

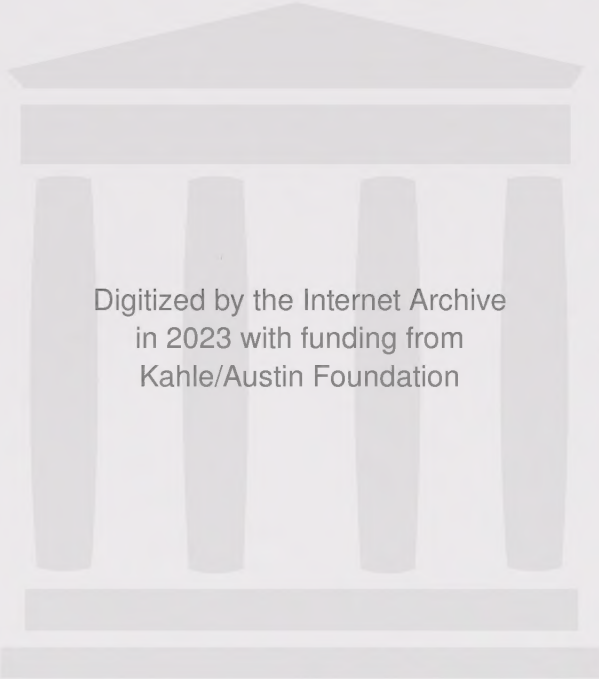
WALKING BY MY SELF AGAIN



TANEDA SANTOKA

Versions by

SCOTT WATSON



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TRANSLATOR'S WORDS

Ten years ago I wrote: 'There is neither rhyme nor reason to my method here. Just that each poem I take—from wherever I take it—one at a time and follow wherever it takes me, and if it feels like it is two lines I put it in two lines; if it feels like two words, two words are what it is. Some go to four lines, some three. It depends on how I sense each poem with, as, and in my life-and-death, my breath, words.'

Ten years later all that can be added is that continuing along with Santoka the poems his poems start in me at times feel as if there is a trickling as with the flow of a brook only downward. A small and gentle waterfall.

Others seem to call for a single ink brush stroke across the page. These are the ones with what I call the Zen grammar, which is a label I use for lack of a better one to describe his poems that use a possessive to modify a possessive to modify a possessive and how such a poem retraces itself to a beginningless beginning and is all at once all it is.

Some choose to call this simple ungrammaticality that may be a result of Santoka being lubricated with drink when composing or editing his

work, but I think not. Drunk or sober, the challenge is to respond to those poems in a wordlife of my being. That requires letting go of whatever protocol or accepted language behavior one may have picked up over the years at home or at schools. One must be uninhibited. One has to let oneself go, go with the flow.

Back in the USA sisters Clara and Marsha at elementary school class parties used to complain that white boys can't dance. But they'd dance with me. It's not just a matter of knowing the right steps. I was an empty Zen fool full of dance. The words eventually appear and feel to me as if they are the ones needed, the words that seem to best respond as Santoka's poem lives through me. Dance to the music beyond measure.

Much is intuition. A sense of things that comes seemingly out of nowhere but here it is. Though I can live, sense things, through the Japanese language I can't say that I'm an official expert. No certificates adorn my walls. At times I need a dictionary and at times, with Santoka, even a dictionary does not help. At times I ask Morie (my wife) but more often than not I'm more at a loss than before because she has no idea what Santoka 'means'. I'm not out to make versions that are grammatically or technically correct. If Santoka's original has a present progressive verb form it

doesn't mean my version will. Anyway no linguist to my knowledge has ever proved that a progressive verb in Japanese is exactly the same as a progressive verb in English. They're just labels anyway. English is not Japanese, Japanese is not English. I am not Santoka, Santoka is not me. I don't believe in translation in the sense that this is equivalent to that. I do what I can.

Scott Watson
Sendai, Japan
2011

this journey, endless journey's buddhapriest cicada

or maybe stop begging take in the mountains

calm, calm, cold, cold, snow, snow

self-deprecation:

from behind a body going into winter drizzle

quiet morning sea islands two of them set there

winter rain stone step climb:
Santa Maria

as if all on its own a tooth comes out

cold
clouds
in a hurry

home town far away trees budding

with a road now quiet heartleaf buds*

*heartleaf: Japanese 'dokudami.' Also in English called Chinese lizard tail. *Houttuynia cordata*.

fernbrake for sale already

over morning noises a long bridge spans

settle in here
little plants bud

satisfied
solitary
chopsticks
set down

winter rain walk this earth firmly

today's road's dandelions are out

evening sky one citron taken

left as they fall tea flowers falling is all

all nude will
dragonfly
think of
lighting

today too all day walking wind

whatever it all is it all is blossoming

after a rain thistle clear morning

looking down all
the small stones

on young leaves is dew
on my *kasa* is dew

this temple all
the baby bamboo
grew up to

pine breeze pine shade lie down

breaking day sharpen a sickle

listening alone, woodpecker

walking continues
other-shore-flowers'
blooming continues

early winter drizzle
early winter mountain
enter walking

enough to eat received it rains

trees budding grasses budding walking goes on

parting
buddhapriest cicada

a never to be seen again mountain
the distance it becomes

serenely
water birds
mate

crossing this river run dry

hanging down snake gourds a pair

making way sound of water

in rain camellia flowers not yet falling

incessantly falling great big leaves!

entirely withered now being beans

a mountain all dry still with water to drink

travel writing rewriting to leave behind

wet by rain dropped from that cloud

getting old longing
for my old home
buddhapriest cicada

rock upon itself letting thistle bloom

with water sound to this village come down

fully eating a meal enough only for a meal

no clouds at all remove my *kasa*

able to meet again camellia in bloom

eavesdrops patter they too getting old

a shabby shadow to think of falling leaves

branches reaching out from a winter tree

or maybe stop begging
take in the mountains

This hat too, has it sprung a leak?

frosty night
where oh where
a place to bed

settle in here
little plants to bud

all day today too no one came fireflies

pine breeze cool,
people eating,
horses eating

today too all day walking wind

on young leaves is dew
on my hat is dew

this
moon
tilted
like an
owl

briar flowers
let's become one with this
earth

waiting, cherries ripen

mountain breasts
becoming naked

mountain path
already blooming
bush clover

here again briar flowers scatter

to pick up
from this
morning's
earth

dedicating these rocks this place where water
springs

hurry back kanakana cicada

a mountain's one day
ants too on their way

clouds in a hurry give a good moon

morning cool ginger flowers

always alone red dragonfly

until my clothes dry
this grassy breeze

today
is
farewell
gourds
dangle

only getting wet
wet buttercup

having this fig leaf shade
having this lunch

across the water
brothel lights
twinkle

mist piled up mountains dear to my heart

spring wind one begging bowl

into a going
where it pleases
journey's rain
getting wet

long away come back to bamboo shoots shooting

wet all over paddy horse scolded scolded

raining, clearing, paddies grow green

weeds overgrown where the dead people burn*

*crematorium

morning dew
going damply
the way that
wants to go

cuckoo
tomorrow
let's cross
that mountain

taking off my hat getting quite wet

neither waiting
nor not waiting
moonlight weeds

a gourd

aim
less
ly
at-
tains
ground

a sudden shower washed eggplant picked

the real equinox's
real beginning
cluster amaryllis

within reach figs
their ripeness

memories
coming flood tide
my hometown place

a little fallen water
cupped by hand

sky's depth leaf sinking in water

As with rock so with grasses: wither

water sounds going on and on briar thicket hips

from behind moonlit water to cross

drizzling
feeding the earth

spearflowers need company too
a few little berries

in rain cross mountains
more mountains unknown

autumn mountain smoke a lone charcoal maker

evening dew a deep damp sleep

pine boughs all drooping hail Buddha

watching the setting moon
alone

hey dog don't you have a home either?

with a drizzle
pine trees
pine trees

penetrating
deep in autumn mountain
sound of waves

up and down mountains
feels like
something's left behind

make a bed of dead grass
moon right above

way going in
tail flowers
fluff away

like this
going on
day to day
leaves
falling
falling

heart-to-heart snow falling little birds' love

distant mountain's snow with one to bid farewell

snow's luminance
many households'
silence

a dry spell bush clover pampas grass are wet

from camellia water fallen flowing

wake up
snow falling
not feeling lonely
but

as if someone's coming snow here, there

an owl is an owl, an I am is an I am unable to
sleep

train's rumble
night's end already
oak leaves rustle

sick on my own
morning to evening

takes its course
green leaves

sky's glisten
persimmon's new leaves
still alive

this morning's water sounds—good things are likely

it's that always-tied-nothing-but-barking-to-do dog

a bloom of
truly quiet
grass's growth

coming out, growing, blooming blessedness

shadow too, so clear, green leaves

pops out a hole, a lizard, or...

no one comes to see me.
preserving butterbur

from mountain
peek at mountain
rain season sun

from morning all nude a dragonfly alights

there's something to eat, something to get me
drunk, rain for weeds

blazing sun's endless ant procession

spider spins its web I affirm my self

ever able to die
grasses bloom
bear fruit

heat of the day
falling leaves
this one

weather clear butterflies
first two, then three

blue sky intimately silent, still

here is me
one day
buddhapriest
cicada

when lilies bloom
Jizo* too
in flowers

*Jizo: Earth Store Bodhisattva;
looks over children, travelers,
and the underworld

even to the grasses
a wind's come up.
chill my tofu too

refreshing breeze
blows around and through
bees and dragonflies

hometown's water to drink, water to bathe

a place to die
grasses flourish,
thrive

ought to give this to someone—
getting sponge gourd's water

* sponge gourd water was and is used
as face lotion – sw

other shore's other-shore-flowers for the Buddha-hood

* other-shore-flowers: literal trans.
of *higan bana* (cluster amaryllis)

amaryllis
flowering
birthplace
graves are
all there is

settling in persimmons ripen

buddhapriest cicada too too close buddhapriest cicada

from persimmon tree's
beyond the moon above
persimmon tree

in bed
sun tinged
persimmon
leaves,
reed tips,
and

something's not enough leaves are falling

shrike's shrieking and that leaf's leaving

coming from behind grass buds all over

moon too
at river bottom
is a traveler's sky

there is a willow tree
a willow place to stay
cool breeze

all in good health pumpkin flowers too

from a sudden evening shower crawfish
come out to play

wake from nap whichever way mountains

traveling autumn's
here—all but mountain mist

sitting here is breeze autumn's weeds

lie down here grass seeds falling

bush clover, pampas grass, this day's way

out back if there are four or five trees
buddhapriest cicada

road's end trees
ready to let leaves fall

leaves falling falling even into begging bowl

willows dispersing
where my begging begins

on an all right road towards an all right building:
crematory

now writing it down fall colors falling

walking: grasses in seed
sitting: grasses in seed

spring is here water sounds as far as can go

winterberries red
good-humored white eyes,
buntings

spring cold brothel girl brings a small coin

the crow has flown time to cross this water

from nowhere a cool breeze black wing dragonfly

nothing's lonelier
than wind it seems
pampass grass ears

water
this
delicious

is
over
flowing

water sounds today too on my way alone

quite myself with this wind come to think

wind blowing out of
nowhere

living on
a butterfly

from
within
this
wind
caw
caw
this
crow

bamboo's thing
with morning wind
drop, drop

happy things sad things grasses exuberate

as if someone is coming loquat leaf falling

wanting something to do grass blades stirring

intimate
mountain
meadow
bush warbler
cries

tip tap comes a bug with no buzz

long away
come back: bamboo
shoots.shooting

there is only this road spring snow falling

spring has come water sounds go where they do

this day this far sandals come off

well now.
which way to go.
wind blowing.

(weed adoration)
come out!
grow!
blossom
full of cool breeze

wind just right
spring-like
thicket and
thicket

being
drunk
sound
of
water

what is sought
on into wind

bulrush ears
where wind wants to go
going

ox largely sprawled out twelfth month wind

into this wind self-rebukingly walk

in this wind call out fully selfless
Kannon Bodhisattva

heartmind calm
sound of water

separated by water
the man-woman thing
talked on forever

the water is likely warm
dark sleepers are likely out

* dark sleepers: fish, species of
sleeper goby – sw

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