same sentiment

Sea breeze—

This is where the swarming flies

Let go.

Taisui[28]

[27] Wheat fields grew in succession along the Tokaidō road. Even when the speaker thinks they have passed them behind, a new one begins. This, of course, is a metaphor for Bashō's parting and the escorting by his disciples up to Kawasaki. With customary humbleness, Yaba is remarking that, while the master may be savoring the opportunity to spend some time away from them, much like the roadside wheat they are reluctant to let him go.

[28] As the preface indicates, Taisui's verse borrows emotionally from Yaba's. Here, he compares the disciples to summer flies, flying around (and inconveniencing) Bashō; however, the arrival at Kawasaki and the cold sea breeze will disperse them, and mark the moment of parting.

端午

On the First Day of the Horse[29]

321

五月雨や傘に付たる小人形　其角

Fifth month rains—

A little doll

Placed under an umbrella.

Kikaku[30]

322

さうぶ懸てみばやさつきの風の色　大坂 洒堂

I want to put up sweet flags—

The color of the wind in the fifth month.

From Ōsaka,

Shadō[31]

[29] The fifth day of the fifth month, or the first day of the horse (端午, *tango*) following Chinese convention, was the date of an early summer seasonal festival. On this occasion, people prayed for the wellbeing of young boys of samurai families, a practice which convened with other customs into the present day "Children's Day" (子供の日, *kodomo no hi*). This day was also associated with the beginning of the rainy season. On the first day of the horse, displays with dolls dressed in samurai garb (武者人形, *musha ningyō*) and poles with carp-shaped banners or streamers (鯉幟, *koinobori*) were placed outside samurai residences, a tradition carried over into the 21st century. A third practice mentioned in the poems from this section has, however, fallen into disuse: decorating the eaves of the houses with sweet flag (菖蒲, *shōbu*) leaves.

[30] Because of the rainy season, a samurai family has placed a paper umbrella on top of the dolls displayed outside their residence. According to Shiraishi, and in contrast to the more elaborate doll displays outside the homes of wealthy, urban samurai, people in the countryside would put a samurai helmet on top of one of the posts of the fence surrounding their properties and then place a single doll figure on top of it. Here, the figures have been affixed directly to the post and then covered with the umbrella.

[31] A common decoration for the First day of the Horse festivities was placing the long, pointed leaves of the sweet flag (*acorus calamus*) on the eaves of one's house. Shadō's synesthetic poem uses the leaves to give shape and color to the gentle winds of the fifth month.

323

五日迄水すみかぬるあやめかな　桃隣

Until the fifth day

The water won’t be clear.

Sweet flag leaves!

Tōrin[32]

324

文もなく口上もなし粽五把　嵐雪

No letter,

No message relied,

Five rice cakes.

Ransetsu[33]

325

みをのやは首の骨こそ甲なれ　仙花

Mionoya said,

“This skull of mine

Is a proper helmet!”

Senka[34]

[32] In the days leading to the First Day of the Horse, people busied themselves decorating their homes. Sweet flags grow naturally in ponds and the villagers have been jumping into the water to procure its leaves; the speaker remarks, with a tinge of sadness, that the water of the local pond will remain muddy until the festival passes.

[33] This verse parodies a famous poetic exchange between Matsunaga Teitoku and Kinoshita Katsutoshi, two of the most prominent waka poets from the generation before Bashō’s. Teitoku apparently sent Kinoshita five rice cakes and a poem that started with the same phrase Ransetsu uses to close his *hokku*, “five rice cakes” (ちまきごは). Upon receipt, Kinoshita replied with a message that started in the same fashion. The explicit mention of the number five highlights the occasion: the First Day of the Horse festival fell on the fifth day of the fifth month.

[34] This poem references a passage from the *Tale of the Heike* that was later immortalized in several Noh and Kabuki dramas. During the battle of Yashima, two rival warriors meet in the beach: the Minamoto-clan Mionoya no Shirō, featured in Senka’s verse, and the Taira-clan Fujiwara no Kagekiyo. Over the course of the battle, Mionoya’s sword breaks and, as he tries to escape, the back of his helmet is seized by Kagekiyo. Both men pull in different directions until the helmet unexpectedly breaks, leaving Mionoya amazed at Kagekiyo’s brute force, and Kagekiyo surprised at the strength of Mionoya’s head. While Kagekiyo’s bravery and fighting prowess had become a part of popular culture, Senka’s verse focuses on the less-known Mionoya, connecting his story with the displays of samurai helmets associated with the First Day of the Horse festival.

326

帷子(かたびら)のしたぬぎ懸(かか)る袷(あはせ)かな　素龍

Under my summer robe,

I take off and hang

The lined kimono.

Soryū[35]

[35] The "lined kimono" here is the two layered *awase*（袷）worn in the early summer, mentioned in several verses at the beginning of this section. For the First Day of the Horse festival, people would change into a lighter, single layered, teal kimono; Soryū's poem describes this moment, commenting perhaps on the quickness in which summer progresses and one piece of dress replaces the other.

夏旅

Summer Travel

327

並松(なみまつ)をみかけて町のあつさかな　臥高

A row of pine trees

I spot ahead,

This town’s so hot!

Gakō[36]

328

枯柴(かれしば)に昼貞(ひるがほ)あつし足のまめ　斜嶺

In the withered hedge,

The bindweed flowers are boiling.

Blisters on my feet.

Sharei[37]

[36] Very little is known of Gakō (dates unknown), other than they were a member of Bashō’s circle in Zeze, Ōmi province. This is their only poem in *Sumidawara*. This poem depicts an urbanite who, setting out on a trip in the middle of summer, longs for the cool shade of the pine trees lining the road ahead.

[37] On the brownish, dried shrubs lining the road grows the bindweed, a pinkish species of morning glory. Its appearance is not unlike the blisters forming on the soles of the speaker’s feet as they traverse the road.

329

二三番鶏は鳴どもあつさ哉　長崎 魯町

In twos, threes,
The roosters crow, but
It's so hot!

From Nagasaki,

Rochō[38]

[38] Rochō (1656-1727) was the younger brother of Kyorai and the rector of the Confucian temple at Nagasaki. While better known as a scholar and government official during the Edo period, his brother's diaries document his interest in poetry in general, and *haikai* in particular. In this poem, a traveler has been on the road all night; the heat, however, has not subsided by the time the roosters crow, making the speaker rue the imminent, sweltering morning sun.

330

はげ山の力及ばぬあつさかな　猿雖

At the bare mountain
My strength can't match it:
This heat!

Ensui[39]

[39] This unfortunate traveler finds themselves in the middle of a treeless mountain, without shade or water to refresh themselves, and their strength starts to falter.

331

するが地や花橘も茶の匂ひ　芭蕉

此句は島田よりの便に

The land of Suruga—
The citrus flowers, too,
Smell of tea.

Written in a letter I sent from Shimada
Bashō[40]

[40] Suruga province was the name of the province that preceded present day Shizuoka prefecture. Shimada (島田) was a municipality in this province and the 23rd station in the old Tokaidō road. On his final trip, floods stranded Bashō in Shimada for 4 days; at this time, he wrote letters to Sora, his companion during the famous trip to the northern provinces described in *Oku no Hosomichi*, and Sanpū. It seems that the missive in which he originally composed this poem is lost. Suruga was famous for its tea, and Bashō remarks that even the Tachibana mandarins, known for their fragrance, are no match to the scent coming from the paddies; it is no wonder that this poem has been reproduced by several tea businesses based on Suruga in their promotional materials.

五月雨（さみだれ）

The Fifth Month's Rains

332

さみだれやとなりへ懸（かけ）る丸木橋（まろきばし）　素龍

Fifth month rains!

I put up a log bridge

To my neighbor's.

Soryū[41]

333

五月雨の色やよど川大和川（やまとがわ）　桃隣

The colors of the fifth month rains!

Yodo river, Yamato river.

Tōrin[42]

[41] The wet season brings along floods, and the speaker improvises a bridge to reach his neighbor's house.

[42] The Yamato River was one of the subsidiaries of the Yodo river, one of the main waterways in Kyōto. The speaker comments on the color of the rivers at their merging point during the rainy season, when both are carrying heavy loads (and different types) of sediment. This verse features a cutting word at the middle, which I have tried to convey by presenting it as a two-line poem.

334

さみだれに小鮒（こぶな）をにぎる子共哉（こどもかな）　野坡

During the fifth month rains,
The children catch
Baby carps with their hands!

Yaba[43]

335

五月雨や露の葉にもる蔏陸（ヤマゴボウ）　嵐蘭

この句は桃隣より書（かき）てこしぬ

The fifth month rains—
Dew spills into the leaves
Of the pokeweed.

Tōrin wished to have this verse included

Ranran[44]

336

五月雨や顔も枕もものの本　岱水

Fifth month rains—
On my face and as a pillow,
Serious books.

Taisui[45]

[43] A river has spilled over a meadow, and children rush to the water pools to catch the baby carps stranded there.

[44] Ranran (1647-1693), a samurai hailing from Hizen province (present day Nagasaki prefecture), was the oldest tenured disciple of Bashō at the time of the former's death, one year before the publication of *Sumidawara*. The postscript hints at a desire to pay homage to his memory by including one of his verses in this anthology. His poem is very straightforward: beads of rain gather in the wide leaves of the pokeweed (*yamagobō*, 蔏陸); its originality resides in the mention of pokeweed, a plant better known at the time for its medical properties than for its beauty.

[45] The rains lull the speaker to sleep, using one of their books as a pillow and the other one to block the light falling on their face.

涼

Cooling oneself

337

川中の根木によころぶすゞみ哉　芭蕉 (公羽)

In the middle of the river,

Laying on a tree.

Cooling myself!

Kō (incorrectly attributed to Bashō)[46]

338

月影にうごく夏木や葉の光り　女 可南

Under the glow of the moon

The summer trees sway;

Light on the leaves.

Lady

Kana[47]

[46] Kō (birth date unknown; died 1719) was a member of a high-ranking samurai family in Tsuruoka, Dewa province (present day Yamagata and Akita provinces). Due to a copyist error, this verse was originally attributed to Bashō; the Chinese characters used to write Kō (公 and 羽) can be taken to mean "old man" (翁) the name that Bashō was affectionally called by his disciples. Bashō left constancy of the error in his will, where he expressly instructed Sanpū to amend it. The fifth month rains have ceased, but their floods uprooted a tree and left it stranded in the middle of a riverbed. The speaker then finds its way to the tree and lays down (よころぶ, *yokorobu*; perhaps a contraction of *yoko*, horizontal, *and korobu*, to tumble down) on top of it.

[47] Kana (dates unknown) was the wife of Kyorai. We do not know much about her, other than she took the tonsure after her husband's death. In this elegant scene, the moon is shining on the trees at night. When a cool summer breeze arrives, the moonlight dances.

339

涼しさよ塀(へい)にまたがる竹の枝　長崎 卯七

Coolness!

Stradling over the wall,

Bamboo branches.

From Nagasaki,

Ushichi[48]

340

行灯(あんどん)をしいてとらするすゞみかな　探芝

I have someone take away

The paper lantern.

Cooling myself!

Tanshi[49]

341

崎風(さきかぜ)はすぐれて涼し五位(ごゐ)の声　智月

The cape wind

Feels exceptionally cool,

The night heron's voice.

Chigetsu[50]

[48] Ushichi (1663-1727) was a cousin of Kana, Kyorai's wife. An important Shogunate official based in Nagasaki, he served as the head of the "Chinese Residential Area" in Dejima, the artificial island built for trade with designated foreign envoys, most notably Dutch merchants, in accordance with the *kaikin*, "maritime prohibitions" enacted by the Tokugawa shogunate. Bamboo thrives during the summer, and its branches now reach over the stone wall around a residence. A cool breeze blows, and the speaker, sitting inside, finds the sight and sound of the leaves rustling over the wall refreshing.

[49] Tanshi (dates unknown) was another member of Bashō circle in Zeze. This is their only poem in *Sumidawara*.
The speaker sits at the veranda on a summer night, but the paper lantern next to them is burning hot and bright, so they ask a servant to take it back into the residence. In the dark, they can finally feel refreshed.

[50] "Cape wind" (崎風, *sakikaze*) was a local word from Zeze domain, Chigetsu's residence, to describe the cool summer winds blowing from the south. Not only does this wind feel cooler than the others but it carries the distinctive call of the night heron, which becomes active around sunset.

342

すゞしさをしれと杓の雫かな　備前 兀峯

To feel refreshed,

Notice the droplets

From the ladle…

From Bizen

Koppō[51]

343

すゞしさや浮洲のうへのざこくらべ　去来

Coolness—

On the sandbank,

Children showing off their minnows.

Kyorai[52]

344

夕すゞみあぶなき石にのぼりけり　野坡

To cool down this evening,

I got on

This dangerous boulder...

Yaba[53]

[51] Koppō (1662-1722) was a retainer for the lord of Bizen province, present day Okayama prefecture. Due to the "alternate attendance" regime that forced feudal lords to reside in Edo every other year, he became acquainted with Bashō and bonded with Ransetsu and Kikaku, the most prominent disciples of the Bashō school in the shogunal capital. The speaker is relaxing in a garden. Next to where he sits is a stone wash basin, on top of which rests a ladle. Noticing the water droplets sliding across the handle and falling to the ground is enough to make the speaker cool down.

[52] The water levels lower and children gather on the exposed sandbanks of a river or a lake to fish. At the end of the day, and as the heat relents, they sit down and compare the small fish they caught.

[53] While left unmentioned, it is assumed that the boulder here stands next to or in the middle of a river. While indeed cool, the evening has grown dark, and the ominous sound of the current makes the speaker doubt they made a sensible decision.

345

三(み)か月(づき)の隠(いん)にてすゞむ哀(あはれ)かな　素堂

In the crescent moon's shadow,

I cool down.

How pitiful!

Sodō[54]

[54] It is not entirely clear what the word *in* (隠) means on this poem. It can denote a "hiding place", suggesting that the speaker is either a hermit or a bandit; a more straightforward reading can also take it to mean "shadow", implying that something or someone blocks the moonlight, the only source of enjoyment for the speaker.

題しらず

Untitled

346

橘や定家机のありどころ　杉風

Citrus flowers—

They got a Teika-style desk

At this place.

Sanpū[55]

347

熨斗むくや磯菜すゞしき島がまへ　正秀

Peeling strips of abalone—

Seaweed grows on the rocky shores

Of this breezy island.

Masahide[56]

[55] A “Teika-style desk”（*teikazukue*, 定家机）was a type of small, low writing desk that became popular during the Edo period; they were created in accordance with an idealized medieval style to which the name of Fujiwara no Teika, the most prominent medieval Japanese poet, was attached for commercial purposes. These were considered sophisticated pieces of furniture, representative of artists and literati. The speaker in this poem is taking a stroll on a city street, when they notice a blooming Tachibana citrus tree and, through the open window by it, the stylish Teika-style desk. The reader should assume that this is the residence of a person of letters.

[56] Women living near the shores would peel long, thin strips of abalone off the shells and left them to dry; these would later be added as a garnish onto letters or presents. This highly descriptive verse focuses on both the activity of the islanders and the appearance of the seaweed-covered crags of the island.

348

世の中や年貢畠(ねんぐばたけ)のけしの花　里東

This human world;
Growing in rented farmland,
Poppy flowers.

Ritō[57]

349

早乙女(さをとめ)にかへてとりたる菜飯哉(なめしかな)　嵐雪

The young girls working in the fields,
Exchange the rice they pick
For herb porridge!

Ransetsu[58]

350

木曾路(きそぢ)にて

やまぶきも巴(ともゑ)も出(いづ)る田うへかな　許六

At the Kiso valley road

Even Yamabuki
And Tomoe went out,
Rice planting!

Kyoriku[59]

[57] Ritō (dates unknown) was another poet from Bashō's circle in Zeze. This is the first of two contributions in Sumidawara, and a letter in which he asks for Bashō's feedback on his poems survives. Unlike the tenant farmers working on someone else's land and paying tribute, the wild poppies do not require permission to grow wherever they please.

[58] The meaning of this poem is very elusive. People like the novelist and scholar Kōda Rohan, author of the commentary to the first edition of the *Basho's Seven Great Anthologies* (芭蕉七部集, *Bashō Shichibushū*, published in 1920), thought that there was a copyist error and that the locative or dative particle に (*ni*) was originally the possessive particle の (*no*) (Shiraishi, p. 410). My translation reflects this adjustment.

[59] The "Kiso valley road" is a portion of the Nakasendō, one of the five main routes connecting Edo, the shogunal capital, with the rest of the provinces during the Edo period. It is named after Kiso Yoshinaka, a prominent warrior in the *Tale of the Heike* who at first fights the Taira clan, helping expel them from Kyōto, but eventually turns against his cousin, Minamoto no Yoritomo, in a struggle to fill the power vacuum at the capital. The "Yamabuki" mentioned in the poem was Lady Yamabuki, Kiso's concubine; the "Tomoe" mentioned in the poem was Lady Tomoe, a female warrior that was both Kiso's lover and retainer. It is the rice-planting season, and as the speaker passes through the Nakasendō, they are surprised to see the towns and villages empty, since everybody is busy working in the rice paddies. Punning on the name of the valley, he surmises that even Lady Yamabuki and Lady Tomoe would be at the paddies.

351

ひるがほや雨降(ふり)たらぬ花の皃(かほ)　智月

Bindweed—

The face of the flowers

Tells me the rains are meager.

Chigetsu[60]

352

はへ山や人もすさめぬ生(なま)くるみ　北鯤

A lush mountain—

No one is drawn

To the wild walnuts.

Hokkon[61]

353

暁(あかつき)のめをさまさせよはすの花　乙州

With dawn here,

Let’s open those eyes!

Lotus flower.

Otokuni[62]

[60] Bindweed thrives in the summer, but without rainfall the flowers start to wither. Chigetsu personifies the flowers, who seem to be frowning at the lack of water.

[61] Hokkon (dates unknown) was an Edo native, one of Bashō’s earliest disciples, and the father of Santen, author of a verse in *Sarumino*. This is Hokkon’s only poem in this collection. This verse is a parody of poem 50 in the *Kokinshū*, by an anonymous author:

> 山高み人もすさめぬ桜花いたくなわびそ我見はやさむ
>
> Deep in the mountains/ Even though no one comes to you,/ Cherry blossoms,/ Do not despair!/ For I would like to praise you.

Switching the cherry blossoms for walnuts is not only surprising but funny and lighthearted, in line with haikai aesthetics and, even more so, with the principle of *karumi*.

[62] Otokuni (1656?-1720) was the younger brother of Chigetsu (author of poems 2444, 2517, 2527 in this collection). He met Bashō in Kanazawa during the master’s *Narrow Road to the Deep North* trip and subsequently collaborated with him in several anthologies. Otokuni was also the editor *of Oi no Kobumi* (笈の小文, rendered into English by Nobuyuki Yusa as “The Records of a Travel-Worn Satchel”), an account of Bashō’s 1687 trip to Ise province (present day Mie prefecture). Lotus flowers close and sink at night and rise to the surface to open quickly and completely in the morning. In this poem, the closed flower acquires the personality of a child being awakened by their parent.

354

雨乞の雨気こはがるかり着哉　丈艸

Now I fear

The rain I prayed for.

Borrowed clothes!

Jōsō[63]

355

螢みし雨の夕や水葵　仙花

I saw fireflies

On this rainy afternoon—

Water mallows.

Senka[64]

356

一いきれ蝶もうろつくわか葉哉　楚舟

In the muggy air,

Even the butterfly drifts about.

Young leaves!

Soshū[65]

[63] During a drought, the speaker engages in a public rain making ritual. Clouds start forming in the sky, and the speaker realizes that the borrowed clothes they are wearing will get ruined.

[64] An idealized summer scene. Water mallows grow once a year and are typically found in rice paddies and, together with fireflies and the rainy season, are characteristic of summer.

[65] Soshū (dates unknown) was one of Bashō's disciples in Edo. Two of his verses appear in *Sumidawara*. This poem depicts a sweltering day, where even this butterfly cannot stand staying still on the green shoots.

357

なりかかる蟬(せみ)がら落(おと)す李(すもも)かな　みの 残香

They mature,

Cicada husks drop.

Plums!

From Mino,

Zankō[66]

358

猪(ゐのしし)の牙(きば)にもげたる茄子(なすび)かな　さが 為有

In the boar's

Tusk, a plucked

Eggplant!

From Saga,

Iyū[67]

359

団売(うちはうる)侍(さむらひ)町(まち)のあつさかな　怒風

The heat

Of a fan peddler

At a samurai neighborhood!

Dofū[68]

[66] Zankō (dates unknown), was a member of Bashō's circle in Ōgaki, Mino province (present day Gifu prefecture). This group of followers, led by Shikō (poem 223) and Keikō (poem 262), counted Sharei (poem 263), Jokō (poem 280), Sensen (316), and Dofū (poem 359) among its members. It is the middle of the summer, and the cicadas coming from underground are shading their shells as they transition into adulthood. The poet seems to be comparing the abandoned cicada shells with fallen plums.

[67] A wild boar has ransacked an eggplant field; testament to that is a single eggplant, skewered on one of its tusks.

[68] Dofū (dates unknown) was a samurai from Mino, where he studied Bashō-style haikai under Keikō. This is his only verse in *Sumidawara*. This verse draws on the irony of the heat experienced by the fan peddler, who would be carrying a heavy load of merchandise and wouldn't be able to fan themselves. The expansive samurai residences, with gardens and fountains, further highlight the merchant's plight.

360

けうときは鷲の栖や雲の峰　祐甫

It is awe-inspiring,

The eagle’s dwelling—

A peak of clouds.

Yūho[69]

361

一枝はすげなき竹のわかば哉　仙花

Its single branch

Seems detached,

Fresh bamboo leaves!

Senka[70]

362

竹の子や児の歯ぐきのうつくしき　嵐雪

Bamboo sprouts;

The children’s gums,

How lovely!

Ransetsu[71]

[69] “A peak of clouds” (*kumo no mine*, 雲の峰) is a seasonal word for summer, referring to towering formations of cumulus clouds. There are two possible readings for this poem: either the clouds have set against an actual peak, where the eagle has nested, or the eagle has come down from where the clouds have formed, as if it lived in them.

[70] This poem works as a tacit comparison between bamboo leaves, who tend to grow in a sharp, tight clump, and the wide spreading, softer-looking leaves of other trees. To the speaker, bamboo leaves appear less friendly.

[71] A young infant, their baby teeth still growing, greedily eats boiled bamboo shoots: to a parent, a healthy, wholesome trait. As Shiraishi indicates, a very similar scene takes place at the beginning of the *Yokobue* (横笛, “The Flute” per Royall Tyler’s translation) chapter of *The Tale of the Genji*, involving Genji and Kaoru.

363

さるべき人、僕(やつがれ)が酒をたしむ事をかたく戒め
給ひて、諾(うけがひ)せしむ。しかるに、ある会にそれを
よく知(しり)て、あらき・あはもりなど名あるかぎりを
取出(とりいで)て、あるじせられければ、汗をかぎて、
改(あらため)て酒に名のつくあつさ哉(かな)　利牛

A well-regarded person strongly advised that I quit indulging in sake, which I readily acknowledged. Nevertheless, and being aware of this, at a certain gathering they brought out well-known liquors like Arak and Awamori and, since I was being treated with the utmost consideration by the host, I started sweating and wrote

You are giving
Sake new names
In this heat!

Rigyū[72]

[72] Arak is middle eastern spirit made from grapes and anise. Awamori is an Okinawan alcohol made by distilling rice. Both liquors would have appeared extremely exotic to the guests of an Edo period banquet like the one described in the preface. The speaker (presumably Rigyū himself) comments on the uncomfortable irony of being invited to drink fancy spirits at a party whose host had, in a previous occasion, warned them about their drinking habits. The meaning of the poem can be summed up in a single question: if one gives alcohol a fancy name, does it stop being alcohol? The heat, here, is the heat of social pressure and embarrassment.

364

ある人の別墅にいざなはれ、尽日打和て物がたりし其夕つかた、外のかたをながめ出して、

行雲をねてゐてみるや夏座敷　野坡

I had been summoned to a certain someone's villa, where we relaxed and told each other stories all day. That evening, I took a long look outside and wrote

Laying down or sitting down,
We look at the drifting clouds—
A summer room.

Yaba[73]

[73] A "summer room" (夏座敷, *natsuzashiki*) would typically be located on one of the corners of a residence where, in summertime, all the doors to the exterior could be opened to maximize airflow. A placid summer scene to close the section.