

Please note that not all pages are included. This is purposely done in order to protect our property and the work of our esteemed composers.

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ABOUT HAIKU

Originally called *hokku*, the familiar 3-line verse began as the opening of a group improvisation called *renga* which evolved in Japan in the middle ages. One poet would speak (often creating spontaneously) the first three lines, another poet would add the next two, another the next three and so on until a longer composition had evolved. This creative collaboration was an important social, creative and intellectual pastime. Eventually the opening three line groups (whose lines commonly had syllables of 5,7 and 5 respectively) achieved a life of their own and became the *haiku* (a merging of *hokku* and *hakai* (playful) that we know today.

THE POETS

The poetry used in this collection was written by the most famous Japanese haiku masters of whom Basho (1644–94) is considered their founding father. His deep humanity and intense observation of the natural and human world combined to elevate the haiku tradition to its epitome. The poet and painter Buson (1716–84) and the beloved Issa (1762–1826) carried on the tradition and instructed and inspired future generations. Through their work and the work of their compatriots, the impressions of the world around them were distilled into poetic “glimpses,” brief moments of casual acknowledgement, profound beauty or gentle sadness. The steady references to the seasons, trees and flowers, the small creatures of nature, the intensity of human relationships as well as those quiet moments spent in thoughtful reflection, give us an impression of their world and their relationship to it.

All the translations into English are by Peter Beilenson and were previously published by Peter Pauper Press.

COMPOSER'S NOTE

This group does not have to be performed as a full cycle. please feel free to change the order of these pieces or select only those which you prefer, depending on your needs and mood.

—Steven Mark Kohn
March 13, 1998

TEXTS

That Winter

That winter when my
Faithless lover left me
How cold the snow seemed

Defeated in the Fray

Defeated in the fray
By bigger battlers for love,
Tom cat seeks a mouse

Enviably Leaves

Enviably leaves
Becoming so beautiful
Just before falling

Over the Ruins

Over the ruins
of a shrine, a Chestnut tree
still lifts its candles

Behind Me the Moon

Behind me the moon
Brushes shadows of pine tress
Lightly on the floor

While I Turned My Head

While I turned my head
The traveler I'd just passed
Melted into mist

Hill of Flowers

He who climbs this hill
Of flowers finds here a shrine
To the kind Goddess

I'm Very Sorry

I'm very sorry
To have to die at this time
With plum trees in bloom

On the Temple's Great Bronze Bell

On the temple's great
Bronze bell a butterfly
Sleeps in the noon sun

Where Does He Wander

Where does he wander
I wonder, my little one
Chasing dragonflies?

Even In Castles

Even in castles
I have felt the searching breath
Of the wintry wind

Oh, the Tiny Cry

Oh, the tiny cry
Of a pitiful cricket
Caught in a hawk's beak

An Old Silent Pond

An old silent pond
Into the pond a frog jumps splash!
Silence again

Having Spoken Ill

Having spoken ill
My lips now feel the cold
Of autumn's fatal wind

In My Small Village

In my small village
Even the flies are not afraid
To bite a big man

From Watching the Moon

From watching the moon
I turned, and my friendly old
Shadow led me home

Thinking Comfortable Thoughts

Thinking comfortable thoughts
With a friend in silence
In the cool evening

After Bells

After bells had rung
And were silent, flowers chimed
A peal of fragrance

It Is Not Easy

It is not easy
To be sure which end is which
Of a resting snail

Mister Toad

Hop out of my way
And allow me please to plant
Bamboos, Mister Toad

Poppy Petals Fall

Poppy petals fall
softly, quietly, calmly,
when they are ready

Into a Cold Night

Into a cold night
I spoke aloud. But the voice
Was no voice I knew

A Thousand Captains

Here, where a thousand
Captains swore grand conquest,
Tall grass their monument

The Exquisite Pure White Fan

So lonely, so lovely,
The exquisite pure white fan
Of the girl I lost

I Have Known Lovers

I have known lovers
Cherry bloom, the nightingale
I will sleep content

Live In Simple Faith

Live in simple faith
Just as this trusting cherry
Flowers, fades and falls

Snow Whispering Down

Snow whispering down
All day long, earth has vanished
Leaving only sky

27 Haiku

for Medium Voice and Piano

That Winter

Jakushi

Steven Mark Kohn

Slowly ♩ = 56

Voice

Piano

mp

That

4

win - ter, _____ that win - ter _____ when my

push

push

7

Faith - less, faith - less lov - er _____ left me _____

mf

p

mf

p sub.

Defeated in the Fray

Shiki

Steven Mark Kohn

With military airs ♩ = 112-116

With military airs ♩ = 112-116

mf secco

mf

pp

f

mp sub.

mf

mf

De - feat - ed in the fray

poco

piu p
espr. sub.

By big - ger bat - tlers for love,

sf

p

Poppy Petals Fall

Etsujin

Steven Mark Kohn

Delicately flowing ♩ = 96

Delicately flowing ♩ = 96

pp legato sempre

Leg.

4 *p*

Pop - py pet - als fall,

hold *Leg.* always

7

pop - py pet - als fall _____

Leg.

A Thousand Captains

Basho

Steven Mark Kohn

With fury ♩ = 126-138

f ————— *ff*

Here, where a thou - sand Cap - tains swore grand con - quest,

With fury ♩ = 126-138

f ————— *mf*

Here, where a thou - sand,

f ————— *mf non secco*

thou - sand, Cap - tains swore grand con - quest,

ff ————— *f*

con - quest, grand,

Snow Whispering Down

Joso

Steven Mark Kohn

Very smooth and dreamy ♩ = 72-76

Very smooth and dreamy ♩ = 72-76

p

Ped. Ped.

3 *p*

Snow

Ped. Ped.

5 *a tempo*

whis - pering down All day long

a tempo

pp sub.

Ped. Ped.