

By the Same Author

BOOKS

Poems to Define the Corona of Silence (Fiddlehead, 1970)

Mantle (Fiddlehead, 1971)

Snowglobe (Fiddlehead, 1973)

Selected Poems (Outland Press, 1977)

In a Canvas Tent (Sono Nis, 1984)

CHAPBOOKS

Heartwood (Finn Hill Arts, 1986) among what is lost (Cowan & Tetley, 1988)

Waking to Snow

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for Wakana

young green sprouts

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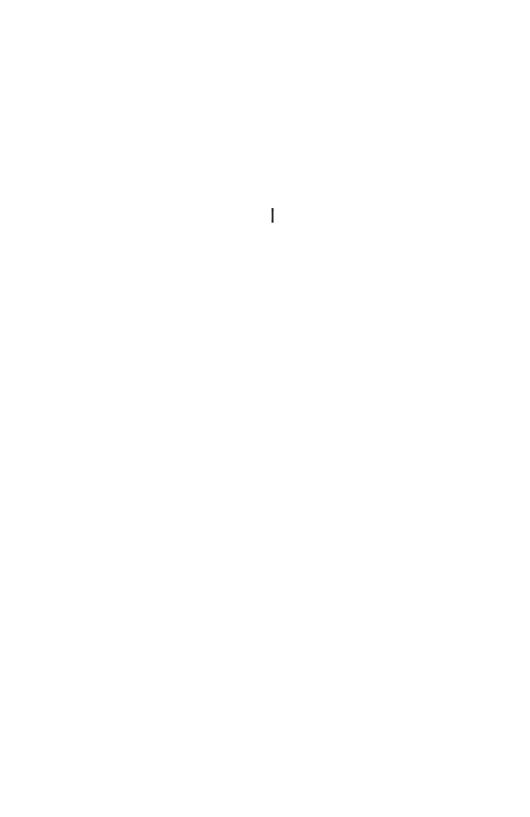
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iwama tojishi kōri mo kesa wa toke-somete koke no shitamizu michi motomu nari

Ice that sealed the rock gaps this morning starts to melt – under the moss water trickles seeking its Way

Saigyo (1118-1190)



Rebuttal to the First Noble Truth

Cat sleeps in my lute case.
Palestrina motets
and Kona coffee.

Home-baked whole wheat scones with marmalade.

Runes

Sharing a beer with a colleague, his bald head gleams as he gesticulates about a lecture he gave at a conference in Taipei: 'Pragmatics in the Japanese Classroom'.

At the bus stop we part: he to a mortgaged house, a wife and two foxy daughters. I to this three-mat room, silence ringing in my ears like a cracked bell.

Dried noodles and beans. Wash the dishes. Sit for a while, listening to the runes of the rain.

That time I went to a fortune teller my third year at university in Portland, Oregon: she pored over my palm then gave my money back.

There's nothing there, she said. Go out and live.

My hands still remember the weight of walking away without a history or future: on my way to learning

how to be an unborn ghost.

My First Guide to Kyoto

Next-door neighbour's pug-nosed Sakura tied up all day whimpering beneath the stairwell: no way to treat the earliest cherry blossoms

in Kyoto.
So I take him for a walk – rather he takes me, charging like a stunted rogue elephant to the Kamo river's ecstasy of in-

visible smells where he poops three times, each with more strain, panting and slobbering as he drags me along at the end of his taut leash. Oh

we're sailing now past some thin old folk playing a kind of croquet near the bridge in the ancient newborn sun, past some kids crouched bouncing a ball and chanting, past endless blocks of jumbled houses, blue-tiled roofs glinting like dragon scales. By now, Sakura's zonked, able to scrawl his faint signature only at irresistible

spots, so we wend our way home: small dun dopey boggle-eyed dog with fur radiating in tufts, deep gaze *thank you* to each other.

Sweeping Leaves in the Cemetery at Ryōkō-in, 4 a.m.

Bamboo broom stone lanterns dead leaves

I've travelled halfway around the world to be here

Father

I keep seeing my father in old men passing with stooped shoulders and thrift shop tweed jackets which never fit. The same baggy trousers and jammed necktie, the same white moustache carefully trimmed and thick framed glasses which don't quite hide hazel eyes holding such grief, I want to embrace him calling father father but find myself frozen, my own bones hunching into the same question mark. Anyway, it turns out to be somebody else's father. The world filled with the same ancient men: unladen from wives and children. walking alone.

Mother Tongue

In the corner house the old man with cancer in his lungs listens between spasms of coughing

to someone calling his childhood name beneath the trees

dear friend it is quiet here you will have time to learn the language of

wind rain birds