

The Lyric Forms of the Literati Mind:  
Yosa Buson, Ema Saikō, Masaoka Shiki and Natsume Sōseki

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## Abstract

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This dissertation examines the transformation of lyric thinking in Japanese literati (*bunjin*) culture from the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century. I examine four poet-painters associated with the Japanese literati tradition in the Edo (1603-1867) and Meiji (1867-1912) periods: Yosa Buson (1716-83), Ema Saikō (1787-1861), Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902) and Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916). Each artist fashions a lyric subjectivity constituted by the kinds of blending found in literati painting and poetry. I argue that each artist's thoughts and feelings emerge in the tensions generated in the process of blending forms, genres, and the ideas (aesthetic, philosophical, social, cultural, and historical) that they carry with them. As poet-painters, Buson, Saikō, Shiki, and Sōseki blended these constitutive elements of literature like strokes of paint on a canvas. Through examinations of blending, I show the movement of thought and feeling, the dynamism of lyric thinking, in poetic form.

Through such blending each artist evoked a heightened consciousness of the senses—sight, sound, smell, and touch. I examine how each artist thinks through sensual embodiment in poetic form, and show how the boundaries of lyric thinking expand by the Meiji period as traditional genres of poetry begin to overlap and blend with modern prose. Between the late eighteenth century and the Meiji period, new genres of writing emerge, yielding more possibilities for sensual embodiment in poetic form. Traditional genres such as *haikai* and *kanshi* also endure as antiquated and autonomous forms, and in vernacular prose as compounded forms that place ideas of the past and the present in dialectical motion. This dialectical motion appears in modern prose as constitutive elements of lyric thinking, and as obstructions to the linear movement of thought in narrative prose.

The chapters are organized chronologically. In Chapter 1, I show how lyric thinking manifests as tensions in the perception of time and space in Buson's *haikai*. In Chapter 2, I examine Saikō's *kanshi*, and show how her lyric thinking manifests in a dialectical and ironic relationship with genre. In Chapter 3, I show how Shiki's lyric thinking manifests as contradictions of thought in his artistic practice called *shasei*, or "representing life." In Chapter 4, I examine lyric thinking in Sōseki's modern prose. I show how his lyrical novel *Kusamakura* and prose-poem *Omoidasu koto nado* give form to grief through contradiction and irony.

The dissertation shows what the lyric writings of Buson, Saikō, Shiki, and Sōseki can tell us about lyric thinking, subjectivity, and the philosophy of poetic form.

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**Introduction:**

**The Philosophy of Poetic Form**



Do I contradict myself?  
Very well then . . . I contradict myself;  
I am large . . . I contain multitudes.  
—Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (1855)<sup>1</sup>

This dissertation examines the transformation of lyric thinking in Japanese literati (*bunjin*) culture from the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century. The term “lyric thinking” is informed by Helen Vendler’s discussion of “thinking” in the poems of Alexander Pope, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, and William Butler Yeats.<sup>2</sup> Vendler aims to show “the way thinking goes on in the poet’s mind during the process of creation, and how the evolution of that thinking can be deduced from the surface of the poem—that printed arrangement of language that John Ashbery has brilliantly called a poem’s ‘visible core.’”<sup>3</sup> I do the same with four poet-painters associated with the Japanese literati tradition in the Edo (1603-1867) and Meiji (1867-1912) periods: Yosa Buson (1716-83), Ema Saikō (1787-1861), Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902) and Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916). Each artist fashions a lyric subjectivity constituted by the kinds of blending found in literati painting and poetry. I argue that each artist’s thoughts and feelings emerge in the tensions generated in the process of blending forms, genres, and the ideas (aesthetic, philosophical, social, cultural, and historical) that they carry with them. As poet-painters, Buson, Saikō, Shiki, and Sōseki blended these constitutive elements of literature like strokes of paint on a canvas, producing what Angus Fletcher has metaphorically called “colors of the mind.”<sup>4</sup> Through examinations of blending, I show the movement of thought and feeling, the dynamism of lyric thinking, in “poetic” form.<sup>5</sup>

Through such blending each artist evoked a heightened consciousness of the senses—sight, sound, smell, and touch. I examine how each artist thinks through sensual embodiment in poetic form, and show how the boundaries of lyric thinking expand by the Meiji period as traditional genres of poetry begin to overlap and blend with modern prose. Between the late eighteenth century and the Meiji period, new genres of writing emerge, yielding more possibilities for sensual embodiment in poetic form. Traditional genres such as *haikai* and *kanshi* also endure as antiquated and autonomous forms, and in vernacular prose as compounded forms that place ideas of the past and the present in dialectical motion. This dialectical motion appears in modern prose as constitutive elements of lyric thinking, and as obstructions to the linear movement of thought in narrative prose.

In Japanese literary history Buson, Saikō, Shiki, and Sōseki have been called *bunjin*, or literati, because they each practiced in traditional Chinese aesthetic forms, including poetry, painting, and calligraphy. *Bunjin* is a term used by Japanese literary historians retrospectively to characterize a set of artists during the Edo and Meiji periods who shared a set of artistic practices and sensibilities.<sup>6</sup> The earliest and most famously remembered Japanese *bunjin* before Edo was Sugawara no Michizane (845-903) from the early Heian period.<sup>7</sup> Michizane embodies the original meaning of *bunjin*, the Japanese transliteration of the Chinese term *wenren*, which was used in later generations to refer to “scholar-officials” in the Song dynasty (960-1279).

The idea of *bunjin* changed in the Edo period, and embraced a subjectivity that concentrated on the individual.<sup>8</sup> Under the profound influence of late imperial Chinese culture and Confucianism, *bunjin* flourished, resulting in an artisan culture that was not tied to official patronage or political affiliation. By the Edo period, *bunjin* embraced a “bohemian” attitude, as they made a livelihood by their artwork and thus were independent and free artists. Takebe Ayatari (1719-1794) is one such *bunjin*.<sup>9</sup> Although Buson, Saiko, Shiki, and Sōseki did not refer

to themselves as *bunjin*, Buson and Saikō participated in this *bunjin* renaissance in Edo, while Shiki and Sōseki saw out its legacy in Meiji.

In concert with the rise of individuality in Edo *bunjin* culture, I choose Buson, Saikō, Shiki and Sōseki to talk about lyric thinking because they each have a different interpretation of the literati tradition, and display lyric thinking in diverse ways that represent their respective historical moments. Buson and Saikō lived during the heyday of literati culture absorbing the art and culture from Late Imperial China (1368-1911), while Shiki and Sōseki lived during its decline with the rise of the novel and other forms of vernacular literary expression. Shiki is known as a modern haiku poet and Sōseki is known as a modern novelist, but their works blend modes of representation from literati poetry and painting to enrich the visual and sonic landscapes in modern Japanese prose.

For Vendler poetic discourse that is born from lyric thinking cannot “be closely analogized to the discourse of philosophical thought.”<sup>10</sup> By philosophical thought, Vendler means thought that mediates an argument and arrives at an explanation or a conclusion. In other words, lyric thought need not make a definitive claim about the world. She writes, “In poems, thinking is made visible not only to instruct but also to delight; it must enter somehow into the imaginative and linguistic fusion engaged by the poem.”<sup>11</sup> By exploring lyric thinking in the poetry of Buson, Saikō, Shiki, and Sōseki, I hope to show the growing incoherence between form and content in Japanese literature. Buson and Saikō wrote in traditional forms, and yet transcended the confines of those forms by engaging with contemporary ideas in the content of their poetry. Shiki and Sōseki followed suit in their compositions of haiku and *kanshi*, but even more so in modern prose: Shiki’s prose poems comprised images and voices of poets and painters from the past and present; Sōseki echoed this multiplicity in the modern novel and prose poem. As such, each artist’s lyric thought becomes visible in the ways he arranges sounds and images in the content of their forms, generating a poetic discourse about the possibilities of the poetic imagination.<sup>12</sup>

Of course, Buson, Saikō, Shiki, and Sōseki are all “lyric” poets in a more conventional sense, because their work “directly expresses the poet’s own thoughts and sentiments.”<sup>13</sup> This sense of the lyric is informed by the foundational texts of the Chinese and Japanese poetic traditions, and they were the inheritors of both. The “Great Preface” (Da xu) of *The Classic of Poetry* (Eighth Century BCE; Shijing) states: “Poetry expresses the intents of the heart and mind” (*shi yan zhi*); the preface of *Collection of Poems New and Old* (905; Kokin wakashū) opens with the idea that in poetry “words are the seeds of the heart and mind” (*kokoro wo tane toshite yorozu no koto no ha to zo narerikeru*).<sup>14</sup> Eighteenth century nativist scholar Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801) also theorized poetry as an expression of personal feeling. In his essay “A Small Boat Punting Through the Reeds” (1757; Ashiwake obune), Norinaga argues that poetry is not about politics or self-cultivation, but is an authentic expression of human emotion.<sup>15</sup> He writes that poems are able to be emotionally expressive because of their use of *aya*, or “patterning.”<sup>16</sup> For Buson, Saikō, Shiki and Sōseki, this “patterning” may be understood as a metaphor for their lyric thinking, or the movement of thought and feeling in forms and genres.

I show the movement of thought and feeling in each artist’s manipulation of *form* and *genre*. The meaning of both terms is not self-evident, so I will define them here. I use the word *form* to mean the literal form, or the external shape, of the poem (i.e. haiku, penta-syllabic regulated verse, etc.), and also “the way the poem embodies the energy of the gesture of its making.”<sup>17</sup> The second meaning comes from Robert Hass, and evokes Derek Attridge’s definition of form as a literary performance that mobilizes meaning. Attridge argues that “the

words [in a literary work] mean, and at the same time they show us what it is to mean.”<sup>18</sup> During this literary performance, the reader experiences what Attridge calls “otherness,” a creative and aesthetic experience beyond the words written on the page. Thus an examination of form is an examination of how meaning is mobilized in a text:

. . . their sequentiality, interplay, and changing intensity, their patterns of expectation and satisfaction or tension and release, their precision or diffuseness. It does not include any extractable sense, information, image, or referent that the work lays before the reader. Through this mobilization of meanings, the work’s linguistic operations such as referentiality, metaphoricity, intentionality, and ethnicity are staged.<sup>19</sup>

By examining how words in a poem mobilize meaning, I show how the reader gains what Attridge calls an aesthetic experience of “otherness,” but also meanings that are philosophical, social, cultural, and historical. The mobilization of multiple meanings reveals the dynamism of lyric thinking in forms produced by Buson, Saikō, Shiki and Sōseki.

*Genre* is a normative category determined by expectations of what the literary work should do. This categorization often depends on the work’s content. For example, Saikō wrote poems in the genre of “boudoir poetry,” in which content (objects, feelings, spaces) often adheres to convention. In this sense, questions of genre are concerned with how a work meets a horizon of expectations: how a boudoir poem is a boudoir poem, or how a winter haiku is a winter haiku. Frederic Jameson describes genre as “‘literary institutions,’ . . . whose function is to specify the proper use of a cultural artifact.”<sup>20</sup> The categorization of a work into a *genre* also depends on the work’s *form*. For example, haiku is a poetic form of seventeen syllables and is a genre of Japanese poetry. In this sense, *genre* is synonymous or near-synonymous with *form*, which is why many critics often use them interchangeably.<sup>21</sup> Composition in traditional form meant working within the genres associated with those forms. Buson, Saikō, Shiki and Sōseki ironized the boundaries of genre through the mobilization of multiple meanings, the literary performances, afforded by form.

The complexity of such engagement with form and genre derives from each artist’s practice and blending of the “three excellences” (*sanjue* in Chinese; *sanzetsu* in Japanese) of East Asian literary arts: poetry, painting, and calligraphy. For all four writers, poetry includes traditional Chinese poetry, or *kanshi*, a capacious genre with a long history in China and Japan. The word *kanshi* is a Japanese term that emerged in the Meiji period to refer to two identical genres of poetry: traditional Chinese poetry from China, and traditional Japanese poetry written in Chinese. Before the Meiji period, *kanshi* were called *shi*, or “poetry.” This term was used to distinguish the genre from *uta*, or “song,” which is another way to refer to *waka* (Japanese court poetry). Once English and European poetry were imported in the nineteenth and twentieth century, *shi* came to refer to all poetry.<sup>22</sup> The genres of *kanshi* I examine are the *koshi* (ancient-style poetry; *gushi* or *gutishi* in Chinese), the *zekku* (quatrains; *jueju* in Chinese), and the *risshi* (regulated verse; *lüshi* in Chinese). All four artists practiced in these forms and genres, either in their own compositions or in their citations of other poets, Chinese and Japanese.<sup>23</sup>

Buson, Shiki, and Sōseki blended Chinese poetry with Japanese poetry. I show this blending in their *hokku* (later called haiku), which refers to the first seventeen syllables in a thirty-one-syllable stanza that recurs in seriation, or what is called *haikai-no-renga* (also *renga*), or “linked verse.” In *renga* one poet composes a seventeen-syllable verse of three beats (5-7-5),

which is then “linked” by another poet to a fourteen-syllable verse of two beats (7-7). The 5-7-5 and 7-7 linked-pair forms a stanza, and this linking is repeated (potentially forever). *Renga* has been a collaborative composition of poetry since the medieval period, but poets may also practice in “solo composition” (*dokugin*).

For all four artists, poetry evoked traditional Chinese painting, or *bunjinga* (literati painting). This genre of painting includes landscapes (*sansui* in Japanese; *shanshui* in Chinese), as well as ink wash paintings of natural objects ranging from rocks to blossoms to bamboo. Landscape paintings are also referred to as *nanga*, short for “Southern school of painting” (*nanshūga* in Japanese; *nanzonghua* in Chinese), which blossomed in the Song dynasty (960-1279).<sup>24</sup> Chinese and Japanese literati alike produced paintings of this sort alongside compositions of *kanshi*, which appeared as inscriptions in calligraphy. For Buson, Shiki, and Sōseki, poetry also evoked *haikai* painting (*haiga*), a genre that also pairs images with a calligraphic inscription. In *haiga* the images are crude and simple, and the inscription often comments on the images with humor and irony.

Practicing in such forms and genres enabled the four artists to participate in the literati, or *bunjin*, tradition, which originated in China, but evolved into its own tradition in Japan alongside the emergence of other literary genres.<sup>25</sup> Working within the *bunjin* tradition meant that the artist’s relationship to one form is always conscious of other forms and genre, including Japanese and Western: Buson’s *haikai* evoked classical Chinese poetry and painting; Saikō’s *kanshi* evoked nineteenth century Dutch realism; Shiki and Sōseki’s modern prose alluded to Chinese, Japanese, and Romantic writers. As such, the correspondence between form and content is complicated by the multitude of images and voices that constitute each artist’s lyric thinking.

One Chinese scholar-official who displayed this sensibility and inspired all four poets in this study is Su Shi (1037-1101). Su Shi embodied the multi-dimensions of literati identity in the Song dynasty, as he was a “Buddhist, gastronome, alchemist, classicist, dissident, hydrology engineer, philosopher, and, above all, poet, calligrapher, and connoisseur of the arts.”<sup>26</sup> Su Shi’s achievements in the arts, especially in poetry and painting, left an indelible impression in Chinese literary history, including the idea that a literatus is a virtuoso of diverse expression and a master of multiple forms.

Participating in the *bunjin* tradition gave Buson, Saikō, Shiki, and Sōseki access to traditional thought on form and aesthetics that originate in the Six Dynasties period (220-589). These theories informed the way each writer blended forms, genres, and ideas to create movement of thought in poetic form. This blending depends on the idea that literature contains the thoughts and feelings of the writer:

If literature truly conveys the mind,	文果載心
Then my mind has a place to abide.	余心有寄 <sup>27</sup>

Liu Xie’s (465-522) final words in the preface to his magnum opus *Wenxin diaolong* (The literary mind carves dragons) tell us that if literature has the abundant capacity to convey the mind of a writer, then his mind has a place to abide as it moves from the words on the page into the imagination of the reader who beholds them. His ideas loom large in late imperial treatises and manuals, and in the ether of traditional aesthetic thought in China and Japan.<sup>28</sup>

Lie Xie is in conversation with ideas from earlier literary treatises, such as Lu Ji’s (261-303) “Poetic Exposition on Literature” (300?; Wen fu):

Whenever I contemplate the creations of a talented artist, something in me is able to grasp how the artist uses his mind.

余每觀才士之所作,竊有以得其用心。<sup>29</sup>

In the Chinese and Japanese traditions, the “mind” is also the “heart” (*kokoro* in Japanese), and by using the word *xin*, Lu Ji and Liu Xie are referring to the writer’s thoughts and feelings. My examination of Buson, Saikō, Shiki, and Sōseki returns to these fundamental ideas, such as the way each artist “uses his heart-mind” (*yong xin*), but in the literary and historical contexts of the eighteenth through early twentieth centuries.

With these foundational ideas in mind, allow me to demonstrate what I mean by lyric thinking in a brief reading of a *hokku* by Buson, written before 1762. In the poem, the lyric subject blends form, genre, and ideas, showing the continuity of tradition, but also the contingency of history. Being continuous with the tradition gives the poet access to collective thought and feeling in the continuum of literary history; showing variation and contingency demonstrates his presentness, his own subjectivity against that history. Such is the complex blending of lyric thinking, the subtle movements of thought and feeling in poetic form:<sup>30</sup>

The sea in spring  
All the day long swells  
Long swells.

*haru no umi / hinemosu notari / notari kana*  
春の海終日のたりのたりかな<sup>31</sup>

The poem opens with an image of the spring sea, followed by images that describe it in terms of time and space: “All the day long swells / Long swells.” *Hinemosu* is an old word that describes the span of time from morning to night. In the frame of an entire day, the sea in spring is *notari*, an onomatopoeia that evokes the image of waves heaving slow and calm in a vast expanse of water. The poem opens with an image of the sea, and ends by evoking its heaving motion through sound and repetition. The repetition of *notari* creates the rhythm that gives form to *hinemosu*, and gives sound and movement to the otherwise silent and static image of the spring sea.

While evoking the tradition, the *hokku* asserts its own presentness as a lyric utterance. The *kigo* (seasonal referent), “the spring sea” (*haru no umi*), evokes the genre of spring poems in the Japanese and Chinese poetic traditions. Spring is conventionally figured by images of slowness and languor, which we find here in the heaving of waves, the sound of which we hear in the repetition *notari notari*. As Harvey Gross and Robert McDowell observe, “rhythmic sound has the ability to imitate the forms of physical behavior as well as express the highly complex, continually shifting nature of human emotion.”<sup>32</sup> By evoking melancholy and longing, the rhythm of *notari notari* fuses the scene of the endless rise and fall of the swelling sea with the endless beating of the poet’s longing heart. The poem ends with *kana*, an exclamation stressing that the poet longs with the long swells all the day long.

The sound and repetition in Buson’s *hokku* exemplifies one way eighteenth century *haikai* was informed by aesthetic ideas from contemporary Chinese poetics. The *hokku* evokes

the idea of “blending of feeling and scene” (*qing jing jiao rong*), a theory of lyric expression that can be traced to Qing dynasty poet Wang Fuzhi (1619-92):

In spite of the fact that “feeling” is in the mind and “scene” is with things, “scene” engenders “feeling” and so does “feeling” engender scene. Whether the “feeling” evoked is sorrow or joy, whether the “scene” encountered is one that thrives or withers, they reside and hide in each other’s dwelling.<sup>33</sup>

Wang’s idea emerges in the late seventeenth century, but he applies his theory that “feeling” (*qing*) and “scene” (*jing*) are inseparable to all Chinese poetry.<sup>34</sup> As Cecile Sun describes in her reading of Wang, the poem merely enacts “the mutually affective dynamism between man and nature to generate a flow of meaning between ‘feeling’ and ‘scene’ that never stagnates.”

The “blending of feeling and scene” for an Edo or Meiji *bunjin* manifests as a composite of poetry and painting from the Japanese and Chinese traditions; but as we enter the late nineteenth century, those traditional images diversify by blending with new images from the British and European Romantic tradition.<sup>35</sup> Thus the possibilities for blending in the lyric thinking of Buson, Saikō, Shiki and Sōseki are afforded by the variety of texts in circulation during each artist’s historical moment. While we see the influence of ideas from medieval aesthetic treatises such as “Poetic Exposition on Literature” and *Wenxin diaolong*, we also see the influence of late imperial art manuals such as *Eight Albums of Painting* (1621-28; Bazhong huapu) and the *Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting* (1679; Jieziyuan huazhuan). All *bunjin* learned the technique and philosophy of Chinese painting from these manuals. By the late Edo period, Japanese literati created their own treatises on painting and poetry. For example, literatus Urakami Shunkin (1779-1846), son of literatus Urakami Gyokudō (1745-1820), composed a treatise called *Rongashi* (1842; Poems on painting), in which he recapitulates the history of literati painting and its long-held relationship with Chinese poetry, along with its theories concerning form.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to the “blending of feeling and scene” from late imperial Chinese poetry, the rise of Neo-Confucianism inspired *bunjin* to embrace ideas of self-cultivation and individuated expression. This lyricism was enhanced by contemporary ideological apparatuses, including empiricism in natural history and *materia medica*.<sup>37</sup> Buson participated in cultural salons that introduced him to methods of observing nature.<sup>38</sup> Saikō’s father was a Dutch physician, so she was conversant with early nineteenth century medicine. The fruits of such knowledge can be found in poems where the lyric subject intensely scrutinizes a living form and communicates that experience through the senses. By the late eighteenth century, these methods of empirical observation inspired the idea of representing a “true view” (*shinkei*) in literati painting. This did not call for pictorial realism, but a kind of authentic representation that that was true to the heart and mind of the painter, in other words, his subjective experience.<sup>39</sup>

The increasing emphasis on writing about matters of the self in the Edo period was coeval with the beginnings of isolated and individuated *haikai* practice. Traditionally, *haikai* is divided into “orthodox” (*ushin*) and “unorthodox” (*mushin*). The former restricted poets to a finite number of topics and lexica; the latter gave poets the freedom to talk about almost anything, from the sonorous splash of a frog leaping into an ancient pond, to the aesthetic clash of plum blossom petals falling on piles of horse dung. This kind of *haikai* surged in popularity, and precipitated the decline of collective subjectivity.<sup>40</sup> By the eighteenth century, *haikai* poets including Buson were already composing *hokku* individually, with the latent possibility of

linking them to a fourteen-syllable verse at a future *renga* session. Buson and many other *haikai* poets during their lifetime also published collections (*kushū*) of their *hokku*, evincing that the form could stand on its own lyric feet. The autonomy of *hokku* strengthened by Shiki and Sōseki's time, when *hokku* emerged as its own genre called haiku.<sup>41</sup>

Buson, Saikō, Shiki and Sōseki each displayed their individual thoughts and feelings by blending the forms, genres, and ideas described above. Their writings show the transformation of lyric thinking beginning in the eighteenth century, where there is an expanding literary market with a proliferation of forms and genres, an increasing emphasis on self-expression in poetics and specialization in poetic production, and the rise of an idiosyncratic ethos in *bunjin* culture.<sup>42</sup> Thus I begin my examination of lyric thinking at this moment in literary history because there are more possibilities of blending. To be sure, the blending I find essential to lyric thinking can be found in much earlier texts, including Heian *monogatari* such as *Tale of Genji* (eleventh century; *Genji monogatari*), as well as medieval performance such as *Noh*. But what distinguishes early modern and modern literature from the literature of earlier periods is precisely the profusion of ideas, made possible by the wide circulation and availability of texts, the democratization of readership, the sheer number of writers involved in literary production, the vibrant print and visual culture, and the increasing global awareness mediated by intellectual exchange with late imperial China throughout Edo and the Dutch in the early nineteenth century.

The first chapter examines lyric thinking in Yosa Buson's *haikai* poetry. I argue that Buson's lyric thinking manifests as tensions in the perception of time and space. These tensions of space can be seen in his manipulation of text and image in *haiga* (*haikai* painting), and in the arrangement of color in *hokku*. I show the tensions of time in a three-verse death poem that figures the past, present, and future simultaneously, and in a poem that addresses time through repetition and tautology. I conclude by examining a free-form elegy that uses apostrophe, repetition, and rhythm to give form to the contradictions of grief felt by a lyric subject during a time of mourning.

The second chapter departs from *haikai*, and examines lyric thinking in Ema Saikō's *kanshi*. I argue that Saikō's lyric thinking manifests in a dialectical and ironic relationship with genre. As a woman literatus, Saikō is expected to compose poems in the boudoir genre in which the lyric subject assumes the persona of an abandoned woman in the "inner chamber" (*kei*). She does this, but also ironizes that persona. Through examinations of her poems on painting, writing, traveling, reading, and self-transmission, I show how Saikō's poetry is informed by late imperial poetics, including the call for true and sincere representation of the self and the quotidian. These contemporary poetics allow her to critique the boudoir genre, and in so doing display her own self-awareness.

The third chapter enters the Meiji period, and examines lyric thinking in Masaoka Shiki's modern prose poems. I argue that Shiki's lyric thinking manifests in a Romantic dialectic between life and death. This dialectic appears as contradictions of thought in poetic works where the idea of *shasei*, or "representing life," emerges as a philosophy of poetic form. Shiki embodies the idea of *shasei* in his poetic writings, and uses his own ill body as the object of representation. I examine excerpts from his essay *Fudemakase* (1884-1892; Propensity of the brush), his travelogues *Tabi no tabi no tabi* (1892; Journey within a journey within a journey) and *Jūnen mae no natsu* (1898; Summer ten years ago), and his deathbed narratives *Bokujū itteki* (1901; A drop of ink) and *Byōshō rokushaku* (1902; Sixfoot sickbed). These multi-generic works saturate modern prose with a polyphony of voices and a proliferation of imagery that call upon literary forebears in the *bunjin* tradition.

Shiki serves as a transitional figure between Edo and Meiji because of his resistance to vernacular language and simultaneous use of modern ideas and literary representation. His poetic writings exemplify how lyric thinking in the modern period grows more diffuse with the profusion of different forms and genres. Shiki was born at the start of Meiji, and was one of the last modern writers to receive a rich education in literati forms, the chief of which was *kanshi*.<sup>43</sup> Despite his thorough training in literati poetry and painting, Shiki spent most of his literary career reforming *haikai* and *waka*, and participating in the national fervor over creating a vernacular literary language. The fruits of his labor in the modernization of poetry can be seen in the *hokku*'s emergence as its own genre, "haiku." The *genbunitchi* (unification of speech and writing) movement of the late 1880s and 1890s manufactured a new modern vernacular language, which over time evolved into the prose writing we find in the modern Japanese novel (*shōsetsu*). Shiki experimented with writing novels, but devoted his literary attention to haiku, *waka* and *kanshi*, as well as various genres of prose, including *zuihitsu* (essays) and *hyōron* (criticism). As a modern *bunjin*, Shiki practiced in traditional forms but adapted them to modern modes of literary expression. We find these adaptations in his critical writings: Shiki showcased his penchant for polemics and his fluency in many genres and forms in a multitude of short essays and miscellaneous writings on language, literature, and, most of all, poetry.

The fourth chapter continues with Meiji literature, and examines lyric thinking in Natsume Sōseki's modern prose. I argue that Sōseki's lyric thinking manifests in contradictory movements of thought that evoke irony and grief. His novel *Kusamakura* (1906; *Pillow of grass*) and prose-poem *Omoidasu koto nado* (1910; *Recollecting and such*) place haiku and *kanshi* alongside modern prose, and feature a lyric subject that ironizes the literati tradition in the process of evoking it. Irony lies at the core of Sōseki's lyric thinking. I show how the alternations of haiku and *kanshi* in prose narrative and the rhythmic and sensual use of figurative language give form to the contradictory feelings of melancholy and nostalgia. These movements in narrative simulate a living body pulsating, breathing, and dying. The "death" of poetic form is suggested by irony.

Sōseki followed in Shiki's footsteps. His literary career as a novelist did not start until after Shiki's death. In Sōseki's prose and poetry we discover a diversity of sensibility and poetic vision that was ahead of his time. This diversity was informed by his early education in *kanbun*, his familiarity Edo fiction and poetry, and his career as a scholar and critic of English literature. His poetry blended the British and European Romantic tradition with the Japanese and Chinese traditions. Sōseki was also a painter of multiple genres, including *haiga*, *bunjinga*, and Pre-Raphaelite paintings. As Haga Tōru writes, "[Sōseki] composed paintings, thought by painting, and breathed by painting."<sup>44</sup> Sōseki was the last modern writer to demonstrate a *bunjin*-esque versatility in poetic form, and the elegiac tone in his writing is a valediction to the *bunjin* tradition. I end with Sōseki because he gives the literati tradition a futurity by blending haiku and *kanshi*, and the history of ideas they carry, with the language of modern Japanese prose. By blending multiple poetic traditions in modern prose, Sōseki shows lyric thinking in its most composite form, revealing a philosophy of poetic form that thinks in cosmopolitan ways.

The lyric mind makes a claim on human experience by giving it a form. This is one way a poem "does something" for the reader, as Kenneth Burke discusses in *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (1941), in which he lays the groundwork for what he calls a "pragmatic" approach to interpreting a poem:



It [the pragmatic approach] assumes that a poem's structure is to be described most accurately by thinking always of the poem's function. It assumes that the poem is designed to "do something" for the poet and his readers, and that we can make the most relevant observations about its design by considering the poem as the embodiment of this act.<sup>45</sup>

Burke argues that poems "do something" for the poet and the reader.

The lyric writings of Buson, Saikō, Shiki, and Sōseki reveal a poetic form's moment of emergence as a lyric event with potential performances that "do something." They allow us to discover what Buson, Saikō, Shiki, and Sōseki can tell us about lyric thinking, subjectivity, and the philosophy of poetic form.

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<sup>1</sup> Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass: The First (1855) Edition* (New York: Penguin, 1961), 85.

<sup>2</sup> Helen Vendler, *Poets Thinking: Pope, Whitman, Dickinson, Yeats* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Vendler, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Angus Fletcher, *Colors of the Mind: Conjectures on Thinking in Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> My usage of the word "poetic" leans on definitions in Owen Barfield, *Poetic Diction: A Study in Meaning* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973). The word "poetic" describes words, phrases, and writing that we associate with "poetry" or a "poem." Although "poem" and "verse" are often used interchangeably, as they are in this study, "verse" refers to metered or metrical writing, which can be poetic or un-poetic. "Poetry" or "poem" include verse, but need not abide by meter. The "prose poem" is a good example. In general, "prose" is the opposite of verse, and refers to un-metered or un-metrical writing. I examine this kind of prose, but also prose that we would identify as "poetic" or as "poetry," as if the diction, rhythm, imagery or some other formal element in the prose reminds the reader of poetry or a poem.

<sup>6</sup> The definitions provided in *Genkai* (1889-91), *Kokukanbun jiten* (1906), *Jirin* (1911), and other Meiji dictionaries all state that a *bunjin* is an artist who composes poetry and painting, and who cultivates himself in the path of *bun* (literature) and *ga* (elegance). For a recent book-length discussion on the history and permutations of *bun* in Japanese letters, see Kōno Kimiko, Wiebke Denecke, eds., *Nihon ni okeru "bun" to "bungaku"* (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Robert Borgen has examined the life and poetry of the ninth century poet, scholar, bureaucrat, and diplomat. See Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

<sup>8</sup> W. Puck Brecher has shown how *bunjin* also embraced idiosyncratic aesthetic ideals such as strangeness and eccentricity. See W. Puck Brecher, *The Aesthetics of Strangeness: Eccentricity and Madness in Early Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2013). Brecher traces the development of aesthetic eccentricity, uncovering the social and historical circumstances that led to the emergence of strangeness in early modern literati culture. Through an examination of how the aesthetic terms *ki* (eccentricity) and *kyō* (madness) appeared in writings about literati, Brecher argues that the pursuit of strangeness on the one hand becomes the ethos of the free and untrammelled artist, but also the trait of an aesthetic persona codified and commercialized by market exchange. Although Buson, Saikō, Shiki, and Sōseki were not necessarily associated with *ki* or *kyō*, they certainly wrote alongside, in tune with, or against these aesthetic terms in their respective historical contexts. This indicates that they participated in the system of exchange that Brecher describes; however, the diversity of their writings precludes the possibility of them being subsumed under the umbrellas *ki* and *kyō*.

<sup>9</sup> Laurence E. Marceau, *Takebe Ayatari: A Bunjin Bohemian in Early Modern Japan* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Vendler, 9.

<sup>11</sup> Vendler, 9.

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<sup>12</sup> Here I invoke the ideas of Ewan Jones, whose book on eighteenth century British Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) has argued that the philosophy of poetic form emerges in a poem's "potential performances": "However detailed our inventory of formal devices might be, metrical accent and generic convention will finally prove insufficient for the full range of potential performances. All of these potential performances develop a certain experience of temporality, through the unfolding line, and a certain affective state, through the emotional tone or pitch in which we deliver it. The sensuous and affective embodiment of verse is itself philosophically significant; but no less is it again historically constituted, through the successive communities of readers that include our contemporary selves."

See Ewan James Jones, *Coleridge and the Philosophy of Poetic Form* (Cambridge, MA: University of Cambridge Press, 2014), 5. By reading poems through their potential performances, Jones shows how "the critical component of poetic form is capable of reflecting beyond the question of its own composition, and upon a variety of legitimately philosophical questions." This is what he means by Coleridge's "philosophy," not how we traditionally conceive of the word as referring to a discursive tract or propositional statement, but as a way that "verse thinks philosophically in a manner that philosophy proper cannot." See Jones, 5.

<sup>13</sup> The entry for "lyric" from the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "Adj. 1. Of or pertaining to the lyre; adapted to the lyre, meant to be sung; pertaining to or characteristic of song. Now used as the name for short poems (whether or not intended to be sung), usually divided into stanzas or strophes, and directly expressing the poet's own thoughts and sentiments. Hence, applied to the poet who composes such poems." When "lyric" is used as an adjective, readers often think of "lyrical." The adjective "lyrical" is an older synonym of "lyric."

<sup>14</sup> The lyricism theorized in the preface of *Kokin wakashū* is a different tenor than the lyricism that emerges in the Edo period. In the Heian period the essentials of poetry are *kokoro* (heart-mind) and *kotoba* (words), which can be understood as "content" and "form," respectively. In the Heian period *kokoro* is prescriptive, meaning the feelings a poet can express are conditioned by convention. This amounts to what is called "objective correlatives" in English poetry. In a discussion of Shakespeare, T.S. Eliot defined "objective correlative" as "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion." While the *kokoro* in the Heian period is conventionalized, the *kokoro* in *haikai* poetry is less so, which furnishes space for irony and individuated expression.

<sup>15</sup> See Motoori Norinaga, ed. Koyasu Nobukuni, *Ashiwake obune; Isonokami sasamegoto* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2003), 82-86. For an English translation of a selection of the essay, see Haruo Shirane, ed., *Early Modern Japanese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 613-616.

<sup>16</sup> Norinaga wrote another essay "My Personal View of Poetry" (1763; Isonokami sasamegoto), in which he developed these ideas about poetry further by arguing that poetry allows us to make our deepest feelings known, and thereby facilitate empathy and sympathy with others. He returns to this idea in his essay "The Tale of Genji: A Little Jeweled Comb" (1799; Genji monogatari tama no ogushi), and argues that the essence of Japan's first novel *The Tale of Genji* (eleventh century; Genji monogatari) is *mono no aware*, or "empathy or sympathy for others." Norinaga writes that literature such as *The Tale of Genji* teaches readers how to feel the world and the people around them: "When our hearts are troubled and we are beset by worries, they console us. They help us understand our lives in this world and the workings of the emotions." Trans. Harper. See Thomas Harper, Haruo Shirane, eds., *Reading The Tale of Genji: Sources from the First Millennium* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 421. Although Norinaga's discussion focuses on the genre of fiction known as *monogatari* (tale), his argument applies to poetry since the characters in *Genji* use *waka* to communicate with each other.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Hass, *A Little Book on Form: An Exploration Into the Formal Imagination of Poetry* (New York: Ecco, 2017), 3.

<sup>18</sup> Derek Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 153.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Frederic Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (New York: Routledge, 1983), 92.

<sup>21</sup> As Caroline Levine has observed, "for many critics, the terms *form* and *genre* are synonymous or near-synonymous." See Caroline Levine, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 13. In Japanese criticism, there also remains an unclear distinction between the words that are often translated as "form," "genre," and "style." "Genre" refers to how an art form fits into a norm or category, and evokes other categorical terms in Japanese literary criticism. There is the word *janru* (Japanese transliteration of the French word *genre*), but this term is also associated with the Chinese compounds *buntai*, *keitai*, and *yōshiki*. The English translation for these compounds is often "form" and sometimes "style," and their meaning is often limited to the kind of language used in the literary work. These Chinese compounds all relate to the original meanings of the word *tai* (*ti* in Chinese; lit. a body; to embody). In Liu Xie's *Wenxin dialong*, *ti* is a "normative form," which is essentially what genre is, a form that subscribes to a norm, a category that can be reproduced.

<sup>22</sup> Recently, scholars in English refer to *kanshi* as “Sinitic poetry” or “Sinitic verse.” See the discussion “*Kanshibun*: What to Call it?” in Matthew Fraleigh, *Plucking Chrysanthemums: Narushima Ryūhoku and Sinitic Literary Traditions in Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2016), 20-28. *Kanshi* was also the lingua franca used in poetic exchanges among literati in East Asia; in this way, if a literary work was “Sinitic” that meant that it could be read and understood by all readers of classical Chinese. For a discussion about literary Sinitic in the Heian literary sphere see Brian Steininger, *Chinese Literary Forms in Heian Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2017), 12-13. As Steininger illustrates in his book, poets in the Heian period (794-1185) and earlier were concerned with how their poetry would be received by a Chinese reader, and he uses “literary Sinitic” as a term of convenience to distinguish non-Chinese authored writings from Chinese authored writings. In this way, *kanshi* as a genre ensured Japan’s position in what scholars have recently called the “Sinosphere” (*kanji bunka ken*), an East Asian intellectual community fostered by literary production and communication in traditional Chinese prose and poetry. While *kanshi* does have a place in the “Sinosphere,” this grouping overlooks the autonomy of *kanshi* as a Japanese genre. By at least the Edo period (1603-1867), *kanshi* had matured as its own genre of poetry in Japanese letters. I have no alternative translations to “Sinitic poetry” or “Sino-Japanese poetry.” I choose to use the term *kanshi*, and gloss it as “a genre of traditional Japanese poetry in literary Chinese.”

<sup>23</sup> By the Edo period the literary antecedents in *kanshi* are Chinese and Japanese. Furthermore, some poems have nothing to do with the Chinese tradition, and allude only to Japanese literature. By the Meiji period, we find *kanshi* that even evoke images of modern life: from trains and telegrams to tuberculosis and post-industrial urban ennui.

<sup>24</sup> Literati painting in the Edo period is generally referred to as *nanga* (lit. southern painting) or *bunjinga* (lit. literati painting). Both terms denote the same style of painting practiced by eighteenth century *bunjin*, including Buson, Sakaki Hyakusen (1697-1753), Ike no Taiga, and Maruyama Ōkyo (1733-1795). *Nanga* is a mixture of styles developed by two schools of painting in the Song dynasty: the Northern school and the Southern school. The Northern school comprised professional artists who painted with technical precision. The Southern school comprised amateurs, or scholar-gentlemen, who valued subjective expression. They painted from the heart and inscribed poems on their paintings. Painting styles from both schools mixed during the Yuan (1279-1368), Ming (1368-1644), and Qing (1644-1912) dynasties. It was during this period when *nanga* and other Chinese paintings were first imported in Japan. These paintings served as the bedrocks of *bunjin* aesthetics through and beyond the Edo period.

<sup>25</sup> The Edo period gave rise to an abundance of genres in Japanese prose writing. After the import of late imperial Chinese vernacular fiction (*hakuwa shōsetsu* in Japanese, *baihua xiaoshuo* in Chinese), the *yomihon* (reading books) emerged as one genre of popular fiction. In addition to *yomihon*, there were *gesaku* (playful works) subgenres of illustrated fiction called *sharebon*, *kokkeibon* and *kibyōshi*. For a summary of some of these genres of writing that circulated in the literati sphere of the eighteenth century, see Toshiko Yokota’s discussion “Flourishing of Popular Literature and Government Censorship” in Toshiko Yokota, “Buson as Bunjin: The Literary Field of Eighteenth-Century Japan” (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2000), 161-205.

<sup>26</sup> Ronald C. Egan, *Word, Image and Deed in the Life of Su Shi* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1994), xiii.

<sup>27</sup> Toda Kōgyō, ed., *Shinshaku kanbun taikai* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1974), 65: 682. From here on *SSKT*.

<sup>28</sup> A Japanese annotation of the text had circulated by at least the early eighteenth century. See Toda’s discussion at the end of his translation. See Toda, 65: 693-697. He notes that Kūkai’s *Bunkyō hifuron* from early Heian period mentions the text; he also says that a Japanese copy of the text was printed and sold in the middle of the eighteenth century. More recently, Suzuki Sadami has streamlined Toda’s reception history of *Wenxin dialong* in Japan. See Suzuki Sadami, “Higashi Ajia ni okeru ‘Bun’ no gainen wo meguru oboegaki” in Kōno Kimiko, Wiebke Denecke, eds., *Nihon ni okeru “bun” to “bungaku”* (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2013), 13-32.

<sup>29</sup> Takahashi Tadahiko, ed., *SSKT* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 2001), 81: 245. “Wen fu” is also anthologized in *Selections of Refined Literature* (sixth century; Wenxuan), which was a wellspring of inspiration for Japanese writers from the beginning of literary history.

<sup>30</sup> In “Poetic Exposition on Literature,” Lu Ji argues that the writing process involves shaping of all sorts, including adjustments to the form and content of writing to ensure continuity (and discontinuity) of thought. He suggests that the writing is contingent upon variation (*bian*) in the writer’s thinking, and in those “shifts” (*qu*), the reader can find the all the subtle possibilities of feeling:

Paring down the elaborate and the terse, and giving form to what came before and what comes next, the writer varies his writing appropriately; and in these shifts in thought we find all kinds of subtle feelings.

若夫豐約之裁，俯仰之形。因宜適變，曲有微情。

See Takahashi, 81: 258. Stephen Owen translates *qu* as “fine turns”:

“Fine turns,” *qu*, refers to the subtle shifts in direction that occur in the process of mutation, *bian*. Such fine turns” may be contrasted with sharper changes of reversal or movement in a new direction. A subtle shift in mood (*qing*) in the writer may be the motive for engaging in a mutation, but it seems more likely that this is rather the effect of such subtle changes. These “turns” occur in all aspects of the work: mood, argument, tempo, force, and so on. In the turns appear ‘subtle moods,’ either in the affections (*qing*) conveyed or in the circumstances (*qing*) presented. Presumably the gross categories of *qing*—joy, anger, sorrow, and so on—can be conveyed statically: but for the finer, more ‘subtle’ (*wei*) distinctions, conveying the authentic movements of mind/heart (*xin*), continual change and turning is necessary.

See Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992), 167. Echoing Owen, I interpret these “fine turns” to be the writer’s shifts in thought, in which we can discern subtle distinctions between feelings. In my translation, I also include the other meaning of *qu*, which is “vast” and “all-encompassing.” See Takahashi, 81: 258.

<sup>31</sup> Yosa Buson, *Buson zenshū* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1992), 4: 25.

<sup>32</sup> See their chapter “Prosody as Rhythmic Cognition” in Harvey Gross, Robert McDowell, eds., *Sound and Form in Modern Poetry* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), 9.

<sup>33</sup> Trans. Cecile Sun. See Cecile Chu-chin Sun, *The Poetics of Repetition in English and Chinese Lyric Poetry* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 190.

<sup>34</sup> This blending and mutual dependency between feeling and scene is also found in the ideas of late Qing intellectual and poet Wang Guowei (1877-1927). Wang Guowei embraced Wang Fuzhi’s idea of blending lyricism and visuality, and connected it with Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Arthur Schopenhauer’s (1788-1860) aesthetic philosophies in the Western tradition. See David Wang, *The Lyrical in Epic Time: Modern Chinese Intellectuals and Artists Through the 1949 Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015) xv, 303.

<sup>35</sup> We find this blending in *kanshi* (poems in Chinese). After the importation of British and European Romanticism in the nineteenth century, *kanshi* incorporated aesthetics and images from the English, French, and German poetic traditions. In 1818, Confucian scholar and poet Rai Sanyō (1780-1832) wrote three seven-character ancient-style poems (*shichigon koshi*) about Napoleon Bonaparte’s time of exile on Saint Helena. See “Song of the French Emperor” (Futsuō ō) in Ibi Takashi, ed., *Rai Sanyō shisen* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2012), 94-103. In 1882, haiku reformer and poet Masaoka Shiki composed a quatrain on George Washington:

Washington

Truly I can see on the mound of thick grass, there stands a hero;  
A worried mind and a pained heart in the heat of a hundred battles.  
Blood and rain fall on blades and blossoms, spring is in full bloom;  
At the center holding in heaven and earth, the wind of freedom.

washinton

hatashite miru sōbō yori eiū okoru wo

shōshi suishin hyakusen no uchi

ketsu’u kenka haru ranman

naka ni fukumu tenchi jiyū no kaze

華盛頓

果看草莽起英雄

焦思碎心百戰中

血雨劍花春爛熳

中含天地自由風

See Masaoka Shiki, *Shiki zenshū* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1976), 8: 46

During the early Meiji period, *kanshi* also served as a poetic form for Japanese translations of poetry from these European traditions. For a discussion of *kanbun* and *kanshi* translations of English and European prose and poetry, see Miura Kanō, *Meiji no bunjin to kangaku* (Okayama: Miura Kanō, 1987), 38-47. Physician, bureaucrat and novelist Mori Ōgai (1862-1922) co-translated British and German Romantic poetry using *kanshi* forms in a poetry collection called *Omokage* (1889; Traces). *Omokage* was published in the August 2, 1889 issue of the literary journal *Kokumin no tomo*. The translations were produced by Ōgai and the other members of the Shinseisha (New Voices Society): Ochiai Naobumi, Ichimura Sanjirō, Inoue Michiyasu, Miki Takeji, and Koganei Kimiko. The *kanshi* translations include German poems by Nikolaus Lenau, Karl Woermann, Joseph Victor von Scheffel, and Wilhelm Hauff, and the English poem “Manfred” by Lord Byron. See Mori Ōgai, *Ōgai zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973), 19: 1-68.

<sup>36</sup> For an annotated version of the text see Taketani Chōjirō, *Bunjin garon: Uragami Shunkin Rongashi hyōshaku* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1988).

<sup>37</sup> By empiricism, I am referring to the new concentration on a single object and setting it apart from its environment in eighteenth century literati painting. Federico Marcon has examined the epistemology of nature in early modern

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Japan, and argues that between the early seventeenth and the mid-nineteenth century, the discipline of natural history became more secular and objective, separating itself from spiritual and philosophical understandings of the natural world. He notes that this method of cataloguing natural objects resembled and rivaled contemporaneous developments in European science. Marcon treats scholars of *materia medica*, or *honzōgaku* (the study of medicinal herbs), and observes that by the eighteenth century, naturalists began to depart from lexicographical work, and instead ventured into the wild to catalogue objects in nature: “To these scholars, nature was no longer conceivable as an organic, meaningful, and homopoietic space of supernatural and mystifying relations but as a multitude of objects—myriads of things (*banbutsu*).” See Federico Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature and the Nature of Knowledge in Early Modern Japan* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 10.

<sup>38</sup> Marcon argues that the networks of intellectual exchange in the mid to late Edo period gave rise to a “Japanese Republic of Letters” that welcomed artists and literati, including Buson. In his book, Marcon examines Edo artist Kimura Kōkyō (also known as Kenkadō, or Tsuboiya Kichiemon), whose house became a cultural salon, attracting many artists and *bunjin*, including Buson: “Kenkadō seems ubiquitous in the historiography of Tokugawa culture. His passion for natural history and other cultural pursuits became the catalyst that brought into existence, put into motion, and maintained through much needed financial lubrication a vast network of intellectual interactions and production. In his house, he hosted regular meetings of various experts in different fields. Painters like Yosa Buson, Uragami Gyokudō, and Maruyama Ōkyo; men of letters like Ueda Akinari and Motoori Norinaga; thinkers like Minagawa Kien; *rangaku* scholars like Otsuki Gentaku and Shiba Kōkan; and naturalists like Ono Ranzan and Odaka Motoyasu—the best minds of the period—regularly attended discussions and intellectual convivial events in his salon. Marcon that these cultural salons were places where artists exposed themselves to a variety of early modern discourses, including these new objective and scientific approaches to understanding the natural world around them.

<sup>39</sup> This also gave rise a poetics of the quotidian, the influences of which can be seen in the diversity of objects that appear in Edo poetry and in the expression of feelings and scenes of every day life. As Suzuki Ken’ichi has shown, the *kanshi*, *haikai*, and *waka* genres expanded their vocabulary to include images and soundscapes outside of the poetic tradition. Suzuki Ken’ichi, *Edo shiika no kukan* [The spatiality of poems in the Edo period] (Tokyo: Shinwasha, 1998), and *Edo shiikashi no kōsō* [Ideas in the history of Edo poetry] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2004). Suzuki cites examples that depict insect cages and goldfish bowls in contemporary painting, to the sounds of bird song and musical instruments, and the cacophony of the city.

<sup>40</sup> Robert Tuck’s dissertation has examined the relationship between *kanshi* and haiku and late nineteenth century media, reminding us that poetry as social practice continues and crosses national boundaries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. See Robert James Tuck, “The Poetry of Dialogue: *Kanshi*, Haiku and Media in Meiji Japan, 1870-1900,” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2012). While the four *bunjin* in my study, three of whom Tuck also discusses in his dissertation, formed poetic friendships and engaged in poetic exchanges in their lifetime, I contend that the majority of their poems bespeak an individuated consciousness. Thus the continuity of what Tuck calls “poetic sociality” can be viewed as a way early modern and modern *bunjin* writers held on to a tradition that was growing moribund with increasing urbanization and modernization; however the content in many (but not all) of their poems occupy a space in between the past and the present, gesturing toward a different and more lonely future.

<sup>41</sup> This reminds us of Walter Benjamin’s essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in which he argues that mechanical reproduction and reproducibility in the post-industrial age in Europe have destroyed the aura of art, rendering works bereft of what he calls “uniqueness.” He writes, “the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity’s entire mode of existence.” With the rise of mechanical reproduction, art just becomes another commodity that can be reproduced. In some ways, this resonates with what happens to *haikai* in the modern period as haiku, a individuated genre of poetry anticipated by the rise of *hokku* as an autonomous poetic form during the eighteenth century. See Walter Benjamin, trans. Harry Zohn, *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 222.

<sup>42</sup> This mirrors developments in eighteenth century Europe when “the market and the idea of specialist production received increasing emphasis,” leading to the rise of the Romantic artist. See Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society: 1780-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 36.

<sup>43</sup> As early as 12 years old, Shiki composed poems in Chinese, a sensibility first nurtured by his grandfather Confucian scholar Ōhara Kanzan (1818-1875). Shiki produced over 2,000 *kanshi*, 600 of which are anthologized in a self-compiled collection called *Kanshikō* (1878-96; Chinese poetry manuscript). As Watanabe Katsumi has observed, for Shiki literature begins with *kanshi*. Masaoka Shiki, *Shiki zenshū* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1975), 8: 683.

<sup>44</sup> Haga Tōru, “Natsume Sōseki: kaiga no ryōbun,” in *Natsume Sōseki ibokushū* (Tokyo: Kyūryūdō, 1979), Volume 3.

<sup>45</sup> Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 89.

**Chapter 1:**  
**Tensions in Time and Space in the Poetry of Yosa Buson**

To assume consciousness is at once to assume form.  
—Henri Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art* (1934)<sup>1</sup>

It's as if every part were aware of all the others.  
—Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters on Cezanne* (1907)<sup>2</sup>

*Haikai* is a living being.  
—Yosa Buson, “Preface” (1782)<sup>3</sup>

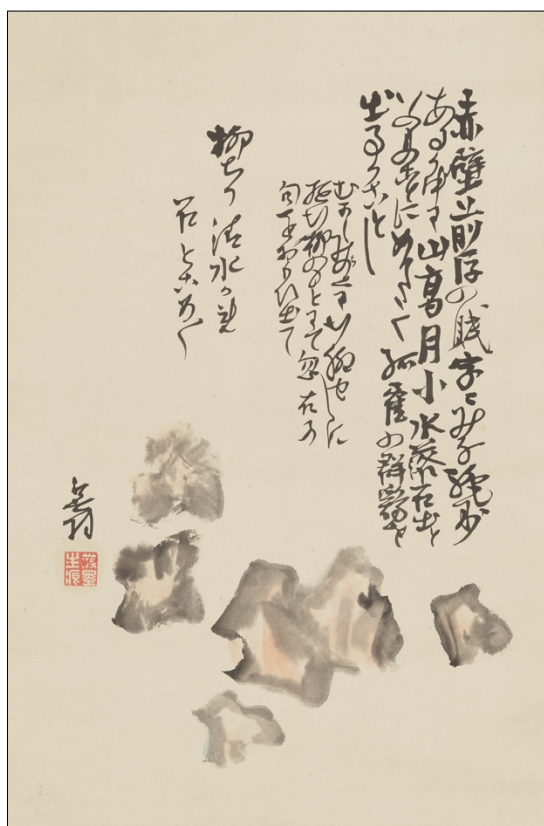
This chapter examines lyric thinking in Yosa Buson’s poetry. Buson was an eclectic poet and painter with a penchant for blending. He blended traditions, images, senses, sounds, colors, genres and forms, like brush strokes on a painting. This blending subtends a larger dynamic relationship between constitutive elements in his poetry, a tension by which his poems cohere, and a tension from which we can discern his lyric thinking.

Buson’s *haikai* practice is informed by late imperial ideas of self-expression and empirical observation, producing poetry that blends the poet’s feeling with the object or scene that he beholds before him. Whether concrete or abstract, the object or scene of perception is figured in tension with time and space. To talk about spatial tensions, I examine a *haiga* that transports the reader through the Chinese and Japanese traditions, and a selection of *hokku* that represent place through a dialectic of color and sense perception. To talk about temporal tensions, I examine Buson’s three death verses, which move between the past, the present, and the future. I conclude by examining a lyric that suspends time through repetition and tautology, and a free-verse elegy that gives form to the time of mourning through repetition and rhythm.

### **Intertextuality and Representation of Place**

Buson’s poetic forms produce meaning through figures of intertextuality, including allusion and quotation. When a poem is intertextual, its meaning is composite, and depends on a dynamic relationship with other “texts,” including images. When a poem represents a specific place, intertextuality enhances the representation of that place by echoing earlier representations across other genres and mediums. Each representation also contains its own affective space, feelings that the poet reproduces through intertextual modes.

Late in his career Buson produced a *haiga*, in which he pairs rocks with a *haibun* (*haikai* prose) as its calligraphic inscription. In the following examination I show how image and text in the *haiga* animate one another, and how text as a visual language mediates different genres and mediums, and complicates poetic form’s relationship to history and representation:



Each and every word in the Earlier and Later Rhapsodies on Red Cliff is sublime. The line “The mountains tall, the moon small, / At the river’s bottom, rocks protruding” is especially wondrous, like a lone crane flashing forth from a flock of fowl.

Long ago when I journeyed to Michinoku, I was wandering under the willows and suddenly recalled the following poem:

Willow leaves scatter,  
A clear stream sere, rocks  
Strewn here and there.

赤壁前後の賦字々みな絶妙あるか中に山高月小水落石出といふものことに  
めてたく孤鶴の群鷄を出るかことし  
むかしみちのくに行脚せしに遊行柳のもとに忽右の句をもおもひ出て  
柳ちり清水かれ石ところどころ<sup>4</sup>

The painting is a *haiga*, a genre of *bunjin* painting that pairs a simple image with an inscription in prose or poetry. Rocks are featured prominently in *nanga* landscapes and object studies in late imperial painting manuals. We may view the *haiga* as a rock study alongside other rock paintings in Buson’s oeuvre. In the *haiga* Buson evokes the eighteenth century idea that single objects are autonomous and totalizing landscapes, giving the rocks their own autonomy as living objects, not part of a larger landscape, but as a landscape of their own.<sup>5</sup>



The image comprises five or six rocks strewn on the bottom of the page. In rough brush strokes he renders the rocks in chiaroscuro, giving form to them by blending shades of ink light and dark, bold and faint. The two large rocks in the center confound perception: are they one rock or two? Seamlessly fused, but also standing as overlapping autonomous forms, the two rocks offer a visual metaphor for the intertextuality and the blending in Buson's poetry. As an ambiguous and composite whole, the *haiga* transcends containment by a particular ideological frame, and through intertextuality moves in and out of frames to places beyond the surface.

This transport is mediated by the *haibun* inscription, which instructs the viewer how to read the images through visual and intertextual modes.<sup>6</sup> In the process, the autonomy of the rocks is placed into opposition with the *haibun* inscription, which mediates a communion with other poets, and transports the rocks through the Chinese and the Japanese poetic traditions. The inscription comprises three parts: a comment on “Rhapsody on Red Cliff” (Chibi fu) and “Later Rhapsody on Red Cliff” (Hou Chibu fu) composed by Song dynasty literatus Su Shi (1037-1101); allusions to the travelogue *Narrow Road to The Deep North* (1689; Oku no hosomichi) by Matsuo Bashō (1644-94) and a *waka* by early medieval poet Saigyō (1118-1190); and a quotation of a *hokku* that Buson composed in 1743, a few decades before he produced the *haiga*.

Su Shi's rhapsodies are about travel, history, and the poetic imagination.<sup>7</sup> “Rhapsody on Red Cliff” opens with a tranquil scene in autumn of 1082: Su Shi and his guests are boating beneath Red Cliff, drinking wine, reciting poetry, and savoring the landscape. Then they enter a conversation that evokes the idea of impermanence, but also bespeaks the idea that there is continuity in human existence. Ronald Egan has suggested that this continuity is made possible by visiting a historical site, which puts the subject in communion with a greater human consciousness and continuity.<sup>8</sup> By visiting Red Cliff, the poet enters an affective space and forms a connection with the people who once inhabited it.

“Later Rhapsody on Red Cliff” opens with a dreary scene of delayed celebration in winter of 1082: Su Shi and two guests wander on a desolate landscape, frost falls and dew forms on bare tree limbs, while the moon glows bright in the dark sky. They lament not having any food or wine with which to enjoy the evening, but soon enough they find some, and go boating again beneath Red Cliff. However, this time they encounter a changed landscape:

Thereupon we took the wine and fish, and wandered again below Red Cliff. The river flows, water rushing; sheer cliffs rise a thousand feet. The mountains tall, the moon small; At the river's bottom, rocks protruding. How long has it been since our last visit? The landscape seemed completely unfamiliar.

於是攜酒與魚，復遊於赤壁之下。江流有聲，斷岸千尺。山高月小，水落石出。曾日月之幾何，而江山不可復識矣。<sup>9</sup>

Buson's inscription quotes one of the four-character couplets from the passage above: “The mountains tall, the moon small; At the river's bottom, rocks protruding.” Although the speaker in the passage has traveled to Red Cliff just months before, the landscape has changed from autumn to winter, a seasonal change that has rendered the scene “unfamiliar.” The sublimity of the moment, in part, is stirred by how the seasonal change has imbued the landscape with a feeling of awesome boundlessness.

In the way they depict the experience of visiting Red Cliff, the two rhapsodies are in tension with each other: the former offers a clear message in the theme of transience, whereas the

latter is open-ended and enigmatic.<sup>10</sup> Buson echoes the enigmatic feeling of the later rhapsody with a metaphor describing the sublimity of Su Shi's poetry: "like a lone crane flashing forth from a flock of fowl."<sup>11</sup> This alludes to the conclusion of the later rhapsody: a lone crane appears in the east, and it swoops down above the boatmen, soars across the river and emits a loud cry before disappearing into the west. Although the color of the bird is not specified in Buson's inscription, the crane in the rhapsody is described as wearing a "black skirt" and "white robe." The rhapsody ends with the poet dreaming of a Daoist, whose feathery wardrobe reminds the poet of the crane. When the poet asks the Daoist whether he disguised himself as the crane, the Daoist just smiles. Su Shi's ending has left traditional commentators befuddled: Ming dynasty poet Yuan Hongdao (1568-1610) claimed that the meaning of "Later Rhapsody on Red Cliff" is opaque even to the author himself.<sup>12</sup> With the desolate winter landscape and the Daoist transformation in mind, we can imagine what Buson found sublime about the rhapsodies.

In addition to transporting the poet to the rhapsodies on Red Cliff, the inscription uses the lone crane to index the representation of birds in literati painting. The crane is considered auspicious and beautiful, and has been a subject of painting since at least the Tang dynasty.<sup>13</sup> In the Song dynasty (960-1279), the crane was often associated with Confucian sagacity because of its dignified poses; soon after, with the development of Daoism, the crane represented all the ideals associated with the immortals: purity, loftiness, longevity and auspiciousness. By the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) it had also become associated with the virtues of a scholar-official, a literatus. By the eighteenth century, the crane carried all these meanings. By comparing the sublimity of Su Shi's rhapsodies to the sublimity of a crane, Buson extolls the rhapsody's evocation of the ineffable, overlaid with symbolic self-representation in literati painting.

While evoking the space of literati painting, the image of the flying crane moves the scene from Red Cliff to representations of Ashino in the Japanese tradition, and begins another chain of allusions across genres and mediums. Buson alludes to a journey he made in 1743, retracing seventeenth century *haikai* poet Matsuo Bashō's (1644-94) travelogue *Narrow Road to The Deep North*. The inscription features *yugyō yanagi* (wandering under the willows), a poetic epithet or *utamakura* (lit. "poem-pillow") that evokes the place of Ashino, known for its willows.<sup>14</sup> In his travelogue, Bashō wanders under the willows in summer at Ashino and composes a *hokku*:

On a whole paddy  
I planted seeds, then parted  
The willows.

*ta ichimai / uete tachisaru / yanagi kana*  
田一枚植て立去る柳かな<sup>15</sup>

The traveller plants rice seedlings to fill one paddy, and then parts with the willows, a symbol of farewell in the poetic tradition.

The *utamakura* ties Bashō's poem to a Noh play of the same title, in which an itinerant priest retraces the steps of medieval poet Saigyō. The priest encounters the spirit of Saigyō in the form of a willow. The association between Saigyō and willows comes from his *waka*, which is anthologized in *Shinkokin wakashū* (1205; also *Shinkokinshū*, or New Collection of Poems Old and New):

Along the path  
A clear stream flows  
In the shade of willows;  
Stop for a moment, I thought,  
Then ended up lingering.

*michi no be ni / shimizu nagaruru / yanagi kage / shibashi tote koso / tachidomaritsure*

道のべに清水ながるる柳かげしばしとてこそ立ちとまりつれ<sup>16</sup>

Saigyō's poem paints a summer scene where the poet finds shade under willow trees. By the end of the poem, we discover what was intended to be a brief respite from the heat turns out to be a much longer stay. Like the itinerant priest in the Noh play, Bashō traces Saigyō's journey to Ashino. Saigyō's *waka*, the Noh play, and Bashō's *hokku* all depict willows as a space where a traveller comes and goes. They also echo Su Shi's rhapsodies in how they tarry in a space of cultural significance, and a space that stirs the poetic imagination.

Buson simultaneously blends the autumn and winter scenes in Su Shi's rhapsodies, while also alluding to the summer willows in Bashō, the Noh play, and Saigyō, all in the space of one seventeen syllable verse. The *hokku* exemplifies the power of allusion to transport the poet through and across the Chinese and Japanese literary traditions, while blurring distinctions between time, space, genre, form, and medium:

Willow leaves scatter,  
A clear stream sere, rocks  
Strewn here and there.

*yanagi chiri / shimizu kare ishi / tokoro-dokoro*  
柳ちり清水かれ石ところどころ<sup>17</sup>

The *hokku* paints a cold and desolate landscape in a sequence of images: scattered leaves, a sere stream, and rocks. What makes a *hokku* a *hokku* is its *kigo*, or seasonal referent. Like *waka*, *hokku* are organized in anthologies (*kushū*) by the season. In the case of this poem, however, this method of categorization would clarify the seasonal ambiguity: if we treat the image of willow leaves scattering (*yanagi chiri*) as the seasonal referent, then it is an autumn poem; if we treat the sere stream (*shimizu kare*) as the referent, then it is a winter poem.<sup>18</sup> The seasonal ambiguity allows the poem to be both, neither, or in between autumn and winter.

The suspension of the seasons mirrors the *hokku*'s dynamic relationship with other poems. The *hokku* relates to Saigyō's *waka* through opposition and contrast: the willows in Saigyō's poem have leaves, which provide shade over a clear, full-flowing stream; the willows in Buson's poem have scattered their leaves on a dried-up stream; where Saigyō evokes fullness, heat, and light, Buson evokes emptiness, cold, and darkness. In alluding to Su Shi, the *hokku* blends the two rhapsodies together. Although willows do not appear in either of Su Shi's poems, we can picture willows in the autumn scene of the first rhapsody, and see them shed their leaves like the trees in the second. The river is full in the first rhapsody, and empty in the second, like

in Buson's verse. In this way, the *hokku* echoes the unfamiliar landscape in the later rhapsody by representing the seasonal change from autumn to winter in one poem.<sup>19</sup>

Buson's *hokku* alone alludes to poems in both the Japanese and Chinese traditions.<sup>20</sup> We remember from Su Shi's rhapsodies that a traveller can join a larger human continuity by connecting to the affective space of a historical site. As we observed with Ashino in Bashō and Saigyō's poems, *utamakura* are portals to collective experience. Edward Kamens argues that the *utamakura* in one poem evokes a specific place, but it also evokes the collective of poems that share that place, linking the one poem to the entire continuum of Japanese poetry.<sup>21</sup> In the same way that the site of Red Cliff mediated a connection with Cao Cao's fallen soldiers and the later representations of Red Cliff in Chinese poetry and painting, as an *utamakura* "Red Cliff" connects Buson's *hokku* to other poems about Red Cliff in the Japanese and Chinese traditions. In 1680, Bashō composed a *hokku* that alludes to the same line from Su Shi's "Later Rhapsody on Red Cliff":

Rocks sere,  
River dry—  
Winter is missing.

*ishi karete / mizu shibomeru ya / fuyu mo nashi*  
石枯れて水しばめるや冬もなし<sup>22</sup>

Bashō's *hokku* paints a scene so dry, cold, and dreary, there is no space for "winter." The *hokku* is categorized as a winter poem, but the poet doubts the winter-ness of sere rocks and a dry river. Ōtani Tokuzō and Nakamura Shunjō argue that the poem is commenting on a misplaced metaphor, that the verbs *karete* (sere) and *shibomeru* (to dry up) are used to describe trees and vegetation during winter, but not rocks or rivers. In this way, the poem ironically comments on the limits of language to describe a landscape.<sup>23</sup> The poet in Buson's *hokku*, however, is not making a claim about either autumn or winter, or the failure of language to represent them. His *hokku* roams in multiple times and places, and shows the possibilities of poetic form.

The *haiga* inscription also challenges the boundaries of allusive variation by transporting the *hokku* to other poetic genres and their representations. As Kamens observes, even when a Japanese poem does not feature an explicit allusion, it can "replicate" the familiar structure or "enact" the familiar attitude of another poem in the tradition.<sup>24</sup> As a representation of Red Cliff, Buson's *hokku* enacts earlier representations of Red Cliff, including Su Shi's song lyric (*ci*) "To the tune, 'Recalling Her Charms,' Cherishing the Past at Red Cliff." In the song, the poet compares the scene at Red Cliff to a painting:

Jagged rocks break the clouds,  
Tossing waves pound the bank,  
Furling up a thousand piles of snow.  
The river and mountains are like a painting;  
At one moment, how many valiant men were here!

亂石崩雲  
驚濤拍岸  
捲起千堆雪  
江山如畫  
一時多少豪傑<sup>25</sup>

The lines above illustrate how poetry, like a painting, encapsulates the relationship between time and space, and the relationship between historical event and representation. Up above, the rocks on the mountain cliff break apart the sea of clouds; down below, the waves beat upon the rock at

the bank of the river in winter, and disturb the thousand piles of snow that have accumulated over the season. His use of the verb “to furl up” (*juan qi*) reminds us of a courtesan furling the blinds, about to view the scene beyond her chamber window, or a literatus furling a scroll with a landscape painted upon it. The landscape bears markers of time: the waves furl and push upwards the piles of snow, which have covered the rock face. Once the rock face is bare, the poet exclaims: “The river and mountains are like a painting.” The metaphor enables the poet to place the landscape he beholds in history: he exclaims that “at one moment” (*yi shi*), the landscape was once filled by valiant men.<sup>26</sup>

The ability to take elements from one medium and rearrange them in another aesthetic representation reveals the kinship between mediums. This evokes W.J.T. Mitchell’s idea that media are all mixed because one medium invariably stirs our imagination of another.<sup>27</sup> The *hokku* features scattered leaves, a sere stream, and rocks. From these images we imagine a barren landscape; but the inscription’s intertextuality invokes a polyphony of voices, filling that barren landscape with sound from other histories.

The intertextual relationships with genres and mediums show how Buson’s *hokku* and *haiga* are both works in the state of becoming. They emerge as their own representations of Red Cliff and Ashino.<sup>28</sup> Buson’s *hokku* and *haiga* stand in for Red Cliff and Ashino, and imagine them blended as one. The rocks, in their impressionistic manner, sit on the page “protruding” out of the poems and the histories onto a new landscape where they gain new meaning. Part of this new meaning comes from being autonomous living objects. The other part is their continuous but varied relationship with tradition, made possible by the visual language in the inscription, which places the rocks in different representations in poetry and painting.

So far we have seen how the visual language in the inscription mediates the image’s connection to multiple places in the literati tradition. Supplementing the visual performance in the *haiga*, the *hokku* evokes a variant of itself as a line of poetry in Chinese. The variant *hokku* communicates a visual and sonic language that challenges the boundaries of *haikai* form by blending it with *kanshi*:<sup>29</sup>

<i>ryū</i>	<i>san</i>	<i>sei</i>	<i>sui</i>	<i>ko</i>	<i>seki</i>	<i>sho</i>	<i>sho</i>
柳	散	清	水	澗	石	処	処
●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●

Although the *hokku* can be read aloud in Japanese as *yanagi chiri / shimizu kare ishi / tokoro-dokoro*, it can also be read aloud using the Chinese readings of the graphs that compose the verse, as shown above.<sup>30</sup> The Chinese meter of the line (○ = level tone; ● = oblique tone) evokes the meter of an ancient-style poem (*koshi*), a rhapsody (*fu*), or a song lyric (*ci*). In these genres, tones are less regulated, and oblique tones are more prominent. In this way, Chinese form of the *hokku* opens more possibilities for reading on its own and through allusion to other genres.

By blurring the lines between *kanshi* and *haikai*, the variant *hokku* echo the visual ambiguity of the rocks in the *haiga* through its possibilities of sound. The end of the *hokku* marks the end of the inscription: an onomatopoeia that gives sound to objects moving “here and there” in time and space: *sho-sho* (in *kanshi* form) and *tokoro-dokoro* (in *haikai* form). This sound evokes the image of rocks in the painting, and gives them a new aural dimension: as the

rocks appear strewn “here and there” before the eye, in our imagination we hear them moving here and there in time and space through the polyphony of voices from Su Shi’s rhapsodies and song lyric on Red Cliff to Bashō’s and Saigyō’s willow poems at Ashino, and other poetic and visual representations in the Chinese and Japanese traditions.

The *haiga* demonstrated the multiple kinds of transport possible by pairing text with image. The rest of the chapter concentrates on text, but continues to evoke the idea that the texts are intertextual with other texts and images, especially painting. And as we have seen with the *haiga*, the willow *hokku*, and its variant, poetic form is constituted by images and sounds. As images and sounds echo each other across genres and mediums, they map out the routes of lyric thought across various spaces, revealing the architecture of Buson’s aesthetic consciousness.

### Seeing and Imagining Color

When Buson’s places colors together in poetic form, they produce tension in the poet’s perception of space. His poems often feature the colors of a natural object and ask the reader to imagine their blending. In these poems, the poet questions the colors that constitute the object, and encourages the reader to imagine what it looks like and the space that it occupies. Like a painter, the poet places black and white together, and as the colors brush against each other, they blend into shades of gray in the reader’s imagination.

Scholars have noted the prominence of colors in Buson’s *haikai*, but few have examined how colors function or why Buson emphasizes them at all. In the willow *hokku*, we can imagine the bleak colors evoked by the images that comprise the scene; but Buson does not specify the color of the images as he does in a considerable number of his *hokku*. Below are two examples of *hokku* in which colors are specified, and where color becomes the focus of the poet’s thought:

1. Tea flowers—  
Hard to tell whether  
Yellow or white.

*cha no hana ya / ki ni mo shiro ni mo / obotsukana*  
茶の花や黄にも白にもおぼつかない

2. Wild plum blossoms:  
Not white,  
Not red.

*noji no ume / shiroku mo akaku mo / aranu kana*  
野路の梅白くも赤くもあらぬ哉<sup>31</sup>

Color is the object of uncertainty in both poems, which questions the clarity of the poet’s perception, and also the necessity to make a definitive claim about color. In *waka*, the color of natural objects is either understood by convention, or the question of color is immaterial to the central meaning of the poem. This is likely the case for *waka* and *haikai* during the eighteenth century as well. Adopting the stance of an empirical scientist, the lyric subject in the two *hokku* seeks to specify the colors of natural objects, making the perception of color itself the crux of the

poem. The *hokku* above desire to name a color, but do not succeed, and thereby encourages the reader to imagine what the tea flowers and plum blossoms look like.

Buson wrote the first *hokku* sometime in 1768, likely in winter because the tea flowers (*cha no hana*) are the seasonal referent. Another version of the poem switches the order of the colors from “yellow or white,” to “white or yellow.” Either way, the poet beholds a patch of green tea flowers and he cannot tell whether the flowering portion is yellow or white. The poet is either too far away to see them, or the flowers have yet to bloom, and he is staring at the buds. When in bloom, tea flowers show their white petals and yellow pistils. Here, instead of writing about the yellow or the white of the tea flower, the poet questions the certainty of his perception, which ends the poem with a visual image vague and indistinct, encouraging the reader to think that the buds are both yellow and white, or neither.

Buson wrote the second *hokku* sometime in 1769, likely early spring because plum blossoms are the seasonal referent. Like in the earlier poem on tea flowers, the poet beholds a natural object and questions its color. While the poet in this *hokku* may not be certain about the color he sees, he is certain about the colors he does not see: red and white. In his many poems on plum blossoms, Buson usually specifies whether they are red or white.<sup>32</sup> Ogata Tsutomu and Morita Ran claim the poet is seeing something in between red and white, a pink color perhaps. This is precisely what the *hokku* wants the viewer to see, or not see. But there is also a possibility that the wild plums on the country road have yet to bloom. If we take the poem literally, the blossoms are not red, nor are they white. This observation suggests that the poet here and in the tea flowers poem is thinking about the boundaries of perception, overlaid with an anxiety about the unreliability of language to represent the senses.

As the poet goes back and forth in his mind about color, the tension created by indecision or the lack of perceptual clarity also evokes the humor in *haikai*. This humor is the wit of *haikai* practice, what Robert Backus has described as the “fun” that evolved as a way to lighten the aristocratic weight of orthodox *haikai* before the Edo period. In orthodox *haikai* practice (also known as *renga*, or linked-verse), attitudes and feelings toward any object worth talking about were made normative by convention. Backus writes:

This sense of a proper response to a sanctified category of objects considered to be beautiful, which generations of aristocratic poets had imparted to the Japanese mind, created a situation made to order for humor. Sanctity affronted shocks the believer and gives the recreant a laugh.<sup>33</sup>

The sanctified category of objects to which Backus refers is the finite number of things that appear in *waka* and *renga*, including tea flowers and plum blossoms. Ironizing the conventions of their evocation is what makes the poet and reader laugh.

Until the Edo period, traditional poetry conditioned the way poets thought about natural objects. But with the rise of empirical observation and the emergence of *haikai* as an autonomous genre of poetry, Buson was able to blend traditional imagery and their figurative associations with a new way of seeing: taking an object and scrutinizing its individual form, through which the poet could communicate his own thoughts and feelings, often in an ironic and humorous way. In the process, *haikai* furnished a space for playful critique, imbuing poetry with wit, irony, and sarcasm. This playfulness can also be found in Buson’s attitude toward rules in *haikai*. He wrote that when the rules do not work, the rule is to break the rules.<sup>34</sup>

In the second *hokku*, the poet presents himself as a *bunjin* who does not take himself too seriously. Although a joke is no longer funny after someone tells you the punch line, we need to know what plums meant to Buson in order to understand his wit, which leads to an interpretation that ironizes and pokes fun at the literati tradition. Buson wrote countless poems on plum blossoms, including one where red petals blaze on piles of horse dung.<sup>35</sup> Plum blossoms are cherished objects in the *bunjin* tradition, as they are one of the Four Gentlemen (*shikunshi*): orchids (*ran*), bamboo (*take* or *chiku*), chrysanthemums (*kiku*), and plums (*ume* or *bai*). These natural objects were associated with Confucian virtues, and were embraced by literati poets and painters since the Song dynasty, including Su Shi. In *haikai*, however, even the sanctity of plum blossoms can be ruined as the butt of a joke.

As a verse that makes a claim about what color the plum is not, the *hokku* also alludes to a line in an earlier Chinese poem whose political meaning contradicts the openness of interpretation suggested by the *hokku*. Northern Song literatus Tang Geng (1070-1120) wrote: “Their white is not yet white; their red is not yet red.” The verse comes from a poem Tang wrote on plum blossoms. Ogata and Morita write that the white refers to plums and the red refers to peaches, and interpret the claim that neither has ripened to their full color as a metaphor, which tinges the line with political satire. In Tang’s context as a scholar-official in the Northern Song Dynasty, this interpretation is plausible. But Buson was no scholar-official; he was an artist, like many other *bunjin* in the eighteenth century. Moreover, he wrote a *hokku* in which the plum blossoms are modified by “wild” (*noji*; lit. “a track on a moor”). In the context of Buson’s poem, the plums have the potential to symbolize the virtues of a Confucian literatus; but because they are wild and uncultivated, and do not show the colors conventionally associated with their blossoms, the poet is suggesting that they are offering something else, which the reader is left to imagine. The poem merely exclaims (emphasized by the emphatic *kana*) that the wild plum blossoms are neither red nor white. And this is where the reader chuckles.

Buson also wrote *hokku* in which color fills a space and makes the reader imagine a landscape painting that confounds perception. The *hokku* above showed how much color was a concern for him, and asked what color can do for a poem, as well as how and why the lyric mind fixates upon it. Buson was a painter, and his use of color reaches its height of complexity in *hokku* that show the reader how to perceive the world through the eyes of a painter. The *hokku* below perform three experiences of imagining a painting: conflict resolution, optical illusion, and panoramic movement.

1. White plum blossoms—  
Black ink fragrant  
At Goose Cormorant Inn.

*hakubai ya / sumi kanbashiki / kōrokan*  
白梅や墨芳しき鴻鷗館

2. Red plum blossoms—  
The lowering sun strikes through  
The pines and the oaks.

*kōbai ya / irihi no osou / matsu kashiwa*  
紅梅や入日の襲ふ松かしは



3. Fresh leaves greening,  
A stream shimmering white, barley  
Tinged with yellow.

*wakaba shite / mizu shiroku mugi / kibamitari*  
若葉して水白く麦黄ミたり<sup>36</sup>

In the first and second *hokku*, the poet begins with the image of plum blossoms, but this time he specifies their color. The first *hokku* dates to sometime in 1775, and the second in 1783, the year of Buson's death. Both were written likely in early spring because of the seasonal referent, plum blossoms. Morita and Ogata read the poem as a recollection or representation of the time when Japanese literati from distant provinces would gather together and write poetry at Kōrokan, a hotel patronized by foreign officials (Japanese, Tang and Silla) during the Heian period. With this historical moment in mind, plum blossoms are in full bloom around the hotel, the scent of black ink fills the air, and poets hailing from near and far sit down together and compose verses.

By placing objects in an oppositional relationship with each other, *hokku* gives form to the act of painting and the experience of viewing it. If we take the poem as a scene in the imagination, then we see a painter with his canvas, on which he just finished rendering the plum, its white blossoms and its dark branches still wet with ink. The strong scent of the ink covers the canvas, and permeates his studio, the name of which aurally registers as “Kōrokan,” a word in Chinese that translates to “Goose Cormorant Inn.” The poet may be thinking of the Heian hotel named Kōrokan, which literally translates to “Goose Belly Inn,” but the poet chooses to use a homonym for the middle graph *ro*, which refers to a waterfowl in the cormorant family. Anthologies feature the original *ro* 鷗 (cormorant), but annotators claim that it is an error, and that Buson really meant *ro* 臏 (belly). Since the *haikai* poet has the freedom to pun, the image of a cormorant gives the poem another visual layer: as a pun it brings resolution to the colors in opposition. Geese and cormorants are birds that both have black, white, and shades of gray in their plumage. By moving from the white of the plum blossom, to the black of the ink, and then to a mixture of the two colors in a static image of two whole birds describes the process of ink wash painting, the act of blending colors, the act of bringing two opposites into resolution.

Buson's resolution between black and white in the last verse reminds us of how form and color balance each other in traditional Chinese painting. Early theorist of Chinese painting Zong Bing (375-444) declared, “Write form from form, paint color from color.”<sup>37</sup> In a discussion of the role of color in traditional Chinese vis-à-vis classic and modern Western painting, François Jullien observes that early Chinese texts thought of painting in terms of “an alliance between form and color,” a dynamic relationship of complementarity and opposition. Early treatises list six “colors” that form three oppositional pairs: black and white, dry and wet, thick and thin. In ink wash paintings, the literatus dilutes black ink to produce variations of lightness, density, clarity, and opacity in his objects. Buson shows us this process in his *hokku* when the black and white reappear in a variegated but unified form in the plumage of two birds. In this way, Buson's use of black and white resonates with the idea in traditional Chinese painting that the painter must balance the tension between oppositional colors.<sup>38</sup>

In the second poem, Buson uses color as a way to explore the possibilities of perception and abstraction. The *hokku* on plum blossoms pairs complementary colors red and green, and creates an optical illusion: by the end of the poem, it is questionable whether the plum blossoms

are even there. We know that the plum blossoms are red in this poem, but the images that follow them abstract the image of blossoms in their figuration of a twilight scene. The rays from the lowering sun (*irihhi*) penetrate the forest of the green pines and oaks. The poet uses the verb *osou*, which means “to assail,” “to invade,” or “to strike.” An older meaning of the verb means “to layer,” and is used to describe the act of putting on layers of kimono. Although this refigures the twilight as a scene of overlapping tapestries, the speed with which a fabric falls upon and hugs another layer of fabric on the body is echoed in the speed with which the light meets the limbs of trees. In this way, the poet paints a slow scene where shafts of light gradually fall upon the forest in a mixture of dark and light, producing a burnt red glow. The sunset is either figuring the glow of the plum blossoms in the poet’s imagination, or the plum blossoms are figuring the sunset. Either way, Buson has produced a poem that questions the possibility of perception, and how color spurs the mind to think in abstraction and metaphor.

The third *hokku* paints a polychromatic panoramic view. The three colors in the poem direct the eye to behold a live and moving landscape in green, white, and yellow. The date of the poem is unknown, but Buson wrote it likely in early summer because of the seasonal referent, young leaves or fresh verdure (*wakaba*). The poem opens with the color of green denoted by the *wakaba*, which we associate with *shinryoku* (lit. the new green), as they are both metonyms for early summer. The poet does not deploy the “cutting word” *ya* like he does in the second *hokku* after the red plum blossoms; instead the poet connects the image of the green leaves to the next image using *shite*, a verb that marks the state of action (the leaves being green or greening), but also serves as a linking-conjunction between images in a poem.<sup>39</sup>

As the leaves green before the eye, a stream shimmers with the color white. Here, the color white is also used to describe bright light: white (*shiroku*) describes the summer sunlight coruscating from the stream, which we imagine is flowing next to the green leaves. The second beat is enjambed, ending with the barley (*mugi*) that becomes the subject of the last beat, where the poet describes the stalks of barley as tinged with yellow (*kibamitari*). The absence of a *kireji* allows the images to be contiguous with one another; as a result, the poem moves without pause in one direction from image to image, culminating in a consummate scene of early summer: a bright shimmering stream flanked by trees with green leaves and a field of yellow barley.

As some scholars have noted, the *hokku* paints a picture more akin to a modern oil painting than a traditional literati landscape.<sup>40</sup> On the one hand, this view places the *hokku* seemingly at odds with the landscape paintings produced by Buson, whose style drew from the principles outlined in the late imperial painting manuals and treatises. In her discussion of the “true view paintings” (*shinkeizu*) of eighteenth century literatus Ike no Taiga (1723-76), Melinda Takeuchi observes that eighteenth century painters synthesized three principles of composition: “*shai* (painting the idea), *shasei* (painting life) and *ikkaku* (the artist’s untrammelled personality).”<sup>41</sup> To paint the “idea” of an object means to communicate its essence by blending convention with the artist’s feelings. To paint the “life” of an object means to “apprehend the spirit-resonance of nature’s forms in order to probe the essential truth of nature.” “Spirit-resonance” (*ki’in*; *qi yun* in Chinese) is the first of the “Six Laws” (Liu fa) of Chinese painting, outlined by painter and critic Xie He in the late fifth century. By the Edo period, the meaning of “spirit-resonance” varied depending on the artist, but overall it referred to a spiritual communion between artist, object, and painting.<sup>42</sup> These principles of representation in painting blend with the empirical scrutiny we find in Buson’s *hokku*, in which the lyric mind subjectively engages with a panoramic scene by examining the colors that make it move, the colors that constitute a living form in the poetic imagination.

Buson's *hokku* concentrate on the complexities of color perception, and how the absence and presence of color stimulates the imagination. In the poems where the poet beholds tea flowers and plum blossoms he questions the colors that constitute them. This participates in empirical observation by ironizing it, deceiving the reader into seeing what may or may not be there. The last three *hokku* showed what visual acrobatics are possible when the poet thinks with a wider palette of colors: balancing opposition and complementarity, visualizing the concrete to the abstract, and imaging a panoramic view that transcends tradition.

### White, Death, and Lyric Time

This section examines the relationship between the color white and how it produces tensions in the representation of time in Buson's *hokku*. Among the colors in Buson's *hokku*, white is the most prominent. In the *hokku* we have examined, one poem puts the white of the plum blossom in contrast with the black of ink; another poem places the white shimmering light of a stream in between two other colors, thus encouraging the viewer to see the contiguity between them. Yamashita Kazumi has called Buson "Haku no Shijin" (the poet of white), an appellation that became the title of his monograph from 2009 on Buson's poetry.<sup>43</sup>

At the end of his life Buson left three *hokku*, all three of which suggest white to differing degrees of perceptual clarity. The third poem ends with suspension, waiting for white to appear. Although white is not the primary focus of either poem, it is visible in the poems that suggest it, but not in the poem that names it. This curious relationship with white may be the result of sensory loss, or symptomatic of a lyric mind meditating on mortality through contradiction. Although biography should not necessarily weigh on the meaning of a poem, when we come across a set of poems that mark the end of a poet's life, we wonder about the weight of death on aesthetic choices. Buson's late style is a subject that has yet to be examined, but his final verses provide one way to begin the conversation.

Wallace Stevens once remarked, "To a large extent, the problems of poets are the problems of painters, and poets must often turn to the literature of painting for a discussion of their own problems."<sup>44</sup> In three verses, Buson comes to terms with the problem of his impending demise by figuring the color white in three verses that draw on Chinese and Japanese poetry as well as the tradition of literati painting. I propose we read the three *hokku* as one poem or as a pseudo *renku* (linked-verse) sequence, since Buson on his deathbed uttered them one verse after another to his pupil Matsumura Goshun (1752-1811; also Gekkei):

The winter warbler  
Long ago on Wang Wei's  
Hedge fence.

Warbler—  
Why do you rustle  
Frost on the bush?

The night to dawn  
White on the plum  
Is all I have left.

*fuyu uguisu / mukashi ōi ga / kakine kana*  
*uguisu ya / nani gosotsukasu / yabu no shimo*  
*shira ume ni / akuru yo bakari to / narinikeri*

冬鶯むかし王維が垣根哉  
うぐいすや何ごそつかす藪の霜  
しら梅に明る夜ばかりとなりけり<sup>45</sup>

All three poems date to the hour before dawn on December 25, 1783. Although Buson finally selects the third *hokku* to be his “death-verse” (*jisei no ku*), the figurative resonances between the three verses asks us to examine their relationship to one another, how they cohere as one poem, yet also diverge into three distinct comments on the color white, and how white is figured in terms of painting. In the previous section, I examined how color functions in separate verses; but at the critical moment before death, we find Buson’s mind thinking in verses, not individually, but as a set or a sequence. Conventionally, *renga* or its more modern name *renku* (which refers to linked verse in unorthodox *haikai*) does not comprise solely of *hokku*: *renku* like *renga* begins with a *hokku* (5-7-5), which is followed by *wakiku* (7-7), and this continues indefinitely.<sup>46</sup> But Buson leaves just three *hokku*, which suggests a mind struggling between different beginnings, or a mind finding a form, forming a single amorphous poem from three strands of thought.

The first *hokku* stands in for a Chinese painting, and the color white is suggested in the representation. The color white accompanies the retrospective image of the winter warbler perched on Wang Wei’s hedge fence. By invoking Tang Dynasty poet Wang Wei, we are reminded of how his colorful and painterly poems inspired Su Shi to comment on the mutual and chiasmic relationship between poetry and painting.<sup>47</sup> In the *hokku* this relationship reappears in two images: the winter warbler and Wang Wei’s hedge fence, both of which are figured as things from long ago (*mukashi*).<sup>48</sup> The seasonal referent “winter warbler” is an explicit indication that the *hokku* is a winter poem; although no snowfall is mentioned, we can imagine that the bird is perched on a snowy branch in the hedge. The snow and other images associated with winter are also suggested by the allusions to Wang Wei’s hedge fence.

The figure of the winter warbler disrupts the lyric subject’s situatedness in the present by transporting him and the poem through the history of representations of Wangchuan Villa. Earlier I argued that we view the *haiga*’s text and image as a composite representation of Su Shi’s poems and the paintings that they inspired; we can say the same for how the winter warbler *hokku* works as a representation of poems and paintings of Wang Wei’s villa. Like the willow *hokku*, the poem here extracts elements from a source painting, which is likely a late imperial imitation or facsimile, and stands in as its own representation. In this way, “Wang Wei’s / Hedge fence” (*ōi ga / kakine*) functions like an *utamakura*, transporting the reader to the various “places” where Wangchuan Villa has been represented.

After transporting through earlier representations, the lyric subject is theoretically able to experience time as an object in a painting. By figuring himself as the winter warbler, the poet marks his presence in the landscape of Wangchuan Villa.<sup>49</sup> In his discussion of Song dynasty painting, Edward Casey observes that the painter transmits himself, or his spirit, into the painting in order to give it its so-called verisimilitude: “The transmission of spirit sought by the painter is *the transmission of the spirit that inheres in a place* with which one is fully resonant—hence that is continually in motion, given that resonance and motion are inseparably allied.”<sup>50</sup> In his

formulation, Casey draws from the rhetoric in medieval Chinese painting manuals that the painter is one with the natural landscape because they share the same spirit.

As a reader of these medieval manuals, the ideas of which were reproduced in late imperial treatises that circulated among *bunjin* in the Edo period, Buson was informed by the same spiritual and aesthetic beliefs from medieval China. But writing in an age when the subject's relationship to nature is growing increasingly secular, the poet realizes that his self-identification with Wangchuan Villa is mediated by time and representation. As he imagines a painting through the figure of the winter warbler, he becomes aware of the gulf between his present moment and the distant past, indicated by "long ago" (*mukashi*).

While the first *hokku* stands in for a painting of Wang Wei's villa, as a *hokku* it also comments on how representation in poetry performs what representation in painting cannot: sound. And yet, the first *hokku* is curiously silent, since most of Buson's poems that feature the warbler comment on sound.<sup>51</sup> The silence of the first *hokku* is soon disquieted by the noise the warbler makes in the second *hokku*, in which the white image of frost functions as the amplifier of sound. In this *hokku* the poet does not specify a season, and begins with just *uguisu* (warbler). In some anthologies, this makes the poem a spring poem, whereas the first *hokku* is a winter poem.<sup>52</sup> The repetition of the same bird suggests that the warbler in the second *hokku* is the same warbler, but in the future, at a later time in early spring.

Unlike the first poem, which features no *kireji*, and moves from image to image without pause, the second poem starts with the warbler and inserts *ya*, a pause for exclamatory emotion.<sup>53</sup> Herbert Jonsson's monograph on *haikai* poetics in the eighteenth century has argued that while *kireji* (namely, *ya*, *kana*, and *keri*) are emotive, whether they "cut" or break the continuity of a poem depends on the poem.<sup>54</sup> Buson's own writing on the subject reveals his liberal attitude toward *kireji*, that in some poems they "cut," and in others they do not.<sup>55</sup> In this *hokku* the *ya* functions as a pause to facilitate the transition to a lyric address in the form of a question: "Why do you rustle?"<sup>56</sup> I return to the complexities of lyric address in Buson's poetry in greater detail at the end of the chapter, but in this *hokku* the poet is addressing the warbler, the warbler that he remembers as the winter warbler in representations of Wang Wei's villa, the warbler that he now imagines, but in an early spring scene.<sup>57</sup>

The meaning of this relationship depends on how we read the question that forms it. In the *bunjin* tradition, birds have allegoric and symbolic value. Literati painted and wrote poems about birds because they self-identified with them, and by being one with the bird meant that they were one with nature. Warblers are one of the metonyms for early spring, most important of which are plum blossoms, the favorite flower of the literatus.<sup>58</sup> In historical terms, the immediate audience of the drama between the poet and the warbler is Goshun, to whom Buson utters the verse. But for those of us reciting at home now, we become the audience overhearing the poet asking the warbler: "Why do you rustle?" Most interpretations of the poem read the interrogative particle *nani* as "what."<sup>59</sup> In the context of *waka* from *Shinkokinshū* and poems from the Chinese tradition, *nani* can also mean "why."<sup>60</sup> The poem also provides an object for the verb, which makes the entire verse read like a straightforward question. But the syntax of 5-7-5 allows room for pauses in thought, one of those unmarked pauses Buson's suggests in his discussion of *kireji*: "Why do you rustle / Frost in the bush?" The pause between the second and third beat amplifies the interrogative tone of the question.

The question momentarily suspends the poem, before delivering an answer that blends sound and color. After the pause we discover the object of the warbler's rustling: "Frost on the bush" (*yabu no shimo*). Buson uses the verb *gosotsukasu*, the causative form of *gosotsuku*,

which translates to the intransitive verbs in English “to rustle” or “to whisper.”<sup>61</sup> The silence in the first verse is slightly disturbed by the faint rustling, but that sound ultimately leads to an image of frost, an image of white. While the warbler is fluttering about, stretching its wings, doing what warblers do, the poet’s question highlights the object mediating and amplifying the rustling sound: frost. We could dismiss the question as banal, that the poet is just asking the warbler why it does what it naturally does; but Buson makes an aesthetic choice to end with frost, which concludes the *hokku* with the jarring sound of white, white noise.

The suspension produced by the question is echoed by the answer, rendering the *hokku* in a state of temporal and semantic limbo, mirroring its formal position between two *hokku*. The suspension may be read as an ironic self-critique of poetic practice: the question to the warbler also questions what noise the warbler is *not* making, which self-reflexively turns the question on the speaking poet. A survey of Buson’s *hokku* on warblers reveals that a warbler makes a sound related to voice: a cry, a chirp, a warble. Because it does not warble in this *hokku*, the tone of the question harbors an unarticulated complaint that it is not singing its usual spring song. By asking the warbler why he is making faint and bothersome noises, disturbing the frost, the poet is posing a similar question about his own activity, revealing a feeling of failure on his part as a poet not singing and just muttering meaningless whispers.

Right on the heels of temporal suspension giving rise to potential feelings of doubt and disappointment, the third and final *hokku* absents the warbler and presences the poet singing in its place. He not only sings his heart out, he also figures himself as a landscape, entering the representation of an early spring scene at a moment of suspension, waiting for night to dawn white on the plum blossoms. The color white appears in name, but ironically as the object of longing because the temporal contingency prevents him from seeing white come to light.<sup>62</sup>

The third poem diverges from the resonance between the earlier *hokku*, and yet harmonizes the dissonances between them, and also stands out as its own lyric poem. Right on the heels of the image of frost (*shimo*) that caps the second *hokku*, an image of white plum blossoms (*shiraume*) opens the third. The assonance between *shimo* and *shira* is deliberate since Buson rendered “plum blossoms” as *shiraume* and not its Chinese name *hakubai*, which we saw in the *hokku* with the black ink fragrant. Although the white is clear in the image of the plum blossoms, the verb *akuru* makes them the indirect object of dawning, a verbal pun of sorts that makes the visibility of the white contingent upon the morning light. We remember that Buson plays with the same relationship between light and white with the figure of the shimmering stream in the *hokku* about fresh green leaves and yellow barley. Unlike the scene in that *hokku*, the time is not day with the sun shining bright over the landscape, but the in-between hours of night and day, a time and space set in darkness. Time mediates the tension between the blackness of night and the white of the plum blossoms, contingent upon the sunrise.

Unlike the first and second *hokku* there is no warbler here, and the seasonal referent that categorizes the poem as spring is waiting to be seen. In real life, Buson may have been scared of the dark, but in his painting and poetry, dark is invariably featured in tension with light. Other poems by Buson use darkness as a space of wonder, of contemplation, a place where things happen and play on the senses.<sup>63</sup> In this *hokku* the darkness of night occludes the white of the plum, a tension shared by other poems; but the plaintive cry of the poet mediated by the emphatic *keri* that caps the verse wants this darkness to end. And the verb *akuru* offers assurance that night will dawn.

In the *hokku*, white straddles the boundary of new and old in the way that it evokes ineffability, possibility, and the unknown. The point behind the use of cliché and over-

determined images in the Japanese tradition is so that one poem can communicate with the collective, that the feelings expressed by one would be known and therefore shared by all. In Edo period *haikai*, the warbler is within and without the tradition; here Buson defamiliarizes the warbler by not letting it sing. The song would only confirm what the poet and every reader already know about the warbler: its beautiful song. The sound *shira* (white) in *shira-ume* (white plum) evokes the verb *shira-zu*, the negated form of the verb “to know” or “to be aware.” Although it is misleading to say that white plum blossoms (*shiraume*) always carry a feeling of the un-known, in the context of this poem, in how the word rhymes in assonance with the curious rustle of frost (*shimo*) in the previous verse, and how it is paired with the darkness of night, waiting to be visible, white becomes the object of knowing.

The associations of white in the *hokku* carry the meanings and associations from the past, from *waka* and the Chinese tradition. These meanings are blandness, absence, and plenitude. In his discussion of colors in traditional Chinese painting, François Jullien writes that white is sometimes considered a negative color.<sup>64</sup> By negative Jullien refers to the negative space in a painting, the “white” space barely or left entirely untouched by the brush, which furnishes room for thought. Negative is also how the aesthetic known as *pingdan* (plainness, blandness) is categorized.<sup>65</sup> Since the Song Dynasty, *pingdan* has been upheld as an ideal in the composition of Chinese poetry and painting:

In composing a poem, in the present as in the past,  
Only the creation of the plain and bland is hard.

作詩無古今  
唯造平澹難<sup>66</sup>

The lines above by Mei Yaochen (1002-1060) show that *pingdan* is difficult to produce, a goal for poetry, and painting as well. Jullien writes that blandness “is the phase when different flavors no longer stand in opposition to each other but, rather, *abide within* plenitude.”<sup>67</sup>

The plenitude that the flavor of blandness provides is redolent of the ideas of absence or emptiness, the aesthetic category of *xu* in Chinese (*kyo* in Japanese), which is often used to describe literary works about ghosts, the supernatural, immortals, clouds, and other celestial bodies. These works often evoke Buddhist icons and imagery, and in Buddhism white is symbolic of death. With this in mind, white, emptiness, and blandness in this context evokes experiences beyond the limits of mortal perception, times and places where distinctions do not exist, and everything melts into harmonious plenitude. By composing a *hokku* in which the object of longing is the night to dawn white on the plum, Buson sets up all the elements for a landscape, a landscape of blandness and plenitude, just waiting to unfold at the will of time.<sup>68</sup>

Time is the larger dynamic force subtended by the three *hokku* in one form. At the end of his life, Buson produces a poem that begins as a representation of a painting where painter and landscape are fused, and then uses lyric address to question what was, what is, and what will be. The poet speaks in the lyric present, and apprehends time in three ways: the first *hokku* is retrospective, a representation of representations standing in for Wang Wei’s painting of Wangchuan Villa. The second *hokku* moves forward in time, out of winter and into early spring, when a warbler rustles frost on the bush, which disturbs the speaker and provokes the question “why.” The third *hokku* is, on the one hand, a reply to the unspoken question, about why the warblers are not singing; on the other, the *hokku* is a plaintive statement about the poet’s present awareness of the fatal moment: “it is now become the moment I realize that all I have left before I die is the night to dawn white on the plum.” While the three *hokku* each treat time in distinct

ways, as one poem, a coherence formed by the figurative resonances between each line, it speaks in the eternal lyric present, in which all time—past, present, and future—happens at once.

## Repetition and Tautology

This section continues to explore the relationship between poetic form and time, and revisits earlier discussions about irony, punning, and humor in *haikai* practice. Buson's poem "Shunbo no kotoba" (Lyric on spring endings) is a lyric that blends genres, and uses repetition to perform and ironize the generic treatment of spring in the poetic tradition. The tautology in the poem evokes the punning that constitutes the wit in *haikai* practice while also raising questions about the relationship between repetition and lyric time. I show how the lyric uses repetition and tautology to suspend the fulfillment of meaning, and to suggest the endless possibilities of interstitial experience at the penultimate moment of twilight.

"Lyric on Spring Endings" is anthologized with other poems under the generic title of *haishi* because it combines forms: a *kanshi* quatrain and a *hokku*. The protean form and content of the *haishi* genre exemplifies the blending of forms during the Edo period.<sup>69</sup> The *kanshi* portion has been described as the prelude (*maegaki*) to the *hokku*, which dates to 1769. In the most recent anthology of Buson's prose works, editor Fujita Shin'ichi groups the quatrain and *hokku* together under a title of his own creation: "Lyric on Spring Endings" (Shunbo no kotoba). As a composite whole the poem uses repetition and tautology to comment on the endlessness of a liminal moment at twilight:

The man behind follows the man in front;  
A hundred paces, still a hundred paces.  
Down the bank, up the bank and back;  
Just about to set, the sun yet to set.

Treading on the tail feathers  
Of a copper pheasant,  
In the spring sunset.

<i>kōjin wa zenjin wo ou</i>	後人逐前人
<i>hyappo nao hyappo</i>	百歩尚百歩
<i>tsutsumi wo kudarite, mata tsutsumi ni noboru</i>	下堤還上堤
<i>kuren to hosshite, hi imada kurezu</i>	欲暮日未暮
<i>yamadori no / o wo fumu haru no / irihi kana</i>	山鳥の尾を踏む春の入日哉 <sup>70</sup>

The first four lines all tarry in the same time and space, as if the poet's lyric mind is just spinning on a wheel. In Line 1, a man who follows another man, and they are equidistant apart. In Line 2, the adverb *nao* (still) indicates that every step the man behind takes does not change the distance between him and the man in front.<sup>71</sup> By Line 3, the same thought continues: they both descend the embankment, they both ascend the embankment, and that process repeats, indicated by the adverb *mata* (again). In Line 4 the poet then draws attention to another natural being in the state of imminent movement: the evening sun about the set (*kuren to hosshite*), but has not yet set (*imada kurezu*). The four lines repeat the same idea, echoing each other, but to what end?



The punch line seems to be that there is no end, that the man chasing the other man and the sunset trying to set are both caught in temporal and spatial suspension.

The form of the poem produces repetition and tautology that mirrors the action (or non-action) in the content of the poem. On the lexical level, each line features the repetition of words: man; hundred paces; bank; set. Lines 2 and 4 mirror one another in the way they place words in opposition: front, back; up, down:

後人逐前人	●○●○○
百步尚百步	●●●●●
下堤還上堤	●○○●○
欲暮日未暮	●●●●●

Such are ways that the poem's form visually evokes repetition, even by way of opposition between lines. This mirroring also registers on the prosodic level in the Chinese meter. The *kanshi* is a five-character ancient-style poem (*gogon koshi*), which is characterized by its loose constraints regarding lineation and prosody. Although the rules of prosody—the balance between “level” (*hyō*) and “oblique” (*soku*) tones—are loose, the last word of every other line must rhyme, as we see with the *ho* in Line 2 and the *bo* in Line 4 in the original Chinese version. Lines 2 and 4 also “rhyme” as oblique tones, whereas Lines 1 and 3 are a mixture of level and oblique. In this way, the poem presents us with repetition semantically, syntactically, visually, and prosodically.

The *hokku* that follows the *kanshi* alludes to a variant for poem No. 2802 attributed to Kakinomoto no Hitomaro (660-724) in *Manyōshū* (759; Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves). Buson evokes the longing in Hitomaro's poem to comment on the never-ending feeling of time often dramatized in the convention of spring poems:<sup>72</sup>

Am I to sleep alone  
 This long night, long  
 Like drooping tails,  
 Tail feathers of copper pheasants  
 Resting mountains apart?

*ashihiki no / yamadori no o no / shidari o no / naganaga shi yo o / hitori kamo  
 nemu*

あしひきの山鳥の尾のしだり尾の長長し夜獨りかも寝む<sup>73</sup>

The image of tail feathers from a copper pheasant (lit. mountain bird) in Hitomaro's poem reappears in Buson's *hokku*. “Copper pheasant tail feathers” (*yamadori no o*) is an example of a *jokotoba*, or “preface word,” a poetic device in the family of *makurakotoba* (lit. pillow words), epithets that allude to earlier poems from *Manyōshū*. Hitomaro's poem uses the image of copper pheasant's long tail feathers as a metaphor for the long nights he has to sleep alone, but also as an image in a line of repetition: the word *ashihiki* (an epithet evoking the stretch of a mountain), the noun *o* (tail), and the adjective *naga* (long). By alluding to Hitomaro's poem, Buson evokes the longing the poet must endure over the course of the long night.

When the *kanshi* and the *hokku* form one composite poem, the lonesome longing in Hitomaro's *waka* is refigured in “Lyric on Spring Endings” as an ironic comment on the

circularity of time and feeling at twilight. The pathetic feelings in Hitomaro's poem evoke the conceit of endless longing and un-fulfillment in spring, which is dramatized by the repetition and tautology in the quatrain. In this way "Lyric on Spring Endings" transforms a conventional poetic conceit into a comment about the suspension of time and feeling itself when a poet finds himself at the penultimate moment before sunset.

By evoking sorrow through the allusion to Hitomaro, "Lyric on Spring Endings" also refigures the temporal and spatial dimensions of longing into a visual metaphor that confounds perception. Like the earlier *hokku* that showed how twilight seen through the pines and oaks produces the optical illusion of plum blossoms, the *hokku* here also tricks the eye: the poem uses tail feathers as a visual metaphor for the sun setting on a mountain path. We imagine the poet is walking, and as the sun sets, shadows stretch upon the ground, in the form of copper pheasant tail feathers. The sunset in the *hokku* comes at the heels of the sunset in the prelude poem: the sun about to set, but yet to set. The twilight shadows figured as pheasant feathers in the *hokku* adds a new visual dimension to the earlier sunset. The *hokku* refigures the liminal suspension generated by the repetitiveness and redundancy of the *kanshi* into a *trompe l'oeil* of tail feathers and twilight shadows.

As a composite poetic form "Lyric on Spring Endings" uses repetition, tautology, and the blending of genres (*kanshi* and *hokku*) to describe the poet's perception of twilight. While repetition and tautology also evoke the playfulness and humor in *haikai* practice, on a meta-level they suggest the idea that poetic form need not find an ending, but rather be content suspended in the time (and space) of imminence and interstitial experience. The longing and un-fulfillment evoked through allusion to Hitomaro's poem also imbues Buson's poem with irony about its claim (or non-claim) on time. As "Lyric on Spring Endings" tarries in the eternal present, where action (or non-action) recurs in ceaseless penultimate-ness, what begins as a pleasurable evocation of the beauty of twilight becomes an almost painful entrapment in its endlessness.

## Form and Longing

This section concludes the chapter with an examination of a free-verse elegy that gives form to the time of mourning through repetition and rhythm. Buson's *haishi* "Lyric on Spring Endings" questioned the possibilities of lyric by juxtaposing discernible generic forms to create an alternate synthetic whole. Buson wrote other poems that make use of *kanshi* and *haikai* forms, including "Denga no uta" (1774-5; Song of the Yodo River) and "Shunpū batei kyoku" (1775; Song of spring wind on the riverbank at Kema), which are similar in form but longer than "Lyric on Spring Endings," and are often referred to as ballads. Buson was not alone in carrying out these lyric experiments: *haishi* and poems of the unconventional sort emerged in the eighteenth century during the height of pleasure quarter (*yūkaku*) culture in Edo when songs about romances with courtesans were in vogue.<sup>74</sup> The revival of the song lyric (*ci*) genre in late imperial China surely had some influence on the development of these lyric experiments in the eighteenth century. These free-style poems, in content, echoed the sentiments found in popular song; in form, they sought to explore new frontiers in lyric expression.

"Hokuju Rōsen wo itamu" (1777?; Mourning for Hokuju Rōsen) is an elegy that is often discussed alongside the two aforementioned *haishi* ballads, and anthologized in the same motley group of poems as "Lyric on Spring Endings." "Mourning for Hokuju Rōsen," however, is an elegy in free verse. Its language is entirely vernacular, and its structure blends forms beyond generic distinction.<sup>75</sup> Buson composed it for his mentor and friend Hayami Shinga (1671-1745),

who died at age 75 when Buson was 30.<sup>76</sup> He was a sake brewer and *haikai* poet who studied under Kikaku, a pupil of Bashō. Shinga adopted the nom de plume “Hokuju” (lit. northern longevity) upon retirement. In the title, Buson addresses him with the honorific “Rōsen,” which means “the venerable immortal.” Some scholars speculate that Buson composed the poem in 1777, but it was not published until 1793, a decade after Buson’s death.<sup>77</sup> Regardless of when he wrote it, Buson left a poem in which he mourns the death of a beloved friend, a friend whom he regarded with the highest esteem. The poem is translated below and divided into stanzas for smoother reading in English:

### Mourning for Hokuju Rōsen

You departed this morning; my heart this evening scattered in a thousand pieces,  
Why are you so far away?

Longing for you, I walked to the hills and roamed;  
Why are the hills so sad?

5 The dandelions bloomed yellow, the shepherd’s purse white;  
There is no one to share the view.

Is there a pheasant? I hear it crow and crow;  
*I had a friend. He lived across the river.*

10 *Poof—a protean disperses into smoke, the west wind blows  
So hard on the bamboo fields and the sedge plains,  
There is nowhere to refuge.*

*I had a friend. He lived across the river. Today,  
no pheasant crows hororo.*

15 You departed this morning; my heart this evening scattered in a thousand pieces,  
Why are you so far away?

In my humble abode, by the Buddha I light no candles,  
I offer no flowers; in silence with a heavy heart, standing still tonight,  
All the more reverent.

*hokuju rōsen wo itamu  
kimi ashita ni sarinu yūbe no kokoro chiji ni  
nanzo haruka naru  
kimi wo omoute okanobe ni yukitsu asobu  
okanobe nanzo kaku kanashiki  
tanpopo no ki ni nazuna no shirō sakitaru  
miru hito zo naki  
kigisu no aru ka hitanaki ni naku wo kikeba  
tomo ariki kawa wo hedatete suminiki*

*hege no keburu no hato uchichireba nishi fuku kaze no  
hageshikute ozasahara masugebara  
nogarū beki kata zo naki  
tomo ariki kawa wo hedatete suminiki kyō wa  
hororo tomo nakanu  
kimi ashita ni sarinu yūbe no kokoro chiji ni  
nanzo haruka naru  
waga io no amida butsu tomoshibi mo monosezu  
hana mo mairasezu sugosugo to tatazumeru koyoi wa  
koto ni tōtoki*

北壽老仙をいたむ  
君あしたに去ぬゆふべのこゝろ千々に  
何ぞはるかなる  
君をおもふて岡のべに行つ遊ぶ  
をかのべ何ぞかくかなしき  
蒲公の黄に薺のしろう咲たる  
見る人ぞなき  
雉子のあるかひたなきに鳴を聞ば  
友ありき河をへだてゝ住にき  
へげのけぶりのほと打ちれば西吹風の  
はげしくて小竹原眞すげはら  
のがるべきかたぞなき  
友ありき河をへだてゝ住にきけふは  
ほろゝともなかぬ  
君あしたに去ぬゆふべのこゝろ千々に  
何ぞはるかなる  
我庵のあみだ仏ともし火もものせず  
花もまいらせずすごすとイめる今宵は  
ことにたうとき<sup>78</sup>

The poem opens with the reality that Shinga is gone, and the poet's heart is in disarray. The poet walks to the hills where he finds signs of spring in the dandelions and shepherd's purse blossoms. This is where the poet would spend time with his friend Shinga, and while thinking of him, he suddenly hears the call of what sounds like a pheasant. The poem shifts voice and enters a monologue by a pheasant lamenting the death of a friend. Then the poem shifts back to the poet's voice, which we recognize by the repetition of the first line. The poem concludes with a scene of silent vigil in darkness. The events that unfold in "Mourning for Hokuju Rōsen" are clear; but the treatment of emotion in time and space, the problem of voice and lyric address, and the use of rhythm and repetition raise questions about the boundaries of lyric containment, the relationship between sound and lyric form, and the possibility for lyric to give form to longing.

The rupture that opens the poem is echoed in images that mediate feelings of grief in temporal and spatial ways. The first line frames the trauma of loss in one day: the poet mourns from the moment in the morning he learns of Shinga's death to the moment around twilight when

he realizes that his heart is in a state of disarray, “scattered in a thousand pieces.” The adjectival noun *chiji* describes the heart (and mind) of the poet as “shattered in a thousand pieces,” as other translators have interpreted; the particle *ni* makes it an adverb, indicating that these pieces have also moved in myriad directions, hence “scattered.”<sup>79</sup> The original term *chiji* literally means “thousands and thousands,” the repetition of which highlights the great number of pieces, as well as the myriad directions to which these pieces have scattered. *Chiji* also refers to the manifold forms the heart and mind can take in a contemplative state, a spatial metaphor to describe the protean nature of the heart during times of sorrow, and the boundless depths of the poetic imagination.<sup>80</sup>

The second line “Why are you so far away?” echoes the spatial meanings of *chiji*, but also gives its meanings of unlimited distance and variation a temporal dimension. The line opens with *nanzo*, a classical interrogative meaning “why,” asking why Shinga is *haruka*, which means “distant” and “far away,” but also “dark and indistinct.”<sup>81</sup> Although in my translation, the question “Why are you so far away?” marks the subject as the deceased, which is how many critics have interpreted the line, the subject may continue from the first line in enjambment. This means that Line 2 can be read as “Why [does my heart scatter] so far away [searching for you]?” With both readings in mind, the question refers to the vast distance that separates life and death, but also the distance and time of longing evoked by the *chiji* in the first line, and the darkness and obscurity of the directions to which the pieces of the poet’s mind and heart have scattered in the search for the deceased.

The apostrophes that punctuate the poem question the role of voice and lyric address, and show how the poem is about voices summoning the dead by incantation. The apostrophe to Shinga “Why are you so far away?” is echoed in the question the poet asks of the hills: “Why are the hills so sad?” Earlier, I discussed lyric address in the second of Buson’s death verses where the poet questions the warbler. In that *hokku* the dialogue is between poet and warbler, and I argued that the apostrophe turns back on the poet. The apostrophes in “Mourning for Hokuju Rōsen” are addresses to Shinga, who we know is absent. In this way, they displace the irreversible structure of time when a person dies by making the absent present again in speech, in discourse. Jonathan Culler writes: “Apostrophes displace this irreversible structure by removing it from linear time and locating it in a discursive time.” He argues that apostrophes in elegies allow for more fluid movements in time because the elegy “replaces an irreversible temporal disjunction, the movement from life to death, with a reversible alternation between mourning and consolation, evocations of presence and absence.”<sup>82</sup> So, by asking “Why are you so far?” and “Why are the hills so sad?” the poet summons Shinga back to life to converse with him, a move that contradicts the opening statement that Shinga is gone.

The monologue performed by the pheasant reifies the relationship between the poet and Shinga, but through fiction and metaphor. Once the poet reaches the spot on the hills where he and Shinga together once admired the white and yellow blossoms, he thinks he hears the incessant call (*hitanaki ni naku*) of a pheasant. In my translation, I use the verb “crow,” which refers to the loud and passionate cry of a cock pheasant, often heard during mating season in spring.<sup>83</sup> The passionate crow of a cock pheasant, although illusory, answers the apostrophe that opens the elegy, which is the voice of a woman, suggested by the use of the second-person pronoun *kimi* (you). In traditional Chinese and Japanese poetry, women speakers use *kimi* to refer to their lovers.<sup>84</sup> It is also common for a male literatus to don the voice of a woman to articulate his inarticulate feelings of love for a fellow man, in this case, his beloved mentor.<sup>85</sup>

As a literatus, it is no surprise that Buson chooses to figure his relationship with his mentor as a romance between a hen and a cock. In traditional Chinese painting, pheasants are associated with Confucian virtues. Hou-mei Sung observes that pheasants became an integral part in the bird-painting genre, especially by the Song Dynasty. Pheasants are often depicted together with orioles (warblers) to symbolize friendship between literati. She writes that by the Yuan dynasty, the pheasant's beautiful feathers were associated with literati talent.<sup>86</sup> Of the two pheasants, the cock has the beautiful and colorful feathers, so it makes sense that Shinga as mentor would be figured as the colorful cock, and Buson, in subordinate deference, figures himself as the drab hen.

When the poet hears what sounds like a pheasant (*kigisu no aru ka*), the poem enters a monologue in which a hen pheasant laments the disappearance of a friend. The hen, who we identify with the female voice of the poet, then uses metaphor to describe the fugitiveness of life: she imagines a “protean” (*hege* or *henge*) transforming into smoke. Proteans are creatures that change form, and are found throughout Edo literature on the supernatural.<sup>87</sup> Then suddenly the wind blows strong upon the spring landscape, and before the protean in smoke form can take shelter, he is blown away. Echoing the cock pheasant's passionate and repetitive call, the hen repeats the line with which she began her recollection, but ends her monologue with the reality that despite what the poet thinks he had heard while roaming on the hill, “Today / No pheasant crows *hororo*.”

The onomatopoeia *hororo* appears in poem No. 1033 by noble and poet Taira no Sadafumi (872?-923), anthologized in *Kokinshū* (905; Collection of poems new and old):

On the spring moor,  
Among the tall leaves of grass,  
Longing for his mate,  
A pheasant takes off,  
Crowing *hororo*.

*haru no no no / shigeki kusaba no / tsumagoi ni / tobidatsu kiji no / hororo to zo naku*

春の野のしげき草ばの妻恋ひにとびたつ雉子のほろろとぞなく<sup>88</sup>

Sadafumi's poem observes a spring scene where a cock pheasant flies to find his mate (*tsumagoi ni tobidatsu*). As the cock pheasant lifts off, he crows *hororo*. The *hororo* is the sound of passion and affection; unlike poet in the Sadafumi's poem, the speaking subjects—poet and hen—are unable to hear with certainty *hororo* or the feelings it evokes. Like the protean that poofs into smoke and vanishes in the wind, sound in the fiction of the poem is contingent on illusion and imagination.

On the level of form, however, *hororo* and the sounds of passion, excitement, and affection are audible in repetition. In tune with other elegiac poems in the tradition—from poetry in *Manyōshū* to the chorus and dialogue in Noh plays from the medieval period—Buson's elegy uses repetition to showcase a lyric performance that blends pain and pleasure, as the lyric mind mourns a loss but to a beat.<sup>89</sup> This beat produces a rhythm that mediates feeling without putting a stamp on what those feelings necessarily are. The repetition of Lines 1-2 in Lines 14-15 in the poem echoes the repetition of Lines 8 and 12 in the hen's monologue. The only difference in the hen's speech is the addition of “Today / No pheasant crows *hororo*” (*kyō wa /*

*hororo tomo nakanu*).<sup>90</sup> This difference highlights the fact that *hororo* is not audible in the fiction of the poem, but on a meta-formal level resonates in the repetition and rhythm of the entire poem: a pheasant's call that recurs again and again.

Rhythm also mediates the relationship between poet and reader, and the connection to divine experience. The incantatory power of repetition in Buson's elegy reminds us of Gary Ebersole's argument that the repetition in *Manyōshū* poems serves a sacred and ceremonial purpose in death rituals, and therefore has religious and aesthetic import.<sup>91</sup> The ritual in the elegy is the incantatory act to summon the deceased back to life: this plays out in the poet's apostrophes and in the fiction between the hen and cock, whose presence manifests in an illusory sound caught by the ear of the poet, and in an illusory imaginary image of a protean conjured in the hen's memory and imagination. As we read the elegy and perform these various incantatory rituals, the repetition of lines and the repetition of sounds (such as *ki* and *no*) create a rhythm, and produce a somatic feeling beyond representation in language, a representation possible only in sound. Culler writes that in the history of lyric, free verse forms enabled poets to escape the shackles of classical meter and enter a direct relationship with the divine.<sup>92</sup> In this way, he argues that "rhythm is an event without representation" because it suggests something else, an experience beyond the poem itself.<sup>93</sup> In the process of reading the elegy, we become aware of its rhythm, its pulse, and its something-else-ness, which make us feel with the poet as he communicates with the divine.

The conclusion of the elegy contradicts the sound made audible by the repetition and rhythm in the form of the poem; and yet at the same time, the ending echoes the silence that pervades the content of the poem. After the repetitions, the poet finds himself in his humble abode before an image of the Buddha. Thereupon he mentions what he does *not* perform as a mourning ritual: he lights no candles, and he offers no flowers, the acts of which intensify the gravity of loss because material objects seem have no use here. He only offers stillness and reverence. The onomatopoeic adverb *sugosugo to*, translated above as "in silence with heart heavy," speaks to the anxiety, heaviness, and stillness of the moment in crestfallen silence.<sup>94</sup> The *sugosugo to* describes the manner in which the poet stands still (*tatazumeru*), in the wake of the incantatory charm from the earlier repetition and rhythm. The term also refers to the disappointment one feels immediately after expectations for excitement and pleasure go unfulfilled.<sup>95</sup> If we take the repetition as the poem's performance, once it stops, the scene grows more silent than before, and the poet returns home feeling unfulfilled.

The poem ends with a declaration that tonight will be "all the more reverent" (*koyoi wa / koto ni tōtoki*), which adds a layer of profound admiration and respect to the "in silence with heart heavy" by which the poet stands still. This stillness in reverence continues the eternal and divine moment, the awesome feeling that earlier resonated in the nerves and tensions between the words that recur and the images that repeat. Like *tōtoki*, the word "reverence" also means the quality that inspires a profound sense of awe, the feelings that strike us when we confront the divine or the sublime. In this way, the poem ends ambiguously: both in deferential silence and reverential awe, as if the song and dance in the incantation and rhythm successfully summoned a presence from absence.

Buson was experimenting in a lyric form to transcend the boundaries of traditional poetic genres, while at the same time making use of techniques in his literati repertoire. Unlike in his *hokku*, painterly landscapes in the elegy are figured as places of absence: the hill marks the spot where poet and friend once enjoyed each other's company, and the plains of bamboo and sedge mark the spot where the protean disappears. While the blossoms blooming yellow and white

remind us of how colors emerge bright and prominently in Buson's *hokku*, their role here is static and their beauty goes unappreciated, as the poet laments "there is no one to share the view," and taken more literally "there is no one to view them." Buson may be depriving the elegy of color to bolster its somber theme, and the landscape of vision is overtaken by a landscape of emotions. In this way, the elegy seamlessly blends these earlier genres, themes, and techniques without giving weight to one element or the other.

The tensions in the elegy lie less in content, and more in form: the elegy's use of displacement in time and space, the complexities of voice and gender, and the incantatory power of rhythm and repetition. This contradiction between form and content exemplifies the dissonance we find in lyric poetry, and reveals a larger concern poets face when treating feelings of longing in lyric form. In his essay on longing and form, György Lukács (1885-1971) presents a paradox concerning poetry of longing: he asks whether longing can have a form, that if its fulfillment is form itself, then how can longing be longing once its been fulfilled?

Longing is always sentimental—but is there such a thing as a sentimental form? Form means getting the better of sentimentality; in form there is no more longing and no more loneliness; to achieve form is to achieve the greatest possible fulfillment. Yet the forms of poetry are temporal, so that the fulfillment must have a "before" and an "after"; it is not being but becoming. And becoming presupposes dissonance. . . . Poetry cannot live without dissonance because movement is its very essence, and the movement can only proceed from disharmony to harmony and back again the other way.<sup>96</sup>

Lukács argues that dissonance cannot happen in painting, since it is a form outside of temporality, and so dissonance must come to resolution, otherwise it is incomplete.<sup>97</sup> In the poems we have examined that are representations of paintings, incompleteness is the key to the "corner of the world" that Buson imagined in his willow *hokku*. His *hokku* always seem to leave room for the imagination to roam, in this way in a constant process of "becoming," dependent on the reader and his knowledge of the poetic tradition to fill in the gaps. Buson's elegy, while existing as a form, aspires toward formlessness, which we may call a process of "becoming," by negating all conventions, and showing the emergence of an unknown form.

So what does Buson's elegy achieve with its form? In the same essay Lukács describes the idea of German longing as so strong that it "destroys all form," that it is so powerful that "one cannot express it except by stammering."<sup>98</sup> He asks, "whether this formlessness of longing is really proof of its strength or, rather, of an inner softness, a yieldingness, a never-endingness?" There is an analog to Buson's poem: as the elegy tries to contain the trauma of loss, it also contains the movement, pulses, and variations of those feelings, like the word *chiji ni*. In these pulses we hear the stammers of the poet's voice and thought: the destabilization of voice and containment as the poetic language rides the backs of rhythm and repetition in place of the pheasant's crow *hororo*, only to end in silence and stillness that gives presence to an ambiguous feeling evoking something in between reverence and sublimity.

This chapter examined the tensions in the lyric subject's perception of time and space in Buson's poetry. I began with a *haiga* that transports the reader through representations of place in the Chinese and Japanese traditions. I then discussed a different kind of movement in poems about color and perception. These poems mediated the spatial perception of natural objects through modes of painting. The remainder of the chapter examined poems that conceptualize



time in poetic form. Lingered with the idea of color, I examined his death verses, all of which suggested white but with limitations. I argued that white grounds his works in Chinese aesthetics of the unknown, the ineffable and possibility, but those very contingencies also manifest in the poem's three-fold take on temporality and lyric time. To explore the topic of lyric time further, I discussed an experimental genre called *haishi*, and examined a poem about tautology and the endlessness of a liminal moment. I concluded the chapter by examining another *haishi*, an elegy in free verse where Buson exhibits his bohemian *bunjin* colors as a lyric poet writing against convention. His elegy shows us one way an eighteenth-century poet-painter expresses longing in ways different from his predecessors in the tradition; the poem also reveals Buson's own struggle to give form to loss and longing by realizing the limits of lyric form.

The poetic forms in this chapter offered a glimpse of the complexity lyric thinking in poetic form from the eighteenth century. The next chapter treats Ema Saikō, a nineteenth century *bunjin* who wrote *kanshi*. Buson's poetry allowed me to discuss the multiple kinds of blending that happen in the various forms that comprise *haikai* practice; Saikō's poetry will allow me to explore the possibilities of movement within and without genre.

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<sup>1</sup> Henri Focillon, trans. George Kubler, *The Life of Forms in Art* (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 118.

<sup>2</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, trans. Joel Agee, *Letters on Cezanne* (New York: North Point Press, 2002), 71. "In the brightness of the face, the proximity of all these colors has been exploited for a simple modeling of form and features: even the brown of the hair roundly pinned up above the temples and the smooth brown in the eyes has to express itself against its surroundings. *It's as if every part were aware of all the others*—it participates that much; that much adjustment and rejection is happening in it; that's how each daub plays its part in maintaining equilibrium and in producing it: just as the whole picture finally keeps reality in equilibrium."

<sup>3</sup> Translations are mine unless otherwise noted. Yosa Buson, *Buson zenshū* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1992), 4: 209. From here on, *BZ*.

<sup>4</sup> *BZ*, 6: 444. The image is courtesy of Itsuō Art Museum, Ikeda (Osaka Prefecture): hanging scroll; ink and light color on paper; 58.6 x 36.7 cm. The image is reproduced in *BZ*, 6: 444.

<sup>5</sup> Melinda Takeuchi observes that the encyclopedic way Chinese painting is presented in the *Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting* (1679; Jieziyuan huazhuan) inspired the eclectic approach to painting embraced by Edo *bunjin*, including Buson and his contemporary Ike no Taiga (1723-1776). See Melinda Takeuchi, *Taiga's True Views: The Language of Landscape Painting in Eighteenth-Century Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 23. A Japanese version of the *Manual* was published in 1748, and like Taiga, Buson looked to it for inspiration. Takeuchi argues that the images in the *Manual* were meant to be parts of a larger whole, but literati painters in the Edo period treated the parts as wholes in themselves. Takeuchi writes: "Early Japanese literati painters seem to have interpreted such designs, wrenched out of compositional context for the sake of demonstrating brushwork or grouping of form, as pictures in their own right." See Takeuchi, 29.

<sup>6</sup> This visual language reminds us of the kind of pairing between text and image we find in English Romantic poet William Blake's (1757-1827) metal plates, upon which he juxtaposed illustrations with poems. In *Picture Theory* (1994), W.J.T. Mitchell examines Blake's visual language, and explores how a text can make the reader think in images. Mitchell argues that "all media are mixed media," and that representation itself is a confluence of mediums, rather than their separation. See W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 5. Since all media are mixed, a work of art inspires the viewer to see in multiple ways. He argues there is an "iconology of the text," a means of interpreting a text by way of examining the images it evokes in the mind of the reader.

<sup>7</sup> The inscription's opening commentary on Su Shi's rhapsodies on Red Cliff sets the tone for the entire inscription, and imbues the image of rocks with literary and historical significance. Buson describes every word in Su Shi's rhapsodies as "sublime" (*zetsumyō*), a state of being that evokes exquisiteness, grandeur, beauty, and fear. During his years of exile, Su Shi composed the two *fu* (rhapsodies, or poetic expositions) upon his visit to Red Cliff on the Yangzi river in Huangzhou. Red Cliff is remembered as the site where Han Dynasty General Cao Cao and his army

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fought to reunite China in A.D. 208. The battle ended in Cao Cao's defeat, which ushered China into an era of disunity known as the Three Kingdoms period.

<sup>8</sup> Egan writes: "The sanguine reassurance that Su finds in the underlying thought of an ongoing human consciousness and community, greater by far than any single life, yet linking separate lives together, as Su is linked to the Red Cliff warriors and later readers are, in turn, linked to Su as a special and memorable resolution of the problem raised so often by encounters with ancient sites in Chinese poetry. It is this evocation of human continuity, in the face of which individual possessiveness is meaningless, that makes the ending of the rhapsody so immensely satisfying." See Ronald Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi* (Cambridge, MA: The Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1994), 224.

<sup>9</sup> For the original Chinese, see Zhang Zhilie, et al., eds., *Su Shi quan ji jiao zhu* (Shijiazhuang Shi: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 2010), 10: 39. From here on *SSQJZ*.

<sup>10</sup> Egan, 221-250.

<sup>11</sup> The Chinese graph that Buson uses for crane is *kaku* 霍 (a variant of *kaku* 鶴), which means "the whoosh of a bird in flight." In Chinese the graph is *huo*, which is onomatopoeia for a bird's swift flight. Buson could have made an error, or he was furthering driving the point home that Su Shi's verse is so sublime that it flashes before the eye.

<sup>12</sup> Egan translates the commentary by late imperial poet Yuan Hongdao: "The second rhapsody carries within its narration of events boundless scenic description. As for the ending, even Zizhan [Su Shi] himself would not be able fully to explain its marvelousness." See Egan, 246-7.

<sup>13</sup> For a full history on the symbolism of the crane in Chinese painting, see Hou-mei Sung, *Decoded Messages: The Symbolic Language of Chinese Animal Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 39-62.

<sup>14</sup> The *hokku* was published several times in different anthologies, and features different headnotes. For a list, see *BZ* 1:13. Ashino is located in present day Tochigi Prefecture.

<sup>15</sup> The Japanese comes from Sugiura Shōichirō, et al., eds., *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1959), 46: 75. From here on *NKBT*.

<sup>16</sup> The Japanese comes from the version in Tanaka Yutaka, Akase Shingo, eds., *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992), 11: 91. From here on *SNKBT*. The poem with slightly different orthography is anthologized in Hisamatsu Sen'ichi, et al., eds., *NKBT* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1958), 28: 83.

<sup>17</sup> For Japanese see *BZ*, 1: 13. The version in Shimizu Takayuki, ed., *Shinchō nihon koten shūsei Yosa Buson shū* (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1979), 135, notes that the last beat reads "*tokoro-doko*," which leaves out the *ji-amari* (extra syllable) that sometimes occurs in *haikai* practice. From here on *YBS*.

<sup>18</sup> In *BZ* the poem is treated as a winter poem; in Takai Kitō's *Buson kushū* (1784), the poem is treated as an autumn poem.

<sup>19</sup> The dissonance and consonance the *hokku* bears in relation to the Su Shi and Saigyō poems mirrors the dynamic relationship between elements in Chinese painting. In his discussion painting manuals and aesthetic treatises from medieval through late imperial China, François Jullien has observed that Chinese landscapes are worlds bound by dualism. He argues that the elements in Chinese landscapes oppose *and* correspond, giving the sense of totality to the scene depicted in the painting. The Chinese word for landscape is *shanshui* (*sansui* in Japanese), or "mountains and water." The tension between the two elements is what constitutes the Chinese-style landscape paintings Buson practiced: "'Mountains-waters' symbolizes these dualities that hold the world in tension, and the infinite exchanges that result from them. Hence, far from being conceived as a fragment of land subject to the authority of the gaze and delimited by its horizon, the Chinese landscape puts into play the functional aggregate of opposing yet corresponding elements, and it is that dynamism as a whole, whatever the scale, that the brush will be called on to capture. The Chinese painter, in his most significant painting, figures the process of things as a whole, the entire, infinitely diverse play of its polarities. He does not paint a corner of the world." See François Jullien, trans. Jane Marie Todd, *The Great Image Has No Form, or On the Nonobject through Painting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 122. As Peter Flueckiger discusses in his monograph on Confucian and Nativist thought in the mid-Edo period, the idea of totality was very much present in eighteenth century intellectual discourse. He writes, "When Japanese intellectuals of this time looked to ancient cultures as the source of a normative Way, they typically defined the value of such a Way in terms of its ability to structure society as a whole that exceeds the sum of its parts, so that individuals and their relationships take on meaning through their incorporation into a totality that transcends them." See Peter Flueckiger, *Imagining Harmony: Poetry, Empathy, and Community in Mid-Tokugawa Confucianism and Nativism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 3.

<sup>20</sup> In three images, Buson's *hokku* distills the tension between Su Shi's two rhapsodies on Red Cliff, and provides oppositional balance to Saigyō's summer verse on willows at Ashino.

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<sup>21</sup> Edward Kamens on the allusiveness of traditional Japanese poetry: “Allusiveness is extremely conspicuous in this tradition, . . . even when a poem of this tradition makes no explicit allusion through gesture, playful or otherwise, to another particular poem, it nonetheless rather transparently relates itself intertextually to virtually all other poems in the tradition, by replicating familiar formal structures and enacting familiar attitudes; and even when these structures and attitudes are overthrown by something unfamiliar or unorthodox, that seemingly antagonistic relationship is also one that attains significance through intertextuality.” See Edward Kamens, *Utamakura, Allusion, and Intertextuality in Traditional Japanese Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 4.

<sup>22</sup> See *NKBT*, 45: 237.

<sup>23</sup> Whether this is the poet’s tongue-in-cheek way of saying that winter does not feel like winter, or criticizing Su Shi for fabricating false winter imagery, or lamenting an ecological catastrophe in the seventeenth century, the reader can only imagine what he means by “Winter is missing” (*fuyu mo nashi*).

<sup>24</sup> Kamens, 4.

<sup>25</sup> Translation of the *ci* title is by Egan. In his book, Egan translates an alternate version of the *ci* I excerpted; my translation is based on the version in a recent collection of Su Shi’s works. For the original Chinese, see *SSQJZ*, 9: 391-402.

<sup>26</sup> The song lyric unfurls a sequence of images inspired by Su Shi’s visit to Red Cliff, which self-reflexively figures the landscape as a painting of history. Buson never visited Red Cliff, but he read and saw representations of it, and his *hokku* condenses those mediations of history into residual images of loss and absence. This process reminds us of George Kubler’s ideas on how a historian produces historical knowledge. He argues that although an event is made up of a finite number of signals, no individual has the capacity to interpret all the signals in all their meaning. Therefore, he argues that the historian must condense “the multiplicity and redundancy” of the signals that constitute an event so that his reader can understand the event without experiencing the entirety of the historical moment and “all its instantaneous confusion.” Kubler writes: “Though finite, the total number of historical signals greatly exceeds the capacity of any individual or group to interpret all the signals in all their meaning. A principal aim of the historian therefore is to condense the multiplicity and the redundancy of his signals by using various schemes of classification that will spare us the tedium of reliving the sequence in all its instantaneous confusion.” See George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), 20. Like the two rhapsodies and the song lyric, the *hokku* arranges images in remembrance of Red Cliff, infusing the scene with lyric feeling.

<sup>27</sup> See Note 6.

<sup>28</sup> Edward Casey has argued that a painting is an original to itself. He argues “a painting that represents something at once *stands for* and *stands in for* that which it represents.” See Edward Casey, *Representing Place: Landscape Painting and Maps* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2002), 17. He writes: “If this presentation of nature can also be seen as its self-presentation (because it is the natural landscape itself that comes forth in the painting), it is in and through such a representation that, without taking its place, *stands in its place*. The topos of the topic, the place of the landscape, is taken up in the representation that both stands for this place and stands in for it. In this way, place is at once signified and reinstated, reinstated-as-signified, *assigned* in a painting that represents it. Place is not replicated but transmuted in the work.” See Casey, 19. Elsewhere, Casey has expressed similar thoughts on the difference between memory and the imagination, that a memory is fallible because it can be discredited, whereas the imagination is true to itself. Casey writes: “Imagining proper is an act of differing significantly from the kind of imagining that may be involved in coming to know or understand something. The reason for this is that in imagining proper we project or entertain possibilities for *their own sake*. More exactly, we posit objects as possibilities *simpliciter*, not as possibilities that might be confirmed or discredited by experience.” See Edward Casey, “Imagination: Imagining and the Image,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 31, no. 4 (June 1971), 477.

<sup>29</sup> The version in *Buson kushū* does not feature the *re* in the body of the poem. See *YBS*, 135.

<sup>30</sup> Narushima Yukio discusses the “Chinese rhythm” (*kanbunchō*) of the poem and its connection with Su Shi, *nanga* and *haikai* history. See his discussion in Narushima Yukio’s *Buson to kanshi* (Tokyo: Kashinsha, 2001), 225-228.

<sup>31</sup> *BZ*, 1: 93; *BZ*, 1: 100.

<sup>32</sup> Although plum blossoms also come in yellow, Buson did not leave any poems on *rōbai* (lit. beeswax plum blossoms), also known as *Chimonanthus* or wintersweet in English. They were treated in Chinese poetry during the Song Dynasty. Wang Anguo (1028-1074) has a poem called “Yellow Plum Blossoms” (Huang mei hua). See Fu Xuancong, et al., eds., *Quan Song shi* (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, 1993), 11: 7533.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Backus, “What Goes Into a Haiku,” *Literature East and West* 15, (1972), 739.

<sup>34</sup> In June of 1782, Buson wrote the preface to *Haidai seimei* (Correct use of haikai topics), a dictionary compiled by Yamamoto Rokyō, in which he discussed *sarikirai*, a rule in *renku* that forbids repetition: “If the occasion warrants

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it, breaking the rules should become the rule. . . . A *haikai* rule is like the wind and the rain, and the hot and the cold of the four seasons: change has no limit.” See BZ, 4: 209-210.

<sup>35</sup> Buson did leave a *hokku* on red plum blossoms that also mocks the literati tradition by pairing red plum petals with horse dung:

Red plum petals  
Fallen, might be shoots of fire  
On the horse dung.  
紅梅の落花燃ゆらむ馬の糞

See BZ, 1: 510. Trans. Backus, 762. Backus’s translation reproduces the pun in the verb *moyu*, which can mean “to put forth shoots,” or “to burn in flames.”

<sup>36</sup> BZ, 1: 274, 511, 570.

<sup>37</sup> Jullien (2009), 194.

<sup>38</sup> However, the brilliance and vividness with which colors appear in Buson’s poetry, exemplified by the *hokku* examined in this section, seem to anticipate the way color and form are figured in modern European painting. In his discussion about form and color in Chinese painting, Jullien compares the use of color in the European tradition, distinguishing classical painting from modern. He observes that the classic idea of painting “submits form to color,” while “the moderns move in the opposition direction . . . liberating color from form and even giving precedence to color,” like we find in paintings by Kandinsky, Picasso, and Matisse. Jullien (2009), 196. On a visual level, Buson’s *hokku* is all about putting colors in opposition and waiting for the reader’s imagination to blend them. The fragrance of the ink adds an olfactory dimension to the swatches of black and white, but in the end the poem gives precedence to color over everything else.

<sup>39</sup> Although *shite* has many uses in classical Japanese, for a writer of *kanbun* and *kanshi*, any noun has the potential to become a verb. For examples, “red leaves” (*momiji* or *kōyō*) can mean “leaves turned/turning red” when followed by a *shite*, like in the *hokku* by Buson below:

Autumn leaves reddening,  
Even they fall and scatter  
Like the cherry blossoms.  
紅葉してそれも散行桜かな

See BZ, 1: 581. Allan Persinger interprets the *shite* to mean “under,” and his translation goes: “Under young green leaves, / white water / yellow barley.” See Allen Persinger, “Foxfire: The Selected Poems of Yosa Buson” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2013), 7. He sees the green leaves as a frame for the other images. In 1688, Bashō composed a verse with “green leaves” (*wakaba*) when he visited the statue of Chinese monk Jianzhen (688-763; known as Kanjin in Japan). Kanjin went blind after many failed voyages to Japan. He finally made it in 753, spread Buddhism, and founded Tōshōdaiji Temple in Nara. A memorial statue of Kanjin stands there:

With young green leaves,  
I want to wipe away  
The drops under thine eyes.  
若葉して御めの雫ぬぐはばや

See Ōtani Tokuzō, et al., *NKBT* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1962), 45: 107. The annotators claim that summer verdure is shining in the sun, and the leaves are trying to wipe away (tear) drops (*shizuku*) under the eyes of the statue. The *shite* seems to indicate the method by which the poet will wipe the eyes.

<sup>40</sup> Makoto Ueda translates commentary about the *hokku*: “A colorful scene that looks more like an oil painting than a *nanga*.” See Makoto Ueda, *The Path of the Flowering Thorn: The Life and Poetry of Yosa Buson* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 162. The notes to the verse in the *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* describe the poem as a “topographical view of early summer” (*fukan seru shoka no fūkei*). See Teruoka Yasuo and Kawashima Tsuyu, eds., *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1959) 58: 122. The editors in *YBS* believe the poem is showing depth and perspective, playing with the near (the young leaves) and the far (the stream and barley), which is different from *nanga*. See *YBS*, 291.

<sup>41</sup> Takeuchi, 144.

<sup>42</sup> As Takeuchi has shown, the meaning of “spirit-resonance” (*ki’in* 氣韻) varied among Edo literati: for Tosa Mitsuoki (1617-91), she writes that spirit-resonance “originates in the painter”: “[spirit-resonance] means that the painter, as he sets out to work, lets the spirit of his soul circulate through his body. When his soul is small and his spirit insufficient, his brushwork will be stunted, feeble, and always unsatisfactory.” For Hayashi Moriatsu (early eighteenth century), it “resides in the forms”: “to give vent, just as if projecting one’s voice, to the mysterious life-

force [*ki*] that resides in the 10,000 things . . . and to cause this vigor of living things to flow forth just as it appears before the eyes.” For Gyokushū (early nineteenth century), Takeuchi writes that his use of the term was more liberal, and that “spirit-resonance could reside in the artist, the scene, and the painting.” See Takeuchi, 138-9.

<sup>43</sup> Yamashita Kazumi, *Haku no shijin: Buson shinron* (Tokyo: Furansudō, 2009). In his book, Yamashita catalogues numerous *hokku* in which white appears, and examines their different symbolic and affective meanings, including “pure elegance,” “visual impact,” “value,” “wit,” “love,” “longing,” and “ambiguity of meaning.” See Yamashita Kazumi, *Yamashita Kazumi chosakushū* (Tokyo: Ōfū, 2013), 3: 389-416. From Yamashita’s extensive survey, it is sensible to say that white figures in a variety of ways and has many functions in Buson’s *haikai* poetry.

<sup>44</sup> From Angus Fletcher, *Colors of the Mind: Conjectures of Thinking in Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 273.

<sup>45</sup> BZ, 1: 524. Buson’s pupil Kitō wrote two *hokku* in 1782 in which plums are marked as the indirect object:

The lingering chill	Behold
Of wintry clouds hangs	The day wintry rain falls
On white plum blossoms.	On white plum blossoms!
しら梅に余寒の雲のかかる也	しら梅にこはそも氷雨の降日哉

<sup>46</sup> For a quick summary of the rules of *renku* see the introduction in Herbert Jonsson, *Haikai Poetics: The Theory and Aesthetics of Linked Poetry in the Age of Buson* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2008), 18-24.

<sup>47</sup> Buson’s fondness of Wang Wei also has much to do with how Tang poetry was popularized during the eighteenth century after Ogyū Sorai’s death. Sorai imparted his passion for Ming Ancient Phraseology to his disciple Hattori Nankaku (1683-1759), under whom Buson studied classical Chinese. Among his many achievements, in 1724 Nankaku published *Tōshisen* (C. *Tangshi xuan*; Selections of Tang Poetry), a Ming Dynasty anthology of Tang poetry annotated by Li Panlong (1514-1570). The anthology was widely read among Edo literati. Flueckiger writes that through such poetry, Nankaku was able to foster a community of *bunjin* who embraced ideals of elegance, an aesthetic freedom from the reins of Edo Confucian order: “While *bunjin* were by no means all followers of Sorai, they shared with him an interest in the formative power of culture, while restricting, as we saw with Nankaku, the social sphere in which such culture is meant to hold sway.” See Flueckiger, 123.

<sup>48</sup> Narushima agrees with Takahashi Shōji’s argument that *mukashi* (long ago) does not refer to Wang Wei, but to Buson’s past idealization of Wang Wei. See Narushima, 59. I like this reading because it gives the *hokku* more autonomy as a poem that refers to Buson’s subjective understanding of the past, not history’s.

<sup>49</sup> In his reading of the poem, Ueda identifies Buson as the winter warbler: “As a bird, he [Buson] finds himself perched on the hedge of Wangchu’an Villa, a country house owned by Wang Wei, whose poetry and painting he had admired throughout his career. On the verge of death, his soul wanders out of his body and goes back to its ultimate home—the Tang poet-painter’s country cottage.” See Ueda, 153. Ueda’s metaphysical reading (Buson’s disembodiment) may be a stretch, but I agree that Buson’s identification with the warbler is interesting in that it provides him with a figure to express nostalgia, and a displaced self-examination of his career of artistic production. Alternatively, if we take the warbler to be a figure for the poet Wang Wei (meaning, a poetic figure that Wang Wei used in his own poetry), and here it is a figure for the poet Buson, by Buson talking about the warbler, he is talking about himself through the eyes of Wang Wei and himself. The multiple and confounding layers of subjectivity enrich the meaning of the poem.

<sup>50</sup> Casey (2002), 116.

<sup>51</sup> Fujita Shin’ichi and Kiyoto Noriko in the “spring” section of their collection list 44 *hokku* in which *uguisu* (warbler) appear. Of the 44 warblers, 32 are discussed in the context of their song. See Fujita Shin’ichi and Kiyoto Noriko, eds., *Buson zenkushū* (Tokyo: Ōfū, 2000), 11-18.

<sup>52</sup> Ogata and Morita in BZ categorize the warbler in the second *hokku* as the *kigo* for spring. Fujita and Kiyoko say winter, and group the poem with the first *hokku*.

<sup>53</sup> Helen McCullough defines *ya* in this context as an interjectional (exclamatory) particle: “As an interjectional particle, *ya* indicates emotion. It often follows a word of address or a command.” See Helen Craig McCullough, *Bungo Manual: Selected Reference Materials for Students of Classical Japanese* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 68.

<sup>54</sup> Jonsson, 27.

<sup>55</sup> In a preface to *Ya-kana-shō*, a work on *kireji* by contemporary waka poet and fiction writer Ueda Akinari (1734-1809), Buson writes that the insertion of a *kireji* does not necessarily break the continuity of a verse:

A *kireiji* is something which is not when it is, and is when it is not. There are poems with *kireji* that are not cut, and poems with no *kireji* that are cut.

切字はありてなきもの也、なくて有もの也。切字ありてきれぬ句有、なくて切るゝ句あり。

Trans. Jonsson, 27. For original Japanese See *BZ*, 4: 139-140. Jonsson notes other more concrete discussions concerning the meanings and uses of *kireji*. For example, “In *Ya-kana-shō*, . . . Akinari identifies a large number of widely different kinds of *ya*. Among these we find, of course, the ‘cutting *ya*’ (*kire-ya*), but also the ‘rhyming *ya*’ (*kuchiai no ya*), which has mainly a rhythmical function that does not cut the verse.” See Jonsson, 27.

<sup>56</sup> Ueda and Cheryl Crowley’s translations interpret the *nani* to mean “what” or “something.” Crowley: “warbler / something is rustling / in the forest frost.” See Cheryl Crowley, *Haikai Poet Yosa Buson and the Bashō Revival* (Boston: Brill, 2007), 2. Ueda: “warbler, what are you / doing to cause that rustle? / frost in the bush.” See Ueda, 153.

<sup>57</sup> The address enhances the “now-ness” of the poem, making it a lyric event. As Jonathan Culler has observed, “Fiction is about what happened next; lyric is about what happens now.” See Jonathan Culler, *Theory of the Lyric* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 226. In his discussion of lyric address in the Western poetic tradition, Culler writes that apostrophe enables the poet to develop a relationship with the addressee: “apostrophe treats that bringing together of subject and object as an act of will, something accomplished poetically in the act of address.” See Culler, 223. This applies to Buson as well: by addressing the warbler through apostrophe, the poet constitutes it as another subject, with whom he can develop a relationship.

<sup>58</sup> Buson’s address to the warbler in the form of a lyric reminds us of Allen Grossman’s general observations about the triangular relationship between poet, object, and reader in poetry: “In the most primitive terms, the presence of a poem involves a triadic state of affairs, in which there is a self, and the beloved of that self which always has a transcendental character ascribed to it, and a third—the third being the audience, the ratifier, the witness, and the inheritor of the drama of loving relationship to which the poem gives access.” See Allen Grossman, *The Sighted Singer* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 13.

<sup>59</sup> This reading makes less sense considering the context of the poem. We have a subject (the warbler), and we have the object of rustling (the frost on the bush), which is also the place where the subject resides. “Why” sounds like the right question. This is supported by the accusatory tone of the line, which suggests that the poet is slightly bothered by the sound he hears, and wants to know why the warbler is doing what it is doing.

<sup>60</sup> Poem No. 36 (Spring Book 1) by Emperor Gotoba in *Shinkokinshū*:

Gazing afar,  
At the mountain base misting  
The Minase River:  
Why would I think of  
Evening in autumn?  
見わたせば山もとかすむ水無瀬河ゆふべは秋となに思ひけん

See SNKBT 11: 29; also in *NKBT*, 28: 45.

<sup>61</sup> In the entry for “*gosotsukashi*” in *Kogo Jiten* (a classical Japanese dictionary), a haiku is given in which *kamiko* (paper garments) “rustle” after being blown by the pine wind.

In the wind-blown pines,  
[Someone] rustles  
Paper-thin garments.  
松風にごそつかせたる紙子かな。

See Ōno Susumu, et al., eds., *Iwanami kogo Jiten* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1980), 493. The convention of the *kamiko* is interesting to think about in the haikai tradition since it evokes the itinerant poet, evident in the prefatory remarks to Bashō’s *Kogarashino no Maki* (1684). See Shiraishi Teizō, Ueno Yōzō, eds., *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoen, 1990), 70: 3. In other words, as a verb, “*gosotsukatsu*,” can suggest by metaphor the rustling movement of a peripatetic and penurious poet, a persona Buson and many other *haikai* poets assumed in their poetry.

<sup>62</sup> There are many English translations of this verse. My own interpretation of the poem rests on three assumptions: that the verb *akuru* means “to dawn” in the simple future tense, meaning “it will dawn”; that the particle *ni* marks *shiraume* as the indirect object of *akuru*, which means that night will dawn, but also *on* the plum; and that adverb *bakari to* means “now and only,” supported by the predicate *narinikeri*, which registers the subject’s emphatic awareness of the now-and-only-ness of the moment. Other translations of this verse in chronological order: “To wait until the moment / When day breaks white upon the plum / Is all that I can do now.” (Backus, 1972); “Henceforth / will dawn each day / as the white plum.” (Yasuhara, 1982); “Now each and every night will end / Dawning in white plum blossoms.” (Morris, 1984) “In the white plum blossoms, / night to next day / just turning.” (Hass, 1994); “from now on / every night will dawn / with white plum blossoms” (Ueda, 1998); “Amid white plum blossoms / night turns to dawn — the time has come” (Shirane, 2002); “it is now the moment / when white plum

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blossoms / lighten into dawn” (Crowley, 2007); “among white plum blossoms / what remains is the night / about to break into dawn.” (Addiss, 2012). See Backus, 757; Eri Fujita Yasuhara, “Buson and *Haishi*: A Study of Free-Form *Haishi* Poetry in Eighteenth Century Japan,” (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1982), 43; Mark Morris, “Buson and Shiki: Part Two,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45 (1985), 417; Robert Hass, ed., *The Essential Haiku* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 125; Ueda, 153; Shirane, 546; Crowley, 2; Stephen Addiss, *The Art of Haiku: Its History through Poems and Paintings by Japanese Masters* (Boston: Shambhala, 2012), 219. My translation blends the versions by Backus, Crowley and Addiss.

<sup>63</sup> Here I am thinking of the *hokku* below from 1768, which is about synesthesia, giving sound to darkness. See *BZ*, 1: 40.

In an ancient well—  
A fish jumps for mosquitos  
And makes a dark splash.  
古井戸や蚊に飛ぶ魚の音くらし

<sup>64</sup> Jullien, 194.

<sup>65</sup> François Jullien, trans. Paula Varsano, *In Praise of Blandness: Proceeding from Chinese Thought and Aesthetics* (New York: Zone Books, 2004), 87.

<sup>66</sup> Trans. Jullien and Varsano. See Jullien (2004), 95. For Chinese original, see Mei Yaochen, *Wanlingji*, Vol. 46, in *Siku Quanshu*.

<sup>67</sup> Jullien (2004), 24. Original emphasis.

<sup>68</sup> The last verse’s “now-ness” and relationship to time reminds us of Kubler’s idea of the in-between moment he calls “actuality”: “Actuality is when the lighthouse is dark between flashes: it is the instant between the ticks of the watch: it is a void interval slipping forever through time: the rupture between past and future: the gap at the poles of the revolving magnetic field, infinitesimally small but ultimately real. It is the interchronic pause when nothing is happening. It is the void between events.” Kubler, 15. Nothing is happening in Buson’s final verse on white plum blossoms but the feeling of expectancy and waiting.

<sup>69</sup> Buson wrote a number of poems that posthumously have been categorized under the genre label *haishi* for the sake of convenience. The generic terms *haishi* (a blend of *haikai* and *kanshi*, poems in Chinese), *washi* (Japanese poems, in distinction from *kanshi*), and *haitaishi* (*haikai*-style poems), refer to more or less the same motley group of poems that do not entirely adhere to convention: *waka* (which includes *renga* and *haikai*) and *kanshi*. Eri Yasuhara’s illuminating study on the genre, if we can even call it a “genre,” has observed that *haishi* draws from *kayō* (songs) and *kana-shi* (Chinese poems in Japanese vernacular), both of which grew in popularity during the seventeenth century. See Yasuhara, 289-356.

<sup>70</sup> Fujita Shin’ichi, ed., *Buson bunshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2016), 202-203. The poem also appears in *BZ*, 4: 36-37. Ogata and Morita entitle the poem collectively as “Yamadori no’ maegaki” (Prelude to “copper pheasant”). The “copper pheasant” refers to the *hokku*.

<sup>71</sup> Although Fujita takes a literal reading of the poem, we can also read the *kanshi* as a metaphor for Buson’s belatedness, or more broadly as the belatedness of the poetic tradition: *kōjin* can mean “the poet of the present (lit. the person who has come later)” and *zenjin* can mean “the poet of the past (lit. the person who has come before).” By stating that the former is a hundred miles away from the latter—a distance that the poem maintains thematically—the poem places the poet (Buson) in perpetual and belated opposition to his forebears.

<sup>72</sup> “Lyric on Spring Endings” evokes the spring *kigo* “slow-setting sun” or “long day(s)” (*osoki hi* or *chijitsu*). Buson features that *kigo* in a *hokku* he wrote on the theme of “recollecting the past” (*kaikyū*) in 1775:

Long days  
Pile up in the distance  
Of long ago.  
遅き日のつもりて遠きむかし哉

See *BZ*, 1: 278.

<sup>73</sup> For the Japanese see *NKBT*, 6: 245. The poem is well known: it is also anthologized in *Shūi Wakashū* (1005; Collection of gleanings) compiled by Emperor Kazan, and *Ogura Hyakunin Isshu* (One hundred poems for one hundred people), compiled by Fujiwara Teika (1162-1241). See *SNKBT*, 7: 226; Kikuchi Akinori and Watanuku Toyooki, eds., *Ogura hyakushū tai’i* (Tokyo: Katsura Shobō, 1993), 9-10. In these later collections, the poem is attributed to court poet Kakimoto no Hitomaro (660-724), whose poetry Hideo Levy has observed to be the finest and earliest example of Japanese lyricism. See Hideo Levy, *Hitomaro and the Birth of Japanese Lyricism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984). Below is Poem No. 2082 in *Manyōshū*:

Longing—

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Unable to long much longer,  
On this night long  
Like the tails of copper pheasants  
Resting mountains apart.

思へども思ひもかねつあしひきの山鳥の尾の長きこの夜を

For a colorful illustration of the *yamadori* and other birds in the pheasant family see the entry for *kiji* in *Nihon daihyakka zensho* (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1985), 6: 456.

<sup>74</sup> For a discussion about early experiments in *haishi* by other Edo poets, see Yasuhara, 159-197. Considering the influx of Chinese influence during the eighteenth century, it makes sense that Japanese poets would experiment in new forms. The relationship between *haishi* and conventional genres of poetry (*waka*, *renga*, and *kanshi*) is akin to the relationship between *ci* and *shi* poetry in the Song Dynasty. For essays that discuss the problems of voice in the *ci* genre, see Pauline Yu, ed., *Voices of the Song Lyric in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 3-103.

<sup>75</sup> As Ueda has observed, its plain language and free-style structure resembles nineteenth century Western poetry. But this he is also alluding to Japanese *shintaiishi* (new style poetry), a new genre that emerged after the importation of British and European lyric poetry and Romanticism in the early twentieth century. Horikiri Minoru argues that the lyricism of the poem goes beyond *shintaiishi*. See Horikiri Minoru, “Buson no haishi: ‘Hokuju Rōsen wo itamu’ no jojōsei” in *Kokubun kaishaku to kanshō* 66 (February 2001), 2: 40-48.

<sup>76</sup> Shinga and Buson were apparently quite close. Shinga’s son was friends with Buson, and Shinga treated Buson like a second-son. See Ueda, 19-20.

<sup>77</sup> The date of composition is a matter of debate. The editors in *BZ* Ogata and Morita, as well as Muramatsu Tomosugu, speculate that Buson composed the poem 1777, after the publication of “Denga no uta” and “Shunpū batei kyoku.” For a summary of the debate, see Yasuhara, 123-125. In 1793, Shinga’s son Momohiko at age 81 published *Isonohana*, a collection of poems by his father and others to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of his father’s death. Ueda suggests that the poem was written before 1777. Buson left his signature “the monk Buson,” which Ueda claims Buson stopped using after 1757. Facts aside, Ueda argues the tone of the poem is youthful, and not like the *haishi* Buson was writing in 1777: “It’s boldly unconventional form, impassioned tone, and waka-like language all set it apart from the other longer poems Buson wrote in or around 1777.” See Ueda, 21.

<sup>78</sup> *BZ*, 4: 26-28. Also *YBS*, 240-244.

<sup>79</sup> Other versions of the opening lines: “You went away this morning—tonight my heart is torn in a thousand pieces/ Why are you so far?” (Yasuhara, 1982); “You left in the morning, and my heart in thousands of fragments / flies to an infinite distance this evening.” (Ueda, 1998); “You left in the morning. In the evening, my heart is in a thousand shards / wondering why you have gone so far away” (Crowley, 2007).

<sup>80</sup> Below are three poems that address the different meanings of *chiji* from the entry in *Nihon kokugo daijiten* lists many poems. The first is by Ōe no Chisato, anthologized as Poem No. 193 in *Kokinshū* (905); the second is by Kamo no Chōmei, anthologized as Poem No. 397 in *Shinkokinshū* (1205). The last poem is a *hokku* by Bashō from *Shōō bunshū* (1699-1709):

Gazing at the moon,  
Feeling mournful  
In a thousand ways;  
But I am not alone  
In autumn’s grief.  
月見れば千千にもものそかなしけれわが身ひとつの秋にはあらねど

Sighing a poem,  
Longing in a thousand directions;  
The moon and me  
On a lone peak  
Where the pine winds blow.  
ながむればちぢにものおもふ月に又わが身ひとつの峰の松風

Isles and isles—  
Thousands of pieces scattered  
Over the summer sea.  
嶋々や千々にくだけて夏の海



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For the Japanese, see *SNKBT*, 5: 71 and *NKBT*, 8:140; *SNKBT*, 11: 126 and *NKBT*, 28: 106; *NKBT*, 45: 83.

<sup>81</sup> This is the only classical sounding line in the poem, as the rest is in vernacular. Although the original does not provide a *kanji* for *haruka*, Ogata and Morita read it with the Chinese graph *yō* 杳 in mind (which is read *haruka* in Japanese), which in classical and medieval Chinese can mean: 1. Indistinct, obscure; vague, blurred. 2. Receding far into distance; far off; secluded. 3. Dimness of far time. See Paul W. Kroll, *A Student's Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese* (Boston: Brill, 2015), 536. As for the elegy's Chinese influence, Nieda Tadashi has speculated about the poem's relationship to *koshi* (ancient-style poems) in the classical Chinese tradition. See Nieda Tadashi, "Buson 'Hokuju Rōsen wo itamu' to *koshi*" in *Nihon bungaku kenkyū* 2 (November 1962), 20-27.

<sup>82</sup> Culler, 227.

<sup>83</sup> I must thank Leo Kolaszewski, President of the Pheasants Forever Fox Valley River Chapter 585 in Oshkosh, WI, for educating me about the passionate crow of cock pheasants during springtime.

<sup>84</sup> In classical Chinese poetry, *jun* 君 is synonymous with *gong* 公, and evokes the trope of an abandoned woman, waiting for her absent husband. This is often treated in the Yuefu (Music Bureau) tradition. Below is the opening to a Yuefu poem by Xiao Tong (501-531), or Zhaoming Taizi, Crown Prince of the Liang Dynasty (502-587). The poem is anthologized in *Wen xuan* (Selections of Refined Literature), a collection that had great influence on Japanese poetry. The poem comes in series entitled, "There is Someone I Long For" (*you suo si*):

My prince—distant and far away,            公子遠于隔  
On the other side of the heavens.            乃在天一方

For Chinese, see Guo Maoqian, ed., *Yuefu shiji* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1979), 251. In Japanese poetry as early as *Manyōshū*, the pronoun *kimi* referred to one's master, and in many other early Japanese texts, it is used as an honorary term of address for lords and sovereigns. In the preface to *Kokinshū*, the pronoun appears in a *waka* in which a woman addresses her absent lover and compares him to the morning frost:

You and the morning:  
Like the morning frost  
That comes and goes,  
By the time I long for you,  
You have melted away.

きみにけさあしたの霜のおきていなばこひしきごとにきえやわたらん

See *SNKBT*, 5: 7. By the medieval period, *kimi* can refer to a courtesan (*yūjo*), and this usage continued through Edo. By the Edo period, the use of *kimi* becomes more fluid: it is used among men in the *bushi* (warrior) class to refer to others of equal social standing. In the case of Buson's "Mourning for Hokuju Rōsen," biography and the poetic tradition help delimit the meaning of *kimi* in the way that I have argued; however, these other possibilities may be at play as well, enriching and further blurring the boundaries of gender and voice.

<sup>85</sup> For more on this kind of poetry in early China see Paul F. Rouzer, *Articulated Ladies: Gender and the Male Community in Early Chinese Texts* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001).

<sup>86</sup> Sung, 81-90.

<sup>87</sup> There is much debate surrounding the term *hege* (originally *henge* but with an elided syllabic nasal). Yasuhara, Ueda, and Crowley read it as an adjective modifying *keburī* (smoke): "Mysterious smoke," "Ghostly smoke," and "Eerie smoke," respectively. For a discussion of the debate, see Yasuhara, 113-116. Buson left a *hokku* in which *henge* appear:

Bestowed a house  
Where a protean resides  
During winter slumber.  
変化住屋敷もらひて冬籠

See *BZ*, 1: 79. Considering the amount of supernatural literature published in Buson's lifetime, especially by contemporary Ueda Akinari, it makes sense to treat *hege* (*henge*) as a noun referring to creatures that have the ability to change shape at will. In Akinari's story "Buppōsō" (The Buppōsō Bird), characters Muzen and his son Sakunoji hear the cry of a sacred bird known as "buppōsō," which cries "buppan, buppan." The term *hege* does not appear in the story, but it is tied to the sacred and supernatural world evoked in Akinari's fiction. A dictionary of Edo language says that *henge* refers to a one-man act in a kabuki play, that consists of a several short dances and performances. With this in mind, the *hege* in Buson's poem encourages readers to think across mediums. In English, the noun "protean" (from Proteus in Greek mythology) is the only neutral word that captures the meaning of a being that transforms. In 1927, James J. Montague wrote a poem "Proteans of the Wild," which appeared in his column "More Truth Than Poetry," in the *Zanesville Signal* (Zanesville, Ohio) on November 10, 1927. My usage of

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the word is the same, but without the ironic tone. “Proteans” refers to the animals in the wild that been given new utility by reappearing as various commodities of exchange.

<sup>88</sup> For the Japanese, see *SNKBT*, 5: 314 and *NKBT*, 8: 317. Kojima Noriyuki and Arai Eizō in *SNKBT* note that the *hororo* is associated with *horohoro*, the onomatopoeia for falling tears. This resonates with the verb *naku*, which means “to cry” in both senses of the word: to make a loud call, and to shed tears. Buson’s use of *naku* in the elegy also plays with the double-entendre, but I have avoided using the verb “to cry” in my translation to preserve the detachment from sentimentality and the concomitant evocation of mournful tears. A survey of his paintings and poetry will show that Buson’s ethics toward nature betray a nuanced attitude toward animals: on the one hand, as living beings with their own agency (like a cock pheasant that crows for his mate), and on the other, as appropriated figures to represent the subjectivity of the artist.

<sup>89</sup> In *Manyōshū*, there is a genre of *waka* called *sedōka* (head-repeated poems), which comprises two tercets of five, seven, and seven syllables each: 5-7-7-5-7-7. Although the genre died out after *Manyōshū*, Kakinomoto Hitomaro is well known for his *sedōka* poems.

<sup>90</sup> The *tomo* is being used as an emphatic adverb for *hororo*, but it is also homonymous with the *tomo* (friend) that appears in the hen’s monologue. This suggests that the *hororo* refers to *his* call, and not hers or any other bird’s. The appearance of *tomo* in the pheasant monologue also blurs the relationship between cock and hen by blending romance with fraternity and filial piety. In Sadafumi’s *waka*, a cock pheasant is calls for his female mate (*tsuma*). Although we find similar crowing and calling (*hororo*) in Buson’s elegy, the hen pheasant laments that she “had a friend” (*tomo ariki*). In Confucian discourse, a “friend” (*you* in Chinese) signifies fraternal and brotherly love, and is related to the Confucian virtue of “filial piety” (*xiao*).

Motoi Katsumata’s work on filial piety in the seventeenth century has shown that the ideology permeated all quarters of life. See Motoi Katsumata, “Monks as Advocates of Filial Piety: The History of Buddhist Kōshiden in the Early Edo Period,” in Massimiliano Tomasi, ed., *Proceedings of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies* 16 (Summer 2015), 35-44. Katsumata discusses the history and culture of filial piety in his new monograph, *Oyakōkō no Edo bunka* [Filial Piety Culture in the Edo Period] (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 2017).

Many critics of the elegy have read the relationships between the speaker in the poem and the addressee, and between the present and absent pheasant as emblematic of a filial relationship: for example, Muramatsu Tomotsugu argues that Buson’s longing for Shinga is overlaid with nostalgia and a longing for his mother. See Muramatsu Tomotsugu, “Buson shū” in *Kanshō nihon no koten* (Tokyo: Shōgaku tosho, 1981), 17: 68-69. His claim about Buson’s nostalgia are echoes of Hagiwara Sakutarō’s essay “Kyōshū no shijin Yosa Buson” (The poet of nostalgia Yosa Buson) from 1933-35. If we think about genres of poetry and song circulating in the eighteenth century, we can easily see how this filial relationship is overlaid with the romantic rhetoric redolent of tunes from the pleasure quarter. In this way, the fictional romance where a hen pines for her cock is refigured as a filial fraternal bond between a youth and elder.

For a discussion on Confucian friendship as a spousal relationship, see Li-Hsiang Lisa Rosenlee, “Confucian Friendship (*You* 友) as Spousal Relationship: A Feminist Imagination,” in *International Communication of Chinese Culture* 2 (November 2015), 181-203. Rosenlee’s article bridges the ancient (Confucian and Greek) idea of friendship as a perfect and moral fraternal bond with the modern ideal of perfect companionship in marriage. In Buson’s elegy, the cock and hen romance infused with fraternal love engages with Rosenlee’s argument from the opposite end, that is a homo-social friendship between a youth and an elder that is figured as a romance between a male and a female.

<sup>91</sup> Gary Ebersole, *Ritual Poetry and The Politics of Death in Early Japan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989).

<sup>92</sup> Culler, 162.

<sup>93</sup> Culler, 138.

<sup>94</sup> Other versions of the ending: “I stand with a heavy heart—/ Yet how precious is this moment.” (Yasuhara, 1982); “I sit alone in mourning—tonight / you look more noble than ever.” (Ueda, 1998); “In this twilight, lingering in sorrow / I feel a special sense of awe.” (Crowley, 2007) Older Japanese dictionaries include the Chinese graph for *sugosugo*, which appears as the reduplicative binome *qiaoqiao* 悄悄. Kroll lists the following definitions when it appears as a reduplicative: 1. sadly distressed, cheerless and downhearted. 2. sinkingly soft; sadly silent, whispering still. See Kroll, 366.

<sup>95</sup> *Zokugo jikai* (facsimile of 1909 publication) defines *sugosugo* as “going home early after being disappointed”; *Jirin* (facsimile of 1911 publication) defines it as “spoiled pleasure (*kyōzame*)” or “feeling disappointed and discouraged.” See Matsudaira Enjirō, et al., eds., *Zokugo jikai* (Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 2012), 514, and Kanazawa Shōzaburō, ed., *Jirin* (Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 2009), 803.

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<sup>96</sup> György Lukács, trans. Anna Bostock, *Soul and Form* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 124.

<sup>97</sup> “If fulfillment is attainable, it has to be attained—it can never be there as something natural and stable. In painting there cannot be dissonance—it would destroy the form of painting, whose realm lies beyond all categories of the temporal process; in painting, dissonance has to be resolved, as it were, *ante rem*, it has to form an indissoluble unity with its resolution.” Lukács, 123.

<sup>98</sup> Lukács, 111.

**Chapter 3:**  
**Sense and Sensibility in the Poetry of Ema Saikō**

The mind rules over the hand; hand rules over mind.  
—Henri Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art* (1934)<sup>1</sup>

The Outer – from the Inner  
Derives its magnitude –  
—Emily Dickinson, No. 450 (1862)<sup>2</sup>

I grind the fragrant ink myself.  
—Ema Saikō, “Bamboo”<sup>3</sup>

This chapter examines lyric thinking in Ema Saikō’s poetry.<sup>4</sup> As the lyric subject roams and experiences the world in new and sensual ways, it is checked by convention, discourses, and the limits of form itself. The images in her poetry reveal a lyric subject wandering within and without the inner chamber, challenging the containment of genre and ideology through dialectical movement and sensuous embodiment. I examine poems about her philosophy of composition, sensory perception, experience of reading, generic longing, and self-transmission. I argue that the way Saikō senses the world through movement in poetic form evinces a lyric subject that is self-aware, ironic, and individuated.

Literati painting and poetry in the late Edo period was conversant with current trends. As a painter, Saikō worked mainly in the traditional style, while her contemporaries experimented with new modes of representation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century: empirical observation and pictorial realism. As a poet, however, Saikō’s work was more nuanced. She practiced in traditional genres associated with women in Chinese poetry, which meant assuming the poetic persona of a *keishū*, a talented woman of the inner chamber. But Saikō also critiqued this persona through metaphor and irony. In the poetic space of the inner chamber she explored the limits of sensory experience, and simultaneously critiqued the ideologies of her time. These included new trends in *kanshi* that abandoned neoclassicism for a poetics that communicated truth of self, heart, and mind, and concerns of the every day. Although she embraced traditional modes of representation in poetry, these modes were also nuanced by the new empirical ways of seeing and knowing the natural world.

## I Dwell in Possibility

Saikō’s dynamic relationship to contemporary discourses on representation can be seen in her poems on writing and painting. By the late eighteenth century, Dutch Studies (*rangaku*) had emerged in Japan, which integrated with the already thriving developments in Japanese art and literature of things Chinese. As Federico Marcon has argued, empiricism in pictorial representation was one of the ideologies imported from texts on Chinese herbal medicine. This gave rise to *honzōgaku*, a discipline that sought medicinal properties in plants and animals, and thereby catalogued nature in a scientific and desacralized way.<sup>5</sup> Empirical representation only heightened after the importation of European epistemological models from Dutch art and science. Saikō’s father Ema Ransai (1747-1838) was a physician and scholar of *rangaku*, and

Saikō was exposed to such methods of representation, a mode of understanding the natural world that became an integral, but also a contentious, part of her sensibility as a *bunjin*.<sup>6</sup>

Saikō's poetry exemplifies how a *bunjin* practicing in traditional forms can put new ideas in tension with old ones. In the previous chapter, we saw how this worked in *haikai*, as the form incorporated new diction and themes of the times. This happened in *kanshi* as well. As Suzuki Ken'ichi has argued, in the Edo period Japanese and Chinese forms start to blend and share a sensibility for communicating present concerns.<sup>7</sup> Later in her career, Saikō composed a series called "Poems on the Four Pleasures of Leisure" (Enkan shitekishi): "The Zither" (Kin), "Chess" (Ki), "Writing" (Sho), and "Painting" (Ga). Her poem "Writing" outlines her theory of composition in poetry and calligraphy:

### Writing

Where is a good place to write with leisure?  
 Beneath the window, I clear dust off the ink stone.  
 A pair of wrists, within dwells a daemon;  
 All I sense is depletion of mind and spirit.  
 5 Behold the inscriptions by Cai, Official of Documents,  
 At Goose Gate of Luoyang, left for hundreds of years.  
 Deep in the heart we must store the words of the ancients;  
 Wielding the brush, we need only make them new.  
 Writing has always been painting of the heart,  
 10 Retaining our true nature for thousands of years.  
 Impossible to imitate writings from the Jin and the Tang,  
 I find joy just in encountering the words of ancient men.

*sho*

*enkan izuko tekisuru ka  
 sōtei ni kenjin wo harau  
 sōwan uchi ni ki ari  
 tada oboyu seishin wo tsuiyasu wo  
 ishibumi wo miru saishōsho  
 kōto ni todomaru koto jūjun  
 kyōoku suberaku inishie wo takuwau beshi  
 rakuhitsu tada arata naru wo yōsu  
 yurai kokoro no ga  
 senzai tenshin sonsu  
 manabigatashi shintō no chō  
 tada yorokobu kojīn ni taisuru wo*

書

燕間何所適  
 窓底掃研塵  
 雙腕中有鬼  
 徒覺費精神  
 觀碣蔡尚書  
 鴻都留十旬  
 胸臆須貯古  
 落筆但要新  
 由來心之畫  
 千載存天真  
 難學晉唐帖  
 唯喜對古人<sup>8</sup>

The poem is a five-character ancient-style poem (*shichigon koshi*) of twelve lines. The *koshi* form does not have a line limit, and Saikō, like many of her *bunjin* contemporaries, chose the form because of its more relaxed meter: if we examine the Chinese original, the even lines (2: *chin*, 4: *shin*, 6: *jun*, 8: *shin*, 10: *shin*, 12: *jin*) rhyme, while the rest of the Chinese graphs in the poem can alternate freely between level and oblique tones. In comparison to other forms of

*kanshi* such as the quatrain (*zekku*) and regulated verse (*risshi*), both of which I examine in this chapter, the *koshi* form is more capacious, and thereby enabled poets to treat discursive topics, such as why writers write.

The poem alludes to principles of writing as early as the Six Dynasties period (220-589), in which Liu Xie composed *Wenxin dialong* (The literary mind carves dragons), a literary treatise about aesthetics and the craft of writing. In the Introduction, I discussed *Wenxin dialong* as one of the bedrocks of literati thought on aesthetic production; in the previous chapter, we saw its influence in the dynamics of Buson's poetry as well. Liu Xie's ideas were reiterated throughout Chinese literary history, and *Wenxin diaolong* (*Bunshin chōryū* in Japanese) had circulated in Japan by at least the early eighteenth century. In her poem "Writing," Saikō lays out her theory of composition, which echoes Liu Xie's arguments about the poetic imagination and the relationship between the heart (*kokoro*) and writing, but also departs from them by asserting the importance of the present over the past.

The poem opens with a question suitable for all practitioners of poetry and calligraphy: "where is a good place to write with leisure?" Like in many of Saikō's other poems, the place where the poetic imagination wanders is by the window. In this poem, the writer is beneath a window (*sōtei*), a place where many *bunjin* found inspiration. As a poetic figure, the window has many associations, and puts the poem in conversation with contemporary discourses on landscape. As Imanishi Riko has observed, the window was a place of creative inspiration for Qing and Edo literati, but also a material frame for landscapes and other natural objects in their paintings.<sup>9</sup> Odano Naotake (1749-1780) and other Western-style painters of the Akita Ranga school depicted people and objects in the domestic sphere and framed them in circular windows.<sup>10</sup>

Saikō's evocation of the window also connects her with other women poets who used the space of the inner chamber to construct a new subjectivity. The window is a fixture of the *kei*, or "inner chamber," a topos evoked in poems about women and authored by women poets in the Chinese tradition.<sup>11</sup> As Xiaorong Li has argued in the case of women's poetry in late imperial China, the inner chamber (*gui* in Chinese) was a real and imaginary place. The *gui* was an idealized space for women, its appearance in poetry always signified a woman subject, and as a word it was used in combination with other words to denote space a woman occupied.<sup>12</sup> Li has shown how women poets in late imperial China constructed new feminine subjectivities by transforming the *gui* in their poems. She argues that such writings by women prescribed a feminine subjectivity that conformed to Confucian ideals for women, but they also "provided women with new possibilities for self-understanding and projection."<sup>13</sup>

The possibilities of expression and experience in the *gui* changed over time.<sup>14</sup> The *gui* was real for some women, and imaginary for others, but it was a space that traditionally separated women from men.<sup>15</sup> By the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), poets abandoned the "abandoned woman" trope, and breathed new life into the boudoir genre. The female subjects were no longer passive women, but rather women of talent who appropriated the *gui* as their own domestic space to talk about their feelings and daily activities.

In the Japanese tradition, the *kei* was purely imaginary. Saikō used the inner chamber as a way to explore the limits of poetic form through the figure of an ostensibly confined space that in most cases was made porous by windows of escape. The social conditions in early modern Japan also show that the separation of the sexes was an ideal, not a reality.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, we can say that the windows in Saikō's poems acknowledge the boudoir genre that has been practiced by other Chinese literati since the Six Dynasties, but it was ultimately an imaginary space that she used to explore possibilities of lyric expression and the limits of poetic form.

The window in the poem functions as a figurative “window” to possibilities outside, but also a mirror to the possibilities of self-expression already transforming inside the inner chamber. As Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) wrote, “I dwell in Possibility – / A fairer House than Prose – / More numerous of Windows – / Superior – for Doors –.”<sup>17</sup> Saikō, too, found that poetry provided windows to possibilities, including how to view the force of the imagination in writing. The meaning of Line 3, “In these two wrists dwells a daemon,” is twofold: literary inspiration in the form of a daemon (*ki*) can be accessed at the flick of the wrist, or the daemon manifests by way of poetic afflatus, or divine inspiration.

The former relates to the idea of “Spirit Thought” (Shen Si), the title of the Chapter 26 in *Wenxin diaolong*, and essentially describes a spirit within the writer, once he has attained quietude, that wanders throughout literary history and seeking inspiration from writers of the past. The chapter opens with the idea that the spirit, which is like a daemon, or creative force, resides within the breast:

When the basic principle of thought is at its keenest, the spirit wanders together with things. The spirit resides within the breast, and our aims and our vital forces control the gate to let it out. The things of the world come in through the ears and eyes, and language has charge of the hinge. When that hinge permits passage, nothing can hide its face; but when the bolt to that gate is closed, the spirit is concealed within.

故思理為妙，神與物游。神居胸臆，而志氣統其關鍵。物沿耳目，而辭令管其樞機。樞機方通，則物無隱貌；關鍵將塞，則神有馭心。<sup>18</sup>

“Spirit Thought” is a way of conceptualizing the poetic imagination in early Chinese thought.<sup>19</sup> In the passage above, Liu Xie states the pivotal role of language as the figurative hinge to the door that enables the imagination’s passage to possibility. But language cannot control that passage unless the writer focuses his intent (*zhi*) and vital force (*qi*). Throughout *Wenxin diaolong*, Liu Xie employs an array of biological metaphors, which describe literary creation as vitally dependent upon mental concentration and breath regulation. In this system of thought, literature is akin to the human body, and various *ti*, or literary forms, mimic the organic processes of a living body, such as cycles of breath and beats of the heart.

Liu Xie states that the spirit resides within the breast (*xiongyi*), the same compound word translated above as “deep in the heart” (*kyōoku*) in Line 7, where the writer stores words of the ancients. The spirit, or daemon, in Saikō’s poem, however, resides within a pair of wrists (*sōwan*), the hinge that connects the writer’s hands to the body. The relationship between the daemon and the wrist evokes contemporaneous discourses concerning “inspiration” in Romanticism, which was religious or artistic, or a mix of the two. The former refers to “the infusion of the heavenly spirit into the mind or soul; the other to the awareness of an idea or image that stimulated creativity.”<sup>20</sup>

The idea that poetic inspiration, spiritual and artistic, “depletes” (*tsuiyasu*) the poet’s “mind and spirit” (*seishin*) is uncanny. It also evokes how the imagination afflicted French artists in the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup> Anka Mulhstein has remarked how French artists obsessed by their art or scientific curiosity fell victim to “the ravages of thought.”<sup>22</sup> Mulhstein describes the imagination as a malefic force that comes from within. This portrayal resonates with Saikō’s daemon, which may be a demonic spirit: the first meaning of the word *ki* is “demon.” With these



uncanny associations in mind, Saikō may be alluding to the kind of demonic possession in Gothic literature evoked in Romantic poetry of the nineteenth century, or the overabundant imagination that vexed French painters.<sup>23</sup> Suffice it to say, the idea of the imagination and inspiration in the poem speaks to multiple contemporaneous traditions.

Saikō moves from the idea of poetic inspiration being a daemon (or demon) that consumes the artist to the relationship between the writer and her literary forebears. This reminds us of Harold Bloom's idea of the "anxiety of influence," since the writer in the poem sees herself in opposition to the words of the ancients (*kojin*).<sup>24</sup> Lines 5 and 6 allude to the forgotten writings of Eastern Han Dynasty scholar and calligrapher Cai Yong (132-192). Cai is remembered for having the Five Classics engraved in stone to serve as models of writing for later generations. The Five Classics include the *Shangshu* (*Shōsho* in Japanese; Book of Documents), which is also one of Cai's official titles. Saikō uses this allusion as an allegory for the purpose of writing: to model oneself on the writings of literary forebears, but under the condition that the writer "need only make them new" (*tada arata naru wo yōsu*). The key to newness is in how one wields the brush, which echoes the earlier image of the wrists in which literary inspiration, or demonic possession, manifests.

This necessity to be new also speaks to how art was theorized in the early nineteenth century. Uragami Shunkin (1779-1846), one of Saikō's teachers and son of Gyokudō, expressed similar sentiments about newness in his two-volume poetic treatise on literati painting *Rongashi* (1842; Poems on painting):

Transformation follows the trend,  
Propensity also accords with nature.

*henka kiun ni shitagai*                      變化隨氣運  
*ikioi mo mata shizen ni yoru*        勢亦因自然<sup>25</sup>

The lines above come from a poem in the second volume of *Rongashi*, which discusses *bunjinga* in general terms, stating that it emerges in the Song Dynasty, and transforms according to trends over time (*kiun*). This propensity (*ikioi*) for painting to transform accords with nature (*shizen*). Taketani glosses the word *shizen* as "Mother Nature" (*daishizen*) in modern Japanese. In traditional Chinese thought, the bedrocks of *bunjinga*, the laws of nature accord with the Dao, or the Way. By the nineteenth century, the Daoist idea of nature being the spiritual source of all creation merges with the scientific idea of nature as a disenchanting object that can be empirically observed and understood. But the Romantic idea of nature as a tutelary presence may also be at play here, since nature was depicted as such in European landscape paintings.<sup>26</sup> With all these meanings at play, the two lines suggest that form and content are historically contingent.

Historical contingency also applies to other artistic mediums of expression, including poetry.<sup>27</sup> Saikō argues that essence of writing is "painting of the heart" (*kokoro no ga*), which she supports with the claim that writing enables access to our "true nature," and has done so for a thousand years. The couplet that concludes the poem, however, destabilizes the idea that "painting of the heart" and its attendant idea of "retaining true nature" has been a cultural truth since the beginning of time. She concludes with the claim that the poets of the Jin (265-420) and the Tang (618-907) Dynasties are "impossible to imitate" (*manabi gatashi*), and reveals her presentness vis-à-vis the tradition. By the final line, "I find joy just in encountering the words of ancient men," the relationship between the poet and her forebears is clear: her use of the verb

*taisuru* (to encounter; to oppose; to face) conveys her point that writing is not about imitation, but about creation with the tradition stored deep in mind and heart as a source to draw from, but also with which to contend.

The choice to distance herself from the Jin and the Tang is also an indirect critique of early Edo Confucian scholar Ogyū Sorai's (1666-1728) literary movement to return to the classics, most notably exemplified by the poetry of the High Tang era. Sorai's neoclassicism was challenged by a new poetics called *seirei* (from *xingling* in Chinese, "natural sensibility"), which promoted spontaneous expression, drawing inspiration from one's inner nature to communicate heart, mind, and soul. Spontaneity also meant writing about the quotidian as a means to be true and sincere. As Nakamura Shin'ichirō has observed, *seirei* poetics fundamentally transformed the philosophy of late Edo *kanshi*. He argues that *kanshi* from the late eighteenth century onward diversified in topic and embraced individuated expression (*koseiteki hyōgen*) and modern consciousness (*kindai ishiki*), a poetics that he likens to Romanticism.<sup>28</sup>

Ibi Takashi has traced *seirei* poetics to the writings of late Ming Dynasty poet Yuan Hongdao (1568-1610; penname Zhonglang):

Whatever the mind-heart wants to express, the wrist can convey it. . . . If you apprehend a place with the mind-heart, and convey the mind-heart with the wrists, then there is nothing that natural sensibility cannot totally transmit. This is what is called "true poetry."

心所欲吐，腕能運心. . . . 以心攝境，以腕運心，則性靈無不畢達。是之謂真詩。<sup>29</sup>

The passage above draws a connection between the image of the wrist in Saikō's poem to the heart and soul in Yuan Hongdao's discussion. The wrist is what communicates the soul, and Saikō spells this out in her poem about writing. The idea of "true nature" (*tenshin*) in Line 10 of the poem relates to the phrase that concludes the above passage, "true poetry" (*zhenshi*), and suggests that what is thought of as "true" to poets of the late Edo period largely depends on the poet's individuated and subjective engagement with the world around them.

By the Qing dynasty (1644-1912), Yuan Hongdao's ideas were expounded upon by another poet of the same surname, Yuan Mei (1716-1797).<sup>30</sup> He declared, "Poetry is what expresses one's nature and emotion. It is enough to look no further than one's self [for the material of poetry]. If its words move the heart, its colors catch the eye, its taste pleases the mouth, and its sound delights the ear, then it is good poetry."<sup>31</sup> Yuan Mei's ideas were imported in early modern Japan. By the late Edo period, ideas of individuated expression can be found throughout *kanshi* practice, including theories of composition.<sup>32</sup> Yamamoto Hokuzan's (1752-1812) treatise *Sakushi shikō* (1783; The range of intent in composing poetry) is a case in point. The treatise initiated a major shift in *kanshi* practice: to move away from the elegant and grandiose style of high-Tang poetry, and toward a poetics that embraced emotions and thoughts of the contemporary and the quotidian.<sup>33</sup>

Nineteenth century ideas about historical contingency and individuated expression resonate throughout Saikō's poetry. By placing new and old ideas in tension with one another in poetic form, Saikō's mind is able to move with and against them, like a brush that caresses the canvas. This is how the mind of a literati painter works. As Shunkin describes in *Rongashi*, painting is in a constant process of change and transformation. As we have seen, Saikō's poetry

is not just a static storehouse for theories of the past and the present, but a dynamic place to engage ideas without being overcome by them. This dynamism has to do with the possibilities of poetic form, which can make claims that affirm and simultaneously deny ideological meaning.

Saikō also wrote a poem on the philosophy of painting in which we see this dynamism at work. In the previous chapter, I discussed Buson's allusions to Song Dynasty literatus Su Shi (1037-1101). Su Shi (pen name Dongpo, or "East Slope") was popular among *bunjin* in the nineteenth century as well, and Saikō was especially interested in his claim that painting is not about resemblance and realism, but about the wonders of the imagination, which we may provisionally read as a critique of the pictorial realism that evolved alongside *seirei* poetics. Below is another ancient-style verse of twelve lines entitled "Painting":

### Painting

“Saying that to paint is to resemble  
Is like seeing through the eyes of children.”  
Who dared utter these words,  
But the venerable recluse of East Slope?  
5 I take them as my method,  
Whenever ink touches paper.  
One scroll instantly turns into the Xiaoxiang,  
Myriad forms spring forth from the brush tip.  
If a painting can picture the center of the heart,  
10 What need to worry about praise or criticism?  
A representation of hemp or a representation of reeds,  
Identification is all in the eye of the beholder.

<i>ga</i>	畫
<i>ga wo nashite keiji wo ronzu</i>	爲畫論形似
<i>Sono ken wa doushi ni tonari su</i>	其見隣童子
<i>kono go tareka yoku haku</i>	此語誰能吐
<i>tōha rōkyoshi nari</i>	東坂老居士
<i>yo torite motte hō to nasu</i>	余取以爲法
<i>mokkun aruiwa kami ni otoseba</i>	墨君或落紙
<i>shakufuku sunawachi shōshō</i>	尺幅即瀟湘
<i>hyakudai gōtan ni okoru</i>	百態毫端起
<i>moshi yoku kyōchū wo utsuseba</i>	若能寫胸中
<i>nanzo kanarazushimo yoki wo osorenya</i>	何必畏譽毀
<i>asa to nashi mata ashi to nasu</i>	爲麻亦爲芦
<i>shimei subete kare ni makasu</i>	指名總任彼 <sup>34</sup>

The poem opens with a quote, almost verbatim, from the first of Su Shi's two-poem set "Written on paintings of flowering branches by Secretary Wang of Yan-ling."<sup>35</sup> The rest of the poem engages with the idea behind the quotation, which argues that "resemblance" (*keiji*) is a simplistic way of viewing the purpose of painting. Representation in painting for Saikō, as it is for many *bunjin* who embraced the *nanga* tradition, is about the possibility of art to evoke more

than just the object that is being depicted. Since a child is too young to have mastered the aesthetics and theories of representation in literati painting, Su Shi would argue that when a child sees a painting of a hemp, they see hemp, without considering the imagination that went into producing that representation of hemp.<sup>36</sup>

The poet then asks, “Who dared utter these words?” If we consider the historical moment in which Saikō invokes Su Shi, the tone of the question suggests that saying painting is not about resemblance is out of fashion with the current trend. Nevertheless, the poet embraces Su Shi’s words, and takes them as her method (*hō to nasu*) whenever ink falls upon the canvas.<sup>37</sup> The “I” (*yo*) in the poem, as in many of Saikō’s poems, is explicit, and highlights the fact that she is the one appropriating Su Shi and using his ideas at her disposal. This self-assertion resonates with Patricia Fister and Kado Reiko’s claims that Saikō was a poet who “expressed herself in the way she saw fit.”<sup>38</sup> Moreover, it shows the poem’s awareness of circulating ideas, new and old, and asserts the lyric subject’s agency in appropriating them.

Appropriating Su Shi’s argument as her method of painting creates tension with late imperial ideas of landscape. Lines 7 and 8 show how she puts Su Shi’s idea to work by applying black ink (*mokkun*) onto one scroll, and suddenly Xiaoxiang emerges. These views refer to *Xiaoxiang bajing* (*Shōshō hakkei* in Japanese), or *Eight Views of Xiaoxiang*, the subject of many paintings and poems in the Song Dynasty that represent or evoke the Xiaoxiang region in Hunan Province, China. The word “one scroll” (*shakufuku*) evokes the term “one-scroll window” (*chifu chuang*) from late imperial literatus Li Yu’s (1611-1680) writings on windows and painting. As the term suggests, the window becomes the frame for a painting as if it were a scroll, what Li Yu calls a “natural painting.”<sup>39</sup> The context of this poem, however, is explicitly about painting a landscape, rather than making a “natural painting” with the frame of a window. Thus, the landscape in the poem seems to be suspended between two modes of visual representation of Xiaoxiang: a painting vis-à-vis a window-frame.

Although Li Yu’s window theory looms in Line 7, if we think about its relationship with Line 8, Saikō seems to be more interested in what the brush can do, and how a painting can stand in and stand for the Xiaoxiang in a way that is true to itself. The adverb *sunawachi* conveys the sudden spontaneity with which the landscape appears on the scroll. In the previous chapter, I discussed Edward Casey’s idea of representation as “standing in as” and “standing in for” Red Cliff in Buson’s *hokku*. The evocation of Xiaoxiang here as a spontaneous landscape addresses this idea, since Song Dynasty painting prides itself on offering a truth not based on empirical observation, but rather the workings of the imagination. In Saikō’s poem “Writing” the imagination is channeled through the wrist: the wrist that holds the hand that holds the brush is the hinge that opens the gate for the daemon to manifest once ink touches paper and lets myriad forms emerge.

After demonstrating theory in practice, the rest of the poem examines what happens to a painting when it is received by a viewer in a society with conflicting expectations of what a painting should be and look like. She writes: “If a painting can picture the center of the heart, / What need to worry about praise or criticism?” The inseparability between painting and the heart of the painter is the condition that allows her to ignore judgment of the viewer. She gives an example of such reception in the last lines when she addresses the viewer: “A representation of hemp or a representation of reeds, / Identification is all in the eye of the beholder.” The verb *nasu* (which is translated as “representation”) is key here, since it means “to create,” but also “to create as something else,” hence “to represent.” The line suggests that whether the painted

image represents “hemp” or “reeds” is an arbitrary distinction, and is a veiled critique of contemporary modes of pictorial representation, which called for “true-to-life” depictions.<sup>40</sup>

Saikō leaves the ending to her poem “Painting” open-ended.<sup>41</sup> She concludes with the idea that classification is a judgment she leaves entirely (*subete*) for the viewer (*kare*) to make. By creating a space of democratic interpretation, she deflates or even contradicts the assertions she makes earlier about what painting should be, and entrusts the viewer with the freedom to decide what the painting is trying to represent, allowing the imagination to roam as it pleases.

In “Writing” and “Painting,” we hear a voice that believes that a work of art can communicate truth about the mind and heart of the creator. While leaning on models, methods, and ideas of the past, she also embraces the contemporary idea that judgment is in the eye of the beholder, and that seeing is a means of subjective knowing. And yet, Saikō left a poem in which she argues that that knowing can be occluded by genre and convention:

### Myself Singing

Several scrolls of wisteria parchment cover the table in piles;  
In picturing bamboo, feelings of the heart never burn to ash.  
How can the public eye know me and my mind,  
When they see a painter of the inner chamber?

*mizukara utau*  
*sentō ikufuku manshō ni uzutakashi*  
*take wo utsushite jōkai nao imada kai narazu*  
*segan nanzo shiran ware no kokoro*  
*mite keikō no gashi to nashikitaru*

自咏  
剡藤幾幅滿牀堆  
寫竹情懷猶未灰  
世眼何知我儂意  
看爲閨閣畫師來<sup>42</sup>

The poem problematizes the nineteenth claim that “seeing is knowing,” especially in the case of empirical observation and pictorial realism in painting. On the surface, the poem criticizes the world for seeing her as a painter of the inner chamber, which also questions the correlation between truth and artifice. When the poet exclaims, “How can the public eye know me and my mind,” she asks her readers to consider what about seeing a painting allows the viewer access to the person and the creative mind behind the brush. In asking this question, the poet addresses a salient problem of *kanshi* as a poetic form: how can a poet write about herself when the reader cannot see beyond the boundaries of genre and convention?<sup>43</sup>

Saikō answers this question through movement within and without the inner chamber. This movement allows her to engage with past and present ideologies, as we observed in her poems on the philosophy of composition, “Writing” and “Painting.” But as her poem “Myself Singing” illustrates, the viewer’s relationship to an object is often obfuscated, which problematizes the correlation between seeing and knowing. By the eighteenth and nineteenth century, artistic representation of the mind and heart in lyric poetry and painting is enhanced by new epistemological models. These models did not throw the baby out with the bath water, as it were, but nuanced old modes with new ways of feeling and knowing the natural world, which poets such as Saikō echoed and ironized. As the poetic imagination in *kanshi* transforms to perceive the world in ways more real and true, a lyric subject emerges that is aware of herself and her reception in a dynamically changing society, and is also ironic towards the mediums, genres, and poetic conventions in which she practices.

## A Certain Slant of Light

The poems above showed us the lyric thinking in Saikō's poems on writing and painting, and how her thoughts moved dynamically with and against intellectual discourses of the past and present. I now shift my examination to poems about sensory perception and movement. These poems show the reader "how to see," and address some of the complexities of perception in the nineteenth century. They also show us how to see through the modes of painting, a medium that explores what light can do. And like painting, her poetic form mediates the complex relationship between seeing and knowing. This mediation includes the reader: as we read the poem, we enter her imagination and discover how the speaking subject sensually embodies objects and experiences in the poem.

The way *kanshi* instructs the reader how to see begins with the title. Nearly all of Saikō's poems have titles, as we noticed in the poems discussed above. In the Chinese and Japanese poetic traditions, titles provide the frame by which a poem conveys meaning.<sup>44</sup> In other words, a poem with a title is, at least in part, about the title. The meaning of a poem can diverge from the title through irony, but as a general rule titles guide interpretation. One of Saikō's poems is titled "Bamboo." When the title is an object, as it is here, the poem is often read in the genre of "poems on things" (*eibutsushi*, or *yongwushi* in Chinese). Ibi Takashi has observed that the rise in the popularity of *eibutsushi* coincides with the turn from neoclassicism to the poetics of *seirei* by the late eighteenth century, which was coeval with the rise of empirical and realistic representation in Japanese art.<sup>45</sup> I will show how the poem resonates with conventional themes and feelings, but also how the lyric subject merges with the object in the poem, a performance that straddles the line of writing oneself within and without poetic convention.

I mentioned in the opening of the chapter that Saikō is most known by art historians for her ink-wash paintings of bamboo.<sup>46</sup> Saikō's poem "Bamboo" is among many other poems on natural objects commonly depicted in literati painting.<sup>47</sup> Its strength and durability as a woody grass led it to become a traditional symbol for Confucian decorum, the qualities all noble gentlemen should have: uprightness, mental strength, perseverance, and so on. As a Confucian daughter, Saikō likely painted bamboo for similar reasons; but in her poetry, bamboo is figured in sensual ways, and becomes a complex object of desire. We recognize these feelings in the genre of boudoir poetry in which objects—mirrors, glass slippers, gauze curtains, the trousseau, and so on—are figured in sensual or erotic ways. The following poem "Bamboo" evokes the sensuous experience the poet gains by painting bamboo in her boudoir, but also transcends imaginary confinement by merging self and object, and form and content:

### Bamboo

When I awake there is no one around, the small cloister is pure;  
I grind the fragrant ink myself, the sound is soft and faint.  
Tall bamboo does not await the moon outside my chamber window;  
Pale shades fall aslant around my hand, taking form.

*take*  
*suiki hito naku shōin kiyoshi*  
*shitashiku bokuja wo sureba hibiki keikei*  
*shūkō matazu keisō no tsuki*

竹  
睡起無人小院清  
親磨墨麝響輕輕  
脩篁不待閨窗月

The poem is a seven-character quatrain (*shichigon zekku*), and blends two conventions: the boudoir topos and the genre of “poems on things,” both of which were popular during the Edo period. We assume in Line 1 that the poet is in her bedroom, and when she wakes up she looks out into the cloister or courtyard, where she sees no one, and only feels “pure” (*kiyoshi*). The feeling of pureness is evoked in many of Saikō’s poems, and is tied to the literati ideal of attaining a state that is simple, unadorned, and free of vulgar concerns. This is related to the aesthetics of *pingdan* (blandness) cherished in literati painting. Although the title of the poem gives it away, pureness is an affective response stirred by the image or presence of bamboo. The poem begins with her awake in order to avoid associations with the dreamscape, which is by nature a sensual place without boundaries of subjective experience. The poet wakes up in her boudoir, the feeling of pureness is in the air, and she decides to paint, whereupon we discover that wakefulness is just as dreamy in the poetic imagination.

In the tradition of “poems on things,” “Bamboo” imagines various affective responses to the object in view, in this case bamboo. As the events unfold, the reader enters a sensual fantasy about the hand’s intimate relationship with materials that make bamboo take form. Line 2 begins with *shitashiku*, an adverb indicating that an act is performed intimately, and suggests that the poet will use her own hand to grind the ink. Literati had servants do the dirty work of preparing the ink, but the poet decides to grind the ink herself. The ink is not any ordinary ink. The word *bokuja* refers to pungent ink with a fragrance that comes from the belly of a small deer. As she grinds the ink, the sound is *keikei*, a reduplicative binome and onomatopoeia for a soft, pleasant sound, which reifies the temporality of grinding, the fragrant ink caressing the stone back and forth. This moment reminds us of Susan Stewart’s argument that movement and time are part of the experience of touch: “As touch moves and takes time, pattern becomes apparent, just as following sound, we trace a path for it: we hear and feel sound emerge, discerning its form.”<sup>49</sup>

As the softness of sound fills the studio and echoes the affective pureness in Line 1, the poem begins to paint the atmosphere of bamboo. By Line 3, we know that we are in the poet’s inner chamber (*kei*), and close to the window from which she can see that there is no moonlight outside illuminating the cloister. We remember that Line 1 ends in the feeling of purity, the cause of which is unclear, so we temporarily assume that bamboo is nearby. Then Line 3, “Tall bamboo does not await moonlight outside my chamber window,” disrupts the association between bamboo growing tall in the cloister, thereby making it pure, which leaves the reader in suspension about what is making her feel pure. Line 3 suggests that the bamboo will take form by the work of some force other than the moonlight, which we discover in Line 4 is mediated by the hand of the artist.

The poem concludes with a complex visual and tactile image that echoes the temporality of the pleasant sound of grinding in Line 2, but also introduces a new sensation, with its own temporal and spatial dimensions. “Pale shades fall aslant” (*tan'ei shasha toshite*). At first glance, we imagine that the pale shades are shadows cast by the moonlight, or are pale rays of moonlight, both of which *tan'ei* can mean.<sup>50</sup> Considering that Line 3 ends with the image of “moon” (*tsuki*), and Line 4 opens with *tan'ei*, a word that normally describes moonlight, it is natural to think that the moonlight is present. But the negation in Line 3 asserts that it is not, and before reaching the end of the poem the reader is held in suspension about what the “pale shades” are referring to. The reduplicative binome *shasha*, translated above as “fall aslant,” is normally used to describe sun or moon light falling in an oblique direction. The way that the

shades fall *shasha* is a visual echo of the sound *keikei* produced by ink grinding. And when we discover that the source of the shade is the ink that the poet has just ground herself, taking form (*shōzu*) around the hand that is rendering them on paper, the *keikei* in Line 2 gains a corporeality as a shade, an ink-wash of bamboo. As the sound transforms into shade, and as it falls aslant, it enters a new dimension of time and space, the limits of which are left for us to imagine.

Concluding the poem with the image of bamboo shades taking form around the hand suggests a knowing of form that is mediated by the hand. Henri Focillon writes: “The hand knows that an object has physical bulk, that is smooth or rough, . . . The hand’s action defines the cavity of space and the fullness of the objects that occupy it.”<sup>51</sup> For the painter in the poem the form of bamboo is aural, tactile and visual: it begins as ink heard as a sound, then held in the suspension of thought as moonlight, it takes form as pale shades of ink falling aslant around the hand, thereby taking form on the canvas. The temporality of bamboo’s sensual embodiments performed by the end of the poem evokes how Susan Stewart describes beholding:

To experience the roughness or smoothness of an object, to examine its physical position or come to understand its relative temperature or moistness, we must move, turn, take time. Visual perception can immediately organize a field; tactile perception requires temporal comparison. We may say in fact that visual perception becomes a mode of touching when comparisons are made and the eye is “placed upon” or “falls upon” relations between phenomena.<sup>52</sup>

The reader’s eye falls upon the bamboo as the pale shades fall upon the canvas. But the role of the hand as the mediator, the creator, the producer of these shades is just as oblique; *megurite* is a verb that literally means “to enlase; to encircle; to surround.” Other interpretations of the poem have assumed that the shades are coming through the hand, dispelling the uncanny idea that the shades are falling aslant on their own like rays of moonlight.<sup>53</sup> Since we have *megurite*, the shades are falling aslant *around* the hand, but with the implication that the brush strokes are the result of the painter’s hand moving here and there around the canvas. The meaning of forming an enclosure around the hand is key here, since it echoes the theme of confinement in the inner chamber, but also comments on the boundaries of form and medium in painting. As the poet-painter beholds the bamboo taking form on her canvas, the bamboo is looking right back at her. In a way hauntingly reminiscent of John Keats’s “This Living Hand” (1819), the painter beholds bamboo as much as bamboo beholds the painter, and by extension the reader.<sup>54</sup>

Since the boudoir genre is all about sensual and sensuous experience, it makes sense for Saikō to write a poem on bamboo that links perception to touch as a way to evoke intense feeling. As Stewart writes, “of all the senses, touch is most linked to emotion and feeling.”<sup>55</sup> These sensuous evocations of emotion in the boudoir mirror contemporaneous developments in Qing poetry, including the revival of the boudoir genre and *ci* (song lyric) poetry.<sup>56</sup> Japanese poets did not compose *ci* because of the difficulty in reproducing the Chinese vernacular elements of the *ci* genre; but they did read them. As I mentioned in the Buson chapter, the influence of the song lyric—its complex temporal and spatial dimensions, repetition, variegated registers of voice and diction—can be found in *haikai* and *kanshi*.<sup>57</sup> Buson’s *haikai* revealed the cross-pollination of genres in the eighteenth century. Saikō’s poem “Bamboo” shows the boudoir topos working in concert with her counterparts in the Qing dynasty as a vehicle to explore the possibilities of feeling. Without moving from her bedroom window, the poet in “Bamboo” experiences multiples senses of bamboo, moving from the ear, to the eye, to the hand.



“Bamboo” was one demonstration of Saikō’s theory of traditional literati painting, which invoked Su Shi’s view that painting is not about resemblance. But as a poem in the late imperial revival of the “poems on things” genre, “Bamboo” blends traditional ways of seeing with a Western scientific gaze. Timon Screech has argued that the dominant mode of viewing an object in Japanese art is “synaptic,” which means that an object’s meaning is created by associations, “drawing the empirically seen into a web of things previously learnt.”<sup>58</sup> In “Bamboo,” these associations are affective (purity), material (cloister, ink, paper), and sensorial (sound, touch), which resonate with the boudoir atmosphere. The scientific gaze, however, is a fixity of looking that separates the object from its environment, viewing it as autonomous and apart from culture. When the bamboo comes to life as a natural object by the end of the poem, it straddles the line of poetic artifice, the uncanny, and fantasy, and a way of seeing an object autonomously.

Not all of Saikō’s poems were interested in the sensual and imaginative space of the boudoir, or with viewing objects in real and unreal ways. The poet is not always stationary, or confined to the inner chamber. Saikō also wrote poems as travelogues.<sup>59</sup> While many of these poems can be read as biographical accounts of the sights she saw and the people she met, some poems went beyond biography and abstracted the relationship between the poet-painter and the landscape.

One such poem is “Miscellaneous Poems Written on a Journey to the West,” which is conventional in form, but unconventional in content: the poem explores the possibilities of visual movement in a painting by complicating the distinction between seeing and knowing. The poet is out and about, beholding nature and describing what strikes the eye:

#### Miscellaneous Poem Written on a Journey to the West

Sea colors vast and indistinct like gazing into the obscure;  
 Serried masts beyond the trees, blanketed in evening smoke.  
 Blue, blue tricking the eye—is that sky or water?  
 I wonder how wind-blown sails could fly by treetops.

*saiyū zasshi*

*kaishoku bōbō toshite fumei wo nozomu  
 renshō ki wo hedatete ban'en tairaka nari  
 seiran me wo mayowasu ten ka mizu ka  
 kaitei su fūhan shōbyō ni yuku wo*

西遊雜詩

海色茫茫望不明  
 連檣隔樹晚煙平  
 青藍迷眼天耶水  
 怪底風帆松杪行<sup>60</sup>

Like “Bamboo,” the poem is a seven-character quatrain (*shichigon zekku*). The poem dates to March, 1846, when Saikō took her nephew to Kyoto.<sup>61</sup> As she does in “Bamboo,” Saikō explores the possibilities of perception in “Journey to the West.” Although the poet is away from the boudoir, window, and studio, she takes her brush and canvas with her: as the poet beholds the landscape, she paints a picture that merges reality with painterly representation, and evokes the sublime.<sup>62</sup>

The poem opens with the image of sea colors (*kaishoku*).<sup>63</sup> We immediately imagine different shades of blue, and how they grow increasingly indistinct as they stretch into the vast distance. The reduplicative binome *bōbō*, meaning “vast and indistinct” describes the space of the ocean, but also the heart of the poet longing for an ineffable object.<sup>64</sup> Line 1 concludes with an affirmation of the vastness and indistinctness, spatial and affective, by saying that the sea

colors vast and indistinct are like “gazing into the obscure” (*fumei*). This “gaze” (*nozomu*) is hopeful and filled with longing. Thus the *bōbō* gives *nozomu* a spatial and temporal dimension, qualifying the poet’s gaze into boundless obscurity with feelings of endless longing.

The poem’s relationship to ideas of realistic representation in 1846 anticipates or engages with contemporary discourses about photographic representation. Maki Fukuoka has observed that by the mid-nineteenth century Japanese artists were interested in representing (*sha*) the real (*shin*). Fukuoka traces the term *shashin*, which by the late eighteenth century referred to pictorial realism.<sup>65</sup> After photography developed in the 1860s, the term came to refer to “photograph.” Confucian scholar and poet Gotō Shōin (1797-1864) left commentary about Saikō’s poem that speaks to the idea of *shashin* as a representation of the real:

The poem represents a true view of the tossing sea.

*nishu nada no me no shin wo utsuseru mono nari* 二首灘目寫真<sup>66</sup>

As I discussed earlier, *shin* (true, real) became an aesthetic idea in Japanese poetry by the mid-Edo period, which continued into the nineteenth century during which Saikō was writing. In the context of *kanshi*, the ideological roots of *shin* lie in *seirei* poetics, which called for truthful and sincere self-expression in poetry, and thereby encouraged writers to discuss matters of the everyday. This interest in *shin* overlapped with the new epistemological models in natural history, and the pictorial realism in painting. Shōin describes the scene in Saikō’s poem as a *nada*, or “tossing sea,” which he then writes has been represented (*utsuseru*) as *shin*. What makes the poem capture *shin* is twofold: the poem’s ability to represent a scene with the suggestion of pictorial realism, but with an expression of feeling that mirrors the movement of the tossing seascape. This blending of feeling and scene evinces her lyric subjectivity.

Right on the heels of the vast indistinctness and visual obfuscation in Line 1 comes an optical illusion that unfolds in the rest of the poem, producing an effect similar to viewing a two-dimensional painting with a distorting lens. This lens could be a zograscope, a late-eighteenth century device used to enhance depth perception of a flat image.<sup>67</sup> Fukuoka writes that the device was used in Japan to view *ukiyo-e*, Edo woodblock prints, and the lens were “often opaque and warped, unintentionally calling attention to the mediating mechanism of the lens itself.”<sup>68</sup> Line 2 opens with the image of serried masts (*renshō*), synecdoche for vessels on water, which are some distance away from trees. The depth perspective suggested here is then flattened and contradicted by the blanket of evening smoke stretching horizontally over the landscape.

While greater degrees of verisimilitude and photographic representation can be found in late Edo *kanshi*, Saikō’s poem is more interested in placing the boat in indistinctness: the timber masts (synecdoche for the ship) stick out in a sea of fog.<sup>69</sup> Saikō focuses on opacity and relies on the modes of painting to mediate her feelings about the scene. Her picture conjures Dutch paintings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that inspired Naotake and other painters of the Akita Ranga school. These artists are known for incorporating Western painting techniques and executing complex visual effects in their paintings, such as three-dimensional realism, distant perspective, chiaroscuro, reflections in water, and the use of blues in depicting the sky and sea.<sup>70</sup>

Line 3 opens with two blues, *sei* and *ran*, that puzzle perception (*me wo mayowasu*).<sup>71</sup> The poet describes this visual confusion as not being able to distinguish sky from water (*ten ka mizu ka*). Blue is contiguous with more blue, and the two colors melt into each other. Since “Journey to the West” is a travel poem, we assume that in order to see the line of demarcation

(the horizon) disappear, the poet must be standing at an elevated perspective where everything is within sight: ship masts, treetops, sky, water, and land. This evokes Timon Screech's description of the Dutch "turret-gaze" in Japanese painting of the late eighteenth century.<sup>72</sup> Maruyama Ōkyo (1773-1795), for example, produced paintings in which a person is positioned on the balcony of a tall building structure, gazing upon a natural expanse.

But if the poet was imagining a painting, then the movement and attending obfuscation would be pure fancy and not the realistic representation acclaimed by Shōin in his commentary. The point of the poem, then, is that these visual experiences are not mutually exclusive: in poetry the real is the fantasy and the fantasy is the real. By Line 4, the confusion only continues as the eye is tricked into seeing ship sails moving on the same level as pine treetops. While being indistinct and imaginative, the scene is also confounding and de-familiarizing, indicated by the verb *kaitei su*, translated above as "I wonder." The verb is used here to comment on an inexplicable image, a view that confounds reality.<sup>73</sup> In this way, the poem evokes the sublime, but in a self-referential way as a painting that makes the reader aware of the lens through which she can see landscape in new and non-linear ways.

Although the poem evokes modern painting and painterly techniques, we must remember that it is a travel poem. As a travel poem, "Journey to the West" also comments on the experience of perceiving a landscape when the lyric subject is in motion. Travel as a poetic genre has a long history in the Japanese tradition, and is mostly associated with exile, parting, and danger because the safe return of the traveller was always uncertain. By the Edo period, however, travel was more accessible than ever before. *Haikai* poet Matsuo Bashō's (1644-94) peripatetic wanderings in the seventeenth century are a case in point. As Marcia Yonemoto has observed, "from the seventeenth century on, the development of a transportation infrastructure and the growth of the market economy vastly increased physical mobility in Japan."<sup>74</sup> Yonemoto has shown how the proliferation of maps disseminated an awareness of space, and how the developments in transportation fundamentally changed the way people wrote about travel in early modern Japan. Poets were no longer limited to images of the past, but could incorporate images of the present, such as places where they had actually traveled.<sup>75</sup>

Emerging at a historical moment of increasing mobility, "Journey to the West" also evokes the disorienting experience of early modern transport.<sup>76</sup> The wonder filled with anxiety that concludes "Journey to the West" reveals the uncertainty of the lyric subject during a time of increasing mobility domestically and overseas. This mobility reflects not only the physical movement of the poet, but also the ideological movements of the early nineteenth century.

The poems examined thus far have shown how poetic form mediates the thoughts and ideas that circulated during her time, including the early modern notion that what one sees is what one knows. "Bamboo" exemplified the kind of uncanny animation that can happen within the inner chamber, and "Journey to the West" showed the kind of movement that can happen without. As we observed in "Bamboo," the imagination of the object turned on the perceiving subject—the painter beholding bamboo became the painter beheld by bamboo. This trick of perception is echoed in "Journey to the West," in which the lyric subject confronts a sublime landscape and doubts the credibility of what she is seeing. While these poems exemplify the wonders and imaginative possibilities of poetry and painting, they also reveal an anxiety about the act of perception itself, albeit replete with sensual and awesome affect.

## There is No Frigate Like a Book

The rest of this chapter returns to the inner chamber, and reexamines the kinds of movement available by the window, the same window evoked in the earlier poem “Writing.” As Imanishi has observed, windows in late Edo painting were frames of perception, portals to the everyday lives of literati men and women.<sup>77</sup> In *ukiyo-e* painting, women were often shown reading by a window.<sup>78</sup> In Saikō’s poetry, windows were a fixture of the inner chamber and means of literary transport to the Chinese and Japanese classics. She composed poems on reading that situated a female subject in a painting, and at the same time transported herself and reader into the text.

Poems about reading reflected the thriving book and reading culture of the Edo period. Chinese vernacular novels circulated widely in translation, and influenced popular genres of Japanese prose, such as *gesaku* (playful writing), *sharebon* (pleasure quarter fiction) and *yomihon* (reading books). As P. F. Kornicki and others have shown, aristocratic women during the Edo period read a variety of books, especially those didactic and written for women.<sup>79</sup> On the whole, Saikō’s poems on reading chiefly concerned the classics. She composed poems on Sima Qian’s (145?-90?BC) *Records of the Grand Historian* (Shiji), as well as Rai Sanyō’s *Nihon gaishi* (1827; Unofficial history of Japan). Mari Nagase has discussed these poems on history as a way Saikō wrote herself out of the conventions of poetry composed by women.<sup>80</sup> In addition to works in classical Chinese, Saikō also read works from the Japanese canon, including Murasaki Shikibu’s *The Tale of Genji* (eleventh century; Genji monogatari), which was required reading for aristocratic women.<sup>81</sup> Saikō was not alone as reader of *Genji*, but she was one of the few *banjin* to treat a Japanese novel in *kanshi* form.

By writing a poem on *The Tale of Genji*, Saikō participated in the *Genji* fervor in late Edo intellectual discourse. Confucian discourse condemned the novel for being racy and therefore indecent. By the late eighteenth century, we find a new intensity of reading and interpretation of *Genji*, especially among scholars of nativist learning (*kokugakusha*). Kamo no Mabuchi (1697-1769), Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801), and other classical philologists condemned non-native ideologies, such as Confucianism and Buddhism, and instead looked towards classical Japanese literature for native identity and sensibility.<sup>82</sup> Norinaga wrote a theoretical treatise on *Genji* called “The Tale of Genji: A Little Jeweled Comb” (1799; Genji monogatari tama no ogushi), in which he argues that the essence of *Genji* is *mono no aware*, or “empathy or sympathy for others.” Norinaga’s theory bridged the novel’s aesthetics of longing with a nativist agenda that longed for a prelapsarian Japanese identity untainted by non-native ideology.

Norinaga’s treatise exemplifies how nativist politics were coeval with an eighteenth century zeitgeist about the depiction of human emotions in literature, and the power of poetry to express them. Before “A Little Jeweled Comb,” Norinaga wrote another essay entitled “My Personal View of Poetry” (1763; Isonokami sasamegato), in which he argues that poetry communicates deep emotions, and that poetry, unlike ordinary language, is able to do this precisely because of its artifice. He describes this constitutive feature of poetry as *aya* (also *bun*), or “patterning of words,” which distinguishes it from the vernacular. The patterning of words enables poets to communicate, but more important, empathize with others to achieve mutual understanding. These ideas about empathy are reiterated in “A Little Jeweled Comb” when he discusses Murasaki’s theory of fiction, which, simply put, is to communicate the truths of emotion and human experience, and to seek the empathy and sympathy of others, including the reader.

Saikō's poem exemplifies how form and content do not necessarily define each other when genres and sensibilities blend. Although Saikō was not a *kokugaku* scholar, and was more conversant with Chinese and Confucian circles since she was a *bunjin* writing and painting in the Chinese style, she read Japanese literature and composed a series of poems on *Genji*.<sup>83</sup> In the history of *kanshi*, topics and allusions to literature are of chiefly Chinese origin; but this changes in the Edo period. Saikō's poems on *Genji* are examples of how *kanshi* expands its range of literary and philosophical topics: *kanshi* was no longer bound to Chinese literature and philosophy, and even wrestled with ideologies that nativists like Norinaga claimed were occluded by Confucian and Chinese thought.<sup>84</sup> In 1834, she composed a seven-character ancient-style poem (*shichigon koshi*) in which she represents the experience of reading *Genji*:

Reading Murasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of Genji*

Who wields a red brush and depicts emotional truth,  
Intoxicating the hearts and minds of readers for a thousand years?  
Discerning the nuances of its beauty, sure enough, she is a woman;  
Her elegant sensibilities naturally differ from those of a man.

- 5 Spring rain falling, he trims the lamp, and ranks a hundred blossoms,  
Whereupon his tales of cherishing scent and pitying jade begin.  
At dusk he crosses the Milky Way on the bridge of magpie wings;  
By dawn he entrusts the blue bird to deliver a letter of immortal love.  
A gourd flower, a gated alley, moonlight traces;
- 10 A cicada shell, thin garments, a torch at half-glow.  
Summer insects burn on their own, throwing themselves into flame;  
Spring butterflies dance about madly, their wings wooing the blossoms.  
Mischievous cats roll up the green bamboo blinds;  
Chang'e is indistinct, hidden in a palace on the moon.
- 15 Romances lasting as long as cloud and rain broke his heart into pieces;  
When all but cold embers remained of the flame, in secret he shed tears.

- Fifty-four chapters comprising tens of thousands of words,  
And in the end, nothing escapes the word "emotion."  
In emotion there is joy and pleasure, pain and sadness;
- 20 Above all, the emotion most resonant is longing for the other.  
Do not condemn the entire work for treading on indecency;  
Wanting to say it all is to exhaust the situations of emotion.

At my little window I hold up a lamp, the night is desolate and still;  
I, too, will attempt to plumb the profundity of mind and heart.

*shishi wo yomu*  
*tareka tōkan wo torite jōji wo utsusu*  
*senzai dokusha kokoro yoeru ga gotoshi*  
*myōsho wo bunseki suru wa hatashite jōji*  
*mizukara jōfu to fūkai kotonaru*

讀紫史  
誰執彤管寫情事  
千載讀者心如醉  
分析妙處果女兒  
自與丈夫風懷異

*shun'u tō wo kirite hyakka wo hinsu*  
*kō wo oshimi gyoku wo awaremu wa kore yori hajimaru*  
*ginkan yūbe ni wataru ujaku no hashi*  
*senshin akatsuki ni okuru seichō no tsukai*  
*koka monkō tsuki ikkon*  
*senzei ishō tō hansui*  
*kachū mizukara yaite hono'o ni tōzuru mi*  
*shunchō kyōbu shite hana wo kouru hane*  
*rido burai ni shite shōren wo age*  
*kōga iki toshite getsuden okubukashi*  
*yū'un tei'u sundan no chō*  
*reikai zanshoku hisoka ni namida wo taru*  
*gojūshihen senban no kotoba*  
*hikkyō idezu jō no ichiji wo*  
*jō ni kanraku ari hishō ari*  
*nakanzuku jō wo atsumuru wa kore sōshi*  
*togamuru nakare tsūhen koto in ni wataru wo*  
*kiwamete jō wo tsukusu tokoro wo tokidasan to hosshite*  
*shōsō ni tomoshibi wo kakagete yoru sekiryō*  
*ware mo mata shin'i wo tokan to hossu*

春雨剪燈品百花  
 惜香憐玉自此始  
 銀漢暮渡烏鵲橋  
 仙信曉遞青鳥使  
 瓠花門巷月一痕  
 蟬蛻衣裳燈半穗  
 夏蟲自焚投焰身  
 春蝶狂舞戀花翅  
 狸奴無賴細簾揚  
 嫦娥依稀月殿邃  
 尤雲殢雨寸斷腸  
 冷灰殘燭偷垂淚  
 五十四篇千萬言  
 畢竟不出情一字  
 情有歡樂有悲傷  
 就中鍾情是相思  
 勿罪通篇事涉淫  
 極欲說出盡情地  
 小窓挑燈夜寂寥  
 吾儂亦擬解深意<sup>85</sup>

As she demonstrated in her poems “Writing” and “Painting,” Saikō uses the capaciousness of the *koshi* form to treat discursive topics, such as the experience of reading. The poem represents the experience of reading *The Tale of Genji* by giving form to the novel’s structure of feeling, which in the words of Norinaga, is about *mono no aware*, or “sympathy or empathy for others.” The word in the poem that addresses this structure of feeling is *jō*, translated above as “emotion,” and is a term that resonates with, if not as a substitute for, Norinaga’s theory of *mono no aware* as the essence of the novel. In the following analysis, I will show how the poem transports the reader to moments in the novel through allusion, creating a montage of images from *Genji*. Through these images, followed by commentary about the essence of the novel, the poem represents how Murasaki depicts the empathetic and sympathetic relations between characters, and in the end how the reader participates in this affective loop between author, character, and reader.

The poem’s opening discussion about authorship is a self-reflexive comment on the literary sensibilities of a woman author. Lines 1 and 2 comment on what the novel is about: “Who wields a red brush and depicts emotional truth, / Intoxicating the hearts and minds of readers for a thousand years?” The word *jōji*, translated above as “emotional truth” has two meanings fused together: “the truth of a situation” and “romantic feelings between men and women,” which taken broadly refer to the emotional responses between characters in the novel. *Genji* is a novel set in the Heian period (794-1185) and is a tale of Prince Genji’s dalliances with women of the Heian aristocracy. Genji forms many relationships with women, and they all end in sadness and longing. Rather than falling into the Confucian discourse that often condemned *Genji* for being vulgar and indecent, the poet here echoes Norinaga’s claims that *Genji* is about the sensitivity to human emotions stirred in situations of romantic courtship. Line 2 “Discerning the nuances of its beauty, sure enough, she is a woman; / Her elegant sensibilities naturally differ

from those of a man” reveals the poet’s prejudice towards the author being a woman, who in her view is able to treat the nuances of beauty (*myōsho*) with discernment (*bunseki*). The poet’s emphasis on the author being a woman, whose sensibilities differ from a man, is a moment of self-identification, revealing the poet’s awareness of her gender and identifying with another woman writing about the emotions. This demonstrates how readers can develop a rapport with the author, in this case, based on gender and literary sensibility.

The poet moves on to discuss how a woman writer perceives the world differently from men, highlighting her own self-awareness. She elaborates on the phrase “elegant sensibility” (*fūkai*) by listing allusions to *Genji* in Lines 5 to 16. Line 5 evokes a scene from the second chapter “Hahakigi” (Broom cypress), in which Genji and his brother-in-law Tō no Chūjō (one of the Middle Captains serving the Office of the Chamberlain) have an intimate conversation about women, discussing the politics of courtship and finding a suitable woman to marry. Spring rain falls outside, and the men chat inside by the candlelight, “ranking one hundred blossoms” (*hyakka wo hinsu*). “One hundred blossoms” is a metaphor for women. The whole chapter is about the perception and status of women—from looks to pedigree—and how that affects romantic companionship. Two other male characters (the Warden of the Left Mounted Guard and the Junior Secretary from the Ministry of Rites) join Genji and Tō no Chūjō, and discuss their own experiences courting women. The poet’s choice to begin her allusions with “Hahakigi” is pointed, since the remarks about women reveal Murasaki’s sensitivity to reputation, which we also read as a self-reflexive comment on the poet’s concern for her own repute.<sup>86</sup>

Line 6 comments on how Genji’s “tales of cherishing scent and pitying jade,” a metaphor for his dalliances with women, invites the reader to sympathize with the characters of the novel. The poem moves freely in and out of allusions to represent the experience of reading. The novel itself is replete with allusions to poetry, philosophy, and myth, including the legend of the cowboy (Hikoboshi) and the weaver maiden (Orihime) in Line 7: the two lovers are separated by the Milky Way and reunite by crossing a bridge formed by the wings of magpies on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month, which is now the Tanabata festival. The allusion summarizes the drama of romance depicted in the novel: Genji’s consummates his romances in the evening; by morning he has fled, whereupon he sends his messenger boy to deliver poems to the woman with whom he spent the night. Lines 9 and 10 provide allude to two women who have romances with Genji: Yūgao (The Lady of the Evening Faces) and Utsusemi (The Lady of the Cicada Shell). Lines 11 and 12 are poetic metaphors for the danger and self-destruction that can result from such failed romances. The Chinese allusions in Lines 13 and 14 speak to the method by which the heart and emotions of characters are revealed to the reader: some exposed, as if naughty cats have just raised the blinds, and some hidden like Chang’e, the goddess of the moon in Chinese mythology. All this is to show that love is fleeting, and that the novel asks us to empathize with Genji, a man of feeling and sensibility.

The poem moves on to discussing the essence of the novel, and evokes Norinaga’s theory of *mono no aware*, which argues that *Genji* is about showing empathy or sympathy for others. The limits of the *kanshi* form do not allow for the Japanese phrase *mono no aware* to appear, and instead features the Chinese graph *jō*, translated above as “emotion.” The word appears in Norinaga’s essays on *mono no aware*, and is usually glossed as *kokoro*, or “heart and mind.” Since Saikō produced a *kanshi* she is also evoking its meanings and associations in Chinese poetry and philosophy: In Chinese *jō* is *qing*, a word that has inspired centuries of intellectual debate on its meanings and usages. Recently, David Schaberg has examined the word’s morally

inflected meaning in early China, defining it as “any truth—objective or emotional—that is subject to hiding and that is brought into the open through human exposition. Whether they are psychological constants, social or natural dynamics, or personal responses to situations, *qing* are the sorts of things that might remain hidden or unknown, and that require discovery to be called *qing*.”<sup>87</sup> Schaberg’s discussion of the meaning of *qing* in early China is not mutually exclusive from the word’s later lyrical connotations of “feeling,” which continue through the Ming and Qing dynasties as the theme of sentimental vernacular fiction in vogue during the Edo period. His argument that *qing* is something hidden that requires discovery is echoed in Norinaga’s discussion of Murasaki’s larger purpose in writing *The Tale of Genji*:

All the things one sees and hear and experiences in this life . . . when one is deeply moved and struck by them, they cannot simply be shut away in one’s heart. We wish to tell someone or write them down and show them to someone. This sets our hearts at ease as nothing else does, and when the listener or reader is moved to feel as we have felt, our relief is even greater.

すべて世にあらゆる、見る物きく物ふるる事の、さまざまにつけて . . . ふかく感ぜられて、いみじと思ふ事は、心のうちにこめてのみは、過しがたくて、かならず人にもかたり、又物にかきあらはしても、見せまほしくおもはるるものにて、然すれば、こよなく心のさはやぐを、それを聞見る人の、げに感ずれば、いよいよさはやぐわざなり。<sup>88</sup>

Writers write to be read and heard. Norinaga’s recapitulations of Murasaki’s theory of fiction as a way to record human experiences so that they can be discovered by the reader is reiterated in Lines 17-22 of Saikō’s poem, which argue that the entire novel is about emotion. As Norinaga notes the importance of the listener, we think about poetry as feelings overheard, and once heard the listener understands.<sup>89</sup> In writing a poem about reading *The Tale of Genji*, Saikō echoes Norinaga echoing Murasaki, who both believe that writing is about communicating human experiences, and that the task of understanding falls on the reader.

The poem concludes by explaining the role of the reader, which we interpret as another self-reflexive move to talk about the poem as a whole. Line 20 claims that the most resonant emotion in *Genji* is “longing for the other” (*sōshi*).<sup>90</sup> In Chinese poetry, *sōshi* (*xiangsi* in Chinese) is used in situations where one person longs for another person, and this feeling is often unrequited, which is why it carries so much weight. This sentiment is echoed in the poems that punctuate “the tens of thousands of words” in the novel, which may push the envelope of decency according to Confucian norms, but as the poet argues, “Wanting to say it all is to exhaust the situations of emotion.” Norinaga uses similar language when he argues that all the emotions are found in “love” (*koi*):

Virtually every sort of emotion experienced by the human heart is to be found in love. And so, this tale having been created in order to inventory the full range of life’s emotional experiences, thereby moving the reader deeply, the manifold nuances of feeling in the human heart, the savor of the extreme depths of emotion, could hardly be expressed without touching on the subject of love.



さまざまに人の心の感ずるすぢは、おほかた戀の中にとりぐしたり。かくて此物語は、よの中の物のあはれのかぎり、書あつめて、よむ人を、深く感ぜしめむと作れる物なるに、此戀のすぢならでは、人の情の、さまざまとこまかなる有さま、物のあはれのすぐれて深きところの味は、あらはしがたき。<sup>91</sup>

The idea of exhausting emotion and human experience in the poem is echoed in Norinaga's writings on *Genji*. While his claims concentrate on "love" being the emotion or state that has it all, a claim he also makes about *mono no aware*, the poet in Saikō's poem argues that the strongest emotion is "longing for the other" (*sōshi*). The two are not mutually exclusive, but it is interesting to consider their differences. Feelings of longing abound in *Genji* since all the relationships end in separation, and in most cases the woman is portrayed as longing and misunderstood. Longing is also the prime emotion in Chinese poetry about women of the inner chamber. In this way, the poet is writing herself into the novel and over Norinaga's theory, identifying herself as one of Genji's abandoned women.

The poem concludes with a scene of the reader by the window, reading *Genji* by candlelight, which mirrors the first description of Genji in Line 5. As Genji and his male associates "rank one hundred blossoms," the poet finds herself doing the same, but alone and with her own perspective. The longing in Line 20 recurs in the image of night "desolate and still" (*sekiryō*) in the penultimate line, as the poet's own lonesome persona as a woman of the inner chamber joins Murasaki and the characters of the novel. This empathetic and sympathetic union made possible by reading is poly-perspectival and inter-subjective: as writer, the poet becomes Murasaki as author; as an abandoned woman, she becomes Yūgao and Utsusemi; and as reader she becomes Genji, who reads and responds to the feelings of the women he courts.

The final line "I, too, will attempt to plumb the profundity of mind and heart" reveals the poet's own individuated experience of reading. She uses a similar first person pronoun we saw in the earlier poem "Myself Singing," and stresses that she *too* has an interpretation to offer, an assertion over the presiding discourses about the novel. The reader, alone to herself, probes the novel in search of *shin'i*, which can mean "profound meaning." The word *i* (meaning) also has semantic affinity with *jō* (emotion) and *shin* (heart-mind) in Chinese poetry, and are often all glossed in Japanese as *kokoro*, the "heart and mind." By concluding in this way, the poem comes full circle: it returns to the topic of reading, and conveys the message that the process of reading, of getting into the minds and hearts of characters and author, is essential to understanding others. And as the poet has shown us, the poem is one way to form one's own interpretation, despite what prevailing discourses may claim.

### A Formal Feeling Comes

The poems thus far have taken us through Saikō's lyric contemplations on philosophies of composition, the uncanny and sublime wonders of perception, and the individuated experience of reading. The previous poem showed how the reader forms a connection with the author and the characters through sympathy and empathy. Through an array of allusions, and a discussion about those allusions, the poem evoked a strong sense of longing. The rest of this chapter dwells on longing, which is as much of a fixture of the inner chamber as the window. An examination of longing will help us think about dialectical movements within and without genre.

The way Saikō evokes longing in her poems is not typical of the boudoir plaint, which is conventionally overly forlorn and overly sentimental—in other words, the excess is what makes the genre distinct. Saikō worked within and without the genre, making the poems more about expressing a sense of self, rather than just rehearsing tropes. This critique of the boudoir genre reminds us of the contrarian persona Qing poet Gu Zhenli (1623-1699) assumes in her poetry. Xiaorong Li has shown how Gu’s alternative representation of the boudoir was a means of “articulating her idiosyncratic sense of self.”<sup>92</sup> It is highly likely that Saikō read Gu, since she was familiar with other late imperial women poets. But the poet in Saikō’s poems, however, is not subversive; rather, she is writing about the boudoir in a self-consciousness way, and we see this in how she evokes emotions, namely longing. As images and thoughts moving back and forth in her mind, the poet exhibits a longing that is dynamic and dialectical.

Saikō left two poems that read together form a dialectic on longing. One is set in spring, and the other autumn, and they both discuss sleep: in the spring poem the poet wants to stay awake, but in the autumn poem, she cannot fall asleep. With problems of sleep on the mind, the poet confronts feelings of grief and loneliness. As Emily Dickinson once wrote, “After great pain, a formal feeling comes.”<sup>93</sup> Saikō gives form to the pang of grief in one seven-character ancient-style poem (*shichigon koshi*), and one seven-character regulated verse (*shichigon risshi*). The grief evoked in these poems remind us of the same grief found in the *ci* (song lyric) genre, and even older in Yuefu (Music Bureau) poetry, a style of verse that emerged in the Western Han dynasty that was sung to popular folk tunes. Yuefu poetry and the song lyric often featured the trope of the abandoned woman, and came back in full swing in the late imperial period in China. Below is “Spring Lyric,” a title that conjures the Chinese lyric tradition:

### Spring Lyric

Days long by the golden needle, sensing faint fatigue;  
 Outside the window weeps a willow finer than silk thread.  
 Proud and pained, the heart pulses and pounds, never to cross the threshold;  
 Myself knows when idle grief wells from within, and brims over my face.  
 5 Wanting to dispel a longing for sleep, a constant longing for tea;  
 By the pitiful cold hearth, quiet in the cloister grows deep and deeper.  
 In a low voice I summon the young maid several times,  
 Only to startle the pair of swallows roosting in the eaves.

*shunshi*

*hi nagaku shite kinshin biken wo oboyu*  
*sōzen no suiryū ito yori mo hososhi*  
*kyōshin myakumyaku shikii wo idezu*  
*mizukara shiru kanshū noborite omote ni mitsuru wo*  
*suishi wo yaburan to hosshite shikiri ni cha wo omou*  
*ayaniku no reiro shinshin no in*  
*teisei ikudo ka kanji wo yobu*  
*osoraku wa chōryō sōshoku no tsubame wo odorokasan*

春詞

日永金針覺微倦  
 窓前垂柳細於線  
 矜心脈脈不出闕  
 自知閑愁上滿面  
 欲破睡思頻思茶  
 生憎冷爐深深院  
 低聲幾度喚鬢兒  
 恐驚彫梁雙宿燕<sup>94</sup>

At first glance, the form resembles a seven-character regulated verse (*shichigon risshi*) because of the eight lines; but like Yuefu poems, and song lyrics that imitated the Yuefu style, the meter is unregulated, which allows for more freedom in diction and lyric expression. Through its concern for sleep and languor, the poem converses with the vast corpus of writing by late imperial women on illness, which includes fatigue and sleep disorders. This rings true especially for the autumn poem, which is about insomnia. Grace Fong has observed that women poets used illness as a poetic motif for autobiographical reflection and aesthetic creation, as it enabled them to construct an alternative space and temporality of being.<sup>95</sup> Fong has shown how their poems on illness privileged poetic evocations of sensory perception and bodily sensation.

In “Spring Lyric” Saikō figures time as long and listless, like other poems about spring in the Chinese and Japanese traditions.<sup>96</sup> By writing in the Yuefu-inspired song lyric tradition, she evokes a kind of conventional languor and depression redolent of boudoir poetry, but in a way that articulates a heightened awareness of sensory perception and bodily sensation in the present. This awareness manifests in her lyric thinking through antipodes: inside and outside, motion and stillness, sleep and wakefulness, hot and cold, the heard and the unheard. These polarities constitute the totality of a literati painting; here, Saikō paints a landscape of the mind.

The poem opens with an awareness of time inside and outside the inner chamber. The golden needle is metonymy for sewing, but also synecdoche for the hand of a clock. Boudoir poetry conventionally features domestic objects, but also objects that denote the passing of time.<sup>97</sup> Either sewing all day long or watching the day pass as the clock's hands go round, the poet in Line 1 betrays her awareness of time and its sluggishness in spring. We can take the subject of “sensing faint fatigue” (*biken wo oboyu*) to be the golden needle as well as the poet herself. By the end of Line 1, we find the poet's consciousness hanging by a thread. She develops this thought in Line 2, where she looks outside her window and sees a weeping willow “finer than silk thread” (*ito yori mo hososhi*). Like the image of the golden needle in Line 1, the willow branch drooping outside evokes the feeling of fatigue and spring lassitude. Although Lines 1 and 2 do not form a couplet, the comparison to silk thread by the end of the line exemplifies the semantic unity between lines in Chinese poetry. The inside and the outside are fused together, like how the poet in Saikō's poems is never hermetically confined to one space.

The poem then moves to discuss the poet's awareness of the magnitude of her feelings. Line 3 opens with the word *kyōshin*, which Kado Reiko interprets to mean a “heart of restraint.” The *kyō* has many meanings, including “sensitive,” “pained,” and “proud.” Here, the heart is *myaku myaku*, a reduplicative binome also with many meanings, from “hidden” to “pulsating.” The idea of the line suggests that the heart of the poet is content with being confined in the inner chamber, and yet also pained by such confinement. The line ends with “never to cross the threshold” (*shikii wo idezu*), which we take to be the reason her proud and pained heart pounds. We know that Saikō in real life was not a kept woman, and did not feel confined like many of her Qing contemporaries writing in the genre of boudoir poetry. Here the poet acknowledges the tradition of the boudoir plaint, but makes it her own by asserting a willfulness to stay inside, not to cross the threshold of the bedroom entryway. Line 4 echoes this willful determination by claiming that while her heart may be hidden away inside pulsating with grief, she knows when that grief appears from nowhere, rises up from within, and manifests writ large on her face. This self-awareness speaks to Kado's interpretation of self-restraint, but a kind that does not rein in emotion, as much as it evinces a keen awareness of how grief can overwhelm the heart and mind.

Rather than abandoning herself to languor and longing, the poet tries to find relief, which paradoxically would only prolong her longing. In order to dispel her longing for sleep, she longs

for some tea. By putting both longings in tension with one other, the poet repeats the Chinese graph for longing (*shi* and *omou* in the Japanese). Such repetition is common in ancient-style verse because it adds feeling and lyric energy. The longing for sleeping is repurposed as longing for tea. But the tension between these actions is then negated and simultaneously echoed by the images in Line 6: the fire of the hearth is cold, so she cannot prepare tea, and the cloister where the poet is situated grows “deep and deeper” (*shinshin*) into silence. The repetition of *shin* (deep; to deepen) echoes the longing in the previous line, but also gives that longing a temporality because the reduplicative binome suggests that the night is growing deeper. As time passes, the poet’s longing endures as long as she can stay awake.

After failed attempts to make tea on her own, the poet seeks help, which results in a misdirected address. In Line 7, the poet summons her maid (*kanji*) for assistance (probably for some tea), but instead wakes up the swallows roosting in the eaves of the house. What do we make of an ending like this? The earlier lines convey the poet’s self-awareness of her grief, how it manifests, and her attempts to find resolution, albeit contradictory. The poem does not feature another person until the end, and even when that person is mentioned, the poet’s attempt to communicate with her fail. The only living beings that take notice of the poet’s speech are a pair of swallows, likely a male and female roosting together.<sup>8</sup> A pair of swallows (*sōen*; *shuangyan* in Chinese) is a conventional symbol of marriage or companionship between a man and a woman in Chinese poetry.<sup>9</sup> By ending with the image of swallows, the poem turns back on itself, highlighting the solitude of the lyric subject, who is without a companion. But rather than wishing to be like the pair of swallows, as we find in other poems in the tradition, the poet concludes with the misdirected address, and goes nowhere. The poet is still alone with herself, just more aware of her loneliness on a long spring day.

In 1824, Saikō composed another poem on sleep and longing, but set in autumn. Spring and autumn are the most affective seasons in Chinese poetry because they are both seasons of change and transience. Longing in spring poems is associated with the long span of the day; longing in autumn poems is associated with cold, decay, and loneliness, since winter is right around the corner. In her poem “Sleepless on a Bright Moon Night,” Saikō plays with the trope of the moon as the friend of the solitary poet. Typically, when the poet is in the company of the moon, there is wine toasting, shadow play, and dancing, like we find in the poems of Li Bai (701-762). However, the poet here suffers from insomnia, and consequently suffers from hypersensitivity to the sights and sounds of night:

#### Sleepless on a Bright Moon Night

Autumn nights are like streams—ever waking me from dream,  
 A crow in the woodland trees cawing two, three times.  
 The water clock drips barely faint, my robe getting colder;  
 The rest of the flame almost dark, I notice light on the window.  
 5 A couplet at random comes to mind amid the tranquil silence,  
 Myriad sensations spring forth, spilling from my pillow.  
 Tossing and turning unable to sleep, I long for old friends;  
 Just then, I glimpse the clear moon descending the roof.

*gesseki inezu*  
*shūshō mizu no gotoku yume shikiri ni odoroku*

月夕不寢  
 秋宵如水夢頻驚

*rinju ni karasu naku ryōsan sei*  
*kōrō yaya mare ni shite hi no rei wo soe*  
*zantō yōyaku kurakushite mado no akaruki wo oboyu*  
*ichiren tamatama kanchū ni oite etari*  
*bankan subete chinjō yori shōzu*  
*tenten shite nemurazu kyūyū wo omou*  
*atakamo miru rakugetsu okuryō ni kiyoki wo*

林樹鴉鳴兩三聲  
 更漏稍稀添被冷  
 殘燈漸暗覺窓明  
 一聯偶向閑中得  
 萬感渾從枕上生  
 展轉不眠思舊友  
 恰看落月屋梁清<sup>100</sup>

The title of the poem already tells us that the season is autumn, which we associate with melancholy and transience. A “bright moon night” (*gesseki*) often refers to the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month, on which the moon is bright. In the Chinese tradition, the moon’s radiance is an invitation for reflection.<sup>101</sup> In poetry, the moon often mediates feelings between the poet and beloveds across distances; in Saikō’s poem, the moon makes a brief appearance before it eventually disappears, leaving the poet without means to mediate her longing.

The metaphor that opens the poem indicates that the season is autumn, and shows a lyric subject thinking about the season as a disturbing rush of water. She claims that “Autumn nights are like streams,” and then qualifies the metaphor by saying that the rush of water ever (*shikiri ni*) wakes her from dream. We assume that the rest of the poem describes what she perceives while awake. The disturbing sound is echoed in Line 2 with the caws of crows in the trees, which she hears “two, three” times. The cawing of crows indexes the conventional lexicon in poems by late imperial women who describe a heightened auditory sense due to insomnia.<sup>102</sup> Although the cawing links the poem to a set of conventional tropes, the fact that the poet here is numbering the caws heightens the auditory sensation. Although numbers often have little to do with the objects they quantify in Chinese poetry, the numbers give palpability and presentness to the images in the previous line, almost reifying the ceaseless flow of the stream in Line 1. The numbers “two, three” suggest that the cawing is happening now and will continue to wake her.

As the poem unfolds, images complement and contrast each other, producing a tension, a push and pull effect, in the poetic imagination. Right on the heels of numbers, the poet evokes the water clock, or clepsydra, which Saikō often uses in her poetry to suggest the sluggishness of time. The clepsydra is an ancient time-measuring device activated by the flow of water. Western clocks had been available in Japan since the sixteenth century, so evoking the water clock is pure fancy, and seems to be deflecting the earlier claim that the poet is awake. The fluid stream in Line 1 takes forms as drops telling time, and like the caws of the crow in Line 2, these drops suggest a sense of quantity or measurability. But the fact that the drops are barely audible also stands in contrast to the loud and audible caws heard in the previous line. As the night gets late, the poet feels colder, a coldness that also registers in what she sees. Just like how the flowing stream and the crow caws become recurring drops of the water clock, the rest of the candlelight is about to go dark, only to be replaced by moonlight. The movement from one image to another shows a lyric mind thinking back and forth about degrees of fullness and emptiness, presences and absences.

Just when the moon makes its appearance as a shaft of light on her window, the window mediates creative inspiration. In Lines 5 and 6 the poem comments on itself in a self-reflexive observation about forming a couplet: “A couplet at random comes to mind amid the tranquil silence, / Myriad sensations spring forth, spilling onto my pillow.” Lines 5 and 6 are about a couplet, but also function as a couplet in the poem. One couplet (*ichiren*) generates myriad

sensations (*bankan*), which all spring forth from the pillow where the poet's head lies. The water imagery evoked by the Chinese graph *kon* (spilling all over) echoes the stream in Line 1 and the water clock drops in Line 3, as if these external sights and sounds have been internalized by the poet, assimilated into her sensorium, and are now sensations gushing forth from the pillow and spilling everywhere.

With myriad sensations all over the place, the poet tosses and turns. Unable to sleep, she starts longing for old friends (*kyūyū wo omou*).<sup>103</sup> The poet longs for old friends, and with a title like "Sleepless on a Bright Moon Night," we expect, along with the poet, that the moon will stay out to comfort her and mediate a connection with them. But the final line pulls the rug from under her feet, concluding with the moon's disappearance: "Just then, I glimpse the clear moon descending the roof." The poem sets us up for what would conventionally be a virtual reunion with beloveds through the connection of the moon; but instead, the poem ironizes that tradition and concludes with the affirmation of the poet's unresolved loneliness and the moon's clean exit from the scene.

Both "Spring Lyric" and "Sleepless on a Bright Moon Night" exemplify Saikō evoking the Chinese traditions of lyric expression as old as the Yuefu genre, and its later imitations and reincarnations in *shi* and *ci* poetry in the late imperial period. They also evince a lyric subject thinking dialectically about the relationship between illness and emotion, and we see this thinking in action with the arrangement of contradictory images in poetic form. While furnishing spaces of contradiction on their own, the poems are also working dialectically with each other. One poem is set in spring and is about wanting to stay awake; the other is set in autumn and is about wanting to go to sleep. Yet both poems conclude with irony: the attempt to find a temporary solution to sleepiness or restlessness ends in failure. On the one hand, we sympathize and cry with the poet as painful feelings burst from her bosom, but we smile with her too, as each poem ends without closure and in a state of emotional suspension.

## Poets Light But Lamps

The dialectical poems we examined in the previous section showed the dynamic movements of thought when thinking in a genre. I conclude by addressing another kind of movement in her poetry: the deliverance of self when the subject feels stuck in poetic form. Later in her life, Saikō wrote poems about the poet's relationship with Time. These poems not only reveal an aging self and a deteriorating body, but also an anxiety about self-transmission and self-representation in poetic form. In the earlier poem "Myself Singing," we found a lyric subject aware of her reception in the public eye, and doubtful about the ability of her readers to see beyond the veneer of convention and genre. In 1834, a few years before the death of her father, Saikō produced two poems in which she problematized the idea of transmitting the self in the medium of poetry. As Saikō laments the passage of time and the self-alienation that comes with aging, the poem mediates a dialectic of past and present selves, and her identities as poet, painter, reader and caregiver. Through this mediation of different selves, Saikō suggests that the act of transmitting the self is complicated by the vagaries of time.

Saikō wrote two seven-character regulated verses under the title "Self Transmission" (*Mizukara yaru*).<sup>104</sup> From here on, they will be referred to as No.1 and No. 2, respectively. Regulated verse differs from ancient-style forms we have examined in that they, like the quatrain, have a strict meter. They also comprise eight lines, and by convention Lines 3-4 and Lines 5-6 form parallel couplets. The title "Self Transmission" calls attention to the act of

writing poetry, and the individuated poet using language to deliver a message to her reader. The poetic form enables Saikō to explore her feelings about transmission through oppositions and contradictions. The first poem mediates a series of oppositions—the fugitive and the eternal, presence and absence, past and present, life and death—in an attempt to suggest that the transmission of the self is ultimately uncertain:

### Self Transmission

- A dream fast and fleeting, a person half a century old;  
 Deep thoughts, fine and unending, quietly pain the heart.  
 The moon wanes, the moon waxes, from full to new;  
 Blossoms fall, blossoms bloom, in autumn and then in spring.  
 5 Pictures I once painted seem by a different hand;  
 Books I once read feel unfamiliar as I read them again.  
 My only wish is for my life to be without worry;  
 Yet there in the living room, my aged and ill father.

*mizukara yaru*

*ichimu sōsō hanbyaku no hito*

*yūkai ruru toshite an ni shin wo itamashimu*

*tsuki kake tsuki michite bō to saku to*

*hana ochi hana hirakite aki mata haru*

*katsute utsuseru ga wa te no nao betsu naru ka to utagai*

*sude ni mishi sho wa me ni kasanete aratanaru to oboyu*

*kono mi negau tokoro wa tada tsutsuga naki koto wo*

*nao kōdō no rōbyō no oya ari*

自遣

一夢匆匆半百人

幽懷縷縷暗愴神

月虧月滿望兼朔

花落花開秋又春

曾寫畫疑手猶別

已看書覺眼重新

此身所願唯無恙

猶有高堂老病親<sup>105</sup>

The poem opens with a dream, and through the figure of a dream, the poet comments on the medium of poetry. The word “*ichimu*” evokes the brevity of the eight lines that bound the poem, as well the limits of imaginary space contained therein.<sup>106</sup> In Line 1 the poet identifies herself as a woman around the age of fifty whose life seems as fleeting as a dream. This comparison of her life to a dream reveals an anxiety about how time presses upon the poet’s attempt to talk about herself in lyric form. The epistolary application of the reduplicative binome *sōsō* reinforces this reading: it is the phrase “Yours, in haste” that a writer uses to conclude a brief letter. As we read the statement that her life is as fleeting as a dream, we also read that her poem, her letter to the reader, has been condensed into a brief medium of eight lines. These feelings of brevity forebode the uncertainty of transmission.

The feelings of fleetingness in Line 1 contrast with the feelings of endlessness in Line 2. The reduplicative binome *ruru* appears in parallel opposition to *sōsō*. It evokes an image of a fine, endless thread and also describes the minuteness of her “deep thoughts” (*yūkai*). The word is also an adverb for writing in a “detailed manner,” like saying everything in every way. Thus the couplet formed by Lines 1 and 2 reveals a tension in the act of self transmission in poetry: a feeling that the busyness of life makes the attempt to render it into words on the page seem impossible, yet in the attempt to do so endless threads of profound feelings pull quietly and painfully in the depths of her heart. This comments on poetic form, which must contend with the

economy of words, but has inexhaustible depths of meaning that words may or may not be able to convey. By creating a contradiction between brevity and endlessness, the poet asks us to think about what the medium of poetry can do, and what it also fails to do.

The poem then creates another opposition: in the following couplets that form the center of the poem she juxtaposes the continuity of objects in nature with the discontinuity of human life. The couplet formed by Lines 3 and 4 uses the repetition of images whose presences and absences are mutable. In Line 3, the poet describes the visibility of the moon depending on the time of the month, and in Line 4, the visibility of the blossoms depending on the season. She chooses these natural images because they are always occurring, appearing in the same way as they always do, and this creates the feeling of continuity that she then negates in the following line. But continuity in nature is also continuity in poetic form, as the images are conventional. By talking about the beginnings and ends of the moon and the blossoms in spring and again in autumn, the poet comments on how poems continue to talk about the changing seasons, the moon, and the blossoms.

In addition to expressing continuity, the repetition in Line 3 compensates for the deficiency of language to express feelings. Cecile Sun has written about the ubiquity of repetition in English and Chinese lyric: “For the lyric, unlike any other mode of discourse, is obsessed with repetition, expressed not only through the overtly palpable rhythm and cadence of the emotions and thoughts, but also through a variety of covert and hence artful means of repetition, to deliver its thoughts and emotions in terms of something else.”<sup>107</sup> In Saikō’s poem—“The *moon* wanes, the *moon* waxes, from full to new; / *Blossoms* fall, *blossoms* bloom, in autumn and then in spring.” (tsuki *kake*, tsuki *michite bō to saku tō* / hana *ochi* hana *hirakite aki mata haru*)—the repetition in the beginning of both lines is overt, since a single word repeats in the same line. This kind of overt repetition enables the reader to sense emotive expression.

Both lines end with covert repetition by collocating nouns that evoke the cyclicity of changes in nature: *bō* and *saku* in Line 5, and *aki* and *haru* in Line 6. This repetition transmits the poet’s feelings in a way Sun describes as “in terms of something else.” By “something else,” Sun highlights something about repetition that does more than deliver the thoughts and emotions of the poet. This evokes William Wordsworth’s thoughts on how repetition makes up for deficiencies of language:

Words, a Poet’s words more particularly, ought to be weighed in the balance of feeling and not measured by the space which they occupy upon paper. For the Reader cannot be too often reminded that Poetry is passion: it is the history or science of feelings: now every man must know that an attempt is rarely made to communicate impassioned feelings without something of an accompanying consciousness of the inadequateness of our own powers, or the deficiencies of language.<sup>108</sup>

This excerpt comes from in a note to Wordsworth’s “The Thorn” in the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. Wordsworth observes that when we communicate passion, we become aware of the deficiencies of language. He proposes that one way for a poet to circumvent that deficiency and transmit passion is through the act of repetition. By repeating *tsuki* and *hana*, and describing their cyclicity, the poet in “Self Transmission” is expressing lyric feeling for these natural objects as well as the seasonality that they repeatedly represent in real life and in poetry;



however, the surrounding context of the line reveals that she is praising poetry as much as she is ironizing its ability to do what she cannot.

In this way, the repetition of the moon (*tsuki*) and the blossoms (*hana*) suggests a cycle that will never end, and this suggestion of continuity in nature meets with the fugitiveness of human life in the couplet formed by Lines 5 and 6. Here the poet finds herself at a disjuncture in time, a moment when she reflects on the relationship between the artist and her available mediums of transmission, her painting and reading (and by extension, her writing). This feeling of difference and unfamiliarity are feelings concomitant with the awareness of her past self and her present self. The poet finds her present self “different” (*betsu naru*) and “unfamiliar” (*arata naru*). The adverbs in this couplet are particularly interesting: both begin with adverbs marking past completion, *katsute* and *sude ni*, and both end with a promise of newness, *nao* and *kasane*, but a newness that will always be unexpected. In other words, while the natural world (and poetry too) inexorably moves in cyclical motion and appears to be just repeating itself again, what does change is the poet—the mortal hand—with the realization that her present cannot ever return to her past. The poet’s self-transmission is inevitably subject to the mediation of time.

The poem concludes with the desire to escape a reality in which she finds herself stuck. The prosaic diction of Line 7—*kono, tokoro, tada*—produces a resonant cry of desperation to be free of sickness and all other worries (*tsutsuga*).<sup>109</sup> Line 8 begins with *nao* (repeated from Line 5), which negates the force of that wish with the reality that her aging ill father is still there, meaning she cannot rid herself of sickness and grief. As I discussed earlier, illness is a common theme in late imperial poetry, since it evokes the quotidian in *seirei* poetics. Fong argues that the evocation of illness offered women poets an alternative spatial and temporal awareness, one that furnished a space for personal and intellectual reflection. As women poets before Saikō used illness as a prelude or even pretext to writing, we can see how the illness of the father stimulates a poem about mortality and uncertainty, what Romanticists call negative capability. By ending the poem with a reflection on mortality, the poet comments on the end of transmission between herself and her father, and from there comments on her own ability to transmit.<sup>110</sup> In the process of composing the poem, she realizes the limits of transmission, that the passage of time reveals the mutability of her self-awareness and the ability of her words to mean what she had intended them to mean when she first composed them.

In No. 1 the poet mediates a series of oppositions as a way to express her feelings about the uncertainty of transmission. In No. 2, she expands upon the feelings that conclude poem No. 1—the feeling of self-alienation, the awareness of mortality, and the feeling of being inseparable from sickness and grief. But as No. 2 returns to her initial concern with the brevity of expression, she reminds us that poetic form is fleeting. Like we observed in the earlier poems on sleep and longing, “Self Transmission” is also working dialectically, as the two poems speak to each other in complementary and contradictory ways. No. 2 responds to the anxieties of transmission in No. 1 by not only mirroring the form of the first poem, but also raising new questions:

Long, long-held wishes, many turned out different;  
When life is a dream, what is right and wrong?  
Reined in by worldly thoughts because my reading is shallow;  
Friendships have grown distant because I rarely leave my gate.  
5 Carrying grief to my pillow—the weak lantern dims;  
Tending to illness by the window—the thin moon fades.

Who can know if the idle gull on the river's edge is sleeping,  
When the windblown waves keep stirring her from reverie?

*yūyū taru sogan koto ōku tagau  
ichimu jinsei nan no zehi ka aran  
jinsō tsunagaruru wo sho wo yomu koto no asaki ni yori  
kōyū utoki wa mon wo izuru koto no mare naru ga tame nari  
urei wo idakite chinjō zantō kuraku  
yamai ni ji shite sōzen ketsugetsu kasuka nari  
tare ka shiran kan'ō kōhan ni nemuru mo  
fūha nao bōki ni furen to hossuru wo*

悠悠素願事多違  
一夢人生何是非  
塵想羈因讀書淺  
交遊潤爲出門稀  
抱愁枕上殘燈暗  
侍病窓前缺月微  
誰識閑鷗江畔睡  
風波猶欲觸忘機<sup>111</sup>

The poem opens with unfulfilled wishes. Line 1 begins with *yūyū*, which resonates with the *ruru* in Line 2 in the first poem. Both are reduplicative binomes that suggest endlessness. However, *yūyū*, translated above as “long long-held,” expresses an endless or limitless feeling of longing in a vast space. While No. 1 opens with a feeling of the quickness and brevity of life, No. 2 opens with a feeling of endless longing for possibility in her life. But we discover that this longing was in vain, since the many events of her life proved that those wishes never came true, that reality ran counter to expectation. Line 2 negates this realization of reality by framing her life as a dream. Dreaming enables the poet to question whether the outcomes of her life were right or wrong, that in the world of dreaming—and along with that, the world of poetry and the poetic imagination—nothing is right or wrong, it only is. In No. 1, *ichimu* suggests the brevity of her life, as well as the brevity of the life of the poem, but here it provides a space of freedom from judgment. The poet seems to be thinking about whether the act of transmitting oneself through the medium of poetry has ethical outcomes. She writes that she wanted things to be a certain way, but reality proved different. Her only hope is that lyric expression itself will preclude attempts to make judgment.

In the couplet formed by Lines 3 and 4, the poet contradicts the freedom she asserts in Line 2 and provides examples of how her life may or may not have gone wrong. Both lines address causality through the words *yori* (cause) and *tame* (reason). She finds herself attached to the world because she has not read enough to transcend to higher planes of knowledge, but at the same time detached from the world because she is a recluse. In contrast to the general claims about life in the corresponding couplet in No. 1, the couplet here moves to local concerns: the cyclicity, continuity and the inexorability of time is refigured as personal choices that have left the poet fettered and alienated. She rarely leaves her gate and therefore limits her chances of seeing others. Furthermore, she does not progress as an intellectual because she chooses to read lightly. In describing the habits of a recluse, the poet is talking about her solitary pursuits in poetry and painting, not for anyone else but herself. In the first poem, she comments on the continuity of time, nature and the poetic tradition; but there she provides reasons for why she feels disconnected with the world in the pursuit of isolated self-cultivation. While time seems out of her control in the first poem, in the second, the poet seems to have a hold on her life, albeit with regrets.

In Lines 5 and 6, the poet returns to the topic of her ailing father and her grief as a caregiver realizing her own mortality. In Line 5, she carries grief to her pillow, and evokes the dream (the *ichimu* that appears in both poems): her desire to work out her feelings in a time and

space free from what is right or wrong, a time and space also offered by writing this poem. In Line 6, she tends to her father's illness. Both lines conclude with a metaphor: the weak lantern dimming and the thin moon fading, which end both lines with the image of growing darkness. In the former, the dimming lantern suggests that her time on the pillow—her dreaming—will be brief like the dream in Line 1 of poem No. 1, or impossible as Fukushima Riko suggests in her reading of the line.<sup>112</sup> Meanwhile Saikō's grief deepens like the deep thoughts (*yūkai*) in Line 2 of the first poem, and the health of her father declines with the opacity of the moon. When we compare this couplet with its corresponding couplet in the first poem, we find that the poet is talking about transmission. In No. 1, the difference and unfamiliarity she feels after viewing a painting she painted in the past and after reading a book she read before are responses to how time mediates the transmission of an artist's work. In No. 2, she also makes a comment on time: the wick of the lantern eventually burns out, and the moon recedes from view. The poet is commenting on the inevitable death of artists, here represented by herself and her father.

The figure of the ailing father resonates with the theme of family in Saikō's poetry, and also serves as a metaphor for mortality in the poem.<sup>113</sup> The illness and aging exemplify the biographical representation we find in Edo poetics, but they also comment on the uncertainty of an artist's legacy. The couplet featuring the moon and the blossoms and the couplet lamenting the loss of familiarity reinforce this reading, since the death of her father can be read in line with the discontinuity of the artist and the continuity of nature.<sup>114</sup> While this may be the case in other poems or a way of reading her works overall, the pathos in "Self Transmission" forecloses an aesthetic reading of the moon and the flowers without the consideration of irony. The repetition of "moon" and "blossoms" in No. 1 and the "windblown waves" in No. 2 reveal her ironic distance to the poetic tradition and conventional objects because they continue whereas she (like her father) cannot. But as we discover by the end of No. 2, her concern for the recurring beauties of nature become reminders of her inability to be a part of the world of continuity, even in poetic reverie.

Poetic reverie—the dream—links the end of the second poem with the beginning of the first one. In the final couplet, which also concludes both poems when we read them as one whole, the poet describes herself through metaphor: as a gull idly situated on a riverbank.<sup>115</sup> Although the gull tries to sleep and tune out from the world, the windblown waves still wake her from her daydreaming. I have translated *bōki* as "reverie," with the consideration that the term means "to let go of the impulses of the heart and mind."<sup>116</sup> Such impulses entail whatever compels us to act or feel something in the material world, including the forces of time. The *ki* means "impulse," but also refers to the "trigger" that sets the world in motion: time.<sup>117</sup> One way to forget (*bō*) this impulse to engage with the real world, or the trigger that sets the world in motion, is to dream. The poet is caught in a moment where she is trying to escape the world, but is constantly being reminded of her place in it.<sup>118</sup>

If we compare the final couplet of No. 2 with the final couplet of No. 1, we find a similarity of temporal concerns for the present and the future: in No. 1, the poet wishes to be without sickness, but realizes that she must tend to her aging father, who reminds her of her own mortality. In No. 2, she takes the poem out of reality and discusses her present situation through metaphor: she is a gull trying to sleep, but is repeatedly stirred by the waves. The concluding image of perpetual wakefulness, and the inability to fall asleep and dream, presents the central contradiction of both poems as a whole: the attempt to write herself out of a reality that keeps on reminding her that she is a living creature on this world subject to the vagaries of time. Wordsworth writes that in the poetic imagination the mind has the power to transport itself to

faraway places, but when rendered into words on the page, the words reveal their inability as “frail shrines” to promise such transport, and invariably remind the poet and reader of their limitations. In poem No. 2 the poet yearns to be in a state of idleness—dreaming, sleeping, reverie—where she is free from the vagaries of time, free from the limitations of mediated expression.

The two poems have a poignant resonance with a line by Emily Dickinson: “Time never did assuage — / An actual suffering strengthens.” The passage of time is more painful and jarring than it is satisfying or restorative, and as we have seen in “Self Transmission,” it problematizes movement. As both poems demonstrate, the transmission of the self due to the mediating factors of time is ultimately uncertain—wishes do not all come true, our relationship to the world is rarely ideal, and the lights that poets hope will shine inexhaustibly eventually go out. Reading the two poems “Self Transmission” with biographical concerns in mind, we find a late Edo *bunjin* writing in tune with *seirei* poetics and incorporating matters of the everyday. But as we have seen, writing about the quotidian does not preclude profound thinking about larger problems with lyric expression, namely the limits of poetic form in securing the transmission of self to readers.

This chapter examined the various kinds of movement and sensual embodiment in Saikō’s poetry by showing how the lyric subject situates herself in the confluence of discourses about representation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We saw examples of Saikō’s philosophies of composition, the complexities of sensory perception inside and outside the inner chamber, literary transport through reading, the dialectics of longing in the boudoir plaint, and finally the uncertainty of self-transmission in the face of Time. On this tour of her poetry, we examined her compositions in multiple *kanshi* forms (ancient-style verse, the quatrain, regulated verse), and observed that Saikō was one among many poets early modern Japan and late imperial China who explored what poetry could say about the senses and sensual embodiment. While reusing and reinventing the tropes associated with the poetry of the inner chamber (*kei*), Saikō wandered within and without convention, speaking in a lyric voice that was self-conscious, ironic and individuated. Such poems not only give us a glimpse into the history of feelings and perception of her time, but also provide valuable insights regarding Saikō’s sense and sensibility as a *kanshi* poet. These sensibilities are echoed in the poetry and prose of the modern writers I treat in the following chapters, Masaoka Shiki and Natsume Sōseki.

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<sup>1</sup> Henri Focillon, trans. George Kubler, *The Life of Forms in Art* (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 184.

<sup>2</sup> Helen Vendler, *Dickinson: Selected Poems and Commentaries* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2010), 219.

<sup>3</sup> Iritani Sensuke, Kado Reiko, eds., *Ema Saikō shishū Shōmu ikō* (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1992), 1: 93-94. From here on *SI*.

<sup>4</sup> Saikō’s extant three hundred and fifty *kanshi*, anthologized in *Shōmu ikō* (1871; Manuscript of the dreamer of Xiang), a posthumous poetry collection compiled by her family.

<sup>5</sup> Marcon argues that in the Tokugawa era we begin to see “a process of desacralization of the natural environment in the form of systematic study of natural objects that was surprisingly similar to European natural history without being directly influenced by it. This process was carried out by scholars invading pristine regions to survey the vegetal and animal species living in Japan and classify them as discrete entries of dictionaries and encyclopedias or as objects to collect, analyze, exchange, or consume as cognitive science, aesthetic, or entertaining commodities.” See Federico Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature and the Nature of Knowledge in Early Modern Japan* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), x. In Saikō’s personal case, with her father Ema Ransai (1747-1838) being

a scholar and physician of Dutch studies (*rangaku*), there may have been more overlap with models from European natural history since she had direct access to them.

<sup>6</sup> Below is a poem Saikō wrote around 1828, in which she reminisces about her childhood. The scene captures early nineteenth century cosmopolitanism.

Winter Night

A father leafs through European books,  
A child reads Tang and Song verses.  
Sharing the light of a single lamp,  
Each following their own course.  
The father reads, not knowing when to stop;  
The child tires, and thinks of nuts and potatoes.  
What a shame her mind cannot keep up with his;  
The father is 80 years, but his eyes are not cloudy.

*tōya*

*chichi wa himotoku ōran no sho*

*ko wa yomu tōsō no ku*

*kono ittō no hikari wo wakachite*

*konryū onoono mizukara sakanoboru*

*chichi wa yomite yamu koto wo shirazu*

*ko wa umite ritsu'u wo omou*

*hazuru ni tau seishin chichi ni oyobazu*

*chichi wa toshi hachijū me ni kiri nashi*

冬夜

爺繙歐蘭書

兒讀唐宋句

分此一燈光

源流各自泝

爺讀不知休

兒倦思栗芋

堪愧精神不及爺

爺歲八十眼無霧

See *SI*, 2: 253-255.

<sup>7</sup> Suzuki Ken'ichi, *Edo shiika no kōzō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2003), 6-30.

<sup>8</sup> *SI*, 2: 274-175.

<sup>9</sup> See Imanishi Riko, trans. Ruth S. McCreery, *The Akita Ranga School and the Cultural Context in Edo Japan* (Tokyo: International House of Japan, 2016), Chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>10</sup> Many of these framing ideas derive from treatises on gardening and landscape by late imperial literatus Li Yu (1611-1680). Li Yu also wrote the preface to the influential manual *The Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting*, which was published as a woodblock-printed book in Japan in 1679. All *bunjin* during the Edo period, including Buson and Saikō, learned from this manual. Li Yu also produced a collection of essays called *Xianqing ouji* (1671; Leisure notes), in which he describes living quarters of a Chinese house and outlines his theory of windows. He argues that windows could serve as natural substitutes for a scroll painting. Sarah E. Kile has discussed Li Yu's *Leisure Notes* in the larger context of late imperial Chinese cultural production, arguing that his essays concentrate on the material world with an emphasis on the quotidian and individual experience. See Sarah E. Kile, "Toward an Extraordinary Everyday: Li Yu's (1611-1680) Vision, Writing, Practice," (Phd diss., Columbia University, 2013). Li's influence loomed large in the Japanese literati sphere, and could be found in the framed scenes painted by Naotake, Uragami Gyokudō (1745-1820), and other eighteenth century *bunjin* painters.

<sup>11</sup> Song Dynasty woman poet Li Qingzhao's (1084-1155) song lyric (*ci*) "To the tune 'Spring in the House of Jade,'" (Yu lou chun) features the word *sōtei* (*chuangdi* in Chinese). An abandoned woman sits by the window beholding plum blossoms outside:

They know a person is haggard, sitting beneath a springtime window, 道人憔悴春窗底  
Beset by boredom, too sad to lean on the railing. 悶損欄干愁不倚

Trans. Ronald Egan. See Ronald Egan, *The Burden of Female Talent: The Poet Li Qingzhao and Her History in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013), 378.

<sup>12</sup> As Xiaorong Li notes, the *gui* (*kei* in Japanese) etymologically refers to "the small gate of an inner courtyard, palace, or city." She also catalogues its associative compounds. The term is used in combination with other words to denote the space for Chinese woman: *guige* (inner chamber), *guikun* (inner quarter), and *guifang* (bedrooms). The term is also used in combination with other words to denote various aspects of the female subject that occupies the *gui*: *guixiu* (talented woman of the inner chamber), *guiyan* (beauty of the inner chamber), *guiwa* (girl of the inner chamber), and *guiying* (the eminent of the inner chamber). See Xiaorong Li, *Women's Poetry of Late Imperial China: Transforming the Inner Chambers* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012), 5, 13. The majority of these words in Chinese are used in Japanese. For example, Ema Saikō is often referred to as *keishū* (*guixiu*), or "talented woman of the inner chamber."

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<sup>13</sup> Li, 14.

<sup>14</sup> In the Confucian tradition, the *gui* functioned as a physical and social space of separation, and has always been gendered as a woman's space. In early poetry from the Yuefu tradition and the Six Dynasty collection *New Songs from the Jade Terrace* (Yutai xinyong), the *gui* was often figured as a space of lament, where abandoned women would long for their lover. *New Songs From a Jade Terrace* was a poetry anthology compiled by court poet Xu Ling (507-583) under the patronage of the Liang crown prince Xiao Gang (503-511), who later became Emperor Jianwen. In the anthology we find a new genre of Chinese poetry called *Gongti shi* (Palace-style poetry). Among the innovations brought forth by the collection was the establishment of generic conventions: tropes such as the abandoned woman (*qifu*), themes such as the boudoir plaint (*guiyuan*), topoi such as the boudoir (*gui*), and luxurious objects that depict feminine beauty: bejeweled garments, diaphanous curtains, trousseaus, mirrors and perfume. As a result, these poems became resources for delineating femininity from the angles of beauty, psychology and setting. While stock imagery, artifice and cliché define the genre of palace-style poetry, the syntagmatic relationship between poetic images reveals how Six Dynasties poets evoked palatial atmospheres in the poetic imagination. By the Song Dynasty, we find the emergence of a new genre of poetry called the *ci* (song lyric) in collections such as the *Anthology of Poems Written Among the Flowers* (Huajian ji) in which the *gui* topos was often evoked. The collection established the boudoir as a genre that men and women literati poets alike used to express a range of feelings and moods associated with feminine subjectivity.

<sup>15</sup> In China, male literati often donned the voice of a woman to write about emotions from the perspective of a female lyric subject. For a full-length monograph on the subject in early Chinese male-authored writings, see Paul Rouzer, *Articulated Ladies: Gender and the Male Community in Early Chinese Texts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001). In the Song Dynasty, men writing in the *ci* (song lyric) genre also borrowed the voice of women. See Maija Bell Samei, *Gendered Persona and Poetic Voice: The Abandoned Woman in Early Chinese Song Lyrics* (New York: Lexington Books, 2004). Samei examines the voice in the *ci* genre, and discusses the complexities, contradictions and pluralities of gender. She argues that, ultimately, the voice of the *ci* poet disrupts the gender binary of male and female. More recently, Wai-ye Li has examined how late imperial male poets "hide themselves" by assuming the voice of a woman during times of national and political crisis. See Wai-ye Li, "Hiding Behind a Woman: Contexts and Meanings in Early Qing Poetry," in Paula Varsano, ed., *The Rhetoric of Hiddenness in Traditional Chinese Culture* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2016), 99-122.

<sup>16</sup> As Marcia Yonemoto has argued, women in the Edo period had important roles inside and outside the family, and were not subject to the same segregated seclusion as their female contemporaries elsewhere in East Asia. In Japan's case, Yonemoto contends, the separation of the sexes was more the exception than the rule. See Marcia Yonemoto, *The Problem of Women in Early Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 14.

<sup>17</sup> Vendler, 222.

<sup>18</sup> Translation by Stephen Owen. See Stephen Owen, *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 346; For original Chinese see Toda Kōgyō, ed., *Shinshaku kanbun taikei* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1974), 65: 395-396. *Wenxin diaolong* in Japanese is *Bunshin chōryō*, and Toda is the editor of both volumes in the *taikei*.

<sup>19</sup> See Zong-qi Cai, *A Chinese Literary Mind: Culture, Creativity, and Rhetoric in Wenxin diaolong* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

<sup>20</sup> Frederick Burwick, *Romanticism: Keywords* (Chichester, England: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2015), 137. William Blake (1757-1827) evoked both kinds of inspiration in his epic poem *Milton* (1810-14), in which he discusses the poet's relationship to his literary forebears, such as John Milton (1608-74), whose work weighed heavy on many Romantic poets. Blake opens the poem with the claim that the muses of Beulah mediate his unification with Milton as they travel directly from his brain down his arms, and in the end the spirit of Milton manifests on the page, or in Blake's case, the illustrated plate of the poem: "Come into my hand, /By your mild power descending down the nerves of my right arm / From out the portals of my Brain." See William Blake, *The Prophetic Books of William Blake: Milton* (London: A.H. Bullen, 1907), 1.

<sup>21</sup> The verb *tsuiyasu* also means "to spend," and the objects are often labor, time, and money. A more cynical reading of the line would be to say that the poem is aware of how the imagination by the nineteenth century has become a commodity in an economy of exchange, which drains the talents of individual artists.

<sup>22</sup> Anka Mulhstein describes how the afflictions of artistic inspiration can be found in Honoré de Balzac's account of fictional seventeenth century painter Frenhofer: "In Frenhofer, 'the creative principle itself is threatened, sapped, an ultimately destroyed by an overabundance of talent and imagination.' The destructive forces that fell Frenhofer do not come from the outside world, from the ordeals that all artists have to confront, but from within himself." See Anka Mulhstein, trans. Adriana Hunter, *The Pen and the Brush: How Passion for Art Shaped Nineteenth-Century French Novels* (New York: Other Press, 2017), 61.

<sup>23</sup> As Burwick notes, that in the works of Swedish scientist, philosopher, and theologian Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) “demonic possession was a phenomenon competing with divine inspiration.” English Romantic poet John Keats (1795-1821) often evoked the idea of demonic possession in his poetry. See Burwick, 139.

<sup>24</sup> This claim would set Saikō’s poem apart from Liu Xie’s *Wenxin diaolong*, which is a call to arms for all writers, requesting that they return to the classics and not look back.

<sup>25</sup> Shunkin Gakuji [Uragami Shunkin], *Rongashi* (n.p.: Jukeidō, 1842), 2: 2-3. Also in Taketani Chōjirō, *Bunjin garon: Uragami Shunkin Rongashi hyōshaku* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1988), 137-138. *Rongashi* is remarkable in the genre of treatises on painting, or *garon*. Most treatises on painting are written in prose, and if they feature poetry, the poems are usually seven-character quatrains (*shichigon zekku*). Taketani Chōjirō has highlighted how the treatise itself is composed entirely of five-character ancient-style poems (*gogon koshi*). *Rongashi* is two volumes, each comprising thirty poems of ten lines; the poems are interspersed with commentary in prose by other *bunjin*. In sixty poems, Shunkin conveys the essence of literati painting, its aesthetic ideals, formal features, and its history in the Chinese and Japanese traditions. Below is the entire poem:

Ages and ages of arguments on painting;  
 Too many claim authority over the other.  
 The men of the Song knew how to expound theory,  
 So well, their theories were profuse and pell-mell.  
 The Southern and the Northern schools emerged,  
 Their differences have been passed down clearly.  
 Through them we trace painting to the ancients,  
 And can also search for its origins.  
 Transformation follows the trend;  
 Propensity also accords with nature.

yoyo garon wo arawasu	世世著畫論
shushō sukoburu tatan nari	聚訟頗多端
sō hito yoku ri wo toku	宋人能說理
sono ri o mata funpun tari	其理亦紛紛
nanboku no setsu hajimete okori	南北說始起
hamyaku ruden wo akiraka ni su	派脈晰流傳
kore ni yotte kojū ni sakanobori	依之遡古人
arui wa sono minamoto wo saguru beshi	或可探其源
henka kiun ni shitagai	變化隨氣運
ikioi mo mata shizen ni yoru	勢亦因自然

<sup>26</sup> Alexander Pope’s (1688-1744) idea of nature is “a principal of natural order or natural law that applied to human behavior and morality and also governed poetic expression.” However, William Wordsworth (1770-1850) saw nature as a tutelary presence, and believed in an inter-dependency between the individual mind of the poet and his external surroundings in nature. Frederick Burwick, *Romanticism: Keywords* (Chichester, England: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2015), 185. The similarities between Wordsworth’s Romantic attitude toward nature and literati attitudes toward nature in the nineteenth century are strikingly similar. For examples, Satake Shōzan’s (1748-1785) landscape paintings resemble the kind of European Romantic landscapes where nature is depicted as large and overbearing, and man small and vulnerable.

<sup>27</sup> We find this idea reiterated by fellow painter, calligrapher, and scholar Nukina Kaioku (1778-1863), whose commentary can be found throughout *Rongashi*, and whose modern attitude can be found in Saikō’s poem. Kaioku remarked that Shunkin’s claim “transformation follows the trend,” is not limited to painting: “Transformation follows the trend,’ How can this be just about painting? A truthful claim.” See Taketani, 138. Kaioku is also a well-known literati painter, whose landscapes varied in style. Most of his brushwork is soft and inconspicuous, but the brushwork in paintings such as “Viewing Plum Flowers in Snow” (Setchū kenbai zu), “have a bravura quality accentuated by strong tonal contrast, which emphasize a sense of depth between the foreground figure and the distant mountain peaks.” See Paul Berry, *Literati Modern: Bunjinga from Late Edo to Twentieth-Century Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 172.

<sup>28</sup> Nakamura Shin’ichirō, *Edo kanshi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1998), 67-271.

<sup>29</sup> The quote comes from the preface to a collection of Yuan’s poems by Jiang Yingke (1553-1605; penname Jinzhi). See Ibi Takashi, *Edo Shiikaron* (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1998), 68.

<sup>30</sup> For a recent discussion of Yuan Mei's poetic theories, see J.D. Schmidt, *Harmony Garden: The Life, Literary Criticism, and Poetry of Yuan Mei (1716-1798)* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 227-236.

<sup>31</sup> James J.Y. Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 73. The kernel of Yuan Mei's statement resonates with the oldest theory of lyric expression in Chinese found in the preface to the *Classic of Poetry* (Shijing): "poetry expresses the heart's intent" (*shi yan zhi*); but here he adds a new concern for sensuous embodiment. In other writings, Yuan Mei extends this concern for the sensual to the depiction of romance between men and women, which resonates with themes of vernacular fiction of the late imperial period. Ibi notes that this is the main difference between Yuan Hongdao's *xingling* and Yuan Mei's *xingling*: the latter's emphasis on emotion evoked by the love between men and women.

<sup>32</sup> As early as the seventeenth century, the ideas associated with *seirei* poetics can be found in the writings of monk and poet Ishikawa Jōzan (1583-1692):

One must avoid only copying and imitating. When the mind and heart are intent on this, one's nature and soul are clouded, and the flow of the poem blocked. Meaning thus becomes meaningless.

唯踏襲模倣ヲキラフベシ。ココニ心ガアレバ性靈ニ曇リガツイテ、詩ノ風モ拘滞セリ。意味優良ナラズ。

See Ibi, 72. Jōzan was a monk at Myōshinji, a large temple in Kyoto with many books in Chinese. He had vast knowledge of the Chinese classics and composed *kanshi*. The anxiety that Jōzan expresses about copying and imitating the writings of literary forebears seems to be informed by the ideas of *xingling* poetics from Yuan Hongdao.

<sup>33</sup> For a selection of Hokuzan's treatise in English translation, see Haruo Shirane, *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology, 1600-1900* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 910-913.

<sup>34</sup> *SI*, 2: 276-278.

<sup>35</sup> Below is the first of Su Shi's two poems:

Saying that to paint is to resemble	論畫以形似
Is like seeing through the eyes of children.	見與兒童鄰
To say a poem must be a kind of poem	賦詩必此詩
Proves ignorance of the poet's craft.	定非知詩人
Poetry and painting are one in principle:	詩畫本一律
Natural and creative, pure and new.	天工與清新
Bian Luan depicts sparrows true to life;	邊鸞雀寫生
Chao Chang's blossoms communicate soul.	趙昌花傳神
How is it that their paintings evoke	何如此兩幅
Distance and blandness held in perfect balance?	疎澹含精勻
Who says that just one splash of red	誰言一點紅
Can lodge the infinitude of spring?	解寄無邊春

In a discussion of the poetry and paintings of Wang Wei (699-759), Su Shi famously remarked that the two mediums complement one another. In the first poem, he says they are "one in principle" (*ben yi liu*). The lines all suggest that poetry and painting are supposed to suggest something beyond itself, beyond reality, and along this train of thought, he concludes the poem by indirectly praising Secretary Wang's awesome craft: "just one splash of red / Can lodge the infinitude of spring." Below is the second poem:

Thin bamboo is like a secluded man;	瘦竹如幽人
A secluded blossom is like a young maiden.	幽花如處女
Above and below, sparrows sit on branches;	低昂枝上雀
In waving sheets, the rain falls on flowers.	搖蕩花間雨
As a pair of wings gets ready to take flight,	雙翎決將起
A mass of leaves just scatters into the air.	眾葉紛自舉
How lovely the bees scour the blossoms,	可憐採花蜂
Transporting fresh pollen on two limbs.	清蜜寄兩股
In the same way men abound in natural talent:	若人富天巧
Spring colors emerge when the brush touches paper.	春色入毫楮
Even from afar I know your potential in poetry:	懸知君能詩



See Zhang Zhilie, et al., eds., *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu* (Shijiazhuang Shi: Hebei Renmin Chubanshe, 2010) 5: 3170-3176.

<sup>36</sup> Such a view resonates with Su Shi's Neo-Confucianist attitude toward aesthetics, which is more interested in the metaphysical aspects of representation, rather than the imitative and derivative.

<sup>37</sup> Sato Hiroaki translates *hō* as "law," which further strengthens Saikō's conviction that Su Shi is a master to be emulated without question.

<sup>38</sup> Patricia Fister, "Feminine Perceptions in Japanese Art of the Kinsei Era," *Japan Review* 8 (1997), 5.

<sup>39</sup> Li Yu writes: "All rooms with such windows should have considerable depth. If the viewer is looking at a mountain from a place somewhat distant from the window, the exterior of the window becomes the mounting for the picture scroll, what is within the frame becomes a landscape painting, and the landscape and the mounting work together as a continuous whole. Thus the viewer will perceive it without explanation as a 'natural painting.'" See Imanishi, 264.

<sup>40</sup> Saikō's concentration on "picturing the heart" can be interpreted as part of a new late eighteenth century episteme that incorporated the Western scientific gaze. As Timon Screech has argued, "the gaze was turned to address facets of the human condition: social norms, personal relations, individual integrity, and morality." Screech also writes that this gaze was an "anatomising stare": "Invisible workings were sought out for inspection, whether of human beings, animals, particles, or larger abstract systems. It was proposed as axiomatic that a full reevaluation of the significance of internal workings was necessary for the new comprehension of external empirical wholes." See Timon Screech, *The Western Scientific Gaze and Popular Imagery in Later Edo Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3.

<sup>41</sup> Her ending echoes the concluding exclamation about the infinitude of expression afforded by the wonders of the imagination in the first of Su Shi's poems.

<sup>42</sup> *SI*, 1: 226-227.

<sup>43</sup> Kado Reikō has discussed this poem in the context of Saikō's feminism, that Saikō is writing against the grain of poetic conventions created and enforced by men in the history and practice of Chinese poetry. For a more recent discussion of women engaging with conventions of self expression in late imperial Chinese poetry, see Haihong Yang, *Women's Poetry and Poetics in Late Imperial China: A Dialogic Engagement* (New York: Lexington Books, 2017). The questions Yang lays out in her book echo the question posed by Saikō's poem "Myself Singing": "While *shi* poetry is often treated as autobiographical, to what extent could a woman express a 'self' in her poem when the genre has been excluding her for hundreds of years and when the very idea of expressing herself to an audience beyond her immediate family could bring severe criticism, suspicion of her moral qualities, and even denial of her femininity?" See Yang, xiv.

<sup>44</sup> This goes for the waka tradition as well, when poets compose poems to a *dai*, or "title."

<sup>45</sup> *Ibi*, 93-121.

<sup>46</sup> See Patricia Fister, *Japanese Women Artists 1600-1900* (Lawrence, KS: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, 1988), 111-113. Although most of Saikō's paintings are of bamboo and the other "Four Gentlemen," toward the end of her life she also painted landscapes.

<sup>47</sup> Bamboo is one of the Four Gentlemen (*shikunshi*): plums (*ume* or *bai*), orchids (*ran*), bamboo (*take* or *chiku*), and chrysanthemums (*kiku*).

<sup>48</sup> *SI*, 1: 93-94

<sup>49</sup> Susan Stewart, *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 145.

<sup>50</sup> Kurokawa Momoko has examined various representations of light (*hikari*) in Ema Saikō's ink-wash paintings of bamboo. For example, snow is represented as white space resting on bamboo, which gives the illusion that moonlight is being cast upon it. Kurokawa's work further drives the point home that Saikō wrote poetry as paintings, and paintings as poetry. See Kurokawa Momoko, "Ema Saikō jigasan 'bokuchikuzu' kō": sono hikari no hyōgen wo megutte," *Wakan hikaku bungaku* 47 (August 2011), 54-76.

<sup>51</sup> Focillon, 162.

<sup>52</sup> Stewart, 164-165.

<sup>53</sup> Hiroaki Sato translates the line: "[The bamboo] in light shades, aslant-aslant, emerges through my hand." See Hiroaki Sato, *Breeze Through Bamboo: Kanshi of Ema Saikō* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 68.

<sup>54</sup> A more meta-level reading would allow us to think of Saikō being interpellated by the bamboo, that her identity as a painter bound by Confucian ideology is reaffirmed by producing a symbol of that very ideology.

<sup>55</sup> Stewart, 162.

<sup>56</sup> Xiaorong Li has traced the development of the boudoir topos in Chinese poetry from its beginnings in *New Songs from the Jade Terrace*, to its movement from *shi* poetry to *ci* (song lyric) poetry in the Song Dynasty, and its subsequent continuation and revival in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. She links the popularity of the boudoir topos to the resurgence of the *ci* genre in the late imperial period, arguing that the boudoir was one vehicle that served the *ci* genre's call for true and sincere self-expression. See Li, 47-51.

<sup>57</sup> In her book, Samei explores the complexities of voice in the *ci* genre, and observes that unlike the palace-style poetry we find in *Yutai xinyong*, the *ci* from the Song Dynasty gave poets a form in which voice could alternate freely and unconventionally between different kinds of speech, for example, the voice of the male poet and the voice of the ventriloquized abandoned woman. These shifts in speech naturally have their own temporality, which complicates how time is featured in the genre. By and large, Japanese poets did not produce *ci*; but they did draw from it when they composed in more vernacular genres of Japanese poetry, such as *haishi* and free-form verse.

<sup>58</sup> Screech, 2.

<sup>59</sup> As Mari Nagase has observed, Saikō wrote herself out of feminine genres, and wrote on a wide range of topics, including nature, history, drinking, family, friendship, and travel. Nagase discusses Saikō's travel poems, mainly those that record her visits to see old friends in Kyoto. See Mari Nagase, "Women Writers of Chinese Poetry in Late-Edo Period Japan," (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2007), 177-180.

<sup>60</sup> *SI*, 2: 461-462. The *kundoku* is by Iritani Sensuke in *SI* with slight modifications. Fukushima Riko has produced another version in *Edo kanshisen* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995), 3: 95-96.

<sup>61</sup> Originally there were five poems, three of which are anthologized in *Shōmu ikō*. This is the second of the three. The first and third poems are translated below:

No. 1

I journey to the rich country and find a place of great industry;  
The fecund ground is not bound to the farm fields of mulberry.  
A thousand houses bask in spring, all along the sea edge;  
Green roof tiles serried like fish scales, smelling of wine.

<i>fukoku yukite shiru daikōjō</i>	富國行知大賣場
<i>kōyu hitori nōsō ni aru nominarazu</i>	膏腴不獨在農桑
<i>senka no shunkaku mina umi ni hinsu</i>	千家春郭皆瀕海
<i>hekiga rinji shite shuki kanbashi</i>	碧瓦鱗次酒氣香

No. 3

On a stroll, roaming in spring, the spirit of a poet traveler.  
Outside the shrine of Utamarō, the moon at twilight.  
In the shade of gnarled pines, the traveler about to rest;  
The rushing tide rinses the sand, exposing all the roots.

<i>sanpo su shunyū shikaku no tamashii</i>	散步春遊詩客魂
<i>kashin no shigai tsuki kōkon</i>	歌神祠外月黃昏
<i>ranshō insho hito masa ni uzukumaran to su</i>	亂松陰處人將踞
<i>chōsui suna wo araitte kotogotoku ne wo arawasu</i>	潮水沙淘盡露根

See *SI*, 2: 460-464.

<sup>62</sup> The evocation of the sublime in Line 1 anticipates the boundlessness evoked in seascape photography by contemporary Japanese photographer Sugimoto Hiroshi (1948-). Joshua Pettito has argued that the oceanic in Sugimoto's seascapes offers an alternate space to modernity, that his sea "operates as a horizon of transcendence that punctures the condition of linear time and the law of perspective that has long grounded modern perception and consciousness." See Joshua Pettito, "The Oceanic Vision of Sugimoto Hiroshi," *History of Photography* 40 (2016), 2: 107-128. Pettito characterizes Sugimoto's oceanic aesthetic as a "realm of primordial being and feeling," indexical of sublime ideology found in the aesthetics of Japanese fascism in the early twentieth century. In the context of Saikō's poem "Journey to the West" written a century earlier, sublime feelings were part and parcel to the palette of affective responses in literati painting, which happened to find a kindred and contemporaneous spirit in Romantic poetry, and an afterlife in Sugimoto's evocations of the oceanic.

<sup>63</sup> A line of poetry like this strikingly resonates with poetry of the Romantic period, in which Saikō was writing. Margaret Cohen's book *The Novel and the Sea* (2010) has examined the sublimation of the sea in eighteenth and nineteenth century fiction, and leaning on the work of Jonathan Raban and others, has argued that the sea emerges as an aesthetic object in the Romantic period. Cohen describes the sea depicted in eighteenth and nineteenth century writings as "dark-heaving, boundless, endless, and sublime." See Margaret Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 115-118. As Cohen shows, the sublimation of the sea is often described in accounts written while on board a ship. For example, she quotes Joseph Addison: “[a] troubled ocean, to a man who sails upon it, is, I think the biggest object that he can see in motion, and consequently gives his imagination one of the highest kinds of pleasure that can arise from greatness.”

<sup>64</sup> In this way, *bōbō* 茫茫 is a combination of *hyōbyō* 縹渺 and *yūyū* 悠悠, reduplicative binomes often used in *kanshi*—the former meaning “boundless and indistinct,” the latter meaning “longing in vast calmness.”

<sup>65</sup> Maki Fukuoka, *The Premise of Fidelity: Science, Visuality and Representing the Real in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 5. Fukuoka’s monograph offers a new history of Japanese visuality through an examination of the discourses and practices surrounding the nineteenth century transposition of “the real” in the decades before photography was introduced. Fukuoka performs a careful examination of texts by the *Shohyaku-sha*, a motley crew of scholars comprising of doctors, farmers and government officials. She traces the word *shashin* in medical, botanical and pictorial texts, and reveals how the term creates new discourses concerning the representation of objects in scientific practice.

<sup>66</sup> *SI*, 2: 262. The *kundoku* is by Iritani in *SI* with slight modifications. After Rai Sanyō (1780-1832) death, his pupil Shōin took over in providing commentary to Saikō’s poems.

<sup>67</sup> Imanishi discusses other lens and viewing devices used in the eighteenth century. She distinguishes between two types of painting: *uki-e* and *megane-e*. The former refers to a painting that uses linear, one-point perspective. Today these are called *ukiyo-e* with linear perspective. The latter refers to paintings that were produced to be viewed through an optical apparatus. These apparatuses used lens that were either the “reflective type” (*hansha-shiki*) or the “direct type” (*chokushi-shiki*). The former uses a mirror to reflect the image; the latter does not. Imanishi writes: “What is important about both [*megane-e* and *uki-e*] is that people enjoyed them in playful or recreational contexts. Moreover, both the viewing apparatus and the contrivance of using linear perspective were seen as ‘tricks’ to delight the human eye. Those tricks invited people to feel that they were standing in an actual scene or landscape, a sensation that added to the interest these images generated.” See Imanishi, 116-129.

<sup>68</sup> Fukuoka, 2.

<sup>69</sup> Decades earlier, Saikō’s mentor Rai Sanyō (1780-1832) wrote “Song of a Dutch Ship” (Oranda sen no uta) a seven-character ancient-style poem of twenty-eight lines describing a Dutch ship being pulled in for dock in Nagasaki in 1818. Aboard a skiff, Sanyō observes the port patrol boats escort the ship to the quay. Mid-way in the poem, he describes the ship’s massive size and its machinery:

The barbarian ship in water reaches a hundred feet tall;  
A sea breeze faintly sighs, flags and fishnets billow.  
Three sails on timber yards, set by myriad lines of rope,  
With a pulley to hoist and lower them like a well sweep.

*bansen mizu wo idete hyakushaku takaku*

*kaifū sekiseki toshite keibō wo soyogasu*

*sanpan hobashira wo tatete bantō wo hodokoshi*

*ki wo mōkete shinshuku suru koto kekkō no gotoshi*

蛮船出水百尺高

海風淅淅颭颭旄

三帆樹桅施萬條

設機伸縮如桔槔

See Ibi Takashi ed., *Rai Sanyō shisen* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2012), 88-93. Sanyō’s poem strives toward verisimilitude and describes the Dutch ship in detail, down to the block and tackle system used to set the sails. He compares the hoisting and lowering motion to a well sweep, a device that draws water from a well using a pulley mechanism. As Cohen remarks in the case of European writings, “the real seas were in the vanguard of science, technology, communications, and commerce.” (Cohen, 117) As we can see in Sanyō’s poem, this is also the case for Japan in the early nineteenth century.

<sup>70</sup> Naotake’s famous painting *Shinobazu Pond* (1770; Shinobazu ike) exhibits these modern characteristics: reflection on water, distant perspective, chiaroscuro, fading blues in sky and water, and three-dimensional representation of objects. For images of sea-faring ships, see the images of Naotake’s *Seascape from Takanawa* (Takanawa kakei-zu) and *Night Fishing* (Yachō-zu) in Imanishi, 121.

<sup>71</sup> The color *sei* can also mean green, gray and black. In the context of the poem it makes sense to read it as blue to mirror the blue that follows it, *ran*, which is also the word for indigo (*ai*).

<sup>72</sup> Screech, 215-228. Of course, in Chinese poetry “climbing up high” (*deng gao*) has been a common theme, if not genre, since the Tang dynasty. Du Fu’s poem “Deng Gao” is a good example. In his poem, the poet ascends a tower and gazes upon an autumn landscape, whereupon he becomes overwhelmed by sadness. Saikō’s poem incorporates this tradition as well (especially with the use of *bōbō*); but her poem is more about an optical illusion, than autumnal sadness.

<sup>73</sup> In regard to Saikō's use of *kaitei su*, Fukushima Riko cites an allusion to the first line of Du Fu's poem "Song on a Landscape Screen Newly Painted by Treasurer Liu of Fengxian": "The top of the hall is not the best for planting maple trees; / Strange how smoke and fog forms on the river and mountains." (堂上不合生楓樹, 怪底江山起煙霧) See Fukushima, 96.

<sup>74</sup> Marcia Yonemoto, *Mapping Early Modern Japan: Space, Place, and Culture in the Tokugawa Period, 1603-1868* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 45.

<sup>75</sup> Yonemoto writes: "in the case of both *haikai* and early modern tale literature, one can see not only an expansion of literary sensibility, but also a vernacularization of spatial concepts, as spatial and place-based references became the stuff of increasingly popular poetic and prose genres." See Yonemoto (2003), 47.

<sup>76</sup> The perceptual movement and confusion in Saikō's poem reminds us of the affective and dissonant wandering found in English writings by women of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Ingrid Horrocks has shown how mobility in the Romantic tradition is a gendered genre in which literary works authored by women often depict the lyric subject as a poetic wanderer with feelings of anxiety about mobility. See Ingrid Horrocks, *Women Wanderers and the Writing of Mobility, 1784-1814* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). Horrocks argues that the poetic wanderer reveals the vulnerability of the modern subject, as people are increasingly subjected to movement throughout the world with the expansion of the British Empire.

<sup>77</sup> See Chapter 5 "The Framing Window and Borrowed Scenery: The Literati Window," in Imanishi, 251-275.

<sup>78</sup> See Itasaka Noriko's article "The Woman Reader as Symbol: Changes in Images of the Woman Reader in Ukiyoe," in P.F. Kornicki, Mara Patessio, and G.G. Rowley, eds., *The Female as Subject: Reading and Writing in Early Modern Japan* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2010).

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Nagase, 181-182.

<sup>81</sup> See "The Tale of Genji: Required Reading for Aristocratic Women," in Kornicki, et al., 39-57.

<sup>82</sup> Patrick W. Caddeau, *Appraising Genji: Literary Criticism and Cultural Anxiety in the Age of the Last Samurai* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), 3.

<sup>83</sup> Perhaps it is not so surprising that Saikō would leave poems about *Shiji* and *Genji*, as the two works were often compared and discussed alongside one other in the Edo period. In his essay, "Discursive Commentary on *Genji*" (1673; *Genji gaiden*) Kumazawa Banzan (1619-1691) described *Genji* as written in the style of *Shiji*; however, Hagiwara Hiromichi (1815-1863) rejects this claim in his essay, "A Critical Appraisal of *Genji*" (1854-1861; *Genji monogatari hyōshaku*). See Thomas Harper and Haruo Shirane, eds., *Reading The Tale of Genji: Sources From The First Millennium* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 388, 513.

<sup>84</sup> Confucian scholar, poet, and mentor Rai Sanyō encouraged Saikō to write on *Genji*. Between 1829-1831 she composed a series of quatrains about selected chapters of *Genji*. For example, below are the poems about the "Yūgao" (Lady of the evening faces) and "Utsusemi" (Cicada shell) Chapters:

Yūgao

A gourd blossom deep downtown, showing off allure;  
One fan stirs longing for the other, bonding two worlds.  
The incense burned out, fragrance emptied, yet roots remain:  
Once again soft vines creep, more entwined than before.

yūgao

koka shinkō ni senken wo arawasu  
issen no sōshi ryōse no en  
kō tsuki kaori munashikimo ne taezu  
mata jūman wo nukite kotosara ni tenmen tari

夕顏

瓠花深巷見嬋娟  
一扇相思兩世緣  
香燼芳空根不斷  
又抽柔蔓故纏綿

Utsusemi

It is impossible for all the beauties to bloom in the same season:  
The wild ginger blossom, suddenly crushed by a storm of jealousy.  
In a woman's chamber, how many spring nights are but dreams?  
I adore Cicada Shell—she left behind her robe.

utsusemi

shūen ichiji ni narabi hiraki gatashi  
kika tachimachi tofū ni kudakaru  
kōkei tashō zo shunshō no yume

空蟬

衆艷一時難併開  
葵花忽被妒風摧  
紅閨多少春宵夢

ware wa aisu utsusemi no sendatsushi kitaru wo 我愛空蟬蟬脱來

See *SI*, 2: 256-258. For the *kundoku* see Fukushima, 3: 52-55.

<sup>85</sup> *SI*, 2: 366-370.

<sup>86</sup> Saikō's poetry was evaluated by other literati poets, the most famous of whom was Rai Sanyō.

<sup>87</sup> See David Schaberg, "The Ruling Mind: Persuasion and the Origins of Chinese Psychology," in Paula M. Varsano, ed., *The Rhetoric of Hiddenness* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2016), 46.

<sup>88</sup> Trans. Harper. See Harper and Shirane, 440-441. For the Japanese, see Nakamura Yukihiko, ed., *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1966), 94: 95.

<sup>89</sup> Tomiko Yoda reveals one of the contradictions in Norinaga's theory of *mono no aware* in arguing that communication in *The Tale of Genji* often ends in failure. She shows that the poetic responses delivered by women characters to their male suitor (Genji) and the intrusions by the narrator disrupt the romantic connection and consequently contradict the ideal of "communal harmony" in *mono no aware*. See Tomiko Yoda, "Fractured Dialogues: *Mono no aware* and Poetic Communication in *The Tale of Genji*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 59, no. 2 (December 1999): 523-557.

<sup>90</sup> Annotators Fukushima and Iritani have replaced the Chinese graph *shō* 鐘 (bell) in Saikō's manuscript with *shō* 鍾 (to gather, hence *atsumuru* in *kundoku*). The correction makes sense, but to address both meanings, I rendered to the line "the emotion most resonant" as opposed to "the emotion that gathers the most."

<sup>91</sup> Trans. Harper. See Harper and Shirane, 471. For the Japanese, see Nakamura, 94: 114.

<sup>92</sup> Li, 88. In her chapter, Li examines both Gu's *shi* and *ci* (song lyric) poetry. Gu's *ci* in particular reveal an individuated mind writing against the confines of convention and genre.

<sup>93</sup> Vendler, 168.

<sup>94</sup> *SI*, 1: 63-65.

<sup>95</sup> See Grace S. Fong, "Writing and Illness: A Feminine Condition in Women's Poetry of the Ming and Qing," in Grace S. Fong and Ellen Widmer, eds., *The Inner Quarters and Beyond: Women Writers from Ming through Qing* (Boston: Brill, 2010), 19-47.

<sup>96</sup> As a poem that echoes the Yuefu and song lyric genres, "Spring Lyric" also alludes to *haikai* that have represented the temporality of long days in spring. In my Introduction, I discussed Buson's *hokku* about the spring sea, and how the repetition and length of spring takes lyric form. In 1775, Buson also produced a retrospective *hokku* on spring entitled "Reminiscing the Past" (Kaikyū). We hear its echoes in the form and content of Saikō's poem:

Long days  
Pile up in the distance  
Of long ago.  
*osoki hi no / tsumorite tōki / mukashi kana*  
遅き日のつもりて遠きむかし哉

See Yosa Buson, *Buson zenshū* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1992), 4: 278. Buson's poem is about spring twilight when the day just seems to go on forever. He links this long temporality with how time in general "piles up" (*tsumorite*), as it has done so since the "distant past" (*tōki mukashi*).

<sup>97</sup> Saikō often evoked the water-clock, or clepsydra, in her poems. For example, below is one of her early poems on the long days of summer:

Improvisation on a Summer Day  
The long days are like years, the water clock at noon drips slow;  
A steady fall of light rain, it is the season of ripening plums.  
I take a long nap by the window, deep in my chamber it is quiet;  
I even copy from the perfume box, four charming poems.

<i>kajitsu gūsaku</i>	夏日偶作
<i>ejitsu nen no gotoku chūrō ososhi</i>	永日如年晝漏遲
<i>hibi taru sai'u jukubai no toki</i>	霏微細雨熟梅時
<i>gosō nemuri tarite shinkei sizuka nari</i>	午窓眠足深閨靜
<i>nozomi etari kōren shi'enshi</i>	臨得香奩四艷詩

See *SI*, 1: 12-13.

<sup>98</sup> The swallows may also not be living, but fixtures of the engraved eaves of the house. In this case, the ending is even darker: the poet's plea falls on deaf ears, but somehow is audible to static, inanimate objects that remind her of her own solitude.

<sup>99</sup> Poem No. 12 of the “Nineteen Old Poems” (Gushi shijiu shou) from the Han Dynasty ends with an abandoned woman longing to be reunited with her husband like a pair of swallows:

Heart racing, I fiddle with my inner belt,	馳情整中帶
Muttering softly, for a while pacing to and fro.	沉吟聊躑躅
Longing for us to become a pair of flying swallows,	思爲雙飛燕
I carry mud in my mouth and nest in the eaves of your house.	銜泥巢君屋

<sup>100</sup> *SI*, 1: 130-132.

<sup>101</sup> Saikō’s poem evokes Li Bai’s famous poem, “On a Silent Night I Long” (Jingye si), in which the poet is lying in bed, and mistakes the bright moonbeams shining into his bedroom for frost glinting on the ground. He raises his head and gazes longingly at the bright moon, then lowers his head and longs for home:

By the foot of the bed I see moonlight:	牀前看月光
It looks like frost shining on the ground.	疑是地上霜
I raise my head, and gaze at the moon above the mountain;	舉頭望山月
I lower my head, and long for home.	低頭思故鄉

For the Chinese, see Saitō Shō, ed., *Kanshi taikai* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1965), 7: 167-168.

<sup>102</sup> Fong writes: “Generally constructed within the spatial location of the women’s quarters, their poems draw on a limited lexicographical range that emphasizes acute bodily sensations of being cold and thin and a heightened level of sensory perception, particularly the auditory senses, often due to the inability to sleep at night. The persona hears the water clock dripping and the wind blowing at night, the cock crowing and the orioles singing at dawn.” See Fong, 33.

<sup>103</sup> Here we are reminded of Du Fu’s (712-770) five-character regulated verse (*wuyan lüshi*) “Moonlit Night” (Yue ye), which features the moon as the mediating figure between the poet and his family. The poet has been dispatched to work in the capital Chang’an, while his family is waiting for him back home in Fuzhou. He looks at the moon one night, hoping that his wife and two children are also looking at the same moon. Surely, many poems after Du Fu have used this trope, but Du Fu’s poem is a classic example:

Tonight in Fuzhou the moon is out,	今夜鄜州月
In the bedroom alone she just gazes.	閨中只獨看
From afar I worry my son and daughter	遙憐小兒女
Do not yet know to long for Chang’an.	未解憶長安
Fragrant smoke wets cloudy curls;	香霧雲鬟濕
Bracing beams chill jade shoulders.	清輝玉臂寒
When will we stand by the window curtains,	何時倚虛幌
Both aglow in moonlight, our tear marks dried?	雙照淚痕乾

For the Chinese, see Mekada Makoto, ed., *Kanshi taikai* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1965), 9: 89-90.

<sup>104</sup> In its original form, “Mizukara yaru” is read as “Jiken.” See entry for “*jiken*” in Morohashi Tetsuji, ed., *Daikanwajiten* (Tokyo: Taishūkan, 1989) 9: 407. Li Bai wrote a poem of the same title: “Facing wine, unaware of dusk; / Fallen blossoms mantle my robe. / I sober up and pace the moonlit valley, / Where a bird returns home and people are scarce.” See Aoki Masaharu, ed., *Kanshi taikai* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1965), 8: 354. In the case of Li Bai’s poem, translating the title as “Dispelling Grief” makes sense because the poem is about waking up to the sadness of one’s loneliness. Saikō’s poem is more complex, as it contends with matters beyond the self, and the fragility of artistic representation (poetry, painting, writing) in the face of time and aging. Japanese annotators Kado Reiko and Iritani Sensuke write that the title means “dispelling grief” (*jibun no ki wo harasu*). Their interpretation addresses an effect of writing the poem, the feeling of catharsis, which he draws from the locus classicus of the term in the Tang Dynasty. While the process of transmitting the self in these two poems involves the release of grief, it is the process that the title (and the poem) refers to, not the result. The meaning of the title hinges on the verb, “*yaru*,” which here means “to send,” “to dispatch,” or even, “to disseminate.” A facsimile of a *kanbun* dictionary from 1906 (originally published by Sanseido) includes these meanings in the entry for “*ken*”: “to dispatch” (*tsukawasu*), “to send” (*yaru*), “to deliver” (*okuru*), “to pursue” (*ou*), “to depart” (*tatsu*). See Sanseidō Henshūjo, ed., *Koku kanbun jiten* (Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 2011).

<sup>105</sup> *SI*, 2: 372-3.

<sup>106</sup> John Hollander writes that dreaming and poetry both raise the question about the intentionality of the dreamer and the poet: “There are dreams in and out of poems, poems in and out of dreams. There is the common and interesting challenge that both poems and dreams pose to the idea of intentionality; both the dreamer and the poet could be said

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to will elements in each of these, but unwittingly.” From Chapter 5, “Dreaming Poetry,” in John Hollander, *The Work of Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 78.

<sup>107</sup> Cecile Chu-chin Sun, *The Poetics of Repetition in English and Chinese Lyric Poetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 216.

<sup>108</sup> William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, eds., Michael Gamer and Dahlia Porter, *Lyrical Ballads 1798-1800* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2008), 288. The rest of the quote: “During such efforts there will be a craving in the mind, and as long as it is unsatisfied the Speaker will cling to the same words, or words of the same character. There are also various other reasons why repetition and apparent tautology are frequently beauties of the highest kind. Among the chief of these reasons is the interest which the mind attaches to words, not only as symbols of passion, but as things, active and efficient, which are of themselves part of the passion. And further, from a spirit of fondness, exultation, and gratitude, the mind luxuriates in the repetition of words which appear successfully to communicate its feelings.”

<sup>109</sup> Another reading of “*tsutsuga naki*” is “to be free from all harm.” The word appears in the last lines of the *Jiu bian* chapter in the *Chuci*: “Blessed with rich flavours from the Lord of Heaven, / I shall return to see my lord free from all harm.” See David Hawkes, trans., *The Songs of the South* (New York: Penguin, 1985), 217. For the Chinese, see Hoshikawa Kiyotaka, ed., *Shinshaku kanbun taikai* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1970), 34: 303.

<sup>110</sup> In her article “Self-Representation and the Patriarchy in Heian Female Memoirs,” Esperanza Ramirez-Christensen examines why the works of women writing at the intersection of the tenth and eleventh centuries in Japan “still touch us, and both comfort and distress us.” See Rebecca Copeland and Esperanza Ramirez-Christensen, eds., *The Father-Daughter Plot: Japanese Literary Women and the Law of the Father* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 49-88. Ramirez-Christensen examines the socio-political milieu in the *Kagerō Diary* and the *Sarashina Diary*, and argues that women’s writing in the Heian period became a quest for self-representation that encountered many contradictions. Women were fighting against the limits of their socio-political inferiority, and their writings provided record of that. As for Saikō, the particular poems I examine here are not another instantiation of the difficulties faced by Heian women in their relationship with patriarchy. As an early modern woman poet, Saikō was writing among many other women poets, as well as male poets from various social classes. The worlds described in *Kagerō Diary* and *Sarashina Diary* are much more isolating for women than Saikō’s world in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

<sup>111</sup> *SI*, 2: 374-5.

<sup>112</sup> Fukushima writes that the weak lantern is a symbol for a restless night (*nemurenu yoru no shōchō*). See *Edo kanshisen*, 84.

<sup>113</sup> Nagase has discussed Saikō’s poems about family, from mournful poems on death and illness to congratulatory poems about birth and promotion. Nagase, 174.

<sup>114</sup> Nagase argues that Saikō dually embraced concerns for nature and her family: “While it is true that the majority of Saikō’s poems reveal her voice as a ‘poet’ who cares mostly for the moon and flowers, she was concerned for the Ema’s prosperity, and was an active member of the family, and not hesitant to compose on related events.” See Nagase, 176-177.

<sup>115</sup> Japanese annotator Fukushima Riko interprets the gull as the same white seagull (*hakuō*) that appears *Liezi*. According to the story in *Liezi*, there was a man who loved playing with seagulls on the seashore. One day his father told him to catch one for him. Although the seagulls flew down to the man before, they no longer flew down to him because they could sense his intent. See *Edo kanshisen*, 84 and 141. In other poems, Saikō mentions the white seagulls with clear reference to *Liezi*. However, the connection between Saikō’s poem “Self Transmission” No. 2 and the story in *Liezi* is not clear.

<sup>116</sup> See Morohashi, 4: 963.

<sup>117</sup> This reading comes from its usages in *Zhuangzi*. According to the entry for “*ki*” in Morohashi, “*ki*” alone can mean “what gives birth to myriad things” as well as “the workings (of nature).” See Morohashi, 6: 555.

<sup>118</sup> This may remind readers of the opening to a famous poem by Wordsworth: “The world is too much with us; late and soon, / Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.” See Wordsworth, 144.

**Chapter 3:**  
**Representing Life in the Prose Poems of Masaoka Shiki**



To imagine a language means to imagine a life-form.  
—Ludwig Wittgenstein (1945)<sup>1</sup>

Words are things, and a small drop of ink,  
Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces  
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think.  
—Lord Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto III; Stanza 88 (1821)<sup>2</sup>

The body is the house of the mind;  
the mind is the master of the body.  
—Masaoka Shiki, *Fudemakase* (1884)<sup>3</sup>

This chapter examines lyric thinking in Masaoka Shiki's prose poems. I argue that Shiki's lyric thinking manifests in a Romantic dialectic of life and death. This dialectic appears in poetic works that embody the idea of *shasei*, or "representing life." In these works, Shiki invokes the modern meaning of *shasei* as "sketching," an empirical representation of objects informed by pictorial realism and naturalism in nineteenth century European painting and literature; he also invokes the traditional idea of "transposing the spirit-resonance" of a life form in poetry and painting. As such, Shiki's *shasei* displays a philosophy of poetic form in which language represents a living body and its dynamic movement, rather than a still and static image.

I examine the permutations of *shasei* in excerpts from his essay *Fudemakase* (1884-1892; Propensity of the brush), his travelogues *Tabi no tabi no tabi* (1892; Journey within a journey within a journey) and *Jūnen mae no natsu* (1898; Summer ten years ago), and his deathbed narratives *Bokujū itteki* (1901; A drop of ink) and *Byōshō rokushaku* (1902; Sixfoot sickbed). In these poetic works, Shiki assumes the persona of a careless Rambler, and lets his mind meander in witty, ironic, and dialectical discussions about various topics. He uses poetic imagery to create a topographical landscape of his lyric mind, conjuring the aesthetic of "blandness" (*pingdan*) in Chinese literati painting and the concern for the quotidian in Edo *haikai* and *kanshi* poetics. I read each work as a prose poem in which the lyric subject imagines life as a moving and changing polygonal painting constituted by polyphony of voices and proliferation of images.

## Illness as Metaphor

This section prefaces my discussion of *shasei* in Shiki's prose poems with an examination of *shasei* in his *kanshi*. Informed by *haikai* and late imperial Chinese poetics, his *kanshi* blended the empiricism in Buson's *hokku* with the heightened sensitivity in Saikō's *kanshi*. Shiki composed poems in many genres on the dialectic of life and death; he used the *kanshi* form, and also the prose poem, to figure his tuberculosis as a mode of self-expression, what Susan Sontag has called "promoting the self as an image," a characteristic of modern subjectivity in nineteenth century literature.<sup>4</sup> As such, Shiki's *kanshi* evoke the natural symbiosis between poet and poem in traditional Chinese thought, and also the "romantic view that illness exacerbates consciousness" in the sensual embodiment of poetic form.<sup>5</sup>

In 1896, Shiki composed a five-character ancient-style poem (*gogon koshi*) about the relationship between illness and creativity:

Born with the natural talent to carve insects,  
By twelve, I was already composing poetry.  
Lung disease lettered in a thousand scrolls,  
My whole life recorded with one brush.  
In reclusion springtime colors are rare;  
I sit alone, the evening sun sets slow.  
A crow returns to the mountain peak;  
Far far away, there is someone for whom I long.

<i>chōchū motoyori tenpu</i>	彫蟲固天賦
<i>jūni sunawachi shi wo nasu</i>	十二即成詩
<i>haibyō sho senkan</i>	肺病書千卷
<i>jinsei fude isshi</i>	人生筆一枝
<i>yūkyō shunshoku sukunaku</i>	幽居春色少
<i>koza yūhi ososhi</i>	孤坐夕陽遲
<i>karasu santō ni mukatte kaeru</i>	鴉向山頭返
<i>yūyū omou tokoro ari</i>	悠悠有所思

The poem opens with irony about literary talent. He writes that he was endowed with the gift to “carve insects” (*chōchū*), a pejorative metaphor from traditional Chinese thought for unsophisticated and inferior artistic technique.<sup>7</sup> And yet in Line 2, the Shiki celebrates his precociousness as a young artist by declaring that at age twelve he was already composing poetry, one of highest forms in literati culture. In Line 1, the poet is not being humble, but actually embracing “carving insects” as his creative means of literary expression. He rejects the grand literary virtuosity afforded by writing in the tradition and invoking the ancient masters in favor of the freedom to write whatever comes to his mind, however minute or mundane.

In the late nineteenth century, “carving insects,” as it were, may be interpreted as Shiki’s metaphor for the modern idea of *shasei* and its attendant modes of plain and vernacular literary expression. In the Edo period, *shasei* denoted a practice where the artist’s heart and mind communed with a natural object and rendered its “spirit-resonance” (*ki’in*) in traditional poetry and painting.<sup>8</sup> By the late nineteenth century, *shasei* imported the conventions of Western-style realism, and gained cultural currency as a principle of modern artistic and literary composition for Japanese painters and poets.<sup>9</sup> A work that audiences would identify as *shasei* in the Meiji period was one that depicted an object “as is” (*ari no mama*) with accuracy, precision, and objectivity.<sup>10</sup> This meant abandoning the traditional conventions (allusions, quotations, clichés) that an artist would employ to “carve dragons,” not “carve insects.”<sup>11</sup> By the modern period, the range of topics a poet can represent as *shasei* grew infinite, including counting cockscomb blossoms in the garden to hearing a distant temple bell while eating a persimmon.<sup>12</sup>

The poet describes what he means by “carving insects” in the images evoked in Lines 3 and 4: “Lung disease lettered in a thousand scrolls, / My whole life recorded with one brush.” Shiki’s fatal battle with tuberculosis (*haibyō*) is figured as a myriad writings, and his whole life (*jinsei*), as a single brush. The parallel couplet creates a mutual dependency between life and

writing, and evokes the recurrent theme of illness and literary creativity in Shiki's oeuvre. For Shiki, the representation of life is akin to the manipulation of a brush.

The rest of the poem comments on the relationship between life and writing by evoking feelings of longing through images of a spring landscape. Sitting in solitude, the poet is able to see beautiful and bittersweet scenes of spring, all of which stir sadness across infinite time and space. Although the crow in the distance is able to find his way home on the mountain peak, the poet is unable to escape reclusion because of his illness, and abandons himself to the state of infinite longing, evoked in the reduplicative binome *yūyū* (far far away). He cries, "Far far away, there is someone for whom I long," concluding the poem with sadness.

The way the poem pairs illness and writing, and life and sadness, evokes the boudoir plaint from late imperial Chinese poetry as well as the conceit of the Romantic genius and the question "what is life?" often posed by Romantic poets. In the Meiji period, aesthetic ideas informed by Chinese and Japanese literati culture fused with newly imported ideas from British and European Romanticism, including the concern for "life" itself. Shiki was a reader of English literature and philosophy.<sup>13</sup> Romantic poets explored the question "what is life?" and answered it with paradoxes that suggested the impossibility of finding resolution. As Ross Wilson has observed, "Romantic consideration of 'life' is most frequently not so much riven as fascinated by the paradoxes that it entails. Romantic writers are indeed acutely aware that what is often taken to be life does not live."<sup>14</sup>

Shiki's concern for representing life, recording his thoughts, pains, and joys during his lifetime struggle with tuberculosis often takes form as obsessive excavations of the literary archive, passionate discussions about poetry and painting, and prolix expositions about the quotidian.<sup>15</sup> In these discursive and polemical writings, Shiki displays his dialectical thinking on life and death. Janine Beichman has described these oppositions as Shiki's "ability to balance conflicting elements, to hold two opposites in mind at once."<sup>16</sup> As Shiki reformed haiku and *tanka* to embrace the ideal of *shasei*, meaning that these genres would no longer rely on conventions to communicate poetic meaning, but stand as individuated forms that recorded what the poet perceived in real time, he also wrote works that examine diverse aspects of daily life, such as dreaming, travel, eating fruit, watching clouds, classifying friends, the rules of baseball, and the experience of illness. In these works Shiki constructs a dramatic persona that explores the possibilities of sensation and feeling while wrestling with mortality.<sup>17</sup>

As we observed in the *kanshi* above, illness appears as an essential character in Shiki's *shasei*, and as a metaphor for poetic creativity. In his poems on illness we find contradictions of thought in poetic figurations of the mind and body. Sometime after 1896, Shiki composed two five-character regulated verses (*gogon risshi*) entitled "Ill Intervals" (*Byōkan*). Both poems evoke images of illness in a beautiful spring landscape, and conclude with feelings of longing:

Myriad things bearing signs of spring,  
Lively and vital without a moment's rest.  
A fish fin in the shallow spring stream;  
Behind a bird, the jagged mountains green.  
In the afterglow, light follows shadow;  
Body ill, the mind lodges in its form.  
Long days waste away in boredom,  
Fragrant grass fills the empty garden.

<i>banbutsu shun'i wo fukumi</i>	萬物含春意
<i>seisei shibarakumo todomarazu</i>	生生不暫停
<i>gyoken shunsui asaku</i>	魚肩春水淺
<i>chōhai ranzan aoshi</i>	鳥背亂山青
<i>zanshō akari wa kage wo oi</i>	殘照明追影
<i>byōku kokoro wa katachi ni yadoru</i>	病軀心寓形
<i>buryō eijitsu wo keseba</i>	無聊消永日
<i>hōsō kūtei ni michiteri</i>	芳草滿空庭

The spring wind blows, melting away the frost,  
 The grass is luxuriant as far as the eye can see.  
 A country man tills the southern field;  
 A young swallow seeks its old dwelling.  
 I temporarily live in the vulgar realm;  
 My hometown is west of the evening sun.  
 Weak and ill, I profit from the warm serene,  
 Watching the clouds, lost in longing for home.

<i>shunpū fukite kōreru wo toki</i>	春風吹解凍
<i>manmoku kusa seisei tari</i>	滿目草萋萋
<i>sōfu nanpo ni tagayashi</i>	僮父耕南畝
<i>enji kosei wo motomu</i>	燕兒求故栖
<i>gūkyo wa jinkai no ura</i>	寓居塵界裏
<i>kyōkoku wa sekiyō no nishi</i>	鄉國夕陽西
<i>suishisu wadan wo ri toshi</i>	衰疾利和煖
<i>kumo wo mite kishi mayou</i>	見雲歸思迷 <sup>18</sup>

The first poem shows the ailing poet in contrast to his vibrant springtime surroundings. The second couplet describes two animals and paints a landscape in perspective: in the foreground the poet can see the small fins of a fish in a shallow stream, in the background behind a bird a range of jagged mountains. The poet uses the “back” (*hai*) of the bird and the “fins” (*ken*) of the fish to mediate a vision of a larger landscape. This sensitivity to the body evokes the attention to corporeal experience in Saikō’s poetry. As a late imperial trope, sickness entails a different temporality, as well as a heightened sensitivity to the body.

The poet continues his concern for the body in the third couplet: “In the afterglow, light follows shadow; / Body ill, the mind lodges in its form.” Both lines speak to the inseparability between pairs: light and dark, mind and body.<sup>19</sup> As the poet in the *kanshi* wastes away in boredom, nature continues to grow, filling the empty garden. The tone of the final line is ironic: conventionally tall grass and fragrant herbs are celebratory symbols of spring bounty; here, these figures of fulfillment only further underscore the poet’s un-fulfillment.

The second poem echoes the images of the earlier *kanshi*, but evokes melancholy and nostalgia. The opening couplet repeats the image of the luxuriant grass and the vibrancy conventionally associated with spring. The second couplet paints another picture that evokes the

tradition of literati painting: a country farmer tilling the land, and a young swallow seeking its old nest. Both images evoke the farmstead poems of Tao Yuanming (365?-427), a Six Dynasties poet that many Japanese *bunjin* conjured when they wanted to express nostalgia for life in an idyllic landscape. These feelings of homesickness continue in the latter half of Shiki's poem, where the poet declares his disconnect with city life, and desires to return home to the countryside.<sup>20</sup> In the final couplet, his illness becomes the means through which he can benefit from his seemingly pleasant surroundings, while also triggering disorienting thoughts of home. As the poet watches the clouds, he gets "lost in longing for home" (*kishi ni mayou*), suggesting that enfeeblement induces debilitating psychological pain.

Shiki's poems showed how illness enables the poet to experience an alternative temporality and a heightened sensitivity toward the objects of perception. Illness as a trope in Chinese poetry also carries along a whole genre of feelings, one of which is sadness and longing in the form of nostalgia. In the following sections, I examine *shasei* in prose poems where the lyric subject's mind evokes erratic and contradictory movements across different genres and registers of language. By examining this movement in his prose works, we can see how Shiki manipulates vernacular language to shift in and out of traditional genres of writing, as a way to represent a living mind thinking through poetry.

### Letting the Brush Go Where It Goes

This section examines the idea of *shasei* in Shiki's *zuihitsu* (essay; lit. "following the brush"), a genre in which Shiki fashions himself as an idiosyncratic artist by evoking the literati tradition and modern ideas about sound and rhythm in poetry. Shiki composed a series of vignettes that were published in four volumes under the same title *Fudemakase* (1884-1892; Propensity of the brush). The tenuous or entirely absent connection between vignettes is the reason Shiki and later literary historians have called the work a *zuihitsu*.<sup>21</sup> The *zuihitsu* was a popular form of expression among early modern and modern literati. By the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, *zuihitsu* production soared, and many focused on matters of daily life.

In *Propensity of the Brush*, Shiki reveals his ambivalence about calling the work a *zuihitsu* and points to the porousness of genre in the Meiji period.<sup>22</sup> In the vignette "The *Zuihitsu* Style" (*Zuihitsu no bunshō*), Shiki calls the piece a *zuihitsu*, but qualifies that categorization with the description of it as a "memorandum":

We may call this *zuihitsu* my memorandum, we may call it my wild ramblings, but it is a recording of my inner thoughts as they are, so needless to say, there are many imperfections. I began writing the piece a few days ago, dashing off whatever comes to mind, faster than a locomotive, without concern for style or grammar: there's Japanese text, Chinese text, translated text; the grammar is classical, modern, and my own. Once I write something down, I don't review it or make corrections. So, read with that in mind.

此隨筆なる者は余の備忘録といはんか 出鱈目の書きはなしといはんか  
心に一寸感じたることを其まゝに書きつけおくものなれば 杜撰の多きは  
いふ迄もなし 殊にこれは此頃始めし故書く事を續ゝと思ひ出して困る故  
汽車も避けよふといふ走り書きで文章も文法も何もかまはず 和文あり  
漢文あり 直譯文あり 文法は古代のもあり 近代のもあり 自己流もあ

り 一度書いて読み返したことなく直したることなし されば其心して讀  
み給へ。<sup>23</sup>

Shiki rejects categorization in favor of something more free, unpredictable, and idiosyncratic. *Propensity of the Brush* evokes the idea of *shasei* as Shiki renders his inner thoughts “as they are” (*sono mama*) and in a form of language that does not accord with a specific genre.

Despite his disclaimers about inaccuracy and randomness, closer examination of the way thought takes form in each vignette shows that the work is more self-conscious and performative. The title means “propensity of the brush.” This “propensity” is the same “propensity,” or *shi* (*sei* or *ikioi* in Japanese), that François Jullien describes as the natural movement of the brush in Chinese calligraphy.<sup>24</sup> By featuring “propensity” in the title, Shiki evokes the traditional idea that a literatus becomes one with his brush, and lets it go where it goes. And where it goes subscribes to the traditional principle of naturalness, the principle that governs all of nature’s forms, including the mind of the poet.<sup>25</sup>

In the mid-1880s, Japanese prose still resembled the styles of writing we would recognize from the Edo period: a hodge-podge of classical Japanese and Chinese elements on the level of rhetoric, diction, and syntax. Although the *genbunitchi* debates were well in swing by the time Shiki began writing *Propensity of the Brush*, Shiki chose to use the eclectic style of his Edo *bunjin* forebears.<sup>26</sup> The piece on the whole exemplifies this style of language, which we find in the opening vignette “Poem in a Dream” (1884; Muchū no shi):

February 13, my cold severe, and I have no voice. In the middle of the night, I wake up from a dream, and hear snow falling on the window: in a dream or in a hallucination, I compose a couplet:

Falling on the window, a sound faint, softer than rain;  
Spread out on the floor, colors bright, white like frost.

The next morning I wake up, and my heart is still hazy.

二月十三日風邪劇シク聲全ク出デズ 夜半夢驚クノ際雪ノ窓ヲ打ツヲ聞ク  
夢カ幻カ一聯ヲ得タリ

打窓聲小軟於雨, 鋪地色明白似霜,  
翌曉眠覚メテ後猶糢糊心胸ニアリ<sup>27</sup>

The vignette evokes familiar Edo prose genres, including the diary (*nikki*), the travelogue (*kikōbun*), and *haikai* prose (*haibun*). It also offers an early example of how Shiki juxtaposes poetry with prose, a way of writing that he continued to the end of his life. The language above resembles *kundoku* or *kundokutai*, a language that originated as a gloss for *kanbun*, or texts in literary Chinese, but became its own style of writing.<sup>28</sup> The style is marked here by the use of *katakana* and the incorporation of a *kanshi*, which appears in the middle of the passage.

Illness becomes one of the tropes that enables the poet to access an alternate temporality and subjectivity. As Grace Fong has observed, late imperial women poets used illness as a catalyst for writing poetry: “For them, the experience of illness—one of temporal duration—often functions as a prelude and even a pretext to writing.”<sup>29</sup> Saikō used the illness trope to express her solitude and longing in the boudoir. A survey of his *kanshi* will show that Shiki, like

other male literati, borrowed the voice of a woman and wrote poems about the boudoir plaint.<sup>30</sup> Although the topos of the vignette is not necessarily the woman's inner chamber, the illness becomes a pretext for the dream or hallucination that follows, which takes form as verse.

Shiki is sick and cannot speak, so his surroundings speak for him. He hears the sound of falling snow, which is loud enough to stir a sick man with heightened sensitivity. Shiki chooses Chinese verse as a way to give form to the aspects of sound that the opening prose cannot:

Falling on the window, a sound faint, softer than rain;  
Spread out on the floor, colors bright, white like frost.

*mado wo utsu koe sasayaka ni shite ame yori mo yawarakaku  
chi ni shiku iro akaruku shite shimo yori mo shiroshi*<sup>31</sup>

Shiki's two lines of verse form a parallel couplet (or *tsuiku*), which means that the words in Line 1 correspond to the words in Line 2 in terms of taxis and prosody.

The sound of falling snow and its subsequent figuration in lines of verse display Shiki's facility to use language to mediate different sensory experiences. Susan Stewart argues that "poems compel attention to aspects of rhythm, rhyme, consonance, assonance, onomatopoeia, and other forms and patterns of sound to which attention is not necessarily given in the ongoing flow of prose."<sup>32</sup> Line 1 opens with the same phrase from the prose "falling on the window" (*mado wo utsu*), but moves to describe the texture of that sound in poetry: "faint, softer than rain." The adjective "soft" (*yawarakaku*) describes the audibility of snowfall but also its weight and texture. But what does the snow look like? He appears only to hear the sound of snowfall, but not see it. In Line 2, sound mediates a transition to a view of moonlight shining on the bedroom floor. This moonlight serves as a figure or substitute for the white of the snow. He describes the moonlight as "colors bright, white like frost." Stewart writes that sound does not intrinsically have a spatial dimension, unlike vision: "We see properly only what is before us, but sound can envelop us; we might, as we move or change, have varying experiences of sound's intensity, but it will not readily 'fit' an epistemology of spatiality, horizon, or location."<sup>33</sup> Stirred by the faint sound of snow falling on the window, Shiki uses Line 2 to create a spatial dimension that mediates the sound through the vision of moonlight shining bright white like frost.

The plight of the sleepless poet evokes the poetic tradition, including Saikō's "Sleepless on a Bright Moon Night" and Li Bai's "On a Silent Night I Long" (*Jingye si*). In Li Bai's poem the poet is lying in bed, and mistakes the bright moonbeams shining into his bedroom for frost glinting on the ground. He raises his head and gazes longingly at the bright moon, then lowers his head and longs for home.<sup>34</sup> Saikō echoes Li Bai's nostalgia in her poem, but Shiki's verse does not go that far. It breaks off at the image of frost, and returns to prose, whereupon we discover that Shiki returns to sleep, but awakes with the same feeling he had before going to bed: "my heart is still hazy" (*moko shinkyō ni ari*). The word *shinkyō* also includes his state of mind, both of which are *moko*, which means "hazy," "indistinct," and "dreamy." Shiki's use of *moko* evokes the opening lines of a poem by Bai Juyi (772-846) anthologized in the *Quan Tang Shi* (1705; Complete poems of the Tang):

Night after night the river and clouds are dark and brooding;  
At daybreak the mountain snow is white and indistinct.

連夜江雲黃慘澹  
平明山雪白糢糊<sup>35</sup>

The allusion to Bai Juyi's description of snow tells us that the sensation of snow remains with Shiki, almost hauntingly, even after he wakes up: snow transforms into a visual image of his inner feelings, the state of being hazy and indistinct. In other words, the sound is no longer audible at dawn, but its lasting impression can be found in the heart and mind of the poet, a blankness, an opacity, an ineffable feeling, soft and tenuous as a flake of snow.

Shiki's concentration on the sound of falling snow throughout the opening vignette of *Propensity of the Brush* tells us that the piece on the whole is interested in the possibilities of language to represent sensory experience. By entitling the vignette "Poem in a Dream," Shiki comments on the experience of lyric as overheard: that poetry is like hearing a sound that makes you want to visualize it, to touch it, and to give it some palpability so you can know it. Listening to sound in this way functions as a critical medium for other sensory experiences. In her discussion of German poet Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), Stewart observes that hearing is a "middle" sense that mediates the subject's connection to vision and touch:

. . . it [hearing] mediates the vagueness of touch and the cold brightness of vision; it negotiates the partiality of the immediacy of touch and the objectified "all at oneness" of vision; and it stands between those objects of touch that are as mute as the fell of dark and those objects of vision that are endlessly describable. Whereas vision and touch refer to stationary objects, hearing indicates movement and change and so hearing is especially conducive to the transformation and unfolding of language.<sup>36</sup>

We find the transformation and unfolding of language in the way that Shiki moves from prose to poetry and back to prose again, the effect of which reproduces the experience of hearing a poem being read out loud. In this way, "Poem in a Dream" is a prose poem about poetry, as it shows how the lyric mind makes sensory connections with objects using the shifts and changes of language.

The vignettes that follow "Poem in a Dream" reveal Shiki's thoughts on topics of all kinds: language, orthography, friendship, happiness, art, literature, music, poetry, letters, and more. This overwhelming degree of diversity in *Propensity of the Brush* is Shiki's way of exploring the concern for the transformative possibilities of language that Stewart raises above, since this work, as well as his later writings, performs this dynamic relationship in language by the way it mediates different senses, thoughts, and feelings.

This movement in language is informed by Shiki's reading of English philosopher and scientist Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). Shiki writes a vignette about Spencer's *Philosophy of Style* (1852), in which he argues with Spencer about his claims regarding the economy of mental energy. By mental energy, Spencer means the mental faculties that we use in the process of reading, and argues that the more difficult the text the more it depletes our mental energy. This is why in the opening section "The Principle of Economy Applied to Words," Spencer writes about the conveyance of thought that "the more simple and the better arranged its parts, the greater will be the effect produced."<sup>37</sup> Shiki's concern was what constituted that "effect," and what happens in the heart and mind of the reader in the process of reading. While Spencer argues that the more time we spend over a sentence, the less we gain from it, Shiki contends that sentences that require longer contemplation are the most fascinating.

Throughout the essay Spencer cites lines by the Romantic poets, and argues that poetry is superior to prose because of its precision and economy of words. Inspired by this idea, Shiki



exclaims at the end of the vignette: “the most concise style is the best style” (*sai kantan no bunshō wa sairyō no bunshō nari*), and idea that resonates with his later campaign to reform haiku and let it stand autonomously, cut off from the linked-verse tradition. He quotes English rhetorician Richard Whateley (1831-1863), “men find pleasure in attaining meaning beyond language,” and replies, “I find pleasure when the writer has mastered the technique of suggestiveness in short sentences.”<sup>38</sup> The idea of “meaning beyond language” (*genko igai no imi*) and “suggestiveness” (*yoi*) are part and parcel to how poetry works, and what Shiki tries to achieve in his own prose and poetry.

Shiki’s discursive meditations on the constitution of literature and the possibilities of language (evident in the range of topics and registers of language that constitute *Propensity of the Brush*) are informed by Spencer’s views on the rhythmical structure of poetry, namely how such movement makes feelings communicable between poet and reader:

There is one peculiarity of poetry conducing much to its effect—the peculiarity which is indeed usually thought its characteristic one—still remaining to be considered: we mean its rhythmical structure. This, improbable though it seems, will be found to come under the same generalization with the others. Like each of them, it is an idealization of the natural language of strong emotion, which is known to be more or less metrical if the emotion be not too violent; and like each of them it is an economy of the reader’s or hearer’s attention. In the peculiar tone and manner we adopt in uttering versified language, may be discerned its relationship to the feelings; and the pleasure which its measured movement gives us, is ascribable to the comparative ease with which words metrically arranged can be recognized.<sup>39</sup>

Spencer argues that poetry is pleasurable because of meter. When the reader or listener becomes aware of this structure, exemplified by rhyme and rhythm, he can discern the poet’s feelings. And Shiki, perhaps not so surprisingly, ends the vignette on Spencer’s essay with poetry:

I am truly wandering inside the boundless indistinctness of cloud and fog.

*yo wa jitsu ni unmu bōbō no naka ni hō’ō shitsutsu aru mono nari.*

余は實ニ雲霧茫茫の中に彷徨しつつあるもの也。<sup>40</sup>

Shiki employs the four-character phrase *unmu bōbō*, which means “boundless indistinctness of cloud and fog,” a metaphor for the recondite thoughts and feelings of the human mind and heart. He writes that he is “wandering” (*hō’ō shitsutsu aru*), which rhymes with *bōbō*, the dense, vast, and indistinct space that cloud and fog occupy. The line is in prose, but his usage of figurative language points to “meaning beyond language” with all its “suggestiveness.” And what is most striking about the final line is that Shiki is moving in a space pregnant with feeling, a space that the sections to follow will continue to explore in other prose poems.

## Mind and Landscape

This section examines how Shiki blends the traditional idea of *shasei* as the merging of mind and landscape with the Romantic idea of recompensing with nature. As a poet who liked to

roam in vast indistinctness, Shiki recorded his feelings while traveling. Shiki composed a short piece called *Tabi no tabi no tabi* (1892; A Journey within a journey within a journey; from here on *A Journey Within a Journey*), in which he recounts his trip to Hakone.<sup>41</sup> The language in the travelogue evokes *haibun* (*haikai* prose) works from the Edo period. In *haibun* pieces about travel, the writer describes a place and inserts haiku to distill his thoughts and feelings about a particular observation of the natural environment.

Shiki's descriptions of the natural landscape in *A Journey Within a Journey* display signs of continuity with *haibun* and the travelogue tradition in how the lyric subject abandons himself to spiritual communion with the natural object under empirical observation; but they also evoke the Romantic fascination with the sublime and the beautiful as discussed by William Wordsworth in his essay "The Sublime and the Beautiful" (1811-1812).<sup>42</sup> The following examination shows how Shiki's mind reconciles sublimity and beauty when he reaches the summit of a mountain in Hakone and gazes at Mt. Fuji towering in the distance.

Shiki's travelogue begins with the sound of the whistle of a steam engine, marking his departure from Tokyo:

The steam whistle blew, I left the capital behind, and in one day watched fifty-three stations go by. The exquisite views of the riverside towns and mountain hamlets were more fugitive than cloud and smoke passing before the eye, ever more fleeting than the sight of famous ruins on the signboards of photography shops, that after one glance, they were gone without a trace. Someone would call this a journey. This journey is no different from a dream.

汽笛一声京城を後にして五十三亭一日に見尽すとも水村山郭の絶風光は雲煙過眼よりも脆く写真屋の看板に名所古跡を見るよりもなおはかなく一瞥の後また跡かたを留めず。誰かはこれを指して旅という。かかる旅は夢と異なるなきなり。<sup>43</sup>

Shiki opens with *kiteki issei*, a four-character Chinese compound that means "the steam whistle blew." Its sound carries over to the following sequence of words, and like vanishing plumes of smoke, the capital (*keijō*) recedes from view, and along with it fifty-three stations. The rhetoric of the opening description is Romantic, painting an image of the traveller stepping out of the city and foraying into the enchanting space of the countryside. Shiki pairs the fugitive image of the capital with the fugitive image of the "riverside towns and mountain hamlets," and uses a Chinese metaphor to describe its fleetingness: *un'en kagan* (*yun yan guo yan* in Chinese), or "cloud and smoke passing before the eye." The locus classicus for the phrase is in "Record of the Hall of Treasures and Paintings" (*Bao hui tang ji*) by Su Shi (1037-1101). As I discussed in my chapters on Buson and Saikō, the writings of Su Shi had profound influence on Japanese literati culture. Here, Shiki uses figurative language from the Song Dynasty to describe the fugitive beauty of a modern rural landscape.

To reinforce the feeling of fugitiveness, Shiki compares the exquisite bucolic landscape to the advertisements of ruins posted outside a photography shop. By the late Edo period, travel became more convenient because of new roads and infrastructure, and as Kate McDonald has observed, by the late nineteenth century with the emergence of Japan as an imperial power, tourism and travel became a critical tool for broadening the social imagination with the expansion of the empire.<sup>44</sup> As Japan created an image of itself as a nation state with a national

language and cultural heritage, photography became important for visualizing and disseminating ideas associated with that cultural past and identity. Shiki's comment on the signboards of the photography shop betrays a subtle lamentation about the speed by which the modern subject encounters an image in a single glance (*ichibetsu*), only to forget it, as it leaves no trace (*ato kata wo todomezu*). As a way to categorize the fleetingness of images, especially those associated with the historical past, Shiki assumes a third-person perspective and calls his experience a *tabi*, or "journey." And rehearsing the cliché of fugitive experience in early modern literature, he compares the journey to a dream, only this dream is interwoven with mournful feelings for the fugitive beauty of the countryside at the expense of modernization.

The repetition of words in the prose creates a rhythm similar to the kind we hear in premodern oral performance when the performer would utter a word, and qualify it in the next sentence by repeating the phrase. Shiki continues this rhythm as he describes his journey into the countryside, evoking the space of the rural demimonde:

When I tap on my hand a cup of wine suddenly appears; when I tap on my wallet, a beautiful woman with a nice smile shows up later. Someone would call this a hotel. This hotel is very noisy like a communal villa. I felt an affinity to a previous life where the straps on my sandals would wear away after climbing a hill for a few miles, my reward for pilgrimaging into the unknown, where I would be scolded by the road-horse man and ridiculed by the palanquin bearer for setting out aimlessly on the road, treading on white clouds and picking herbs and blossoms. Only in these moments can one truly understand *mono no aware*.

手を敲けば盃酒忽焉として前に出で財布を敲けば美人嫣然として後に現る。誰かはこれを指して客舎という。かかる客舎は公共の別荘めきていとうるさし。幾里の登り阪を草鞋のあら緒にくわれて見知らぬ順礼の介抱に他生の縁を感じ馬子に叱られ駕籠舁に嘲られながらぶらりぶらりと急がぬ旅路に白雲を踏み草花を摘む。実にやもののあわれはこれよりぞ知るべき。<sup>45</sup>

Shiki seems to enjoy romping in rustic places with fine wine and fine women at the snap of a finger. In homage of itinerant poets of the past, he describes this feeling as akin to a former life (*tashō*) where he would be pilgrimaging with horses and carriage, traveling without a destination and merely "treading on white clouds and picking herbs and blossoms." As Shiki dreams about walking on sunshine, he writes that these are the moments when a person can truly understand *mono no aware*, or "empathy and sympathy for others." When a poet feels *mono no aware*, an emotion wells up from within, and he usually composes a poem to distill and encapsulate it.

Shiki writes that he has been traveling in the "floating world" (*ukiyo*) for 25 years, has been away from his hometown in the south for 10 years, and has been away from Tokyo for 10 days. Struck by the repetition of his peripatetic movements he composes the following haiku, from which the title of the piece derives:

A journey within a journey  
Within another journey  
In the autumn wind.

*tabi no tabi / sono mata tabi no / aki no kaze*

旅の旅その又旅の秋の風<sup>46</sup>

The repetition of *tabi*, also evident in the title, on the one hand illustrates Shiki's playful lyricism redolent of the cyclicity of Buddhist thought; on the other, it bespeaks a modern fascination with numbers and enumeration in poetry.

Evident in *Propensity of the Brush* and many other prose works that fit under the umbrella of *zuihitsu* is Shiki's passion for counting, listing, and cataloguing. Seth Jacobowitz has viewed this as Shiki's fascination for creating archives of information, an obsession symptomatic of a modern media overload. I would also argue that the excessiveness of enumeration and repetition in Shiki's oeuvre performs his lyric thinking about infinitude, as well as a Romantic anxiety about the unhappiness of recollection, redolent of ideas discussed in the works of Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard (1813-55). In the haiku above, one journey follows another, almost in an endless cycle of repetition, only to find company in the autumn wind. In *haikai* poetry, the autumn wind functions as a *kigo* (seasonal referent); but here it also works as an ironic figure for autumnal sadness. While the repetition of *tabi* initially produces a comic effect, the elation is soon deflated by the biting cold of the autumn wind.

The rest of *A Journey Within a Journey* records Shiki's feelings about the enchanting landscape of Hakone. His descriptions in prose are regularly distilled by poems. When he reaches the summit of a mountain in Hakone, he is struck by the view of Lake Ashi and begins to express fear and wonder as he describes the landscape unfolding before his eyes:

After climbing the peaks of mountains stretching for a thousand leagues, and breaking off fragments of the hanging white clouds, I reached the summit. How vast my heart feels the first time I set eyes on the polished mirror of Lake Ashi! Enraptured by the superbly exquisite view, and unable to stand, I sit on a tree stump and just stare continuously: the mountains grew all the more quiet when the wind was still, and the cold felt like winter, creeping up from my feet and spreading through every corner of my body through the crown of my head.

千里の山嶺を攀じ幾片の白雲を踏み砕きて上り着きたる山の頂に鏡を磨ぎ  
出だせる芦の湖を見そめし時の心ひろさよ。あまりの絶景に恍惚として立  
ちも得さらず木のくいぜに坐してつくづくと見れば山更にしんしんとして  
風吹かねども冷氣冬の如く足もとよりのぼりて脳巔にしみ渡るこちな  
り。<sup>47</sup>

The opening of the passage immediately evokes the “Climbing High” (*deng gao*) trope in classical Chinese poetry, where the poet would ascend a tower or mountain and look out at the vast landscape before him.<sup>48</sup> White clouds (*haku'un*) evoke the dreamy and ethereal space of the immortal realm, where the Daoists would transcend the vulgar world and indulge in drink and merriment.

Whereas many of these classical Chinese poems about “climbing high” often end in poignant reflections about the distant past, Shiki's description tarries in the ecstasy of the present and displays a Romantic fascination with the unfamiliar, almost alien, landscape. The image he paints evokes the painting of the peripatetic poet staring into a vast expanse of rolling clouds and smoke depicted in “Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog” (1818) by German Romantic painter Casper David Friedrich (1774-1840). Philip Fisher has discussed wonder as a sudden

recognition of a visual presence: “Wonder and learning are tied by three things: by suddenness, by the moment of first seeing, and by the visual presence of the whole state or object.”<sup>49</sup> Here Shiki sees Lake Ashi for the first time, the vastness of the unfolding landscape maps onto his heart and mind, and his body feels paralyzed by ecstasy (*kōkotsu*). He also remarks the lake is clear as a polished mirror, the brilliance of which we can only imagine.

Shiki’s rapture continues as he stares into the landscape, and describes in detail what he sees and feels. But what he perceives seems to be a combination of the sublime and the beautiful. The more he stares the closer he finds quietude: the further his gaze entered the dark density of the valley, the quieter it grew; moreover, the wind is still, and yet a wintry cold penetrates his entire body. The way the cold envelopes Shiki’s body, indicated by the verb *shimiwataru* (to penetrate and spread throughout), suggests that the feeling is overwhelming. Wordsworth writes: “where the beautiful and the sublime co-exist in the same object, if that object be new to us, the sublime always precedes the beautiful in making us conscious of its presence.”<sup>50</sup> After or mid-trance, Shiki describes rare and placid views of the local wildlife:

Wagtails were flying past each other over the waves, swiftly coming, swiftly going. Struggling in the autumn wind, the butterflies fluttered about powerlessly, hovering over and grazing the water surface. It gave me solace to think that I could see this even from a mountain summit in Hakone.

波の上に飛びかう鶴鴿は忽ち来り忽ち去る。秋風に吹きなやまされて力なく水にすれつあがりつ胡蝶のひらひらと舞い出でたる箱根のいただきとも知らずてやいと心づよし。<sup>51</sup>

Evident in the way that he describes the wagtails and the butterflies, Shiki seems to be most struck by their movement in flight. Wagtails weave in and out of each other’s flight path, meanwhile butterflies brave the autumn wind, struggling to stay above water, but just barely. The solace and comfort (*kokoro zuyoshi*) Shiki feels comes not only from the crisp clarity of the view, but also his identification with these creatures that reify the feeling of rapture and ecstasy in concrete images. The adverbs he uses to describe the flight of the wagtails, *tachimachi* (suddenly), and the butterflies, *hirahira* (flutteringly), echo the abstract and indistinct feeling of the rapture: in a perpetual state of flux moving at a pace beyond one’s control.

Shiki then gazes into the distance, where he describes the stately, symbolic, and sublime image of Mt. Fuji, a powerful presence that stirs more feelings of awe:

Far away in the sky I found only white clouds, but above them there was Mt. Fuji towering still, reaching what even from here looks like three thousand fathoms. Its shadow sunk down so far and deep that on the water surface its image wrinkled with the ripples. Nothing could be more impressive.

遙かの空に白雲とのみ見つるが上に兀然として現われ出でたる富士ここからもなお三千仞はあるべしと思うに更にその影を幾許の深さに沈めてさき波にちぢめよせられたるまたなくおかし。<sup>52</sup>

Shiki notices that the same white clouds he found at the summit in Hakone stretch far away into the sky where Mt. Fuji also towers with all its magnificence. Wordsworth writes that when we

encounter the sublime, the sensation we feel resolves itself in three parts: “a sense of individual form; a sense of duration; a sense of power.” Shiki’s description of Mt. Fuji hits evokes all three. The adverbial phrase “towering still” (*kotsuzen toshite*) suggests the solid and singular presence of Mt. Fuji. Shiki even estimates how much taller it stands from his perspective on the summit of a mountain in Hakone. But what strikes him the most, giving us the sense of duration and its concomitant presence of august power, is Fuji’s shadow: as it falls onto the surface and into the depths of Lake Ashi, its image wrinkles with the ripples of water. Wordsworth writes that when the form of the object meets with duration, then we feel a sense of the sublime. Shiki ends the description with a statement that comes close: “Nothing could be more impressive” (*mata naku okashi*). The adjective *okashi* has multiple meanings, but in literary contexts often describes an object or person that is extraordinary, fascinating, charming, or magnificent.

Once Shiki descends the mountain, he discovers a ruin that inspires him to compose a *tanka*. His composition of a *waka* evokes the Japanese poetic tradition, and reifies the modern romanticism about ruins in the advertisements at the photograph shop. The scene encapsulates the meaning behind *utakamura*, or “pillow word,” the capaciousness of which I discussed at length in the Buson chapter. Pillow words are part and parcel to writing about travel, as nearly all of them evoke a specific place of poetic significance. Although the Hakone Barrier (Hakone no seki) is not such a place, Shiki rewrites literary history and coins his own *utakamura* by using “barrier” (*seki*) in a poem:

From there, I descended the mountain, and as far as I could see, everything was pampas grass. I wondered where Hakone Barrier was, but there was no one to ask, and no traces to seek. Thinking it could be a pillow word, I compose a *waka*:

The barrier keepers  
Beckon me—  
I come and take a look:  
The ends of pampas grass ears,  
And the wind passing through.

これより山を下るに見渡す限り皆薄なり。箱根の関はいずちなりけんと思  
うものから問うに人なく探るに跡なし。これらや歌人の歌枕なるべきとて  
関守のまねくやそれと来て見れば  
尾花が末に風わたるなり<sup>53</sup>

Although Shiki did not begin promoting *shasei* in his campaign to reform Japanese poetry until the mid-1890s, we already see the ideas for realism working in the *tanka*. Although the gesture to create and use a pillow word would contradict *shasei* ideology, as it would link the poem to convention and the entire poetic tradition, Shiki composes a poem that could fit the bill for a classical *waka*, and yet, is also the realistic representation of a scene Shiki beholds outside the poetic tradition. The barrier keepers (*sekimori*) are a metaphor for the panicles of the pampas grass flowers in bloom that wave to Shiki as the wind passes through them.

The blandness and banality of the scene also exemplify Shiki’s ideas about *shasei*, including the inseparability of life from death. Pampas grass (*obana*; also *susuki*) is one of the Seven Herbs (*nanagusa*) of autumn. Pampas grass appears in poems as early as *Manyōshū*, and is often personified as a former lover beckoning the poet. As a seasonal referent for autumn, the tone of poems on pampas grass is often mournful and bittersweet, like we have here in Shiki’s

poem. The “ends” (*sue*) indicate the part of the pampas grass flowers (the panicles) that wave in the wind, but also suggest that their life is reaching an end.

Late in his life, Buson left a *hokku* on pampas grass that evokes the sadness and morbidity associated with the autumn plant:

The mountain darkens,  
On the moor at twilight:  
Ears of pampas grass.

*yama wa karete / no wa tasogare no / susuki kana*  
山は暮れて野は黄昏の薄かな<sup>54</sup>

As annotators Ogata Tsutomu and Morita observe, Buson’s *hokku* paints a twilight scene in which the sundown leaves the mountain befallen to darkness (*kurete*), meanwhile on the moor, the ears of pampas grass show their faint white in the remaining light. Buson, always the painter, places light and dark in opposition, creating a scene in which darkness increasingly envelops the landscape, leaving only the white of the pampas grass panicles visible, just barely. In Buson’s poetry, darkness inspires wonder just as much as light does. Shiki held Buson in high esteem, and used his poetry to promote his own views on *shasei* and to reform modern haiku.<sup>55</sup> Shiki viewed Buson as a *shasei* poet par excellence because of his “objective beauty” (*kyakkantekibi*), a characteristic that became one of the tenets of *shasei* ideology.

Like Buson’s poem, Shiki’s *tanka* depicts an autumn landscape. While Buson’s poem is entirely visual, Shiki’s poem refigures what he hears with what he sees. When describing experiences of wonder, Fisher writes that the visual comes front and center, especially in poetry: “Lyric poetry has always, among the arts of time, had uniquely potent means to reach out for the effects of wonder that are more at home in the visual. In language it is the work of familiar syntactic structures and the work of grammar that builds in a strong component of expectation at every moment.”<sup>56</sup> While both Buson and Shiki’s poems may fall under the umbrella of *shasei* poetry in how they describe what the poet immediately sees “as is,” both tap into the poetic tradition with the image of pampas grass, and evoke all its feelings of farewell and sadness.

This painterly aesthetic can be found in many of Shiki’s poems, as well as in the descriptions of natural landscapes in his prose pieces. Years later, Shiki wrote another travelogue entitled *Jūnen mae no natsu* (1898; A summer ten years ago; from here on *Summer*), a retrospective piece on a journey he made to Nikkō in Tochigi Prefecture.<sup>57</sup> Like his earlier travelogue, *Summer* juxtaposes prose with poetry to describe the natural landscape. But the lapse in time from when Shiki makes the journey to when he sits down to recount it changes the tone of his remembrance. The tone of *Summer* is more philosophical, and he exhausts the possibilities of language in order to communicate to the reader the experience of beholding beauty in a recollection.<sup>58</sup> In a similar way, Shiki’s recollection *Summer* also tries to restore a past experience by recounting the sights and sounds of a personal encounter with the sublime and the beautiful.

The opening to *Summer* sounds Wordsworthian: “When I look back, twelve years have passed.”<sup>59</sup> Like Wordsworth, Shiki begins his piece with a temporal rupture, and uses the rest of the narrative to fill in what has been lost over time. Shiki romanticizes his youth, saying that then he was young and healthy with unlimited hope and ambition. We learn that he ends up traveling with four other friends from Tokyo to Nikkō, on their quest to “traverse mountains and

waters and exhaust the patterns of nature” (*sansui wo basshō shite shizen no aya wo kiwamen*).<sup>60</sup> As a retrospective piece, *Summer* transports the past into the present through visual description informed by modes of representation in painting. When he visits Tōshōgū Shrine, the resting place of Edo period founder Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616), he describes what he sees as “painted landscapes” (*gakei*) and “strange views” (*kikan*):

The next day, we went to Tōshōgū. On heaven and earth a painted landscape of a single red bridge surrounded by nothing but green, and a strange view of myriad stocks of cryptomeria and moss of three hundred years covering the withered bones of a hero—these sensations stirred my mind and heart formally and formlessly. . .

つぐの日は東照宮に詣づ。天地渾て青き裏に一個の赤き橋を掛けたる画景、  
萬株の杉三百年の苔蒸して英雄の枯骨を護したる奇観、此等の感じは有形  
に無形に余の心を動かしたる. . .<sup>61</sup>

Shiki’s visual observations of the area surrounding Tokugawa’s grave stir feelings and sensations (*kanji*) that “have form” (*yūkei*), denoting a visible or corporeal manifestation, and that “lack form” (*mukei*), denoting an invisible or spiritual manifestation. The way Shiki describes his sensations here echoes earlier claims in the piece where he talks about his “heart’s intent” (*kokorozashi*) as being formless and in constant flux, but also certain that future opportunities await him on this journey. Some of this hope and certainty of what type of things he and his fellow travelers are to encounter comes from Shiki’s discernment. In the same piece, he writes that knowing the philosophy of art enables one to judge the beautiful (*bi*) from the ugly (*shū*).<sup>62</sup> In this way, the tone of *Summer* differs from *A Journey Within a Journey*: whereas the latter reads more in line with the travelogue genre, *Summer* transforms into an aesthetic treatise as well as a paean for the sublime and the beautiful.

We encounter another passage on the sublime and beautiful when Shiki arrives at Kegon Falls and describes the mountain landscape. They visit several waterfalls and lodge by Lake Chūzenji, located on the foot of Mt. Nantai. He writes: “When we were finally deep in the mountain, the thicket of trees were different from anything on earth.”<sup>63</sup> Before the nineteenth century, Lake Chūzenji was regarded as a sacred place; from the Meiji period onward it became another popular site of tourism for Japanese and foreigners alike.<sup>64</sup> Writing a retrospective piece in 1898, Shiki emphasizes the Lake’s unfamiliarity, a Romantic way of rediscovering a beauty that had been lost. Shiki’s recompense can be found in his description of what he sees and feels:

When I first set eyes on Lake Chūzenji, I knew it was a place I could never forget. Mountain verdure as dense as darkness, the appearance of the water a tranquility that pierces bone, the air sunk into stillness, the lonely rays of the setting sun glimmered, coldness like the forehead of a dead man, tree leaves quiet like a mouth in a portrait, moss from eons ago without human traces, mysterious plants unknown to a botanist—struck by all these strange and wondrous sensations, I could do nothing but join the silence around me.

中禪寺の湖は一たび余が目に触れしより後、再び忘るべからざるの地なり。  
黒き迄濃き山の緑、骨にとほりて静かなる水の色、沈んで動かざる空気、淋し



く光る夕日, 死人の額の如き冷氣, 肖像の口の如く黙したる木の葉, 人蹟を  
印せざる太古の苔, 植物学者の知らざる不思議の草花, 凡そ此等の奇異なる  
感に打たれて余も亦周囲と共に沈黙するの外無かりき。<sup>65</sup>

The description of Lake Chūzenji evokes Shiki's description of Lake Ashi in *A Journey Within a Journey*, but moves in a different direction by emphasizing the landscape's alien-ness. The metaphors in the passage evoke life as much as death: "tranquility that pierces bone, . . . coldness like the forehead of a dead man, tree leaves quiet like a mouth in a portrait." We find the same kind of sensitivity to the body here as we did in Shiki's poetry on illness, but interwoven into a dark and deadly atmosphere, still as a portrait or a landscape painting. As he describes objects that are unknown to man and unknown to science, Shiki paints a scene of unfamiliarity that stirs sensations "strange and wondrous" (*ki'i*), and renders him nonplussed and silent.

As Shiki finds himself unable to do anything else but join the silence of his natural surroundings, he begins to lose his footing in time and space, and ultimately his sense of self:

After coming here, the feeling of summer was first to disappear from my mind,  
followed by the feeling of being in the world, and then when I had finally lost all  
sense of self amid the awesomeness, I sensed a single beam of life moving  
through the myriad forms silent around me. It was as if this was the first time  
here that I could feel mystical beauty.

ここに来りて後, 夏といふ感じは先づ余の脳裏を去り, 次に世間といふ感じ  
漸くに去り, やがて自己の感じも亦惘然としてとりとめなくなりし時, 余は  
此沈黙せる万象を通して一道活気を感じたり. 余は始めてここに神秘的美  
を感得したるが如し。<sup>66</sup>

Shiki's description here anticipates William James's (1842-1910) discussion of mystical experiences in "The Varieties of Religious Experience" (1902), in which he argues that the subject loses a sense of self when he feels overcome by the Other, in the case of *Summer*, the forces of nature.<sup>67</sup> As Shiki is overcome by the "awesomeness" (*bōzen toshite*), he senses a "single beam of life" (*ichidō kakki*) moving through every living thing around him, and comes to the realization that he has felt "mystical beauty" (*shinpitekibi*).

In a state of ecstasy, Shiki's mind enters a trance that abandons him to the thought, feeling, and desire to experience the moment forever, whereupon he composes a haiku to capture the moment in seventeen syllables:

From then on, thoughts of staying here at Lake Chūzenji went back and forth  
ceaselessly in my mind, as mystery constantly awaited me. Indistinct, profound,  
alluring, beautiful.

The moon on the water,  
The chill of the night—  
There are spirits.

此より中禪寺湖畔に只ひとり住みたしとの念は絶えず余が心中に往来して、神秘は常に余を待ちつつあり。恍たり、惚たり、盼たり、倩たり。  
月に水涼しき夕神あらん<sup>68</sup>

Similar to the kind of paralysis he experiences on a summit in Hakone gazing at Lake Ashi and Mt. Fuji, Shiki is stunned by Lake Chūzenji. As his thoughts ceaselessly move back and forth in his mind, entering a state of limbo, language starts to break down: the stative verb *kōkotsu* (entranced; enraptured) splits into its constituent elements *kō* (indistinct) and *kotsu* (profound), and *senben* (attractive eyes and mouth) splits into *hen* (alluring) and *sen* (beautiful). In the classical Chinese tradition, these words are used to describe a poet's encounter with beauty, often personified by a goddess.<sup>69</sup>

As Shiki's thoughts break down into lone adjectives without a clear object, he composes a haiku to distill a scene of light and dark: moonlight shines on the water, while a chill fills the night air, whereupon the poet senses the presence of the divine.<sup>70</sup> The final beat of the verse, *kami aran*, indicates the presence of either one or multiple spirits, but considering the Shinto belief that deities exist in all living things, the divine presence is likely more than one. Among unfamiliar sights painterly and strange, Shiki has a mystical experience in which he encounters the sublime and the beautiful. These encounters not only inspire him to compose lyric poems, as has been done in the literary tradition since the early modern period, but also shape his prose into poetry as well. We discover this poetry in the passages that describe his thoughts, feelings, and sensations when he perceives a natural object or landscape that forces him to suggest meaning beyond words.

Shiki's travelogues and retrospective prose poems about the beauty of Hakone and Nikkō showed us how lyric thought is stimulated by encounters with nature. In these texts where nature is the object of representation in *shasei*, Shiki represents the sensual experience of encountering landscape, a realism that is informed by the poetics of late imperial *kanshi*, literati painting, the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, and the ideas of the sublime we associate with Romanticism.

### Spilling Ink Across Time and Space

This section examines *shasei* in Shiki's deathbed narratives, in which his ill body is the object of representation, like we observed in the earlier *kanshi* poems. By the start of the twentieth century, Shiki's writing embraced the new vernacular language of *genbunitchi*; he did not abandon early modern genres of writing, but integrated them with modern prose in lyrical, discursive, fragmentary, biographical, and encyclopedic prose poems that were published in daily installments in the newspaper *Nippon*. The following examination will treat one such prose poem, *Bokujū itteki* (1901; A drop of ink), in which Shiki travels through myriad discourses and transcends the boundaries of temporal containment through the use of rhyme and rhythm.

In the same way the title of a *kanshi* tells us something about its meaning, the title *Bokujū itteki*, in part, suggests that one drop of ink is a metaphor for writing about life. Beichman writes: "The title of *A Drop of Ink* shows how closely he [Shiki] identified his words with life, for the ink of the title was a metaphor for his life's blood."<sup>71</sup> For a writer who often evoked the Romantic concern for the meaning of life, the association between words and blood can be seen in *A Drop of Ink*: the piece reads like a diary in that every installment ends with the date of composition, and the register of language is, on the whole, personal and vernacular. Moreover, *A Drop of Ink* begins with keen observations of objects around his pillow, and ends with a

humorous discussion on how to compose haiku on sushi. In one installment, Shiki lists ten *tanka* that he composes extemporaneously, and declares that “there is no order” (*junjo nashi*).<sup>72</sup> This declaration serves as a meta-comment on the randomness of the entire piece.

But as Jean-Jacques Origas has observed in his reading of Shiki’s deathbed narratives, there is a sensuous logic that organizes Shiki’s thoughts.<sup>73</sup> His thoughts about the senses are mediated by poetry. Considering the number of poems that punctuate the prose throughout the installments, the title *A Drop of Ink* also seems to suggest that everything— words, objects, discourses about poetry and painting, people, history itself—becomes an object of observation and contemplation. Thus going beyond the mere identification with his life, the words in *A Drop of Ink* stir the imagination of the reader, transporting him to myriad possibilities of meaning.

The title and the function of words in *A Drop of Ink* evokes the opening lines of a stanza in Canto III of the long satiric poem *Don Juan* by English Romantic poet Lord Byron: “Words are things, and a small drop of ink, / Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces / That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think.”<sup>74</sup> Shiki owned a collection of Byron’s works, so it is possible that he had Byron in mind when composing *A Drop of Ink*. In a similar fashion to Shiki’s *Propensity of the Brush* from over a decade earlier, *A Drop of Ink* falls under the umbrella of a *zuihitsu*; but its language is more diverse, and its content concentrates on the public as much as the personal in its discursive and polemical discussions on painting and poetry. The sensual tour of different languages, registers, genres in *A Drop of Ink* explores how words, to echo Byron, “makes thousands, perhaps millions, think.”

How words function in *A Drop of Ink* also transports us to the genre of Ekphrasis, only that the painting Shiki describes is a constantly changing representation of his life, feelings, and thoughts. The first installment from January 16, 1901 opens with a description of the objects around Shiki’s pillow. As Origas has observed, Shiki evokes a picture for his reader by naming objects one by one, as if he were describing a painting:<sup>75</sup>

By the pillow where I have been lying ill, there is a box containing scrolls, letters, and envelopes. Above it rests a thermometer. Decorating the thermometer is a straw wreath to remind me that in my sickness I can somewhat celebrate the new year; the way the twigs of its leaves reach out left and right makes me all the more joyful. Below it is an orange, and next to the orange is a globe of nearly the same size. The globe is my twentieth century new year’s gift, given to me by Sokotsu.

病める枕辺に巻紙状袋など入れたる箱あり、その上に寒暖計を置けり。その寒暖計に小き輪飾をくくりつけたるは病中いささか新年をことほぐの心ながら齒朶の枝の左右にひろごりたるさまもいとめでたし。その下に橙を置き橙に並びてそれと同じ大きさほどの地球儀を据ゑたり。この地球儀は二十世紀の年玉なりとて鼠骨の贈りくれたるなり。<sup>76</sup>

The first word in the piece is *yameru* (being ill), which indicates that Shiki has been ill for some time. Readers of *A Drop of Ink* often conflate the author Shiki with the Shiki represented in the literary work. Like the biographical Shiki, the implied Shiki is bedridden and immobile until his death a year later. Although this distinction applies to everything Shiki writes, I stress it here because Shiki is conscious of his audience and assumes the persona of an ill Romantic genius, and offers his readers many entertaining feats of lyric performance.

Shiki's focus on the boxes with scrolls, letters, and envelopes is in part a *shasei* description of his immediate observations; but since we know from his other writings that selection is essential in *shasei*, his choice to mention the contents of the boxes draws our critical attention. Shiki is immobile, so his only means of participating with the outside world is through post, which reveals that his connection to anything beyond the confines of his bedroom is mediated through written language. Each installment in *A Drop of Ink* reads like a letter, or diary entry, or a fragment on a paper scroll in which a literatus would record his poetic musings.

As he continues his *shasei* description, he describes the *wakazari*, a straw wreath decoration that celebrates the New Year. But his attention is especially drawn to a globe that his friend haiku poet Samukawa Sokotsu (1875-1954) gave him as a New Year's present:

I scrutinize the planet earth, three inches in diameter, and find the country of Japan, ever so small, colored especially red. Below Taiwan is written "New Japan." Korea, Manchuria, Jilin, and Heilongjiang all fall into the purple-colored region, but it makes me uneasy to find no mention of Peking or Tianjin. At the end of the twentieth century I wonder how the globe will look different from these red and purple colors; one cannot know just by looking at a globe from the start of the twentieth century.

直径三寸の地球をつくづくと見てあればいささかながら日本の国も特別に赤くそめられてあり。台湾の下には新日本と記したり。朝鮮満洲吉林黒龍江などは紫色の内にあれど北京とも天津とも書きたる処なきは余りに心細き思ひせらる。二十世紀末の地球儀はこの赤き色と紫色との如何に変わりてあらんか、そは二十世紀初の地球儀の知る所に非ず。<sup>77</sup>

As Shiki scrutinizes the globe, the world and all its possibilities come to mind. Geographical knowledge is mediated by color; but unlike in painting where everything is depicted in completed form, the globe he beholds represents a world in a state of transformation. He wonders whether the globe will look different a hundred years later, no doubt a curiosity stirred by Japan's recent imperial expansion and colonization of Taiwan after winning the Sino-Japanese War in 1895. These opening images set the tone for the entire work, suggesting that in *A Drop of Ink* the world is his oyster, as it were, which means Shiki can write at length and freely about every topic, all kinds of words, and in diverse forms, genres, and styles of language.<sup>78</sup>

In the same way he distills prosaic observations of beauty with a poem in the works we examined above, Shiki ends the first installment of *A Drop of Ink* with a *tanka* that condenses his earlier observations in prose, and also ironizes them in lyric form:

At any rate, the box filled with letters and envelopes, and the thermometer, orange, and globe that rest above it make up the *hōrai* in my bedroom.

By the pillow  
On the thermometer  
Hangs a straw wreath  
To celebrate the new year,  
And it may unravel.

とにかくに状袋箱の上に並べられたる寒暖計と橙と地球儀と、これ我が病室の蓬莱なり。

枕べの寒さ計りに新年の年ほぎ縄を掛けてほぐかも<sup>79</sup>

Shiki restates the objects that he describes earlier in the passage, and says they make up his *hōrai*, which we may interpret as the Japanese transliteration of “Penglai,” the legendary island of eternal youth from Chinese myth, or as another name for Taiwan, or in the context of the new year’s decorations, as another term for the stand upon which food offerings are placed. Either way, the tone is ironic. The *tanka* repeats the same images, but puns on the word *hogu*, which in the context of new years means “to celebrate,” but on its own is synonymous with a verb that means, “to fall apart.” The very object that gives Shiki a sense of joy at the start of a new year is the same object that may soon be no more.

Shiki’s pun that closes the first installment of *A Drop of Ink* speaks to his interest in the stuff of poetry, but also the balance of oppositional elements, like light and dark in painting. Beichman observes: “Shiki employed his special ability to speak of two opposing ideas in one breath. When the one was the surface meaning of a statement and the other its true meaning, the result could be biting sarcasm.”<sup>80</sup> The playfulness of Shiki’s language creates a mood of light-hearted irony, and evokes the humor in the *haikai* tradition. Beichman claims that Shiki’s best writing is “imbued with a consciousness of the coexistence of life and death.”<sup>81</sup> We continue to find this dialectic of life and death in *A Drop of Ink*, especially in the way Shiki uses poetry to mediate his own feelings and sensations, the majority of which allude to his impending death.

Shiki’s awareness of his own mortality is often mediated through metaphor, as we can see in the installment from March 26. Shiki writes that his pupil *tanka* poet Itō Sachio (1864-1913) stopped by with a bucket of spring water and three koi fish, and placed it next to his bed so that Shiki could enjoy the season. The immobile poet envies the mobile fish, alive and kicking, but also sympathizes with them because they both occupy confined spaces. As Shiki does with the wisteria flowers in his garden, and the potted plants in his bedroom, he uses the koi as material for extemporaneous haiku.<sup>82</sup> He comes up with ten verses, but claims that he is expressing “one thought” (*ichii*) in “ten ways” (*jūyō*):

After several revisions, I finally came up with ten verses. They amount to ten verses, but they are not ten verses: I only tried to express one thought in ten ways:

The koi in the bucket  
In the spring water  
Gulping for air.

The bucket shallow,  
The backs of the koi are visible  
In the spring water.

Koi tails  
Moving in the bucket—  
Spring water.

The koi in the bucket,

Their heads lined up—  
Spring water.

In the spring water  
Full in the bucket,  
Koi fins.

Spring water—  
The koi are alive  
In the bucket.

Many koi  
In the small bucket—  
Spring water.

The koi blow  
Bubbles—in the bucket  
Of spring water.

In the bucket  
Spring water washes  
The backs of koi.

The koi jump  
In the shallow bucket—  
Spring water.

とやかくと作り直し思ひ更へてやうやう十句に至りぬ。さはれ数は十句に  
して十句にあらず、一意を十様に言ひこころみたるのみ。

春水の盥に鯉の唼啣かな  
盥浅く鯉の背見ゆる春の水  
鯉の尾の動く盥や春の水  
頭並ぶ盥の鯉や春の水  
春水の盥に満ちて鯉の肩  
春の水鯉の活きたる盥かな  
鯉多く狭き盥や春の水  
鯉の吐く泡や盥の春の水  
鯉の背に春水そぐ盥かな  
鯉はねて浅き盥や春の水<sup>83</sup>

Each haiku mentions the same objects: the koi, the bucket, and the spring water. But each poem says something slightly different about them. One analogy would be that each poem is like one side of the same prism or polygonal shape. Shiki's contemporary Marcel Proust (1871-1922) has been described as a novelist who saw "polygonally," who saw "all twenty sides of a question,

and added a twenty-first.”<sup>84</sup> These visual metaphors point to a kind of representation in the late nineteenth century that merges painting with novelistic, and in Shiki’s case, poetic expression.

The visual metaphor allows us to see how Shiki’s statement “one thought in ten ways” manifests in textual form with varying dimensions of space, and because it is lyric, also time. For example, the first haiku evokes a purely visual image of the koi gulping for air in the bucket; in the second haiku the subject changes to the poet (Shiki himself), who sees the backs of the koi in the water; the third haiku moves from the back of the koi to their tails, which move in the water; by the fourth haiku, the poet turns his focus to the heads of the koi. His focus on various actions of the koi—gulping, moving, filling, living, blowing, washing, and jumping—exemplifies the empirical observation in *shasei*. This focus on the movement of the fish also serves a foil to Shiki’s own immobility and lack of vigor and vitality, at least physically.

The repetition of koi, bucket, and spring water, creates a sense of rhythm in the installment, a rhythm that changes beat throughout *A Drop of Ink*, but still continues as permutations of repetition in prose and poetry. Here the repetition of key words that constitute the haiku sequence become Shiki’s way of moving as the koi do in the bucket. Jonathan Culler writes that rhythm has a somatic quality that draws the reader into another world:

Rhythm gives lyric a somatic quality that novels and other extended forms lack—the experience of rhythm linking it to the body and, perhaps, to the rhythms of various natural processes—and thus contributes both to a different sort of pleasure from those promoted by novels and to a sense of a special otherness: lyrics are language, but language shaped in other ways, as if from elsewhere.<sup>85</sup>

We remember the Shiki prefaces the haiku sequence with the idea that we consider the ten haiku as one whole, and in this sense *A Drop of Ink* encourages the reader to find patterns in language as a way to access lyric experience.

Culler argues that rhythm is important especially in lyric poetry because it enlists the reader to think about a language that comes from elsewhere. In Shiki’s case, his “one thought” is the source of the rhythm that unfolds in the haiku sequence. Culler does not say elaborate what he means by “elsewhere,” but he may mean the realm of lyric thought itself. As Mutlu Blasing writes, “Lyric poetry is not mimesis, . . . it offers an experience of another kind of order, a system that operates independently of the production of meaningful discourse that it enables.”<sup>86</sup> With these ideas in mind, the haiku sequence furnishes a discursive space to make statements about koi, a bucket, and spring water; but by being lyric, the materiality of language allows it to say something beyond mere description of three objects. This is why rhythm becomes important, especially for the immobile poet, as it enables him to simulate movement using only words.

With the haiku sequence on koi, we find a pattern in the repetition of images, which imbues the installment with movement. Shiki shows us another kind of movement by creating rhythm and repetition of thought in prose that seems to go nowhere, or rather ends where it starts. In the installment for March 15, Shiki describes his dislike of the Fifth Month (May), which has something to do with his head being in a fog, resulting in incoherent thoughts:

May is a horrible month. Over the past few days it has finally begun to feel like May, and the displeasure is unbearable. My head is foggy, and my thoughts do not in the least cohere.

In a dream, I would be walking carefree even now. But whenever I have to jump over something, I always think twice. I am also surprised that the recent weather forecasts have been wrong.

When I feel the pain pressing upon my body, I want nothing else but to float in the sky, where nothing can touch me, where the weight of a human being is the same as the weight of air.

Around this time last year, I was able to move into the other room by crawling on my knees, but this year, at present, just turning over in bed has grown difficult. I suspect that next year, I will be unable to move at all.

五月はいやな月なり。この二、三日漸く五月心地になりて不快に堪へず。頭もやもや考少しもまとまらず。

夢の中では今でも平気に歩行いて居る。しかし物を飛びこえねばならぬとなるといつでも首を傾ける。この頃の天気予報の当らぬにも驚く。

体の押されて痛い時は外に仕方がないから、物に触れぬやうに空中にフハリと浮きたいと思ふ、空気の比重と人間の比重とを同じにして。

去年の今頃はみざるやうにして次の間位へは往かれたものが今年の今は寢返りがむつかしくなつた。来年の今頃は動かれぬやうになつて居るであらう。<sup>87</sup>

The writing is terse, as we would expect from a diary entry, but the connection between thoughts in each paragraph is tenuous. He begins with a statement about how much he dislikes May, then talks about his inability to think clearly, and then moves on to talking about dreaming. After the non-sequitur about the weather forecast being off, we discover that the overarching theme of the installment is the movement (or obstruction) of thought and the mobility (or immobility) of the body. His desire to float in the sky and be untouchable and weightless is a response to his current state of intense pain where he feels the pressure of everything, even air itself.

The installment then abandons the theme of the body and the degrees of mobility, and introduces new images that sound like more non-sequiturs:

I went to the trouble of informing Sokotsu that I discarded the “bad luck” fortune

I drew the other day at Anamori Shrine.

I want to forage for bamboo shoots.

At Nikkō a rain squall quickly passes through the new green leaves—how delightful. Out of the dripping wet verdure a single crow takes off, almost touching the leaves.

Postscript: Upon review, the form is not unified. Evidence of my vacuity.

先日余の引いた凶の籤を穴守様で流してもらふたとわざわざ鼠骨の注進。筍が掘つて見たい。

日光新緑を射て驟雨一過、快。緑のぬれぬれしたる中を鴉一羽葉に触れさうに飛んで行く。附記、後で見れば文体一致せず。頭のわるい証なり。<sup>88</sup>

If we did not know any better, we would think the writer is delirious. And yet, Shiki returns to the concerns from the opening paragraph by concluding with a poetic description of a spring



scene. He writes in the present tense, so we assume that he is imagining the scene in Nikkō from his Tokyo bedroom: rain showers pass through the fresh verdure, and amid the lush wet green, a crow flies away. The reverie evokes the dream and his sensitivity to touch from earlier. He notes that the crow flies away, “almost touching the leaves” (*ha ni furesō ni*), a somatic sensation that falls between his desire to not touch anything, and his present predicament of feeling the pressure of everything. Shiki also leaves a postscript, as if he is writing a letter to the reader, that reiterates his earlier claim that his thoughts are incoherent. He claims that the “form” (*buntai*) is not unified and that we should take this as evidence of his mental vacuity. By the end the installment comes full circle, much like how in a lyric poem the start invariably alludes to the end, and vice-versa. In seemingly coherent prose, Shiki takes us through a tour of his mind through the poetics of detour in non-sequiturs and subtle repetitions of images and thoughts.

When talking about coherence and incoherence of thought in writing, *A Drop of Ink* encourages us to think more about the latter, namely how incoherence allows for dynamism and movement. As we noticed in the statement about the earlier installment’s lack of unified form, Shiki certainly thinks about coherence vis-à-vis incoherence in *A Drop of Ink*, which shows that the piece is self-aware of its own performativity. As a work of *shasei*, it also makes us wonder what it means to “represent life” through the permutations of thought, often in the form of poetry.<sup>89</sup> In this way, *A Drop of Ink* is about, and is also a work of, poetic contemplation.

The installment for June 9 in *A Drop of Ink* offers another telling example of how Shiki thinks through different genres of poetry, but because his mind and body are in such poor shape, his thoughts move in and out of coherence:

My fever high, my body in pain. It began with moaning, then turned into shouting, and by the end I was reciting poems and singing loudly: my tone of voice shifted in and out of tune, catching bits and pieces of Dodoitsu, Hauta, and Noh plays, changing so quickly that even I could not keep track. One night, as usual I develop a fever, and one or two lines from a poem or from a gatha pile and fold on one another as I rave in delirium: the first line that comes out, I do not record; but when I reach the middle, I take a moment to record one or two lines, ending up with four. How strange and wondrous that there are parts coherent and incoherent.

熱高く身苦し。初めは呻吟、中頃は叫喚、終りは吟声となり放歌となり都都逸端唄謡曲仮声片々寸々又継又続修倏忽変化自ら測る能はず。一夜例の如く発熱詩の如く偈の如き囁語一句二句重疊して来る、一たび口を出れば復記する所なし。中につきて僅かに記する所の一、二句を取り補ふて四句となす。ただ解すべく解すべからざる処奇妙。<sup>90</sup>

Similar to the opening of the earlier installment, Shiki prefaces the descriptions to come with a statement of his illness and pain. When we think about genre, these prefatory remarks about being ill or mentally vacuous serve as a frame for introspection and sensual observation. We remember from my earlier discussion about Saikō’s poems and late imperial poetics that illness often becomes the pretext for writing. Shiki is certainly aware of the illness genre (if it is a genre), but he uses it to talk about something else. He uses his fever and body in pain as a means to talk about spontaneity, genius, creativity, and the difficult craft of poetry. Shiki outlines another sequence of progression, which begs the reader to consider the stages of delirium as a

metaphor for the creative process: it starts off with moaning, then moves to shouting, and by the end of it he is singing everything he can think of.

In some ways, illness, delirium, and the mental vacuity we observed above, are ways a literatus attains *xian* (*kan* in Japanese), which basically means “a state of tranquility” that enables the artist’s creative juices to flow. François Jullien defines *xian* as a kind of vacuity: “the vacuity to which a spirit liberated from all preoccupations gains access (*xian*) allows for such a concentration of intentionality that will guide the drawing.”<sup>91</sup> Shiki diverges from the kind of concentration and creative intentionality enabled by *xian* by straddling oppositional ideas, and allowing coherence to wrestle with incoherence. The language of the passage is heavily informed by *kanbun*, which lacks particles to mark grammatical subjects and objects. A trained reader can parse the prose without gloss, but at first glance the language is dense. As Shiki describes how word fragments from traditional genres of Japanese song and performance—Dodoitsu, Hauta, and Noh plays—just come to him without rhyme or reason, the language of the passage visually reproduces the polyphony of tunes with the proliferation of Chinese graphs. In other words, the incoherence of form mirrors the incoherence of content.

Although what he is thinking, hearing, or saying is opaque to the reader, he does establish a semblance of order by thinking in sequence. Shiki describes another sequence of progression, but for the composition of verse: as he is uttering verses, he does not record first lines, but waits until he gets to the middle of the poem and jots down one or two lines. And by the end, he has a five-character quatrain (*gogon zekku*):

A star falls down into a white lotus pond;  
By the pond embankment, green colors are even.  
Walking and walking, never going to find Buddha;  
On one road, and I cannot tell east from west.

<i>hoshi wa otsu hakuren no ike</i>	星落白蓮池
<i>chitō sōshoku hitoshi</i>	池塘草色齊
<i>iki-ikedomo butsu ni awazu</i>	行行不逢佛
<i>ichiro tōzai wo oshinai</i>	一路失東西 <sup>92</sup>

The images of white lotus, the pond, and Buddha suggest that the poem is describing the Pure Land or a place of Buddhist enlightenment; and yet ironically the poet cannot find Buddha, nor does he have any sense of direction. The installment ends with just the poem and without comment. If we take Shiki for his word, the poem is supposed to be “coherent and incoherent” (*kai subeku kai subekarazaru*), which he finds to be “strange and wondrous” (*kimyō*). His use of the adjective *kimyō* suggests that we should take the poem as his wild ramblings, but at the same time something at which to marvel. While Shiki claims there is continuity in content, the form suggests otherwise: the order of the *kanshi* contradicts the chaos of the preceding prose.

We may take the poem as a metaphor for contemplation itself, evoking the contradictions of Buddhist thought. Zen Buddhism blends Daoist ideas that figure the world in oppositions such as presence and absence. Buddhist statements about truth are phrased in contradictory and oppositional language, much like riddles or paradoxes. A secular reading of the poem reveals that the poet somehow finds himself in a place of perfection, and yet his movements in either direction lead him nowhere. If we treat the poem as a condensation of what comes before, as we have in my discussions of earlier prose poems, then it encapsulates the concerns of lyric

expression. “Walking and walking” (*iki-ikedomo*) serve as metaphors for lyric feet that move, but without directionality or teleological closure. In other words, the poem suggests, in a subversive gesture against the effort to delineate a sequence of progression in the prose, that lyric time and space are in a perpetual state of motion, without end.

In *A Drop of Ink*, we examined how the immobile lyric subject simulated mobility through language. As *shasei*, or “representation of life,” *A Drop of Ink* employs precise visual descriptions and paints multiple pictures of Shiki’s life battling with illness. We see his illness affect the form of the text, as he shifts in and out of registers, genres, and languages. In the end, we get a polygonal view of the lyric subject, but with variegated patterns of sound to accompany each side: the rhythm and repetition in the prose and the poetry revealed Shiki’s lyric thinking, suggesting a theory of contemplation that involves both the coherence and incoherence of both sight and sound.

### **Wandering in the Enigma of Form**

This concluding section concentrates on *Six-foot Sick Bed*, another prose poem Shiki composed and serialized in *Nippon* in 1902. In the following examination, I continue to show how Shiki uses the rhythm and repetition in poetry to represent life, but also show how the work as a whole questions the limits of *shasei* by obtruding genre to our notice. Shiki represents life as a polygonal painting while simultaneously stirring movement by disturbing the equilibrium between genres.

*Six-foot Sick Bed* is structured almost exactly as *A Drop of Ink*: each installment begins with a number and ends with the date of composition. Amounting to a total of 127 installments, *Six-foot Sick Bed* returns to many of the themes in *A Drop of Ink*, but departs slightly in its increasing emphasis on philology, *haikai* poetics, and literati painting.<sup>93</sup> Shiki continues to discuss the matters of daily life from the confines of his bedroom, but mostly in the vernacular, save for the classical Japanese poetry. *Six-foot Sick Bed* also engages more with discourse, primarily concerning aesthetics and literary criticism.

*Six-foot Sick Bed* opens by framing the setting of the narrative from the confined space to boundless possibilities. Shiki writes: “A six-foot sick bed—this is my world. And this sickbed six-feet long is too big for me.”<sup>94</sup> These lines evoke the opening installment of *A Drop of Ink*, in which Shiki scrutinizes the globe from Sokotsu. But here, his bed becomes his world. Be that as it may, Shiki also writes that he reads newspapers and magazines on a daily basis, so even being bedridden, he stays up-to-date with the world outside. When Shiki learns of new information, and decides to write about it, his feelings about the topic register in the form of the prose, and begin to reach out beyond the confines of his bed through rhythm, repetition, and quotation.

In Installment 25, Shiki receives continual news reports that educator Nishimatsu Jirō (1855-1909; penname Hōhi sanjin) has asked educated men across the land about the call of owls. Intrigued by his inquiry, Shiki describes the call he remembers hearing in his hometown of Matsuyama, and then discusses his past experience listening to owls in Ueno, Tokyo. As it turns out, his illness makes him a light sleeper, and the call often wakes him in the middle of the night:

Ill, and after falling asleep, even all the way in Negishi I hear that call, so even these days sick in bed I am up listening every night. After sundown it starts calling, and at times calls through the night; sometimes I can even hear two of them calling without stopping. Other times, I hear one calling by the tree in my

garden, but when I hear one calling even closer, it feels dreadful indeed. But when the nights finally get cold in mid-autumn, they stop calling entirely. I would like an informed person to tell me whether they just roost until mid-autumn in Ueno and move elsewhere, or do they remain in Ueno, and just stop calling.

病に寝て後ちも矢張り例の鳴聲は根岸まで聞えるので、此頃でも病床で毎晩聞いて居る。日の晩れから鳴き出して夜更けにも鳴くことがあるが時としては二羽のつれ鳴に鳴く聲が聞えることがある。又ある時は吾が庭の木近くへ来て鳴くこともあるが、餘り近く鳴かれると流石に物凄く感じる。さうして秋の半ば稍稍夜寒の頃になると何時も鳴かなくなってしまう。して見ると上野には秋の半ば迄棲んでいて、それから餘所へ転居するのであろうか、又は上野に居るけれども鳴かなくなるのであろうか、物知りに教えてもらいたいのである。<sup>95</sup>

Shiki's describes the proximity and frequency of the owl's call, which is loud enough to reach him kilometers away in Negishi from Ueno, and frequent enough to keep him awake. The way the call is described makes it sound haunting, especially with the repetition of *naku* (to call; to cry), along with its various verbal inflections (*naki* ; *naka*) and homonym *naku*, a negation suffix. When he talks about the owl calling in his garden, Shiki writes that he feels "dreadful" (*monosugoku*). Shiki's fascination with the owl's call turns into an obsession, as he wants an expert to explain why the calls suddenly cease when the weather turns cold in autumn.

The haunting repetition of the word "call" mirrors Shiki's emphatic repetition of "k" sounds in the original Japanese prose (see bold):

*yamai ni nete nochi mo yahari rei no nakigoe wa negishi made kikoeru node, kono goro demo byōshō de maiban kiite iru. hi no kure kara nakidashite yofuke ni mo naku koto ga aru ga, toki toshite wa niwa no tsurenaki ni naku nakigoe ga kikoeru koto ga aru. mata aru toki wa waga niwa no ki chikaku e kite naku koto mo aru ga, amari ni chikaku nakareru to sasuga ni monosugoku kanjiru. sōshite aki no nakaba shōshō yosamu no koro ni naru to itsumo nakanaku natte shimau. shite miru to ueno niwa aki no nakaba made sunde ite, sorekara yoso e tenkyo suru no dearōka, mata wa ueno ni iru keredo mo nakanaku naru no dearōka, monoshiri ni oshiete moraitai no dearu.*

The subtle, but clearly audible, repetition of the "k" in the passage performs the call for the reader, as if the repetition of *naku* was not enough. In Japanese and Chinese poetry, "k" sounds and other glottal stops are emphatic, and hence associated with deep emotion. Here the feeling is a mixture of fear and wonderment. This repetition that registers in the process of reading enlists us, as the readers, into the process of lyric experience. Clive Scott has argued that "rhythm is the mediating force between text and reader, reader and self, the place where these conflicting impulses of will play out in their drama."<sup>96</sup> The drama here is a haunting spectacle that also evokes the sublime. Culler argues that rhythm and other forms of repetition minister "miniature versions of the sublime."<sup>97</sup> No doubt this has to do with the fact that rhythm evokes a place that is elsewhere, and here it is the space of emotion stirred by the dreadful call of owls.

To make matters worse, the haunting feelings evoked by the rhythm and repetition in the prose make Shiki think of Coleridge's long and unfinished narrative poem "Christabel" (1798). He quotes an excerpt from the opening stanza:

Whenever I start talking about this matter concerning the bird's call, I always think of Coleridge's "Christabel":

*And the owls have awakened the crowing cock!  
Tu-whit! –Tu—whoo!*

此鳥の鳴聲の事をいふと余は何時もコルレッツジのクリスタベルを連想する。  
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock!  
Tu-whit! –Tu—whoo!<sup>98</sup>

Of Coleridge's poems, it is not surprising that Shiki thinks of "Christabel," as the poem is associated with Gothic literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and has been described by English scholars as "a poem of supernatural and psychological terror."<sup>99</sup> The poem tells the story of an innocent young lady named Christabel who in bed encounters a being named Geraldine, who she discovers is either a ghost, demon, witch, or some Gothic temptress.

Karen Swann has argued that "Christabel" dramatizes and provokes hysteria of the time, and that the protean nature of Geraldine is a metaphor for the unstable and changing "bodies of literary convention" in the late eighteenth century.<sup>100</sup> In *Six-foot Six Bed*, Shiki's obsession with a particular topic—painting, haiku, philology, owls, his illness—oftentimes sounds like hysteria, and his proclivity or compulsion to safeguard his words with the voices of others in the form of poetic quotation may be symptomatic of an anxiety about literary form at the turn of the century. By the late Meiji period, many Japanese writers had abandoned premodern modes of expression and wrote in the plain style most close to modern speech.<sup>101</sup> Evident in his choice to cleave to traditional modes of expression (*haikai*, *kanshi*, *sōrōbun*, and so on), Shiki was far from an exemplar of *genbunitchi*; but he did smooth out his prose in *Six-foot Six Bed* by writing almost entirely in the vernacular. The moments where he slips into English, or in others where he composes poems or quotes the verse of others, are ruptures in the text that sympathize with Swann's observations about the instability of genre during Coleridge's time.

The important thing to consider in Shiki's quotation of Coleridge's poem is the reification of sound and its attendant feelings of dread. The entire Installment is about the call of the owl, and Shiki concludes it with "Tu-whit! –Tu—whoo!," the onomatopoeia for an owl's call, which also evokes its locus classicus in the winter scene from Shakespeare's comedy *Love's Labour's Lost*. By ending the Installment about sound with sound, the language enters multiple visual and aural dimensions. The quotation from Coleridge's "Christabel" only heightens the eeriness and subtle sublimity of the scene, transporting Shiki's empirical observations beyond his bedroom, and into the world of Romantic poetry and the English tradition.

We may interpret the deployment of various literary genres and forms as symptomatic of the instability and imbalance that plagues Shiki's mind. In Installment 39, we discover that these symptoms of illness feed into his persona as a madman and the Romantic genius who seeks sympathy from his readers, and also enable him to wander freely because his body cannot:

During the intervals when I can move my body, lying on my sick bed, there is no need to think that illness is tough, and I just lie there in peace. But recently being unable to move my body has made my mind anxious, and almost everyday I feel

like I am suffering from madness. Hoping that I would not succumb to such suffering, I thought of different ways to force my immobile body to move. This only stirred more anxiety. My head is a mess. When I can no longer endure it, the bag that I have borne hangs on its last thread, and before long rips itself apart.

病床に寝て、身動きの出来る間は、敢て病気を辛しとも思はず、平気で寝転んで居つたが、この頃のやうに、身動きが出来なくなつては、精神の煩悶を起して、殆んど毎日気違のやうな苦しみをする。此苦しみを受けまいと思ふて、色々に工夫して、あるいは動かぬ体を無理に動かして見る。愈々煩悶する。頭がムシヤムシヤとなる。もはやたまらなので、こらへにこらへた袋の緒は切れて、遂に破裂する。<sup>102</sup>

The whole passage is about mobility and immobility. When his body is no longer able to move, he feels frustration and anxiety, but something is released in the process. The proverbial bag hangs on its last thread, before all the stitching comes loose and everything has fallen out:

When it comes to this, I am hopeless. Screaming. Wailing. More and more screaming. More and more wailing. I do not know how to describe this suffering and this pain.

もうかうなると駄目である。絶叫。号泣。益々絶叫する、益々号泣する。その苦その痛何とも形容することは出来ない。<sup>103</sup>

The image of the bag breaking and ripping itself open evokes the mental state of a person unhinged, of a madman. Shiki dramatizes the characteristics of madness through the staccato rhythm and repetition of words evoking terrifying sounds, evident above. The verbs “screaming” (*zekkyō*) and “wailing” (*gōkyū*) only intensify by their repetition with “more and more” (*masu masu*), and before long the passage evokes a pain and suffering beyond what words can describe.

When language fails to capture his feelings, Shiki uses the form of prose to communicate the pain pounding in his mind and body. The Installment closes with the same kind of repetition, but instead of words and phrases, whole sentences recur, ringing as the crescendo of pain:

I thought I would be happier if I became a real madman, but I could not even do that. If I could die, that would be desirable more than anything, but when a person cannot even die, there is nothing that can kill him. When one day’s suffering would finally diminish by night, and when that day’s anguish would finally be over, then I would rise the next morning feeling anguish all over again. There is no time more painful than waking up. Is there no one who can save me from this suffering? Is there no one who can save me from this suffering?

むしろ真の狂人となつて仕舞へば楽であらうと思ふけれどそれも出来ぬ。若し死ぬることが出来ればそれは何よりも望むところである、しかし死ぬることも出来ねば殺して呉れるものもない。一日の苦しきは夜に入つてやうやう減じ僅に眠気さした時にはその日の苦痛が終ると共にはや翌朝寝起

の苦痛が思ひやられる。寝起程苦しい時はないのである。誰かこの苦を助けてくれるものはあるまいか、誰かこの苦を助けてくれるものはあるまいか。<sup>104</sup>

For Shiki, there is no escape from pain, probably because he finds it productive.<sup>105</sup> Shiki writes that he wants to be a “madman” (*kyōjin*), but he cannot; he writes that he would rather die (*shinuru koto*), but he cannot—nothing can put an end to his misery. These statements preface his claim that waking up is the most painful. Part of this may have to do with the reality that his pain diminishes at night and returns in the morning; but the recursive rhetoric of the passage suggests that this is all a performance of cyclicity and endless repetition, much like the screaming and wailing. His inability to save himself by turning into a madman or embracing death, the reasons for which he chooses to omit, only bolster the claim that Shiki is totally on board for the ride of repetition, the endless cycle that conveniently vexes his mind and body. The passage ends with him repeating the same question, a pitiful plea or pathetic prayer to his sympathetic reader: “Is there no one who can save me from this suffering? Is there no one who can save me from this suffering?”

The progression of pain finds its echo in the form of the text: as the pounding gets louder and longer, so does the text. Unlike other Installments, which have no connection to each other, Shiki returns to the same question in the following installment, and comments that a religious figure would argue that he was seeking spiritual salvation. Shiki rejects the association with religion, and explains that he merely has fallen into a state where everything causes him pain and suffering. He writes: “In the end, finding harmony with my surroundings has grown extremely difficult.”<sup>106</sup> Morphine no longer eases his pain, so he has resigned himself to constant suffering.

If we interpret the dissonance he feels with his surroundings as the catalyst for setting something in motion, then what would that be? This motion evokes Spencer’s idea of rhythm in *First Principles* (1880), in which he argued that rhythm “is a necessary characteristic of all motion.”<sup>107</sup> In his chapter “The Rhythm of Motion,” Spencer uses empirical observations of a sailboat on water and trees on shore to illustrate the when one object encounters another, there is conflict that results in what he calls “rhythmical action.” When the wind blows, the sails ruffle, and the boat swings from side to side, generating undulations in the water; meanwhile on shore, the trees sway to and fro, and blades of grass rise and fall. The ideas about rhythm in *First Principles* are evoked in the way Shiki uses language in his prose poems. His immobility allows him to figure himself as an inert object that upon stimulation by some force—from dissonant feelings about his bedroom to quotidian thoughts about the weather—something ripples in its wake. We have seen these ripples take form visually as different genres and registers of language, and aurally in the sound systems pertaining each genre.

The multi-sensory experience afforded by *shasei* evokes the sensual plenitude that Shiki argues is characteristic of modern *shasei*, and not works from the tradition. During the mid-1890s, Shiki publically promoted *shasei* in his writings published in the newspaper *Nippon*. *Six Foot Six Bed* was one such work, and in Installment 45, he argues for the importance of *shasei* in artistic production:

The practice known as *shasei* is extremely essential for painting pictures and writing descriptions. Without it, paintings and descriptions would be impossible. This is a method that has been used in the West from early on, but the *shasei* of the past was an imperfect *shasei*; since then there have been more improvements,

and by now it has become a method of precision on a whole new level. In Japan, *shasei* since long ago has been terribly neglected, which consequently obstructed the development of painting, and impeded the progress of writing and poetry.

写生といふ事は、画を画くにも、記事文を書く上にも極めて必要なもので、この手段によらなくては画も記事文も全く出来ないといふてもよい位である。これは早くより西洋では、用ゐられて居つた手段であるが、しかし昔の写生は不完全な写生であつたために、この頃は更に進歩して一層精密な手段を取るやうになつて居る。しかるに日本では昔から写生といふ事を甚だおろそかに見て居つたために、画の発達を妨げ、また文章も歌も総ての事が皆進歩しなかつたのである。<sup>108</sup>

Shiki enjoyed polemics, and he made his critical voice heard in his writings. Here, he promotes the modern advancements of Western realism, while denigrating the tradition of *shasei* in Japan. As a polemical stance, Shiki suggests that this approach was nothing more than embracing a *risō*, or “ideal,” which trapped artists in the worlds of convention and cliché:

Whether in painting or in poetry, there are many people who advocate for what is called an “ideal,” but they are the people who do not know the flavor of *shasei*, and who dismiss *shasei* as highly superficial. But actually, an ideal is much more superficial: it cannot compare to the many variations of charm in *shasei*. I do not mean that works that display an ideal are necessarily bad, but when the ideal commonly manifests in a work of art, many in fact turn out bad. An ideal reveals a human being’s intention, so unless the human being is a rare genius, his work inevitably cannot avoid being entirely imitation or cliché.

画の上にも詩歌の上にも、理想といふ事を称へる人が少くないが、それらは写生の味を知らない人であつて、写生といふことを非常に浅薄な事として排斥するのであるが、その実、理想の方がよほど浅薄であつて、とても写生の趣味の変化多きには及ばぬ事である。理想の作が必ず悪いといふわけではないが、普通に理想として顕れる作には、悪いのが多いといふのが事実である。理想といふ事は人間の考を表はすのであるから、その人間が非常な奇才でない以上は、到底類似と陳腐を免れぬやうになるのは必然である。<sup>109</sup>

Shiki explains why modern *shasei* works are good and why *risō* works are bad. By *risō*, or “ideal,” he is referring to the centuries of artistic practice where a painter would render an object according to traditional modes of representation. As a direct heir to the *bunjin* legacy, Shiki learned these modes, and yet rejects them.

As Shiki sets up his argument in praise of modern *shasei* as a means of expression with the promise of newness and variation in contrast to *risō*, he contradicts himself by creating and promoting an ideal of his own. He contradicts his earlier rejection of premodern *shasei* models in his praise for them at the end of the installment:

When you view a work of *shasei*, it may look slightly superficial, but the more you savor it deeply, you will find its variations many, and its charms



profound. . . . An ideal work is often like trying to jump onto a roof in a single breath, but then fall into the center of a puddle. While *shasei* may be bland, it does not carry the faults of blandness. Thus when we find something lodging the finest flavor at the center of blandness, the fruit of its beauty is ineffable.

写生の作を見ると、ちよつと浅薄のやうに見えても、深く味はへば味はふほど変化が多く趣味が深い. . . .理想といふやつは一呼吸に屋根の上に飛び上らうとしてかへつて池の中に落ち込むやうな事が多い. 写生は平淡である代りに、さる仕損ひはないのである. さうして平淡の中に至味を寓するものに至つては、その妙実に言ふべからざるものがある.<sup>110</sup>

Shiki views *shasei* as a form of perfection, an ideal he claims is not an ideal. He concedes that *shasei* is “bland” (*heitan*), but it does not fail at being bland. Blandness (*pingdan*) is an aesthetic ideal from traditional Chinese painting, and evokes plenitude in the beauty of the ineffable. Shiki believes that such beauty can be found in modern *shasei* as well.

Shiki’s denigration of idealistic modes of representation comes at the expense of his own idealization of *shasei*. Such contradiction abounds in Shiki’s writing, evincing a process of contemplation constituted by oppositional movement, wherein we discern his thoughts and feelings. Throughout the installment, and in his other poetic writings, Shiki uses the word *henka*, which means “change,” “transformation,” or “variation.”<sup>111</sup> He argues that each time we view a *shasei* painting, it shows us something different, and this difference is what makes *shasei* so compelling and beautiful.<sup>112</sup>

Shiki gives an example of the beauty afforded by *shasei* in a series of haiku. In Installment 70, Shiki wonders about image pairs in literati poetry and painting, and composes a haiku sequence like in *A Drop of Ink* with the carp in the bucket of spring water. He claims that composing poems about willows (*yanagi*) and kingfishers (*kawasemi*) is much easier, the reasons of which are left unstated. In this final example where Shiki intersperses prose with poetry, he ends up embracing the conventions and clichés that his *shasei* ideology originally set out to avoid; and yet he succeeds in creating another variation of the tradition by rendering one thought in ten ways. By the end of the sequence, Shiki mediates his duel with death with a celebration of life in a polygonal painting of kingfishers and willows:

Like they say for plums and warblers, and bamboo and sparrows, the coupling of willows and kingfishers has been treated in sketches for so long that it is cliché. Whenever I pick up a picture book these days, I often see these cliché couplings. And yet, I am strongly moved by their beauty, and I get more and more intrigued by them. So, I decided to compose ten haiku for fun on the topic of willows and kingfishers. I recall that I did the same last spring with carp in spring water, and composed ten verses too.

梅に鶯、竹に雀、などいふ様に、柳に翡翠といふ配合も略画などには陳腐になる程書き古るされて居る。此頃画本を見るにつけて此陳腐な配合の画を屢見る事であるが、其にも拘らず美しいといふ感じが強く感ぜられて愈興味がある様に覚えたので、柳に翡翠といふのを題にして戯れに俳句十首を

作って見た。これは昨年の春春水の鯉といふ事を題にして十句作った事があるのを思ひ出して又やってみたのである。<sup>113</sup>

The pairs that he mentions—plums and warblers, bamboo and sparrows, willows and kingfishers—have been conventional in literati painting for centuries. He mentions *ryakuga* (sketches), a term that refers to the crude illustrations of natural objects found in painting manuals and picture books (*ehon*), a genre of illustrated material that disseminated widely among literati and artists alike throughout the early modern period. The term *ryakuga* seems to originate with Shiki in Installment 6 of *Sick Foot Sick Bed*, in which he describes an illustration of a single blade of grass and a lone tree.<sup>114</sup> Although he states that such illustrations are cliché, Shiki cannot help but be moved by their beauty. This contradicts his earlier claim that *shasei* are superior to representational modes of the past because it avoids convention and cliché. We know Shiki likes to change his mind, so it is not surprising that here he decides to find praise for convention and cliché. This thought sets in motion another haiku sequence, but this time with images that accord with one other in harmony:

A kingfisher  
Eyes the fish  
By the willows.

Concealing  
The kingfisher,  
Willows overgrown.

The willows  
Where the kingfisher comes,  
I adore.

The kingfisher—  
Circling the pond,  
Around all willows.

The kingfisher  
Does not come on the day  
Storm strikes the willows.

A kingfisher  
And a heron  
By the willows.

The willows cut down,  
And the kingfisher  
Never came back.

The kingfisher  
Finds some footing

By the willows.

The kingfisher  
Gone—the willows  
In the evening sun.

The kingfisher  
Has flown far away  
From the willows.

翡翠の魚を覗ふ柳かな  
翡翠をかくす柳の茂りかな  
翡翠の来る柳を愛すかな  
翡翠や池をめぐりて皆柳  
翡翠の来ぬ日柳の嵐かな  
翡翠も鷺も来て居る柳かな  
柳伐つて翡翠終に来ずなりぬ  
翡翠の足場を選ぶ柳かな  
翡翠の去って柳の夕日かな  
翡翠の飛んでしまひし柳かな<sup>115</sup>

Similar to the ten poems on carp in the bucket of spring water, the haiku sequence here paints a multi-faceted picture of the kingfisher and willows. While the carp sequence served more as a metaphor for Shiki's immobility, the kingfisher poems are more about the presence and absence of natural objects that are meant to be together. Each poem exists in a dialectical relationship with the poem that precedes and or follows: in the first poem, the kingfisher and willows are both present, but the gaze is directed at fish; in the second, the kingfisher are there, but concealed; in the third, the kingfisher and willows are together; in the fourth, the kingfisher outlines the space of the pond; in the fifth, a storm hits and the kingfisher is gone; in the sixth, the kingfisher shares the willows with a friend; in the seventh, the kingfisher and willows are gone; in the eighth, the kingfisher tarries in the willows; in the ninth, the kingfisher is gone, and willows recede from view; and in the tenth, the kingfisher is gone and the willows remain. Each poem could stand as an autonomous scene in a literati painting, and each also displays the empiricism of *shasei*.

By the end of the sequence, the repetition of *kawasemi* evokes a beautiful painting that is constantly changing, as the bird appears and disappears. The kingfisher is a bird whose plumage is green and blue. In *kanshi*, the Chinese graphs for the kingfisher are read as *hisui* (*feicui* in Chinese), which also means “jade green.” The bird's associations with the most cherished gemstone in the Chinese tradition imbues the image with exquisiteness, elegance, timelessness, and ineffable beauty.

Shiki writes that the conventional nature of the pairing made composition easier; but it also revealed the truth about the limits of what a poet can do with genre:

When I wrote on the carp in spring water, I kept getting stuck on the words, but this time with the willows and kingfishers there was more room to play. This let me vary some of the ideas and imagery. But as for how they turned out, there

were more bad ones among the kingfisher poems. But when composing these kinds of verses, it may seem like nothing more than a brief diversion, but I discovered the best way to learn the haiku conventions is when you actually try and compose poems. In other words, I find it interesting to realize that when composing haiku, knowing what goes with what is one thing, but knowing what makes a good verse from a bad one, is something you can only learn by doing it.

春水の鯉は身動きもならぬ程言葉が詰まって居たが、柳に翡翠の方は稍ゆとりがある。従って幾らか趣向の変化を許すのである。而して其結果はといふと翡翠の方が厭味の多いものが出来た様である。併しこんな句の作り様は、一時の戯れに過ぎないやうであるが、実際にやってみると句法の研究などには最も善き手段であるといふ事が分った。つまり俳句を作る時に配合の材料を得ても句法の如何によって善い句にも悪い句にもなるといふ事が、此やり方でやってみると十分にわかる様に思ふて面白い。<sup>116</sup>

Shiki's comment on how a poet uses convention evokes the idea in traditional Chinese that forms and genres have infinite variations depending on the writer's ability to use language.<sup>117</sup> Shiki claims that poetic inspiration came easier when writing within a genre, but even with variation of ideas and imagery (*shukō no henka*), more bad poems resulted.

He ends the installment with the idea that composing within a genre is a heuristic for learning how to discern a good poem from a bad one. Because genre already delimits what a poet can or cannot say, a poet must be creative within those generic constraints. And yet, Shiki is also championing a *shasei* approach to poetic composition through empirical practice and his trial-and-error method. At the core of his concluding remarks on what makes a good poem is the conflict within Shiki: an artist who advocates that poets must free haiku from the conventions of the past and from empirical observation, but simultaneously upholding genres and conventions with the expectation that imagination and creativity will generate something new. The motion stirred by genre and poetic convention took form in ten poems, each presenting a different view of natural beauty to behold. These different views speak to the multifaceted-ness of Shiki's consciousness, clearly informed by his sensibilities as a literatus.

This chapter examined lyric thinking in Shiki's works of *shasei*, or "representing life." I argued that the idea behind *shasei* derives from literati painting, the illness trope in late imperial poetry, pictorial realism in Western painting, and the dialectic of life and death in Romanticism. I showed how this representation takes form in his writing through the movement of lyric thought in his earliest collection of essays *Propensity of the Brush*, his travelogues *A Journey Within a Journey* and *Summer*, and his deathbed prose poems *A Drop of Ink* and *Six-foot Sick Bed*. The goal of the chapter was not only to show the legacy of literati culture in the Meiji period, but how an artist with formal training in *kanshi* and other literati forms reconciled with the expectations of modern prose writing. Overall, we may say that Shiki resisted *genbunitchi* on the surface, but his theorizations and promotions of *shasei* throughout his career evince his commitment to be up-to-speed with modern thought and literary production. In some ways, the diversity of forms, genres, and languages in Shiki's prose writings reveal an intransigence to abandon antiquarian practices of writing from the Edo period; but I have tried to argue that these shifts in language are precisely the ways into seeing how the lyric mind works, how thought and contemplation take shape in literary form.

<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, *Philosophical Investigations* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1953), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Byron, ed. T.G. Steffan, E. Steffan, and W.W. Pratt, *Don Juan* (New York: Penguin, 2004), 182.

<sup>3</sup> Masaoka Shiki, *Shiki zenshū* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1975), 10: 17. From here on SZ. Shiki writes: “*shintai wa seishin no ie nari, seishin wa shintai no shujin nari.*”

<sup>4</sup> Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors* (New York: Picador, 1989), 29.

<sup>5</sup> Sontag, 36.

<sup>6</sup> SZ, 8: 222; for *kundoku* see 8: 356. The poem is the first of three in a series entitled “Improvisations” (*gūsei*).

<sup>7</sup> See entry for *chōchū shōgi* (the lesser skills of carving insects) in Morohashi Tetsuji, *Daikanwa jiten* (Tokyo: Taishukan, 1990), 11: 1013.

<sup>8</sup> As I discussed in my chapter on Yosa Buson, the term *shasei* appears as one of the three principles of composition in writings on eighteenth century painting: *shai* (painting the idea), *shasei* (painting life) and *ikkaku* (the artist’s untrammelled personality). As Melinda Takeuchi discusses in the works of Ike no Taiga, to paint the “life” of an object means to “apprehend the spirit-resonance of nature’s forms in order to probe the essential truth of nature.” See Melinda Takeuchi, *Taiga’s True Views: The Language of Landscape Painting in Eighteenth-Century Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 144. When composing a *shasei* in the Edo period, the artist must embrace the ideal of representing the underlying reality of nature, its “spirit-resonance.”

<sup>9</sup> Karatani Kōjin, trans. Brett de Bary, *The Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 26.

<sup>10</sup> Although “detached objectivity” was the goal, in actual poetic practice Shiki and other modern poets invariably communicated their own individuated subjectivity. In his collection of essays *Views on Poetry* (1924; Kadō shōken), *tanka* poet Shimagi Akahiko (1876-1926) observes that the meaning of *shasei* was misunderstood by painters in the Meiji period, and argues the term has always meant an “immediate expression of the movement of feeling” (*kanjō katsudō no chokusetsu hyōgen*). See Shimagi Akahiko, *Kadō shōken* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1978), 35-37.

<sup>11</sup> The opposite of “carving insects” is “carving dragons” (*chōryū* or *chōryō*; *diaolong* in Chinese), which refers to the craft of belles-lettres in traditional Chinese literary thought. As I have discussed in earlier chapters, Liu Xie’s *Wenxin diaolong* (The literary mind carves dragons) is an aesthetic treatise that instructs readers from the Six Dynasties and beyond how to write literature. “Carving dragons” can also be a metaphor for literary excess, but in most cases it refers to skillful composition of literature.

<sup>12</sup> Below are Shiki’s famous haiku on counting cockscombs and eating persimmons:

Surely there were  
Fourteen or fifteen  
Cockscomb blossoms.  
鶏頭の十四五本もありぬべし

I bite into a persimmon,  
And a temple bell booms—  
Hōryūji.  
柿くへば鐘が鳴るなり法隆寺

See Masaoka Shiki, *Shiki jinseironshū* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2001), 143-144.

<sup>13</sup> A survey of his book collection reveals that Shiki read the English Romantics, including Lord Byron (1788-1824), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), William Wordsworth (1770-1850) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). For a list of books in English, see SZ, 14: 578-582, 596-598. Shiki was also aware of the different forms and genres of English poetry, including the song, ode, elegy, sonnet, and ballad. See his discussion of poetry vis-à-vis prose in an essay called “Rambles on Literature” (*Bungaku mangan*) in SZ, 14: 75-103.

<sup>14</sup> Ross Wilson, ed., *The Meaning of “Life” in Romantic Poetry and Poetics* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 9.

Coleridge formulates and reflects on the question “what is life” in a poem from 1819:

Resembles life what once was deem’d of light,  
Too ample in itself for human sight?  
An absolute self—an element ungrounded—  
All that we see, all colours of all shade  
By encroach of darkness made?—  
Is very life by consciousness unbounded?  
And all the thoughts, pains, joys of mortal breath,

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A war-embrace of wrestling life and death?

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Complete Poems*, ed. William Keach (New York: Penguin, 1997), 330. For original publication information, see the note on 567. The poem opens with the concern for life's resemblances, and suggests that there are too many things in life for human sight to apprehend. What makes this apprehension difficult is what contends with the light, the "encroach of darkness" that is present in "all that we see, all colours of all shade." Coleridge points to the endless struggle between light and dark, the elements that make up life, and that cannot be separated from one another. Coleridge, like many other Romantic poets, wrote about life in the context of death, or about life approaching death. This concern is encapsulated by the final images "mortal breath" and "wrestling life and death," suggesting that life itself, "ungrounded," is ungraspable because it cannot escape its contest with death.

<sup>15</sup> Seth Jacobowitz has argued that Shiki's passion for excavating the archive and wanting to write about everything is a Romantic conceit, and reveals an obsession for the "discourse networks" discussed in the writings of media theorist Friedrich Kittler: "His [Shiki's] unwavering obsession with writing things down, a mania that we might diagnose as *aufschreibesysteme* [discourse networks], only increased in intensity in spite, or perhaps because, of his physical debilitation." See Seth Jacobowitz, *Writing Technology in Meiji Japan: A Media History of Modern Japanese Literature and Visual Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard East Asia Center, 2015), 228. Whether Shiki was media-crazy or not, he certainly embraced the Romantic idea of genius, and illness only added more fuel to the fire of his imagination.

<sup>16</sup> Janine Beichman, *Masaoka Shiki* (New York: Kodansha, 1986), preface.

<sup>17</sup> This persona evokes how tuberculosis is performed in nineteenth century opera. See Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996). On tuberculosis Hutcheon and Hutcheon write: "As a disease that affects the lungs, and thus involves (literally and metaphorically) both inspiration and expiration, it is also perhaps the archetypal operatic disease." (21)

<sup>18</sup> *SZ*, 8: 227; for *kundoku* see 8: 359, with modifications.

<sup>19</sup> This pairing of pairs evokes Coleridge's poem, namely its point that life cannot be discussed without death. See Note 10.

<sup>20</sup> These lines have biographical significance as well. Shiki was born to a low-ranking samurai family in the countryside of the Matsuyama *han* (domain) in Ehime Prefecture. He spent his later years in Tokyo, where he died in 1902.

<sup>21</sup> The *zuihitsu* (*suibi* in Chinese) is a genre of writing with Chinese provenance in the Song Dynasty (1127-1279) that is known for its randomness. Donald Keene observes, "Most are short and they are seldom linked. One gets the impression that, whenever anything attracted his attention, whether great or small, Shiki felt compelled to set down his reactions immediately." See Donald Keene, *The Winter Sun Shines In: A Life of Masaoka Shiki* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 155.

<sup>22</sup> As Linda Chance has observed in her monograph on the medieval writer Yoshida Kenkō's *Essays in Idleness* (fourteenth century; *Tsurezuregusa*), the *zuihitsu* is a genre that lacks generic boundaries, and in this way is also anti-genre. See Linda H. Chance, *Formless in Form: Kenkō, Tsurezuregusa, and the Rhetoric of Japanese Fragmentary Prose* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 46-76. The *zuihitsu* is an ad hoc categorization for *Propensity of the Brush*, as it positions the work in literary history alongside the myriad other *zuihitsu* written by Shiki's contemporaries and Edo forebears. The goal of my examination is not to define the generic boundaries of *zuihitsu*, but to illuminate the movement of thought in poetic forms of prose that fall under the large generic umbrella known as *zuihitsu*.

<sup>23</sup> *SZ*, 10: 87.

<sup>24</sup> François Jullien writes: "*shi* can be defined overall as the *force* that runs through the *form* of the written character and animates it aesthetically. See François Jullien, trans. Janet Lloyd, *The Propensity of Things: Toward a History of Efficacy in China* (New York: Zone Books, 1995), 76.

<sup>25</sup> These traditional principles are governed by the ideas of *yi* (appropriateness) and *li* (the principle of nature). Whenever a literatus picks up his brush, he produces something that is "appropriate" to the theme, topic, or situation about which he is writing, and that accords to "the principle of nature."

<sup>26</sup> Shiki talks about his frustration with *genbunitchi* in the vignette "The Pros and Cons of *Genbunitchi*" (*Genbunitchi no rigai*) in the first volume of *Fudemakase*. While Shiki believes writing in a way that is comprehensible to everyone is important in the case of certain genres of writing (speeches, lectures, and so on), he does not believe this should be the case for literature, especially poetry. See *SZ*, 10: 143-4.

<sup>27</sup> *SZ*, 10: 13.

<sup>28</sup> See Atsuko Ueda, "Sounds, scripts, and styles: *kanbun kundokutai* and the national language reforms of 1880s Japan," in Indra Levy, ed., *Translation in Modern Japan* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>29</sup> Grace S. Fong, “Writing and Illness: A Feminine Condition in Women’s Poetry of the Ming and Qing,” in Grace S. Fong and Ellen Widmer, eds., *The Inner Quarters and Beyond: Women Writers from Ming through Qing* (Boston: Brill, 2010), 19.

<sup>30</sup> Below is a *kanshi* Shiki composed around age 15 in 1882. He assumes the voice of an abandoned woman:  
Boudoir Complaint

The dying lamp, the shadows cold—in a dream I long for you;  
In the golden duck the incense burned out, the jade clepsydra grieves.  
Endless threads hanging wistfully—the willows on the river shore;  
Thinner than I was that day long ago, when I bid farewell to my beau.

*keien*

*zantō kage hiyayaka ni shite yume ni aiomou*  
*kin’ō ka kiete gyōkurō kanashi*  
*banru ii tari kōjō no yanagi*  
*sekijitsu kimi wo okurishi toki yori mo yasetari*

閨怨

殘燈影冷夢相思  
金鴨香消玉漏悲  
萬縷依依江上柳  
瘦於昔日送郎時

For Japanese see *SZ*, 8: 42; for *kundoku* see *SZ*, 8: 242.

<sup>31</sup> The *kundoku* is from Kanai Keiko, et al., eds., *Shin nihon koten bungaku taikei: meiji hen* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2016), 27: 10.

<sup>32</sup> Stewart, 68.

<sup>33</sup> Stewart, 100.

<sup>34</sup> Li Bai’s poem “On a Silent Night I Long” (Jingye si):

By the foot of the bed I see moonlight:	牀前看月光
It looks like frost shining on the ground.	疑是地上霜
I raise my head, and gaze at the moon above the mountain;	舉頭望山月
I lower my head, and long for home.	低頭思故鄉

For the Chinese, see Saitō Shō, ed., *Kanshi taikai* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1965), 7: 167-168. Although the form appears to be a quatrain, “On a Silent Night I long” is actually a five-character ancient-style poem (*wuyan gushi*). Editor Saitō Shō remarks that the ancient-style explains the repetition in diction and freedom in meter.

<sup>35</sup> Although Shiki did not own a copy of the late imperial poetry collection *Quan Tang Shi*, among the Tang poets, Bai Juyi has been the most popular in Japan since the Heian period. The word *moko* (*mohu* in Chinese) also appears in a poem by Su Shi (1037-1101) “Snow at the Hall of Constellations” (Juxingtang xue). Bai Juyi’s poem “Improvisation in the Snow, A Reply to Wei Zhi” (Xue zhong ji shi da Wei Zhi) is cited as the locus classicus for Su Shi’s usage of the word. Shiki did own collections of Su Shi’s poetry.

<sup>36</sup> Stewart, 101.

<sup>37</sup> Herbert Spencer, *The Philosophy of Style: An Essay* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1876), 11.

<sup>38</sup> *SZ*, 10: 378.

<sup>39</sup> Spencer, 39.

<sup>40</sup> *SZ*, 10: 378.

<sup>41</sup> *Tabi no tabi no tabi* was first published in four installments in the newspaper *Nippon* from October 31 to November 6, 1892. It was later published in a new edition of Shiki’s *Dassai shoya haiwa* (1895; Talks on haiku from the otter’s den).

<sup>42</sup> Shiki owned a collection of Wordsworth’s poetry, and likely read him alongside Coleridge and other Romantic poets.

<sup>43</sup> *SZ*, 13: 493.

<sup>44</sup> See Kate McDonald, *Placing Empire: Travel and Social Imagination in Imperial Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017).

<sup>45</sup> *SZ*, 13: 493.

<sup>46</sup> *SZ*, 13: 494.

<sup>47</sup> *SZ*, 13: 495-6.

<sup>48</sup> Paula Varsano traces the earliest example of the trope to a *fu* (poetic exposition) by Wang Can (177-217) titled “Deng lou fu” (Climbing the tower). She writes: “In poems treating this theme, the poet ascends the tower or a mountain and looks out at the vast landscape unfurled before his eyes. Confronted with the evidence of nature’s cycles, he reflects upon his own impermanence and the intransigence of the ills of the world. By virtue of the nature

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of the sentiment being express, treatment of the theme could hardly help but grow more poignant as the theme itself receded into the past and poems on the subject proliferated.” See Paula Varsano, *Tracking the Banished Immortal: The Poetry of Li Bo and Its Critical Reception* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003), 175.

<sup>49</sup> Philip Fisher, *Wonder, The Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 21.

<sup>50</sup> William Wordsworth, *Selected Prose* (New York: Penguin, 1988), 264.

<sup>51</sup> SZ, 13: 496.

<sup>52</sup> SZ, 13: 496.

<sup>53</sup> SZ, 13: 496.

<sup>54</sup> Yosa Buson, *Buson zenshū* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1992), 1: 239.

<sup>55</sup> Mark Morris observes that Shiki takes interest in Buson as early as 1893. For more on the relationship between Shiki and Buson, see Mark Morris, “Buson and Shiki: Part Two,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45, no. 1 (June 1985): 255-321.

<sup>56</sup> Fisher, 22.

<sup>57</sup> *Jūnen mae no natsu* was published in *Hansei zasshi* (Reflection magazine) on August 1, 1898.

<sup>58</sup> The piece also evokes Wordsworth’s famous poem, “Lines Composed A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey” (1798), which Paul Fry has argued is a recompense for loss, that what was beautiful then can still be beautiful now. Fry reads the “Tintern Abbey” poem as a recompense for loss, which comes out in its “then” and “now” structure. He writes that the crisis of loss in this poem and others by Wordsworth is “not so much a loss as a failure to understand that what seems to have been lost is always within reach. In itself unaltered, that which was lost in a form that makes it seem different, more consistent with the ethical humanism of mature reflection in response to suffering, yet still harboring Wordsworth’s original insight as a poet.” See Paul H. Fry, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of What We Are* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 177-178.

<sup>59</sup> Wordsworth’s opening to his poem: “Five years have passed. Five summers, with the length / Of five long winters!”

<sup>60</sup> SZ, 12: 224. Shiki’s use of the word “pattern” (*aya*; also *bun*) to describe nature evokes the centuries of literature on *wen* in early Chinese thought. In the opening chapter of *Wenxin diaolong*, Liu Xie writes: “As an inner power of things, pattern (*wen*) is very great indeed, and it was born together with Heaven and Earth. How is this?” See Stephen Owen, ed. and trans., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911* (New York: Norton, 1996), 344.

<sup>61</sup> SZ, 12: 226.

<sup>62</sup> SZ, 12: 226.

<sup>63</sup> SZ, 12: 228.

<sup>64</sup> In 1896, British diplomat and Japanologist Ernest Satow (1843-1929) built a summer resort near the Lake, and since then the area gained international recognition.

<sup>65</sup> SZ, 12: 228.

<sup>66</sup> SZ, 12: 228.

<sup>67</sup> James writes: “In mystic states we both become one with the Absolute and we become aware of our oneness,” (419); “Mystical states, when well developed, usually are, and have the right to be, absolutely authoritative over the individuals to whom they come.” (422) See William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1920).

<sup>68</sup> SZ, 12: 228. The graph *kei* 暌 is variant for *hen* 曄, which forms a compound word with *sen* 情. As *senben*, the term describes the eyes and mouth of a divine beauty.

<sup>69</sup> The scene here conjures images from Qu Yuan’s (340-278 BC) *Encountering Sorrow* (Li Sao) in *The Lyrics of Chu* (Chu ci), and later Cao Zhi’s (192-232) *Rhapsody on Goddess of the Luo* (Luo shen fu).

<sup>70</sup> Shiki’s language breakdown evokes lines by Alfred Tennyson (1809-92) from his poem “Two Voices”:

“Moreover, something is or seems,  
That touches me with mystic gleams,  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

“Of something felt, like something here;  
Of something done, I know not where;  
Such as no language may declare.”

Quoted in James, 383.

<sup>71</sup> Beichman, 124.



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<sup>72</sup> SZ, 11: 186.

<sup>73</sup> Jean-Jacques Origas is speaking specifically about *Six-foot Sickbed*: “Since *Byōshō rokushaku* is a *zuihitsu* one may think that it lacks an organized structure, but the reader can viscerally sense several structures manifesting in the text. To speak from my own sense, I can see sequence and order manifesting there.” See Jean-Jacques Origas, *Mono to me: Meiji bungaku ronshū* [Objects and eyes: essays on Meiji literature] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2003), 131.

<sup>74</sup> The quote appears in Canto III of *Don Juan*. The rest of the stanza goes:

‘T is strange, the shortest letter which man uses  
Instead of speech, may form a lasting link  
Of ages; to what straits old Time reduces  
Frail man, when paper—even a rag like this,  
Survives himself, his tomb, and all that’s his.

The sentiments expressed here in Byron’s poem are echoed in *A Drop of Ink* as a single word “may form a lasting link / Of ages,” and for a writer approaching death these words will be what survives him.

<sup>75</sup> Origas, 138-139.

<sup>76</sup> SZ, 11: 93.

<sup>77</sup> SZ, 11: 93.

<sup>78</sup> Underlying Shiki’s omniscient world-view may be the same imperialist gaze that he finds so unsettling; and yet his conscious choice to employ a variety of literary forms, genres, and styles may also be an attempt to resist the imperial language and modern systems of expression, including the teleological narrative (i.e. the novel).

<sup>79</sup> SZ, 11: 93.

<sup>80</sup> Beichman, 142.

<sup>81</sup> Beichman, 115.

<sup>82</sup> *A Drop of Ink* is most famous for the sequence of *tanka* Shiki composed on wisteria. For a beautiful translation and reading of the poems, see Beichman, 117.

<sup>83</sup> SZ, 11: 93.

<sup>84</sup> The quote is by French poet Fernand Gregh (1873-1960): “At twenty, Marcel looked on life the same way a fly does, with a multifaceted eye. He saw polygonally. He saw all twenty sides of a question, and added a twenty-first which was prodigiously inventive and ingenious.” See Anka Muhlstein, trans. Adriana Hunter, *The Pen and the Brush: How Passion for Art Shaped Nineteenth-Century French Novels* (New York: Other Press, 2017), 200.

<sup>85</sup> Jonathan Culler, *Theory of the Lyric* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 138.

<sup>86</sup> Culler, 169.

<sup>87</sup> SZ, 11: 189.

<sup>88</sup> SZ, 11: 189.

<sup>89</sup> It is tempting to read Shiki’s *A Drop of Ink* alongside Coleridge’s *Biographia Literaria* (1817), as they are both encyclopedic compendiums of essays that bridge and blend biography, literary criticism, and philosophy. Recent scholarship on Coleridge has mined *Biographia Literaria* for clues about Coleridge’s ideas concerning poetic contemplation. See the articles in “Special Issue: Coleridge, Contemplation, and Cultural Practice,” *Poetica* 85 (2016).

<sup>90</sup> SZ, 11: 206.

<sup>91</sup> François Jullien, trans. Jane Marie Todd, *The Great Image Has No Form, or On the Nonobject through Painting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 169.

<sup>92</sup> SZ, 11: 206. For *kundoku*, see SZ, 8: 360.

<sup>93</sup> Shiki’s third and last deathbed narrative *Gyōga manroku* (1902; Stray notes while lying on my back) takes the concern for Japanese art even further by placing sketches and abstract illustrations of natural objects, alongside the text.

<sup>94</sup> Trans. Keene, 171. SZ, 11: 231.

<sup>95</sup> SZ, 11: 266-7.

<sup>96</sup> Culler, 138.

<sup>97</sup> Culler, 185.

<sup>98</sup> SZ, 11: 266-7.

<sup>99</sup> Nicholas Halmi, et al., eds., *Coleridge’s Poetry and Prose* (New York: Norton, 2004), 160.

<sup>100</sup> Swann writes: “In ‘Christabel,’ Coleridge both capitalizes on and exposes culture’s tactical gendering of formal questions. The poem invites us to link displacing movement of cultural forms through subjects to the ‘feminine’ malady of hysteria and the ‘feminine’ genres of the circulating library; at the same time, it mockingly and dreamily informs us that hysteria is the condition of all subjects in discourse, and that the attribution of this condition to

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feminine bodies is a conventional, hysterical response.” See Karen Swann, “From ‘Christabel’: The Wandering Mother and the Enigma of Form” in Halmi, 710-722.

<sup>101</sup> Kunikida Doppo’s *Musashino* (1901), Tayama Katai’s *No no hana* (1901), and Shimazaki Tōson’s *Kyūshujin* (1902) were written in the modern vernacular language we associate with *genbunitchi*.

<sup>102</sup> *SZ*, 11: 266-7.

<sup>103</sup> *SZ*, 11: 266-7.

<sup>104</sup> *SZ*, 11: 266-7.

<sup>105</sup> My reading here is not meant to be insensitive to the painful cries of terminally ill man, rather I am taking into account the fact that Shiki is writing for a public audience. Shiki is aware of his readers, and performs until his death.

<sup>106</sup> *SZ*, 11: 284.

<sup>107</sup> Herbert Spencer, *First Principles* (New York: A. L. Burt, 1880), 235.

<sup>108</sup> *SZ*, 11: 289-290.

<sup>109</sup> *SZ*, 11: 289-290.

<sup>110</sup> *SZ*, 11: 289-290.

<sup>111</sup> Tabe Tomoki has argued that Shiki introduced *henka* (variation) from linked-verse (*renku*) into his haiku and new-style poetry (*shintaiishi*), imbuing them with new possibilities of expression. See Tabe Tomoki, “Masaoka Shiki ni okeru renku no ichi: ‘henka’ ni taisuru hyōka wo jiku ni,” in *Renga haikai kenkyū* 130 (March, 2016), 16-28.

<sup>112</sup> We may dismiss such a claim as pure literary conceit, but the emphasis on transformation evokes essential ideas about organic form in Chinese aesthetics and traditional Japanese painting and poetry. In “Poetic Exposition on Literature” (Wen fu), Lu Ji describes shifts and changes in language as the places where the reader can discern the thoughts and feelings of the writer.

<sup>113</sup> *SZ*, 11: 322.

<sup>114</sup> See *SZ*, 11: 239. For dictionary entry, see *Kokugo daijiten*.

<sup>115</sup> *SZ*, 11: 322.

<sup>116</sup> *SZ*, 11: 322.

<sup>117</sup> In Chapter 29 “Tong bian” (Continuity and variation) of *Wenxin diaolong*, Liu Xie highlights how genres of writing have been constant throughout literary history, but the vital voice of the writer behind the words achieves longevity through a limitless process of continuity and variation. In other words, a form or genre of writing has infinite variations depending on the writer’s ability to use language. See Stephen Owen, *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 351.

**Chapter 5:**

**Lyric and Longing in Natsume Sōseki's *Kusamakura* and *Omoidasu koto nado***

In this hither and back of mutual and manifold influence,  
the interior of the picture vibrates, rises and falls back into itself,  
and does not have a single unmoving part.  
—Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters on Cezanne* (1907):

Ever since my eyes have known the letters of East and West  
My heart has borne the anxiety of both past and present.  
—Natsume Sōseki, “Untitled” (1899):

How beautiful, if sorrow had not made  
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty’s self.  
—John Keats, *Hyperion*, Book I (1856):

This chapter examines lyric thinking in Natsume Sōseki’s novel *Kusamakura* (1906; *Pillow of grass*) and his prose poem *Omoidasu koto nado* (1910; *Recollecting and such*). I argue that these works evince how a modern literatus like Sōseki uses the antiquated genres *kanshi* and *haikai* in modern vernacular prose as a way to give form to feelings through sensual embodiment outside the teleological containment of narrative. Both works give form to the dialectical movements of lyric thinking, ironizing the efficacy of poetry; as such, *Pillow of Grass* and *Recollecting and Such* display the affirmation of sensual embodiment while also alluding to its failure.

This tension is produced through the alternation between prose and poetry, creating a movement between stasis and movement that also gives form to the “contradictions” of feeling in the process of grief.<sup>4</sup> Feelings of grief in each work appear in the form of nostalgia and melancholy, and seek resolution, if we can call it that, through irony: *Pillow of Grass* and *Recollecting and Such* both display a Romantic “negative capability” in their evocations of loss, instability, and uncertainty; irony enables the poet to cope with the predicament of the human condition by evoking the idea that “only the fragmentary, finite, and incomplete . . . can give us sense of infinity that lies behind any closed form.”<sup>5</sup> As the contradictions of feeling take form in each work, the irony—the permanent interruption of meaning that makes the reader question the narrative presented before him—points to a plenitude beyond the containment of form.

*Pillow of Grass* is a novel in which a poet-painter embarks on a journey to capture beauty. Seeking inspiration for a painting, he travels to an idyllic and pastoral landscape, far away from the concerns of modern urban life and the threat of war. The grief in the novel takes form in images that evoke languid motion in mythic time and space, eternal slowness, and an aesthetic of indistinctness drawn from Chinese poetry and painting. This slowness stalls the linear progression of the narrative, only to conclude with a pat ending that ironizes the journey and the artist’s goal to complete his painting: his epiphany that he can paint after seeing the sadness on Nami’s face is ironized by the novel’s formal evocations of loss and incompleteness.

*Recollecting and Such* is a long prose poem that evokes the pain, grief, and sensual recovery of a narrator convalescing from a near-death experience. The narrative is retrospective and unchronological. As the narrator recounts past events by alternating between prose and

poetry, this stasis and movement in his recollections creates a pulse in the narrative that simulates an ill body in the state of recovery—in other words, the narrative is a convalescent in poetic form. Although the narrator regains his memory of past events through sensual embodiment in poetry, *Recollecting and Such* concludes with an ironic awareness of the inefficacy of that recuperative process.

## The Lyrical Novel

This section examines *Pillow of Grass* as a “lyrical novel,” a genre whose poetic effect derives from contradiction. *Pillow of Grass* is a novel in search of beauty through the deployment of sensuous poetry and figurative language, while also evoking the antithetical language found in nineteenth century European lyrical novels. Ralph Freedman writes that lyrical novels are distinguished from non-lyrical novels by their “internal conflict, a precarious balance of different, sometimes antithetical, techniques which creates a poetic effect.”<sup>6</sup> *Pillow of Grass*’s poetic effect and affective atmosphere derives, in part, from its beautiful and sensuous language, but also the oppositions and contradictions evoked in that language.

One of the internal conflicts in *Pillow of Grass* manifests as the Romantic discord between man and nature.<sup>7</sup> In Romanticism, modern man has lost his connection with nature, and longs to make recompense by communing with the natural landscape.<sup>8</sup> *Pillow of Grass* opens with thoughts about the conflict between man and nature, setting up the plot of the novel, which can be described as a quest to find solace through sensual immersion in a spring landscape:

As I ascended the mountain path, I pondered:

Work by reason, and you will encounter rough patches; Dip your oar into the tide of sentiment, and you will be swept away; Always having your way only constrains you. Suffice it to say, the human world is a hard place to live.

When this difficulty intensifies, you long to move to an easier place. At the moment you have realized that life is hard no matter where you are, a poem is born, and a painting forms.

If the human world is not the work of a god, it is not the work of a demon either. It is the work of ordinary people just living their lives in the row of houses next door. You may think it is hard to live in a world created by ordinary people, but surely there is nowhere else to go. If there were, that would only mean going to the nonhuman realm. But I imagine that life in the nonhuman realm would be even harder than life in the human world.

山路を登りながら、こう考えた。

智に働けば角が立つ。情に棹させば流される。意地を通せば窮屈だ。とかく人の世は住みにくい。

住みにくさが高じると、安い所へ引き越したくなる。どこへ越しても住みにくいと悟った時、詩が生れて、画が出来る。

人の世を作ったものは神でもなければ鬼でもない。やはり向う三軒両隣りにちらちらするただの人である。ただの人が作った人の世が住みにくいからとて、越す国はあるまい。あれば人でなしの国へ行くばかりだ。人でなしの国は人の世よりもなお住みにくかろう。

Like the title *kusamakura*, a poetic epithet for travel meaning “pillow of grass,” the first line frames the entire novel as a tour of the lyric mind: while the subject is in the state of motion (*noborinaga*), his mind is also deep in thought (*kangaeta*). The reader discovers that his journey becomes a process of thinking about the relationship between man and nature.<sup>10</sup>

The novel gives form to the experience of walking in a painting through its deployment of images and tropes from the English, Japanese, and Chinese poetic traditions. *Pillow of Grass* opens with ascension. Ascending a mountain evokes the “Climbing High” (*deng gao*) trope in classical Chinese poetry as well as the Romantic quest into the natural unknown. Poetic traditions blend as the narrator ascends a mountain, a journey that stirs contradictory thoughts about life in nature vis-à-vis life among people. He finds life in the modern “human world” (*hito no yo*) difficult because it lends itself to extreme ways of being, all three of which result in conflict and discord. These three difficulties of life in the human world set up an argument for living elsewhere, a place that seemingly does not exist. If it were to exist, then it would and could only be what he calls the “nonhuman realm” (*hito de nashi no kuni*), which provisionally means the prelapsarian world of nature. But once he praises life in the nonhuman realm, he contradicts that thought by saying that life there would be more difficult than life among people. This back and forth between ideas is emblematic of how the narrator thinks throughout the story, as well as how *Pil* works as a lyrical novel.

The binary created by the “human world” and the “nonhuman realm” is echoed by other antipodes, most notably *ninjō* (human feelings; attachment) and *hininjō* (nonhuman feelings; detachment).<sup>11</sup> Pairs such as *ninjō* and *hininjō* are just one of the many antipodes that constitute the dialectical system through which *Pillow of Grass* operates as a lyrical novel: going back and forth between antipodes, stating that it is in search of one thing, and then ironically evoking its opposite. The meaning of each term is redefined in its evocation, only to be undermined later by a lyric poem or lines of figurative prose.

This back and forth creates slippages in meaning that reveal the lyric impulses of *Pillow of Grass* as a whole. The novel purports to be in search of *hininjō*, which Karatani Kōjin has described as a time and space outside of realism and inside the imaginative world of poetry and painting.<sup>12</sup> While purporting to be a novel far away from the concerns of modern life, the novel slips into the world of *ninjō* by commenting on war, by featuring cliché interactions between the narrator and the mysterious woman innkeeper, and by evoking the comic and frivolous exchanges of nineteenth-century melodrama.<sup>13</sup>

Another conflict that distinguishes *Pillow of Grass* as a lyrical novel is the way that the psychology of the lyric subject, the narrator, is projected onto the landscape that he describes. In other words, his thoughts and feelings take form in his natural surroundings. These scenes evoke the tranquil “mountains and streams” (*sansui*) and related topoi from classical Chinese and Japanese poetry, but also natural scenes from Romantic poetry of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>14</sup> In late imperial Chinese poetics, this is known as “blending of feeling and scene” (*qing jing jiao rong*), theorized by Qing dynasty poet Wang Fuzhi (1619-92). *Pillow of Grass* is informed by such theories of Chinese poetry, as well as modes of expression from Romantic poetry. *Pillow of Grass* is written almost entirely in the present tense, which performs the immediacy of the narrator’s thinking about the journey, and enables him to form a Romantic communion with the landscape in the lyric present, like the subjects in the poems of William Wordsworth and other Romantic poets whom Sōseki read.<sup>15</sup>

When the narrator says that in times of difficulty “a poem is born, and a painting forms,” he describes how the form of *Pillow of Grass* responds to the thoughts and feelings of the lyric subject. The primary forms are poetry and painting, both of which manifest in prose descriptions of sight and sound. He offers an example of this when he describes the song of a lark:

Suddenly I hear the voice of a lark below my feet. I gaze down into the vale, but I can see no form or shadow showing where it is singing. All I hear is its song, pellucid and piercing—notes pouring forth hurriedly without pause. It feels unbearable as if the entire boundless blanket of air had been punctured by the bites of fleas. Not for an instant do the notes in the bird’s song lull. Seemingly unable to rest until it sings the tranquil spring day to its end, singing it to light, and again singing it to dark. Soaring up and up, and flying on and on, the lark will surely find its death deep in the clouds. Rising to where it can rise no more, it may find itself swept away into the clouds, floating in suspension before its form disappears, leaving behind only its song in the sky.

忽ち足の下で雲雀の声がし出した。谷を見下したが、どこで鳴いてるか影も形も見えぬ。ただ声だけが明らかに聞える。せつせと忙しく、絶間なく鳴いている。方幾里の空気が一面に蚤に刺されていたたまれないような気がする。あの鳥の鳴く音には瞬時の余裕もない。のどかな春の日を鳴き尽くし、鳴きあかし、また鳴き暮らさなければ気が済まんと見える。その上どこまでも登って行く、いつまでも登って行く。雲雀はきっと雲の中で死ぬに相違ない。登り詰めた揚句は、流れて雲に入って、漂っているうちに形は消えてなくなって、ただ声だけが空の裡に残るのかも知れない。<sup>16</sup>

As the narrator makes his way up the mountain path, he pauses his philosophical discussion on poetry and painting, and notices the natural landscape around him. He suddenly hears the song of a lark. The prose turns into figurative language and evokes Percy Bysshe Shelley’s (1792–1822) ode “To a Skylark” (1820).<sup>17</sup> The adverbs *tada* (just) and *dake* (only) emphasize that only sound marks the lark’s presence, indicating the song as synecdoche for the singer. The sound of the lark’s song takes form in the prose with the repetition of *n* consonants, and as the image of the bird, which we imagine only by way of synecdoche, climbs higher and higher into the void, the song becomes all the more resonant. The passage ends with hyperbole, describing an ascent into the clouds where the lark disappears in death, and leaves only its song as a disembodied and ghostly voice reverberating in the boundless firmament. Like the body of the lark suspended in the sky before it disappears forever, the narrator’s feelings tarry in musical splendor, tinged with mournful feeling.

While the idea of the disembodied song speaks to the conceit behind the “nonhuman world” because it conceals or effaces the existence of a human lyric subject, its ceaselessness even after the lark’s disappearance suggests that this world of sonorous pleasure begins to feel more like throbbing pain in the mind of the poet. The possibility of relief adumbrated by the bird’s flight toward death makes this point evident, but the narrator’s overall description of the lark’s song, including the metaphor of air having been punctured by flea bites, suggests that music in this natural landscape is not so pleasurable. Lines later, how apropos that the narrator

quotes the eighteenth stanza from Shelley's poem "To a Skylark," and distills the earlier prose description of the lark's song into lines of English Romantic verse:

*We look before and after  
And pine for what is not:  
Our sincerest laughter  
With some pain is fraught;  
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.*

[translation]

Indeed, no matter how joyful the poet may be, he cannot hope to sing his joy as the lark does, with such passionate wholeheartedness, oblivious to all thought before and after.

成程いくら詩人が幸福でも、あの雲雀のように思い切って、一心不乱に、前後を忘却して、わが喜びを歌う訳には行くまい。<sup>18</sup>

After he quotes Shelley, the narrator translates the English lines into modern Japanese poetry, which is not reproduced in the English translation above.<sup>19</sup> While the narrator's translation explicates Shelley's lines for his Japanese reader, they also repeat the feelings that they convey, echoing the contradictory idea encapsulated in the last line "our sweetest songs are those that tell of the saddest thought," and in the earlier prose passage describing the lark's song. These echoes perform the lark's recursive song in literary form.

After the poem, the narrator discusses how a poet cannot be like the lark in how it sings its heart out, seizing the present moment and completely ignoring what comes before and after. This is because the poet's mind is constituted by contradiction, that he "pines for what is not," that his "laughter, / with some pain is fraught," and that his "sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought." In the full-version of Shelley's ode, the poet addresses the skylark and praises its beautiful song. The lines quoted in *Pillow of Grass* make up the first stanza in Shelley's poem in which the poet speaks for all poets by using the pronoun "we" in opposition to "thou," the skylark. By ventriloquizing Shelley, the narrator is making a general claim about poetry, and the Romanticism of the novel. The ode is a paean to the skylark's song and a reminder of the poet's impossibility to sing like the bird. Mark Sandy has discussed this as Shelley's elegiac voice, in which "potential moments of poetic vision and transformation are haunted by an awareness of loss and grief that return us from the possibilities of transcendence and revelation to a confrontation with the limitations of poetry and our own contingent existences."<sup>20</sup> As a lyrical novel, *Pillow of Grass* features moments of poetic vision and transformation, but the contradictions of thought as well as the mournful and elegiac feelings that take form in poetic prose and poems, like Shelley's poetry, ironize the possibility of actual transcendence.

The narrator's comparison between Eastern and Western poetry alludes to other moments in *Pillow of Grass* where Eastern aesthetics are placed in an oppositional relationship with Western thought. Like *ninjō* and *hininjō*, the East and the West function as another pair of antipodes in the dialectal system that constitutes the novel. However, the narrator ironizes the ostensible autonomy of these antipodes by blending them together, especially in the formal treatment of emotion and feeling. Although the narrator's evocation of the "nonhuman realm" is



usually a desire to return to the idyllic landscapes in premodern poetry, when evoking grief, the polarity between poetic traditions is reconciled:

It goes without saying that Western poetry features such expressiveness, but in Chinese poetry too, there are often phrases such as “ten thousand bushels of grief.” What measures to ten thousand bushels for a poet may amount to one cup for the layman.

西洋の詩は無論の事, 支那の詩にも, よく万斛の愁などと云う字がある. 詩人だから万斛で素人なら一合で済むかも知れぬ.<sup>21</sup>

The narrator alludes to a line from a poem by Su Shi (1037-1101), a Song dynasty literatus whose poetry, painting, and calligraphy had immense influence on Japanese literati culture throughout literary history. The phrase “ten thousand bushels of grief” is cliché by the twentieth century, and comments on how grief is figured in *Pillow of Grass*. In Su Shi’s poem the poet feels sympathy for a courtesan, likely one depicted in a painting:

Falling in long streams, jade chopsticks ruin a powdered face;	長垂玉箸殘妝臉
She accepts the golden hairpins, she reveals her fingertips.	肯為金釵露指尖
Ten thousand bushels of idle grief, when will they be gone?	萬斛閒愁何日盡
A grain more would be impossible to add to true form.	一分真態更難添 <sup>22</sup>

The allusion to Line 3 of Su Shi’s poem speaks to the conceit of *Pillow of Grass* as a lyrical novel in how the poem and the novel use metaphor as a self-critical comment about the realism of representation in painting. The figuration of the courtesan in Lines 1 and 2 is constituted by stock imagery evoking the ornamentation in boudoir poetry from the Six Dynasties, and its legacy in late imperial poetry. Right on the heels of the excess of sentiment and allure, Line 3 evokes the courtesan’s inner state: “Ten thousand bushels of idle grief, when will they be gone?” When the poet concludes that nothing more can be added to this perfect picture of grief, the truth of her plight is realized precisely because of metaphor, in the way that the poem figures the courtesan’s inner and outer forms through the modes of painting and poetry. The irony of the claim made in Su Shi’s poem is echoed in the irony of *Pillow of Grass*, which purports to convey the truth of human feeling but through modes of representation that border on the illusory and are ostensibly removed from the realm of human concerns.<sup>23</sup> This is what Freedman describes as “lyrical objectivity” in the lyrical novel.<sup>24</sup>

Back and forth movements of thought, the blending of the narrator’s thoughts and feelings with the landscape, and the quotations of, and allusions to, poems in multiple traditions are some of the dynamic features in narrative form that characterize *Pillow of Grass* as a lyrical novel. Freedman writes that “Lyrical novels, . . . possess widely ranging possibilities of objectification. Their repertoire of possible techniques includes many variations of narrative form which they use in the manner of lyrical poetry, extending from a pure stream of consciousness to a controlled pattern of figures and scenes manipulated by an omniscient author.”<sup>25</sup> In the following sections, I continue to examine the novel’s formal features, but I concentrate on the lyric impulse of such features, namely the stasis and movement mediated by figurative language and poetry, and the feelings of contradiction that give form to grief.

## Pathologies of Motion

This section examines the kinds of language and modes of representation that give form to feeling by way of stasis and movement in the narrative. As a lyrical novel that uses the techniques of poetry and painting to make feelings visible and audible, *Pillow of Grass* carries in figurative and poetic language, evoking a time and space outside of teleological narrative, producing a languid motion that contradicts the pace of post-industrial life in an age of rising imperialism. The novel performs the conceit of “nonhuman detachment,” except that conflicting feelings always get in the way, propelling the lyric subject into the heart of human feeling.

Stasis and movement are evoked in the first chapter when the narrator discusses another binary: the sleep world and the waking world. He argues that the imagination of poetic worlds from antiquity, such as the classic Peach Blossom Spring made famous by Six Dynasties poet Tao Yuanming (365?-427), is an antidote that produces palliative effects on the heart and mind. Although he does not state the source of the ailment, considering the conceit of the novel we may assume it comes from the modern world of human attachments, the world he is trying to escape:

Should sleep be necessary in the twentieth century, this poetic flavor of transcendence from the vulgar world is all the more essential. It is a pity that composers and readers of poetry are all under the influence of Western writers, so they no longer take the trouble to set off on a skiff free and easy and ride upstream all the way to ancient utopias like the Peach Blossom Spring. Since I have never been a poet by profession, I have no intention to preach to modern society about the poetic worlds of Wang Wei and Yuanming. But for me and only me, the excitement their poetry stirs is more palliative than theater performances or dance parties, and more moving than Faust or Hamlet. This is the whole reason I plod along slowly on a mountain path in spring, carrying a box of paints and a stool, all by myself. I long to absorb directly from nature the poetic worlds of Yuanming and Wangwei, and to roam, even for just a while, in the world of nonhuman detachment. Call it a whim.

二十世紀に睡眠が必要ならば、二十世紀にこの出世間的の詩味は大切である。惜しい事に今の詩を作る人も、詩を読む人もみんな、西洋人にかぶれているから、わざわざ呑気な扁舟を泛べてこの桃源に溯るものはないようだ。余は固より詩人を職業にしておらんから、王維や淵明の境界を今の世に布教して広げようと云う心掛も何もない。ただ自分にはこう云う感興が演芸会よりも舞踏会よりも薬になる様に思われる。ファウストよりも、ハムレットよりもありがたく考えられる。こうやって、ただ一人絵の具箱と三脚几を担いで春の山路をのそのそあるくのも全くこれがためである。淵明、王維の詩境を直接に自然から吸収して、すこしの間でも非人情の天地に逍遥したいからの願。一つの酔興だ。<sup>26</sup>

The narrator again places East and West in opposition. He says that he does not intend to sing the praises of classical Chinese poets Wang Wei and Tao Yuanming, but then ironically expresses his wish to immerse himself in their poetic worlds. He writes that the *kankyō*, or “pleasure,” he feels when roaming in poetic antiquity is akin to *kusuri*, or “medicine” (translated

above as “palliative”). Considering the binaries at play, the reader imagines that this medicine induces sleep, much like an opiate, numbing the lyric subject from the pain of reality. Dream states induced by opium were made famous by Romantic poets including Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) and Thomas De Quincey (1785-1859), both of whom Sōseki read. The narrator associates dream with intoxication, which is reified in the word *suikyō*, translated above as “whim,” or more literally “intoxicated pleasure.”

Nakajima Kunihiko has argued that *kankyō*, or “pleasure” (lit. “sensing pleasure”), is a crucial term in Japanese literature written after the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5). He describes it as “an artistic stance and practice to overcome a critical situation.” He writes, “By the late Meiji period, many writers had met with crisis. Simply put, it was the encounter with the unknown, the fugitive, and the self-threatening.”<sup>27</sup> As a post-war novel, *Pillow of Grass* is just what the doctor ordered, as it seems to provide an antidote to the malaise of modern life in 1906, and its palliative effects can be found in its use of language. As the narrator “plods along slowly” (*noso noso aruku*), the novel also moves at a plodding pace through sensual prose and poetry.

An example of such prose appears at the end of the first chapter, where the narrator pictures himself as a figure in a painting or a poem. He imagines a painterly scene where raindrops fall like silver arrows across the overcast sky, grey and hazy like faded ink:

Drenched and moving in the vast and indistinct pale-ink-wash world with silver arrows falling aslant around me, I think of a human form not as myself, but as a poem, as a recitation of verse. When I abandon my material self and observe through a gaze of pure objectivity, for the first time as a figure in a painting I preserve the views of nature and their beautiful harmony.

茫々たる薄墨色の世界を、幾条の銀箭が斜めに走るなかを、ひたぶるに濡れて行くわれを、われならぬ人の姿と思えば、詩にもなる、句にも詠まれる。有体なる己れを忘れ尽して純客観に眼をつくる時、始めてわれは画中の人物として、自然の景物と美しき調和を保つ。<sup>28</sup>

After he has immersed himself in the poetic landscape, the narrator becomes one with the medium that he evokes: a poem or a line of verse. This self-figuration as a poem or as a line to be recited by the reader speaks to the lyric impulse of such passages, where motion of the lyric subject and other figured objects is mediated through the process of reading.

The narrator then abandons his material self and assumes a “gaze of pure objectivity” that enables him observe and preserve nature’s beautiful harmony.<sup>29</sup> But his reverie does not last:

The very moment I become concerned by the pain that afflicts my mind in the falling rain and the fatigue that strikes my feet with each step, I am no longer a figure in a poem, nor am I a figure in a painting. I am as before, nothing more than an ordinary townsman. My eyes become blind to the charm of rolling clouds and swirling smoke, my heart unmoved by the pity of fallen blossoms and crying birds.

ただ降る雨の心苦しくて、踏む足の疲れたるを気に掛ける瞬間に、われはずで詩中の人にもあらず、画裡の人にもあらず。依然として市井の一豎子に過ぎぬ。雲煙飛動の趣も眼に入らぬ。落花啼鳥の情けも心に浮ばぬ。<sup>30</sup>

Once the reality of walking around in the countryside wears on his mind and body, the narrator wakes up from reverie and loses his sensibility to feel the kinds of empathy stirred by poetry and painting. These two lines in particular are parallel, much like couplets in classical Chinese poetry and lines of parallel prose in literary Chinese (*si-liu wen* or *pian wen*). Although the content of his speech claims for the loss of sensibility, the rhetoric of his language suggests otherwise: the denial of poetry is contradicted by its manifestation in literary form.

The narrator's description of the transition in and out of dream is a fanciful exaggeration that speaks to the conceit of the novel and why poetry functions as a palliative; but like an opiate its effects are only temporary. The numbing and dreamlike effects wear off when the natural landscape is not so idyllic. The first chapter concludes with a description that adumbrates how the novel unfolds, and how stasis and movement in language stir disorienting and destabilizing feelings:

Walking alone in dank desolateness through the mountain in spring, I am able to comprehend the beauty of myself even less. In the beginning, I tilt my hat and stride out. Later I simply walk with eyes fixed on my feet. In the end, I walk with trepidation, with my shoulders hunched. As far as the eyes could see, rain rattles the treetops, and from all directions encroaches upon the lone traveler. This is a little too much nonhuman detachment.

蕭々として独り春山を行く吾の、いかに美しきかはなおさらに解せぬ。初めは帽を傾けて歩いた。後にはただ足の甲のみを見詰めてあるいた。終りには肩をすぼめて、恐る恐る歩いた。雨は満目の樹梢を揺かして四方より孤客に逼る。非人情がちと強過ぎたようだ。<sup>31</sup>

The comic irony with which the narrator concludes the first chapter balances the effusiveness and seriousness with which he discusses aesthetics, philosophy, and his desire to escape the concerns of the mundane world. It also indicates the novel's self-consciousness as a lyrical novel that wants to do one thing, but contradicts that wish at the same time.<sup>32</sup> The repetition of the verb *aruku* (to walk) encapsulates the plodding plot of *Pillow of Grass*, and the adverbs that modify the walking narrate the drama of feelings over the course of the novel. By the end, the narrator finds himself walking unsteadily and with trepidation (*osoru osoru*), when he started off ascending the mountain path with wavering thoughts, followed by digressions about springtime tranquility and resplendence. But once the landscape "encroaches" (*semaru*) upon the solitary traveler, dream feels like nightmare.

The first chapter lays the groundwork for the rest of the novel, showing what kind of language the reader can expect, and suggesting what kind of feelings and affect that language generates. But what kind of feelings are these, and how are they mediated? Feelings manifest in *Kusmakura* through poetry, in the form of poetic prose and poems. Fredric Jameson has described such language as affect, which he argues is one of the antinomies that constitute nineteenth century realist novels.<sup>33</sup> As he demonstrates in the first chapter with his quotation of

Shelley, the narrator often inserts different genres of poetry into the narrative of *Pillow of Grass*. In Chapter 3, the narrator jots down haiku as they come to him, suspending the narrative and creating a montage of images in haiku form. The sequence ends:

Poem upon poem,  
Pacing to and fro  
In the spring moonlight.

Resigned,  
Spring draws to a close,  
And I am all alone.

While composing these verses, at some point I begin to doze off.

うた折々月下の春ををちこちす  
思ひ切つて更け行く春の独りかな  
などと、試みているうち、いつしか、うとうと眠くなる。<sup>34</sup>

The first haiku speaks to the formal movements of *Pillow of Grass* as a whole, as a lyrical novel that places poem upon poem, and wanders back and forth in the narrator's imagination of a spring landscape. The second haiku comments on the entangled relationship between the lyric subject and the landscape in which he is situated. The use of the adverb *omoikitte* (resolutely; determinedly; resignedly) to describe how spring approaches its end is in part a Romantic personification of spring, imbuing it with the agency to determine its own temporality. But it also speaks to the resignation of the poet, who is lamenting his solitude as the vagaries of time are beyond his control; and yet, his connection to spring—*haru no / hitori kana*—makes him also part of the spring that has resigned itself to drawing to a close. In other words, the poet and spring are one. He returns to this idea later in the novel in poetic prose.

The drowsiness induced by composing poetry evokes a liminal space in between sleep and waking. He describes this space using the metaphor of a fine silk thread that demarcates the two worlds like an event horizon leading to a black hole filled with unknown possibilities:

I think the adjective “entranced” would be most apt here. In deep sleep, everyone loses recognition of self. When the mind is conscious and clear, no one can be oblivious of the external world. But between these two worlds stretches the horizon to an illusory realm as tenuous as silk thread, too vague to be called waking, too alert to be termed sleep. Such a state is like placing the sleep and waking worlds into the same bottle and thoroughly blending them with the brush of poetry: blur the colors of nature to the threshold of dream, and draw the whole universe, as it is, deeper into the misty realm.

恍惚と云うのが、こんな場合に用いるべき形容詞かと思う。熟睡のうちには何人も我を認め得ぬ。明覚の際には誰あつて外界を忘るるものはなからう。ただ両域の間に縷のごとき幻境が横わる。醒めたりと云うには余り臚にて、眠ると評せんには少しく生気を剩す。起臥の二界を同瓶裏に盛りて、

詩歌の彩管をもって、ひたすらに攪き雑ぜたるがごとき状態を云うのである。自然の色を夢の手前までぼかして、ありのままの宇宙を一段、霞の国へ押し流す。<sup>35</sup>

In his state of drowsiness, the narrator falls into deep thought about the word *kōkotsu*, which as an adjective means “entranced; ecstatic; enraptured.” The Chinese compound is originally a stative verb that describes entrancement. The prose then deploys figurative language to describe this liminal space between sleep and waking. The metaphor of mixture in containment offers a meta-comment on the novel, as a text that knocks on the door of dream and the imagination, where everything is as indistinct as mist and haze, but does not enter. The metaphor also undermines the novel’s attempt to maintain a clear distinction between antipodes, as the text is self-consciously aware that such polarities are reconciled by blending.

The figure of the “fine silk thread” (*ru*) for the horizon that lies between the two worlds complements the figure of the “jar” (*bin*) in which they are blended by the brush of poetry. These figures of containment evoke the containment of the earlier haiku, an economy of poetic meaning governed by seventeen syllables: the silk thread figures that containment as an image of infinity, suggesting the idea of lyric eternity or the eternal present in lyric poetry; and at the same time, the jar delimits that containment with an image of finite space. As such passages hover in figuration and metaphor, the narrative slows down, enabling the narrator’s imagination to roam in realms beyond the boundaries of the pastoral, and into the infinite space of the cosmos, where the mind can easily fall into a proverbial black hole without knowing it.

The narrator returns to the feeling of entrancement and ecstasy in the sixth chapter, where slowness and languid motion manifest in the form and content of language. The earlier evocations of motion in the haiku and in the figuration of consciousness and unconsciousness meet with a fuller and more figurative description of ecstasy and entrancement, but one that evokes motion without a specific destination:

I am not thinking about anything clearly, nor am I seeing anything with certainty. Nothing of striking color stirs on the stage in my consciousness, so I cannot say I have become one with anything. Yet I am in motion: motion neither within the world nor without it—just simply in motion. Neither motion as a flower, nor as a bird, nor motion in relation to another human being, just ecstatic motion.

余は明かに何事をも考えておらぬ。又は慥かに何物をも見ておらぬ。わが意識の舞台に著るしき色彩を以て動くものがないから、われは如何なる事物に同化したとも云えぬ。されども吾は動いている。世の中に動いてもおらぬ、世の外にも動いておらぬ。ただ何となく動いている。花に動くにもあらず、鳥に動くにもあらず、人間に対して動くにもあらず、ただ恍惚と動いている。<sup>36</sup>

The narrator describes himself suspended in a liminal state in between antipodes. The negation of the verb *ugoku* (to move) repeats throughout the passage, and its repetition reifies his awareness “Yet I am in motion . . . just simply in motion.” Language also mediates his movement, a movement qualified by the adverb *kōkotsu*, “entranced” or “ecstatic,” which we remember from an earlier passage when the narrator feels drowsy after composing haiku.

When he explicates “ecstatic motion,” he conjures the images from the earlier haiku in which he has merged with spring. He explains this fusion through the figure of a “spirit” or “essence” (*seiki*) that has compounded all the elements of spring and saturated his mind:

If I were pressed to explain, I would want to say that my mind is simply moving with spring. I would want to say a spirit—compounded of every spring color, spring breeze, spring creature, spring song, then condensed and refined into an immortal potion and then dissolved into a numinous elixir from Penglai, and then evaporated in the sun at Peach Blossom Spring—has unbeknownst to me seeped into my pores and saturated my mind unconsciously.

強いて説明せよと云わるるならば、余が心はただ春と共に動いていると云いたい。あらゆる春の色、春の風、春の物、春の声を打って、固めて、仙丹に練り上げて、それを蓬莱の靈液に溶いて、桃源の日で蒸発せしめた精気が、知らぬ間に毛孔から染み込んで、心が知覚せぬうちに飽和されてしまったと云いたい。<sup>37</sup>

As the narrator describes the sublime experience of becoming one with the season, he evokes images from Chinese myth: “immortal potion made from cinnabar” (*sendan*), a “numinous elixir” (*reieki*), and Penglai, the imaginary realm of the immortals. The predicates of these statements indicate that they are mere approximations, showing that the ineffable can only be expressed through metaphor, evocations of the imaginary, and suppositional language.

Lines later the narrator declares more definitively that there is no “stimulant” (*shigeki*) that has initiated his merging with nature.<sup>38</sup> The lack of a stimulant produces for him a “profound and indescribable pleasure” (*yōzen toshite meijō shigatai tanoshimi*):

The absence of a stimulant produces a profound and indescribable pleasure. I do not mean some fugitive and wild elation, like waves that heave up toward the sky, by the whip of the wind. I can describe it as like a boundless blue sea that moves between one continent and another above invisible depths of ocean floor.

刺激がないから、窈然として名状しがたい楽がある。風に揉まれて上の空なる波を起す、軽薄で騒々しい趣とは違う。目に見えぬ幾尋の底を、大陸から大陸まで動いている潢洋たる蒼海の有様と形容する事が出来る。<sup>39</sup>

When he tries to explain what he means by this pleasure, he returns to metaphor. He wants to clarify that the pleasure is not fleeting, like waves heaving under the sway of wind. Rather, he describes this pleasure as something immeasurable in time and space, a “boundless blue sea” (*kōyō taru sōkai*) moving between two continents, evoking his earlier claim that the feeling is “profound” and “indescribable.”<sup>40</sup>

The metaphors that constitute the landscape of imagery in *Pillow of Grass* rely primarily on sight, but also sound and touch. The novel in this way transcends the visual limits of painting, and embraces a poetry that calls for full sensual embodiment. Such an experience evokes the sensual worlds of classical Chinese poetry, including *Lyrics of Chu* (Chu ci; third century BC) and Qu Yuan’s “Encountering Sorrow” (Li sao).<sup>41</sup> The aesthetics from these ancient

poems are reproduced in the long tradition of literati poetry and painting. Among such aesthetics is “blandness” (*pingdan*), an aesthetic from literati painting and poetry that evokes ineffable plenitude. In his concluding remarks about merging with spring and feeling profound and indescribable pleasure, the narrator writes that his mind is “bland” (*awaki*):

By “bland,” I simply mean a taste that is hard to grasp, but without the risk of being too weak. Poetic expressions such as “teeming tranquility” or “languid calm” perhaps most fully express this state.

淡しとは単に捕え難しと云う意味で、弱きに過ぎる虞を含んではおらぬ。  
冲融とか澹蕩とか云う詩人の語は尤もこの境を切実に言い了せたものだろ  
う。<sup>42</sup>

In order to clarify what he means by “bland” (*awashi*), he cites expressions used by Chinese poets, such as “teeming tranquility” (*chūyū*) and “languid calm” (*tantō*). Both words are composed of Chinese graphs that express the fluidity of water. The word *chūyū* (*chongrong* in Chinese) describes a state of harmony and tranquility that is overflowing and also profound; the word *tantō* (*dandang* in Chinese) describes a state of boundless calm with faint and languid motion, like a placidly flowing stream. In addition to echoing the many descriptions of the vicissitudes of water’s form in *Pillow of Grass*, these expressions distill the tapestry of images that the narrator weaves together through figurative descriptions of the intoxication induced by composing poetry and the attendant feelings of profound and indescribable pleasure when he finds himself moving under the sway of a force beyond his control.

The states of “teeming tranquility” and “languid calm” speak to the conceit of nonhuman detachment; but treating them as such only touches the surface of their meaning in *Pillow of Grass*. The effusions of joy and pleasure are ironized by grief evoked in poetry as well as in dialogue, in which the historical contingencies of 1906 and the threat of war loom large. The feeling of pleasure, like the word *hininjō* that is used time and again to figure it, is external and artificial, just like the surface of a painting. This idea resonates with the way eighteenth century philosopher Edmund Burke (1730-1797) describes “joy and grief” in *A Philosophical Enquiry* (1757): “in grief, the *pleasure* is still uppermost.”<sup>43</sup> The irony in Burke’s claim evokes Shelley’s line “our sweetest songs tell those of the saddest thought.” The stasis and movement in *Pillow of Grass* give form to the irony and contradiction we associate with the lyrical novel; moreover, the symmetrical and reciprocal relationship between grief and joy evinces a process of mourning that depends upon the figuration of fantasy as reality, poetry as mimesis.<sup>44</sup> The following section will explore how the *jouissance* in *Pillow of Grass* is ironized by feelings of loss that surface in poetry, and that thereby refigure the enchanting spells of numbing ecstasy as ceaseless moments of paralyzing grief.

### Nostalgia and Melancholy

This section examines how *Pillow of Grass* evokes nostalgia and melancholy. Above I discussed how the alternation between prose and poetry generates stasis and movement in narrative. Such motion gives form to grief. This grief may be described as nostalgia and melancholy, which are both feelings of longing.<sup>45</sup> What distinguishes the two is whether the longing takes an object or not.



Nostalgia can be understood as longing for an object. In her book on nostalgia in the Slavic cultural context, Svetlana Boym writes that “the rapid pace of industrialization and modernization increased the intensity of people’s longing for the slower rhythms of the past, for continuity, social cohesion and tradition.”<sup>46</sup> *Pillow of Grass* is a case in point, as it exhibits a nostalgia for a retrospectively sanitized past, crystallized in the idyllic world of *hininjō*. The narrator’s desire to embrace *hininjō* inspires him to converse with poems written centuries earlier in the past. In addition to quoting Shelley and alluding to Su Shi, the narrator also cites poems by Tang poet Wang Wei, whose poetry evokes the tranquility of Buddhist aesthetics, and the contradictions of Buddhist thought.

The narrator’s own compositions of haiku and *kanshi* also bespeak nostalgia. Near the end of the novel, he composes a five-character ancient-style poem (*gogon koshi*). Matsuoka Yuzuru (1891-1969) has described the poem as the “keynote” (*kichō*) of the entire novel.<sup>47</sup> The poem, in part, speaks to the conceit of *hininjō* and the aesthetics of detachment, but it also ironizes that detachment through its evocation of grief:

As I leave the gate, much on the mind,  
 A spring breeze brushes my coat.  
 Fragrant grass grows in the wheel ruts  
 Of a deserted road receding in the haze.  
 5 I rest my cane and take a moment to look  
 At myriad shapes tricked out in sunlight.  
 I listen to a warbler tuning its song,  
 Watch falling petals fluttering in the air.  
 Where my walk ends, a grassy field stretches far;  
 10 I write a poem on an ancient temple door.  
 Lonely sorrow high atop the clouds,  
 Across the sky a stray goose flies home.  
 The human heart, a thing so recondite,  
 In formlessness it forgets right and wrong.  
 15 At thirty years I am growing old,  
 Still wistful of happier days.  
 I wander with the changes of things,  
 And calmly encounter their sweet perfume.

*mon wo idete omou tokoro ōshi*  
*shunpū waga koromo wo fuku*  
*hōsō shōtetsu ni shōji*  
*haidō kasumi ni irite kasuka nari*  
*tsue wo todomete shokumoku sureba*  
*banshō seiki wo obu*  
*kōchō no enten taru wo kiki*  
*rakuei no funpi taru wo miru*  
*yukitsukushite heibu tōku*  
*shi wo daisu koji no tobira ni*  
*koshū unsai ni takaku*

出門多所思  
 春風吹吾衣  
 芳草生車轍  
 廢道入霞微  
 停筇而矚目  
 萬象帶晴暉  
 聽黃鳥宛轉  
 睹落英粉霏  
 行盡平蕪遠  
 題詩古寺扉  
 孤愁高雲際

<i>taikū dankō kaeru</i>	大空斷鴻歸
<i>sunshin nanzo yōchō taru</i>	寸心何窈窕
<i>hyōbyō toshite zehi wo wasuru</i>	縹緲忘是非
<i>sanjū ni shite ware oin to hosshi</i>	三十我欲老
<i>shōkō nao ii tari</i>	韶光猶依依
<i>shōyō shite bukka ni shitagai</i>	逍遙隨物化
<i>yūzen toshite funpi ni taisu</i>	悠然對芬菲 <sup>48</sup>

The poem evokes nostalgia in its form and content. It is a *kanshi*, a genre of classical Japanese poetry that became outmoded in the Meiji period. Like haiku, *kanshi* contradict the vernacular language of modern Japanese prose. As for content, the poem echoes the narrator's digressions about classical poetry by deploying images and tropes that allude to poetry from the Six Dynasties (220-589). A contemporary of Sōseki, calligrapher Nagao Uzan (1864-1942) made similar observations in his commentary on the poem in *kanbun* (literary Chinese):

Lofty, ancient, and remote; Calm and distant, the mind wanders far into a style as old as the Six Dynasties.

*kōko chōkei, yūzen toshite shin tōku, fūkaku keiko toshite shinsō ni iru*  
高古超迥, 悠然而神遠, 風格夔乎入晉宋<sup>49</sup>

Nagao's poetic commentary highlights how the poem transports the mind of the poet and his reader to a distant place in antiquity. The different genres of traditional poetry in *Pillow of Grass* transport the reader to older, imaginary, and illusory realms, while also keeping its foot in the modern present through narration in the vernacular. As I argued earlier in the chapter, what is "calm and distant" in *Pillow of Grass* is far from detachment and pure tranquility.

A closer examination of the poem reveals how stasis gives rise to a motion outside of the linear containment of narrative, a motion that gives form to nostalgia and melancholy. The discussion above examined the sensual embodiment in which metaphor and figuration render the lyric subject in a state of ecstasy. The *kanshi* distills that suspension of motion in its concatenation of imagery, through which the lyric subject tarries in longing.

Line 1 evokes the opening of *Pillow of Grass* in which the narrator ascends the mountain path with wavering thoughts on the mind; but here, "much on the mind" (*omou tokoro ōku*) also includes thoughts of longing. The different meanings of the verb *omou* in classical poetry encourage us to interpret "thinking" as "longing" too.<sup>50</sup> Nostalgia is already suggested in the first line, as the departure from home is met immediately with conflicting thoughts and feelings.

The first line comments on how travel is depicted in the novel as whole, but also how departure from home induces anxiety in *Pillow of Grass*. This evokes the trope of travel in premodern Japanese literature, but also the new anxieties of travel in the Meiji period.<sup>51</sup> As Stephen Dodd has shown, by the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, many Japanese writers used the idea of home to create an alternative sense of belonging and collectivity.<sup>52</sup> Boym makes similar observations in her discussion of the modern meaning of "nostalgia," which "acquired international recognition as a disability of wartime and colonial mobility, a somatic and psychological protest against forced travel, depopulation, emigration, and other kinds of compulsory movement."<sup>53</sup>

The *kanshi* is the keynote of *Pillow of Grass*, and is in concert with other poetic voices, including Shelley, George Meredith and William Wordsworth. With Romanticism floating in the ether of the text, the nostalgia in the poem evokes the nostalgia in Romantic poetry. Kevis Goodman has traced the meaning of “nostalgia” in the Romantic era. She writes that before 1900 “nostalgia” was a medical term designating illness, and that the symptoms that we have come to describe as “nostalgia” were not viewed as such until much later.<sup>54</sup> Swiss physician Johannes Hofer (1669-1752) coined the term “nostalgia,” which comes from the Greek words *nostos* (home) and *algia* (pain, suffering). Goodman discusses one of Hofer’s studies in which he found an extreme case of nostalgia where patients experience “quasi-ecstasy.” Goodman writes: “They are thus ex-static in a precise sense: they have been ‘put out of place’ . . . and seem to occupy another place, preoccupied by absent things as if they were present.”<sup>55</sup> The feeling of being “put out of place” is precisely what the narrator feels when he is “just simply in motion . . . just ecstatic motion” earlier in the novel.

When the poet describes what he sees and hear in Lines 5-8, he evokes earlier moments in *Pillow of Grass* where the narrator stops his place in the narrative to observe and preserve the spring landscape. The images “myriad shapes tricked out in sunlight” and the “warbler tuning its song” are emblematic of the other images of beauty that the narrator animates through sensual and effusive language, and the variation with which poems and passages of poetic prose address those feelings of spring splendence.<sup>56</sup>

By Line 8, the poem reveals the aspect of nostalgia that suspends time and space, as we see in the image of “falling petals fluttering in the air.” The images allude to lines from Tao Yuanming’s *Record of the Peach Blossom Spring* (Taohuayuanji), the conventional figure for the realm of nonhuman detachment for which the narrator longs. But once his walk ends in Line 9, the narrative in the poem ceases, echoing the suspension of motion in the hovering petals. Standing still, the poet scrawls a poem on the door of ancient temple. In the following lines the door mediates the poet’s philosophical meditation, and concludes the poem with ambiguous thoughts and feelings, like the opening of the poem with “much on the mind.”

The act of composing a poem within a poem speaks to the self-consciousness of the narrator’s *kanshi* but also of the novel in which it is imbedded. The *mise en abyme* highlights the recursive cycles of self-referentiality and self-reflexivity in *Pillow of Grass*, and draws attention to the irony of the lyrical novel. The poet does not reveal the content of the poem, but the couplet that follows it, “Lonely sorrow high atop the clouds, / Across the sky a stray goose flies home,” suggests that the poem is about longing in solitude in a place beyond reach. The “lonely sorrow” (*koshū*) refers to the stray goose on its way home, but also the poet who is displaced and far away from home. The object of longing—home—is implicit in the image of the goose, thereby evoking nostalgia; and yet Lines 13-18 refigure that nostalgia as a longing without a clear object.

Melancholy can be understood as longing without an object.<sup>57</sup> Like nostalgia, melancholy (also melancholia) has been associated with illness in the history of Western medical science. Hungarian writer László F. Földényi has traced the history of melancholia in Western literature and philosophy, and argues that melancholia, in contrast to depression, has always eluded definition because of the impossibility to describe it: “Depression is *describable* by its symptoms, while melancholia is at best only *interpretable*. . . . Only depression has symptomatology, whereas melancholia is a peculiar state of being that is not apprehensible as a certain cluster of symptoms—just as no interpretation of being can be entirely set down, spelled out, or treated as an object.”<sup>58</sup> In addition to eluding description, Földényi also writes that “the

melancholic . . . is possibly unaware of his own melancholia.”<sup>59</sup> These characterizations of melancholia speak to the kind of ecstasy, or out-of-place-ness, that the narrator tries to describe in the earlier prose passages where he feels a profound and indescribable pleasure. But he finds himself hard-pressed about how to diagnose his pleasure, so he interprets it through approximation, by way of metaphor and figurative language.

In the irony and contradictions in *Pillow of Grass* lies the Romantic idea that grief gives rise to pleasure, or rather the need for the mind to tarry in thoughts of beauty and sadness. As such the novel may be read as one long discursive poem that gives form to the boundless longing of melancholy. As Földényi writes, “Nothing seems more natural than the interweaving of irony and melancholia: it is a kinship that has been unbroken from antiquity to our day.”<sup>60</sup> The novel shows this kinship in how the very boundlessness, elusiveness, and indistinctness of the narrator’s grief and melancholy inevitably invite contradiction and irony.

As the poet enters his philosophical digression, he forms a couplet that figures the indescribable and open-ended nature of melancholy with allusions to Daoist thought in Chinese philosophy: “The human heart, a thing so recondite, / In formlessness it forgets right and wrong.” To “forget right and wrong” alludes to discussions in *The Zhuangzi* about the ability to make distinctions and judgments.<sup>61</sup> For Zhuangzi, being able to free the self from distinctions is an achievement; “right” and “wrong” are determined categories of knowledge, and abandoning them enables the self to leave matters undetermined and open-ended.

The allusion speaks to the concerns of form and longing in *Pillow of Grass*. By couching the claim in the profundity of the heart and mind, the state of “formlessness” (*hyōbyō*; also “boundlessness,” and “indistinctness”) enables the lyric subject to express feelings without the need to find closure through teleological narrative.<sup>62</sup> As a central word in the poem that offers a meta-comment about the entire novel, *hyōbyō* evokes Földényi’s discussion of melancholy as a “boundlessness that disturbs science,” because of its very nature as a feeling ever mired in ambiguity and possibility of meaning—it eludes diagnosis. As a word that also evokes infinite temporal and spatial boundaries, *hyōbyō* speaks to the role of poetry in *Pillow of Grass* in how it produces emotional or affective eddies that obstruct the linear flow of narrative.

The rest of the poem speaks to the contradictory movements of melancholy. The couplet formed by Lines 15 and 16 convey the poet’s nostalgia for halcyon days, showing his mind gazing wistfully into the past while his aging body moves with the linear flow of time in the present. In the penultimate line, the poet occupies all junctures of time as he wanders with the changes of nature’s creatures; but his “free and easy wandering” (*shōyō shite*) through time and space is checked in the final line where he “calmly encounters” sweet fragrances of each moment. The verb *tai su* means “to face,” “to oppose,” “to meet,” and “to encounter.” All these meanings suggest the poet’s external position, outside of the reverie, outside of the experience of the past or whatever time to which he has traveled. In his attempt to relive the past, he ironically finds himself at a dead end, seeing it there before him, but unable to relive it. He is ever “ecstatic,” or “put out of place.”

The feelings of pause, dissonance, and unfulfillment at the end of the poem ironize the ending of the novel, when the narrator realizes that he can finally complete his painting. He joins the other characters to see off a young man as he departs to the war in Manchuria, looks at the beautiful innkeeper and sees the “pathos” (*aware*) written on her face. Then the narrator has an epiphany, and realizes that he can finally paint his painting. He concludes the novel:

The painting within my inner heart and mind is now complete.

余が胸中の画面は此咄嗟の際に成就したのである。<sup>63</sup>

In some sense, the novel has an “ending” because the artist finally accomplishes what he sets out to do: make a painting. However, the feelings in the novel contradict the fulfillment of closure, making the ending pat. The irony also comes from the word *emen* or *gamen* (painting), a word that during the Meiji period referred to the entire surface of a painting or a picture.<sup>64</sup> The metaphor of his “inner heart and mind” (*kyōchū*) as a “painting” speaks to the aesthetic conceit of the novel as a large discursive “painting” of the narrator’s heart and mind; but the metaphor also suggests that what lies beneath the surface of the picture has yet to find resolution.

As a sweet song that tells the saddest thought, *Pillow of Grass* shows how grief and longing, whether as nostalgia or melancholy, resists resolution and closure. But as a painting, the narrator suggests that such feelings cannot be without resolution. This evokes György Lukács’s (1885-1971) essay on form and longing, in which he asks whether longing can have a form, that if its fulfillment is form itself, then how can longing be longing once its been fulfilled?

Longing is always sentimental—but is there such a thing as a sentimental form? Form means getting the better of sentimentality; in form there is no more longing and no more loneliness; to achieve form is to achieve the greatest possible fulfillment. Yet the forms of poetry are temporal, so that the fulfillment must have a “before” and an “after”; it is not being but becoming. And becoming presupposes dissonance. . . . Poetry cannot live without dissonance because movement is its very essence, and the movement can only proceed from disharmony to harmony and back again the other way.<sup>65</sup>

Lukács argues that dissonance cannot happen in painting, since it is a form outside of temporality, and so dissonance must come to resolution, otherwise it is incomplete.<sup>66</sup> Poetry, on the other hand, is a process of “becoming.” Lukács then asks, “Is not the form-concept of poetry in itself a symbol of longing?” As a lyrical novel that may be read as a long discursive poem, the back and forth between stasis and movement, and the evocations of nostalgia and melancholy in *Pillow of Grass* all suggest that painting as a concrete surface inevitably determines longing and places it in a particular and reified form; while poetry leaves such representation undecided, undetermined, and open-ended. While *Pillow of Grass* and the poetry contained within it will always have a form, the word *hyōbyō* suggests that poetic language leaves room for ambiguity and the possibility of meaning.

## Poetry and Memory

The rest of this chapter examines the lyric thinking in Sōseki’s long prose poem *Recollecting and Such*, in which an ill and immobile lyric subject uses poetry as a means to convalesce from a near-death experience.<sup>67</sup> Lyric thinking manifests as sensual healing and memory restoration through the alternation between prose and poetry: these shifts in language produce a pulse in the narrative, akin to the pulse of a convalescing human body. In this way, *Recollecting and Such* echoes the stasis and movement in *Pillow of Grass*, an oscillation that renders the subject out of place, and gives form to feelings of grief and melancholy.

As a retrospective piece, *Recollecting and Such* is often read as memoir, evoking premodern literary genres of autobiography, including *haibun* (*haikai* prose), the *zuihitsu* (essay), the travelogue (*kikōbun*), and the diary (*nikki*). *Recollecting and Such* blends genres, and lacks the chronological order of a conventional diary. As Maria Flutsch has argued, the work is a genre of its own.<sup>68</sup> *Recollecting and Such* goes beyond mere recollection, which is suggested by the adverb *nado* in the original title, *Omoidasu koto nado* (lit. “To recollect, and the like”). The adverb is a furtive jab at teleological meaning, and alludes to the irony in the work’s poetry. The work was originally serialized as thirty-two installments in the Asahi Newspaper, and nearly every installment features either a haiku or a *kanshi*. As such *Recollecting and Such* mediates recollection through poetry, which enables the lyric subject access to planes of consciousness beyond the realm of the real, outside of strictly mimetic representation.

As a prose poem, *Recollecting and Such* features many self-reflexive and self-referential comments about the function of poetry in the narrative.<sup>69</sup> Such self-consciousness also appears in poems themselves. Installment 14 concludes with a haiku that recounts a moment in the past when the convalescing narrator wakes up and finds a spittoon containing a pool of his own coughed-up blood. His physicians fear that he will fall into a coma, and use camphor to return him to world of the living. The installment ends with a scene of the two physicians and a friend preparing for the worst, holding on to the narrator’s hands and seeing him through the night. Thereupon, he composes a haiku:

Checked my pulse  
Numb  
Early dawn.

*hiyayaka na / myaku wo mamorinu / yoakegata*  
冷やかな脈を護りぬ夜明方<sup>70</sup>

The preceding prose suggests that the subject of the poem is the physician who holds on to the narrator’s hands and monitors his “pulse” (*myaku*) through the night. But by composing a haiku, the narrator places himself in the position to diagnose his own condition. The adjective *hiyayaka na* literally means “cold”; but when we consider the patient’s awareness of his frail condition, weak and approaching comatose, and the frigidity of an early morning in autumn, the poem expresses his feeling of suspension: his pulse deprived of movement, hence “numb.”<sup>71</sup>

The haiku provides a coda to a critical moment in *Recollecting and Such* where the narrator realizes the precariousness of his situation, but it also offers a meta-comment on the work as a whole: checking his pulse is emblematic of how poetry functions as indicators of sense and feeling, showing himself and the reader that he is still alive. The time of the poem is “early dawn” (*yoakegata*), which is the morning twilight, the wee interval between night and day. Framing his pulse examination during this liminal hour alludes to the complexities of time and space in the work: as the narrator alternates between the present and the past, he interrupts that retrospective narrative with poems that transport the reader to the lyric present. Like in *Pillow of Grass*, poetry offers a way to escape teleological narrative, but in *Recollecting and Such*, poetry also fills in fissures of memory with sensual experiences in suspended animation.

*Recollecting and Such* begins with the idea of a rupture in memory. The opening lines show the narrator’s awareness of the passage of time and the particular sensations he remembers from the time he stayed in a hospital room in summer several months ago:

At long last, I have returned to the hospital again. As I recall, the last time I spent mornings and nights here in the heat is already three months in the past. Back then, they had rolled out a reed screen that hung down about six feet from the second-floor eaves as an awning to shade the sunbaked veranda.

漸くの事で又病院に帰って来た。思い出すと此処で暑い朝夕を送ったの最早三ヶ月の昔になる。其頃は二階の廂から六尺に余る程の長い葎簀を日除に差し出して、照りの強い縁側を幾分か暗くしてあった。<sup>72</sup>

The adverbial phrase “at long last” (*yōyaku no koto de*) indicates that the narrator’s return has been delayed due to some strained circumstance or difficulty. The reader assumes that misfortune has befallen him, and learns that the narrator finally makes his way back to the hospital “again.” The “again” refers to the repetition of the narrator’s physical return to the hospital, and foreshadows the cyclicity of remembrance across thirty-two installments. He remembers the heat he endured for three months, further distanced by the adverb “in the past” (*mukashi*). The language he uses to talk about time reveals his anxiety about the discontinuity between his present self and his past self. In order to recover this past self, he focuses on sensory details. He recalls the “sunbaked” (*hoteri no tsuyoi*) heat on the veranda. Someone from the hospital rolled out a reed screen and hung it from the second floor, which shaded the veranda from the sweltering heat. The narrator’s focus on this detail shows his interest in describing the intensity of things, and how those intensities fade over time.

The narrator realizes that the physical return to a place is possible, but reliving a past experience is not. In the same passage, he continues recalling the details of his stay three months ago and mentions various objects and people. He ends, however, with the realization that memory is fallible and that he can never fully return to the same time or place in the past:

Now everything has become the past: a fugitive past, uncertain as dream, never again to appear before my eyes.

今は凡てが過去に化して仕舞った。再び目の前に現れぬと云ふ不慥かな点に於いて、夢と同じく果敢ない過去である。<sup>73</sup>

He states that everything he has recalled, including the screen that shaded his sunbaked veranda, is as “fugitive” (*hakanai*) and “uncertain” (*futashika*) as a dream. These adjectives evoke the aesthetics of transience in Japanese literature and poetry informed by the Buddhist view that the world is an illusion, including the subject’s perception of his own experience. His tone suggests that no matter how many details he can recall, they all become things of the past with no possibility of return.

The rupture in memory and his distrust of his own faculties to discern the reality of the present motivate the narrator to supplement his recollections with a poem. He composes a haiku that contains his feelings about a moment of paralysis in growing darkness. The poem gives form to his memory of a past experience, which in the prose remains scattered as fragmented feelings and broken objects. He remembers the day he leaves Shuzenji (the hot-spring town on the Izu Peninsula where he vacations before falling ill again) and returns to Tokyo. The narrator has been placed on a stretcher, where he experiences a deprivation of the senses:

They covered the stretcher with tung-oil paper to keep off the rainfall at dusk. I felt like I had been put to sleep in a pit, and from time to time opened my eyes to darkness. My nose could smell the tung-oil paper. My ears could hear sounds in fragments, raindrops falling on the tung-oil paper, and the faint voices of people who seemed to be escorting me on the stretcher. But my eyes saw nothing. It seems that the chrysanthemum stem that Dr. Morinari inserted in the cloth purse by my pillow broke off in the confusion when we alighted the train.

On the stretcher,  
No chrysanthemum in sight,  
Just tung-oil paper.

I later condensed the scene from that moment into these seventeen syllables.

黄昏の雨を防ぐ為に釣台には桐油を掛けた。余は坑の底に寐かされた様な心持で、時々暗い中で眼を開いた。鼻には桐油の臭がした。耳には桐油を撲つ雨の音、釣台に付添うて来るらしい人の声が微かながらとぎれとぎれに聞こえた。けれども眼には何物も映らなかった。汽車の中で森成さんが枕元の信玄袋の口に挿し込んで呉れた大きな野菊の枝は、降りる混雑の際に折れて仕舞ったらう。

釣台に野菊も見えぬ桐油哉  
是は其時の光景を後から十七字にちぢめたものである。<sup>74</sup>

While lying on a stretcher, the darkness impairs the narrator's vision, which forces him to rely on other senses: smell and hearing. He likens the experience of lying on a stretcher to the feeling of having "been put to sleep in a pit" (*ana no soko ni nekasareta yō*), evoking an image of his own burial. The loss of sight hones other senses: he hears the raindrops falling on the tung-oil paper covering the stretcher surface. He can also smell the paper. The sound of the raindrops blends with the faint voices of people around the stretcher, both of which he hears as a discontinuous flow of sound. His supine position limits his vision, as he no longer sees the chrysanthemum that was once attached to his purse.

He condenses the scene into seventeen syllables, which distills the preceding prose description, but also furnishes a space for a lyric response to the deprivation of the senses. Like the prose, the haiku focuses on the stretcher and the tung-oil paper, his knowledge of which registers through sound and smell. But he cannot see the chrysanthemum, a loss emphasized by the particle *mo*. It is his inability to see the chrysanthemum that makes him more aware of the tung-oil paper that covers the stretcher on which he lies, and he addresses this with sad exclamation (*kana*). In haiku, the chrysanthemum is a seasonal referent for autumn. Tung trees are too, but not the water-repellent oil that comes from their seeds. The narrator's inability to see the chrysanthemum puts him at odds with autumn in the world of *haikai* poetry. In this way, the haiku becomes a lyric exclamation of sensual gain mixed with sensual loss.

The other installments that constitute *Recollecting and Such* feature poetry in the center of prose passages like in *Pillow of Grass*, but in most cases feature poetry as a postscript or coda. The interruptions by poetry produce a pulse in the narrative. If a human being is alive that



means his pulse is still beating. The alternations between prose and poetry make that beat visual in the form of *Recollecting and Such* and audible in the content of its poetry. Prose passages give form to sensation through figuration and metaphor, while haiku and *kanshi* give form to sensation through similar figuration, but also through meter and the containment of poetic form. Although haiku is limited to seventeen syllables, *kanshi* appear in a variety of forms (quatrains, regulated verse, ancient-style poems), and thereby furnish more space to mediate sensation and suggest self-conscious ironic comments about the efficacy of its medium. In this way, the prose and poetry in *Recollecting and Such* produce a pulse that varies in strength and speed, showing a living and breathing text that also doubts its own vitality.<sup>75</sup>

## Sensual Renewal

This section examines the narrator's sensual embodiment in haiku and *kanshi*. Illness is the pretext for composing poetry in *Recollecting and Such*. The narrator's near-death experience results in memory gaps and the deprivation of senses, precipitating feelings of longing for an older and more traditional aesthetic sensibility.<sup>76</sup> This loss of memory, the senses, and the value of tradition inspire the narrator to compose haiku and *kanshi*, through which he seeks healing of body, mind, and soul.

The narrator reacquaints himself with his senses, and haiku begin to appear one by one in the prose, showing a renewed sensitivity to sight, sound, and touch, and how these senses blend into one another. In Installment 5, the narrator expresses his desire to communicate his "mood" (*jōchō*) to his readers through poetry. These readers include his wife, his children, friends, and others reading the newspaper. His desire to impart an affect or affective atmosphere to visible and invisible listeners couches his poems in the intimacy of lyric address.<sup>77</sup> The narrator seeks sympathy from his reader, and restores his own sensual awareness, by composing two haiku that evoke dissonance between images of placidity and noise:

On the autumn river  
Pounding posts into the water  
Makes a boom.

*aki no e ni uchikomu kui no / hibiki kana*  
秋の江に打ち込む杭の響かな<sup>78</sup>

The poet hears wooden posts being pounded into the water, and that sound makes a reverberating boom. The first image, "autumn river" (*aki no e*) is homonymous with an "autumn painting" (*aki no e*), and evokes a cold and placid landscape. The image is then disrupted by the sound of wooden posts being pounded into the water. The haiku ends with a sad exclamation, "makes a boom" (*hibiki kana*), transforming the image of calm water into an image of undulating ripples. The visual image of ripples on the water surface and the sound of the boom come together as one feeling of disruption mediated through sight and sound.

He composes another haiku that evokes an autumn scene, blended with the subtle suggestion of sound:

The autumn sky  
Clear as light blue-green;

A cedar and an ax.

*aki no sora / asagi ni sumeri / sugi ni ono*  
秋の空浅黄に澄めり杉に斧<sup>79</sup>

Whether the poet is looking up at the sky or at its reflection on the river is unclear. He sees a pale mixture between blue and green, and he is certain that the color is “clear” (*sumeri*). The verb *sumeri* indicates that the sky “has cleared,” a clarity that is, or akin to, “light blue-green” (*asagi*).<sup>80</sup> The continuing state of pure clearness (*sumeri*) can refer to sight and sound, which suggests that the final beat of the haiku “A cedar and an ax” may be the visual pairing of two the objects, or may be the sound that their contact produces: the crack of an ax chopping down the cedar. With this possibility in mind, the poem refigures the clarity of the static light blue-green sky with the clarity of resonant disruption.

The two haiku display the narrator’s awareness of sight and sound, and the ways in which those senses can blend and clash like colors in a painting. Like in the poems by Buson and others in the literati tradition, thoughts blend in poetic form like colors on a canvas. The narrator also composes haiku that evoke his sense of touch. Installment 12 opens with a scene of ceaseless rainfall. There is a lull in his pain, so he takes a bath and notices the group of young male performers staying downstairs. He observes them dancing in the nude, and admires their young, healthy, and mobile bodies. He concludes the installment with an autumn haiku that figures his illness as the weight of dew:

My body ails  
Like the weight of dew  
On a bush clover.

*hagi ni oku / tsuyu no omoki ni / yamu mi kana*  
萩に置く露の重きに病む身かな<sup>81</sup>

The poem evokes an early morning scene in late autumn when dew weighs on the delicate leaves of a bush clover.<sup>82</sup> The figure of dew evokes the classic pathos of impermanence, and when dew appears in a poem about an ill body, it makes the impermanence of life all the more keen and poignant. The poem also comments on the tenuous layering of objects: the dew that rests on bush clover leaves, and the illness of a body figured as the weight of dew. Since dew will eventually dissipate, the haiku evokes a liminal moment, which in the context of the poet’s illness can be interpreted two ways: like the weight of dew on a bush clover leaf, the illness that afflicts his body may dissipate, or the body may disappear entirely. In this way, the haiku merely suspends the poet’s sense of touch, and forebodes that this sensation is fugitive.

The three haiku examined above figured the senses of sight, sound, and touch, showing how the narrator uses poetry to seek sympathy from his reader, and to restore his own sensual awareness. Other poems in *Recollecting and Such* figure sensual recovery with philosophical reflection, furnishing room for irony. These poems are *kanshi* that explore the possibilities of movement in his lyric mind, while his ill body lies immobile. In Installment 13, the narrator describes liquids entering and exiting his body. He is bed-ridden at the inn, and Dr. Sugimoto pays him visit. The narrator describes the act of drinking, the texture and taste of fluids going down his throat, and the process of digesting ice-cream: how ice-cream begins as semi-solid

substance that then melts once it travels down the throat and then ends up as a congealed lump in his stomach, which produces a strange sensation. The narrator also learns that he had fallen unconscious for half an hour. After reading his wife's diary, he learns that he had coughed up a large amount of blood, and calls her to his bedside to learn more about what happened when he fell unconscious. The prose narrates a dramatic scene of events that the narrator does not remember having experienced, including spewing blood on his wife's yukata. The narrator concludes the installment with a seven-character quatrain (*shichigon zekku*) that aestheticizes the blood, and reveals his feelings about the declining state of his body:

Dripping blood crimson, lettering from my bosom;  
 Coughed glinting in the twilight, a pool of twilled silk.  
 Night falls and I idly wonder, is this body bone?  
 Abed like stone, I dream of wintry clouds.

*rinri taru kōketsu fukuchū no bun*  
*haite kōkon wo terashite kimon wo tadayowasu*  
*yoru ni irite munashiku utagau mi wa kore hone ka to*  
*gashō ishi no gotoku kan'un wo yumemu*

淋漓絳血腹中文  
 嘔照黃昏漾綺紋  
 入夜空疑身是骨  
 臥牀如石夢寒雲<sup>83</sup>

The opening couplet echoes the images of liquids that appear in the installment, but concentrates on the blood on his wife's yukata. As the blood spews from the heart of the poet, it no longer serves as a marker of sickness or effluvium of the body, but the aestheticized thoughts and feelings of a poet waiting to be read: the blood becomes a “pattern” (*bun*), a figure for calligraphy or a design on a garment. The “dripping” (*rinri*) describes the slow movement of blood as it exits the body, and once expelled, it transforms into a liquid, beautifully patterned and legible as words rendered by a brush. The “crimson” (*kō*) anticipates the description of the pool of blood as “twilled silk” (*kimon*) in Line 2, as the Chinese graphs *kō*, *ki*, and *mon* are all etymologically related to fine silk. The opening lines comment on *Recollecting and Such* as a whole, as a text that transforms sickness and blood into the patterns of language that are beautiful and fleeting: the scene occurs at a liminal moment when day changes into night (*kōkon*), suggesting that the beautiful pool of blood redolent of silk gauze glinting in the twilight will eventually be shaded in darkness.

The latter half of the poem is set in darkness, and while it transports the poet to celestial space, it does not allow that flight to go very far. In Line 3, the poet idly wonders whether his body is all bone. In Line 4, he says that lying abed is like being a stone, which echoes the static image that ends the previous line. In the haiku about the bush clover, the narrator laments the weight of his sickness through the figure of dew. Here, the narrator's awareness of illness does not forebode annihilation by evaporation, but permanent stillness as a dead corpse. His identification with a stone suggests coldness, lack of emotive power, and immobility. The line ends with dreaming of “wintry clouds” (*kan'un*). Gaston Bachelard writes that “clouds are numbered among the most oneiric of ‘poetic things.’”<sup>84</sup> Bachelard means that clouds enable dream-like movement. Here they provide the poet with the possibility of oneiric transcendence to an eternal and celestial space beyond the waking life, beyond the senses.<sup>85</sup> But the fact that these clouds are “wintry” (*kan*) suggests that he carries with him the numbing cold he feels as a body of nothing but bone or a slab of stone to an oneiric and celestial space where he is also immobile. Thus, even the clouds cannot escape the fate of the senses, the coldness the poet feels.

Installment 22 offers another example of how the narrator uses figurative language in prose and poetry to restore his sensual awareness, but also concludes with feelings of grief. The installment opens with the narrator in between sleep and waking. The nostalgic sound of carp jumping in a pond wakes him, but his vision is still impaired. He describes the faint illumination in the room and the ghostly figures seated before him:

In my room there was light that glowed darker than twilight. The light-bulb hanging from the ceiling was covered all in black cloth. The weak light seeping through the weave faintly shined on the eight tatami mats in the room. And in gloomy glow sat two human beings dressed in white kimonos. Neither spoke. Neither moved. Both sat side by side with their hands in their laps, perfectly still.

室の中は夕暮よりも猶暗い光で照されていた。天上から下がっている電気燈の珠は黒布で隙間なく掩がしてあった。弱い光りは此黒布の目を洩れて、微かに八畳の室を射た。さうして此薄暗い灯影に、真白な着物を着た人間が二人坐っていた。二人とも口を利かなかつた。二人とも動かなかつた。二人とも膝の上へ手を置いて、互ひの肩を並べた儘凝としていた。<sup>86</sup>

The narrator paints a monochrome scene of stillness. He compares the illumination of the room to twilight, imbuing the scene with the feeling of encroaching darkness. Seated before him are two human beings dressed in bright white, who he later indicates are nurses. Speechless and motionless, their white uniforms contrast the darkness of the room, evoking an eerie and funerary atmosphere.

While still in the liminal state between dream and waking, the narrator describes their swift and mechanic movements, and their ability to read him better than he can read himself. His immobile state has left him completely vulnerable, forcing him to depend on his caretakers to respond to his every need:

The women dressed in white had my mind all figured out: they reacted like a shadow to a body; they responded like sound reverberating on an object. It was eerie how these women dressed in bright white, under the dim light seeping through the black cloth, could see beyond my physical body, and unnoticeably, and methodically, move as one with my mind.

白い着物を着ている女は余の心を善く悟つた。さうして影の形に随ふ如くに変化した。響きの物に応ずる如くに働いた。黒い布の目から洩れる薄暗い光の下に、真白な着物を着た女が、わが肉体の先を越して、ひそひそと、しかも規則正しく、わが心のままに動くのは恐ろしいものであった。<sup>87</sup>

The thought of their uncanny responsiveness frightens the helpless narrator. In his mind, the nurses become extensions of himself, and move as if his mind and theirs were one and the same. This leaves the narrator with what he describes later as a “weird feeling” (*kimi no warui kimochi*).

As soon as he opens his eyes and gazes at the dim light seeping from the covered bulb hanging from the ceiling, he sees the nurses dressed in white again. The prose portion concludes

with the eerie description of the nurses encroaching upon him when he is not paying attention. The scene ends with a disturbing feeling, the sense of being overcome by the nurses and losing control of his mind and body. Then he composes a five-character quatrain (*gogon zekku*):

The autumn wind moans in the forest,  
 Mountain rain rattles the tall building.  
 These frail bones are jagged like a blade;  
 In the gloom of a green light, verging on grief.

<i>shūfū banboku wo narashi</i>	秋風鳴萬木
<i>san'u kōrō wo yurugasu</i>	山雨撼高樓
<i>byōkotsu ryō toshite ken no gotoku</i>	病骨稜如劍
<i>ittō aoku shite ure'en to hossu</i>	一燈青欲愁 <sup>88</sup>

The poem refigures his paralysis and disembodiment as sensual embodiment by displaying keen awareness of sight, sound, and touch. As a response to the prose that precedes it, the poem is a lyric cry that the poet can still feel, and that contrary to how the installment ends, he has not relinquished complete control of his mind and body to his two caretakers dressed in white. The couplet formed by Lines 1 and 2 evoke turbulent images of wind and rain wreaking havoc on the natural autumn landscape. In his poetic imagination, the sound of the wind can be heard in the sea of trees, while rain rattles the tall building where the poet lodges and looks out at the dismal autumn landscape.

The latter half of the poem shifts the poet's focus from the turbulence of nature to the frailty of his ill body. He describes his frail body with a metaphor: "jagged like a blade" (*ryō toshite ken no gotoku*). If Lines 1 and 2 figure the poet's mind in the form of natural imagery, then Line 3 figures his body as a mountain range: the poet's body has become so emaciated that he can feel his bones, rugged like crags, pressing against a thin layer of skin. The comparison between bones and a blade also evokes coldness, and the jagged edge of the blade reinforces the sharpness of that coldness.

The final line echoes the image of the bulb hanging from the ceiling of his room, the dimness of which the narrator uses to create the eerie atmosphere of darkness that permeates the installment. The lamp is also a figure for the lyric mind in Romanticism and in classical Chinese poetry, and in the line evokes an image of a mind on the brink of emotional abandonment, "green, verging on grief" (*aoku shite ureen to hossu*). "Green lamps" (*qing deng*) appear in classical Chinese poems set in the early morning twilight, which accords with the time depicted in the preceding prose; but the line refigures this liminal moment between night and day with the threshold of the mind falling into the throes of grief.<sup>89</sup> Like the other poems in *Recollecting and Such*, the quatrain suspends sensual awareness—a crescendo moment in which the poet restores his awareness of sight, sound, and touch—but couched in a penultimate moment that defers the grief about to overtake him to a later time in the future.<sup>90</sup>

Like the two *kanshi* examined above, other poems in *Recollecting and Such* betray doubts about the efficacy of their ability to promise sensual renewal. Part of this has to do with the conceit behind the contingency of the narrator's recovery: the more ill he gets, the less poetry can save him; part of this also has to do with the moribund state of traditional poetry during the early twentieth century. The narrator's lyric address may fall on deaf ears because fewer and fewer readers can appreciate the charm of old-fashioned poems. By describing his poetry as

cliché and outmoded in his explanation for including them in the *Recollecting and Such*, the narrator does not pretend to be in tune with the trends of the present age. But ironically, such claims make the reader more suspicious of their role in the work, and he often discovers that the poems, especially the *kanshi*, self-consciously evoke modern thought in ancient form.

### The Fate of Lyric

This section examines how *Recollecting and Such* gives form to elegiac feelings that evoke nostalgia, melancholy, and death. The autumn setting and the amount of autumn poems suggest that *Recollecting and Such* may be an elegiac ode to autumn or an ode to melancholy. But this sadness is figured in a combination of modern prose and traditional poetry, and ironizes the tradition of pathos through a modern and Keatsian “negative capability,” evoked by feelings of suspension, uncertainty, and contradiction.

Contradiction arises when the narrator finds his own experience at odds with continuity. The most trenchant critique of continuity can be found in Installment 15, where the narrator describes his thirty minutes of falling unconscious, the critical event that occasions the composition of *Recollecting and Such*. The opening of the installment echoes the feelings of self-alienation from the opening of *Recollecting and Such*, as the narrator highlights a discontinuity between two selves—the self before falling unconscious and the self afterward:

I had believed that a solid continuity existed between the self that tried to turn over to the right, and the self that saw the raw blood at the bottom of the spittoon near my pillow. I was certain that I had been fully functional for every split second of that interval. When I learned from my wife shortly after that that had not been the case, and that I had lost consciousness for a whole thirty minutes, I was shocked.

強ひて寐返りを右に打たうとした余と、枕元の金盥に鮮血を認めた余とは、一分の隙もなく連続しているとのみ信じていた。その間には一本の髪毛を挟む余地のない迄に、自覚が働いて来たとのみ心得ていた。程経て妻から、左様じゃありません、あの時三十分許は死んで入らしたのですと聞いた折は全く驚いた。<sup>9</sup>

He reflects on the loss of continuity and tries to piece together what happens before and after he falls unconscious. The phrases *ichibu no suki* (lit. “one-tenth of a gap”) and *ippon no kamige* (lit. “one strand of hair”) describe the minuscule measurements of space that challenge the narrator’s conviction that the continuity of experience is invulnerable to even the slightest amount of disruption. Through these spatial descriptions the narrator draws our attention to the ways language measures continuity vis-à-vis discontinuity in time and space.

The narrator finds himself at a loss for words as to how to describe an experience that he does not remember having. Such a loss makes him doubt the continuity of experience: if he has no memory of losing consciousness, how does he know that he has lost it? He learns from his wife that he fell unconscious for thirty minutes, and turns to figurative language and metaphor to fill in the lost time. The fugitiveness of the images he evokes points to the irony of metaphor’s attempt to grasp the ungraspable:

I was hard-pressed to find the words that could best describe it. I did not even have the awareness of having awoken, nor did I have the feeling of having emerged from darkness into light. The faint whirl of wings, the echo of things fading into the distance, the mood in a fugitive dream, the glimmer of an old memory, the trace of a waning impression—needless to say, I did not feel that I had passed through the numinous and awesome frontier that almost became visible after naming all the ways that could describe the unknown.

余は何と云ってそれを形容して可いか遂に言葉に窮して仕舞ふ。余は眠から醒めたという自覚さへなかった。陰から陽に出たとも思はなかった。微かな羽音, 遠きに去る物の響, 逃げて行く夢の匂い, 古い記憶の影, 消える印象の名残-----すべて人間の神秘を叙述すべき表現を数え尽して漸く髣髴すべき靈妙な境界を通過したとは無論考へなかった。<sup>92</sup>

In poetic language, the narrator lists sounds, images, and feelings that all suggest fugitiveness: “the faint whirl of wings” (*kasuka na ha oto*), “the echo of things fading into the distance” (*tōki ni saru mono no hibiki*), “the mood in a fugitive dream” (*nigete yuku yume no nioi*), “the glimmer of an old memory” (*furui kioku no kage*), and “the trace of a waning impression” (*kieru inshō no nagori*). As his mind moves from one fugitive thought to the next, he stops after the fifth image. While the flow of poetic thought suggests that the list could continue, he suspends these fugitive fragments of experience. Like the insertions of poetry throughout *Recollecting and Such*, language here shifts into metaphor as a way to bridge the gap between consciousness and unconsciousness; but their lack of containment in a poetic form like haiku or *kanshi*, coupled with the fugitiveness that constitutes the metaphors, determine their imminent disappearance.

Such figurative language in the passage evokes the aesthetics of impermanence in the Japanese poetic tradition and the aesthetics of liminal thresholds that constitute poetic thought in Romanticism. In his discussion of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s poetics, Angus Fletcher writes, “He [Coleridge] intensified the rendering of poetic thought, especially by inventing situations of liminal, or threshold, passage. In a sense, the liminal is key to the Romantic projection of the most intensely powerful effects of creative thought, including verbal virtuosity in Coleridge’s work.”<sup>93</sup> As a scholar of English literature, Sōseki read the English Romantics, including Coleridge. The way that *Recollecting and Such* represents recollection through the contradiction of linear time, figuring memory in a liminal state of becoming outside teleological thinking, evokes the figuration of time in the Romantic tradition.<sup>94</sup> Fletcher asks, “Can a poet imagine a sequence that is devoid of any passing of time, when the poem shifts from space to space, point to point . . .?” Doubting the continuity of experience, the narrator strings together images that resonate with one another, evoking what Fletcher calls “one-after-the-otherness” in poetry. This refers to a sequence in which images are coeval and coterminous: in the liminal space between the narrator’s consciousness and unconsciousness, the images all verge on vanishing.

Although the images by nature of their fugitiveness eventually disappear, for the brief moment that they negate the passage of linear time, they eternally exist in a liminal state of motion: the wings beating while in flight, the echo becoming less and less audible, the mood one feels in a dream drifting away, the faint flash of a memory, and the feeling that lingers after an impression has gone. The way the respective movements gradually wane in intensity point to the aftermath of being at a threshold. The words that evoke these slow and fleeting movements become the substance of the unknown space he describes as the “numinous and awesome

frontier” (*reimyō na kyōkai*), and makes this space “almost visible” (*yōyaku hōfutsu subeki*). *Hōfutsu* describes liminal vision—an indistinct view of something formed when two opposing elements meet and merge, resulting in a view that is never one or the other, but something in between. As the narrator goes through a list of expressions in order to describe the gap in his experience, the poetic language hypostasizes the unreal, making the invisible almost visible, yet still indistinct.

The in-between-ness of vision, or *hōfutsu*-ness, evoked in the prose resonates with the feeling of suspension that looms in the poetry of *Recollecting and Such*. This suspension also emerges in the narrator’s critique of philosophical understandings of time and space, including Zeno’s paradox about Achilles’s race with a tortoise in Greek philosophy. Zeno’s paradox assumes that time and space are continuous and infinitely divisible. The tortoise is given a head start in the race because it is slower than Achilles, but because each moves at constant speed on a linear path, Zeno claims that both will remain the same distance apart. The narrator describes an analogous paradox with eating a persimmon: if he eats half a persimmon one day, and then half of its remainder the next day, he could theoretically continue eating the same persimmon forever. The narrator then ironizes the logic behind the two paradoxes by supposing that death works the same way: no matter how close he comes to dying, he cannot die. He ultimately finds such logic “counterfactual” or “false” (*hijijitsu*), as it does not accord with empirical knowledge, knowledge that the subject attains through personal observation and experience:

We may be trifled by the counterfactual logic that no matter how close we come to dying we cannot die; but perhaps the road from life to death could be felt comprehensibly and most naturally by avoiding the incoherence that arises when theorizing about what it is to leap from one end and fall into another.

いくら死に近付いても死ねないと云う非事実な論理に愚弄されるかも知れないが、斯う一足飛びに片方から片方に落ち込む様な思索上の不調和を免かれて、生から死に行く径路を、何の不思議もなく最も自然に感じ得るだらう。<sup>95</sup>

Rather than leaving the problem of discontinuity and losing consciousness for the mind to work out through “theory and philosophy” (*shisakujiō*), the narrator suggests a kind of understanding through sensual experience, one that “could be felt” (*kanjiuru*).

The way to “feel” the experience he does not remember having is through sensual embodiment in lyric poetry. He composes a five-character ancient-style poem (*gogon koshi*) of fourteen lines, which can be divided into three quatrains and a couplet.<sup>96</sup> Like earlier poems in *Recollecting and Such* it restores sensual awareness, but also ironizes the efficacy of lyric. It is the longest poem in *Recollecting and Such*, and also its keynote, as it revisits themes and topoi in discursive poetic space. It is the only ancient-style poem (*koshi*) in the work, and takes advantage of the form’s looser constraints on lineation and prosody. The poem narrates a journey through the space of the unconscious, concluding the installment with a dark journey filled with feelings of wandering, failure, instability, solitude, decay, and lateness:

Lost in a vastness beyond heaven and earth,  
I move in and out of life and death.  
Bereft in darkness of all reliance,



Where does my heart and spirit go?

5 On my return, I search for the root of life,  
Only to end with an enigma too deep to fathom.  
I grieve alone and vainly circle dreams,  
Just like the sorrow stirred by a mournful wind.

10 In the rivers and mountains autumn is already old,  
My side locks are graying to the color of rice gruel.  
Vast and desolate heaven is still there,  
High trees have only bare branches left.

An old man's sensations are faint like this;  
The world of wind and dew comes too late into his poetry.

<i>hyōbyō genkō no soto</i>	縹緲玄黃外
<i>shisei komogomo shasuru toki</i>	死生交謝時
<i>kitaku meizen toshite sari</i>	寄託冥然去
<i>waga-kokoro nan no yuku tokoro zo</i>	我心何所之
<i>kirai myōkon wo motomuru mo</i>	歸來覓命根
<i>yōyō tsui ni shiri-gatashi</i>	杳窅竟難知
<i>koshū munashiku yume wo meguri</i>	孤愁空遶夢
<i>en toshite shōshitsu no kanashimi wo ugokasu</i>	宛動肅瑟悲
<i>kōzan aki sude ni oi</i>	江山秋已老
<i>shukuyaku bin masa ni otoroen to su</i>	粥葉鬢將衰
<i>kakuryō toshite ten nao ari</i>	廓寥天尚在
<i>kōju hitori eda wo amasu</i>	高樹獨余枝
<i>bankai kaku no gotoku tan ni</i>	晚懷如此澹
<i>fūro shi ni iru koto ososhi</i>	風露入詩遲 <sup>97</sup>

The first stanza describes the first half of his journey between antipodes, and evokes the feeling of being lost in space, as if he has fallen into a black hole. The words formed by antipodes “heaven and earth” and “life and death” mark the spaces from which the poet has absented himself: the poet is not within heaven and earth, or life and death, but without, in a space in between. The *hyōbyō* that opens the poem evokes the vastness and obscurity of this in-between space.<sup>98</sup> The word is an adverb for his being beyond-ness, but it is also an adjective that describes heaven and earth, and the colors that separate them: “black” (*gen*) for heaven and “yellow” (*kō*) for earth. They are the antipodes of light and dark, which in Daoist philosophy constitutes the whole universe and human existence.

The narrator is beyond either antipode, a world outside and also between binary categorization. Line 1 describes the vastness beyond heaven and earth, evoking the indistinct line that joins them but also separates them. Line 2 describes the back and forth movements, as the narrator moves “in and out of life and death,” an action indicated by the adverb *komogomo*, which describes alternation and repetition. Lines 3 and 4 describe the uncomfortable separation

of mind and body, as the *kitaku* and *sari* mark the release and loss of the body. Disembodied, the poet's mind wanders into *meizen*, a state of darkness.

The second quatrain describes the poet's return from the in-between space beyond heaven and earth. The gravity of the poet's vertiginous and disorientating descent into oblivion in the first stanza is emphasized by his struggle to find life in the second. The first two stanzas take the form of the antipodes that constitute them, forming a wavering dialectic between life and death. In his discussion of the poetry of Edgar Allan Poe, Bachelard writes that when poeticizing vertigo there must be a rise and a fall.<sup>99</sup> The poet's search for the root of life (*meikon wo motomuru*) enables him to be conscious of his fall into alien space, and address the back and forth alternation between opposite states of being: life and death. While the couplet formed by Lines 5 and 6 begins by indicating the poet's return, this search ultimately fails. The darkness (*yōyō*) obscures what can be known, and retains the enigmatic and boundless imagery of the alien space evoked in the first stanza. The poet responds to this failure of knowing in the couplet formed by Lines 7 and 8, which evokes feelings of loneliness and suspension: "I grieve alone and vainly circle dreams."<sup>100</sup> The adverb *munashiku* (vainly) imbues the line with irony, negating potentiality as it reveals the futility of circling his dreams, grieving alone to himself. Line 8 heightens this negativity with the metaphor of a mournful wind stirring sorrow.<sup>101</sup>

The third quatrain initiates a sharp shift in imagery: from the world of darkness to the natural world. But the poet's return to the world of the living is only met with decay and lateness. In Line 9 the poet figures himself as the season of autumn, showing his age in the rivers and mountains. The adverb *sude ni*, meaning "already," is emphatic and indicates the poet's deeply-felt disjuncture with time. He describes the passage of time through the metaphor of his side locks decaying to the color of gruel. The image of gruel evokes a pale color, but also a substance that lacks form and stability. The adverb *masa ni* paired with the verb *otorou* indicates a transition, the poet's state nearing decay. Lines 11 and 12 negate the fleetingness in Lines 9 and 10 with the suggestion of permanence, but this permanence does not last. Line 11 begins with *kakuryō*, meaning "vast and desolate," which modifies "heaven": *kaku* suggests a vastness contained within a limit<sup>102</sup>; *ryō* suggests an expanse of emptiness and sorrow. The latter half of Line 11 establishes a sense of situated-ness with permanence (*nao ari*).<sup>103</sup> Line 12 echoes the feeling of permanence with the solid image of towering trees, but then negates this soaring magnitude with a sparseness and fragility, as these trees only spare bare branches.

Lines 13 and 14 form the final couplet and bring closure to the poem with a statement of truth tinged with irony and belatedness. The poet declares that in his late years, his "feelings and sensations" (*bankai*) are *tan*, or "faint," like the impressions he describes in the previous three stanzas.<sup>104</sup> *Tan* can mean "the slow undulation of waves," "movement," "silence," and "blandness."<sup>105</sup> In this sense, the word *tan* encapsulates the rhythm and imagery of the entire poem: a modulation of presence and absence as the poet describes his enfeebled journey in back and forth movements. Line 14 begins with, *fūro*, "the world of wind and dew," which refers to the world of poetic convention. But the poet writes that this world enters his poetry too late (*ososhi*).<sup>106</sup> Here he questions how poetic diction creates meaning, arguing that poetry as convention—with its classical clichés and formal and topical constraints—ultimately fails to capture the immediacy of an experience.<sup>107</sup> In other words, in this poem, the world of wind and dew can only evoke its own lateness—its own lateness to give form and meaning to the poem. The line ironizes the form of *Recollecting and Such* as a whole, a prose poem that alternates between modern prose and traditional poetry. This alternation produces a pulse betraying signs

of sensual renewal, but the final couplet ironizes that pulse by qualifying it as slow and faint, almost numb, and that poetic imagery comes just “too late.”

The final installment in *Recollecting and Such* echoes the irony in the earlier poems. In Installment 32, the narrator describes his return to Tokyo, and the prose poem comes full circle: like in the opening installment, the narrator is carried on a stretcher in the rain, only that the stretcher is covered in white cloth, which reminds him of a funeral:

It felt like a funeral. It is not apropos to use the word funeral for a living being, but the image of someone laid out on what was neither a stretcher nor a coffin and wrapped in white cloth could only be taken as a person to be buried alive. I kept repeating to myself the words “second funeral.” I felt that I had been given no choice but to undergo twice what everyone else undergoes once.

是は葬式だなと思った。生きたものに葬式と云ふ言葉は穏当でないが、此白い布で包んだ寝台とも寝棺とも片の付かないものの上に横になった人は、生きながら葬はれるとしか余には受け取れなかった。余は口の中で、第二の葬式と云ふ言葉をしきりに繰り返した。人の一度は必ず遣って貰ふ葬式を、余だけはどうしても二返執行しなければ済まないと思ったからである。<sup>108</sup>

The thoughts and feelings in the passage evoke the opening stanza of a poem by Emily Dickinson: “I felt a Funeral, in my Brain, / And Mourners to and fro / Kept treading – treading – till it seemed / That sense was breaking through –.” In *Recollecting and Such* the narrator, ironically and morbidly, figures himself as a living corpse. Like Dickinson, his senses seem to break through as his thoughts and feelings pace in the heart and mind like mourners at a funeral, but whether he achieves full sensual recovery remains to be seen. The sentiments of the passage speaks to *Recollecting and Such* as a recursive funerary prose poem, in which the lyric subject is in between life and death, also suggested by the contradictory image of “a person to be buried alive” (*ikinagara tomurawareru*). The narrator finds himself repeating the words “second funeral” (*daini no sōshiki*), referring to his first encounter with death after falling unconscious for thirty minutes, and the second death that awaits him in the not so distant future.

The installment ends with feelings of joy and expectation as he looks forward to returning home, but the nostalgic reverie does not last, as the images disappear forever:

When I saw the color of the bamboo grove, the red leaves on a persimmon, the potato leaves, the wild-roses growing on the hedge, and the scent of ripe millet, I felt delighted to remember, as if I had been reborn, that now is the season, indeed, to expect such things. Furthermore, I alone took pleasure in imagining what new world I could expect to unfold at home, one that would revive faded and bygone memories. At the same time, the things that had occupied my mind until yesterday—the straw futon, the wagtails, the autumn grass, the carp, and the little stream—all completely vanished.

竹藪の色、柿紅葉、芋の葉、槿垣、熟した稲の香、凡てを見るたびに、成程今は斯んなものの有るべき季節であると、生れ返った様に憶い出しては嬉しが

った。更に進んでわが帰るべき所には、如何なる新らしい天地が、寝ぼけた古い記憶を蘇生せしむるために展開すべく待ち構へているだろうかと想像して独り楽しんだ。同時に昨日迄徘徊した藁蒲団も鶴鴿も秋草も鯉も小河も悉く消えて仕舞った。<sup>109</sup>

The way that the images of autumn stir passionate feelings only to soon disappear speaks to the conceit of *Recollecting and Such* as a prose poem that evokes images of fullness only to deflate them through the contingency of memory and the ability of the lyric mind to sustain the vitality of the poetic imagination. The relationship between the images and the season that they evoke is clear and unequivocal, but the narrator's declaration of delight (*ureshigatta*) is contradicted by the fragility of his mental faculties. He describes the ability to recollect through metaphor, "as if I had been reborn" (*umarekaetta yō ni*), which speaks to the way narrative in *Recollecting and Such* is a reciprocal process of recollection and returning to consciousness, and vice-versa. The fate of this process, however, is evoked in the pleasure in imagining, which aims to "revive" (*sosei seshimuru*) old memories that pace back and forth in his mind, only to unexpectedly vanish (*kiete*) without the chance of appearing again (*shimatta*).

The irony of recollection and coming back to life is echoed in the poem that concludes the thirty-two installments of *Recollecting and Such*.<sup>110</sup> The narrator composes a seven-character regulated verse (*shichigon risshi*) that echoes the sentiments in the preceding prose, but as an ironic coda, caps the work with uncertainty about the vitality of his body to return home:

Now that it is done, I can catch my breath;  
How can I live the rest of my life, left over like cinders?  
Wind passes over the ancient gorge, autumn sounds stir the air,  
The sun sinks into secluded bamboo, stygian colors fall.  
Thoughtlessly I said I would stay three months in the mountains,  
Little did I know another sky stretched beyond the gate.  
Let my return not be late for the season of yellow blossoms,  
Chances are a roving spirit dreams of the old moss at home.

<i>banji kyū seshi toki issoku kaeru</i>	萬事休時一息回
<i>yosei ani shinobinya zankai ni hisuru ni</i>	餘生豈忍比殘灰
<i>kaze wa kokan wo sugite shūsei okori</i>	風過古澗秋聲起
<i>hi wa yūkō ni ochite meishoku kitaru</i>	日落幽篁暝色來
<i>midari ni iu sanchū ni sangetsu todomaru to</i>	漫道山中三月滯
<i>nazo shiran mongai ni itten hiraku wo</i>	詎知門外一天開
<i>kiki okururu nakare kōka no setsu</i>	歸期勿後黃花節
<i>osoraku wa kikon no kyūtai wo yumemuru aran</i>	恐有羈魂夢舊苔 <sup>111</sup>

The poem opens with the affirmation he has survived the worst of it, referring to his miraculous return from the dead. He figures his recovery through the image of "breath" (*issoku*). The "return" (*kaeru*) or cyclicity of breath indicates the vitality of the lyric subject and speaks to the role of lyric poetry in *Recollecting and Such*: poems and poetic language that repeats in a pulse like an endless cycle of breath. Although his breath has returned, he contradicts its vitality by figuring the remainder of his life as "left over like cinder" (*zankai ni hisuru ni*), which evokes the

image of ashes after a funerary cremation. The image is ironic: the remnant glow of cinder will eventually go out. The line also evokes the opening to another poem by Dickinson: “The Poets light but Lamps – / Themselves – go out –.”<sup>112</sup> Like Dickinson, the poet here displays an awareness of life’s limitations, but also the limitations of poetry itself to have an afterlife.

The couplet formed by Lines 3 and 4 evoke the sounds and sights of autumn: the mourning wind, and the darkness of twilight. He claims that the time he tarries in the mountain for three months is a rough approximation with unexpected outcomes, only to discover that a new horizon awaits him on the other side of consciousness. This evokes his reverie in the preceding prose where he talks about the new worlds that await him at home. But as the prose and the poem suggest, this home is illusory and still contained by the poetic imagination. His inability to join the real world precipitates doubt about his own futurity. He writes: “Let my return not be late for the season of yellow blossoms.” The season to which he is referring is autumn when the chrysanthemums are in bloom.<sup>113</sup> In the event that his body is late for the autumn blossoms, the final line reveals that his mind, figured as a “roving spirit” (*kikon*), will continue to dream of home. The poet’s decision to end the poem with nostalgia contained in a dream deflates the hopeful expectancy suggested by *osoraku wa* (chances are), but also speaks to the fear or precariousness of whether such a possibility will ever come to fruition. By leaving the conclusion open-ended, *Recollecting and Such* not only contradicts teleological narrative, it also suggests that lyric thought, as a disembodied spirit, can only sustain itself through dream. And as the opening of *Recollecting and Such* declares loud and clear, recollection is uncertain and fugitive, just like dream.

This chapter examined how grief, as nostalgia and melancholy, manifests in the form of Sōseki’s lyrical novel *Pillow of Grass* and his prose poem *Recollecting and Such*. Both works alternate prose and poetry, producing narratives that challenge the containment and finality of teleological closure. This stasis and movement mediates access to the multiple planes of consciousness, fantasy, and illusion in the poetic imagination. Considering the moribund fate that traditional lyric faces in the early twentieth century, Sōseki’s experiments in *Pillow of Grass* and *Recollecting and Such* reveal a modern lyric thinking that blends modern prose and modern thought with ancient aesthetics, cliché imagery, conventional affect, and traditional genres of poetry, like haiku and *kanshi*. Through this experimentation of blending forms and genres, Sōseki displays a philosophy of poetic form that blends the past and the present, setting lyric thought in dialectical motion through figuration, metaphor, contradiction, and irony. *Pillow of Grass* and *Recollecting and Such* give new form to old feelings like nostalgia and melancholy, transforming the evocation of grief through a modern process of mediation that privileges empirical understanding and sensual embodiment in poetic form.

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<sup>1</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, trans. Joel Agee, *Letters on Cézanne* (New York: North Point Press, 2002), 72.

<sup>2</sup> Natsume Sōseki, *Sōseki zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2003), 18: 211. From here on SZ. The poem in its entirety:

Ever since my eyes have known the letters of East and West,  
My heart has borne the anxiety of both past and present.  
A shameful twenty years of darkness and confusion;  
At thirty I know where I stand, enough to look back.  
As I sit and meditate upon weal and woe,  
The open mind weighs the interplay of the pliant and rigid.

Birds fly into the clouds without a trace,  
Fish swim, streams flow as they please.  
In a world that began without human affairs,  
White clouds take their time indifferently.

*me ni wa shiru tōzai no ji*  
*kokoro ni wa idaku kokon no urei*  
*nijūnen kondaku wo haji*  
*jiritsu wazuka ni kōbe wo megurasu*  
*seiza shite fukuhaku wo mi*  
*kyokai gōjū wo ekisu*  
*tori irite kumo ato naku*  
*uo yukite mizu onozukara nagaru*  
*jinkan motoyori buji*  
*haku'un onozukara yūyū*

眼識東西字  
心抱古今憂  
廿年愧昏濁  
而立纔回頭  
靜坐觀復剝  
虛懷役剛柔  
鳥入雲無迹  
魚行水自流  
人間固無事  
白雲自悠悠

The *kundoku* is a blend between the versions in *SZ* 18: 211-2 and Yoshikawa Kōjirō, ed., *Sōseki shichū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002), 84.

<sup>3</sup> John Keats, *Complete Poems and Selected Letters of John Keats* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 252.

<sup>4</sup> Grief psychotherapist Julia Samuel observes that “grief is the emotional reaction to a loss,” and the process of grief is “in the movement—the back and forth—between the loss and restoration.” She also describes grief as a paradox: “The paradox of grief is that finding a way to live with the pain is what enables us to heal. Coping with grief doesn’t involve immersion theory; rather, it is enduring the pain as it hits us (this often feels like a storm crashing over us), and then having a break from it through distraction, busyness, and doing the things that comfort and soothe us. Every time we alternate between two poles, we adjust to the reality that we don’t want to face: that the person we love has died.” See Julia Samuel, *Grief Works: Stories of Life, Death, and Surviving* (New York: Scribner, 2017), xvii-xviii. The back and forth movement in *Pillow of Grass* is similar. Although the object of loss is not clear, the result is grief as nostalgia and melancholy.

<sup>5</sup> Claire Colebrook, *Irony* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 49. In her chapter on Romantic irony, Colebrook discusses the idea of the “ironic fall” in the writings of German philosopher Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829): “An ironic ‘fall’ realizes . . . that there was no paradise before the sense of loss. The idea of an original plenitude is an image created from life. ‘All life is in its ultimate origins not natural, but divine and human.’ The idea of a fall is, however, essential to irony and life as irony. It is in creating images of a lost paradise that we create ourselves as fallen, and thereby create ourselves at all. For to be selves or personalities we must be limited or delimited from some grander whole.” See Colebrook, 49-50. *Pillow of Grass* and *Recollecting in Such* both emerge from loss: the former aims to reconstruct an idyllic space; the latter aims to restore lost experience.

<sup>6</sup> Ralph Freedman, *The Lyrical Novel: Studies in Hermann Hesse, André Gide, and Virginia Woolf* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), 3.

<sup>7</sup> Kyōko Kurita and others have argued that Romanticism is “the common thread that runs through most of Meiji literature.” See Kyōko Kurita, “Kōda Rohan’s Literary Debut (1889) and the Temporal Topology of Meiji Japan,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 67, No. 2 (December 2007): 379.

<sup>8</sup> The recompense for loss in *Pillow of Grass* evokes Paul Fry’s reading of “Tintern Abbey” by William Wordsworth. Fry writes that the crisis of loss in this poem and others by Wordsworth is “not so much a loss as a failure to understand that what seems to have been lost is always within reach. In itself unaltered, that which was lost in a form that makes it seem different, more consistent with the ethical humanism of mature reflection in response to suffering, yet still harboring Wordsworth’s original insight as a poet.” See Paul H. Fry, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of What We Are* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 177-178.

<sup>9</sup> *SZ*, 3: 3. My translations of *Pillow of Grass* are my own. I have consulted the most recent translation by Meredith McKinney in Natsume Sōseki, *Kusamakura* (New York: Penguin, 2008), and a 1965 translation by Alan Turney in Natsume Soseki, *The Three Cornered World* (Washington D.C.: Gateway, 1988). Like McKinney, my English translations retain the present tense throughout, even in few places where the original Japanese is clearly in past tense. McKinney writes: “Most of the novel is written in the present tense. Since English, unlike Japanese, cannot sustain occasional shifts to past tense narration, I have chosen to retain the present tense throughout, in order to reproduce the effect of the journey’s open-ended experiment that asks the reader to experience the protagonist’s moment-by-moment feelings and thoughts.” My reasons are the same.

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<sup>10</sup> *Kusamakura* is a poetic epithet (*makurakotoba*, or “pillow word”) for travel that can be found in poetry as early as the eighth century. Poem No. 1532 in *Man’yōshū* (759; Collection of ten thousand leaves) opens with *kusamakura*:

Grass for a pillow—  
The traveler on his journey  
Along the way  
May don the colors  
Of the bush clovers in bloom.

草枕旅行く人も行き触ればにほひぬべくも咲ける萩かも

For the Japanese see Kojima Noriyuki, et al., eds., *Shinpen nihon koten bungaku zenshū* (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1995), 7: 333.

<sup>11</sup> The meaning behind these terms have been the subject of debate. Recent scholarship has read *Pillow of Grass* alongside Sōseki’s own literary theory, and has expressed contrasting views about the relationship between *hininjō* and the genres of writing that constitute *Pillow of Grass*. Anette Thorsen Vilslev has suggested that both the prose and the poetry in *Pillow of Grass* mediate the narrator’s detached stance, what the novel calls *hininjō*, enabling him to describe the natural landscape and human emotion with objectivity: “According to the haiku-aesthetics of this novel, both poetry and prose are ways of momentarily detaching oneself from personal feelings, and aspirations, providing methods of objectively contemplating the world, the grandness of the small, and the smallness of the self in the grand picture. The relationship between ‘feelings’ and the literary technique of ‘hi-ninjo’ as detachment requires some clarification. Representations involving ‘feelings’ are not automatically detached by being mediated in language. ‘Hininjo’ is rather a detached stance the writer or painter can adopt towards something, allowing for an objective, artistic reflection on particular feelings.” See Anette Thorsen Vilslev, “Questioning western universality: Sōseki’s *Theory of Literature* and his novel *Pillow of Grass*,” *Japan Forum* 29, no. 2 (2017): 14-15. Daniel Poch has examined *Pillow of Grass* in the context of Sōseki’s experiments with *shaseibun*, a new genre of prose writing inspired by Masaoka Shiki’s haiku reforms that called for realism and immediacy in poetry. Poch argues that the detached stance of the narrator enables him to deconstruct the emotion-packed lyric genres that appear in the narrative. These poetic genres link *Pillow of Grass* to the *ninjō* tradition in premodern literature, in which poetry was featured prominently to mediate romantic feelings between characters. See Daniel Poch, “Kanjiō hyōgen toshite no ‘bun’ no kindai—Natsume Sōseki ni okeru shiika to shizen to ‘Rōmanshugi,’” in Kōno Kimiko, Wiebke Denecke, eds., *Nihon ni okeru “bun” to “bungaku”* (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2013), 221-233.

<sup>12</sup> See Karatani Kōjin, *Sōseki ronshūsei* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2001), 421-428.

<sup>13</sup> The word *ninjō* also evokes the sentimental fiction (*ninjōbon*) in vogue during the early nineteenth century. If we take *hininjō* to be what is not *ninjō*, as the word literally means, then we may understand the polarity between *ninjō* and *hininjō* as analogous to the polarity between “genre” and “anti-genre.” In Chapter 9, the narrator has a conversation with Nami, the innkeeper, and they talk about a cherry tree’s “variation” (*henka*) of motion in a stream. Nami wishes that humans could move with such variation, and the narrator replies, “You have to be *hininjō* to move like that, you know.” See *SZ*, 3: 114. If we take this conversation as a metaphor or meta-comment on the novel as a whole, what constitutes *hininjō*, which evokes the world of nature devoid of human concerns, is the ability to change, to diverge from an established form, or a literary institution. In other words, to be “other.”

<sup>14</sup> Although the narrator tries to maintain a clear distinction between Eastern and Western aesthetics, and wants to favor the latter, he fails because they often overlap in the examples that he provides. Part of this has to do with the irony of the lyrical novel; the other part has to do with the fact that Sōseki is a scholar of English literature. The influence of Shakespeare, Milton, Romanticism, and nineteenth century English novels can be found in his oeuvre, from his critical writings, to his novels, and even his poetry in Chinese.

<sup>15</sup> Sōseki seems to anticipate the writings of Herman Hesse (1877-1962), who Freedman argues is a lyrical novelist in disguise. Freedman writes that early twentieth century German readers adored his writings as they “shared a peculiar rebellion against the industrial civilization they held responsible for the past, which expressed itself in an occasionally strained, often sentimental return to nature and spirit: a revival of romantic values.” Freedman, 42.

<sup>16</sup> *SZ*, 3: 6.

<sup>17</sup> In 1898 Sōseki wrote a *kanshi* entitled “Mustard Blossoms” (Saikakō), in which he alludes to Shelley’s skylark:

Mustard blossoms yellow at sunrise,  
Mustard blossoms yellow at sunset.  
A man in the yellow of mustard blossoms,  
from dawn to dusk will grow mad with joy.  
His free spirit follows the skylark,  
On high to melt into the blue.

Beyond the horizon, near the heavenly capital,  
 Far up, away from the tainted lands.  
 The heart cannot put into words,  
 That pleasure boundless of itself.  
 I regret I have not become a bird,  
 To sing out all the yellow of the mustard blossoms.

*saika chōon ni kō ni*

*saika sekiyō ni kō nari*

*saika kōri no hito*

*shinkon yorokobite kuruwan to hossu*

*kōkai unjaku ni shitagai*

*chūyū kano sō ni iru*

*hyōbyō toshite tento ni chikaku*

*chōtei toshite jinkyō wo shinogu*

*kono kokoro iu bekarazu*

*sono tanoshimi onozukara kōyō tari*

*uramuraku wa imada kashite tori to nari*

*saika no kō wo naki tsukusazaru wo*

菜花黃朝暎

菜花黃夕陽

菜花黃裏人

晨昏喜欲狂

曠懷隨雲雀

沖融入彼蒼

縹緲近天都

迢遞凌塵鄉

斯心不可道

厥樂自黃洋

恨未化爲鳥

啼盡菜花黃

See *SZ*, 18: 205. For an article that discusses this poem in the context of Shelley and British Romanticism, see Nahoko Miyamoto Alvey, “Sōseki no tankō no hana: *Pillow of Grass* to Igrisu romanshugi,” *Hikaku Bungaku Kenkyū* 103 (September 2017), 7-38.

<sup>18</sup> *SZ*, 3: 7.

<sup>19</sup> Sōseki’s translation of Shelley’s stanza, while serving as a translation for contemporary readers, also stands on its own as a modern Japanese poem. Save for the extra syllables in Lines 1 and 4, the poem maintains the classical 5-7-5 meter (6-7-5-9-5-7-5-7-5-7-5-7-7) across thirteen lines: *mae wo mite wa / shirie wo mite wa / monohoshi to / akogaruru kanaware / hara kara no / warai to iedo / kurushimi no / soko ni aru beshi / utsukushiki / kiwami no uta ni / kanashimi no / kiwami no omoi / komoru to zo shire*. The form evokes the genre of “new-style poetry” (*shintaiishi*), which emerged after the importation of Romanticism in the late nineteenth century.

<sup>20</sup> Mark Sandy, *Romanticism, Memory, and Mourning* (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited 2013), 97.

<sup>21</sup> *SZ*, 3: 7.

<sup>22</sup> The poem is attributed to Su Shi in his piece “Calligraphy of Crows and Clouds at the Edge of the Sky (Tian ji wu yun tie).” For the poem see *Ying yin Wen yuan ge Siku quan shu* (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1983-6), 1111: 909. For more on the provenance of the poem in the history of Chinese art and calligraphy, see I Lo-fen, “Su Shi *Tian ji wu yun tie* quan jie,” in *Wenxue pinglun* (2015), 4: 211-220.

<sup>23</sup> Another irony that the allusion to Su Shi’s poem suggests is the fact that the courtesan’s grief is figured as a form of capital. The phrase “ten thousand bushels” (*yi wan hu*) normally refers to giant containers of grain that were used as currency for trade in the premodern era. By alluding to this particular line, the narrator not only evokes the immense weight of the courtesan’s sadness, but also the fact that her sadness has become a commodity in an economy of exchange. If we consider this idea with the earlier quotation of Shelley’s poem and the beauty and sadness that constitutes *Pillow of Grass* as a whole, the allusion serves as an ironic meta-comment on how such aesthetics are merely fodder for consumer desire.

<sup>24</sup> He writes: “Prose allegories, poetic idylls and picaresques, the use of fairy tale, dream, distortion and fantasy, of mental association and dithyrambs in prose—all these have subverted the novel since its beginnings, supplanting narrative with lyrical objectivity.” See Freedman, 16-7.

<sup>25</sup> Freedman, 16.

<sup>26</sup> *SZ*, 3: 10-11.

<sup>27</sup> Nakajima Kunihiko, *Kindai bungaku ni miru kanjusei* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1994), 640.

<sup>28</sup> *SZ*, 3: 14.

<sup>29</sup> Although the diction in the passage is classical, the classical verb *tsukuru*, “to affix,” (*rentaikei* of *tsuku*; *tsukeru* in modern) is homonymous with the modern verb *tsukuru* (to make), which suggests that this objective gaze through which the narrator observes himself and nature is a self-manufactured objectivity. In other words “to affix the eyes” (*me wo tsuku*) may also mean “to manufacture the eyes (to see in a certain way).” Sōseki purposely leaves the verb in *kana* without a Chinese graph, which would distinguish between the two meanings. Although the line likely



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means the former as opposed to the later, consideration of the latter meaning would contradict the novel's conceit of detachment and objectivity, as time and again the reader is reminded, though furtively here, that they are ironic constructions.

<sup>30</sup> SZ, 3: 14.

<sup>31</sup> SZ, 3: 14-15.

<sup>32</sup> Michel O'Neill has examined a similar self-consciousness in Romantic poetry. He asks, "In what way, and with what consequences, is the poem conscious of what it is doing?" This leads me to take soundings of individual poems, exploring their tonalities, rhythms, figurations, structural devices, and treatment of genre in an attempt to find out what the poem is saying or finding out about itself—or not saying and not finding about itself." See Michael O'Neill, *Romanticism and the Self-Conscious Poem* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), ix.

<sup>33</sup> Fredric Jameson would describe passages of poetry as "affect" that disrupts the linear narrative of the nineteenth century realist novel. See Fredric Jameson, *The Antinomies of Realism* (New York: Verso, 2015).

<sup>34</sup> SZ, 3: 36. Translation is a modified version of McKinney.

<sup>35</sup> SZ, 3: 37. Translation is a modified version of McKinney.

<sup>36</sup> SZ, 3: 74. Translation is a modified version of McKinney.

<sup>37</sup> SZ, 3: 74.

<sup>38</sup> The narrator finds pleasure in the absence of a stimulant:

Normally some stimulant provokes a sense of oneness. One imagines that precisely because there is a stimulant that the experience is enjoyable. But in my oneness, I cannot discern with what I have merged, so there is no stimulant at all.

普通の同化には刺激がある。刺激があればこそ、愉快であろう。余の同化には、何と同化したか不分明であるから、毫も刺激がない。

See SZ, 3: 74.

<sup>39</sup> SZ, 3: 74.

<sup>40</sup> The narrator writes that the power of his elation is not commensurate to the image of a boundless blue sea:

My state lacks the power that this image suggests, but I find joy in that. In the manifestation of great power, lurks the concern that that power will eventually be exhausted. In its everyday form, no such worries attend it. But in my present state of mind, more "bland" than usual, I am not only far away from woes about whether my vigorous strength will whittle away, I have also transcended the quotidian realm where the mind discerns what is permissible and what is not.

ただそれほどに活力がないばかりだ。しかしそこにかえて幸福がある。偉大なる活力の発現は、この活力がいつか尽き果てるだろうとの懸念が籠る。常の姿にはそう云う心配は伴わぬ。常よりは淡きわが心の、今の状態には、わが烈しき力の銷磨しはせぬかとの憂を離れたるのみならず、常の心の可もなく不可もなき凡境をも脱却している。

See SZ, 3: 74. Such observations about the relationship between power (*katsuryoku*) and the subject tempt us to consider the conceit of *Pillow of Grass* as allegory for the power of imperialism (and later fascism) during the early twentieth century. The narrator succumbs to a trance that frees him of the ability or necessity to judge right from wrong. Such language may just be Sōseki's effusive paean to aesthetics, poetry, and painting; but the language also forebodes a potentially frightening scenario in which such language is used to mobilize subjects of the empire. For more on aesthetics and fascism, see Alan Tansman, *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

<sup>41</sup> In his essay on *Pillow of Grass*, Karatani Kōjin points out that Sōseki likely read *The Lyrics of Chu* before writing *Pillow of Grass*. See Karatani, 427. In 1972, Furukawa Hisashi discussed the similarities between the two texts, but argued that *Pillow of Grass* may be an inversion of *The Lyrics of Chu*. When Japanese readers think of *The Lyrics of Chu*, they are generally thinking of Qu Yuan's long poem "Encountering Sorrow," which has been read in traditional commentary as an allegory for a court official who has fallen out of favor with his ruler, and the court official is often read as Qu Yuan himself. In late Qing criticism, Qu Yuan is celebrated as the "lyrical poet" par excellence, a sentiment that continues in early twentieth century Japanese literary criticism. In any case, the lyric subject feels distraught and misunderstood by world, and constructs a fantasy of encountering a goddess with whom he fails at consummating a relationship. Although temporality in the poem is out of whack, the imagery and sorrow overall evoke late autumn. *Pillow of Grass*, however, is an ode to spring. In this way, Furukawa argues that Sōseki has turned a lament into a paean. While this interpretation is too simplistic, as *Pillow of Grass* is also brimming with grief, Furukawa does highlight common diction between poems in *Lyrics of Chu* and *Pillow of Grass*. See Furukawa Hisashi, *Natsume Sōseki: bukkyō, kanbungaku to no kanren* (Tokyo: Butsu no sekaisha, 1972), 114-125.

<sup>42</sup> SZ, 3: 74.

<sup>43</sup> Burke writes: “It is the nature of grief to keep its object perpetually in its eye, to present it in its most pleasurable views, to repeat all the circumstances that attend it, even to the last minuteness; to go back to every particular enjoyment, to dwell upon each, and to find a thousand new perfections in all, that were not sufficiently understood before; in grief, the *pleasure* is still uppermost; and the affliction we suffer has no resemblance to absolute pain, which is always odious, and which we endeavor to shake off as soon as possible.” (original emphasis) See Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 34-35. Sōseki did not own this work, but he did own a collection of Burke’s essays and *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790).

<sup>44</sup> In her discussion of Freud’s idea that melancholia is an attachment to an unknown loss, Rebecca Comay writes: “Melancholia would thus be a way of staging a dispossession of that which was never one’s own to lose in the first places—and thus, precisely by occluding structural lack as determinate loss, would exemplify the strictly perverse effort to assert a relation with the non-relational. . . . Trauma would itself in this way be mobilized as a defence against an impossible enjoyment: the melancholic derealization of the real here functions, as Giorgio Agamben has compellingly argued, not only to aggrandize the subject of fantasy, but in so doing ultimately to hypostatize what is unreal (or phantasmatic) as a new reality.” See Comay, “The Sickness of Tradition: Between Melancholia and Fetishism,” in Andrew Benjamin, ed., *Walter Benjamin and History* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 89. For Agamben, see Giorgio Agamben, trans. Ronald L. Martinez, *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).

<sup>45</sup> Another word that comes to mind is *saudade* from Portuguese. The *OED* defines it: “longing, melancholy, nostalgia, as a supposed characteristic of the Portuguese or Brazilian temperament.”

<sup>46</sup> Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 16.

<sup>47</sup> Matsuoka Yuzuru, *Sōseki no kanshi* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1966), 80.

<sup>48</sup> SZ 18: 194. The *kundoku* is by Iida Rigyō, with slight modifications. Iida Rigyō, *Sōseki shishū yaku* (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1967), 101-102.

<sup>49</sup> See SZ, 18: 198.

<sup>50</sup> This interpretation accords with Ikkai Tomoyoshi’s observation that the opening line evokes the Yuefu tradition, in which many songs are about longing. He also cites a famous poem by early Tang poet Song Zhiwen “Song of Descending the Mountain” (Xia shan ge), a poem that makes use of diction from *Lyrics of Chu*:

Descending Song Mountain—much on the mind;	下嵩山兮多所思
Accompanied by the fair one—we plod along slowly.	携佳人兮步遲遲
The bright moon between the pines, it will be like this forever;	松間明月長如此
But to roam again with you—when will the next time come?	君再游兮復何時

<sup>51</sup> The anxiety induced by travel is as old as *The Tale of Genji*. In the premodern world, all forms of travel carried with them the fear of not coming back. However, the situations that stir that anxiety are always historically contingent.

<sup>52</sup> Stephen Dodd has examined nostalgia in the context of literature about the *furusato*, the Japanese word for “native place.” Such works feature a protagonist from the city who returns to his native place, where he reflects on the evils of urbanization and reminisces about the idyllic past of his childhood. In this kind of literature, *furusato* can be literal or figurative: either referring to the writer’s actual native place, or what Dodd describes as a metaphorical “other,” one that allows the writer to “articulate both a criticism for society and a idealized alternative.” Stephen Dodd, *Writing Home: Representations of the Native Place in Modern Japanese Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 1. Dodd argues that the *furusato* “emerged in [the] Meiji [period] as a newly invigorated symbol of desire and discontent,” a place to which writers wished to return, but also one that was falling to ruin, and hence needed restoration. *Pillow of Grass* can be read alongside *furusato* literature, because it longs for a home that is disappearing or already gone.

<sup>53</sup> Goodman, 199-201.

<sup>54</sup> Kevis Goodman, “‘Uncertain Disease’: Nostalgia, Pathologies of Motion, Practices of Reading,” *Studies in Romanticism* 49 (Summer 2010), 199-200.

<sup>55</sup> Goodman, 204.

<sup>56</sup> The different ways the narrator figures what he sees and what he hears makes us think of the different kinds of nostalgia that Boym identifies in her study: restorative and reflective, the former being a “transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home,” and the latter, “the longing itself,” which “has the capacity to awaken multiple planes of consciousness.” Boym writes: “Restorative nostalgia does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition. Reflective nostalgia dwells on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging and does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity. Restorative nostalgia protects the absolute truth, while reflective nostalgia calls it into doubt.” See Boym, 49-50, XVIII.

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<sup>57</sup> Sigmund Freud in *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917) distinguishes “mourning” from “melancholy” in that the former refers to a feeling of loss when a person has died, whereas the latter refers to a feeling of loss whose object is lost in the mourner’s consciousness.

<sup>58</sup> László F. Földényi, trans. Tim Wilkinson, *Melancholy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 255.

<sup>59</sup> Földényi, 252.

<sup>60</sup> Földényi, 215.

<sup>61</sup> There are two passages in *The Zhuangzi* that argue that forgetting of right and wrong renders the mind at ease, and frees the subject from the entanglements of knowledge. The story of Artisan Chui in the “Mastering Life” (Da sheng) chapter:

Artisan Ch’ui could draw as true as a compass or a T square because his fingers changed along with things and he didn’t let his mind get in the way. Therefore his Spirit Tower remained unified and unobstructed. You forget your feet when the shoes are comfortable. You forget your waist when the belt is comfortable. Understanding forgets right and wrong when the mind is comfortable. There is no change in what is inside, no following what is outside, when the adjustment to events is comfortable. You begin with what is comfortable and never experience what is uncomfortable when you know the comfort of forgetting what is comfortable.

The story of Shen Tao in “The World” (Tian xia) chapter:

Shen Tao discarded knowledge, did away with self, followed what he could not help but follow, acquiescent and unmeddling where things were concerned, taking this to be the principle of the Way. “To know is not to know,” he said, and so he despised knowledge and worked to destroy and slough it off. . . . He put aside both right and wrong and somehow managed to stay out of trouble. With nothing to learn from knowledge or scheming, no comprehension of what comes before and after, he merely rested where he was and that was all. . . . a creature that is without knowledge does not face the perils that come from trying to set oneself up, the entanglements that come from relying upon knowledge.

See Burton Watson, trans., *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 206-207, and 370. Zhuangzi is not condemning ethical judgment; rather, he is critiquing the epistemological basis by which such ethical judgments are formed. Judgment about what is “right” vis-à-vis what is “wrong” is based on received and institutionalized knowledge. Sōseki’s poem seems to be arguing that freedom from such categories and distinctions is to be free of ideological containment, and to consider non-teleological and more open-ended conclusions.

<sup>62</sup> Such a claim shares an affinity with Anne-Lise François’s argument for the works in nineteenth century Western literature that “make nothing happen.” She examines fiction and poetry that “locate fulfillment not in narrative fruition but in grace, understood both as a simplicity or slightness of formal means and as a freedom from work, including both the work of self-concealment and self-presentation.” See Anne-Lise François, *Open Secrets: The Literature of Uncounted Experience* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), xvi. The Daoist thought that permeates the *kanshi* in Chapter 12 and *Pillow of Grass* as a whole may be aiming for a kind of “recessive action” in the expression of longing that does not go anywhere or find resolution.

<sup>63</sup> SZ, 3: 171.

<sup>64</sup> Today it means the “screen” of a television or a computer.

<sup>65</sup> György Lukács, trans. Anna Bostock, *Soul and Form* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 124.

<sup>66</sup> “If fulfillment is attainable, it has to be attained—it can never be there as something natural and stable. In painting there cannot be dissonance—it would destroy the form of painting, whose realm lies beyond all categories of the temporal process; in painting, dissonance has to be resolved, as it were, *ante rem*, it has to form an indissoluble unity with its resolution.” *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>67</sup> *Recollecting and such* was serialized in the Tokyo Asahi Shimbun from October 29, 1910 to February 20, 1911, and in the Osaka Asahi Shimbun from October 29, 1910 to March 5, 1911. The day of the first installment was the same for both the Tokyo and Osaka newspapers, but from the second installment the publications differed by days or even weeks. In March through June of 1910, his novel *Mon* (also known as *The Gate*) was serialized in the same newspaper. Not long thereafter, Sōseki came down with severe abdominal pain, admitted himself to the hospital and was diagnosed with catarrh of the stomach. After receiving treatment, in August of that year Sōseki vacations at Shuzenji on the Izu Peninsula. He suffers a relapse of the catarrh, which hemorrhages, resulting in blood loss and a coma. He survives and convalesces at Shuzenji until he is able to return to the hospital in October. It is at the hospital where he begins writing *Recollecting and such*.

<sup>68</sup> In her translation of the work, Maria Flutsch renders the title *Recollections*, and then later *Remembrances*. In her introduction to the translation, she describes the multitude of forms contained within the work: “In its form, unique

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among Sōseki's works, *Recollections* could be said to present a microcosm of his whole oeuvre. This is because it contains miniature versions of every literary form Sōseki ever used, moulded together into a new genre." See Natsume Sōseki, Maria Flutsch, trans., *Recollections* (London: Sōseki Museum in London, 1997), 6.

<sup>69</sup> In Installment 5, the narrator argues that the haiku and *kanshi* are to be read as quick pieces of messages of mood: "I insert *kanshi* and haiku into *Omoidasu koto nado* not with the mere intention of presenting myself as a haiku or *kanshi* poet. To tell the truth, whether the poems are good or bad is of no concern to me. I would be content should I be able to impart to the hearts of my readers, at the speed of a glance, the message that I was living under the sway of such moods while ill." *SZ*, 12: 416. By commenting on the purpose of including his own poetry in *Recollecting and such*, the narrator is suggesting that he is practicing a genre of writing that may appear to readers as doing something that it is not intending to do.

<sup>70</sup> *SZ*, 12: 400.

<sup>71</sup> Here I am thinking of the relationship between cold and numbness evoked in the poetry of John Keats, like in the scene below from Canto I in *The Fall of Hyperion*:

. . . the leaves were yet  
Burning, when suddenly a palsied chill  
Struck from the paved level up my limbs,  
And was ascending quick to put cold grasp  
Upon those steams that pulse beside the throat.  
I shriek'd, and the sharp anguish of my shriek  
Stung my own ears; I strove hard to escape  
The numbness, strove to gain the lowest step.  
Slow, heavy, deadly was my pace: the cold  
Grew stifling, suffocating, at the heart;  
And when I clasp'd my hands I felt them not.

See John Keats, *Complete Poems and Selected Letters of John Keats* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 376.

<sup>72</sup> *SZ*, 12: 357-451.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 357.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 358.

<sup>75</sup> I mean "vital" in the poetic sense that describes the life force contingent on breath, like in Wordsworth's *Vernal Ode*, "And though to every draught of vital breath, / Renewed throughout the bounds of earth or ocean," and in Shelley's *Adonais*, "Dream not that the amorous Deep / Will yet restore him to the vital air."

<sup>76</sup> The narrator describes the reason for writing *Recollecting and Such*: "*Omoidasu koto nado* is nothing more than quotidian and dull reminiscences and descriptions of my own illness, but among them you should find many rare pleasures, albeit old-fashioned. So I recollect things quickly, and write the down in haste, so that I can savor these old fragrances in the company of those who embrace the present and those who are suffering in it." *SZ*, 12: 368.

<sup>77</sup> William Waters has examined the value of poetry as lyric address in the way that lyric poems mediate contact between the poet and the reader. He writes, "When poems address their readers, the topic of the pronoun *you* and the topic of reading (what it is like to be a person reading a poem) become two sides of a single coin. This, then, is the end to which my investigation of lyric address leads: the claim that we as readers may feel in second-person poems, in a poem's touch, an intimation of why poetry is valuable, why it matters to us, and how we might come to feel answerable to it." See William Waters, *Poetry's Touch: On Lyric Address* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 2. Helen Vendler has described lyric address as intimacy between the poet and his future, unseen, reader. See Helen Vendler, *Invisible Listeners: Lyric Intimacy in Herbert, Whitman, and Ashbery* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

<sup>78</sup> *SZ*, 12: 371.

<sup>79</sup> *SZ*, 12: 371.

<sup>80</sup> The function of *ni* in the haiku is ambiguous: it either makes the *asagi* (pale blue-green) the indirect object of the verb *sumeri* (clear; lit. has become clear), or it makes *asagi* the object of metaphor: "clear like pale blue-green."

<sup>81</sup> *SZ*, 12: 395.

<sup>82</sup> The bush clover is one of the seven flowers of autumn (*aki no nanakusa*) that poets have written about since the ancient times of *Man'yōshū*. Sōseki wrote a haiku in September, 1910 in which "white bush clover" (*shirohagi*) appears:

Since becoming ill  
Dew on the white bush clover  
Has been falling heavily!

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病んでより白萩に露の繁く降る事よ

See *SZ*, 17: 408.

<sup>83</sup> *SZ*, 12: 397. The *kundoku* (Japanese reading) has been rendered by Ikkai Tomoyoshi. The poem appears also in the volume on Sōseki's *kanshi*. See *SZ*, 18: 248-249. According to the annotations, the poem is "untitled" and dates to October 3, 1910. The reading and writing process of *kanshi* also reveals a contradictory relationship: the Chinese graphs that the poet writes on the page require a method of reading that is visually absent. The reading process, *kundoku*, introduces a presence to the poem whose original form disappears, or becomes absent. In short, *kanshi* by nature is a poetic practice of suspension, since its writing does not reveal its reading, and its reading does not reveal its writing—*kanshi* is invariably something in between.

<sup>84</sup> Gaston Bachelard, trans. Edith Farell and Frederick Farell, *Air and Dreams: An Essay On the Imagination of Movement* (Dallas: The Dallas Institute Publications, 1988), 185.

<sup>85</sup> The significance of clouds in Sōseki's poetry deserves its own study. Traditionally, "white clouds" evoke the place of the immortals well known from Daoist Chinese legend, and in many of Sōseki's poems "white clouds" can be read in this way.

<sup>86</sup> *SZ*, 12: 421.

<sup>87</sup> *SZ*, 12: 422.

<sup>88</sup> *SZ*, 12: 423.

<sup>89</sup> The curious image of "green" in Sōseki's *kanshi* evokes the "green" that appears in a famous stanza from Andrew Marvell's "The Garden":

Meanwhile the Mind, from pleasure less,  
Withdraws into its happiness;  
The Mind, that Ocean where each kind  
Does straight its own resemblance find;  
Yet it creates, transcending these,  
Far other Worlds, and other Seas;  
Annihilating all that's made  
To a green thought in a green shade.

William Empson argued that the point of Marvell's poem is "to contrast and reconcile conscious and unconscious states, intuitive and intellectual modes of apprehension; and yet that distinction is never made, perhaps could not have been made; his thought is implied by his metaphors." See William Empson, "Marvell's 'Garden,'" *Scrutiny* 1 (December 1932), 3: 236. Empson seems to be suggesting that Marvell's metaphors are key to understanding how his poem "thinks," and the type of thought that he wants his readers to discern. Angus Fletcher echoes this observation in his reading of the word "green" in the poem. He argues that such terms show a "hidden system of thought. We are called to seek out an occluded system or method of binding lyrical expressiveness into a private, constrained, and highly controlled manner of poetic arrangement. . . . It appears that color-terms such as the 'green' of 'The Garden' . . . may not in themselves have an absolutely clear and distinct meaning, but serve nonetheless to order larger combinations of ideas within a given poem." See Angus Fletcher, *Colors of the Mind: Conjectures on Thinking in Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 101. "Green" in Sōseki's poem reveal a hidden system of thought in *Recollecting and Such*, one that places objects in liminal states, verging on grief, and eventually annihilation.

<sup>90</sup> The conclusion of the poem evokes Comay's discussion of how fetishism defers loss to the future. She describes Lessing's explanation of Laocoön: "the sculptor has captured the pregnant moment just before the full horror strikes—the father's mouth open but not yet screaming, the serpents's venom not quite completely penetrated, the agony not quite yet at its climax: the gaze fixes on the penultimate moment so as to block the revelation of the monstrous void. Penultimacy—incompletion as such—becomes a defence against a mortifying conclusion." See Andrews, 95-96.

<sup>91</sup> *SZ*, 12: 401.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Fletcher, 167.

<sup>94</sup> I am referring to "lyric time" or "apocalyptic time" in Emily Dickinson's poetry. By lyric time, I am alluding to Sharon Cameron's theoretical study of Dickinson's poetry. For Cameron, lyric is unmediated by narrative and operates in a time of its own. Cameron writes: "Unlike the story, novel, or drama, the lyric enjoys an independence from authorial interruption (those breaks in the action that remind us all action inevitably ends), and it is free as well from the speech and thought of other characters. As pure unmediated speech it lies furthest of all the mimetic arts from the way we really talk. Lyric speech might be described as the way we would talk in dreams if we could

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convert the phantasmagoria there into words. But as the present is neither the past nor the future, as desire is not equivalent to the object of its longing, as there is a space predicated between the landscape and the human subject who regards it, between language and what it hopes to word into being, so the same radical inequality is manifested between lyric speech and the voice or voices it represents.” See Sharon Cameron, *Lyric Time: Dickinson and the Limits of Genre* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1981), 207.

<sup>95</sup> SZ, 12: 403.

<sup>96</sup> This structure resembles that of a Shakespearian sonnet. Sōseki was a careful reader of Shakespeare and English poetry, so it is not surprising that some of those poetics entered his own *kanshi* composition.

<sup>97</sup> SZ, 12: 403. The *kundoku* (Japanese reading) has been rendered by Ikkai Tomoyoshi. The poem appears also in the volume on Sōseki’s *kanshi*. See SZ, 18: 263-264. According to the annotations, the poem is “untitled” and dates to October 16, 1910. This poem is one of the few *kanshi* of which a number of earlier versions exist. See SZ, 18: 263-272.

<sup>98</sup> This is also the same word that the narrator uses later in Installment 20 to describe the sublime state of “boundlessness” he feels after having merged with the sky. In this poem from Installment 15 and in the prose from Installment 20 are the sole two places where *hyōbyō* appears in *Recollecting and such*. In light of my discussion on the relationship between Sōseki and Coleridge, the vast darkness of *hyōbyō* evokes the dark and strange space in between that Coleridge describes in his poem, “Limbo”:

’Tis a strange place, this Limbo!—not a Place,  
Yet name it so;—where Time and weary Space  
Fettered from flight, with night-mare sense of fleeing,  
Strive for their last crepuscular half-being;—  
Lank Space, and scytheless Time with branny hands  
Barren and soundless as the measuring sands,  
Not marked by flit of Shades,—unmeaning, they  
As moonlight on the dial of the day!

See Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Complete Poems* (New York: Penguin, 1997), 357. Coleridge’s poem is more haunting, but both he and Sōseki were interested in poeticizing the experience of being in liminal space. For Sōseki on Coleridge, see SZ, 27: 67-70.

<sup>99</sup> He writes: “The storyteller feels . . . that he cannot give the impression of this essential fall, at the very limits of death and the abyss, unless he tries to make associations with the effort to *rise up again*. . . . It is these *efforts* to rise up again, these efforts to become conscious of vertigo, that give a kind of undulating effect to the fall, that make the imaginary fall an example of that undulating psychology in which the contradictions between the real and the imaginary constantly change places, reinforce each other, and interact with each other as opposites. Then vertigo becomes stronger in this dialectics wavering between life and death; it reaches the point of that *infinite fall*, an unforgettable dynamic experience that so deeply affected Poe’s soul.” See Bachelard, 96-97. For Sōseki on Poe, see SZ, 25: 340. Sōseki has an essay, “Poe’s Imagination” (*Pō no sozō*), in which he argues that Poe has a scientific imagination.

<sup>100</sup> He evokes Bashō’s death haiku:

Sick on a journey,  
But over withered fields dreams  
Are running all around.  
旅に病で夢は枯野をかけ廻る

Translation from Robert Backus, “What Goes Into a Haiku,” *Literature East and West* 15, (1972), 754. For the Japanese see Ōtani Tokuzō, et al., eds., *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1962) 45: 216. Iida Rigyō first notes the Bashō reference. See Iida Rigyō, *Sōseki shishū yaku* (Tokyo: Kokushokankōkai, 1976), 201. The frail minds and bodies of Bashō and the poet in *Recollecting and such* are wandering in a space of darkness and absence. Bashō’s haiku pairs sickness and death with oneiric vitality: dreams that will continue to run around the fields. In the haiku, such a pairing suggests potentiality for life in death. But in the narrator’s *kanshi* that potentiality is ironized.

<sup>101</sup> Many annotators comment that this line alludes to the first lines in the “Nine Changes” (Jiu bian) of *Lyrics of Chu*.  
Alas for the breath of autumn!

Wan and drear: flower and leaf fluttering fall and turn to decay.  
悲哉！秋之為氣也。蕭瑟兮，草木搖落而變衰。

From David Hawkes, trans., *The Songs of the South* (New York: Penguin, 1985), 209. For the Chinese, see Hoshikawa Kiyotaka, ed., *Shinshaku kanbun taikei* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1970) 34: 282. *Lyrics of Chu*, a work that

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can be described as a work interested in transporting its reader on a journey into the spiritual realm, seems to be heavily influenced by Sōseki's poetic diction when describing movement in ethereal space.

<sup>102</sup> The Chinese graph originally refers to the domain of a castle town. The meaning of this word resembles the meaning of “circumference” in a poem by Emily Dickinson:

The Poets light but Lamps –  
Themselves – go out –  
The Wicks they stimulate  
If vital Light  
Inhere as do the Suns –  
Each Age a Lens –  
Disseminating their  
Circumference.

See R.W. Franklin, ed., *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2005), 397-398. Lines 7 and 8, “Disseminating their / Circumference–,” end the poem with the suggestion that the lens of future readers enables the circulation of light (poetry), but with the firm assertion that such circulation has circular limits. Since a “circumference” is the enclosing boundary of a circle, while it is tempting to read the final line as a hopeful assertion of poetry's radiance in later ages, the poem is more interested in evincing the limit of possibility than the fruition of it.

<sup>103</sup> This line also has a strong allusion to *Lyrics of Chu*, but here it is a couplet that appears at the end of “Faraway Journey” (“Yuan you”):

In the sheer depths below, the earth was invisible;  
In the vastness above, the sky could not be seen.  
下崢嶸而無地兮, 上寥廓而無天。

Trans. Hawkes. For the Chinese, see Hoshikawa, 270.

<sup>104</sup> Iida Rigyō, Wada Toshio and Nakamura Hiroshi read the graph as *awaku*. See Iida, 198. Wada Toshio, *Sōseki no shi to haiku* (Tokyo: Meru Kumārusha, 1974), 299. Nakamura Hiroshi, *Sōseki kanshi no sekai* (Tokyo: Dai'ichi Shobō, 1983), 159. Yoshikawa Kōjirō and Ikkai Tomoyoshi retain the Chinese reading.

<sup>105</sup> See Morohashi Tetsuji, ed., *Daikanwajiten* (Tokyo: Taishūkan Shoten, 1989) 7: 299.

<sup>106</sup> Japanese annotators including Yoshikawa and Ikkai take a more pleasant interpretation and read *ososhi* as “slow.” This interpretation reads the line as more of a comment about the emergence of a poetic feeling than the actual result of coming to grips with dulled senses. Furui Yoshikichi also reads the line in this way, praising Sōseki's usage of the adjective *ososhi*, and writes that the line comments on the length of time required to feel the charm of autumn. See Furui Yoshikichi, *Sōseki no kanshi wo yomu* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2009), 77.

<sup>107</sup> For most writers writing haiku and *kanshi* during the Meiji period, “poetry” was still tied to convention. Thus the narrator is aware of Japanese poetic conventions and the standards a poet must observe in order to write a “good” poem. By denying his poems as good poetry, the narrator begs the reader to read his poems not according to convention.

<sup>108</sup> *SZ*, 12: 450.

<sup>109</sup> *SZ*, 12: 451.

<sup>110</sup> Sōseki wrote an essay called “Spring in the Hospital” (Byōin no haru), which was published in the Tokyo Asahi Newspaper on April 13, 1911 (April 9 in Osaka). *Recollecting and Such* was anthologized in book form in *Kirinukichō yori* (From the scrapbook) on August 18, 1911. In the volume, the essay appears as Installment 33 in *Recollecting and Such*. We may view the extra installment as but another coda to a prose poem of codas.

<sup>111</sup> *SZ*, 12: 451. For *kundoku* annotations see *SZ*, 18: 85-252.

<sup>112</sup> See Note 97.

<sup>113</sup> The line can also be read as a prescient warning that there will be an uprising in Guangzhou, China. In modern Chinese history, the phrase *kōka no setsu* (the season of yellow blossoms) can refer to the Second Guangzhou Uprising, or the Yellow Mound Uprising, which occurred on April 27, 1911. Ming Dynasty loyalist Huang Xing and his revolutionaries led an uprising against the Qing Dynasty offices in Guangzhou province. The uprising failed, resulting in the death of 72 nationalists, including Lin Jue-min. He and his fellow martyrs are memorialized in The Mausoleum of the 72 Martyrs located in Yellow Mound Park. The tumultuous events of late 1910 lead to the Xinhai Revolution, which precipitated the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in October 1911. The final installment to *Recollecting and Such* was published in February (March in Osaka) of 1911. Although this is months before the uprising, the catastrophic events of 1910, including the annex of Korea to the Japanese empire, easily may have laid the groundwork for the crisis waiting to unfold in 1911.

**Coda:**  
**Echoes in the Ether**



Poetry should really only be philosophized.  
—Giorgio Agamben, “The End of the Poem” (1995)

On the night of November 20, 1916 Sōseki composed his last poem, an untitled seven-character regulated verse (*shichigon risshi*). I end this study with an examination of Sōseki’s last poem because it encapsulates the concerns of the earlier chapters on lyric thinking and sensual embodiment in poetic forms from the eighteenth to early twentieth century. The lyric writings of Buson, Saikō, Shiki and Sōseki all feature lyric thinking in which sensual embodiment in poetic form evinces the presence of a lyric subject. Sōseki’s last poem does this too, up until its ending, which offers a way for lyric thinking to continue without the presence of a lyric subject.<sup>2</sup> By the end, the poem presents an allegory for lyric thinking and the future of poetic production beyond Sōseki’s moment, into our own.

As Giorgio Agamben has observed, “poetry lives only in tension and difference between sound and sense, between the semiotic sphere and the semantic sphere.”<sup>3</sup> This means that a poem is a poem as long as there is dissonance between sound and sense, a dissonance produced by enjambment.<sup>4</sup> Agamben argues that this opposition between sound and sense finds resolution when the poem ends. What if a poem ends by not ending? Sōseki’s final *kanshi* presents a case of poetic closure that goes beyond closure, evoking what Barbara Herrnstein Smith describes as “anti-teleology” or “anti-closure.”<sup>5</sup> Sōseki’s poem shows how paradox allows the dissonance between sound and sense to continue forever as a final image of sound that is “both spatial and temporal, stable and unstable, finite and infinite, closed and open.”<sup>6</sup> This final image is evoked in Sōseki’s final poem by the word *gin*, a “song” or “ode” that the poet sings without his body—as we shall see below—to white clouds in the void. This word and its ambiguous meaning in the context of the poem suggest the possibility for poetry to continue even after the poem has ended, for sound and sense to exist in perpetual dissonance afforded by paradox and contradiction:

The true path is desolate, dark and hard to find,  
Wanting to keep an open mind, pacing the past and present.  
Emerald hills and emerald streams, how can they have an ego,  
When all of heaven and all of earth have no feeling?  
Misty evening shades, the moon trapped in the grass,  
Motley autumn sounds, the wind caught in the trees.  
I ignore both eyes and ears, and let go the body,  
Chanting in the sky alone an ode to the white clouds.

*shinshō wa sekibaku yō toshite tazunegataku*  
*kyokai wo idakan to hosshite kokon wo ayumu*  
*hekisui hekizan nanzo ware aran*  
*gaiten gaichi kore mushin*  
*iki taru boshoku tsuki kusa ni kakari*  
*sakuraku taru shūsei kaze hayashi ni ari*  
*ganji futatsu nagara wasurete mi mo mata ushinai*  
*kūchū ni hitori tonau haku'un no gin*

真蹤寂寞杳難尋  
欲抱虛懷步古今  
碧水碧山何有我  
蓋天蓋地是無心  
依稀暮色月離草  
錯落秋聲風在林  
眼耳雙忘身亦失  
空中獨唱白雲吟

The poem paints an autumnal landscape, dark, desolate, and dreary. Considering Sōseki's declining health at the time of composition, many critics have read the poem as autobiography.<sup>8</sup> To be sure, his impending death (Sōseki died on December 9, 1916) may have inspired the conflict that runs through the imagery in the poem—the rhythm between past and present, the discord between self and nature, the precariousness of life figured by the atmospheric opacity and mournful sounds of autumn, and the estrangement of mind from body.<sup>9</sup>

The lyric subject in the poem tries to resolve these conflicts in eight lines comprising four couplets. The poem opens with a couplet about the lyric mind pacing the past and present. The opening word “true path” (*shinshō*) evokes the “path” in Daoist and Buddhist philosophy. By describing it as “desolate, dark, and hard to find,” the poet calls into question what that path is, and what is “true” or “real” (*shin*). By rendering the “true path” obscure, Line 1 evokes the uncertainty of negative capability, and furnishes room for hermeneutic possibilities.

Line 2 continues this openness, or at least the desire for openness, by qualifying that “path” (or more literally, “foot traces”) as being a journey through the past and present.<sup>10</sup> This journey through time in the act of reading and composing poetry is mediated by an “open mind” (*kyokai*), and evokes traditional Chinese theories on literary craft and composition.<sup>11</sup> By linking this “path” to poetic creation, and beginning with the idea of its elusiveness, the opening couplet already anticipates the way the poem ends: a song whose human imprint is no longer visible.

As the poet reflects on the meaning of poetry through the rhythm of past and present, repetition, like a stutter, breaks the integrity of concepts, slowing the affirmation of meaning, and allowing sound to disrupt sense.<sup>12</sup> Lines 3 and 4 form a couplet that speaks to a central question in Chinese and Romantic poetry: what is the relationship between man and nature? In traditional Chinese thought, man and nature are one: natural objects have feelings just like human beings because man and nature exist on the same metonymical plane.<sup>13</sup> Romanticism, however, is a response to the loss of connection between man and nature, which is why the Romantic tradition features prosopopoeia, anthropomorphism, and other figurations that give human attributes to natural objects.<sup>14</sup> The couplet questions this figuration through repetition and parallel construction: the words *heki* (emerald) and *gai* (lit. “vault,” translated as “all”) qualify the binaries *sansui* and *tenchi*, which constitute the ideas of “the natural landscape” and “the human world,” respectively. The repetition of *heki* and *gai* adds to the rhetorical force of each line, but also compromises the integrity of the binaries in severing them. In this way, the couplet throws the world of poetic representation on its head, asking how can landscape have a “self” or “ego” (*ware*), when its world has “no feeling” (*mushin*). The couplet blends the Buddhist idea of *mushin* (“no mind” or “no-minded-ness”) with a modern concern for the self, the Romantic idea of the isolated lyric subject, and modern man's alienation from the natural world. And in the parallelism and the repetition of the couplet, we hear the poet's plaintive cry over this loss. It is in formal features like parallelism and repetition that the music and rhythm of poetry is heard.

The poet renews his connection with nature in foreboding images of visual and sonic indistinctness in the couplet formed by Lines 5 and 6.<sup>15</sup> The humanization of nature through figures of moonlight on the grass and wind blowing in the trees evokes the twilight moments and opaque atmospheres of Romantic poetry, and the eerie and jarring sounds of autumn that poets across multiple traditions have used to forebode death. The fact that the moon's image is “caught” in the grass and the wind is “trapped” in the trees imbues the couplet with a feeling of perpetual penultimate-ness, a feeling of being on the threshold of an imminent crescendo: the end of the poem.<sup>16</sup>

In the wake of visual and sonic indistinctness comes the deflation of the poet's sensual embodiment and humanization of nature as an estrangement of mind from body. In the penultimate line "I ignore both eyes and ears, and let go the body," the poet abandons his eyes, ears, and body; in doing so, he effaces his material existence in the world, and becomes a disembodied spirit or mind floating in the ether.<sup>17</sup> The image evokes the conceit of the Daoist immortal who has transcended the vulgar realm and the Zen practitioner whose mind has abandoned the material world for a place of higher existence.

And yet the poet's transcendence is ironized by the image of a disembodied voice and its ghostly echo in the void, turning the poem into a comment on lyric and metaphysics.<sup>18</sup> The poet's transcendence is attained through pure sound in emptiness. The word *kūchū* means "in the sky," but also carries the Buddhist meaning "inside emptiness." This nuance evokes the "open mind" in Line 2, but also the rift created by the repetition of qualifiers in Lines 3 and 4: *kū* (also *sora*) refers to the space between "heaven" (*ten*) and "earth" (*chi*), and is also the state of the mind that stirs poetic creativity. By figuring his voice in liminal states denoted by "in the sky" and "inside emptiness," the poet lets his ode come to fruition. The adverb *hitori* (alone) indicates his solitude; but the adverb also means "just" or "only." These other meanings ironize his "chanting" (*tonau*), and cynically suggest that chanting in endless repetition will fall on deaf ears. The final image "ode to the white clouds" (*haku'un no gin*) echoes this irony by figuring an audience that is formless and indifferent.<sup>19</sup> Whether the ode is being sung "to" the white clouds or "on (the topic of)" the white clouds is unclear. As a verb *gin* means "to groan," "to sigh," "to cry," and "to sing"; as a noun, it means a Chinese poem to be sung aloud. Considering the meanings of *gin* as a verb, the poem is likely mournful and elegiac.<sup>20</sup> As such, Sōseki's poem concludes on a somber note, with the image of sound separated from sense (song without a singer; poem without a poet), and hovering as an eternal echo in the ether.

The question raised by such an ending is whether sound can be heard if the disembodied lyric mind is floating in liminal space among indifferent white clouds—form without content. Can sound be heard without a body to sense it? The paradox offers a solution to a *crise de vers*, a crisis for the poem that Agamben argues all poems face upon ending:

At the point in which sound is about to be ruined in the abyss of sense, the poem looks for shelter in suspending its own end in a declaration, so to speak, of the state of poetic emergency.<sup>21</sup>

The poetic emergency, the feeling of "ending," is evoked in the form and content of Sōseki's poem, and in the extra-textual contingency of his own mortality.

The word *gin* evokes the rhyme that gives order to the poem, and as a word that denotes a song to be sung, it speaks to the ontology of poetry itself.<sup>22</sup> In its Chinese form, Sōseki's poem rhymes (*jin, kin, shin, rin, gin*) and adheres to the meter (*hyōsoku*) of seven-character regulated verse. Such metrical limits operate in opposition to the semantic movement facilitated by enjambment. So, when Sōseki's poem ends, its poem-ness theoretically ends too. However the paradox suggested by the metaphysical ending—whether the ode can be heard in formlessness, figured by a disembodied lyric voice and the white clouds—allows the disjunction between sound and sense to continue in deafening silence.

If the end of a poem is a poetic impossibility as Agamben argues, then the paradox of a potentially endless chanting audible only as perpetual silence offers a way for poetry to continue in thought, in the poetic imagination. The *gin* evokes a rhythm that continues as a form without

content, like the white clouds figured with it. By the end of the poem, we are back where we started, with the uncertainty and obscurity of meaning: “The true path is desolate, dark and hard to find.” It is through dissonance in meaning, the continued disjunction between sound and sense through paradox and contradiction, that the poem stirs thought.

In his essay on American poet Hart Crane (1899-1932), Allen Grossman argues that a good poem is a “cognitive triumph.” He writes: “Poems are ‘good’ from my point of view, insofar as they respond to *real problems of mind to which there is no other solution than poetry.*”<sup>23</sup> If we take Sōseki’s poem as a distillation of his entire enterprise as poet and painter, as allegory for modern lyric production and its futurity, then its seamless blending of multiple literary traditions through an allusive tapestry of images displays its self-consciousness as a modern poem in ancient form, a mind in contradiction. This is precisely the problem of lyric thinking and creation when contending with the contradictions of modernity, for which one (or perhaps the only) solution is poetry: a form that questions the limits of thought, sound, and sense, and leaves the answers open. In Sōseki’s poem, that openness rests on the final word *gin*, the paradoxical sound of presence and absence. To echo Grossman on the open-endedness of the last lines in Crane’s poem “The Broken Tower”: “The poem has done what poetry can do. It has given rise to thinking.”<sup>24</sup>

I would hope that my examination of Buson, Saikō, Shiki and Sōseki has shown what poetry can do, how lyric thinking presents a philosophy of poetic form that need not produce an argument or find resolution, but can communicate the thoughts and feelings of a lyric subject with openness and indeterminacy—put simply, language in the state or process of thinking. As Sōseki’s last poem has shown through the paradox of the word *gin*, the poem continues to think, without the poet and without the containment of the poem, through the form of rhythm, a paradoxical image that keeps the reader at home thinking too.

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<sup>1</sup> Giorgio Agamben, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen, *The End of the Poem: Studies in Poetics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 115. Agamben is paraphrasing Ludwig Wittgenstein’s dictum, “philosophy should really only be poeticized.”

<sup>2</sup> Bill Brown makes a similar observation about the futurity of consciousness suggested by Henry James’s travelogue *The American Scene*: “For James had really begun to describe a more recent future, a future where verbal performance has been disjoined from human embodiment, and where knowledge has expanded far beyond the confines of the autonomous subject. Everyday life now presents us not with phenomenology’s reduction of the world to consciousness, but with consciousness reconceived as something dispersed throughout the material world.” See Bill Brown, *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 188.

<sup>3</sup> Agamben, 109.

<sup>4</sup> In Western poetry “enjambment” refers to “the continuation of a syntactic unit from one line to the next without a major juncture or pause; the opposite of an end-stopped line. While enjambment can refer to any verse that is not end-stopped, it is generally reserved for instances in which the ‘not stopping’ of the verse is felt as overflow, especially in relation to some poetic effect.” See Roland Greene, et al., eds., *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 435. Under this definition, “enjambment,” in the syntactical sense, rarely occurs in traditional Chinese poetry. I use “enjambment” to refer to the “incompleteness” in the flow of thought in one line that seeks “completion” by forming a mutual dependency with another line. This is the continuation or carrying-over of sense, in opposition to sound, from one line to the next in a Chinese poem. This idea is akin to what Milton describes in his preface to *Paradise Lost* (1764) as “the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another.” For a discussion of this line, see William Fitzgerald, *The Life of a Roman Concept* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 15.

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<sup>5</sup> Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 234-271.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>7</sup> Natsume Sōseki, *Soseki zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2003), 18: 476-477. The *kundoku* is a blend of versions by Yoshikawa Kōjirō, Iida Rigyō, and Ikkai Tomoyoshi.

<sup>8</sup> All Japanese annotations read the poem as autobiography. For a heartfelt discussion on the poem and Sōseki's final days, see Matsuoka Yuzuru, *Sōseki no kanshi* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1966), 267-269.

<sup>9</sup> There is a fatalism in Sōseki's poem that evokes William Wordsworth's sonnet "The World Is Too Much With Us."

<sup>10</sup> There is also a subtle irony in the resonance between "path" (*shō*) and "pacing" (*aruku*), as if the poet's journey into literature of the past and present is already futile because the "path" or "foot-prints" left by his literary forebears may not exist. He seems to be lamenting that only their traces remain.

<sup>11</sup> As Liu Xie (465-522) argues in the chapter on "Spirit Thought" (Shen si) in *The Literary Mind Carves Dragons* (Wenxin diaolong), "In the shaping of literary thought, the most important thing is emptiness and stillness within." See Stephen Owen, *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911* (New York: Norton, 1996), 346. Once the writer finds his peace of mind (through a process of meditation), he enters the ideal state for literary creation. As Lu Ji (261-303) observes in "Poetic Exposition on Literature" (Wen fu), in this tranquil state of mind the writer can scan the thousands of volumes of classical literature, and simultaneously traverse the past and present. Lu Ji writes: "He [the writer] sees past and present in a single instant, / Touches all this world in the blink of an eye." See Owen, 337. The poet in Sōseki's poem, however, tells us that keeping this "open mind" is but an unfulfilled wish, not a certainty.

<sup>12</sup> Here I invoke Craig Dworkin's essay "The Stutter of Form," in which he compares the dissonance between sound and sense in poetry to the dissonance between sound and sense in a stutter or a stammer. In his discussion of the stuttering in *Blert* (2008) by contemporary American poet Jordan Scott, Dworkin invokes Paul Valéry's definition of a poem as "a prolonged hesitation between sound and meaning." See Marjorie Perloff and Craig Dworkin, eds., *The Sound of Poetry / The Poetry of Sound* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 166-183.

<sup>13</sup> See Pauline Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

<sup>14</sup> The way nature is figured in Sōseki's poem evokes Karl Kroeber's reading of nature in "The World Is Too Much With Us." He argues that way Wordsworth humanizes nature elements without full personification "demonstrates how modern man, without returning to an outworn attitude, may not merely observe nature and enjoy the gratifying sensations it provides but can, in a sophisticated, creative fashion, humanize his natural environment, make it belong to him, make it 'ours.'" See Karl Kroeber, "A New Reading of 'The World Is Too Much With Us,'" *Studies in Romanticism* 2 (Spring, 1963), 3: 186.

<sup>15</sup> Like Wordsworth writes "Little we see in Nature that is ours," Sōseki humanizes nature in this couplet by acknowledging man's distance from it. Kroeber writes: "By not pretending that nature is human—the 'pretense' of full personification, a favorite neoclassic device—and by admitting that 'little we see in Nature . . . is ours,' we can become in 'tune' with nature, can associate natural objects and human feelings." See Kroeber, 188.

<sup>16</sup> Annotations by Ikkai Tomoyoshi and many others read the Chinese graph 離 in Line 5 as *hanare* ("separated," from *hanaru*, "to separate"), not *kakari* ("trapped," from *kakaru*, "to cling"; "to hang"). I have chosen Iida Rigyō's reading *kakari* because it evokes the Chinese graph's other meaning "to encounter (something undesirable)" as in Qu Yuan's poem *Li sao* 離騷, or "Encountering Sorrow." This association speaks to the mournful tone of the poem.

<sup>17</sup> This image is not dissimilar from the ending of the last poem in *Recollecting and Such*, where the poet figures his mind as "a roving spirit dreaming of the old moss at home."

<sup>18</sup> Although it is unclear how much Sōseki knew of seventeenth-century metaphysical poetry, the ideas of Andrew Marvell and other poets associated with metaphysical thought seem to appear in Sōseki's poetry as images of dissolution and self-annihilation, as we can see here. Buddhist and Daoist philosophy is metaphysical in nature, so the connections across philosophical traditions are there. The way that Sōseki ends the poem with a disembodied psyche may be interpreted as a statement of truth about the "self" in metaphysical thought. As David Boym writes: "This 'self' is viewed, in the first instance, as a physical body, sharply bounded by the surface of the skin, and then as a 'mental entity' (also called the psyche or 'the soul') which is 'within' this physical body and which is taken to be the very essence of the individual human being. The notion of a separately existent 'self' thus follows as an aspect of the generally accepted metaphysics, which implies that *everything* is of this nature." See David Boym, *On Creativity* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 120.

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<sup>19</sup> Sōseki's other poems often evoke the image of "white clouds," which on the one hand serve as figures for imaginative transport, but also as cold and indifferent listeners. See Chapter 4, Note 2.

<sup>20</sup> We may interpret the images that constitute the poem as metaphors that speak to concerns of lyric expression at the present moment of composition, but also in the future. The word *gin* evokes the afterlife of *kanshi*, if not literati culture overall, in a genre of oral performance called *shigin*, or "Chinese poetry recitation." *Shigin* practitioners often recite poems without knowing their historical provenance or meaning. In *shigin*, poetry meets prayer, and evokes the space of ritual in which poetic meaning derives less from words, and more from sound, rhythm, and repetition.

<sup>21</sup> Agamben, 113. Agamben views the end of the poem as an object of ontological inquiry, and argues that the ends of poems cease to be "poetry" because they foreclose the possibility of enjambment, the continuation of meaning from one line to the next that facilitates movement in verse. As David Ben-Merre observes, "Agamben takes up the negative ontological state of the final line of a poem, but also the eschatological end of lyric poetry in the twentieth century." See David Ben-Merre, "Falling into Silence: Giorgio Agamben at the End of the Poem," *Mosaic* 45, no. 1 (March 2012): 90.

<sup>22</sup> Agamben writes: "the poem is an organism grounded in the perception of the limits and endings that define—without ever fully coinciding with, and almost in intermittent dispute with—sonorous (or graphic) units and semantic units." See Agamben, 110.

<sup>23</sup> Allen Grossman, *True-Love: Essays on Poetry and Valuing* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 156. Original emphasis.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

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