

MUSIC  
SELECTED POEMS

Tarō Naka

*translated by*

Andrew Houwen



Chikako Nihei

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#### IMAGES

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STREET SCENE

in the quiet street  
not even the sound of footsteps on the pavement  
the shutters drawn down over all the windows

where has the murmuring leaves' gold dust gone?  
where has the pale-faced woman consumed by illness  
staring all day from a second-floor balcony vanished?

reddish brown buildings          their doors nailed shut  
now only the bones of branches piercing the chilly air

god          now there is no-one even to call your name

beyond zinc roofs the endlessly open sea  
on a tower an unseen flag flutters

SCENE II

*summer* 1945

scabs of black memory tear off  
the guillotine river cuts up  
the city's torn skin

pushed along in the flow  
countless burnt eyes  
eyes  
eyes

in the iridescent light  
the guts of civilisation crumble like broken tiles  
sticking out, a rib  
a malleus  
a thigh bone  
nerve fibres tangled around them  
like rusty phone wire

where are unravelled organs  
starting to sound again?

in the collapsed temple's hollowed eye-sockets  
the illusion of poppies  
burning silently

DÉCALCOMANIE II

*shi* (poem) is a needle's gleam spreading on the marble  
*me* (eye) is the magnet on which its light converges

*shi* (death) is invisible sap climbing inside a tree  
*me* (bud) is the thorn it feeds pricking the outside world

\*

*shi* (poem) is the shadow of a soaring bird  
*me* (eye) is the rifle bullet following in its tracks

*shi* (death) is a moth's disturbance circling the night's crown  
*me* (bud) is the flame subsiding on the candlestick

\*

*shi* (poem) is a black rose  
*me* (eye) is the trembling antenna

*shi* (death) is the sea-bed's tangled algae  
*me* (bud) is the slicing blade

\*

*shi* and *shi* are the ciphers  
*me* and *me* are the decipherers

*shi* and *shi* are the pollen  
*me* and *me* are the carriers



FAUTRIER'S BIRDS

Fautrier      four *tori e*      four birds painting  
one bird purple  
one bird green  
two birds transparent  
skim through a magnetic storm  
perturbed purple  
gathered green  
scud through the gouache      sharply  
steel skygleam before dawn spills through the windowframe  
cold clawmarks'  
unseen tracks  
unheard ether of flutes  
sky done in clay  
clouds of waves  
waves  
waves  
waves  
purple the burning flame of *mu*  
green the predawn bud-sap  
the birds fly through the invisible shadows of birdless forms  
whirling world  
turning time  
the birds forever flying  
never arriving  
never stopping  
at themselves  
solid wind  
whirlpool poem  
large looming music  
endlessly emerging from themselves

the birds do not stop flying  
the whip of purple's *mu*  
the predawn green's  
wake...

PASSING SUMMER

in the morning hair of a palely brightening  
dawn garden's tangled grassy darkness  
waves of summer's tears overflow  
gone the dream of trembling lily skin  
gone the white death of gardenias' scent  
in first light over fields of darkness  
the voice of dissolving time's distant storm  
scatters revolving green's dazzling illusion  
into empty sky...

JULY

1

the Kannon temple bell distantly echoes  
the burning of the chaff      scorches the night sky of memory  
fetching purifying sand      at Gion Yamakasa festival

2

the rain's harp sweeps past *allegro*  
irises      peonies      rhododendrons too      swept past  
from a green wound a drop drips *andante*

3

rotting grass gives birth to fireflies  
a lily morphs into a butterfly  
in the sky swim countless silver fish

4

one morning white waves come crashing into the mind  
the endless traveller      alone  
walks through beautiful southern streets

5

amid the rubble water bursts from pipes  
tears are burnt and parched  
darkly bright      noon

6

the author of 'Spinning Gears' drank Veronal  
on an innocent young day for the first time  
I felt the terror of life