

Basho: Haikus

None is travelling
Here along this way but I,
This autumn evening.

The first day of the year:
thoughts come - and there is loneliness;
the autumn dusk is here.

An old pond
A frog jumps in -
Splash!

Old dark sleepy pool . . .
 quick unexpected
 frog
Goes plop! Watersplash!

Lightening -
Heron's cry
Stabs the darkness

Clouds come from time to time -
and bring to men a chance to rest
from looking at the moon.

In the cicada's cry
There's no sign that can foretell
How soon it must die.

Poverty's child -
he starts to grind the rice,
and gazes at the moon.

Won't you come and see
loneliness? Just one leaf
from the kiri tree.

Temple bells die out.
The fragrant blossoms remain.
A perfect evening!

Ballet in the air ...
twin butterflies
until, twice white
They meet, they mate

Black cloudbank broken
scatters in the
night ... Now see
Moon-lighted mountains!

Seek on high bare trails
sky-reflecting
violets...
Mountain-top jewels

For a lovely bowl
let us arrange these
flowers...
Since there is no rice

Now that eyes of hawks
in dusky night
are darkened . . .
Chirping of the quails

April's air stirs in
willow-leaves . . .
a butterfly
Floats and balances

In the sea-surf edge
mingling with
bright small shells ..
Bush-clover petals

The river
Gathering may rains
from cold streamlets
for the sea . . .
Murmuring Mogami

White cloud of mist
above white
cherry-blossoms . . .
Dawn-shining mountains

Twilight whippoorwill . . .
whistle on,
sweet deepener
Of dark loneliness

Mountain-rose petals
falling, falling,
falling now . . .
Waterfall music

Ah me! I am one
who spends his little
breakfast
Morning-glory gazing

Seas are wild tonight . . .
stretching over
Sado Island
Silent clouds of stars

Why so scrawny, cat?
starving for fat fish
or mice . . .
Or backyard love?

Dewdrop, let me cleanse
in your brief
sweet waters . . .
These dark hands of life

Glorious the moon . . .
therefore our thanks
dark clouds
Come to rest our necks

Under cherry-trees
soup, the salad,
fish and all . . .
Seasoned with petals

Too curious flower
watching us pass,
met death . . .
Our hungry donkey

Cloud of cherry-bloom . . .
tolling twilight
bell . . . Temple
Ueno? Asakura?

Must springtime fade?
then cry all birds . . .
and fishes
Cold pale eyes pour tears

Such utter silence!
even the crickets'
singing . . .
Muffled by hot rocks

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

Reply:
Bright red pepper-pod . . .
it needs but shiny
wings and look . . .
Darting dragon-fly!

Wake! The sky is light!
let us to the road
again . . .
Companion butterfly!

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

Camellia-petal
fell in silent dawn . . .
spilling
A water-jewel

In the twilight rain
these brilliant-hued
hibiscus . . .
A lovely sunset

Lady butterfly
perfumes her wings
by floating
Over the orchid

Now the swinging bridge
is quieted
with creepers . . .
Like our tendrilled life

The sea darkening . . .
oh voices of the
wild ducks
Crying, whirling, white

Nine times arising
to see the moon . . .
whose solemn pace
Marks only midnight yet

Here, where a thousand
captains swore grand
conquest . . . Tall
Grass their monument

Now in sad autumn
as I take my
darkening path . . .
A solitary bird

Will we meet again
here at your
flowering grave . . .
Two white butterflies?

Dry cheerful cricket
chirping, keeps
the autumn gay . . .
Contemptuous of frost

First white snow of fall
just enough to bend
the leaves
Of faded daffodils

Carven gods long gone . . .
dead leaves alone
foregather
On the temple porch

Cold first winter rain . . .
poor monkey,
you too could use
A little woven cape

No oil to read by . . .
I am off to bed
but ah! . . .
My moonlit pillow

This snowy morning
that black crow
I hate so much . . .
But he's beautiful!

If there were fragrance
these heavy snow-
flakes settling . . .
Lilies on the rocks

See: surviving suns
visit the ancestral
grave . . .
Bearded, with bent canes

Death-song:
Fever-felled half-way,
my dreams arose
To march again . . .
Into a hollow land