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A STRAY DOG HOWLING AT THE MOON
—A LITERARY BIOGRAPHY OF HAGIWARA SAKUTARŌ—
(1886–1942)

VOLUME ONE

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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CONTENTS

VOLUME ONE:

Abstract .............................................. i
Acknowledgements ................................. ii
Preface .............................................. iii

1: Introduction ...................................... 1

2: Chapter One: The Life ............................. 31

3: Chapter Two: Tsuki ni Hoeru—Howling at the moon .................. 69

4: Chapter Three: Niji o ou hito—Following Rainbows—
and the Dialogue Period .......................... 103

4: Chapter Four: Aoneko —The Blue Cat ...................... 138

5: Chapter Five: Hyōtō —The Iceland ..................... 182

Selected Bibliography ............................. 207
ABSTRACT

This thesis is a literary biography of the Taishō poet, Hagiwara Sakutarō, which aims to explore the relationship between the poet's life and work, and to contextualize his role as a 'modern' poet through an analysis of his writing—particularly his themes and imagery—with a view to assessing his contribution to modern Japanese poetry.

Sakutarō's importance as a modern poet is twofold. He is heralded firstly for the success with which he introduced colloquial idiom into his poetry without sacrificing artistic merit, and secondly for his ability to express the existential despair of the intellectuals of his age, that is to delve into the alienated psyche of the 'modern' man. This thesis aims to examine this two-fold contribution to modern Japanese poetry and in so doing, to explore Sakutarō's construction of self, that is, how he saw himself, his life and his work. This approach was taken in the belief that this is the best way to appreciate this poet and his work. Sakutarō was a masterful artist, who gave close attention to the internal cohesion of his poetry and to how he presented it to the world. In his major collections, Sakutarō aimed to present a cohesive thematic framework, and this thesis examines that framework.

Volume One contains the main body of the thesis, while Volume Two contains the translations of his three major collections; Tsuki ni Hoeru (Howling at the Moon), Aoneko (The Blue Cat), Hyōtō (The Iceland), the poetic dialogue Niji o ou hito (Following Rainbows), and a number of extracts from essays and letters. Chapter One, Volume One, is both a chronological history of his life and an examination of how certain events influenced his work, aiming to present a clearer picture of the man behind the poetry. The four following chapters concentrate on his writing, with a chapter given to the examination of the thematic structure of each of his major collections and one to Niji o ou hito. Sakutarō drew on three main themes in his exploration of the psyche of the alienated 'modern' man; the dichotomy between a search for transcendence as an escape from the pain of existence, and a fear of descent back into that pain; the clash between primitive instinct and conscience; and the desire to return to a pure, primitive state of existence, that is, man's original home.

Thus, this thesis aims to explore the life and work of Hagiwara Sakutarō, setting out to show how he gave voice to the alienation and despair of the 'modern' man, and contributed to the development of 'modern' Japanese poetry.
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I also owe thanks to the Japan Centre in the Faculty of Asian Studies, Australian National University, for their help and encouragement since July 1994 when I took up the position of lecturer.

Finally I would like to thank my parents and friends for their loving support.
PREFACE

This thesis is a literary biography, which aims to explore Sakutarō’s construction of self through an examination of the relationship between his life and work. It is perhaps better termed a literary ‘autobiography,’ as it seeks to allow the poet to speak for himself. The complete translations of all the poems from Sakutarō’s three major collections, are included in Volume Two. All the translations in this thesis are based on the versions in the Hagiwara Sakutarō Zenshū (Complete Works of Hagiwara Sakutarō), published by Chikuma Shobō (1975 to 1989),¹ and unless otherwise indicated all translations of Sakutarō’s writings are my own. The poetic dialogue, Niji o ou hito (Following Rainbows), the prefaces to each collection, and the miscellaneous essays included in Section Five of Volume Two, are here translated into English for the first time.

Transliteration of all Japanese words is based on the Hepburn system, and the original Japanese word order, family name first, is retained for the names of all Japanese nationals. Further, this thesis follows the practice of Japanese critics by referring to Hagiwara Sakutarō by his personal name.

The titles of poetry collections are given in Japanese, followed by the English translation; however, for individual poems, the English title is used in the main body of the thesis with the Japanese title in the footnote. Footnote references to Sakutarō’s work provide first the English title, followed by the original Japanese title; however references to Japanese secondary sources give the Japanese title, with the English translation in paraentheses. Volume Two contains an index of all the poems, by both English and Japanese title, together with their translations.

Of the previously published translations of Sakutarō’s work the most comprehensive was published in 1993 by Robert Epp.² His work covers seven of Sakutarō’s collections of free verse and a number of prose poems. Prior to Epp’s work, the most complete translations were those of

¹Edited by Itō Shinkichi, the complete works is made up of sixteen volumes covering work in a variety of genres: poetry = 3; aphorisms = 2; poetic theory = 2; essays = 4; diary and notes = 3. Volume fifteen contains a chronological record of Sakutarō’s life, and the more recent volume sixteen (1989) contains hitherto unpublished notes and poetry.
Satō Hiroaki, in his work *Howling at the Moon: Poems by Hagiwara Sakutarō*, which included the poems of both *Tsuki ni Hoeru* and *Aoneko*.

Other scholars such as Ueda Makoto, Graeme Wilson and Tsukimura Reiko have also published translations of selected poems.

Epp chose to arrange his translations in chronological order as he felt that the ordering of the published collections failed to reveal Sakutarō's development as an artist. Epp's chronological ordering, deliberately destroys the careful thematic construction of Sakutarō's work. Epp believes this approach allows the reader more scope to compare successive pieces of work, and thus the opportunity to assess how Sakutarō experimented with and re-attacked the same issues from various directions. Epp's goal is to provide a 'retrospective,' which he believes provides a more accurate 'frame' for the author, than Sakutarō's own framework. This thesis is, however, written in the belief that an assessment of the ordering of Sakutarō's poems is vital to any assessment his work, as are his letters, aphorisms and other writings. Epp criticises what he refers to as the "artificial setting" of Sakutarō's own ordering, regarding it as limited because it gives only the poet's "private view of a poem's meaning."

Reading the published collections fails to reveal important aspects of Sakutarō's development as an artist. To understand artistic growth, I believe one must rather arrange the several hundred published and unpublished works in rough chronological order.

This ordering allows one to study the natural and historical setting of the works. That alone can convey a full appreciation of a poet's development. Historical arrangement will provide deeper insights into the way Sakutarō grappled with certain problems and metaphors, give a clearer understanding of how he tried to explore different facets of similar emotions, and make it easier to see connections among images that appear in clusters throughout the corpus.

In direct opposition to Epp's methodology, this thesis deliberately chose to run with Sakutarō's own ordering in the conviction that the contexts Sakutarō himself created are vital to a true understanding of his poetry. It is

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an insult to his genius to ignore this context. Sakutarō used his collections to create a thematic structure which overrides the chronology of his work. The three collections covered demonstrate his view of his place in a world where reality was blurred and focus was only found through thematic coherence. An intellectual history which explored Sakutarō's role as an intellectual in his age and examined the intellectual and political currents of Taishō would have proved a useful approach to this poet's life and work; however, this thesis sprang from a concentrated reading of Sakutarō's works with a view to exploring the thematic development of his work and his construction of self. One problem with this approach is however, that due to Sakutarō's interpretation and re-interpretation of a finite group of themes, there is a certain amount of unavoidable repetition in any assessment of the thematic development of his work.
INTRODUCTION

(1) Setting the Stage ......................... 1
(2) Sakutarō's contribution to modern Japanese poetry ..................... 9
(3) Sakutarō's success with the colloquial idiom ......................... 14
   (a) Sakutarō's poetic ..................... 16
   (b) Musicality and language ..................... 19
   (c) Shifting viewpoint ..................... 22
   (d) Debunking tradition ..................... 24
   (e) Coinage of new words and images ..................... 26
(4) Success in tapping into the despair of the 'modern' intellectual ..................... 29
(1) Setting the stage

Hagiwara Sakutarō, stood at the crossroads where the modern diverged from the traditional in Japanese poetry. He is celebrated for his role in the modernization of Japanese poetry, for building a bridge between Meiji and Showa Japan thereby creating a path to the 'modern.' He is heralded by many as the 'father of modern Japanese poetry.' Critics stand in agreement with the poet Takamura Kōtarō, who wrote of Sakutarō's success with the colloquial idiom as early as 1928.

Are there any truly natural—truly pure—poets in modern Japan?...the only possible answer is Hagiwara Sakutarō.

Sakutarō himself was keenly aware of his role as a poet of the new age, feeling the need for a new form to express the sentiments of that age. "I am stung to the quick by the sorrows of the modern man, and my poetry gives expression to these sorrows," he cried. In Sakutarō's eyes, a poet served society as a journalist, setting the trend of the times through his awareness of the moods of contemporary civilization; "Poetry always stands as a leader of the times; it has the keenest perception—presentation—of the emotions of the era to come." By expanding the range of symbol, image and style, Sakutarō pioneered uncharted areas, breaking down traditional boundaries.

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3Takamura Kōtarō (1883-1956) was a poet and sculptor. He was born in Tokyo, the eldest son of Takamakura Kōen, a traditional sculptor in wood. Becoming a member of the New Poetry Society (Shinshisha) in 1909, he began contributing tanka to their magazine, Myōjō (The Morning Star) from 1901. The New Poetry Society, also known as the Tokyo New Poetry Society, was founded in 1989 by Yosano Tekkan. Kōtarō is famous both for his introduction and adaption of Western sculpture, particularly the work of Auguste Rodin, and his modern poetry collections, such as, Dōtei (Journey, 1914) and Chieko-shō (Chieko Collection, 1941). An active member of the aesthetic, anti-naturalist Pan no Kai (Pan Society) in the 1910s, Kōtarō is representative of the Taishō decadent movement. See Miyoshi, Yukio. & Asai, Kiyoshi. (ed.), Kindai Nihon Bungaku Shōjiten, Yūhikaku, 1981, pp. 147-8. [Hereafter Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiten]; and Davis, A.R. (trs.), Syrokornia-Stefanowska, A.D. (ed.), Shijin—Autobiography of the Poet Kaneko Mitsuharu 1895-1975, Wild Peony, 1988, pp. 315-6. [Hereafter Davis, Shijin]


Faced with the problem of how to express the dislocation of the modern world in the leisured traditional poetic forms, he began to turn to Western forms and imagery as a vehicle for his poetic expression, becoming one of the best contemporary exponents of nineteenth century Western poetic concepts, especially those deriving from Baudelaire and the French Symbolists.\(^7\)

This thesis is a literary biography with two primary goals. The first is to present the major turning points in Sakutarō's life, and explore their influence on his work; and the second, to contextualize his role as a 'modern' poet, through an analysis of his writing—his themes, imagery and language—and outside influences, with a view to examining his contributions to modern Japanese poetry. The first chapter is biographical, and the subsequent chapters examine his major collections—concentrating on his free-style verse (shī)—and the poetic dialogue *Niji o ou Hito*. There are few substantial studies of Sakutarō's work in English\(^8\) and this thesis is the first attempt to write a literary biography of this poet in English.

This thesis is written in the belief that the literary biography illuminates certain aspects of a literary work for the reader. To borrow the words of Jeffery Meyers, the aim of a biographer should be to "understand the intellectual and emotional life of his subject,...to fit everything he has learned into a meaningful pattern and to satisfy his readers' natural curiosity about the life of an extraordinary person.\(^9\) Contemporary debate has tended to deconstruct texts and centre the author, bringing into question the concept of a mimetic relationship between literature and life. The approach taken by this thesis, however, stems from a belief that a writer's own reflections can offer a great deal to the interpretation of his or her own work and character. That is to say, that "biography presupposes the factual data of

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a live existence, if only to provide the nest from which the author’s imagination and interpretation may then take flight."\textsuperscript{10} The aim of this thesis, then, is to examine this nest, and thereby examine the process by which Sakutarō’s impressions of his environment are transmuted into poetry, for "the author provides the basis for explaining not only the presence of certain events in a work, but also their transformations, distortions and diverse modifications."\textsuperscript{11} In Sakutarō’s case there is a very close relationship between the poet and his work for as the poet and critic Ōoka Makoto\textsuperscript{12} notes, Sakutarō was a poet who "used even the smallest details of his everyday life to give expression to his inner feelings,"\textsuperscript{13} and thus his personal writings—letters, diaries etc.—offer a great deal to the interpretation of his poetry.

Sakutarō was born into a time when the essentially stable and integrated world view of traditional Japanese society had largely disintegrated. The nihilism of modern philosophy had begun to erode belief in traditional metaphysics. Western thought was becoming increasingly influential. Intellectuals, such as Sakutarō, were forced back on themselves, as the self became the only point of reference in a chaotic world. The response of the ‘modern’ man to this increasing alienation was to turn away from logic and reason, towards sensation and emotionalism, and in this Sakutarō was very much a ‘modern’ man.

In compensation for his loss of a framework of values and beliefs, and the sense of metaphysical well-being that went with them, modern man turns to sensation, to intensity of experience, as a process that is self-justifying. Strong feeling comes to act as a substitute for meaning. The ever-increasing importance that modern artists attach to intensity of response, at the expense of all other aesthetic values such as meaning, formal harmony, or anything else that smacks of Platonic universals, is the direct manifestation of the growing importance attached to intensity of experience in the modern age.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12}Born in Mishima city, Ōoka Makoto (1931-) is a poet and critic. He is a representative poet of the early years of stability following WWII. [Miyoshi, \textit{Bungaku Shōjiten}, p. 39.]
\textsuperscript{13}Ōoka, Makoto. "The Face of Sakutarō" (Sakutarō no Kao), \textit{Kokubungaku}, Gakutōsha, March 1988, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{14}De Jonge, Alex. \textit{Dostoevsky & The Age of Intensity}, Secker & Warburg, London, 1975, p. 5.
Such emotionalism was the core of Sakutarō’s poetic. He valued emotional response over all else, seeking to give voice to the "very nerves of emotion."

The true purpose of poetry is to gaze steadily at the emotions which tremble deep in the interior of the human heart, and to harness...moods, illusions and ideas, in order to reveal these emotions.

Poetry is something which grasps the very nerves of emotion. It is living, working psychology.\textsuperscript{15}

The story of Sakutarō’s life embraces many of the themes and issues central to the intellectuals of Taishō Japan, such as; the dichotomy between the grotesque world of the alienated modern psyche and the utopian vision for which it yearned, the dichotomy between the attraction of urbanization and the dehumanization of the industrial process, and the clash between traditional values and those introduced from the West. Consequently the study of these themes and dichotomies serves to illuminate something of Sakutarō’s success in tapping the feelings of his age.

Western poetry was first introduced into Japan through a collection of translations, entitled Shintaiishi Shishō (Selection of Poems in the New Style), which appeared in 1882, introducing the work of Gray, Longfellow, Bloomfield, Campbell and Tennyson.\textsuperscript{16} This collection is regarded as the first signpost on the road to modern Japanese poetry. Although these translations were not highly regarded for their quality, they opened up new possibilities for the poets of the day, offering them ways of breaking with established tradition. Donald Keene notes that the popularity of this new poetry was largely due to the explosive reaction of a generation of poets frustrated with the overly familiar stereotypes of Japanese poetics.\textsuperscript{17} The first new-style poetry, although still basically following the repetitive five-seven syllabic forms and using pseudo-classical vocabulary, seemed very radical. More open and longer than previous poetic forms, the new style encompassed abstract intellectual ideas which had hitherto been seen as unsuited to poetry. Originally called new-style poetry (shintaiishi), this new style came to be known as free-style poetry (jiyūshi) or simply shi as the newness wore off.

The Western poetic gave the young poets of the early 1900s a chance

\textsuperscript{16}Compiled by three Tokyo University professors; the sociologist Toyoma Chūzan, the philosopher Inoue Sonken, and the botanist Yatabe Ryōkichi.
\textsuperscript{17}Keene, Donald. Landscapes and Portraits: Appreciations of Japanese Culture, op cit, p.136.
to extend their frame of reference, both in diction and concept. In the words of Shimazaki Tōson, "youthful imagination awoke from age-old sleep and clad itself in the language of the common people."\(^{18}\) 1889 saw the publication of *Omokage* (Semblances), a collection of translations compiled by Mori Ōgai,\(^ {19}\) containing works of Goethe, Heine, Byron and Shakespere. In 1897, Shimazaki Tōson published his poetry collection *Wakanashū* (Seedlings) which, as Keene notes, critics regard as the first truly successful collection of modern poetry written by a Japanese poet.\(^ {20}\) Although still using pseudo-classical language and classical syllabic patterns, and even dealing with themes long known in Japanese tradition—love and melancholy—this collection had a freshness which stimulated a new awareness of the potential of poetry. 1905 saw a further anthology of translations, *Kaichōdon* (The Sound of the Tide), containing Ueda Bin’s\(^ {21}\) work on the French Parnassian and Symbolist poets. Although Bin basically maintained traditional syllabic patterns, this work provided examples of a whole new range of symbols and motifs.

Sakutarō was heavily influenced by Ueda Bin’s work, particularly the poetry of the Symbolists—Baudelaire, Verlaine, Mallarmé—who hit a resonant chord as a result of their emphasis upon the communication of emotion and their longing for an ideal world.

The spirit of all Western poetry lies in a hatred of ‘the routine’ and in a longing for unrealistic ideals and dreams (Poe and Baudelaire are obvious cases). All poets are symbolists or transcendentalists or surrealists or romanticists or some other ‘-ists’; that is to say, they are all

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\(^{18}\)Keene, Donald. Ibid, p.139. Shimazaki Tōson (1872-1943) was a poet and novelist with naturalist affiliations. Born in Nagano prefecture, he was brought up by family friends in Tokyo. His most representative works are the novels, *Hakai* (Transgression, 1906), *Ie* (The Household, 1910) and *Yoake nae* (Before Dawn, 1929-35), and the poetry collection, *Wakanashū* (Seedlings, 1897). [Miyoshi, *Bungaku Shōjiten*, p. 119.]

\(^{19}\)Mori Ōgai (1862-1922) was a novelist, critic and translator. After graduation from Tokyo University Medical School, he became an army doctor. A period of study in Germany from 1884 to 1888 fostered his interest in literature, giving birth to the translations included in *Omokage* (Semblances, 1889). He was closely involved with the literary magazines *Subaru* (The Pleiades) and *Mita Bungaku* (Mita Literature). His most famous novels are *Maihime* (The Dancer, 1890) and *Gan* (The wild goose, 1911-13). Ōgai was closely involved with the New Poetry Society (Shinshisha). [Miyoshi, *Bungaku Shōjiten*, pp. 255-6.]

\(^{20}\)Keene, Donald. Ibid, p. 139.

\(^{21}\)Ueda Bin (1874-1916) was a poet, critic and scholar of foreign literature. Born in Tokyo, he began contributing to *Bungakukan* (Literary World) while still at middle school. Like Ōgai, Bin was also closely involved with the New Poetry Society (Shinshisha) and published many of his translations in *Miyōjō*. Affiliated with the ‘aestheticism’ movement (tanpi shugi), he was also closely involved with *Subaru* and the *Pan no Kai*. [Miyoshi, *Bungaku Shōjiten*, p. 28.]
believers in some doctrine that rejects routine daily life. In contrast, all tanka and haiku derive their spirit from ‘conformity to routine life.’...Such poeticizing of an ordinary view of life presumes enjoyment of daily routine...It is no wonder that in an age of anxiety like ours such a poetry of elegant beauty and leisurely pleasure has begun to bore readers.22

The Symbolist movement of the West, was born in the last decades of the eighteenth century, when Baudelaire’s Les Fleurs de Mal (Flowers of Evil, 1857), was inspiring poets to reach beyond the world of reality—to immerse themselves through the senses in a transcendental sphere. Poetry was required to evoke, suggest and symbolize. Metaphors, analogies, images, and symbols became the vehicles through which poets sought to express their feelings and moods. The Symbolist poets wished to let their imagination run free, choosing to depict form via suggestion and nuances. Their goal was to arouse the senses. They rejected the ultrascientific and experimental spirit of their age, seeking to divest art of the crude and obvious realities so blatantly included in the writings of the Naturalists. They refused to dramatize the intimate detail of the everyday face of suffering.

Rimbaud—the nineteenth-century Prometheus, the fire-stealer as he was to be called—shocked the literary world with his violent, hallucinatory, and distorted visions...He advocated a savage rebellion, a concerted disorientation of the senses. The poet is a visionary, a seer, he declared; poetry is a mystic revelation...The dean of French Symbolists, Stéphane Mallarmé...despised the ugliness of the industrial civilization, of which he was a part, and longed to experience cosmic consciousness. His poetry was hermetic, a distillation of complex thoughts he enclosed in words, unusual and revolutionary syntactical procedures...constructed around a focal idea or symbol, a metaphor which was then developed via a series of evocations.23

Symbolism was all the more attractive in Japan, as it advocated the self same concept which had been enthroned by centuries of Japanese poets, that is the importance of the communication of the poet’s mood. Traditional Japanese love of ambiguity and suggestion underlay the success of the Symbolist school in Japan. Sakutarō’s goal, like that of the Symbolists, was to utilize symbols to give voice to his emotions, using their help to create in the reader an emotional state similar to that in his own mind.

Of the Western writers who influenced Sakutarō, it was the proponents of 'dark' Romanticism—Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Poe, in addition to Dostoevsky and Nietzsche—who influenced Sakutarō most deeply. Baudelaire created a truly modern form of lyric poetry, in which the poet struggled to express his psychic experiences for his own personal satisfaction, exploring the hidden psychology of his own sense of isolation, his boredom and melancholy, and the power of love to transport one beyond ugliness.\(^{24}\) Mallarmé in his renunciation of the representation of the real, demanded a new form, a new style of language. His quest led him to intensely imagistic lyrics, creating a very science of suggestion through a keen exploitation of symbolic and metaphoric ambiguities.\(^{25}\) Poe, whom Sakutarō regarded as a literary deity, was "a 'writer of nerves' who in exploring mental and moral disease had opened up in literature an order of experience previously sealed off."\(^{26}\) He worked along the frontier between the worlds of the real and the unreal, with a gift for probing the darkened caverns of the psyche, from which he brought fear, guilt and uncleanliness to imaginative literature. All three had a great influence on Sakutarō. Under their guidance, Sakutarō explored the realms of the grotesque, searching for a means of overcoming the dichotomy he saw between his own inner world and reality. The grotesque was the canvas of his dark imagination, exposing man at his most primitive. As Sakutarō turned inwards to examine the inner man, the grotesque became symbolic of the disintegration of his personality. By incorporating the grotesque and the destructive, Sakutarō added a new dimension to Japanese poetry.

Noriko Lippit groups Sakutarō together with Tanizaki Junichirō, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke and Mishima Yukio as a writer of dark romanticism, in the vein of Poe, Baudelaire and Wilde.\(^{27}\) In her eyes these four Japanese

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\(^{27}\) Tanizaki Junichirō (1886-1965) was a novelist, who was celebrated for his aestheticism and sensualism. Involved with the second series of *Shinshichō* (New Literary Currents), he stood in opposition to Naturalism. His representative works include; *Shisei* (Tattoo, 1910), *Sasame Yuki* (The Makoiya Sisters, 1943) and *Kagi* (The Key, 1956). Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892-1927), was a short-story novelist who developed under the wing of Natsume Sōseki. He was also affiliated with *Shinshichō*. Together with the *Shirakaba* Group (White Birch), he is one of the representative writers of Taishō urban literature. His works include; *Rashōmon* (1915) and *Haguruma* (The Cogwheel, 1927). Mishima Yukio (1925-1970) was a novelist and playwright, whose sensual exploration of violence and homosexuality placed him in the aesthetic camp. His representative works include; *Kamen*
writers were on a "romantic quest for a vision of destructive transcendence, a quest which was heavily influenced by Western dark romanticism. They were concerned with the question of evil, the role of the grotesque in art, and the relation of art to life." Their work was a literary investigation of the alienated psyche—the realm of the grotesque—which took them in search of a myth, a vision which would justify their exploration and save them from their pain. More than these others, Sakutarō focused on his own wounded psyche. He was a 'romantic gothic' that is, a tormented "creature suspended between the extremes of faith and scepticism, beatitude and horror, being and nothingness, love and hate—and anguished by an indefinable guilt for some crime it cannot remember having committed." His attempts to escape his inner anguish only increased his hostility and anger towards both his fellow men and society at large. This focus gives Sakutarō's readers "direct access across cultural boundaries to his psychic pain," placing him firmly among the 'moderns,' as "a modern man speaking to all moderns."  

This thesis concentrates on Sakutarō's work in the new style, rather than his early tanka, as it was in this new form of shi that he made his greatest contributions to modern Japanese poetry. In an essay entitled "An introduction to free-style poetry," Sakutarō seeks to define his concept of free-style poetry. He argues that traditionally all texts were divided into verse (inbun) and prose (sanbun), and that anything written in verse was by definition poetry. Such forms as waka, haiku and the sonnet were, he argued, easily defined as poetry, due to their form and their lyric quality. Yet how does one define such works as Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra, or Bashō's travel diaries, for although these works are written in prose he felt they functioned as poetry? In Sakutarō's eyes, works of true poetry possessed a poetic (shiteki) essence which formed a current—like a pulse of electricity—which sent a shock rippling through its readers. This shock was the only proof of 'true' poetry. Sakutarō categorized both the Nietzsche and the Bashō work as free-style poetry, arguing that any work,
whether written in prose or verse, which possessed this poetic essence—this shock value—should be regarded as poetry. Sakutarō was also attracted to free-style verse because it was born of the changing sensibility of the modern age.

The spirit of free-style poetry is the complete opposite to all that is 'medieval,' to all that is 'constricted by metre.' Free-style poetry is born of a democratic aesthetic sensibility, that is of the commercial, materialistic, utilitarian spirit of this century of modern capitalism.31

(2) Sakutarō’s contribution to modern Japanese poetry

As an introduction to this literary biography it seems appropriate to assess the position accorded Sakutarō, both in Japan and in the West. Why was he so highly regarded? What were his contributions to 'modern' Japanese poetry? In the introduction to the second edition of Tsuki ni Hoeru, Sakutarō unashamedly claims that this work marked the dawning of a new age.

There is no doubt that my collection Tsuki ni Hoeru...was the first dawn, the first step in the new direction predicted for today's poetic circles. Prior to this collection nothing had been written in this colloquial style. All new poetic styles begin in this collection. All the rhythms of contemporary lyric poetry derive from it. In a word, this collection created a new epoch. It is the first cock's cry at a new dawning.32

This is more than mere arrogance and reflects the consensus in both Japan and the West which holds that Sakutarō was one of the prime movers in the development of modern poetry, and that he managed to successfully express the alienation and angst felt by many of his contemporaries.33 In his introduction to Tsuki ni Hoeru, Kitahara Hakushū34 cites this obsession with inner pain—this constant scratching on the barely healed scars of old wounds—as the very source of Sakutarō's poetic power.

31 HS, "An Introduction to Free-style Poetry" (Jiyūshi Genri no Nyūmon), Theories and Impressions of Poetry (Shiron to Kansō), HSZ XIII, pp. 75-85.
33 See Kitagawa, Fuyuhiko. Taikei, op cit, pp. 8-9. The critics he lists include Itō Shinkichi, Kawakami Tetsutarō and Kubo Tadao.
34 Kitahara, Hakushū (1885-1942) was a poet, closely associated with the aestheticism movement, who wrote both free-style poetry and tanka. His early work was published in Bunko (Library of Literature) and Waseda Gakuhō (Waseda University Gazette). On becoming a member of the New Poetry Society, he came to be regarded as one of the foremost Myōjō poets. He was a founding member of both the Pan no Kai and Subaru. His representative collections include; Omoide (Reminiscences, 1911), Kiri no Hana (Paulownia Flowers, 1913) and Tōkyō Keibutsu Shi (Tokyo Scenes, 1913). [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiten, p. 71; and Davis, Shijin, pp. 291-292.]
You have the most pallid face of anyone I know. You look as if you spend your entire life in pain. Yet it is the pain of the flesh of a pearl oyster as it rubs against a single grain of sand. As the pain penetrates deeper the sand becomes a pearl.\textsuperscript{35} Sakutarō believed that the root cause of his suffering arose not from external social conditions but rather from something much deeper, that is, from the relationship between fate and human nature. His suffering, like that of Baudelaire, Nietzsche and Dostoevsky arose from "the instincts of the human animal let loose in the natural world, it arose from the carnal desires of the living will. The essence of this problem transcended the reality of the material world, and entered into the realm of metaphysics."\textsuperscript{36}

Sakutarō's importance as a modern poet is twofold. He is celebrated firstly for his success in breaking from tradition to create his own distinctive style of poetry, particularly for the fact that he managed to introduce colloquial idiom without sacrificing artistic merit and to maintain intensity of feeling in longer poems; and secondly, for his success in tapping the feelings of his age through an exploration of the murky psyche of a 'modern' man. He was the first Japanese poet to successfully write about the "existential despair of a modern intellectual,"\textsuperscript{37} that is, the first "to concentrate on developing ways of expressing his interior self."\textsuperscript{38} He created the image of a deformed man who dreams of returning to a complete self which he believes exists on another level of reality. Sakutarō's break with tradition was not only in his style but also in his thematic concerns, and it is these thematic concerns which form the main focus of this thesis. Sakutarō's stylistic contributions will be examined briefly in this introduction, while his role as the voice of the 'modern' man will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

Sakutarō's three major collections, \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru} (Howling at the Moon), \textit{Aoneko} (The Blue Cat) and \textit{Hyōtō} (The Iceland) were published in 1917, 1923 and 1934 respectively. Critics argue about their relative importance in the body of Sakutarō's work. According to Kitakawa Fuyuhiko most critics come down in favour of \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru}, however, the fact that Sakutarō himself, in middle age, rated \textit{Hyōtō} as his best work,

\textsuperscript{35}Kitahara, Hakushū. "Introduction to Tsuki ni Hoeru," HSZ I, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{36}HS, "The Revenge of Despair" (Zetsubō no Fukushū), The Flight of Despair (Zetsubō no tōsō), HSZ V, pp. 58-9.
\textsuperscript{37}Ueda, Makoto. Modern Japanese Poetry—and the Nature of Literature, op cit, p. 137.
has caused some to question this positioning of *Tsuki ni Hoeru*.\(^39\) Those who favour *Tsuki ni Hoeru* over *Hyōtō* argue that *Hyōtō* is limited in its visualization of basic human existence and shows a decline in imaginative power.\(^40\) while those in favour of *Hyōtō* argue that the early work is too escapist and that Sakutarō faced his existence with more honesty in *Hyōtō*.\(^41\)

Ōoka Makoto divides Sakutarō’s work into two main periods; before and after *Aoneko*, using an essay entitled "The difference between poetry and prose" (which Sakutarō wrote around 1917), as the basis for his argument. The essay reads as follows;

Poetry is for me the solace of my life and at the same time is the 'confession of my sins' before God. In contrast, prose is instead a 'prayer.' This prayer elevates my character and forces both my intellect and my emotions to search more seriously for the ideal. 'Repentance' however, is the merciless real exposure of my very nakedness...For me the creation of poetry can be none other than such naked confession in a completely secret room.\(^42\)

Ōoka holds that from *Aoneko* onwards Sakutarō’s poetic changed from the 'confessional' poetry of *Tsuki ni Hoeru*, to an increasingly prose-like form. That is, the poetry of *Aoneko* became a 'prayer' seeking to unify his intellectual and emotional response. Ueda Makoto agrees with Ōoka that Sakutarō’s poetry went through a transition with the publication of *Aoneko*, choosing the images of 'adventurer' and 'sentimentalist' to parallel Ōoka’s use of 'confession' and 'prayer.'\(^43\) In an essay entitled "Two Types of Romantics," Sakutarō discusses this distinction. The first type, the adventurers—Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Poe—he defines as those who sought adventure in an unknown land, while the second type, the sentimentalists—Goethe, Verlaine, Nietzsche—were misfits who hated the world of their reality because they were ever in pursuit of lofty ideals.\(^44\) Thus in Ueda's eyes, Sakutarō changed from an adventurer in pursuit of the holy grail into an angry misfit at war with his reality, that is from a man of passionate faith to one lost in nihilistic ennui.

Kishida Toshiko draws a similar boundary in Sakutarō's work,

\(^41\)Kitakawa, Fuyuhiko. *Taikei*, op cit, pp. 10-1.
dividing it according to the symbolism created by his verb usage. She stresses the importance of movement verbs in *Tsuki ni Hoeru*, particularly; *nobiru* (lengthening; extending), *haeru* (growing), *furueru* (trembling) and *kusaru* (rotting), arguing that the collection develops in a sequence; *nobiru haeru* → *furueru* → *kusaru*, finally progressing to *hau* (crawling) and *gyōko* (solidification; coagulation) which dominate *Aoneko*. While *Tsuki ni Hoeru* was all movement: upward growth towards the sky, underground burgeoning of roots systems, longing gazes off into the distance, in *Aoneko* all movement becomes slow and viscous.

Images of movement ceased to be prominent in Sakutarō’s work from around 1921. Movement—vertical growth, the creeping decay which spread out over the earth's surface, and the longing gaze towards the horizon—ceased as time came to a halt. All solidified into a static immovable state.45

Sakutarō drew on three main themes in his exploration of the psyche of the alienated 'modern' man; the dichotomy between a search for transcendence as an escape from the pain of existence and an accompanying fear of descent back into that pain; the clash between primitive instinct and conscience; and the desire to return to a pure, primitive state of existence, that is, man's original home. The following chapters will examine both the development of these themes and the different stages in his poetic development in the light of the boundaries discussed above.

In *Tsuki ni Hoeru* and *Niji o ou hito*, as noted by Kannō Akimasa, Sakutarō concentrated on the dichotomy between ascent and descent. That is, the tension between a desire for transcendency, a need to draw near to something far off in the distance or high up in the air, and its opposite, a sense of falling back into the horror of the imprisonment of physical existence.46 Northrop Frye regarded such ascent and descent as two of the primary movements in literature,47 describing them as follows;

In the descent there is a growing isolation and immobility: charms and spells hold one motionless; human beings are turned into subhuman creatures, and made more mechancial in behaviour; hero or heroine are trapped in labyrinths or prisons. The themes and images of ascent are...those of escape, remembrance, or discovery of one's real identity,

growing freedom, and the breaking of enchantment.\textsuperscript{48} The normal road of descent is enveloped in a dream-like haze. Its lower reaches become a nightmare world; "a dark and labyrinthine world of caves and shadows where the forest has turned subterranean, and where we are surrounded by the shapes of animals...[as if] we are retracing...the oldest imaginative steps of humanity."\textsuperscript{49} Metamorphosis is a central image in this descent, that is, the freezing of something human and conscious into an animal, plant or inanimate object. A ghost or an animal, typically a dog, provides companionship for the central figure as it metamorphoses into this subterranean world. Ascent themes take up the metamorphosis image in reverse, as the central character, with a growing sense of identity, manages to cast off his entrapment or concealment. Frye situates Poe as one of the major writers in English of this descent, and Sakutarō is arguably one of Japan's best. This dichotomy between ascent and descent will be examined further in Chapter Two, while Chapter Three will explore the need for a guide, a companion, or vehicle on this journey to the ascendent realm. Sakutarō felt unable to achieve transcendence on his own but with a guide—Dostoevsky—he came to believe that one day he would break through the barriers; that one day he would grasp hold of Maeterlinck's 'blue bird.'\textsuperscript{50}

In \textit{Aoneko} the clash between instinct and conscience, sensation and contemplation, takes over as the central theme. A growing sense of nihilistic ennui begins to pervade Sakutarō's poetry as the tension between this dichotomy increases. Failure to unite these dualities gives birth to a nostalgia for a primitive state of existence where such dichotomies did not exist. In his desire to rediscover the primitive emotions of man, Sakutarō began to turn back to his own tradition seeing the 1920s as "a renaissance—a period of revival"\textsuperscript{51} of the poetry of the Manyōshū period, which he saw as the embodiment of Japan's most primitive poetic spirit. He wished to return to this primitive state and began to warn against what he saw in many as a blind following of all that was Western, reminding his contemporaries that much of what they were taking from the West already existed in Japanese tradition; "we must awaken from our blind infatuated dreams of the West,

\textsuperscript{48}Frye, Northrop, ibid, p. 129.  
\textsuperscript{49}Frye, Northrop, ibid, p. 112.  
\textsuperscript{50}The influence of Maurice Maeterlinck's \textit{The Blue Bird}, will be discussed in Chapter 3.  
\textsuperscript{51}HS, "The Symbolism of Japanese Poetry" (Nihon Shika no Shōchō), \textit{Theories and Impressions of Poetry} (Shiron to Kansō), HSZ XIII, pp. 33-4.
awaken to the true spirit of our Japaneseess."^{52}

This return to man's primal origins began to preoccupy Sakutarō from *Aoneko* onwards. He began to explore what he saw as a physical instinct which draws man towards light like a moth to a flame. These moths "seem to sense their existential homeland, the very origin of their lives, when they see the beauty of a burning flame. This phenomenon belongs to the primeval mystery of life shared by all creatures."^{53} Increasingly Sakutarō began to use his poetry to probe these primeval mysteries. At this point, a nostalgia "for the eternal homeland of his soul—for an existence projected by his longing"^{54} took over as his central theme. In *Hyōō* fear and loneliness, born of the inability to capture this flame, are worked into a sense of loss of man's original home. *Hyōō* is the winter of the poet's life, a time when homeless he wanders the world with nothing but memories. Like an oyster, his hard shell hiding an invertebrate body, he clings to a rock washed by icy seas trying to remember the warmth of past emotion.

(3) Sakutarō's success with the colloquial idiom

Let us now examine Sakutarō's role in revolutionizing modern Japanese poetry in terms of the linguistic content of his verse in more detail. Of all the poets who helped perfect the art of free-style poetry in Japan, Sakutarō's importance lies in the fact that he expanded the possibilities of modern Japanese poetic expression.^{55} He was particularly successful in demonstrating that modern spoken Japanese could be used in poetry in an artistically satisfying manner.^{56} Certain aspects of his poetic style; longer poems; his introduction of colloquial language; coinage of new words and images; his alteration of the tone and fragrance of traditional themes and images; the musicality of his verse; his technique of shifting perspective, such as a sudden shift from third to first person; his misuse of tenses and punctuation, all add to the startling originality of his verse.

In an essay entitled, "On the Poetry Style of *Hyōō*," Sakutarō comments on his use of colloquial styles in the poetry of *Aoneko*.

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^{52}HS, ibid, p. 40.
^{53}HS, "The Poetry of the Moon" (Tsuki no Shijō), HSZ XI, pp. 197-201.
^{54}HS, "The Abstract and the Concrete" (Chūshōgainen to Gushōgainen), *Poetic Principles* (Shi no Genri), Ch. 4, HSZ VI, pp. 32-37.
...The Japanese language of today, generally speaking, has a blurred inarticulate viscous quality, neglecting modulation, it becomes a monotone....The poetic which underwrote Aoneko, by pure chance coincided with just this peculiarity of colloquial speech....When I was writing Aoneko, my life was all idleness and ennui, in a nihilistic Schopenhauer-like world, I spent my days dreaming of the joy of entering Nirvana. The English word 'blue' for Aoneko, I used in the sense of 'weariness,' 'laziness' or 'hopelessness.' Contemporary colloquial speech, particularly the stickiness of everyday dialogue, with its boring, inarticulate nature was particularly well suited to the expression of my state of mind. I was afraid written styles of Japanese would prove too flexible, too elastic. The lack of modulation, the viciousness, the sense of clinging to a spider's web, that is, the colloquial style, was a perfect fit;

...in the dim shadows of this place of nothingness
I droop low—like a willow—salacious and sticky.

...kyomu no oborogenaru yanagi no kage de
namamekashikumo
—nebaneba to shinadarete iru no desu yo.

Thus, in Aoneko I utilized the very weaknesses of colloquial speech—although it was all pure chance.57

Kitakawa Fuyuhiko claims that Sakutarō discovered the beauty of colloquial Japanese, and that his genius for sound, his magical phonetic sense, allowed him to create a very distinctive poetic style.58 As a result of Sakutarō's efforts, particularly with repetition and onomatopoeia, Japanese poetry became auditory to an unprecedented degree.59 Miyoshi Tatsui60 regards the distinctive misuse of language in Sakutarō’s work, particularly his singular use of spaces instead of commas, and his deliberate misuse of grammar as proof of his modernity.61 This cavalier attitude to the linguistic rules of Japanese is however one of the points most often criticised by

58 Kitagawa, Fuyuhiko. Taikai, op cit, p. 10. The poet Nishiwaki Junzaburō also praises Sakutarō for this and for his ground-breaking idiomatic expression and his rhythm.
60 Miyoshi Tatsui (1900-1964) was an Osaka born poet and translator, who was heavily influenced by Sakutarō. Graduating in french literature from Tokyo University in 1928, he began to publish in Aozora (Blue Sky) and Momota Sōji's Shii no Ki (Oak tree). He was a founding member of the quarterly Shi to Shiron (Poetry and Poetic Criticism), and together with Murayama Kaoru and Hori Tatsuio he launched the second series of Shiki (Four Seasons) in 1933, which became the premier vehicle of lyric poetry over the following decade. His poetry collections include, Sokuryō-zen (The Survey Ship,1930) and Rakuda no Kobu ni Matagatte (Astride the Hump of a Camel, 1952). [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiiten, p. 249; and Davis, Shijin, p. 300.]
61 Miyoshi, Tatsui. "For people who read poetry" (Shi o yomu hito no tame ni), Taikai, op cit, p. 17.
critics who accuse him of 'illiteracy' both in terms of his grammar and character usage. This so-called misuse of language, is however, proof of the modernity of Sakutarō's work, reflecting his revolutionary role in the development of modern Japanese poetry.

(a) Sakutarō's poetic

To explore Sakutarō's stylistic contributions to modern poetry, we must first examine his concept of poetry. Sakutarō saw the spirit of poetry as both subjective and idealistic, and his aim, as discussed above, was to present his emotions—through an almost telepathic rhythm—to his readers. He rejected poetic styles which he regarded as nothing but superficial descriptions of objective reality, preferring to explore extremes of emotion. His emotions ranged from the sentimental to the violently self-destructive, from a passionate faith to a nihilistic ennui. The tension which arises from these conflicting extremes underlies much of his work. He believed that if one wanted to portray an idea one became a novelist or a philosopher, but if one wanted to portray emotion one became a poet. Unlike the conscious thought of a philosopher, Sakutarō believed that a poet felt truth intuitively, and it was this intuition, born of the unconscious, which gave birth to poetry.

Life is made up of two types of time; night and day; dream and reality. Unconscious life and conscious life. Literature too is divided into two such groups. Poetry deals with images floating in a dream at night; prose with conscious perceptions of reality in the daytime....it is poetry which gives expression to the essence of the poet's self, which appears and disappears in the twilight zone of consciousness.

Sakutarō believed that he could only create poetry in moments of extreme emotion; the essence of his creativity was unconscious and instinctive.

I cannot write poetry unless I am in a state of mental derangement. Perhaps 'mental derangement' is a rather strange way of putting it, but without the violent waves and heated combustion of the subjective setting life aflame, I just cannot write lyric poetry.

To Sakutarō a poem was a poem less on account of its form than on account

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62See Kimata, Osamu. Taikei, op cit, p. 17.
63 HS, "Poets and Critics" (Shijin to Hyōronka), A Poet's Mission (Shijin no Shimeii), HSZ X, p. 101.
64 HS, "Poetry and Prose" (Shi to Sanbun), At the Harbour (Miyako nite), HSZ V, p. 137.
65 HS, "Hagiwara Sakutarō—Comments on Poetic Creation" (Hagiwara Sakutarō—Shisakudan), Taikei, op cit, p. 192.
of its spirit or inner emotion; he asked his readers to avoid intellectualizing his work, instead requiring they look deeper into the inner core, at the emotions themselves. What I ask of you my readers, is that you pass over the concepts and little incidents which occupy the surface of my poetry. Rather, I want you to touch the emotions deep in the inner core.  

Rhythm became the vehicle for the expression of these emotions. Sakutarō defines two types of rhythm in his work, structural auditory rhythm which has the features of music, and 'emotive' rhythm which has more to do with subjective imagery than style. The structural rhythm was a harmonious flow of sounds and words achieved by alliteration, end-rhymes, assonance and repetition, and served as a conduit for the emotive rhythm. The emotive rhythm was an 'inner rhythm' through which the poet projected his vision, that is, communicated his emotion. A harmonious marriage between the two was one of the primary goals of Sakutarō's poetic and he worked with free-style poetry because it was the best vehicle for his emotive rhythm. Free-style verse destroyed the prescribed rules of metre and created the possibility of rhythm without metre. That is to say, although free-style poetry may be written in prose, it still possesses emotive poetic rhythm.  

This emotive rhythm was central to Sakutarō's poetic and he felt no one would understand his poetry without an empathy with this rhythm. Emotive rhythm stimulated a certain emotional response in the reader. He felt that as Japanese lacked the auditory rhythm of Western poetry, it was up to poets like himself to develop this emotive rhythm, which dissolved distinctions between objects and words, sweeping all before it in a tide of sound and feeling. Rhythm is the prime formative element of music, a temporal movement of sounds that produces an intended emotional effect. In language it designates a regulated flow of stress, syllabic patterns or other phonetic patterns. For Sakutarō, rhythm need not be limited to aural patterns but could be an arrangement of colours, forms, or any sensory stimulus, which grouped into a certain pattern could produce an aesthetic response. In the preface to Tsuki ni Hoeru, Sakutarō seeks to define his concept of emotive rhythm.

I express my own peculiar complicated emotions—the sadness, the joy, the loneliness, the fear in my heart—and other emotions, hard to express

67HS, "An Introduction to Free-style Poetry" (Jiyūshi Genri no Nyūmon), Shiron to Kansō, HSZ XIII, pp. 75-85.
in words or phrases, in the rhythm of my poetry. This rhythm, however, is not an explanation; it is a telepathic link between myself and my readers. I can only communicate—taking their hands in mine—with those who can perceive this rhythm in the silence beyond the realm of words.\textsuperscript{68}

The only hope of communication was through poetic images or music. Musical intoxication was of major importance;

I place much more importance on the musical intoxication created by the beauty of the rhythmic structure, more than on the main themes which express the central poetic thought.\textsuperscript{69}

In Sakutarō's eyes, the emotions of an individual were firmly rooted in that individual's psyche. To truly express the "how" of emotion—the way one feels—words must shed their logic and approach the realm of music—a medium uncompromised by designated meanings. In poetry, as in music, it is the mood which smoke-like, creates a redolence, a fragrance which weaves through the spaces between the letters of the words, offering glimpses of that inner emotion. Sakutarō did not want to complicate his poetry with prescribed structures, nor did he wish his readers to analyse his work as that would destroy the poetry. He rather sought to create a loose veil-like form, which allowed the scent of the poem's inner core—the emotions trembling in the interior—to escape.

In all good lyric poetry, there is a sense of beauty which cannot be explained either by words or logic. This is the redolence of the poem.... It is this redolence which produces that intoxicated elation, which is the true goal of poetry. A poem in which this redolence is thin and vapid has little value as poetry. It is like sake which has lost its fragrance and flavour. I dislike such sake.\textsuperscript{70}

Sakutarō sought to create poetry, in which his inner emotion flowed out through the images and rhythms, unrestrained by the superficial over-structure of the words. He sought a rhythmic fusion of objective description and subjective emotion.

Borrowing the metaphors of 'colour' and 'light' from Shī no Genri (Poetic Principles, 1923), Kishida Toshiko defines Sakutarō's poetic as poetry born of 'light.' Sakutarō stood in opposition to poetry of 'colour,' feeling that poetry must be born of 'light.' Concept, form, philosophy, science, objectivity, all stood on the side of 'colour,' while emotion, life,

\textsuperscript{69}HS, "On the Shinkokinsha" (Shinkokinshū ni isuite), HSZ VII, p.160. See Kubo, Tadao. Taiketsu, op cit, pp. 163-3.
rythm and sentimentialty, were on the side of 'light.' 'Colour' was static, in contrast to 'light' which was movement, and all true poetry in Sakutarō's eyes must be poetry of movement.\(^{71}\)

Let us now examine some of the specific features of his style which reflect the 'modern' in his work.

(b) Musicality and language

As mentioned above, the musicality of his verse is often cited as one of Sakutarō's major contributions to modern poetry.\(^{72}\) He created a "symphony of words" through the comprehensive use of tone, tempo, nuance, mood and images, all of which were carried by both the emotive rhythm and auditory rhythm.\(^{73}\) In Tsuki ni Hoeru, auditory rhythm was achieved mainly through verbal and phonetic repetition, while in Aoneko, Sakutarō began to use more and more aural elements, particularly onomatopoeia. The Tsuki ni Hoeru poem, "Bamboo," is a good example of the musical quality of his verbal repetition.

Bamboo grows from the shining ground
pale green bamboo grows
bamboo roots grow under the ground....
bamboo—bamboo—bamboo grows.\(^{74}\)

*Hikarujimen nittake ga hae*
*aotake ga hae*
*chikanawa take no ne ga hae...*
*take, take, take ga hae.*

The repetition of the verb *hae* and the noun *take* create a musical rhythm which becomes the pulse beat for the growing bamboo, creating a sense of immanence, of movement in the poem.\(^{75}\) Naka Tarō also notes that the

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73 HS, "The Rhythm of Free-style Poetry" (Jiyūshi no Rizumu ni tsuite), HSZ I, p. 242.
75 See Kishida, Toshiko. Hagiwara Sakutarō: Shiteki Imeei no Kōsei, op cit, p. 174. Other examples of verbal repetition can be found in such poems as, "The sick face in the depths of the ground," Vol II, p. 6, and "Landscape," Vol II, p. 19.
rhythm created by the repetition of the vowels 'e' and 'a' and the consonant 'k' in take, hae, ne, watage and aotake all add to the unique musicality of this poem.\textsuperscript{76}

The Aoneko poem, "Roosters" provides a good example of the special onomatopoeia he created to avoid conventional associations.\textsuperscript{77} An auditory rhythm builds through the repetition of the roosters' calls.

I hear the voice of the roosters
calling from the lonely nature of the countryside
Toor-te-kur, Toor-ru-moor, Toor-ru-moor...\textsuperscript{78}

Sakutarō used this romanization in his notes about this poem, where he comments as follows;

At dawn, hearing the distant morning calls of roosters from my bed I transcribed the sounds as toor-ru-moor, toor-te-kur, and then used this sound as the central motif of the poem, "Roosters." The cry of an animal, or the sound of a machine's convolutions are, essentially, pure auditory sounds, and because there is no conceptual, objective way of explaining their particular significance, the listener can subjectively transcribe the sound however he pleases. Thus onomatopoeia, which is primarily concerned with musical effect, is the best technique for effecting freedom. I chose to use this type of auditory motif for that very reason.\textsuperscript{79}

Sakutarō noted that although a cock's cry in Japan was usually transcribed as kokekokkō, the repetitive 'k' sound was too harsh for the tone of his poem. Through the sounds of Toor-te-kur, Toor-ru-moor he hoped to evoke a sense of sentimental melancholy like the sour smell of rotting white chrysanthemums which comes to a man who sunk in remorse, lies awake in

\textsuperscript{76}Naka, Tarō. "Sakutarō no Shi no Ongakusai," op cit, p. 149.
\textsuperscript{77}Other examples include: owaa and ogvaa for the yowling mating cry of a cat in "Cats," Vol II, p. 31; old kana spelling of bumu bumu for the buzz of a fly in "The twilight room," Vol II, p. 79; the old kana spelling of tefu tefu (rather than the conventional chō chō) for the fluttering of butterfly wings in "Terribly melancholy," Vol II, p. 91; and zushiri batari dotari batari for the pounding crunch of marching soldiers in "Soldiers," Vol II, p. 128. Sakutarō's preference for old kana spellings required he specify how much of his onomatopoeia should be read. Also see HS, Meiji Taishō Bungakushū: Hagiwara Sakutarōhen, HSZ XIV, p. 104, for further remarks on this onomatopoeia. In an essay entitled "Sakutarō's Impressions" published in Kanjō in May 1917, Sakutarō outlined how his use of kanji and kana created different rhythms in his poetry. He notes the importance of clearly enunciating each syllable of his onomatopoeia, stressing for example that tefu tefu must be read, te-fu-te-fu. See "Literary fragments published in Kanjō" (Danshō: Kanjō yori), May 1917, HSZ V, p. 425. See Kubo, Tadao. "Sakutarō Shi no Bunseki" (An Analysis of Sakutarō's Poetry), Hagiwara Sakutarō: Nihon no Sakka (10), Shōgakukan, 1992, p. 135, where Kubo argues that Sakutarō's onomatopoeia is unique in Japanese poetry.
\textsuperscript{78}HS, "Roosters" (Tori), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 164. Vol II, p. 98.
\textsuperscript{79}HS, "Notes on my own Poetry" (Jisakushi Jichū), Fukuda, op cit, p. 144.
bed in the early dawn.\textsuperscript{80}

In addition to onomatopoeia and repetition, Sakutarô also introduced a number of rather idiosyncratic linking phrases, such as; \textit{yō ni} and \textit{yō na mono}, which he felt created a limp softness in his verse. He believed the vagueness they introduced was particularly well suited to his poetic aims.\textsuperscript{81} Itô Shinkichi argues that Sakutarô’s use of \textit{yō na mono} was revolutionary in modern Japanese poetry. By making the subject more ambiguous, it created a haziness, a heavy viscosity, which became a distinguishing mark of Sakutarô’s verse.\textsuperscript{82} In an essay entitled “The style of \textit{Aoneko},” Sakutarô explains his use of \textit{yō ni}—which translates as “like.” Commenting on the phrase, \textit{hakaba no yō ni ankoku no yoru} (a night dark as the inside of a tomb), he notes that the \textit{yō ni} evokes a stronger sense of fear than would have been achieved by merely linking the three nouns with the particle \textit{no}. He then discusses the use of this phrase in the \textit{Aoneko} poem, “Nameless Song;”

\begin{quote}
A naked woman, bronzed by sun of the south seas.
A mysterious steam ship, reddened with rust
pulled in alongside the wharf thick with summer grasses...\textsuperscript{83}
\textit{Nanyō no hi ni yaketa hadaka onna no yō ni
natsugusa no shigette iru hatoba no mukō e
fushigi na akasabita kisen ga haitte kīta}...
\end{quote}

He argues that the use of \textit{yō ni} disrupts the poetic link between the two lines, thus making it possible for the sunbronzed nakedness of the woman to stand as an independent image, rather than as a metaphor for the ship. It creates a break, a pause before the image of the steam ship. Yet in addition to the objective description of the naked woman, the phrase also allows for a sense of the subjective, creating a certain haziness in the poem.

When these two lines are linked by the vague phrase \textit{yō ni}...the first line serves as a description of the scene....The \textit{yō ni} also has the effect of softening...the picture, allowing subjective, emotional shading. Thus, the poem succeeds in creating a subtle fusion of the descriptive and the emotive elements, that is of the objective and subjective.\textsuperscript{84}

Tsukimura Reiko argues that Sakutarô’s use of \textit{yō ni} draws on the \textit{jo —

\textsuperscript{80}See HS, “Auditory Expression in Poetry” (Shi ni okeru Onshō Hyōgen), HSZ XV, pp. 278-9.
\textsuperscript{81}HS, “The Style of \textit{Aoneko}” (\textit{Aoneko no Sutairu no Yōi ni tsuite}), HSZ VIII, pp. 12-9.
\textsuperscript{83}HS, “Nameless song” (Dai no nai uta), \textit{Aoneko}, HSZ I, p. 171. Vol II, p. 101.
\textsuperscript{84}HS, “The Style of \textit{Aoneko},” HSZ VIII, p. 12.
introduction—in classical Japanese poetry. In his discussion of the Kokinshū, Sakutarō argues that the jo works both as an objective description of the scene and as a rhythmic link with the rest of the poem, thus creating the sensory foundation of a poem. He uses the following poem to discuss the role of the jo;

A cuckoo calls  
from within the May rises  
I am trapped  
in the maze of love.  

Hotogisu  
naku ya satsuki no  
ayamegusa  
ayame no shiranu  
koi no suru kana

The first three lines, which form the jo, provide an objective picture of the season, that is, set the scene which is then subjectively linked to the narrator's own emotional state. This emotive link is made possible by the fact that the jo also manages to elicit a certain musical tone which induces the dreamy atmosphere of late spring appropriate for love. Thus, Sakutarō's use of yō ni can be seen as his original assimilation of the traditional jo into the modern colloquial idiom.

(c) Shifting viewpoint

Sakutarō created a technique by which he shifted the viewpoint of a poem from an impersonal third person description of a scene—influenced in Tsukimura Reiko's eyes by his reading of the jo—into the personalized world of the narrator by a shift to the first person. This shift in perspective is an example of the emotive rhythm through which Sakutarō draws his reader into a particular poem and thus into the narrator/poet's inner pain. The Tsuki ni Hoeru poem, "A sorrowful moonlit night" is a typical example.

A wretched thieving dog  
is howling at the moon over a rotten wharf.  
Souls listen  
when with voices steeped in gloom  
yellow girls sing in chorus  
sing in chorus  
on the wharf's dark stone wall.

Always

86 HS, Famous Collections of Love Poetry (Renai meikashū), HSZ VII, p. 48.
Why am I always like this?
A Dog!
A pale miserable dog!\(^{87}\)

The first stanza sets the scene; it paints an objective picture of the howling dog and the young girls singing their mournful chorus. Further, it is an example of the very visual quality of Sakutarō's work. In the second stanza, however, the perspective suddenly shifts, and the first person of the narrator suddenly becomes the dog.\(^{88}\) Thus, the voice of the first person narrator transforms the landscape into a metaphor for the poet's inner emotional state. That is, the wretched dog of the first stanza, becomes a metaphor for the poet—becomes his self-image—in the second. The poet sees himself as cut off from the world, a 'thieving dog' standing on a rotten wharf, his one poor link with the world.

Critics in Japan tend to regard a writer's work as an emanation of his spirit and place little faith in the Western theory which asserts independence between the writer and the text. Thus Japanese critics tend to view the voice in Sakutarō's work as his own, as the howling cry of his inner self, rather than a mask. Although some critics take this a little too far,\(^{89}\) there is a very close relationship between Sakutarō the poet and the narrator in his verse, and the analysis in this thesis reflects this closeness.

Another variation on this shifting perspective is seen in the poem, "Death of a frog." To quote;

A frog has been killed
the children formed a ring and raised their hands
all together
raised their sweet
blood-covered hands
the moon appeared.
Someone stands on the top of the hill
a face under his hat.\(^{90}\)

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\(^{87}\) HS, "A sorrowful moonlit night" (Kanashii tsukiyo), HSZ I, p. 41. Vol II, p. 22.
\(^{88}\) For other examples see "Shellfish," Vol II, p. 31; and "The Portrait," Vol II, p. 38.
\(^{89}\) The dialogue (taïwa) between Ōoka Makoto and Naka Tarō, "Sakutarō no Atarashii Kao" (Sakutarō's new face), Kokubungaku, Gakutoša, Oct. 1978, p. 25, provides one such example. In their discussion of the significance of Sakutarō's relationship with 'Elena,' they argue that the poem, "Lascivious graveyard" is set in Spring because Baba Naka died in May, thus attributing Sakutarō's tendency to associate Spring with decay as a reflection of his loss of Elena in the Spring time. Some critics even go so far as to note that the fishiness often associated with the ghost that haunts springtime graveyards in his work is due to the fact that Elena died in the seaside town of Kamakura. Such readings severely limit Sakutarō's poetry and have little value as literary criticism. See Kubo, Tadão. Taikei, op cit, p. 427.
\(^{90}\) HS, "Death of a frog" (Kaeru no shi), HSZ I, p. 46. Vol II, p. 25.
The first section of the poem is used to set the scene and then there is a sudden shift to the man standing on the hill. Ōoka Makoto argues that the man on the hill is actually the frog itself, confronting his own death at the hands of 'innocent' children. Muta Orie argues that "the frog, the children and the man are one in different shapes. The scene of the murder by the children under the moon seems like a primitive ritual ceremony of renewal." Such rites she argues can be seen as a way of integrating the unconscious with the conscious, yet the fact that the man stands apart on the hill indicates that neither the conscious and unconscious, nor the mind and body, are yet integrated. Okaniwa Noboru labels the man as the "faceless darkness of Japanese modernity," a modernity in which the individual stands back as an observer in the face of the suffering of others, for the individual is all. The shift in focus draws the reader into the man's world, drawing the focus of the camera up onto the hill away from the children. In this manner Sakutarō forces his readers to relate firstly to the children and then suddenly breaks that link drawing them into the world of the man on the hill. He uses this cinematic technique repeatedly, creating a multiplicity of viewpoints which parallels the inability of a 'modern' man to achieve a single united sense of self.

(d) Debunking tradition

Another key aspect of Sakutarō's 'modern' style was his conscious alteration of the tone of traditional themes and images. By exposing the underside of traditional images of beauty, he steps out of the comfort system of his society, in a search for a means of expressing his angst. He sought to expose the lie he saw embodied in much which was traditionally held to be beautiful—dawn, spring, cherry blossoms, to name a few. Sakutarō sought not only to debunk traditional images of beauty, but also to harness the disgust and horror inspired by nature's more unpleasant side by linking the

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91 Ōoka, Makoto. Hagiwara Sakutarō, op cit, p. 142. Donald Keene on the other hand, argues that perhaps the man is the poet standing watching what he was as a child. See Keene, Donald. Dawn to the West, op cit, p. 264.
92 Muta, Orie. Imagery in the Poetry of Hagiwara Sakutarō, op cit, p. 121.
94 Sakutarō continued to use this technique throughout his life, see the Hyōdo poem "Useless writings" (Muyō no shomotsu), HSZ II, p.131. Vol II, p. 146. Here he shifts from third person into first person as in "A sorrowful moonlit night."
images to the physiological workings of life, as seen through images of swimming bacteria, oozing intestines and radioactive limbs.

Sakutarô had a particular dislike for cherry blossoms; "Japanese cherry blossoms have a type of sickly beauty. Surely the cherry is the most illusory flower, the most unsightly yet modern flower." The cherry had been highly valued by Japanese poets for centuries, for the beauty of the blossoms and, when falling, as a metaphor for the transience of life. To Sakutarô the cherry was rather an image of sickness and decay, used as a metaphor for lust, a lust which corrupts beauty just as sexual disease corrupts the flesh.

Spring comes, particularly in Tokyo, with an amazing amount of dust. A dust which covers everything in a layer of grime—all of creation disappears under this opaque blur. The sight of cherry blossoms... hanging in the dusty air, always makes me think of some rather unsavoury sexual disease. Why have so many people, from ancient times, loved the dirty flowers of the cherry and sung its praises in so many poems? Why on earth have they expended so much adoration on such an uninteresting season as Spring?...

The pale chalky patch of a syphilis sore with a raw edge of reddened tissue is likened to the translucent white of the blossom rimmed with pale pink. Both the cherry and the season of spring are degraded into an association with disease and lust.

Kannô Akimasa argues that seasons are very important in Sakutarô's work in evoking atmosphere, and that the movement through the seasons seen in his work reflects the poet's emotional development. Thus the movement from the spring of Tsuki ni Hoeru to the winter of Hyōtō, reflects an emotional shift from preoccupations with lust and passion to a cold nihilistic anger. Spring, Kannô argues, was particularly important to Sakutarô because it was linked to the essence of life. It is a season where one feels a strange yearning, a sense of isolation as the world bursts into new growth. Like his sense of self, Sakutarô's sense of spring is splintered. Although spring is a time of new emotion, of brightness and light, this is the

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95 HS, "My Favourite Flowers" (Mottomo konomu hana), Bunshô Kurabu, May 1918, Taikai, op cit, p. 183. Murô Saisei's portrayal parallels Sakutarô's, "The cherries have come into bloom. Brother Yamamura, says they rot his nerves. Cherry blossoms flower like syphilis—a dirty yet bright and gaudy flower." See Murô, Saisei. "Uhoin yori" (From Uhoin), Hagiwara Sakutarô Shû, Taikai, op cit, p. 422.
96 HS, "The Poetry of Early Summer" (Shonatsu no Shijô), Hagiwara Sakutarô Shû, Taikai, op cit, p. 422.
lesser role—the support personality—the main role is played by a misty trembling sensuality, by the sticky dampness of imminent decay. Spring is more often associated with uncleanliness and frenzied growth, like a balloon filled with a putrid mould threatening to burst at the slightest pressure, than with traditional images of fresh new life. In "The substance of spring," the world is invaded by insect eggs. Hitherto invisible they swell larger and larger—like breeding bacteria—threatening to burst open and expose a none too savoury interior.

Spring is all but bursting
swollen with innumerable insect eggs....
they push and jostle each other
they pervade the very air
growing firm as swelling rubber balls....

The Tsuki ni Hoeru poem, "Dawn," provides another such example. Rather than the landscape of fresh beauty and new life one would expect with a title such as, "Dawn," a world of disease and decay is depicted as the narrator's body disintegrates before the reader's eyes. The unsteady light of dawn only serves to expose the horror born of the darkness of the night. The tension created by the positive pull of attraction versus the negative pull of disease, becomes a metaphor in Sakutarō's work for the contradictions and inconsistencies of life.

These are only a few of the many examples of how Sakutarō seeks to undermine images of traditional beauty and as a result succeeds in expanding the range of available symbols by making the underside of life, the ugly and the grotesque, into standard topics for serious poetry.

(e) Coinage of new words and images

Sakutarō made a further contribution to modern verse by expanding the frontiers of imagery, on the one hand creating new words himself and on the other, borrowing Western words and images in his search for new expression. Many of the poets of the day would pick up Western words and work them into the fabric of their poetry, thus adding a modern veneer to their verse. Some were used simply to signify an object which had no Japanese equivalent, while others were used for the sound value or the

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image baggage they brought from Western tradition. The word 'flannel' is one example of this borrowing. In "The twilight room" in Aoneko, Sakutarō talks of a "flannel-wearing possessor of a lonely heart." He felt that the touch of flannel was akin to the touch of a lover's hands. Kitahara Hakushū too associated flannel with a lover, feeling that its touch was like that of a one-sided unrequited love. In the work of both poets, flannel is associated with the sensuality of a lover's touch, thus creating a new metaphor in Japanese poetry. A sensuality heightened by the fact that neru the Japanese word for flannel carries an implicit play on the word 'sleep.'

Sakutarō's interest in science and industry also led to further borrowing of Western words. Biological imagery is used to depict the raw agony of his existence. His poems are filled with the images of science and industrialization—bacteria, radium, crystal, trains, photographic plates, etc.—that is, of much that was new and modern in the world of Taishō Japan. Photography was one of Sakutarō's lifelong hobbies and he often took photos which were deliberately unfocused in an attempt to add a dreamlike quality to their depiction of reality, something he also sought to achieve in his poetry. His fascination with movie making and photography appears again and again in his poetry, as for example in "The portrait" where a photographic image is used as a metaphor for a shadowy picture of the unconscious. The conscious mind of the narrator seeks to capture the unconscious—the subjective—in the objective form of a photograph.

...I took a snapshot.
In the faint shadowed light
I examined the whitened plate
something, just a vague shadow, was pictured....

Sakutarō's fascination with photography was heightened by its ability to

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100 HS, "The twilight room" (Hakubō no heya), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 130. See Vol II, p. 79. See also "Unrequited love" (Katakoi), Vol II, p. 125.
101 HS, "Two Letters" (Futatsu no Tegami), HSZ III, p. 224.
102 "My sorrows wears the thin flannel garb of one-sided love." Kitahara Hakushū, "Unrequited love." See Taikei, op cit, p. 420, Note 146.
103 See "The reason why the person inside looks like a deformed invalid," Vol II, p. 27; "The murder case" Vol II, p. 17; "The portrait" Vol II, p. 38; and "Soldiers" Vol II, p. 128. Sakutarō wrote these foreign words in hiragana in his text (he rarely uses katakana), which then italicised. The translations in Volume Two maintain this italicization to indicate these foreign loan words.
apparently suspend time. This and other symbols of the modern age become part of the poet's landscape, again expanding the boundaries of acceptable poetic expression.

In some cases the use of Western words, whether written phonetically in Japanese or attached as furigana to the Japanese word creates problems for the translator. In the Aoneko poem "The unhappy prisoners," Sakutarō uses the French word—written in hiragana—chapeaux for the faded pale blue caps of the prisoners. As hats had been introduced from the West the tendency was to use a Western word. This use of the French causes problems in the English translation, as the rather dandified, slightly exotic connotations of chapeaux when used in English proves inappropriate for the pallid monotony of the prisoners' lives, thus the word 'caps' seemed a more appropriate English translation.

Under faded pale-blue caps they
wander, aimlessly, dragging the tips of their dusky tails....
In line, like some strange funeral
they crawl in and out of the shadow cast by the huge building
...each head topped with a faded blue paper cap...107

In addition to his borrowing from the West, Sakutarō also created new words of his own. The word bōkei—literally, 'distant views'—is one such example. Unlisted in dictionaries, Sakutarō notes that this word should be taken in context with a line of his verse which reads, tōku kyōdo wo bōkei sureba (if I look back at my distant home). Bōkei encapsulated his nostalgic longing for a glimpse of that distant home. The critic Kawakami Tetsutarō makes the following comment;

...the word "bōkei" clearly incorporates the "bō" of both "kibō"(hope) and "zetsubō"(despair). Thus this nostalgia is largely spiritual; arising from thoughts which have wandered far from the true home of their soul.109

Thus Sakutarō created this new word to evoke a sense of nostalgic longing for a once familiar scene.

106 For example, the poem "Luna Park" from Hyōto is written with the characters for yūenchi (fun park) with runapaaku attached as furigana.
107 HS, The unhappy prisoners" (Kanashii shūjin), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 178. See Vol II, p. 105. When this poem was written in 1922, there were two types of caps worn by prisoners, dark and pale blue. Pale blue was worn by those who had a good record. The distinction disappeared after 1931 when everyone began to wear pale blue.
108 HS, "At the time of publication [of Aoneko]" (Shuppan ni saishte), HSZ II, p. 8.
He also created his own onomatopoeia, as seen in "Roosters" discussed above, or in the Tsuki ni Hoeru poem "Cats." Through the repetition of the sound Oo-waah, Sakutarō sought an amalgam of the sound of a cat on heat greeting its mate and the mewling cry of a small baby.\(^{110}\)

Two jet black cats
high on the roof, on this bewitching night.
A threadlike crescent moon stands straight but dim
from the tips of their ramrod tails.
"Oo—waah, Good Evening"
"Oo—waah, Good Evening"
"Oo—gyaah, Oo—gyaah, Oo—gyaah"
"Oo—waah, the master of this house is sick."\(^{111}\)

As noted by Muta Orie, this loud proclamation of the reproductive function of cats causes a sickening in the mind and body of the master of the house,\(^{112}\) adding to the connotations of black magic already created by the image of two 'black' cats silhouetted against moon, their yowling resounding like a witch's spell or curse.

(4) **Success in tapping into the despair of the 'modern' intellectual**

It was not however only the style of Sakutarō's poetry that played such a revolutionary role in the development of modern Japanese poetry, for as Kitakawa Fuyuhiko argues, it was largely the imagery, which made Tsuki ni Hoeru so remarkable. Images such as "spring came riding on a carriage," or "the harbour in the heart of the horse" or "moths, with their sponge-cake wings fluttering towards the light," added something fresh and new to Japanese poetry.\(^{113}\)

Sakutarō wrote of the many inner conflicts arising from his life as a Taishō intellectual, who though attracted to the West, was still living within the landscape of Japan. He became a pioneer of "a psychological mode of verse that transform[ed] his spiritual chaos into literary documents revealing the luckless, superfluous, and splintered modern non-person he felt himself

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\(^{110}\)Sakutarō made this connection between the cry of a baby and the howl of a cat on heat in an unpublished manuscript. See Fukuda, Kiyoto, (ed.), Hagiiwara Sakutarō: Hīto to Sakuhin (25), Century Books, 1967, p. 120; and Muta, Orie. Imagery in the Poetry of Hagiiwara Sakutarō, op cit, p. 103.

\(^{111}\)HS, "Cats" (Neko) Tsuki ni Hoeru, HSZ I, p. 56. See Vol II, p. 31.

\(^{112}\)Muta, Orie. Imagery in the Poetry of Hagiiwara Sakutarō, op cit, p. 103.

\(^{113}\)Kitagawa, Fuyuhiko. Taikei, op cit, p. 16.
to be." It was this symbolic probing of his own psychic problems that set Sakutarō apart as a great modern poet.

Yet this very obsession with his own psyche has prompted criticism of what is seen as the limited scope of his poetry. Some argue that his poetry is only of interest to "sexually frustrated adolescents," and that the "startling originality of his themes and imagery is merely a direct reflection of the poet's persistent physical ill-health and intellectual neurasthenia." Others, like Epp, argue that he never steps out of his own mind, that he restricts himself by a constant re-working of the same emotional problems. In Epp's eyes, Sakutarō constantly wrote about his own anguish, albeit in a variety of ways, and this limited his art and resulted in him producing a great many poems which deal with the same handful of emotions, almost as if he was always in pursuit of the perfect expression of his own misery. Graeme Wilson agrees with this position, arguing that Sakutarō went too far; "that his neurasthenic vision of reality was less a poetic analysis or exposure of extreme states of human feeling than a deliberate harrying by a skilled poet of the human nervous system," and that his work possessed "an over-sensitivity drooping sometimes into morbidity, sometimes sentimentality, often both;" he also believes that; "It is however this very delving into the human psyche which proved Sakutarō's greatest contribution to modern Japanese poetry, his very concentration which gave his voice such power."

Let us now turn to his personal history and then to an analysis of the themes and images which underpin his work.

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115 Ayukawa Nobuo's view, as seen in Naka, Taro (ed.), "Tsuki ni Hoeru Zempanki no Mondai" (Problems with the first half of *Tsuki ni Hoeru*), *Hagiwara Sakutarō Kenkyū*, Scidosha, 1974, p. 284.
CHAPTER ONE

THE LIFE

(1) Maebashi Beginnings—1886–1910 .......... 32
(2) Poetic Debut—1910s .......... 42
(3) Escape to the city—1920s .......... 51
(4) Return home —1930s .......... 58
(1) Maebashi Beginnings—1886–1910

Hagiwara Sakutarō was born the eldest son of Hagiwara Mitsuzō on the first of November 1886. Mitsuzō was then living with his family in Maebashi Kitakuro Wamachi 69 Banchi which is now part of Maebashi city, the capital of Gunma Prefecture.1 Mitsuzō was the third son of an Osaka doctor. His father, Kenryū, taught medicine and worked as a doctor. The Hagiwara family is said to be directly descended from the ninth-century emperor Seiwa, although the name “Hagiwara” came from a later time when an ancestor called Hosokawa was buried in the Hagiwara Forest in Awa no Kuni, now known as Tokushima. Intending to become a primary or secondary teacher, Mitsuzō entered a teacher training course and became an assistant teacher at the age of twenty-three. Unsatisfied with this occupation, he moved to Tokyo in 1875 to enter Meiji Medical School (Meiji Igakkō). His move to Tokyo met with considerable opposition from his family and he suffered serious financial hardship before managing to graduate. At the age of twenty-seven he entered the medical department of Tokyo University (Tsugaku Igaku) and graduated in the December of his thirtieth year, his excellent grades vindicating his chosen career. In 1882, he moved to Maebashi, a town which drew its wealth from the silk and textile industry, to become a doctor at the Gunma Prefectural Hospital. It was here that he met Yagi Kei, whom he married on the eighteenth of September 1882, when he was thirty-one years old and his bride only sixteen.

Kei was the eldest daughter of Yagi Hajime, a retainer of the former Umayabashi Matsudaira clan. The Yagi family had served the Matsudaira family for generations, and received a stipend of one hundred and fifty koku of rice a year.2 Kei had been brought up very strictly in the old samurai fashion. When she married Mitsuzō, her father was the deputy principal of a teachers' college and held the additional post of prefectural hygiene officer. He later filled various governmental positions and served as an advisor for the Matsudaira family. Sato, Kei's mother, was very fond of her first

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1 General biographical information was taken from three main sources: the two-volume biography written by Shin Shimaoka entitled Denki—Hagiwara Sakutarō (Biography—Hagiwara Sakutarō), Shunshūsha, 1980; the biographical information listed in volume fifteen of Sakutarō's complete works; and Fukuda, Kiyoto. Hagiwara Sakutarō: Hito to Saksuhi (25), op cit. When quoting directly or if interpreting a particular event I have indicated with a footnote, whereas generally accepted biographical data is left un-footnoted.

2 One koku is equivalent to approximately five bushels, theoretically enough rice to feed one person for one year, thus a man with 150 koku was quite a wealthy man.
grandchild Sakutarō and spoiled him a great deal, particularly during the period when Mitsuzō and Kei lived with her parents when they were first married.

In December 1882 Mitsuzō became the deputy director of the Gunma prefectural hospital. Sakutarō was not the first child of the couple. A baby daughter, Tei had died in 1884—before her first birthday—that is, two years before Sakutarō’s birth. She is not listed in the family register, although her burial is recorded on the family grave. Sakutarō was born—the eldest son—when his father was thirty five and his mother twenty, in the Year of the Rat, the first animal of the twelve year cycle of the Chinese calendar. Following Sakutarō, Kei and Mitsuzō had five more children, four daughters, Waka, Yuki, Mine and Ai, and another son, Miroku.

Sakutarō was convinced that a man’s name somehow reflected his character, feeling it could even mould his destiny. In an essay entitled, "About my name," he tells of friends whose future had taken a positive turn when they changed their names, or who had been miraculously cured of an illness. At first glance his parents seem to have given him a very simple name, made up of saku (朔), due to his birth on the first of the month, and tarō (太郎), because he was the eldest son. Sakutarō despised this overt simplicity. Of the characters which made up his name, the first, saku, means new birth—the first fruit of the season—and is associated with yang or the positive of the life forces. The last two characters form the word tarō, which is commonly used to refer to a first born son, and is also associated with the yang. Thus although at first glance Sakutarō’s naming seems but a simple reflection of the reality of his birth—that is, the first son born on the first of the month—on closer examination, it became—in Sakutarō’s eyes—a grim portent, a negative symbol of his dark fate. He felt the two positives—the two yang symbols—recombined to form a negative—the yin—and that as a result the feminine yin ruled his life. Sakutarō also tells of a peculiar palm reading session, where he was warned about the strange, uncommon markings on his palm. His palm was distinguished by a line referred to as the tenkasuji, (the ‘earth’ line which runs vertically down from the middle finger), which marks the hand of only one man in a million. If this line runs true it would, Sakutarō notes, mark its owner as a “genius or hero unparalleled in all the world.” In Sakutarō’s case, however, the line was broken. Thus—as with his name—what initially seemed a blessing of good fortune, became in the end a portent of future unhappiness. His
potential genius was cut short, for rather than marking him a genius, his palm told of a man, "sunken in purposeless dissatisfaction, destined for an agonizing death." Later when he became a writer, although it was fashionable to write under a pen name—such as Kitahara Hakushū and Murō Saisei—feelings of inadequacy made him chose to stay with his true name for all its dark portent. He writes, "as I was yet to become a true man of letters, it was too embarrassing to ostentatiously give myself a pen name, so I stayed with my real name."

This sense of a dark destiny weighed Sakutarō down from early in his childhood and he tended to dismiss the positive aspects of his life.

Although on the outside I was blessed with perfect good fortune, in reality my life...has been but a succession of dark and weary pessimism...

In 1885, Mitsuzō opened a medical surgery in Maebashi within what was once the grounds of the Umayabashi castle, soon becoming a very well-known and respected doctor. He regularly toured the prefecture giving free vaccinations and often gave substantial amounts to public works and charity. He became so popular that he was sometimes called a 'living god' (iki kamisama) by his patients.

A number of anecdotes about Sakutarō’s childhood evoke the image of a rather spoiled, sickly yet talented child. One tells that when the maid once teased him with the reflection of a wooden spoon on the wall it gave him such a fright that he fainted and had to be put to bed after developing a fever; another tells of a time when he wanted a music box—a great rarity at

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3 HS, ibid, p. 235.
4 Murō Saisei (1889-1962) was a poet and novelist from Kanagawa. Before moving to Tokyo in 1910, he had already begun to contribute haiku, tanka and shi to local papers and magazines. 1913 marked the beginning of his friendship with Sakutarō, when together with Yamanura Bochō, they formed the Ningyo Shisha (Mermaid Poetry Society). In 1914, together with Sakutarō, he founded the Kanjō Shisha, and became the editor of their magazine, Kanjō. His works include; At no Shishō (Anthology of Love Poems, 1918), Jojō-shōkyoku-shū (Anthology of Short Lyrics, 1918), and the autobiographical novels Yōnen Jidai (Childhood, 1919) and Sei ni Mezameru Koro (Awakening to Sex, 1919). [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiten, p. 253; and Davis, Shijin, p. 301.]
5 Kitahara Hakushū's (1885-1942) real name was Kitahara Ryūkichi, while Murō Saisei's was Murō Terumichi. Hakushū chose a pen name meaning 'white autumn,' while Saisei took the sai from Saigawa, the river which flows through his home town of Kanazawa—a river on whose banks he spent his childhood—and then as he lived to the west of the river he played on the pronunciation of the word for west—sei—choosing rather the character for 'star.' See, Fukuda, Kiyoto. Murō Saisei: Hito to Sakuhin (23), Century Books, 1969, p. 8.
6 "HS,” About my Name” (Namae no Hanashi), HSZ XI, p. 232.
7 HS, “On my Peculiar for Solitude” (Boku no Kodoku Kuse ni tsuite), A Corridor and a Room (Rōka to Shitsubō), HSZ IX, p. 195.
the time—and so a member of the household was sent off to the distant Yokohama to buy one from the foreign store. Sakutarō had quite a number of other such extravagant foreign toys—a harmonica and an accordion and this fascination with foreign rarities was something which stayed with him throughout his life.

When Sakutarō went to primary school he would not play with the other children but would hide away in corners of the playground frantically trying to avoid the class bully. At the slightest hint of a cold he would be kept from school for the day, and in bad weather he would be sent to school in a rickshaw, facts which undoubtedly made him an easy target for the school bullies. From his early childhood he was a loner, afraid of the staring eyes of other children, feeling guilty about his very existence.

I was born into a comparatively good home and spoiled from childhood. I was never able to constrain myself to the restrictions of others or of society. Because of my eccentric personality, from primary school onwards, I was somehow different from the other children at school and became the lone outcast, detested with cold animosity by all around me. Even now a desolate chill runs down my spine at the very thought of my school days. During those years I was hated, tormented and ostracized by all and sundry—every single pupil and teacher—enough to make me wish to wreak revenge on each and every one...⁸

In later life he harboured a great bitterness towards these school days.

In 1900—the year which heralded a new and dynamic era for modern poetry with the founding of the magazine *Myōjō*⁹—Sakutarō entered Maebashi Middle School at the age of fifteen. He edited various school circulars and published *tanka* and *shintaishi* in the school magazine. His schoolmates teased him with such nicknames as 'little prince,' ridiculing his life as a rich and spoiled eldest son, and 'old woman' (*baasan*) because of his stooping gait, or 'sparrow' because his face was so small. He would often play truant from school, spending the whole day wandering the fields and river banks around Maebashi. After such a day of freedom, he would return home in the evenings with his empty lunch box, just as if he had been to school. His teachers regularly scolded him for gazing out of the window and he was often in trouble for staying away from school on test days. He

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⁹*Myōjō* (The Morning Star) was first established in April 1900, when Sakutarō was fourteen and became the voice of Romanticism in the early 1900s. It ran for 100 issues until November 1908. Controlled by Yosano Tekkan, and his wife Yosano Akiko, the *Myōjō* group also included such poets as Yoshii Isamu, Kitahara Hakushū and Ishikawa Takuboku. [Miyoshi, *Bungaku Shōjiten*, p. 249.]
graduated from middle school at the age of twenty-one, though he had failed one year and thus been forced to repeat. A fear of failing haunted Sakutarō throughout his schooling. He constantly cast around for something to blame—the school, the arbitrary nature of the marking, the system as a whole—for his lack of success. He notes:

I begin to tremble when I think about the time I failed my fourth year of middle school. If it wasn’t for the totally arbitrary pass marks in this world of ours, I would have been able to graduate with honours.10

In an essay, entitled "All things cease to exist with time,” he tells of his pleasure in escaping classes and lying deep in the clover to watch the birds travelling the sky.

Alone away from my group of friends, turning over as in sleep in the clover-covered school yard, I lie watching the shadow of a small bird travelling the blue sky.11

This scene is echoed in "Middle school yard," a poem which attests to his preference for the warm grasses over attendance at class.

One day at middle school
tormented with a sudden lustful passion
throwing my books away in anger
I flung myself down in the grass of the school yard—all alone
Ah! such melancholy.
Flying—thrown—far up into the blue
the rays of the sun shone hot on my hat.12

During his early manhood, Sakutarō felt his life was dominated by two inescapable problems. The first, an almost unbearable sexual desire and the second, a constant questioning of the reason for his existence. In an essay, entitled "The history of a certain man," he tells of this tension, speaking of himself in the third person.

As a youth he was afflicted by a fearsome sexual desire. He searched for God, to turn this unbearable suffering over to him. But opening the Bible on the phrase, 'When you look at a woman lust arises in your heart...' he closed it never to touch it again.13

The Bible, it seems, provided little solace. The fact that the Bible mentions

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11 HS, "All things cease to exist with time" (Mono wa minna saijitsu to tomo ni horobi yuku), HSZ II, p. 346.
12 HS, "Middle school yard" (Chūgakkō no kötei), Hyōtō, HSZ II, p. 32. See Vol II, p. 143.
13 HS, "The History of a Certain Man" (Aru Hito no Rekishi), Kubo Tadao suggests that Sakutarō was referring to "The Gospel of Matthew" (5-28), which reads: 'But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.' See Taiketsu, op cit, p. 444.
women and lust in the same sentence seems to have been enough to make this 'certain man' dismiss it completely, as if the very words increased rather than reduced his sexual tension. Sakutarō, it seems, felt considerable disharmony between his erotic thoughts and desires, and the continence he understood Christianity required. The work continues:

At one time because of his fearsome rising lust, in confusion he embraced the trees of the woods, caught by such violent sexual desire that he feared 'all the trees would wither and die at his embrace.' He shuddered at the thought that as he embraced them all the trees of the wood would wither, one by one. (He wrote poems in secret, but filled with shame set them on fire.)

It was during these middle school years that he was published for the first time with five tanka poems appearing in the Maebashi Middle School Alumni Magazine. Then in 1903, aged seventeen, he published his first tanka in Myōjō.

Sakutarō did not enter senior high school in 1906, the year he graduated from middle school. However the following year at the age of twenty-one he entered the English literature stream of the Fifth High School in Kumamoto. There too he continued to have less than good results and finally failed that year. In 1908 Sakutarō changed schools to attend the German literature stream of the Sixth High School in Okayama, only to fail yet again. After spending three years at two different schools repeating the same preliminary year of high school, he finally left school in 1910 aged twenty-four. A bout of paratyphoid fever provided him with a bonafide reason to leave. In April, 1910, he had entered the preparatory course for Keio University while still attending school in Okayama, only to withdraw the application the same month.

In a letter—peppered with German, reflecting a precocious erudition and fascination with things foreign—to a fellow student from Gunma prefecture, sent in March of 1910, he writes;

This time—more so than ever before—I'll definitely have to abhalten [leave] Schule [school], though it is now still under discussion. This is because prior to my returning home Herr Ikuta [Mr Ikuta] reported my abwesend [absence] at the last Pruefung [examination] to Mein Vater [my father], and further more will no doubt recommend to my Vater that I Schule abhalten.16

14HS, ibid, p. 444.
15It should however be noted that the senior high schools of the day were really equivalent to University in today's terms.
In this same letter, Sakutarō outlines the three choices he saw confronting him.

I have now made a decision, I have just three choices.
1. Kaufmann [tradesman]
2. Medizine Schule [Medical School]
3. Pistol

Thus, he could: become a tradesman, that is take up some 'proper' work—real work, not the decadent pursuit of literature; enter medical school—the road for a virtuous son of a doctor; or use a pistol—that is suicide. None of these options left him much scope to pursue his love of literature. During his school days Sakutarō's interests lay more with philosophy than literature, although he had already begun contributing both tanka and shi to such magazines as Ochiguri (Fallen Chestnuts), a Maebashi literary magazine, Bunko (Library of Literature), and Subaru (The Pleiades). For all his lack of academic success he seems to have been heavily involved in discussions with his fellow students, showing little sign of the fearful, solitary child of his youth.

When I was at senior high school, I shared a room with Ishii Naosaburō, now a tanka poet writing for Mizugame (The Water Jar), and we used to argue violently about morality and law. Every day was spent in discussions with our friends. Consequently I wasn’t very serious about literature and I professed to be a budding philosopher. My friends derided me as a 'sophist,' yet hating to embark on discussions which were more trouble than they were worth, tended to keep their distance.

It was not until he left school and returned to Maebashi that Sakutarō began to be truly interested in literature. He was ever conscious of the fact that his becoming a poet was, in his father's eyes, a discredit to the family name. Abandoning his studies midway, he was nothing but an

Rokuichirō (1887-1912) was a high school friend of Sakutarō's during his time in Okayama. [HSZ, XIII, p. 11.]

17 HS, ibid. p. 12.
18 Bunko first ran from March 1889 to the following November, and then again from August 1895 until August 1910. Kawai Suimei, Irako Scihaku, and Yokose You were the three representative poets of the Bunko group, although both Hakushū and Miki Rofū also published in this magazine. Subaru ran from January 1909 to December 1913. Under the control of Mori Ogai, it basically took over from Myōjō, attracting the younger poets, such as Hakushū, Kinoshita Mokutarō, Ishikawa Takuboku and Takamura Kōtarō. The Yosanos, Ueda Bin, Nagai Kafū and Tanizaki Junichirō were also involved. The Subaru writers worked under the umbrella of 'aestheticism' in opposition to 'naturalism.' [Miyoshi. Bungaku Shōjiten, p. 226, p. 135.]
19 A tanka magazine established in April 1914. Originally called Sutyo, it was edited by Onoe Saishū (1879-1957) a follower of realism. [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiten, p. 242.]
20 HS, "When I Entered Poetic Circles" (Shidan ni Deta koro), HSZ VIII, p. 237.
embarrassment to the family. As the eldest son, it was his duty to become a doctor and continue the family tradition. If Sakutarō had become a doctor he would have been the twelfth generation in that profession—a weighty history he fought to escape.

Apart from the practical difficulties created by his failure at school, Sakutarō had a deep-seated fear of illness and a hatred of doctors. In the last years of his life he kept his desk full of drugs which he was constantly self-prescribing. Yet this fear carried within it a paranoid fascination with the biological workings of man. The microscopic workings of our bodies—seeing man as an organism—is an important source of his imagery.

The fact that not only did he fail to complete his studies, but lived a life of idleness, playing the mandolin and collecting Western records, put further strain on the relationship between father and son. Sakutarō was very interested in music and was an accomplished mandolin player and composer. He graduated from Middle School with every intention of joining the Toyama Military Academy to become a band member. This dream was shattered by a thunderous response from his grandfather, "A Military Band! They're nothing but the entertainers—geisha—of the army, if you must join up, at least become an army doctor." 21 As a young man Sakutarō bought one of only three mandolins said to have been in Japan at that time and studied with Hiryūma Kenpachi, one of Japan's pioneers of mandolin music. During the same period he became a frequent customer at Jūjiya in Ginza, the only shop then selling Western records.

I completely idled my youth away on music. Nietzsche wisely commented that there is no greater youthful time waster, than impassioned music practice, irrespective of actual talent. These words fit my own special wastefulness perfectly. When I think about it now, my musical madness stemmed mainly from my ability to enjoy poetic images through the auditory presentation.22

In addition to music, Sakutarō was, as noted in the introduction, very interested in photography and sketching. Sakutarō took a great many photographs over the years. He preferred squalid city backstreets with their rows of narrow streets, to scenic nature shots, and was only really interested in scenes which evoked a sense of loneliness and desolation.

In 1911, at the age of twenty-five, Sakutarō re-entered Keio University only to leave again later that same year, this time after seven

22 HS, "Of Music" (Ongaku ni tsuite), HSZ IX, p. 264.
months. He took up lodgings in Tokyo, and remained there even after he
withdrew, dreaming of entering the Ueno Music Academy in Tokyo, or
perhaps even escaping from Japan.

I want to go to France
yet it is just so far.
Still I can at least put on a new suit
and leave on a journey—free of care.
As the train travels the mountain tracks
I lean up against the water-blue windows
alone, lost in happy thoughts.
Daybreak on this May morning.
I lose myself in the newly sprouting tender young grasses
as the May morning dawns.23

His father, however, refused to fund any overseas travel, and Sakutarō embarked on a literary career, hardly more pleasing for his father who refused to accept writing as a fit career for his son. Feelings of failure and self-persecution—many no doubt stemming from his relationship with his father—pursued Sakutarō all his life. Sakutarō himself, could not really accept literature as a true 'career;' it was not like a tradesman's 'labour.' He describes himself as desperate to work but unable to find anything to do.

In a letter to Takahashi Motokichi, Sakutarō bemoans his lack of
direction, "There is no greater suffering that realizing that one's actions do not fulfil one's purpose."24 Sakutarō regarded this lack of direction, the aimlessness of his existence, as a sin against nature—against the very universe. In another letter to Takahashi written in May 1917—the following year—Sakutarō writes;

However one considers one's own essence, it seems that I am more
correctly referred to as a 'seeker after truth' than as a 'poet.' Poetry is merely the 'repentance of my sins.' As a poet, I have a somewhat amateur attitude. This is because I cannot embrace a worshipful belief in poetry as the absolute (other poets—usually for superstitious reasons—tend to regard poetry as something sacred). For me, poetry is merely a 'sad toy.'25

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23 HS, "On a Trip" (Ryōjō), Airen Shihen (Collection of Love Poems), HSZ II, p. 16.
24 HS, "Letter to Takahashi Motokichi." April 1916, HSZ XIII, p. 111. Takahashi Motokichi (1893-1965) was a Maebashi poet. He was very close friends with Sakutarō during the Tsuki ni Hoeru years. He published in such magazines as, Seimei no Kawa (The River of Life) a literary magazine which ran from Oct. 1916 to June 1917. Seimei no Kawa was closely affiliated to Shirakaba (The White Birch) Group. His representative works include; Enbō (Distant views, 1922) and Tanshi (Aesthetic Viewpoint, 1923).
[Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiten, p. 146.]
Sakutarō talks of his increasingly difficult relationship with his father in the following passage, reportedly a conversation between father and son in 1911, a year that Sakutarō, then twenty-five, mostly spent perfecting his mandolin playing.

'Look, even these animals are working diligently.'

'They aren't working, they're moving. To work means to do something for a purpose. They aren't working, they're just moving through instinct.'

'What? Instinct? These ants are working to gather food for winter. People too must work while they are young so that they will not starve in old age. There is no ration for idlers. Whatever the situation, work is the most important thing for a human being. Do you understand?'

His father had taken Sakutarō out into the back garden to point out the diligence of the ants, perhaps hoping this would bring his strange and gloomy son to a greater awareness of his responsibilities. It was not however, that Sakutarō was unaware of his responsibilities but rather that he was unable to fulfil them—he was caught in a search for meaning. He yearned for a purpose, for an answer to the questions that plagued him, yet he was totally unable to find an answer within the limits of his father's concept of man's role in society and its attendant responsibilities.

'I can't go on like this, I must do something, but I don't know what to do': this is for us, the voice most feared. Plainly speaking, we have neither ideals, nor purpose....Now I, incidentally, have been wounded more deeply than anyone else in the world, by this modern sickness. Since my graduation from middle school, I have suffered from this illness. When many of my friends—bright with hope—were discussing their future, I sat alone sunk in gloomy silence, in a corner of the classroom. My father pressed me unceasingly. 'Anything will do, but set yourself an objective!'

But, I never found that objective. My friends diagnosed me as an artist; however, in my mind, Art was not a worthy objective. I was looking for the work which I—as a man—must do. But, I never found

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Kindai Sakka 4, Hanawa Shōbō, 1988, pp. 269-275. Kubo notes three elements of Takuboku’s influence on Sakutarō (p. 275); the conceptual influence of Takuboku’s collection Kanshiki Kangu (Sad Toy, 1912), which held that poetry was a poet’s sole comfort—his ‘sad solace;’ the influence of the ‘sick’ dog which appears in Ichikoku no suwa (A handful of sand, 1910) on the title of Tsuki ni Hōru (discussed in more detail in Chapter 2); and thirdly, the influence of Takuboku’s retrospective tanka, which looked back on his middle school days, in much the same way as Sakutarō’s Kyōdo Bōkei poems (Distant views of Home). Born in Iwate prefecture, Ishikawa Takuboku (1886-1912) was a poet, both free-style and tanka, and a critic. He is a representative writer of the Japanese ‘romantic’ movement. His works include; Rōmaji Nikki (Romanized Diary) and Yobiko to Yokobue (A Whistle and a Flute, 1911). [Miyoshi, Bunbaku Shōjiten, pp. 14-5.]

26HS, "Eternal Boredom" (Eien no Taikutsu), HSZ IX, pp. 202-3.
anything....At that time I regarded literature merely as a dissolute hobby and as a shameful profession....fortunately or not (as the case may be), I did not need to work in order to live. Therefore, I could not even be distracted by work. I could never—even for a moment—forget the suffering which arose from that one thought which troubled me,

'For what purpose? Why are you living?'

Sakutarō felt exposed and useless—an emotion which became a central motif in his poetry. He felt exposed as he wandered the streets, feeling eyes upon him saying: "Look! It's him again, out walking. He's like a stray dog, always loitering around town." I was totally and absolutely bored.

...Yet because of the irritation born of that very boredom, I couldn't bear to stay inside the house for a single moment. Nerves on edge, like some madman, all day, everyday, I left the house and rushed around madly. It would be no exaggeration to say I ran rather than walked.

(2) Poetic Debut—1910s

Sakutarō broke into the Tokyo poetry circles as an up-and-coming freestyle poet when the magazine Zanboa (Shaddock), accepted five poems, for the May 1913 issue, including "Yogisha" (Night train) which received particularly high praise. He had been sending poems and tanka to Zanboa for about six months before these works were taken up, and although he had already published various tanka, this was his first publication of jiyūshi. However, unfortunately for Sakutarō who had only just found somewhere to publish his work, Zanboa was discontinued after that May issue. Hakushū then helped Sakutarō to publish in Wakayama Bokusui's

28 HS, "Eternal Boredom" (Eien no Taikutsu), HSZ IX, p. 205.
29 HS, ibid, p. 201. Those well versed in the subject will recognize that Sakutarō was clearly suffering from some form of psychological illness. At times he appears Manic/Depressive, at others Schizophrenic, although documented evidence of any such illnesses has proved unavailable.
30 Edited by Kitahara Hakushū, Zanboa ran from Nov. 1911 until July 1913. Hakushū took the name of the journal from a citrus tree in this garden in Yanagawa. Ueda Bin, Kanbara Ariake and the New Poetry Society poets all contributed to this magazine. Hakushū used Zanboa to introduce the work of Saisei, Yamamura Bōsho, Sakutarō and Ōe Takeji. [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiten, p. 111.]
31 Wakayama Bokusui (1885-1928) as a tanka poet from Miyazaki Prefecture. He published his first collection of tanka, Umi no Koe (The Voice of the Sea), in 1908, the year he graduated from Waseda University's English Literature Department. Together with Maeda Yūgure he was noted for his 'naturalist' style. Under his editorship, Sōzaku ran for two years from 1910. [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiten, p. 277]
Sōsaku (Creation). At this time Sakutarō, together with Murō Saisei and Ōte Takuji came to be regarded as the three disciples of Hakushū. Each poet exerted an influence on the others.

I learned a great deal from Ōte. Much of the style of Aoneko was inspired by him, yet later it seems that Ōte took much from me. Yet although our roads were ever entangled, it was I who learnt the most. Ōte always remained a little ahead.

Hakushū was also very influential in Sakutarō’s life at this time helping introduce him to the intellectuals of his day. Although Hakushū was only one year older than Sakutarō he had published Jashūmon (Heretical School) when he was twenty-five which had brought him early fame. Sakutarō’s first letter to Hakushū is dated October 1914, suggesting that the two men met for the first time around that date.

In such a short time you have taken me captive....Imagine me all alone at night, tearfully screaming out my desire to see you. This is a letter sent to you—Kitahara Ryūkichi—from one who loves you with his whole heart. This is no exaggeration. You are my real mother, more so than the mother of my flesh. I have come across many people but sadly have never fallen in love (though there were many I liked). Although at first I felt antagonistic towards Murō, after three months I fell completely in love with him. Now both Murō and I love each other deeply. Just when I was convinced that there couldn’t possibly be another such person, I met you, and for the second time I felt love for someone of my own sex.

The many letters he sent to Hakushū between 1914 and 1917 reflect the great passion Sakutarō felt for his beloved mentor—32 in 1914, 52 in 1915, 7 in 1916 and 9 in 1917.

Sakutarō also carried out a passionate correspondence with Murō Saisei. In his diary dated April 1913, Saisei tells of an unexpected but very passionate letter he received from Sakutarō, whose name he only recognized from a poem he had seen in Zanboa.

Reading the letter was like reading a terrible love letter. It contained

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32 Ōte Takuji (1887-1934) was free-style poet from Gunma prefecture. He made his poetic debut in Zanboa in 1912, the year he graduated from the English Literature Department of Waseda University. He was affiliated with Sōsaku, ARS and Chijō Junrei (Earthly Pilgrim). Under the influence of Baudelaire, Ōte's style of symbolic poetry was flavoured with aestheticism and fantasy. Together with Sakutarō and Saisei, he was regarded as Hakushū's disciple. [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiten, pp. 40-41.]

33 HS, "Ōte Takuji: The man and the Poet" (Ōte Takuji kun no Shi to Jinbutsu), HSZ XIV, p. 298.

34 HS, "Letter to Kitahara Hakushū," 24 Oct. 1914, HSZ XIII, p. 60. Kitahara Ryūkichi was Hakushū's real name.
such passionate protestations as, 'In the present poetic circles no poetry is as good as yours,' and 'When I read your poetry I am deeply, deeply moved by its sincerity.' As it was the first time I had ever received such an unexpected letter, and because I too felt a warmth of feeling which all but set me afire, I quickly sent off a reply. And so began a passionate association with this strange young aspiring artist. Every third day or so, a pale, fashionable envelope would arrive and I'd know it was a letter from Sakutarō.35

After exchanging letters for about a year, in February of 1914, Saisei visited Maebashi for the first time. The initial meeting between Sakutarō and Saisei seems to have been a disappointment to both of them. From Saisei's poetry, Sakutarō had built up an image of a "beautiful youth—like a pale white fish," however the man whom he met at Maebashi station was unfashionable and countrified, carrying a solid cherry-wood walking stick, with hair long and black like an ancient Egyptian.36 To make matters worse, the penniless Saisei was expecting the wealthy Sakutarō to put him up. Sakutarō could scarcely take this young poet home, for his father absolutely despised writers, newspaper reporters and the penniless unemployed—all of which Saisei was qualified for. He did, however, manage to borrow money from his mother to pay for a room at an inn in town. Hiding Saisei from his father's sight, Sakutarō hoped his guest would leave as soon as possible.

Saisei describes this first meeting with Sakutarō at the station. Sakutarō arrived smartly dressed in a fashionable Western coat and a matching felt hat, which together with his tobacco smoking, made him seem very affected to Saisei.

With a totally disinterested expression, Sakutarō looked out at the Tone river flats, and then showed me to my lodging. When this affected man came to see me in the evening he was no longer wearing the brown Western style jacket, but a silk haori from Isezaki, suggesting a lack of interest in going out for a stroll with me—already dressed in my Western clothes. At that time, many poor poets, unable to even subsist in lodgings in Tokyo would go to the houses of country contributors with comparatively greater means, and would stretch out their stay for one or two months just to survive, and then on returning to Tokyo would leave behind their old lodging and find another place to make a new start.37

36HS, "On First Entering Poetry Circles" (Shidan ni Deta koro), The Corridor and the Room, H5Z IX p. 239.
However, although their first impressions of each other were far from favourable on either side, the more Sakutarō talked to Saisei in his room, the more he came to value him for his simplicity and poetic talent, and a close and enduring friendship developed. Even when ideological differences emerged and their literature began to run along different paths, their friendship continued unchanged, with Sakutarō coming to depend on a great deal on the more practical Saisei.

In mid-March 1914, Saisei left Maebashi to return to Kanazawa to collect an inheritance which had come to him from his adopted father, but soon moved on to Tokyo. During this year Sakutarō frequently travelled to Tokyo, and wandered the cafés or bars of Ueno, Asakusa and Ginza with Saisei and others. After experiencing the bustle and pleasures of the night life of the city, Sakutarō bemoans his isolation in his diary, "I just can’t live in the country any more. If I stay here it will be like committing spiritual suicide. It’s a life of idleness with neither stimulus nor excitement."38

In June 1914, together with Saisei and Yamamura Bochō,39 Sakutarō established the Ningyo Shisha (Mermaid Poetry Society), to "study poetry, religion and music." It was at this time that Sakutarō turned from tanka to the composition of shi. Inspiring writers often established themselves in literary circles by publishing a magazine, and true to this trend the three 'mermaid' poets founded the poetry magazine Takujo Fansui (Fountain on the Table) in March 1915. Takujo Fansui put out a second issue in April, a third in May, and then closed down. The cover—a photo of an ancient Greek wall painting—was chosen by Sakutarō. The publisher was organized by Saisei in Kanazawa, although apparently Saisei left for Tokyo rather suddenly, leaving the costs of the third printing unpaid. Takamura Kōtarō, Hinatsu Kōnosuke40 and Kanbara Ariake41 also

39Yamamura Bochō (1884-1924) was a poet from Gunma prefecture. Baptised as a Christian in 1902, he entered the Holy Trinity Theological College (Seisanitsu Shingakkō) in Tsukiji in Tokyo in 1903. Beginning his career as a tanka poet, he turned to shi, and joined the Free Poetry Society in 1910. His representative works include; Sanin no Shojo (Three Virgins, 1913), Sei Sanryōhāri (Holy Crystal Prism, 1915), Kaze wa kusaki ni sasayaita (The wind murmured among the grasses, 1918) and Kumo (Clouds, 1925). [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiten, p. 265; and Davis, Shijing, p. 320.]
40Hinatsu Kōnosuke (1890-1971) was a poet and scholar of English literature from Nagano prefecture. Together with Saijō Yaso, he founded the Waseda affiliated magazine Seihai (The Holy Grail) while still studying English literature at Waseda University. He later founded the magazine PANTHÉON in 1928 with Saijō Yaso and Horiguchi Daigaku. His works include; Tenshin no Shō (In praise of a new course in life, 1917) and Kōkui Seibo (The Black-habited Madonna, 1921). From 1922 he took up a teaching position at Waseda University and became a leading critic of modern Japanese literature. His best
published work in addition to that of the three 'mermaid' poets. 1915 saw Sakutarō move away from the gentle lyrics of Airen Shihen (Collection of Love Poems) to the starker more modern poetry of Tsuki ni Hoeru.

Sakutarō's keen interest in music, had led to the establishment of The Gondola Western Music Society in 1911. It took its name from the nickname for Sakutarō's study in the Maebashi house, called 'The Gondola Club' because of its tiny size and Western atmosphere. Originally just a simple gathering of friends to play the guitar and mandolin, by 1914 it had twenty members, and used to perform concerts around the local area. In 1916 the name was changed to Jōmō Mandolin Club. Sakutarō often served as conductor and composed various pieces for the Mandolin. He mentions their first concert in a letter to Takeamura Toshirō:

On the eighth [January 1916] we held the first concert of our Western Music Society. Please imagine me, the leader of the group on that gay occasion, playing the guitar with the golden links sparkling at the cuffs of my new Western style shirt.42

Sakutarō's interest in music led him to make the acquaintance of some of the foreign priests in Maebashi, and he began to attend their church quite frequently.

On Christmas night I played the guitar as we gathered around the stove at the home of a Western acquaintance [that is, one of the priests]. With a three piece concert of piano, mandolin and guitar, playing well into the night, it was a dreamlike evening of foreign pleasures.43

Thus it was through his music, that Sakutarō came into close contact with Christianity, though he notes in the above quoted letter that he himself was not a Christian. Another major Christian influence on his life was his cousin Eiji.

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known work of criticism, Meiji Taishō Shi Shū (History of Meiji-Taishō Poetry, 1929), was awarded the Yomiuri Literature Prize in 1948. He also published a number of translations of such writers as Wilde, Byron and Poe. [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiten, p. 210; and Davis, Shōjin, p. 284.]

41 Kanbara Ariake (1876-1952) was a Tokyo born poet. His first collection of poetry, Kasawakaba (Young Grasses, 1902) was a collection of pure romantic poetry in the vein of Shimazaki Tōson. Becoming increasingly interested in symbolism and idealism, spurred on by Ueda Bin's Katchōon, Ariake is hailed as the first Japanese symbolist poet. His representative works include; Ariake Shō (Ariake Collection, 1908), Chima (Foolish Dreams) and a collection of essays Hibari Shō (Skylark Collection, 1938). [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiten, p. 68.]

42 HS. "Letter to Takeamura Toshirō," Jan. 1916. HSZ XIII, p. 105. Takeamura Toshirō (1896-1944) was a poet from Yamagata prefecture. Affiliated with Kanjō, he became a close friend of Sakutarō's. His most representative collection, Ashī Shigera (Overgrown reeds, 1919) was published by Kanjō Shisha. [HSZ XIII, p. 103.]

43 HS, ibid, p. 106.
Hagiwara Eiji was born in Osaka, the son of Mitsuzō’s elder brother Genseki, and during Sakutarō’s middle school years he came to live with the family to help Mitsuzō with his medical practice. Eiji—unlike Sakutarō—had followed in the family tradition and become a doctor. Eiji was a major intellectual influence on his cousin, providing him with a sympathetic sounding board. In a letter to his cousin, the young Sakutarō writes that his aim was to become a man just like Eiji. During his time in Maebashi, Eiji became increasingly interested in Christianity, ultimately choosing to be baptised. The two cousins often discussed religion and its meaning. Like Sakutarō, Eiji was very interested in modern literature and often lent Sakutarō magazines and books.

In 1916, Sakutarō and Saisei established the magazine Kanjō (Emotion). The four year life span of Kanjō belied the fate of most poetic magazines, which usually ended after only one or two issues. By the time Kanjō ceased publication in 1919—after thirty-two issues—Sakutarō and his cohorts had become known as the Kanjō Shisha, or the Kanjō Poets.

Kanjō began at a time when poetry circles were dominated by the Naturalists, who had, according to Sakutarō, killed off true poetry. He choose the title kanjō because; "At that time the Naturalists held the very sound of the word kanjō in deepest contempt. So we then took up that accursed word and made it the catch cry of our group." Yamamura Bochō and Fukushi Kōjirō founded Jiyū Shisha (Free Poetry Society) around the same time. Bochō’s Sei Sanryōhāi (Holy Crystal Prism) had caused a sensation in 1915, with its complicated language and hitherto unexplored emotional expression.

Tsuki ni Hoeru was published in 1917, when Sakutarō was thirty-two years old, and with its publication his name became widely known. Dedicated to his cousin Hagiwara Eiji, the introduction was by Hakushū, the postscript by Saisei and the illustrations by Tanaka Kyōkichi and

46. Fukushi Kōjirō (1889-1946) was a poet who was part of the Hakushū’s camp which stood in opposition to Miki Rofū’s group. His most famous work was his maiden collection, Taiso no ko (Child of the Sun, 1914). He believed himself strongly influenced by both Saisei and Sakutarō. [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiten, p. 217.]
47. Tanaka Kyōkichi (1892-1915), was a painter born in Wakayama prefecture. Based on Sakutarō’s letters, the two were friends for only a year or so before Kyōkichi died of tuberculosis. Kyōkichi completed the eleven illustrations for Tsuki ni Hoeru from his sickbed, however he died before the publication of the collection. [HSZ XIII, p. 107.]
Onchi Kōshirō, Tsuki ni Hoeru which contains fifty-five lyric poems and two longer poems, collects together works which had previously been published in such magazines as Chijō Junrei (Earthy Pilgrim), Shiika (Poetry), ARS, Takujō Funrei (Fountain on the Table), and Kanjō (Emotion). Maeda Yūgure advised Sakutarō that publication would cost at least three hundred yen, and as he could hardly expect his father to hand over money for such a venture, he went to his mother and with her help eventually managed to get the money together. Five hundred copies were printed at Sakutarō's own expense.

Six days after its publication Tsuki ni Hoeru was banned as an offence to public morals, however Sakutarō received unofficial notice that if the two poems "Love," (Airen) and "The lover of love" (Koi o koisuru hito) were deleted, then publication could go ahead.

On the twenty-first, completely out of the blue, I received an unofficial suppression order for my collection Tsuki ni Hoeru. Apparently it contained two or three poems which offended public decency.

The overt sensuality of "Love" was felt to be too shocking. Sakutarō wrote angrily in his local newspaper that if these two poems were obscene then all...

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48 Onchi Kōshirō (1891-1956), was a Tokyo born painter and poet. He created the cover illustration for Kanjō and also published his own poetry in this magazine. Four of his illustrations were included in Tsuki ni Hoeru, in addition to Kyōkichi's eleven, and he was also responsible for the binding and the positioning of the illustrations. He created the covers for Atarashii Yokujō (New Desire) and Shōgakukan's publication of Hagiwara Sakutarō Zenshū (Hagiwara Sakutarō Complete Works). See Tanaka, Seikō. Tsukuehe no Gakatachi—Tanaka Kyōkichi Onchi Kōshirō, (Painters who capture the Moon's Glow—Tanaka Kyōkichi Onchi Kōshirō), Chikuma Shobō, 1990. [HSZ XIII, p. 107.]

49 Editted by Hakushū, Chijō Junrei (Earthy Pilgrim), which ran for six issues from Sept. 1914 to March 1915, was essentially a magazine for free-style poetry. It published the work of such poets as Sakutarō, Saisei, Ōte Takuji and Saitō Motokichi. [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiten, p. 161.]

50 Shiika (Poetry) was a tanka magazine established by Maeda Yūgure. The first series ran for 92 issues from April 1911 until Oct. 1918, and the second from April 1928 until May 1957. A third series began publication in Jan. 1967 and is still running today. [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiten, p. 111.]

51 ARS, pronounced arusu, was a literary magazine which ran for seven issues from April to Oct. 1915. Edited by Hakushū, Moris Ōgai and Ueda Bin acted as advisors. It became a vehicle for the Aestheticism movement. [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiten, p. 11.]

52 Maeda Yūgure (1883-1951) was a tanka poet from Kanagawa Prefecture. The founder of Shiika in 1913, his tanka collection, Shōkaku (Harvest, 1910), stood in direct opposition to the Naturalists. His poetry was hailed for its strong visual qualities. [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiten, p. 233.]


54 HS, "What sort of poetry is an offense to public morals?" (Fūzoku kairan no shi to wa nani zo), from an article printed in the local Jōmō Newspaper 25-26 Feb. 1917. HSZ VI, p. 277.
love poems should be banned in the future.\textsuperscript{55}

Lady—bite hard with your lovely strong teeth.
Bite hard on the green of the grass.
Oh, Lady!
Let me dye your face—all over
with the pale \textit{ink} of this green grass
and so intensify your desires....
Let us make a snake-like play
here on this deserted field....\textsuperscript{56}

"The lover of love" utilizes a homosexual—transvestite—motif which was regarded as absolute sexual perversion by some critics.\textsuperscript{57} Others, such as Matsunaga Goichi, regard this poem as a product of its times, arguing that the climate of modernism in 1917 allowed Sakutarō to explore his so-called 'abnormal' sexual desire.\textsuperscript{58}

...I tilted my head a little
and kissed the trunk of a new white birch.
I painted rose-coloured rouge upon my lips
and clung to the tall snow white tree.\textsuperscript{59}

At that time, the law demanded that any new book be presented to the Ministry of Home Affairs three days before it went on sale. \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru} was to be published on February 15, thus it was presumably delivered for approval on the thirteenth. Sakutarō was taken by surprise by the ruling, commenting: "even in my wildest dreams, I never imagined that my collection would be banned as an offense to public morals."\textsuperscript{60} The three offending pages were cut from the already bound book, one centimetre from the binding and a new page was added with the statement that the two poems, "Love" and "The lover of love" had been deleted.\textsuperscript{61} Publication was then allowed to go ahead. The two offending poems were however restored in the second edition, published four years later. Sakutarō notes rather flippantly that even the title and the layout of the book were shocking to the censors.

\textsuperscript{55}HS, "What sort of poetry is an offense to public morals?", ibid, p. 277.
\textsuperscript{56}HS, "Love" (Airen), HSZ I, p. 64. See Vol II, p. 36.
\textsuperscript{58}Matsunaga, Goichi. "Sei no Imeeji" (Sexual imagery), \textit{Kokubungaku}, Gakutōsha, Oct. 1974, p. 132.
\textsuperscript{59}HS, "The lover of love" (Koi o koisuru hito), HSZ I, p. 65. Vol II, p. 37.
\textsuperscript{60}HS, "Introduction to the second edition of \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru}", HSZ I, p. 117.
...both the title and binding of this collection were very original and rather unusual for the time, and its suppression was no doubt partly due to the shock the government officials received at the sight of it.62 This censorship scandal added to the interest in the collection already sparked by a poet of Kitahara Hakushû's standing writing the introduction. Although the first edition of Tsuki ni Hoeru was dedicated to Sakutarô's cousin Eiji, the second edition published on March 23, 1922 by ARS, was dedicated to the then-deceased Tanaka Kyôkichi who illustrated the collection. Sakutarô had originally intended to ask Ueda Bin to write the introduction but Ueda had died before its publication. He then tried Kanbara Ariake, however on his refusal, he asked Kitahara Hakushû.63 During the early 1900s, Sakutarô became involved with a woman he most often referred to as 'Elena,' who became according to critics an important influence on his poetry.64 'Elena' was the baptismal name of Baba Naka, a close school friend of Sakutarô's younger sister Waka. In a letter to Maruyama Kaoru,65 written in 1937, Sakutarô writes that he was touched by love for the first time in his nineteenth year, which Kubo argues refers to Elena.66 Naka married Sato Sei, a doctor from Takazaki, in 1909, when Sakutarô was twenty-four. After bearing two children she fell victim to tuberculosis and in 1917, the year of the publication of Tsuki ni Hoeru, she passed away at the early age of twenty-eight. The name 'Elena' often appears in Sakutarô's letters and notes, although he later deleted it from many of his poems. Sakutarô kept a diary for a short time between January 1, 1914 to February 6 of the same year. The initials "BN" and "SN"—of both her maiden name (Baba Naka) and married names (Sato Naka)—appear quite frequently in the diary entries. Soon after her marriage, Sakutarô wrote the following:

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62 HS, "On First Entering the Poetic Circles" (Shidan ni Deta goro), HSZ IX, p. 237.
65 Maruyama Kaoru (1899-1974) was a poet from Oita, Kyûshû. He was deeply influenced by the new-style poetry of Shi to Shiron (Poetry and Poetic Criticism), a poetry magazine which ran from 1928 to 1931 under the control of Haruyama Yukio and Kitakawa Fuyuhiko. In 1934, together with Hori Tatsuo and Miyoshi Tatsuji, he successfully launched the second revival of Shûki (Four Seasons), which ran until 1944 and became the main vehicle for intellectual lyric poetry during this period. His representative works include; Horanpu n Kamome (Sails, Lamps, Seagulls, 1932), Yonen (Childhood, 1935), Senkyô (Fairyland, 1948) and Tsuki watara (Moon crossing, 1972). [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shôjiten, pp. 339-40; and Davis, Shûjin, p. 297.]
Last night I met Elena for the first time in a long while....There is no longer any passion between us, what we share is a miraculous love greater by far than mere eros.  

Sakutarō sets up a contrast between the words koi and ai, somewhat equivalent to the Greek distinctions of eros and agape, noting that his love for Elena was now equivalent to agape and had gone beyond the physicality of lust. According to Kubo, he created a fantasy figure over and beyond the flesh and blood woman, seeming to prefer the ideal to the reality and it is this fantasy figure, this ghostly 'Elena,' rather than the actual woman Naka, who inhabits the world of his poetry. Kubo bases this theory on the fact that their relationship did not seem to have had a physical side, but was rather an idealized, intellectualized love.

(3) Escape to the city—1920s

Sakutarō's relationship with his father became very difficult in the late 1910s, with Sakutarō finding it painful even to sit with his father during meals. Sakutarō sank into deep depression, which finds voice in the poem, "Melancholy riverbank;"

...life is just a meaningless, melancholy continuum
A Rainy Season!
All is but the clammy gloom of falling drops of rain
—it is just rain—on and on—just rain—rain—rain!...  

After the publication of Tsuki ni Hoeru, Sakutarō lost the impulse to write poetry, lost that electric shock-like intuition and instead began to work on aphorisms and poetic theory, the publication of which (from 1919) provided him with some financial independence. He first began to write aphorisms upon reading Ikeda Chōko's translation of Nietzsche's No Longer Human, apparently taking his style from this work. Other writers were also experimenting with this style, such as Mori Ōgai with Chiebukuro (Pouch of Wisdom) and Akutagawa Ryūnosuke with Shuju no Kotoba (Words of a Dwarf).

Aphorisms, with their short pithiness, provided Sakutarō with a

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67 Kubo Tadao. "Sakutarō no Koi" (Sakutarō and Love), Hagiwara Sakutarōron (1), Nihon Kindai Sakka 4, op cit, p. 240.
69 The number of poems he wrote in the late 1910s and early 1920s runs as follows: 1917=28; 1918=9; 1919=0; 1920=1; 1921=0.
vehicle to express his opinions about life, society and culture in a concise, condensed form. Sakutarō now came to be recognized not only as a poet but also as an essayist. His aphorisms can be divided into three distinct periods. The early works found in Atarashiki Yokujō (New Desire), published in 1922, are made up of prose poetry and the writings concerned with his concept of emotionalism. This first collection was written during the height of Naturalism and his stress on 'emotions' was an attack on the naturalist literary circles. The middle period of Kyomō no Seigi (Justice of Nihil),70 published in 1929, is more fragmentary, with more prose than poetry, while the work of the third period is seen in Zetsubō no Tōsō (Flight of Despair) published in 1935 and Minato nite (At the Harbour) in 1940.71 Sakutarō comments on the role of aphorisms in his work in the following passage:

Lyric poetry and aphorisms are the two opposing sides of my poetic spirit. Though their structures differ, they both express my living poetic sentiment. Aphorisms are my philosophic poetry—shisōshi—as opposed to my lyric poetry, yet both unite to form my life as a poet. Lyric poetry is my night, and philosophic poetry my day.72

Poetry came to him from the realm of the unconscious, like dreams in the night. This dream world offered him a 'vision of beauty,' an escape from the suffering of reality. Yet reality pursued him and he was forced to reawaken into the conscious world where he became "like a rat uneasy with his surroundings, creeping out of his hole terrified by a gnawing anxiety."73 Aphorisms became a vehicle for Sakutarō to explore the philosophy behind the emotions which inspired his poetry, and furthermore were a weapon in his role as a 'cultural leader' to argue his opinions on both literary and social issues. Kawamori Yoshizō believes that Sakutarō turned to aphorism because he was unable to express all of his desired meaning in poetry. In this sense, the aphorisms were experiments with ideas and images before

70Although a more direct translation would read The Justice of Falsehood. I have used Justice of Nihil as Sakutarō used this English title, together with the Japanese on the box cover of the book. Although kyomō means 'falsehood' I believe Sakutarō, though building on the falsity of so-called justice, wished to go beyond that and create a sense of the 'nothingness' (kyomu), the total lack of human control over the legal system, and thus have chosen to go with the translation, Justice of Nihil. See photographic plates in HSZ IV.
72HS, "Introduction to The Flight of Despair" (Zetsubō no Tōsō), HSZ V, pp. 5-6. Vol II, p. 150.
73HS, ibid, p. 6.
they made their way into poetry. That is, his aphorisms were "like unprocessed ore, raw material yet to be shaped into poetry."\textsuperscript{74} Fukuda Kiyoto argues that Sakutarô's aphorisms were important more as a form of diary of his life than as works of criticism,\textsuperscript{75} and it is in this light that the aphorisms are used in the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

When *Kyomô no Seigi* was published in 1929, seven years after *Atarashiki Yokuji*, Naturalism had lost all momentum and Sakutarô instead turned his anger against the state of modern-day society. This work was a particular attack on the many contradictions of so-called Japanese justice. Sakutarô gave it a title page engraved with the stirring words; "With the ringing sound of rending steel, I sing of the 'Justice of Nihil' and those with ears must listen."\textsuperscript{76} The poem "Useless writings," was published in the January 1920 issue of *Bungei Shunju*\textsuperscript{77} in 1930, with the subtitle, "a preface to *Kyomô no Seigi*," and gives some sense of the futility of a man confronted by the injustices of life. The narrator of this poem has lost faith in his art; it is all wasted words which he is forced to try and sell like a beggar on the street.

Deathly pale, a man stands
watching his writings being sold on the street....
From the beginning I was a useless man
from the beginning these were useless writings
only selling for a single coin....\textsuperscript{78}

In a letter written around the time of the publication of *Kyomô no Seigi*, Sakutarô asks Saisei to look after his family after his death, and implores him to tell the world all about the artist named Hagiwara Sakutarô, advising him to read this collection of aphorisms so as to know how to fulfil this mission.

1919, together with his foray into the world of aphorisms, also

\textsuperscript{75}Fukuda, Kiyoto. *Hagiwara Sakutarô: His Life and Work* (25), op cit, p. 51.
\textsuperscript{76}HS, *Justice of Nihil* (Kyomô no Seigi), HSZ IV, p. 226.
\textsuperscript{77} *Bungei Shunju* is a general literary magazine, which has run from Jan. 1923 until the present. Originally it contained mainly essays under the editorship of Kikuchi Kan, however, under the subsequent editorship of Akutagawa Ryûnosuke, Naoki Sanjugo and Kawabata Yasunari, it gradually became a literary journal, which stood in opposition to both the Proletarian literary movement and the political nationalism of Shinchô. Moving with the times it gradually took on a more journalistic tone. [Miyoshi, *Bungaku Shôjiten*, p. 226.]
\textsuperscript{78}HS, "Useless writings" (Muyô no shomotsu), HSZ II, p.131. Vol II, p. 146. Note the shift perspective from third person to first person which personalises the poem thus heightening its impact.
marked the year of his marriage at the age of thirty-four to Ueda Ineko. It was an arranged marriage which never seems to have been very happy. Ōoka Makoto argues that not only was Sakutarō unable to support a wife, he was psychologically unsuited to marriage and in his heart in love with ‘Elena,’ a fact which turned his relationship with Ineko into a love triangle, with one member a ghost-like vision which it was impossible to fight. Further strain was placed on their relationship by the domineering meddling of Sakutarō’s mother and Sakutarō’s own indecisiveness. In retrospect, Sakutarō too came to regard the marriage as a mistake.

Finally I married. The townspeople gossiped maliciously, yet ignoring their sarcastic, obscene sneers, still I married. (I only realized later that this marriage was a mistake. What else could happen when a man with no livelihood marries, living in his father’s house, at his father’s expense.)

Their first child, Yōko was born in September, 1920, and their second and last child, another girl, Akirako was born in September 1922 while Sakutarō and Ineko were living with his parents in Maebashi. Sakutarō himself was aware of his own unsuitability for marriage, blaming its failure, at least partly, on his own personality.

My past married life could well have ended in such disaster due to some abnormality on my part, for my ex-wife was by no means a bad woman—rather the opposite.

In terms of his writing, 1922 proved a particularly fruitful year, the March of which saw the second edition of Tsuki ni Hoeru. He advertised a number of forthcoming publications together with this second edition; firstly a new collection of poetry, to be entitled Yūtsu naru (On Melancholy); a short-verse collection entitled Aoneko; a prose collection Tsukikage aru Jinsei (Life in the Moonlight); and the treatise Shi no genri (Poetic Principles). Aoneko, as published in January 1923, was a combination of the two advertised collections, Yūtsu naru and Aoneko. Aoneko contains works written between February of 1917 and July of 1922, although, as noted above, he wrote very little poetry between 1918 and 1920. The work in this collection falls into two groups referred to by critics as early and late Aoneko.

In February 1925, Sakutarō moved to Ōimachi in the suburbs of

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79 Ōoka, Makoto. Hagiwara Sakutarō, op cit, p. 177.
Tokyo with his wife and two small daughters. The four years in Ōimachi were beset with financial difficulties and were far from easy for Sakutarō. He received sixty yen from his father every month and that was all the family had to live on. He had completed Kyōmō no Seigi while still in Maebashi, and had hoped to sell it on arrival in Tokyo and thereby add a little to the monthly finances. He was unable, however, to find a ready publisher. 82 A short essay “Gumboots” depicts something of the misery of this time in his life.

When I first moved to Ōimachi in Tokyo, I experienced terrible poverty. In addition to the 60 yen my father sent from the country every month, I myself had no work and could earn not a single yen more. . . . It was not at all easy for my wife, two children and myself to survive on this. With my unsaleable manuscripts under my arm, everyday I would go by public rail and walk from Publisher X to Publisher Y, trying to sell the manuscripts which I had secretly prepared while still in the country, desperate to turn them into a monthly income. But it was all to no avail, and mould began to grow on my wicker trunk [where he kept his manuscripts] as I suffered my unfortunate fate. 83

Ōimachi was an industrial sector of Tokyo, in Sakutarō’s day enveloped in the smoke belching out from the many textile factories. Sakutarō describes the dusty rooms of the house as always strewn with children’s clothing and drying diapers, with the children themselves always crying and feverish. From morning to night his wife was screaming at the children or banging the pots and pans in the kitchen. Someone in the household always seemed to be sick, and they could not even buy rubber boots to protect them from the mud of the road.

This period of poverty must have been a terrible shock for Sakutarō, the pampered eldest son, used as he was to a life of idleness and luxury. Images of Ōimachi, a repetitive refrain of “mud,” “soot,” “shrill screaming,” began to appear in his work from this time. In the prose poem “The post office,” published in Fujin no Tomo (Housewife’s Companion) 84 in June 1927, Sakutarō describes the post office as a place, which, like a port or a train station, inspires one with the desire to travel, to range far off into the unknown; a place which embodies the “eternal nostalgia of the soul.” “The

82 It was finally published from Daiichi Shobō in 1929.
83 HS, “Gumboots” (Gomu nagagutsu), The Corridor and the Room, HSZ IX, p. 211.
84 Fujin no Tomo (Housewife’s Companion) is a woman’s monthly magazine which has run from Jan. 1908 until the present day. Published by Fujin no Tomo Sha, it was originally edited by Hani Motoko. [Itō, Sei, & Kawabata, Yasunari. et al. (ed.), Shinchō Nihon Bungaku Shōjiten, Shinchōsha, 1977. p. 577.]
post office" tells of the young female factory workers clustering around the counter, clutching their pay packets as they wait in turn. He wonders what they are sending and where. Is it just their meagre earnings sent home to help their families, or is it perhaps something more dire, a telegram telling of the illness or death of a fellow worker? Sakutarō liked to watch the people who gathered in the post office, to read the homesickness and despair he saw written on their faces.

Post Office! I love to watch all that homesickness. Oh, my poor young woman! Sitting in a dim corner of the room writing your letter—embracing the myriad sorrows of your daily life, your pencil lead has snapped, and your letter is blurred, stained with tears. Why is it that life makes you young women suffer so? We too are like you, shod in shoes worn through with despair, wandering the harbours of life. We homeless souls are frozen numb for all eternity—for all eternity.85

After only two months in Ōimachi, Sakutarō and his family moved to Tabata in April 1925, to a shabby two storey house. The rows on rows of houses of the Hongō area could be seen from the second floor. "Dinner in the empty house," draws a bleak picture of this move.

Under the yellowing lamp
I ate with the family
no fish, meat, or even vegetables,
only a few grains of dried up left-over rice
in the echoingly empty house
on the eve of our move.86

Things improved with the move to Tabata. His friendships within the poetry circles increased, as did his publications of essays and criticism. Both Saisei and Akutagawa Ryūnosuke lived nearby. It was also around this time that he got to know the younger poets Hagiwara Kyōjirō,87 Nakano Shigeharu88 and Hori Tatsuo.89 Compared to the Ōimachi period, his life in

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85HS, "The post office" (Yūbinkyoku), Destiny (Shukumei), HSZ II, pp. 301-3.
86HS, "Dinner in the empty house" (Akiya no banshoku), HSZ II, p. 87.
87Hagiwara Kyōjirō (1899-1938) was a Maebashi poet. He published in Kawai Ryūkō’s Taimatsu (Torch) and Kōma Kioumi’s Tanemaku Hito (The Sowers), and he founded the anarchist-dadaist magazine Aka to Kuro (Red and Black) with Okamoto Jun in 1923, which ran until June 1924. His representative works include, Shiketsu Senkoku (Death Sentence, 1925), Ajia ni Kyōjin ari (There are Giants in Asia, 1938 and Dangen (Fragment), 1931). [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiten, p. 198; and Davis, Shijin, p. 280.]
88Nakano Shigeharu (1902-79) was a poet, novelist and critic from Fukui prefecture. While studying German Literature at Tokyo University, together with Murō Saisei and Hori Tatsuo, he helped found Roba (The Donkey) in 1926. From 1927, the year of his graduation, he became heavily involved in the Proletarian Literature movement. He was a founder and major contributor to Puroretaria Geijutsu (Proletarian Arts), which ran from July 1927 to April 1928. Arrested in 1932, as a result of the government purge on Proletarian writers, he was released in May 1934 on the promise that he withdraw from
Tabata was much more social. Most evenings Sakutarō would wander around the cafés of Dōgenzaka with Saisei, till late at night.

Sakutarō now began to give voice to the feelings of resentment he had long been harbouring towards his life in Maebashi, to his father and the other inhabitants of the town.

Home! When I think back on my home now far away, a thousand emotions engulf my heart. My sad sad home! People were cruel, always watching me with cold disapproval. They ridiculed this all-too-wretched poet, simply because I had no job or because I was an eccentric. They even spat at me from behind. Poking out their tongues they chorused, "There goes the idiot."

Through all the long days of my youth I endured all this. I came to hate the world, man and nature. I turned against everything....Violent thoughts of rebellion caught me unawares and, like mice, gnawed holes in the corners of my heart.

No, No, I must give up these thoughts.

More than ever I came to understand the loneliness of human anger. Yet when I finally escaped my ancestral home, as I passed all alone over the bridge to the city, for no reason at all I found tears on my cheeks. Yet still, the train ran ever onwards towards the end of the winding rails.90

He began to see his literature as a weapon, a way of gaining revenge for all his past suffering.

My literature will become an appeal, a lament. I will use it to wreak revenge on all the mortifications of my past, for there is nothing else I can do, I am so powerless.91

Sakutarō's wife, Ineko, became sick after less than a year in Tokyo and the family moved to Zaimokuza, a beachside area of Kamakura. It was during

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90 Hori Tatsuo (1904-53) was a novelist, translator and poet born in Tokyo. He took Murō Saisei and Akutagawa Ryūnosuki as his models for writing. He graduated in Japanese Literature from Tokyo University in 1929, and was a founding member of Roba (The Donkey). He parted from the Leftist Roba, to join Kawabata Yasunari and Yokomitsu Riichi in the founding of Bungaku (Literature) which ran from Oct. 1929 to May 1930. He was a collaborator on Sakuhin (Works, May 1930 to April 1940) which was the successor to Bungaku, and edited Shiki (Four Seasons) which after a short first series, ran from Oct. 1934 to June 1944. His most representative novels include: Kaze Tachinu (The Wind Rises, 1936-38) and Naoko (1941) [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shōjiten, p. 231; and Davis, Shijin, p. 286.]

91 HS, "At the Time of Publication" (Shuppanshi ni Saishite), Junjō Shōkyokushū, HSZ II p.8-9.

91 HS, "Literature as Revenge" (Fukushū to shite no Bunbaku), HSZ V, p.136.
this period that Sakutarō began to work on Shi no Genri (Poetic Principles), and wrote his "Busonron" (Critique of Buson). Hori Tatsuo, who visited Sakutarō two or three times in Kamakura, describes an incident on his first visit, when he and Sakutarō went to visit Akutagawa, who was also living in Kamakura. Lying on his sick bed, Akutagawa read to them from the manuscript of Tenkibo, asking their opinions. Hori Tatsuo had to return to Tokyo that evening, but Sakutarō and Akutagawa stayed talking deep into the night. It was a night Sakutarō never forgot. Akutagawa made an impassioned plea for his belief in the tragic but unavoidable fate of a genius. He confided in Sakutarō that he was thinking of emigrating to South America and completely cutting off all ties. Yet when they parted company he contradicted his earlier words, saying with a smile:

...if a misanthrope fails to commit suicide then he is a complete liar.
You and I are really just pretend misanthropes!\(^2\)

Two years later, Akutagawa took his own life. Although, Sakutarō and Akutagawa's friendship spanned only the last two or three years of Akutagawa's life, in this short period they became close friends.

In 1926 (the first year of Shōwa), Sakutarō left Kamakura and moved to Komagome in Tokyo. Although her weak lungs remained a problem, Ineko's health had improved, and Yoko, his eldest daughter, was to start primary school. Many other writers lived nearby—Saisei, Miyoshi Tatsuji and Uno Chiyo.\(^3\) Furthermore a string of writers (Ozaki Shirō, Kawabata Yasunari, Shiga Naoya and Hakushū) often visited Sakutarō.\(^4\) Sakutarō was receiving more money from the publication of his manuscripts, and for a while life was a little more comfortable.

\(^{43}\) Uno Chiyo (1897—) was a novelist from Yamaguchi prefecture. She was closely affiliated with Chūō Kōron which serialized her early work Iro Zange (Sexual Confessions) between 1933 and 1935. Her most representative work was Ohan, which was serialized in Bun Tai between 1947 and 1949 [Miyoshi, Bungaku Shūjiten, p. 32.]
\(^{44}\) Ozaki Shirō (1898-1964) was a novelist from Aichi. Jirsei Gekijō (Life Dramas, 1933) is one of his representative works. Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972) is one of Japan's Nobel prize-winning authors, who works include: Izu no Odoriko (The Izu Dancer, 1926) and Yukiguni (Snow Country, 1935-37). Shiga Naoya (1883-1971) was a novelist from Miyagi prefecture, whose works include: Kinosaki ni te (At Kinosaki, 1917) and Anya Kōro (A Dark Night's Passing, 1919).
worsening of Sakutarō’s relationship with his wife. "Home," tells of a
wife’s malicious hatred of her husband, and was no doubt based on the
poet’s own relationship.

We sit in the old house
conferring in silence.
Neither bitter enemies
nor cruelly demanding our rights.
"Look at me! I am your wife
we must never part even in death."
Her spiteful eyes pierce through me
—malicious—burning with revenge.

We sit in the old house
there is no way out.95

Ineko and Sakutarō seem to have been fundamentally unsuited. In an essay
entitled, "Memories of Autumn Evenings: My Life as a Bachelor," Sakutarō
tells of his unhappiness with his wife, drawing a picture of their
disorganized life in a home which echoed with the shrewish rantings of his
wife and unhappy tears of the children. Upon their move to Tokyo,
Sakutarō tried to ‘educate’ his wife, encouraging her to take more care of
her appearance and deportment.

I had a lot of trouble trying to educate this wife of mine. Above all else
I felt that the correction of her violent rudeness was the very first
priority. Thus my aim was to encourage her to be a more ladylike
woman with more emotional delicacy and gentleness, for in truth she
didn’t understand even the simple basics about makeup and dress—
things any ordinary young woman would know.96

At first he had little success but his last effort, taking her to a dancing hall,
was one he lived to regret, for her dancing and flirtatious behaviour
apparently made her even less concerned with the children and the
housework. In 1929, after ten years, the relationship finally broke up, with
Ineko moving in with her lover, a student from Waseda University, and
Sakutarō returning to Maebashi with the two children, then aged ten and
eight. The last straw was when Sakutarō discovered not only that Ineko had
blatantly lived with her lover for a week while he was away, but also that
she had left the children out in the street while she entertained him.

When I returned from my trip, I found the children covered in mud
playing on the road like homeless dogs. At the sight, a truly justifiable
anger and disgust which defied expression boiled up inside me. For the

96HS, "Memories of Autumn Evenings: My Life as a Bachelor" (Shūshoki: Dokuji
first time in my life I hit my wife. I hit her with all my strength—fired by my anger and disgust. From that time onwards, my wife lost all feeling for me.  

The case for their divorce was built on Ineko's affair with her young lover and thus Sakutarō retained custody of the children. Some notes written at the time suggest it was actually Ineko who finally left.

My wife has left, leaving the children behind, and I have no idea where she has gone. Alone—still reeling—I returned to Jōshū....In the meantime...my father's illness had suddenly worsened. All is bleak desolation.

The journey back to Maebashi is depicted in the poem, "Return home," one of a number of Hyōdo poems which tell of his life during these days.

The day I returned to my home
the train braved a violent gale.
The last awake, alone I stand at the window.
The steam whistle shrieked out into the darkness
and the sparks lit up the plain.
...In the dim light of the night train's carriage lamp
the motherless children cry in their sleep.
Stealthily everything works its way into my grief.
Ah! Once again I flee the capital.
Where is the house and home I seek?...

Sakutarō stayed in Maebashi for a few months, but in November—leaving the two children in his mother's care—he returned alone to Tokyo, taking up temporary residence in an apartment in Nogizaka, which a fellow poet, Miyoshi Tatsuji, had organized for him. "Nogizaka Club" tells of these days.

November is here already.
Why is this winter so cold?...
Sunk in gloom, I wander the bustling year-end town
sitting in bars, trying to get drunk even in the day time.
...No coal, no heating
in this Western style room, with its harsh white walls.
I wake in my bed alone....

Sakutarō tried to wheedle the three months bond money and two months rent he needed to tide him over until the end of the year from his ailing father. However, not only did his father refuse to cover these expenses, but he ranted and raved at his son, yelling that if Sakutarō still could not support

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98 Fukuda, Kiyoto. Hagiwara Sakutarō: Hito to Sakuhin (25), op cit, p. 73.
99 HS, "Return home" (Kikyō), Hyōdo, HSZ II, p. 113. Vol II, p. 137.
himself at forty years of age, then what on earth was he a writer for. If this was the best he could do he should change his profession. Ignoring his father's rantings, Sakutarō returned to Tokyo, even without parental support. Freed from his family responsibilities he wandered the bars and cafés to all hours drinking even more heavily than usual. "The Drunken Moon Café" portrays one such night.

...I was so unbearably thirsty.
Staggering, I opened the door of The Drunken Moon.
The sound of a broken record reverberated
from out of the confusion of the café....
The women crowded around, surrounding the table
with but little pity for my drunkenness.
Cursing, they robbed me of my wallet in a flash.
Then counting down to the very last one
they stole my coins and left me.101

In her biographical work, entitled My Father—Hagiwara Sakutarō, Sakutarō's daughter Yōko talks repeatedly of her father's drinking. She portrays a father whose drinking gives him psychological ease, allowing him to be more at ease with himself, less fearful of the observation of others.

When father drank he became like a silly child. As he became drunk he would start to slop his sake all over the table, which would then lead on to his spilling his food all over his knees and the tatami. After he stood up, it was as if a small child had eaten spreading food everywhere. Grandmother would complain angrily that there was no end to the cleaning up, but I much preferred this drunken child-like father to my usual father. He was much less awkward.102

Sakutarō would go out drinking every night and then sleep late in the mornings. The afternoons were spent writing in his study upstairs. Yōko describes his chain-smoking, an addiction she believes stemmed from the same psychological unease as his drinking.

There was never a single moment when Father didn't have a cigarette in his hand. When he was writing something upstairs in his study it was as if he was sitting in a cloud of cigarette smoke. Even in winter, he would write with just a single brazier on the wooden floors of the large room. The brazier was completely filled with old cigarette butts. He would just smoke a bit of the cigarette and then shove the butt into the ashes. When he was thinking about something, this action became even faster.

102 Hagiwara, Yōko. "An Evening Sake" (Banshaku), Chichi—Hagiwara Sakutarō (My Father—Hagiwara Sakutarō), Chikuma Shobō, 1959, p. 5.
The only time he didn’t have a cigarette in his hand was when he was asleep.\footnote{Hagiwara, Yōko. "Of Cigarettes and Felt Hats" (Tabako to Sofuto no koto), op cit, p. 49}

Sakutarō’s father passed away at the age of seventy-two, on the first of July 1930, exactly one year after Sakutarō’s divorce. To his mother’s enduring sorrow, Sakutarō was not with his father when he died, for only the previous day Sakutarō had accompanied a relative back to Tokyo. Rushing back to Maebashi when he heard the news, he was confronted with the white funereal cloth already covering his father’s face. After his father’s death, Sakutarō took his mother, younger sister Ai, and the two children to live in Tokyo. At first only his sister moved down to be with him, and then the following summer—in 1931—after he found a house in Shimokitazawa in Setagaya ward, his mother and children joined them. It was during this time that he put together the collection of classical love poems, Renai Meikashū (Famous Love Poetry), which was published the same year by Daiichi Shobō.

In February 1933, he rented some land in Daita in Setagaya-ku where he built a house of his own design. It was a western-style house with a high roof, white walls and a dark brown outer wall. A western-style room in the attic became his study, which Yōko describes as follows;

...the front cover of Nekomachi (Cat Town) hung in its frame, and a favourite old lamp—reminiscent of the seventeenth century—which he’d found in some antique shop stood on a red Chinese-style stand. Father particularly liked old lamps. From between the thick deep-red curtains drawn back from the east window you could see the snow piled up as if it had been blown right up against the window frame.\footnote{Hagiwara, Yōko. "Of Name Plates and such" (Hyōsatsu no koto nado), op cit, p. 30.}

In his youth, Sakutarō had been very interested in fashionable Western styles—both of clothing and furnishings—but it seems that in his later years he began to revert to more traditional Japanese styles; at least that is how his daughter represents him. The man who had so impressed Saisei with his matching suit and hat, appears as a very different man in Yōko’s writings.

An old limp felt hat hid Father’s eyes, and his long thinning hair hung down, hiding as much as half of his sleepy drunken face.\footnote{Hagiwara, Yōko. "Cold rice balls" (Omusubi), op cit, p. 41.}

In later life he only wore brown—his suits, overcoat, shoes and socks all brown—a far cry from the young dandy of his youth.

Apparently Father used to be a very fashionable young man, often wearing a bow tie and a turkish hat, but in his later years he settled for a
soft felt hat. It was always a dark burnt brown. When he bought a new one—without so much as glancing in the mirror—he would force it on and off trying to get the right fit, but as it gradually lost its shape and became all floppy, he would wear it without giving it so much as a second thought, as if he had forgotten all about its shape.\textsuperscript{106}

With the freedom and finance of his father's estate, Sakutarō—now fifty—finally had a stable homelife, though in many ways he was reliving the pampered days of his childhood when he was cosseted by his mother. He finally achieved a long-treasured desire and established his own independent magazine, \textit{Seiri} (Physiology). Previously, Sakutarō had assisted with various magazines such as Satō Sōnosuke's \textit{Shi no Ie} (House of Poetry),\textsuperscript{107} Murō Saisei's \textit{Roba} (Donkey)\textsuperscript{108} and Hinatsu Kōnosukī's \textit{Sabato},\textsuperscript{109} but he had not had his own magazine since \textit{Kanjō} in 1916. Working as an editor for \textit{Nihon Shijin} (Poets of Japan),\textsuperscript{110} he began to want an independent vehicle for his own ideas, but had been unable to set up a magazine, largely due to lack of funds.

The characters which make up the word "seiri" (生理) which he choose for his title, carry a sense of the fundamental principles of human life or the 'realities of life.' Sakutarō sought to evoke both a sense of Eastern fatalism and Western physiology in the title. This link with Western physiology was heightened by the medical drawing of the human physique displayed on the cover. In the first issue of \textit{Seiri}, published in June 1933, he comments;

The meaning of the word \textit{seiri},...pertains to a physical organism, as discussed in the Western physical sciences, yet at the same time it also carries a hint of destiny, of the laws which govern a man's life....I will have achieved my purpose if—like the reflection of a brilliant lantern

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\textsuperscript{106}Hagiwara, Yōko. "Of Cigarettes and Felt Hats," op cit. p. 50.

\textsuperscript{107}Satō Sōnosuke (1890-1942) was a poet of both free-style verse and \textit{haiku} from Kanagawa Prefecture. \textit{Shi no Ie} (House of Poetry) ran from July 1925 until Jan. 1932. [Miyoshi, \textit{Bungaku Shōjiten}, p. 108.]

\textsuperscript{108}Murō Saisei's \textit{Roba} (Donkey) was a Leftist magazine which Saisei founded together with Hori Tatsuo and Nakano Shigeharu. Running for 12 issues from April 1926 to May 1928, with translations of Lenin and Heine, it is said to have possessed the essence of Taishō literature. [Miyoshi, \textit{Bungaku Shōjiten}, p. 276.]

\textsuperscript{109}Published by Sabatosha, \textit{Sabato} was a literary magazine which ran from Aug. 1924 to Nov. 1926. [Itō, Sei, & Kawabata, Yasunari. et. al. (ed.), \textit{Shinchō Nihon Bungaku Shōjiten}, op cit. p. 577.]

\textsuperscript{110}\textit{Nihon Shijin} (Poets of Japan), was a poetry magazine which ran for 59 issues from Oct. 1921 until Nov. 1926. Published by Shinchōsha, it was the organ of the \textit{Shiwakai} (Poetry and Tales Group) which was established in Nov. 1917. Many of the Taishō poets were members. It published an annual collection of poetry, \textit{Nihon Shishū}, for eight years until Oct. 1926. [Miyoshi, \textit{Bungaku Shōjiten}, p. 191 & p. 127.]
slide creating a metaphysical illusion in the reader's mind—this work evokes both a sense of human consciousness born of an awareness of fate, and of the human organism itself.\textsuperscript{111}

*Seiri* ran from June 1933 to February 1935, during which time Sakutarô continued to publish in a variety of genres—poetic theory, aphorisms, essays and poetry. *Seiri* plays an important role in the history of modern Japanese poetry in that it established a new *danshō* style, that is a style made up of a collection of literary fragments. Sakutarô seemed to prefer this *danshō* style during his later years.

In February 1936, Sakutarô became a member of the *Shiki* (Four Seasons)\textsuperscript{112} literary group and joined the *Nihon Rômaha* (Japanese Romantics)\textsuperscript{113} group in the December of the same year. In the last years of his life, he was awarded a number of literary prizes, beginning in September 1936, with a literary prize from the *Bungakukai* magazine\textsuperscript{114}—*Bungakukai Shô*—for his work, "Review of the literary circles of today" (Shidan Jihyô). In December 1940 he was awarded the Kitamura Tôkoku Prize (Tôkoku Shô).\textsuperscript{115}

From the early 1930s, Sakutarô went through what the critics refer to as a 'return to Japan' (nihon no kaiki). *Hyôto* is seen as the representative work of this return, where classical diction replaces the colloquialism he had brought to his earlier verse. From this time, Sakutarô became increasingly interested in traditional Japanese poetry as exemplified by his work, "Yosa Buson—Poet of Nostalgia" (Kokyû no Shijin: Yosa Buson) published in 1936. From 1935, he had began to publish a number of critical works which explored the poetry of Japan's past, at a time when his country was

\textsuperscript{111}HS, "Note on Seiri" (Seiri kaidan), HSZ V, p. 449.
\textsuperscript{112}The first series of *Shiki* (Four Seasons), under the editorship of Hori Tatsuo, only lasted for two volumes, in May and July 1933. The second series, edited by Hori Tatsuo, Maruyama Kaoru and Miyoshi Tatsuki, proved more successful and ran for 81 issues, from Oct. 1934 to June 1944. [Miyoshi, *Bungaku Shôjiten*, pp. 113-4.]
\textsuperscript{113}*Nihon Rômaha* (Japanese Romantics) was a literary magazine which under the editorship of Kamei Katsuchirô and Shinpo Kôtarô, among others, ran for 29 issues from Mar. 1935 to August 1938. It turned towards Romanticism in opposition to Modernism. [Miyoshi, *Bungaku Shôjiten*, pp. 192-3.]
\textsuperscript{114}The first series of *Bungakukai* (The Literary World) ran for 58 issues from Jan. 1893 to Jan. 1898, under the editorship of Shimazaki Töson and Hoshino Tenshi (among others). The second series ran for 119 issues from Oct. 1933 to April 1944, under Kawabata Yasunari and Kobayashi Hideo (among others). The third series which began in March 1949 is still running today. [Miyoshi, *Bungaku Shôjiten*, p. 225.]
\textsuperscript{115}Kitamura Tôkoku (1868-94) was a poet and critic from Kanagawa prefecture. His representative works include the dramatic poem, *Hôrai Kyoku* (Song of Utopia, 1891) and *Naibu Seimei Ron* (Commentary on Man's Inner Life), a work of literary criticism which was published in Bungakukai in 1893. [Miyoshi, *Bungaku Shôjiten*, p. 72.]
turning towards the nationalism of the war years.

It was during this Seiri period (July 1934), that he took up a teaching position at Meiji University in the Liberal Arts Department and then in 1936, he began to speak on a radio talk-show broadcast for Osaka's BK station. On the night before a broadcast he refrained from his customary patronage of the local bars, choosing rather to stay and drink at home and have an early night. He would even get up early and have breakfast with everyone. He would then sit smoking for a while as he read the morning paper, but would soon get up and go upstairs only to come down again, and up again, arranging his notes—reflecting his apprehension about public-speaking. His mother could not stop worrying about him and would follow him around, asking if he was ready yet or offering pearls of motherly advice, such as, "It'd be better if you didn't drink anything on the way today, I think you'd had a bit too much the last time," or telling him that he tended to speak too fast and should enunciate more clearly. He would just tell her not to worry.116

There were two women who became closely involved with Sakutarō in his later years, although very little is known of the second. As for the first, in 1938, when he was fifty two years old, Sakutarō married for a second time. His new bride, Ōtani Michiko was the daughter of a large sake maker from Shirakawa city of Fukushima prefecture. Although there was a marriage ceremony, Michiko's name was never entered in the family register. They met when Sakutarō attended a miai—or arranged marriage meeting—only to be more taken with the woman who brought in the tea than the women he was supposed to be meeting. In a letter to Saisei he talks of his feelings for Michiko: "This time I myself have felt a little of the romance of love."117 His new wife, however, failed—as had Ineko—to get on with his mother, and she moved out the following year. Hiding the fact from his mother, Sakutarō then set her up in an apartment and visited her quite frequently.

Some time around 1940, after he had broken up with his second wife, Sakutarō is said to have had a lover. However, he would not let even Saisei meet her, saying she was not beautiful and not Saisei's type. She died from some illness soon after meeting Sakutarō. The result of all this secrecy

116Hagaiwara, Yōko. "The Radio Broadcasts" (Hōsō no toki), op cit, p. 43.
means that very little is known about their relationship.\footnote{Hori Tatsuo claims that this woman—whose name is unrecorded—cannot be ignored, stating that she was the impetus for Sakutarō’s essay “Japanese Women” (Nihon no Josei). See Fukuda, Kyōto. Hagiwara Sakutarō: Hito to Sakuhin (25), op cit, p. 89.}

Sakutarō was fascinated by magic tricks, an interest which increased with age. He had often entertained the children with his tricks. Yōko remembers him making pieces of paper disappear and then reappear on the top of someone’s head, or in an ear, or out of an eye. It became a sort of family tradition for him to perform his tricks over his evening sake.

On evenings when clusters of wisteria floated whitely above the garden, I often used to see father quietly drinking alone in the chanoma. One or two bottles of sake and a few side dishes were simply laid out on the table, though only on evenings when grandmother was out of the house.

Father would sit quietly relaxed in his usual place between the oblong brazier and the tea cabinet, pouring his own drinks, a cigarette between the fingers of his left hand and red magicians balls rolling in the long thin fingers of his right hand. With a detached expression he would make the balls appear and disappear.

Father was by nature not very clever with his hands...but with the red magician’s balls grasped in his fingertips, his hands seemed to take on a life of their own, as if somehow the nerve endings of his fingers were particularly sensitive. I had watched him performing this trick since I was a child, but he really seemed to improve around this time.

Once when I congratulated him, saying "You’re much better now aren’t you," he turned to me with a start, his detached expression breaking into a smile. "Do you really think so?" he asked, continuing the trick, his movements becoming even more rhythmic. It was good to see father like this, quietly drinking alone, more at ease than usual. When grandmother was around, she never allowed him this sort of peace. She seemed to have the opposite effect...At times like this, he wouldn’t drink so much and would go upstairs to bed quite early.\footnote{Hagiwara, Yōko. "Magic Tricks" (Tejina), op cit, p. 11.}

At this time in his life, these red magician’s balls were never far from his hands. Sometimes he would suddenly come down from his study and pace the corridors of the house or the garden, lost in thought but always with the balls flicking rhythmically in his long fingers.

In December 1937, Sakutarō joined the Tokyo Amateur Magicians Club (TAMC). It was somewhat difficult to become a member as special recommendations were necessary, and Sakutarō was very pleased to be allowed to join. The TAMC held their first public demonstration, performed for an audience of eight hundred people, in February of 1934 at the Medical Hall (Ishikaikan) in Kanda. One of the early members, a Mr. Yanagizawa,
remembered Sakutarō in the book which celebrates the club's fiftieth anniversary:

Hagiwara Sakutarō—said to be the Tagore of Japan—became a member in 1938. His appearance had barely changed from the days of the publication of his maiden collection *Tsuki ni Hoeru*. I can still remember him, just like a stray dog, his eyes turned up as if howling at the moon. He was, however, absolutely hopeless at magic.

I have never met another amateur as slow to memorize a trick....He used to tell me he just didn't understand, and so I often went to his house in Setagaya to show him the rudiments of the first very simple tricks. As a beginning I showed him how to do a trick using a handkerchief, and apparently he got together a group of his fellow writers and performed it for them. He told me about it at the next club meeting, saying that he'd concentrated really hard and performed the trick for them, and feeling rather pleased with himself had asked, "Well, what do you think. I'm pretty good aren't I?" only to have one of them comment nastily, "What do you mean! We could all see how you did it." Sakutarō told me he practised it all again and then showed them for a second time, only to be told yet again, "We can still see what you're doing!" Now he was getting really irritated, but he practised really hard for one last time and then showed it to them for a third time.

"This time you didn't see how I did it, did you?" This question met with the response "Well no, this time we couldn't see. We couldn't see anything because you had it all hidden up against your body. We can't see what you're doing at all." After all this Sakutarō told me sadly that he felt he was just no good at magic.

I will never forget him telling me this.120

Yōko writes that when the day of a TAMC meeting came around, Sakutarō would get up much earlier than usual and get dressed properly, rather than his usual tendency of going out drinking still dressed in his night kimono.

After Father's death we found a big thick manuscript sitting neatly in the middle of his desk....On the top was a piece of paper inscribed with the words "Do not Touch" in the large, thick letters of my father's hand....Grandmother and I thought it was an unfinished manuscript, but on taking a quick look we realized it was a list of all the secret mechanisms for his magic tricks. We found out later that it was a club rule for this material to be burned immediately on the death of a member. I believe Father had made these preparations because during his illness he had had some premonition of his death. He must have already given up, for he was usually very untidy in his habits. This was

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the one single preparation he made for his death. 121
He continued to drink heavily throughout these later years, ignoring his
health. Yōko tells of a drinking binge which continued for more than a
month, with Sakutarō out drinking each night, returning on the last train—if
at all. His face gradually became haggard and worn. One day, Yōko
remembers Sakutarō asking his mother almost hesitantly if she could leave
out some rice balls for him to eat when he returned home, giving his mother
the opportunity to harass him about going out each night and asking him
why he didn’t take more care of himself.122

From October 1941, Sakutarō’s health gradually worsened and he
began to stay at home, refusing all visitors. In a letter to his sister written
during this time he remarks that he was thinking of seeing a doctor, which
means he must have been feeling very sick indeed as he hated doctors and
usually dosed himself up from the many drugs he stored away in drawers of
his desk. He did indeed see a doctor at around this time, however the results
were not particularly worrying. It was not until the following year that his
health became critical. At the end of March 1942, Sakutarō caught a cold
and in April he retired from his position at Meiji University on account of
his health. He passed away at 3.40 am on the eleventh of May 1942.
Pneumonia is recorded as the cause of death. A haiku, pencilled during his
last days, tells of the fear and evil visions which possessed Sakutarō as his
life came to an end; “Horns finally thrust out from the shadow of the black
curtain.”123 The funeral was held two days later, on the thirteenth, at his
home and he was buried in the Hagiwara family grave on the thirtieth of
May at the Seijun Temple in Maebashi. During his last, bedridden days, he
pencilled a number of miscellaneous notes, which draw a picture of a man
confronted by what he saw as a life of failure. The following untitled poem
was amongst them;

On the day I become one with the trees and grasses
The history of my defeat, must be engraved onto my tomb.
Who will ever know of it?—No one.
I will starve for all eternity
I must forgive people for the past
I must forgive my father for the past.124

CHAPTER TWO

Tsuki ni Hoeru—Howling at the Moon

(1) Introductory remarks .................................................. 69
(2) The structure of Tsuki ni Hoeru ..................................... 69
(3) A thematic analysis of Tsuki ni Hoeru ......................... 75
   (a) Images of descent ................................................. 75
   (b) Images of ascent ................................................ 90
      (i) The skylark .................................................. 91
      (ii) Music ....................................................... 94
      (iii) Repentance ............................................... 95
(1) Introductory remarks

*Tsuki ni Hoeru*, as mentioned in the introduction, was Sakutarō’s first major collection and occupies an important position in the history of Japanese poetry, both for its revolutionary style and thematic content. This chapter will examine both the structure of the collection and its central themes and images. The overriding theme of *Tsuki ni Hoeru* is the dichotomy between a desire for transcendence, that is, an escape from the pain of life into the clear blue sky above, and a fear of descent back into the subterranean darkness of the pained psyche of an isolated 'modern' man. In *Tsuki ni Hoeru*, the poet is caught in a no-man’s land between ascent and descent, one moment possessed by a passionate faith in his escape, the next by both fear of and anger at his perceived entrapment. In the midst of his visions of ascent, he is confronted by the irreconcilable division between instinct and conscience. It is this instinct—blind and grotesque—which pulls him back into the lower realm, forcing him to search for a more primitive state of being before such a divison arose. Thus, the underlying theme of *Tsuki ni Hoeru* is a quest for a unified self.

(2) The structure of *Tsuki ni Hoeru*

*Tsuki ni Hoeru* is made up of six sections; seven if the two longer poems at the end are counted as a separate section. The fifty-five lyric poems, which were written over a four year period between 1914 and 1917, are ordered thematically rather than chronologically.¹

In the first section, entitled "Bamboo and its Sentimentality," the poet ruthlessly strips away the protective layers to expose the pallid sickly centre which lies at the core of his inner being. We are drawn into subterranean depths—into a microscopic burgeoning of root systems where a desperate desire for the ascendent is pushing its way upwards. The first poem, a stark self-portrait of the poet, entitled "The sick face in the depths of the ground," reads as follows;

In the depths of the ground a face emerges
the face of a sick and lonely man emerges.

In the darkness in the depths of the ground

¹The poems in sections two and three are the earliest poems. See Volume Two for original publication dates.
lithe grass stalks begin to sprout
a rat's nest begins to sprout.
Entangled in the nest
numberless hairs tremble forth;
time of the winter solstice
from the sick desolate ground
slender roots of pale bamboo grow forth
grow forth
and Ah! so deep in sadness
smoke-like tendrils
sunk so deep, deep, in sadness.

In the darkness in the depths of the ground
the face of a sick and lonely man emerges.2

This is a poetic depiction of the landscape of the poet's inner being; the
face—emerging from the depths—is his cry of pain, his plea for others to
notice and perhaps aid his escape. The poet sees himself as diseased and
isolated, buried under the ground, a victim of the inner malaise of Japanese
society. The sick face becomes a metaphor for an artist alienated in society.
The slender bamboo shoots forcing their way upwards are the embodiment
of a desire for the ascendent. As noted by Kishida Toshiko, there is no
cessation of movement in this poem.3 Repetition of words such as,
emerging, sprouting, growing, trembling, heightens the sense of feverish
growth which pervades the poem. The new shoots—fed by numberless
trembling roots—are met by the darkness of the longest night of the year.
Yet although the cold environment augurs almost certain death for the fragile
new shoots, still they force their way upwards, showing their strength of
purpose even in pain. As noted by Muta Orie, the upward movement of the
shoots symbolizes "man's desire to find his true self in the upper world and
as such embody the ascendent."4 In contrast, the rat's nest hints at the
devious scavenger-like instinct of the lonely frustrated ego trapped in the
ground. The rat's nest becomes a metaphor for the root-like infestation of
the poet's diseased psyche. Dark emotions fester in this inner world of
suffering and disease. Thus, there are two forces at work in this poem, one

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2HS. "The sick face in the depths of the ground" (Jimen no soko no byōki no kao), Tsuki ni Hoeru, HSZ I, p. 18. Vol II, p. 6.
3Kishida, Toshiko. Hagiwara Sakutarō: Shiteki Imeeji no Kösei, op cit, p. 75.
4Muta, Orie. Imagery in the Poetry of Hagiwara Sakutarō. op cit, p. 82. Kishida Toshiko also notes that all the upward, growing imagery in the world of Sakutarō's poetry is
linked to the sky and light. See Kishida, Toshiko. Hagiwara Sakutarō: Shiteki Imeeji no Kösei. op cit, p. 72.
a skyward force and the other a downward pressure. Kishida argues that this downward pressure counteracts the force of the skyward one, sucking its energies back into the ground.\(^5\) The structure of the poem reflects this, with the upward growth of the shoots in the first stanza becoming the trembling root tips in the second. Descendent pressure immediately counters any upward growth; with root growth countering stem growth. In this manner, the darkness of the descendent casts a shadow over the light of the upper realm which is an active manifestation of the life force.

Following on from this first poem, the "Bamboo" poems continue to develop this image of rapid, feverish growth. The upward movement is now accompanied by a sense of repentance. The world of "Bamboo and its Sentimentality" becomes a world of repentance, a confession of the poet's sins before God.\(^6\) The sins of the penitent are unearthed and exposed on the cold snow as the sounds of a flute beckon from high up in the treetops.

In the second section, "Skylark Fare," the poet's focus shifts from the subterranean depths to the clear blue sky above. The reader, and narrator, turn their eyes upwards towards a bright, transcendent world. Yet the vision of the ascendent realm fades away into the distance just as the poet reaches out to grasp it in his hand, as seen in the poem, "Skylark Fare."

\[\ldots\text{Oh! that I might tenderly open the green window.} \]
\[\text{Yet alas, when I look up at the clear skies of May} \]
\[\text{streaming off into the distance} \]
\[\text{Oh! how I wish I could offer up, in my own hands} \]
\[\text{a dish of skylark fare} \]
\[\text{and tenderly come to your left-hand side.} \]\(^7\)

The poet/narrator cannot pass through into this upper realm, for as noted by Frye, the ascent must be accompanied by a discovery of one's real identity, in this case a unification of the poet's split self.\(^8\) Trapped by his own existence, the poet/narrator is destined to stand at a window inside an enclosed room, ever an observer of the outside world.

Section three, entitled "Sorrowful Moonlit Night" depicts a shadowed world of encroaching loneliness. The collection has moved from

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6 See HS, "Notes 3," HSZ XII, p. 57, quoted in Ooka, Makoto. *Hagiwara Sakutarō*, op cit, p. 172. This is an example of the "indefinable guilt" of the romantic gothic as discussed in the introduction.


dreams of transcendence to an absolute loss of faith in ever achieving this dreamed-of escape. A frustrated anger at his fate feeds a desire for destruction, creating a world of crime, fear and death, exemplified in "The death of a drunk:"

From the ghastly white belly
of the drunk, lying dead on his back
a mysterious substance is flowing....
On all sides—
the ground glistens
the grass is pointed—sharp
everything glistens like radium.
The pale white face of the murderer
surfaces in this lonely landscape, and
smiles—as a ripple of wind in the grass.9

Physical disintegration serves as a metaphor for the poet's sense of inner disease, and tells of the breakdown of the barriers which protect a 'civilized' man from exposure to the unpleasant rawness of the organic level of existence; where root-tips once hidden lie grotesquely exposed, and buried limbs force their way, zombie-like, to the surface. "The death of a drunk," portrays a secret hidden world, where the dissolution of the corpse is symbolic of the horrific inner decay of the narrator's soul. His skin and bones—that is the body which houses his soul—no longer act as a barrier and the putrid internal organs spill out into the outside world, a powerful metaphor for the infectious—plague-like—power, brimming over from a diseased subconscious into the conscious world.

"Sorrowful Moonlit Night" evokes a world of cold urban anonymity, depicting an existence where man's heart shrivels in the shadows as he continues the meaningless repetition of his daily labour. Group labour offers no solace to the loneliness and isolation of the individual.

When the sorrowfilled twilight falls
Tokyo city fills with labourers
the shadows of their threadbare hats
spread throughout the whole city
here, then there
they dig up the hard ground....
...in the melancholic twilight shadows
their withered hearts glitter upon their shovels.10

Section four, entitled "A Rotten Clam" is subtitled "sensations born of the tormenting allure of a spring evening, and the diseases which follow" (nayamashiki shunya no kankaku to sono shikkan).\textsuperscript{11} The poems in this section explore the torments of lust and the hidden seeds—both physical and mental—of sexual disease. Spring arrives "from far off in the distance coming into bud with gently pouting lips,"\textsuperscript{12} into a swollen world ready to burst all bounds, filled with a "yearning to drink in the kiss of a young girl under the plumply swollen willow buds."\textsuperscript{13} The feverish swelling of the eggs in "The substance of spring," is like the upward growth of the bamboo in "Bamboo and its Sentimentality."

Spring is all but bursting
swollen with innumerable insect eggs....
they push and jostle each other
they pervade the very air
growing firm like swelling rubber balls.
Prod closely with your fingertip
for surely this is the very substance of spring.\textsuperscript{14}

Section five, "Lonely Desire" depicts a lonely world of contorted sensuality, a contortion born of anxiety and loneliness. The anxiety stems from an inner sense of abnormality and isolation. The poet draws a picture of the lustful interior of his soul, something which, while it shames him, gives him a certain licentious pleasure. The two poems, "Love" and "The lover of love" which were responsible for the suppression of the collection are in this section. It ends with the poem "My lonely personality," which is a plea for companionship, a desperate call to an unknown friend to come and relieve the narrator's terrible loneliness. Though desperate for companionship, the narrator seems to have little faith that his plea will be answered and is left shivering, destitute and alone.

My lonely personality calls to my friend
my yet unknown friend. Come quickly!
Sit down on this old chair. Let us just talk quietly
—just the two of us...
My terribly lonely personality
calls out in a loud voice to my yet unknown friend.
My strange and obsequious personality
like a seedy destitute crow

\textsuperscript{12} HS, "Spring" (Yōshun), Tsuki ni Hoeru, HSZ I, p. 58. Vol II, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{13} HS, "Spring," op cit, Vol II, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{14} HS, "The substance of spring" (Haru ni jittai), Tsuki ni Hoeru, HSZ I, p. 60. Vol II, p. 33.
shivers, crouched in the corner of this desolate chair
here in the barrenness of winter.\textsuperscript{15}

Section six, "The Unknown Dog," is the last of the collection. It depicts
the desolate world of a wanderer destined to beg on the highways of life, giving
proof to the statement in the preface that, "every single man, exists in fearful
loneliness for all eternity."\textsuperscript{16}

I have begged on far distant highways.
My starving heart has wept in misery
amidst the sharp stench of rotting onions and meat.
I have wandered the backstreets of town, my beggar's heart
wallowing in misery.\textsuperscript{17}

The wanderer is always shadowed by a sickly deformed dog which howls
in fear at the moon. It is this image which gives the collection its title.
Ah! wherever I go—wherever I go
this unknown dog follows me
crawling along on the filthy ground
this diseased, lame-legged dog is ever behind me.
Quivering with fear, in sadness—far and long—
this miserable shadow of a dog howls with all its might
—up at the lonely night-moon.\textsuperscript{18}

The collection, finally comes to an end with two long poems, "The
skylark's nest" and "The toy flute." These two poems explore the battle
between instinct and conscience. In "The skylark's nest," the narrator stands
with a fragile egg—a symbol of future life and potential—in his hand, and
with conscious callousness squeezes its life between his fingers.

My fingers reached out and picked up one of the eggs.
The breath of a living thing, warm with life
tickled the pad of my thumb.
Irritation—like when watching a dog in the throes of death—
seethed up from the depths of my soul.
Brutal crime is born of just such a discordant sensation.
The heart afraid of sin is the harbinger of the heart
which gives sin its birth.
Furtively, I held the egg in my fingers up to the sunlight
a vague pale-red shape—like a clot of blood
—was just visible through the shell.
Then—a cold watery substance

\textsuperscript{15}HS. "My lonely personality" (Subishii jinkaku), \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru}, HSZ I, p. 69. Vol II, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{17}HS. "Looking up at the trees" (Aogi no kozue o aogite), \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru}, HSZ I, p. 75.
Vol II, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{18}HS. "The unknown dog" (Mishiranu Inu), \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru}, HSZ I, p. 75. Vol II, p. 42.
a fluid, heavy with the smell of blood, oozed between my fingers. The egg had broken. Barbaric human fingers had squashed this delicate thing in cold blood.\textsuperscript{19}

Instinct, which taps a brutality usually hidden by the veneer of civilization overrides conscience as he crushes the egg.

"The toy flute," paints a portrait of a father and son, the former lost in an insoluble dilemma (his failure to unite his instinct and conscience), while the latter is possessed by an all-encompassing desire for a toy flute. The two are a symbolic portrayal of a single divided soul, fighting to unite.

Sakutarō intentionally chose to structure his collection along thematic lines. Beginning in the grotesque lower realms of the ‘descendent,’ that is in the world of a lonely split-self, he draws his readers skywards in an ascent, a quest for self-discovery and unity. It is, however, an impossible quest and the poet is left in a state of desperate loneliness split by the dichotomy of his nature.

(3) A Thematic Analysis of \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru}

Sakutarō utilizes a number of stylistic devices and motifs to develop this thematic structure. Physical barriers play an important role, heightening the contrast between the outer world of conscious reality and the hidden, subterranean realm of unconscious emotion. He sets up contrasts between opposites; the ground and the sky, darkness and light, enclosed space and the freedom of the external world, and then highlights these contrasts further by inserting barriers—windows, doors, hard layers of frozen topsoil—between them. These contrasts create a dualism within his work, a tension between the upward and downward movements; between the the enclosed subterranean space, inhabited by the poet, and the transcendent realm of his desire, ever far off in the distance or high up in the clear blue sky. This dualism serves to emphasize the huge gulf between the ‘ascendent’ world and ‘descendent’ realms.

(a) Images of descent

First let us examine the nightmare world of the ‘descendent.’ The poem

entitled "Death," depicts a corpse which—seemingly with a will of its own—forces its way upwards out of the dark ground. 

As I watch—out of the depths of the ground
a weird, weird hand appears
a foot appears
a neck protrudes...²⁰

The corpse, like the sick face in "The sick face in the depths of the ground," emerges into a cold and wintry world. Barriers between the living and the dead are breaking down, and a nightmare world lies exposed.

A similar breakdown is occurring in the "The world of bacteria," where bacteria swarm just beneath the semi-translucent skin of an invalid; these microscopic organisms grow and grow, invading the macro level. The swarming cells, usually so small, are already visible to the naked eye, not only visible but humanized with mouths and ears.

Bacteria legs
mouths
ears
noses.

Bacteria are swimming....

In the bodies of humans
in the intestines of shellfish
in the spherical centre of an onion
in the very heart of the landscape....

In those places where the bacteria live
a crimson light gleams faintly
as if passing through an invalid’s skin
only just visible
yet so, so unbearably sad.

Bacteria are swimming.²¹

The power of the life force—manifest in the upward growth of the bamboo—has been usurped. In this "rotting" world, light can barely penetrate and there is a consequent slowing of movement. It is this declining speed which brings about decay. The disintegration begins internally as in "The world of bacteria." The bacteria are creatures of the darkness and need

²⁰HS, "Death" (Shi), Tsuki ni Hoeru, HSZ I, p. 42. Vol II, p. 23.
²¹HS, “The world of bacteria” (Bakuteria no sekai), Tsuki ni Hoeru, HSZ I, p. 52. Vol II, p. 29.
no light to grow.\textsuperscript{22} Light cannot filter down into the damp stickiness of the organic matter which trembles and squirms in the dark. The will towards the upper realm—the 'other' shore—declines and images of growth and extension disappear. All becomes emaciated, static and directionless. The images which began with bamboo roots progress to a darkened space filled with passive ennui.

The organic workings of life—tangled root hairs, frozen stems, bacteria swimming beneath an invalid's skin—become metaphors for the poet's disease-ridden soul now emerging from its imprisonment in the depths of the unconscious. The descendent realm is ripe with disease and decay, harbouring an angry contagious power. This portrayal of the hidden, of the microscopic, and of the breakdown of the barriers which usually prevent any movement between them and the outer world of our reality, is a technique Sakutarō uses to contrast the descendent and the ascendent, and becomes a metaphor for his attempt to break down the barriers between conscious and unconscious existence. Nature becomes barren and hostile. The poet complains. "All of nature makes me suffer."\textsuperscript{23} Grass is pointed and sharp, its cold edges cut deep into human flesh, yet like radium it gleams with inner light. The poet is deprived of a harmonious co-existence with and within nature.

On all sides—
the ground glistens
the grass is pointed—sharp
everything glistens like radium.\textsuperscript{24}

For all that, the poet desires to return to a primitive state where he can comfortably co-exist with nature. His desire to be sucked down, back through time, is seen in the poem, "A turtle," which reads as follows;

Woods
marsh
blue sky
hands feel the weight
as the pure gold turtle sleeps—quietly
bearing this shining
lonely Nature's pain;
the turtle sinks groping into man's soul

\textsuperscript{22}See Kishida, Toshiko. \textit{Hagiwara Sakutarō: Shiteki Inmeiji no Kōsei}, op cit, pp. 100-1.
\textsuperscript{23}HS, "My lonely personality" (Sabishii jinkaku), \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru}, HSZ I, pp. 69-72. Vol II, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{24}HS, "The death of a drunk" (Shusei chūdokusha no shi), \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru}, HSZ I, pp. 44-5. Vol II, p. 24.
sinks into the depths of the blue sky.\textsuperscript{25}

As noted in the introduction Sakutarō was fascinated with modern technology, with all that was new and modern in Taishō Japan. words such as 'radium' and 'bacteria' are proof of this interest.

This destruction of barriers between the ascendent and descendent is also employed in the poem "Bamboo," where the tiny stems are breaking through the frozen barrier of the hard ground. Bamboo, as noted by the critic Robert Epp, is the embodiment of the tension between these two realms.

(Sakutarō) was terrorized by the roots but admired the stalks. Bamboo roots bring out his pessimism and make him hate life; they menace him with their rapid growth and give him the sensation that he is about to slip into the abyss. Stalks by contrast, bring out his optimism and make him affirm life; they give him the impression that one can reach to the skies and realize his ideals.\textsuperscript{26}

The second "Bamboo" poem reads as follows;

Bamboo grows from the shining ground
pale green bamboo grows
bamboo roots grow under the ground
becoming gradually thinner and thinner
fine hairs grow from the root tips
fine hairs grow—a smoke-like blur
faintly, they tremble.

Bamboo grows from the hard ground
bamboo grows sharp above the ground
grows straight upwards
frozen joints glittering
the bamboo grows under the pale blue sky
bamboo—bamboo—bamboo grows.\textsuperscript{27}

The bamboo forcing its way upward towards the pale blue sky is an example of the vertical ascent, which Kishida argues is central to Sakutarō's poetic in \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru}.\textsuperscript{28} The upward extension of the bamboo represents the powerful growing spirit of spring. Kishida argues that the English translation 'sprout' is a more appropriate rendition of \textit{hae} than 'grow,' as it carries a sense of pushing and as such expresses the great strength of

\textsuperscript{27}HS, "Bamboo" (Take), \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru}, HSZ I, pp. 21-2. Vol II, p. 18.
internalized will which causes this upward movement. The following sketch, entitled "Sunlight and the Grasses," which Sakutarō sent to Kitahara Hakushū in April 1915, gives a pictorial representation of this tension.

Sakutarō draws his hands and body as sparse and withered grass stalks, and likens his hairs to insects—swarming worms. The fruit and flowers of his body are potato-like root tubers, with dangling root systems. A single line of prose is added to the picture, "all is so painful, I just can't bear it." While his body is drawn upwards towards the sun, the movement seems to be painful and shadowed by a terror of falling back into the darkness. The focus on the line of vision, the line of light, is an important motif in his poetry, drawing attention to the vital importance of perspective. A card he sent Hakushū the day after the sketch, describes this 'unbearable' pain in more detail.

Yesterday, I nearly breathed my last, it was a day of nothing but pain. I went on a binge the day before yesterday when the usual nervous sickness surfaced...all too clearly, I can still see the lips of the pale white woman who laughed after sex, I can still hear her laughing at me during the act; still hear the foul words I uttered in my drunkenness. I was filled with terrible pain which tore at my nerves...I even thought I was going

mad.\textsuperscript{31}

The terrible fear of exposure, a fear of madness, which always accompanies the desire for escape is a motif Sakutarō often employed to express the tension between the descendent and ascendent, as for example in the poem entitled, "The reason why the person inside looks like a deformed invalid," where the narrator stands at a window looking out through the glass. From his station at the window, the narrator yearns towards the blue sky.

I am standing behind a lace curtain
that's what makes my face seem rather blurred.
In my hand I'm holding a telescope
with it I'm looking far out into the distance.
I see woods where bald-headed children are walking
and dogs and sheep are made of nickel.
That's what makes my eyes seem somewhat opaque.
And, this morning I ate too much of that cabbage dish
besides, the window glass is but crudely made
that's why my face seems so terribly distorted.
To tell the truth
I am an all-too-healthy person
so why are you standing there and staring at me so fixedly?
Why are you smiling at me so eerily?
Oh well, of course, if it's what's below my waist
if you say that part of me isn't very distinct
well that's a rather stupid comment, for
after all, I mean, it's because I am standing inside the house
by the wall near this pale window.\textsuperscript{32}

Although the glass protects him from the outside world, the narrator fears that it causes some distortion, and that something about him makes people stare. The window distorts not only his features but also his sexuality; the lower half of his body has all but disappeared. This sexual ambiguity, this half-man recurs throughout the collection,\textsuperscript{33} proof of the problem Sakutarō had in expressing his sexuality. The poem reads as a series of excuses seemingly meant to hurry attention away from the narrator, as he tries to find some logical reason for his appearance. He searches for some excuse, some external reason for his deformity, some justification for his pallor—the window pane's crude manufacture, or if that will not answer, then the cabbage he ate for breakfast. Surely, he pleads, it is obvious that too much

\textsuperscript{31} HS, "Postcard to Kitahara Hakushū." April 26, 1915. HSZ XIII. p. 90.
\textsuperscript{32} HS, "The reason why the person inside looks like a deformed invalid" (Naihū ni iro hito ga kikei na byōnin ni mieru riyū), Tsuki ni Hoeru. HSZ I. p. 49. Vol II. p. 27.
\textsuperscript{33} As for example in "Dawn" (Ariake), see Vol II. p. 30.
cabbage would make anyone look a little off-colour. Or perhaps it is the lace curtain which causes the distortion. A number of critics comment on the rather strange nonsensical humour in this poem, behind which they see Sakutarō’s own awareness of the split in his personality.\textsuperscript{34} A shift in the Japanese in the middle of the poem from polite verb endings to plain style (orimasu to iru), parallels an increasing anger on the part of the narrator at being under observation. This is an example of Sakutarō’s success at blending classical and modern diction to create a change in mood. The poem can also be read as a masterful portrayal of an artist in society, always looking out wondering how he appears to the outside world.

In the postcard to Hakushū, seen below, Sakutarō drew a pictorial representation of this invalid standing at his window.\textsuperscript{35} The room and the house form a barrier walling him in. He stands with his telescope looking out on a world where nature seems sadly out of joint, where children—the promise of new life—are balding, and the animals—upon which man depends for sustenance—have solidified into metal. The need for a telescope, further highlights the distance between this man and the outside world.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{postcard.png}
\caption{Postcard to Kitahara Hakushū.}
\end{figure}

In note (2) beside the picture, Sakutarō pointedly draws attention to the


\textsuperscript{35}HS, “Postcard to Kitahara Hakushū,” 22 May 1915, HSZ XIII, p. 94.
direction of the light and the direction of sight line of the observers outside the window, using this sight line to indicate the shifting perspective between the man inside and those passing outside.

In "The portrait," the narrator tries to capture on film, a picture of just such a contorted face framed by a window, but the "shadow-like reflection" which begins to appear on the photographic plate fills him with a paralyzing fear. The shifting perspective technique used in this poem, achieved by a shift from the third person to first person, acts like the focusing lens of a camera. The very act of taking a photographic portrait is an attempt to stop time, to present a face to the world, yet the subject of this portrayal slips away, fearful of discovery.

His face was always contorted
as he stood straight, there by the window.
When it comes time for the white cherry to flower
he comes creeping out again—like a mole—
out from the depths of the ground.
When he stole in through the window
stealthily with quiet footsteps
I took a snapshot.

In the faint shadowed light
I examined the whitened plate
something, just a vague shadow, was pictured.
A shudder—a tremor on an oleander—
ran up my spine.36

The season is spring. Something—perhaps a young man's fancy turning to thoughts of love—urges the mole-like creature to emerge from his hiding place deep in the "depths of the ground." For all the photographer's efforts, the shadow-self eludes true capture on film, just as the murderer in "The murder case" eludes the detective and slips away into the distance, for the unconscious cannot survive in the clear light of the conscious world.

In the distant sky a pistol cracks
again the pistol cracks.
Ah! my detective in his crystal garb
steals in at his lover's window.
The floor too is crystal.
From between her fingers
deep blue blood flows.
On the sad woman's corpse
a cold grasshopper rasps.

On a morning early in the month of frost
the detective wearing his crystal garb
turns at the crossroads of the town.
The autumn fountain is at the crossroads
already alone, the detective is sunk in gloom.

Look! On the lonely marble pavement, far in the distance
the villain is slipping quickly away.37

The detective always comes too late, always just misses catching sight of the
villain. The photographer, too—stealthy though he is—never quite manages
to capture his quarry, though he sees its face quite clearly at the window.
The villain and the misty photographic image are both the shadowy shape of
instinct, which pulls the narrator back down into the dark descendent world.
Kawakami Tetsurō argues that the murderer and the detective are one and
the same person, and it is this split personality which creates the eroticism
and morbid sensitivity of the poem.38 As noted by Kawakami, the sickly
eroticism of the blood flowing between the fingers of the corpse is
heightened by the use of the word 'ao.' Ao, the pallid blue which pervades
Aoneko is used in a number of Tsuki ni Hoeru poems. The following lines
from "Bamboo," provide one such example;

...smoke-like bamboo roots are spreading
something sharp and green—grows up from the ground.39

...kebureru take no ne wa hirogari
surudoki aoki mono no chimen ni hae.

This eroticism is a further example of the tension between the ascendent and
the descendent, as desire for love and beauty is dragged down by lust and
murder.

According to Muta Orie, a split self is faced with two choices, "either
to kill the other self or to long for a union to become a whole man."40 The
detectives pursuit of the killer is more an embodiment of the latter, part of

17. This poem is often cited as one of Sakutarō's best. See Itō Shinkichi, Hagiwara
38 Kawakami, Tetsurō, "Nihon no Autosaida" (Japan's Outsider), Hagiwara Sakutarō:
Nihon no Sakka (10), op cit, pp. 44-5.
problems for the translator, becoming alternatively: pale, blue or green. In this poem, the
link with surudoki (sharp) made 'green' more appropriate than the pallid limpness of
'blue.' However, in "The murder case" the 'blue' blood creates a much more erotic tone.
See "Lust" for a further example of the 'blue' eroticism. HS, "Lust" (Jōyoku), Shōji
Shihen (Poetic Gleanings), HSZ III, pp. 85-6.
40 See Muta, Orie. Imagery in the Poetry of Hagiwara Sakutarō. op cit, p. 117.
the desire to find a united self which underpins the whole collection. Tsukimura Reiko regards the murderer as a shadow of truth that instantly disappears the moment the detective (the poet) becomes aware of it. Thus, as noted by Muta Orie, the murderer represents the poet at the height of his feelings, and the detective, the poet who contemplates the results of such a moment of passion. The corpse becomes the remnants of past emotion. Sakutarō believed that criminals reached the pinnacle of passion at the moment of their crime, an idea strongly influenced by his reading of Dostoevsky.

Crime possesses both prestige and spirituality. The more secretly crimes are committed, the more spiritual they become, for those who commit a crime are at that one moment the purest individualists in the world. They can then encounter truth directly. They can strip away all the affectations and masks of mankind.

The image of the "hydrophobic" in the preface to Tsuki ni Hoeru parallels the neuroses of the watcher at the window. Sakutarō describes himself as a paranoid hydrophobic, who feels that no-one can possibly understand his very individual emotions. Desperately, he holds to the hope that perhaps a select few may find something in their own experience with which to relate to his idiosyncratic view of life.

Sometimes I think of an unhappy hydrophobic, a person with an extreme fear of water. A deathly fear of but one cup of water, is something most of us cannot even imagine. We could ask, "Why are you scared of water?"

"In what way are you scared of water?"

Yet to us, such psychology remains impregnable and strange. But to the sufferer—the hydrophobic—that feeling, above all else, is a pure reality. In such a case, if the patient himself—spurred on by some necessity—were to try turning to a bystander, seeking to explain this painful, very real emotion, (and one can well imagine that happening; and if the bystander had no special knowledge of this sickness, then one can lay no bounds on the cruel teasing to which the hydrophobic would be subjected; I shudder at the thought of such a situation), what mode of expression should he use? No matter what words he uses to explain, it will probably be impossible to express this strange emotion.

Hydrophobia—a disease which attacks the central nervous system—serves as a powerful metaphor for the poet's own psychological anguish. The

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42Muta, Orie. Imagery in the Poetry of Hagiwara Sakutarō, op cit, p. 56.
43HS. "From Note 1," HSZ 12, pp. 19.
hydrophobic attempts to explain his own peculiar emotions, even though he faces not only failure but almost certain derision.

Hydrophobia\textsuperscript{45} is in fact another term for the disease rabies and can be defined as a disease which "often begins with excitation of the central nervous system expressed as irritability and viciousness.\textsuperscript{46} The restlessness, nervousness and irritability—even the sudden viciousness—of a rabid victim come closely with the emotions of the poet/narrator—ever anxious to appear normal—though he is treated like a sickly deformed dog. Just as the hydrophobic is at a loss to explain his feelings, so too, Sakutarō finds himself unable to truly express the "how" of his own emotions.

Sakutarō could never quite rid himself of the underlying fear that any attempt to explain himself—to show himself more clearly against the window pane—would cause him to be branded insane. He was possessed by a terrible anxiety that exposure—and almost certain derision—would be far worse that the terrible loneliness which was the price of his isolation. It was as if he had been entrusted with the care of something terribly fragile and valuable, and all his concentration was needed to protect it.

...I've so many fragile things in my arms
that's what's so dangerous.
There now, I've begun to walk—careful, careful.
Everybody leave me alone.
Just leave me alone.
I can't stand it—I'm so, so worried.
Whatever happens
don't watch my stumbling steps
I'm at the very end of my tether
like a sick balloonist
always following a misguided course
I stagger on and on—and on.\textsuperscript{47}

He must continue on his way—however much he staggars—until he has fulfilled his mission. Though he tries to concentrate on the mechanics of his task, he cannot rid himself of his fear of observation.

A deformed dog is another inhabitant of Sakutarō's descendent world. As the narrator travels his path through the descendent world in

\textsuperscript{45}The hydrophobia symptom consists of repeated episodes of painful contraction of the muscles of the throat on attempting to swallow. This symptom may be elicited by the sight of water because of the association of water with the act of swallowing, thus the name 'fear of water.' Encyclopedia Britannica, Chicago, 1987, Vol 9, p. 874.

\textsuperscript{46}Encyclopedia Britannica, op cit. p. 874.

\textsuperscript{47}HS, "My hazardous path" (Kiken na sanpo), Tsuki ni Hoeru, HSZ I, pp. 43-4. Vol II, p. 23.
search of a path to the upper realm, this dog shadows his every move. It is a companion in the metamorphosis he must undertake if he is to reverse the downward spiral of this life. As we saw in the introduction, the image of the dog becomes the personification of the poet himself.\textsuperscript{48} The title of the collection \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru}—which translates as \textit{Howling at the Moon}—underlines the symbolic significance of the 'dog' in the whole collection. Sakutarō chose this image because of "the mystical and morbid image embodied in the howling of a dog."\textsuperscript{49} The use of the verb 'howling' gives sound and movement to the image of a dog silhouetted against the moon. In the preface to \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru}, Sakutarō relates this dog to images born of past nightmares. The diseased and howling dog is a shadow of "ominous bad" dreams, part of the darkness of Frye's subterranean world.

For me the past holds many painful memories. The past is like an ominous bad dream of an irritated, inactive and troubled body and soul. A dog howls at the moon; howls—suspicious, frightened of its own shadow. In the diseased soul of the dog, the moon—like a pale ghost—becomes a mystery of ill omen. Still the dog howls.

I want to nail my gloom-ridden shadow down into the ground of this moonlit night, so that it will not come following me through all eternity.\textsuperscript{50}

The short prose piece entitled "Something I must say," depicts just such a nightmare, where the poet becomes a dog unable to communicate with humans.

Since my childhood, I have often wondered what would happen if somehow I incurred some terrible divine retribution or if I was bewitched by some sinister magician—as in the fairy stories. I used to wonder what my life would be like if I was turned into some animal.

What if one day as I was walking in some deserted lonely forest, a sprite suddenly appeared and turned me into a dog.

With my tail dragging behind me I'd return to my master's house, no, no, to my own house and search out my mother, whom I'd suddenly begun to miss unbearably. I'd try to tell her all about this terrible thing that had happened to me. But mother would just treat me like a stray dog. Whatever I tried—wagging my tail, barking, licking her—all was totally incomprehensible to her, she just couldn't understand me. And so, however much I cried and screamed she would add to my torment by chasing me out of the garden.

Has there ever been any fate so tragic in the whole expanse of human history? A dog—this dog—just cannot be understood by humans—it is

\textsuperscript{48}See HS, "A sorrowful moonlit night." see Vol II, p. 22.

\textsuperscript{49}Kubo, Tadao. \textit{Hagiwara Sakutarōron (1), Nihon Kindai Sakka 4}, op cit, p. 277.

a terrible tragedy—one of God’s practical jokes.
It goes without saying that in my role as a poet I am just such a bewitched dog.\textsuperscript{51}

Kubo Tadao researched the source of this image of a dog in Sakutarō’s work, and after finding little precedent in traditional Japanese literature,\textsuperscript{52} came to the conclusion that Ishikawa Takuboku was a major influence. Drawing on Sakutarō’s known familiarity with Takuboku’s poetry, Kubo argues—despite the fact that Sakutarō himself once said he was unaware of the poem at the time—that Sakutarō’s images of ‘lame,’ ‘mad’ dogs originate from the following image of a ‘sick’ dog in a poem from Takuboku’s collection, \textit{Ichiaiku no Suna} (A Fistful of Sand);\textsuperscript{53}

If the maidens heard me cry
They would say it was naught but a sick dog howling at the moon.
\begin{quote}
\textit{Wa ga naku o otomera kikeba}
\textit{Yamai inu no}
\textit{Tsuki ni hoyuru ni nitari to iu ranu}\textsuperscript{54}
\end{quote}

Takuboku sees himself as a sick, howling dog. The howl of the sick dog is the embodiment of the narrator’s sense of self, of how he fears others see him. There is indeed a similarity between this poem and Sakutarō’s “A Sorrowful Moonlit Night,”\textsuperscript{55} where the narrator identifies himself with a deformed dog, howling his fears at the moon.

Although Sakutarō’s deformed dog, howling while the “yellow girls sing in chorus,” does seem to have much in common with Takuboku’s ‘sick’ dog, Kubo’s theory still leaves the question of where Takuboku got the image unanswered. Dogs appear in Japanese poetry as early as the \textit{Manyōshū}, however, they are hunting dogs or watch dogs, not the wild, stray dogs of modern verse, as seen in the following poem;

\begin{quote}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
a rustic scene & satobitaru \\
a dog’s bark & inu no koe ni zo \\
tells of & shirarekeru \\
a house & take yori oku no \\
\end{tabular}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{51}HS, “Something I must say” (Iwanakereba narainero koto), \textit{Poetic Gleanings} (Shūi Shihen), HSZ, III pp. 182-191.
\textsuperscript{52}Kubo, Tadao, \textit{Hagiwara Sakutarōron} (1), \textit{Nihon Kindai Sakka} 4, op cit. p. 271.
\textsuperscript{53}Kubo notes in passing, when Yoshida Koyō asked Sakutarō whether he had been influenced by Takuboku’s poem at a \textit{Pan no Kai} (Pan Society) meeting, Sakutarō said that he didn’t know of this particular poem. Kubo, Tadao, \textit{Hagiwara Sakutarōron} (1), \textit{Nihon Kindai Sakka} 4, op cit. p. 277.
\textsuperscript{55}HS, “A sorrowful moonlit night,” (Kanashīi tsukiyo), Vol II, p. 22.
The poem's setting is rustic and impoverished. Only the bark of a dog tells of the nearby human habitation. The animal is unseen, a watch dog hidden behind a fence, serving to heighten the sense of rural isolation evoked by the poem. A dog spoke of human habitation, and was seen as a domesticated animal—the wild equivalent being the wolf.

In Sakutarō's work, however, the dog became a metaphor for an individual who had broken away from the accepted paths and roles imposed by society, the image of a solitary wanderer—with neither community nor higher power to protect him. The dog provided him with a new and disturbing image to evoke the lonely isolation and terrible foreboding that filled his heart.

The image of the dog in the collection's title was clearly influenced by Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra. Ikeda Chōkō's translation of Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra appeared in 1911, and although there are no specific records as to when Sakutarō read this particular work, he was reading Nietzsche at this time. The images of wild, stray dogs howling in fear under the moonlight, which began to inhabit the Japanese literature of this period, were all heavily influenced by Nietzsche's work.

In the chapter entitled "Of The Vision and The Riddle," Zarathustra and the dwarf had been debating the meaning of 'eternal return' on their long desolate climb up to the gateway called "Moment" (where the eternal paths of the past and future come together). Suddenly Zarathustra is "standing between wild cliffs, alone, desolate in the most desolate moonlight."

...I heard a dog howling nearby....And saw it, too, bristling, its head raised, trembling in the stillest midnight, when even dogs believe in ghosts....the full moon had just gone over the house, silent as death, it had stopped still, a round glow, still upon the flat roof as if upon some forbidden place: that was what had terrified the dog, for dogs believe in thieves and ghosts....But there a man was lying! And there! The dog,
leaping, bristling, whining...it saw me coming—then it howled again, then it cried out—had I ever heard a dog cry so for help?\footnote{Nietzsche, Friedeich. \textit{Thus Spoke Zarathustra}, Hollingdale, R.J. (trs.), Penguin Books, London, 1969, Part III, pp. 179-80.}

Tired and sickened, Zarathustra felt as if he had been "reawakened from sleep by a worse dream," a dream which found its way into the preface of \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru}, as the "ominous bad dream of an irritated inactive and troubled soul,"\footnote{HS, "Preface to \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru}," HSZ I, p. 14. Vol II, p. 4.} and the dog that haunted its byways. Nietzsche creates a dog which though trembling with fear, howls its warning to the night, unable to leave its master—the "most solitary man," who lies convulsing with a huge black snake embedded deep in his throat. Yet, in the moment of triumph when he bites off the snake's head, the man becomes transformed; "no longer a man—but a transformed being, surrounded by light." This sight awakens an unquenchable thirst in Zarathustra's heart. Here is a man who has battled the ultimate evil, mastered it, and won through, thus achieving a transcendent state. All who witness this transformation are thereafter destined to yearn for such a transformation, to hope that they too can achieve this escape. Sakutarō was filled with the same yearning as Zarathustra. The poem, "Dawn," is clearly influenced by the above-mentioned passage. A man's body lies at death's door, the body decaying even before his spirit is quite dead. A dog—like the dog in Zarathustra's tale—howls to the moon, in fear and despair.

\begin{quote}
From the pain of a long illness
his face becomes wreathed in spider webs
all below his waist has faded away—like a shadow
above his waist a thicket grows
his hands decay
his whole body loses its very form.
Ah!—today too—the moon is out.
The dawn moon out in the sky.
A deformed white dog is howling
in its dim paper-lantern light.
As daybreak approaches
a howling dog stands by the lonely road.\footnote{HS, "Dawn" (Ariake), \textit{Tsuki hi Hoeru}, HSZ I, p. 55. Vol II, p. 30.}
\end{quote}

The lower-half of his body—his sex—has faded into shadow, and the upper half—his intellect—is already food for the plants. His body and mind are already lost, so, unlike Zarathustra's "most solitary man," the narrator seems unable to overthrow the snake and reach the light.
Isoda Kōichi notes the importance of Nietzsche's influence, remarking that "this dog seems to be howling in accompaniment to its search for some inner meaning... in the depths of a human heart."\(^{61}\) In Isoda's eyes, the dog represents Sakutarō's alter-ego, which like Zarathustra on his spiritual odyssey, delves into the depths of lonely despair. Isoda, however, concludes that Sakutarō's search is not an eternal search for salvation—as Zarathustra's seems to be. In Isoda's eyes, Sakutarō's poetry depicts a man whose mental neuroses compel him to fear and detest society even while he longs to be part of it. Sakutarō's aim is one of survival, as he searches for some way out of his pained existence.

(b) Images of ascent

After first building up a picture of the world of his inner pain in the early poems of the collection, Sakutarō begins to explore a number of doors of escape, doors into the upper realm. He stands—alone—looking upwards in search of a sign.

On the back streets of the impoverished city block
the scanty trees eke out their existence....
I am searching for love...
A tiny leaf—high in the top of the evergreens
which grow in the barren soil of the roadside
—flutters in the wind.\(^{62}\)

The tiny leaf fluttering high in the evergreens—symbolic of eternal life—seems to offer just such a sign. High up in the treetops, far off in the distance, he sees a vision of salvation. Such salvation can only be achieved through repentance, through an awareness of the ugliness of the inner man. In "Winter," the sins of the lower realm lie exposed, allowing the creatures living below to begin to work towards repentance. Repentance can come only after the exposure of sin.

The signs of sin appear in the heavens
appear on the falling drifts of snow
glittering in the treetops
as if shining from beyond the depths of winter
the signs of sins committed appear in every quarter.

Behold them sleeping

\(^{62}\) HS, "Looking up at the trees" (Aoki no kozue o aogite) Tsuki ni Hoeru, HSZ I, pp. 75-7, Vol II, p. 43.
in the dark earth the living creatures
have begun to build a house of repentance.63
The cold seems to have a purifying effect, as if it will freeze and cleanse the
sins. The treetops are full of light in contrast to the darkness in the depths of
the earth. Here, the exposure of man's sins in this upper realm, brings
forgiveness, not ridicule.

(i) The skylark

The ascendent world is depicted through a number of images—the sky,
birds, treetops, light, flutes, mountain tops. Freedom of spirit is embodied
in the images of birds flying free in the blue sky, or musical notes filtering
off into the distant treetops. Such images stand in sharp contrast to the sick
subterranean face, the scurrying mole, or the cold boneless shellfish, and
other images of the descendent. Seeking avenues for escape, the
subterranean man seems to believe that he will find not only forgiveness—
as in "Winter"—but also love and companionship, and finally heart's ease in
these high places.

The skylark is one of the most powerful images of ascent in the
collection. In the "Skylark Fare" poems, the sky becomes a metaphor for the
transcendent realm of the unrestricted spirit.

High in the very treetops
tiny eggs are shining
as I look up—the small birds' nests shine
now, already, it is time for the sinner to pray.64

The sky is inhabited by tiny eggs. These eggs—shining high above—tell
the sinner it is time to pray, just as the signs of sin "appearing in the
treetops" in "Winter" caused the living creatures below to begin to "build a
house of repentance."

In the "Skylark Fare" poems, a pure young woman and the love dish
of skylark fare are the embodiment of the upper realm. These young women
share the sky with the skylark, flying free. The "Skylark Fare" section,
begins with a short prose piece;

The fresh greenery and scent-laden breeze of the May morning
ennobles my life. I want to wield a fork of purest silver with the woman I
love, under the dripping sky-blue window. At least once in my life, I
want to steal and eat the lover's dish of skylark fare which is shining in

the sky.\textsuperscript{65}

The poet yearns for a chance to share this feast with his lover in the fresh newness of a spring morning. Here too, the protagonist sits beside a window, which forms a barrier between him and the object of his desire—the "dish of love" outside in the sky. By associating a mother skylark, eggs bulging with new life, and a beautiful young maiden, with this transcendent world, Sakutarō develops the duality between high and low into a contrast between the feminine and masculine. The transcendent world is inhabited by the feminine while the subterranean depths are the realm of the masculine. The male is trapped in a rotting subterranean world while the female flies free in the sky above, the more he desires her the more his lust drags him down into the murky depths. Satisfaction, that is attainment of desire, is irrevocably linked to sin—to stealing, to murder—as if that is the only way for a man to gain access to this transcendent—feminine—world.

Traditionally, because they fly free in the sky, birds are symbols of the spirit and embody a freedom denied to land-bound humankind.

Every winged being is symbolic of spiritualization. The bird, according to Jung, is a beneficent animal representing spirits or angels, supernatural aid, thoughts and flights of fancy.... Interpretation[s] of the bird as symbolic of the soul [are] very commonly found in folklore all over the world.... They pertain to the Element of the air and,... denote 'height' and—consequently—'loftiness' of spirit.... Low-flying birds symbolize an earth-bound attitude; high-flying birds, spiritual longing.\textsuperscript{66}

In Japan, the skylark is a 'season word' (kigo) for spring. The Japanese word for skylark is formed from the two characters, 'cloud' and 'sparrow.' By implication, a skylark is a sparrow which can fly up through the clouds to somewhere far beyond human sight. Though its outward appearance was rather plain, its song—heard from far off, hidden in the clouds—was fabled for its beauty. In the West too, the skylark was celebrated for the unearthly beauty of its voice, it flew free in "the vaulty heaven so high above our heads, nearer than us to the gates of Heaven."\textsuperscript{67} By feeding upon the skylark—the very body of spring—the narrator seems to believe he would somehow be filled with the spirit of the bird, and that his voice will then


bring forth music. If he could but possess this dish, then he could approach the object of his desire. The partaking of this feast would mark the unification of the two opposing worlds, and yet a window, as in "Skylark fare,"\textsuperscript{68} bars his entry into the outside world, and the frustrated narrator is forced to watch the object of his desire flow off into the distance.

In "Anxiety," another of the skylark poems, a young girl bears the skylark fare, holding it high aloft, like an offering in some pagan rite. The narrator can only stand and watch. Although his hands are clasped as if in prayer he seems to be contemplating theft rather than redemption. Anxiety, born of his desire for possession, gnaws at him as he contemplates the object of his desire.

A young girl walks
through the chill of the falling frost of morning
bearing the skylark fare aloft—high in her hands.
Leaning against a roadside tree
peering through the gaps between the girl's
slender white-powdered fingers
wanting so much to steal and eat that delicious skylark fare
so deeply anxious
here is a man—so deeply anxious—that he reaches out
palms together as if in prayer.\textsuperscript{69}

The purity of this young girl—the sensual 'whiteness' of her slender fingers—stands in marked contrast to the poet's own inner sense of 'disease' and 'sin.' The nightingale in John Keats poem "Ode to a Nightingale" plays much the same role as this young girl. Keats' nightingale flies immortal in a beautiful world, free of the painful realities of human existence—"Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!" Sakutarō, like Keats, seeks some escape from that pain, from "the weariness, the fever, and the fret."\textsuperscript{70} Keats yearns to go with the nightingale, to fade away from this world of suffering, just as Sakutarō yearns to escape from the hard cold ground in which he is buried alive. Yet however much he desires to partake of this love feast, it is denied him. Thus, this escape—this path—to the transcendent world is denied.

\textsuperscript{68} HS, "Skylark fare" (Hibari ryōri), \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru}, HSZ I, p. 35. Vol II, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{69} HS, "Anxiety" (Shōshin), \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru}, HSZ I, pp. 37-8. Vol II, p. 20.
Music

Music is one with the skylark and as such is part of the ‘upper’ realm. In the poem "The flute" the poet’s longing for redemption—for escape to this 'upper realm'—is embodied in the notes of a flute, which sounds in the treetops to the accompaniment of a koto played by ‘another's wife.’ This 'other's wife' plays the same role as the maiden carrying the skylark fare. She offers potential companionship, becoming a guide to the upper realm.71

Looking up—the strum of a suspended koto high in the
branches of a tall pine
with fingers dipped in crimson
borne aloft in the trees—the koto strums.
Ah! in accompaniment to the koto played by another's wife
an exquisite flute is in the sky.
Sharp and clear, in tonight's frosty skies
illuminating the top of the pine
revealing the form of repentance
through the very ardour of the one in sorrow.

The exquisite flute is in the sky.72

The flute plays of sorrow, of its yearning for forgiveness, sounding high in the branches of a tall pine, a tree whose evergreen majesty has made it a symbol of eternity. According to Kubo Tadao, at this time in his life Sakutarō was taken with the notion that "the spirit of Christian love" was man's supreme salvation,73 and Kubo sees the woman in this poem as the embodiment of that Christian love. The sound of her koto guides the flute, drawing it up high into the pine tree. Yet her fingers are dipped in crimson, as if the very music draws forth blood, hinting on one hand at the sacrificial aspect of salvation, and on the other at physicality, the sensuality of heart's blood, the lust which drags man back down. This female musician, high in the branches, stands in contrast to the lonely man, whom music has deserted, who digs in the earth with hardened metallic hands. Hands which are the agents of creativity have hardened into steel.

...I no longer play the Chinese fiddle.

71 Kubo Tadao argues that this woman is the embodiment of Sakutarō's childhood love 'Elena,' who was ever denied him, both as the wife of another and as a baptized member of the Church. See Kubo, Tadao. "Sakutarō no Koi" (Sakutarō and Love), Hagiwara Sakutarōron (1), Nihon Kindai Sakka 4, op cit, p. 240.
72 "The flute" (Fue), Tsuki ni Hoeru, HSZ I, p. 25. Vol II, p. 11.
73 Kubo, Tadao. "Sakutarō to Kirisutokyō" (Sakutarō and Christianity), Hagiwara Sakutarōron (1), Nihon Kindai Sakka 4, op cit, p. 456.
my hands have turned to steel.
Obsessively
these pitiful mawkish hands dig up the earth
—just dig up the earth.74
Yet the flute merely offers an illusion of escape, the poet/narrator is like the adventurers who listen to Zarathustra's tales, who are "intoxicated by riddles, who take pleasure in twilight, whose souls are lured with flutes to every treacherous abyss."75 In the end, the flute is just an illusion and the poet/narrator is left to dig in the darkness of the subterranean world. As he digs pained by the cold earth, a moon rises above him, sensual, like the "pure whiteness of a woman's ear" a constant reminder of the realm he cannot enter, however long and hard he howls.

...Muddying my delicate fingers
I turned over the cold earth....
In the dusk of that chilly day
the wriggling curl of an earthworm catches the light
—then disappears
at the bottom of the freshly dug hole.
Just then from behind the low buildings
silkily—the moon rose—
as if stroking the pure whiteness of a woman's ear.
The moon rose.76

(iii) Repentance

In his pursuit of a road to the upper realm, the poet/narrator also explores a path of a seemingly Christian repentance. 'God' has become one with the world of the skylark.

Christian imagery began to appear quite frequently in Sakutarō's writings from the early 1910s. His notes and early attempts at poetry from this period, contain constant references both to sin and its accompanying sense of guilt. Sakutarō harnessed Christian imagery to explore self-punishment as a means of freeing himself from this guilt. He was fascinated with the image of the passive, non-resisting suffering of Christ upon the cross, as seen in the following poem entitled, "Lust;"

Nail down my hands
nail down my feet.

74 HS, "Mawkish hands" (Kansho no te), Tsuki ni Hoeru, HSZ I, p. 31. Vol II, p. 15.
75 Nietzsche, Friederich. Thus Spoke Zarathustra, op cit, p. 176.
impale me on the cross.
 Gnashing my teeth at
 this absolution for my lust.
 The sky reverberates
 the earth too resounds.
 Pale blue blood drips from my body
 in stinging drops.
 A lightning bolt falls
 to rend my flesh.
 Unashamed of my nakedness
 here upon the cross
 gnashing my teeth—I pray.  

Epp gives the following analysis of this motif of self-crucifixion;

This act the poet presents not as a rather intriguing and purifying type
of "self-kill" but as a form of sincere prayer, an act of absolutely pious
contrition... (yet) The pain the penitent suffers... only temporarily makes
him forget the weight of his guilt. His powerful sexual drive will not be
so readily sublimated or subjugated.  

Is this indeed a "sincere prayer?" Surely the former, that is, a desire for
purification through a masochistic self-destruction is a much stronger
reading in Sakutarō's case. Further, it is an oversimplification to impose an
overriding sexual drive—although this was undoubtedly an important
factor—as the only reason underwriting the tension between the narrator's
suffering and the transcendent world. His suffering has many dimensions,
not least of which is the tension between instinct and conscience. Although
carnal desire is one face of instinct, brutality—born of a lack of belief in
anything but the survival of self—is also an important undercurrent.

Sakutarō seems to be merely playing with the Christian images, as
he played with many Western concepts and words. He drew on Christianity
less as a belief system and more as a source of metaphors for suffering, in
his pursuit of imagery to describe the intensity of his suffering. As the critic,
Kakuta Toshirō argues, Sakutarō ultimately had only a very superficial
relationship with Christianity. His knowledge of Christian ideas and
imagery was used first and foremost to nourish his poetic visions.  

77 HS. "Lust" (Jōyoku), Shū ShiHEN (Poetic Gleanings), HSZ II, pp. 85-6.
Self destruction is also explored through the image of hanging. The sinner in "A celestial hanging," one of the "Purgatory Poems," strings himself up on the "celestial pine." Sakutarō's use of the high/low dichotomy here highlights the division between the world of the sinner and the bright, high world of the pine.

Tears of repentance trickle 
through the pine needles which shine in the distant night 
frost white in the distant night sky 
he hangs himself on a celestial pine. 
In his yearning for the celestial pine 
he hangs as if in prayer.\(^{80}\)

This poem draws a picture of a sacrificial victim yearning in his death for the 'celestial pine,' used as a metaphor for the eternal life force of the heavens. Seeking absolution, the figure hangs himself. 'Hanging' evokes images of capital punishment meted out to an irredeemable criminal. The world of the poem is cold and distant, even the falling tears of the victim have little hope of melting the frosty shining. The Christian images of 'prayer' and 'repentance' are used more as a vehicle to express the depth of his yearning for salvation—for escape from his own existence—than as an expression of his religious faith.

In "The penitent," Sakutarō again draws on this image of a man hanging, "as if in prayer;"

The figure of the penitent is at its clearest in winter 
only his figure—as if carved in relief—
is clear in this world of darkness 
clear as it shines high in the heavens. 
Behold the aurora, beautiful behind the prayerful penitent! 
There above the horizon, the darkness of eternal night is sleeping. 
A fear-inspiring deluge floods down 
from the icebound mountains. 
Behold! the figure of the penitent—praying. 
Blood trickles piteously from the corners of his mouth 
as hands together in prayer, and eyes closed 
he is strung up—mercilessly—in the heavens. 
His soul is hung out on the glowing branch of a pine 
—freezing—freezing—in the frosty night sky. 
Behold! this prayerful figure of a sinner 
here in this universe of absolute darkness which 
absorbs the current of time

—this universe made up of a tapestry of unvoiced moments

\(^{80}\) HS, "A celestial hanging" (Tenjō ishi), Tsuki ni Hoeru, HSZ I, p. 27. Vol II, p. 12.
of silence,
Look upon the terror of this one individual unit
—this solitary man suspended on high.
Look upon the glowing corpse of his soul.
Ah! his tears of repentance, like blood
—just like blood wrung from his body.\(^{81}\)

Epp argues that Sakutarō’s utilization of Christian imagery stemmed from a truly Christian desire to cleanse himself of his guilt. Epp writes;

Unconsciously, at least, Hagiwara had hoped that faith in God might help him escape the painful grip of his personal time: the past of his sins, the present of his temptations, the future need for more suffering. Much to the contrary....Religion actually exacerbated his sense of sinning, increased the weight of his temptations, and terrified him with the threat of the need for endless punishment and penance.\(^{82}\)

Sakutarō, it seems, associated himself with Christ upon the cross, using this image as a metaphor for the physical suffering he feels destined to endure. This suffering—if he can but endure—offers him passage into the transcendent world he seeks. Yet, the narrator in these overtly 'Christian' poems is a lone penitent hoping to purge himself of his own inner evil—his own inner lust—not a humble supplicant looking for inclusion in the body of the church, for a true believer would turn to Christ for purging and not attempt it on his own. Christian references all but disappeared from his work with the publication of Anmō, in 1923, adding credence to the theory that he used it primarily for its imagery, for once his interest in transcendence through repentance waned, he moved on.

Knowledge of Christianity came to Sakutarō through three main channels: his cousin Eiji, the foreign missionaries in Maebashi, whose church he would occasionally attend—mainly for the music—and most importantly through the writings of Dostoevsky, whom Sakutarō regarded as a god-like genius. Dostoevsky worked less as a conduit for Sakutarō’s religious conversion, and more as a mentor and guide. On reading Dostoevsky’s works, Sakutarō felt that he had found a soulmate, commenting that while he had learned philosophy from Nietzsche, poetry—that is, rhythm—from Poe, he had learnt psychology from Dostoevsky.\(^{83}\)

\(^{81}\)HS, "The penitent" (Zangesha no sugata), Shūi Shihen (Poetic Gleanings), HSZ III, pp. 178-9.
\(^{83}\)HS, "On First Reading Dostoevsky" (Hajime to Dosutoifusukii o Yonda koro), The Room and the Corridor (Rōka to Shitsubō), HSZ IX, pp. 158-9. Vol II, p. 159.
In his eyes, he and Dostoevsky shared a similar temperament, which resulted in their interest in the psyche of the individual. Sakutarō was fascinated by Dostoevsky's delving into the instinctive brutality of a man—such as Ivan Karamazov—for whom Christian beliefs and morality no longer had any meaning. Like Sakutarō, Dostoevsky was primarily a psychological writer, interested in delving deep into the subconscious, in bringing to light the dark inner desires of the *underground* man. Both writers sought to give expression to man's inner guilt, both the guilt which arises from external factors, such as a son's refusal to follow the path laid out for him by a domineering father, and that more internalized guilt which arises from an awareness of man's inherent, *instinctive* evil. The influence of Dostoevsky will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

As *Tsuki ni Hoeru* develops, the poet/narrator loses all faith in ever grasping hold of his transcendent dream and he is left alone and empty-handed in the parched dust of the roadside. Destiny has cast him up as a "trembling, isolated soul," and no amount of tears will save him from his fate.

By the parched-white of a country road
the heart of a tired horse
stares at the withered sun-bleached grass;
stares at the lonely trembling of the grass
which angles upwards thin and sparse.

Standing in the lonely country sunshine
what is it you see
Oh my trembling, isolated soul?

Thin tears wash over
the face of this dusty landscape.84

Here, Sakutarō uses the shifting perspective technique, transforming the image of the tired horse into a metaphor for his own "trembling, isolated soul." Anger and frustration at his fate begins to surface in the heart of the poet. This frustration gives birth to a desire for destruction. All that is of the transcendent realm—birds, beautiful women, eggs—falls prey to this destructive urge and is pulled down into the graveyard of his brutal instinct and withered desires. From the third section, "A Sorrowful Moonlit Night," the beautiful images of transcendence disappear to be replaced with corpses and ghosts, telling not only of the poet's loss of faith in transcendence, but

84HS. "Isolation" (Kodoku), *Tsuki ni Hoeru*, HSZ I, p. 80. Vol II, p. 45.
also of his hatred of the regenerative power of the feminine which he feels is denied him.

Throughout the collection, every tentative move to break out of his inner loneliness is met by a powerful countermove—his inner fears whispering of certain failure. The force of the downward movement of the descendent always overpowers the upward movement. Unable to attain the transcendence for which he yearns, the poet/narrator turns on the objects of his desire and strikes out with a blind destructive force. Those images which once fed his vision are pulled downwards, corrupted and left exposed and decaying. Caught in a downward spiral of self-pity, he destroys all he touches, in a world already dripping with decay.

That chrysanthemum is rotten
that chrysanthemum drips with pain
Ah! the month of frost is just beginning
my platinum hands wither.
Desperate to pluck the chrysanthemum
with keenly sharpened fingers.
But, no, Touch it not!
In a corner of the bright sky
the chrysanthemum sickens
the rotten chrysanthemum drips with pain.\(^{85}\)

The chrysanthemum, like the cherry, has a specific sexual connotation for Sakutarō. It becomes an object to be violated. The narrator’s metallic fingers become weapons of destruction, bent on the destruction of these flowers, no longer symbols of nature’s beauty but rather of its cruelty. The smell of a rotting chrysanthemum is equated with lust, its decay a symbol of the effect of lust upon its object.\(^{86}\) Thus, though he is desperate “to pluck the chrysanthemum” his soul pleads with him to desist, for such an action would be sure to contaminate him. This is the disease which follows “the tormenting allure of a spring evening.”\(^{87}\)

In his desire for healing, for release from these diseases, the narrator seeks to gain power over the creation of life; power over that ‘upper’ realm of the birds’ nests and the shining eggs ever removed from him, high up in

\(^{85}\) HS, "The rotten chrysanthemum" (Sutaru kiku), \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru}. HSZ I, p. 23. Vol II, p. 10.

\(^{86}\) In "The twilight room" (Hakubo no heya), \textit{Aoneko}, see Vol II, p. 79, the poet equates female sexuality with the smell of a rotting chrysanthemum.

...my Love
like the stench of rotten chrysanthemums
I smell your awkward passion—your pallid beliefs...

the tree-tops, or streaming far off into the distant sky. As if hoping he can become part of the regenerative cycle of nature, he scatters seeds onto soil he has piled in his hand. He holds it up and out towards the light, hoping beyond hope for the seeds to germinate.

I heap up soil onto my hand
I scatter seeds on the soil
now, with a white watering can, I pour water onto the soil
the water trickles down
the coolness of the soil soaks into my palm.
Ah! pushing open the window to the far off month of May
I stretch out my hand towards the sunlight
here, amidst this invigorating panorama
my skin becomes fragrantly warm
and the seeds in my hand—pitifully tender—begin to breathe.88

Yet his desire makes him awkward, his anxious haste betrays him. In "Seedlings" the narrator searches for unsprouted seeds but in his haste for possession, he pokes his fingers through the very base of the pot, destroying their fragile grip on life.

The seedlings gleam under the blue sky
the child digs the earth.

Seeking seedlings yet to sprout
I poked my white fingers through
the base of the shining pot.89

The man's hands solidify into metal, lose their sensitivity, becoming weapons of destruction and contamination, as seen in the prose poem, "Remnants of a Holy Communion;"

Elena! Take your place at the table for this sorrowful evening meal. Put the silver cross to your lips, here, now, pour forth your essence which transcends the attendant monks, even transcends the dish of skylark fare.

Oh, now pour it onto my shining metallic hands. My hands are diseased, rotten, like sharp painful needles, wherever they touch, they break apart the wineglass, rend open your lips.

Oh, now the saints are diseased, the chrysanthemums diseased, but it is my hands which are the most diseased, more than anything else...90

Although the narrator has a fearful contagious disease he still lives in hope,

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89 HS, "Seedlings" (Nae), Tsuki ni Hoeru, HSZ I, p. 25. Vol II, p. 16.
90 HS, "Remnants of a Holy Communion" (Seisan Yoroku), Shūi Shihen, HSZ, III, p. 167.
believing that perhaps 'Elena's essence will somehow have the power to heal him. The prayers of the monks have failed—religion offers no escape—even the power of the "skylark," that is love, has failed. Whatever the narrator touches he destroys; he shatters the glass and rends open Elena’s lips. Alone with a brutal destructiveness welling up within him, the narrator is left to wander the smelly backstreets of life, exhausted by his loneliness and the fruitlessness of his search. No beautiful white-skinned maiden bearing her lovefeast of skylark fare comes to companion him, he is back in the descendent, where the deformed dog shadows his every move. Nihilistic ennui takes over from the passionate faith of the earlier poems as the poet begins to despair of ever uniting his split-self, his instinct and his conscience. Self takes over and shuts down all sense of conscience.

My efforts to touch God are repulsed, as too are my efforts to touch material things—objective reality. Even my efforts to touch a lover are rejected. The result of these rejections is that I maintain a close hold on my own self.\textsuperscript{91}

This tension between instinct and conscience will be examined in the following chapter.

\textsuperscript{91}HS. "Sentimentalism" (SENTIMENTALISM), \textit{Miscellaneous Poems} (Shūi shihen), HSZ III, p. 146.
CHAPTER THREE

*Niji o ou hito*—Following Rainbows—and the Dialogue Period

| (1) Introductory remarks        | .......... | 103 |
| (2) The influence of Dostoevsky | .......... | 104 |
| (3) The Year of Silence and the Dostoevsky Incident | .......... | 108 |
| (4) Maeterlinck’s "Blue Bird" and Sakutarō | .......... | 111 |
| (5) The Dialogue Period of 1916 | .......... | 114 |
| (6) *When Cherries Bloom*       | .......... | 115 |
| (7) *Niji o ou hito*            | .......... | 117 |
| (i) The rainbow image           | .......... | 120 |
| (ii) The thematic structure     | .......... | 123 |
| (8) *The poet in me and Zarathustra* | .......... | 131 |
| (9) "The skylark's nest" and "The toy flute" | .......... | 134 |
(1) Introductory remarks

*Niji o ou hito* was published in the inaugural issues of *Kanjō* in June 1916, a little over half a year before the publication of *Tsuki ni Hoeru* in January 1917. It was written soon after Sakutarō broke what he refers to as the 'year of silence'—June 1915 to May 1916. Depressed and suicidal, Sakutarō believed Dostoevsky came to him as the voice of God offering him salvation. Unable to enter the happiness of the ascendent realm, Sakutarō came, for a time, to believe that Dostoevsky would be his guide. This 'Dostoevsky Incident'—this touch of the hand of God—marks a boundary in Sakutarō's creative life. With the year of silence and the "joyous apex" of the Dostoevsky Incident, the irritation and impatience which marked the *Tsuki ni Hoeru* period gradually lessened, and a sense of exhaustion—which found voice in *Aoneko*—took over. From the consequent melancholic *ennui* he created a world of nostalgia, a world of half-dream which looked back on the pleasure of grasping the 'blue bird'.

*Niji o ou hito* is a record of Sakutarō's search for the 'blue bird' and reflects the poet's need for a guide—a Dostoevsky-like companion—on his journey towards the transcendent. The *Poetic Dialogues,* of which *Niji o ou hito* is arguably the best, were written between *Tsuki ni Hoeru* and *Aoneko,* and mark an important stage in the change from the "imagistic vision" of *Tsuki ni Hoeru,* to the pathos and nostalgia of *Aoneko.* *Niji o ou hito* draws upon the major themes of both *Tsuki ni Hoeru* and *Aoneko,* that is the dichotomy between the ascendent and the descendent of *Tsuki ni Hoeru* and the clash between instinct and conscience which dominates *Aoneko.* Amo Hisayoshi, Kubo Tadao and Itō Shinkichi all comment on the importance of *Niji o ou hito* in the light of Sakutarō's exploration of the genre of the poetic dialogue, regarding it as an important stage in his

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1 HS, *Niji o ou hito* (Following Rainbows), HSZ IV, pp. 452-466. For the full translation see Vol II, pp. 53-74.
3 Hereafter this is referred to as the 'Dostoevsky Incident.'
4 Sakutarō's image of the 'blue bird' is born of his reading of Maurice Maeterlinck's *The Blue Bird—A Fairy Play in Five Acts.* This is discussed in detail in section four of this chapter.
5 See HS, "Introduction to *Teihon Aoneko-*" HSZ II, pp. 144-47, where Sakutarō notes that *Tsuki ni Hoeru* is "a poetic world of purity and imagistic vision" built on a "physiological sense of fear," while "the true essence of *Aoneko* lies in pathos and pathos alone."
development. Sakutarō regarded the two long poems which conclude Tsuki ni Hoera, "The skylark's nest" (June 1916) and "The toy flute" (July 1916), as the climax of the Poetic Dialogue period. These poems explored the 'dilemma' which plagued Sakutarō, just as it plagued the father in "The toy flute"—at that time;

...the man sat thinking inside the room
his thoughts were a spinning whirlpool—a confusing dilemma
captivated his heart....
Instinct and conscience....
The two shadows, forcibly wrench apart,
re-entangle themselves—like so many threads—
and again locked together, hover around the dim skylight....

This dilemma arose from his inability to unite his emotional goals with those of his intellect; his inability to marry his instinct and conscience. To explore the significance of this 'dilemma' in Sakutarō's work it is first necessary to examine the influence of Dostoevsky.

(2) The influence of Dostoevsky

Sakutarō began to read Dostoevsky towards the end of 1914. In an essay entitled, "Poe, Nietzsche and Dostoevsky" in 1930, he writes that he began with The Brothers Karamazov, and then moved on to Crime and Punishment, in the process becoming a "fanatical Dostoevskian."

The very name Dostoevsky, was for me, that of the God of Literature.
He was a genius among geniuses. Sakutarō was first introduced to Dostoevsky's work through Miura Kanzō's translation of The Brothers Karamazov published in October 1914. It is unclear which text the translator used, however it seems to have been based on Constance Garnett's English translation9 rather than on the original

7HS, "The toy flute" (Fue), Tsuki ni Hoera, HSZ I, pp. 91-4. Vol II, p. 51.
8HS. "Poe, Nietzsche and Dostoevsky" (Pō, Niiche, Dosutiefuzukii), Literary Discourse (Bungakuron), HSZ XI, p. 555.
9Constance Garnett (1861-1946) was married to the influential publisher and critic Edward Garnett. Her translations of Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and others, introduced Russian classics to English readers and remained the standard version for half a century. Her translation of The Brothers Karamazov was published in the twelve volume Collected
Sakutarō made a series of notes, in his copy of this translation of *The Brothers Karamazov*—now housed in the Maebashi City Library— which read as follows:

* Absolutely everyone should read this book.
* This is the world’s greatest book.
* It is a modern commentary on the Bible, an explanation of the true spirit of Christ. It marks the beginning of a new morality—a new history—for all mankind.
* He who reads this can become a sage overnight.
* The history of God, man and the Devil are written in these pages.
* It is not a novel, it is actual reality—it is terrifying fact.
* If one but reads this work nothing else needs be read for the rest of one’s lifetime.
* He who reads this book without fear is the bravest man in the world—yet is naught but a fool.
* Those who remain unmoved by this book, would be unmoved by anything they read.
* This is The Gospel for all those who seek after truth and happiness.
* This is the road to Christ.\(^{11}\)

These notes show something of the passion with which Sakutarō met Dostoevsky’s work. In an essay entitled, “On First Reading Dostoevsky,” Sakutarō tells of his burgeoning “Dostoevsky Mania,” commenting that he felt that the two of them shared such a closeness of temperament that they felt like blood-kin.

The first Dostoevsky work I read was *The Brothers Karamazov*. Even though it was in translation, I was absolutely awe-struck....The next work I read was *Crime and Punishment*. This made an even stronger impression on me than the Karamazovs. From the beginning to the end, the psychology, speech and conduct of the hero, Raskolnikov, captured my heart as if by magic....I was left with a strong impression that my own conceited psyche was all too similar to Raskolnikov’s...and from that moment, I became possessed with an absolute Dostoevsky mania.\(^{12}\)

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\(^{10}\) According to Kubo Tadao the Muira translation only covered up to Part Two. Book Six, that is up to “The Russian Monk” section. Apparently Sakutarō later read the rest of the novel in Kornekawa’s translation put out by Shinchōsha in 1917. See Kubo, Tadao. “Taishō Russian Literature and Sakutarō” (Taishōki no Rōshia Bungaku to Sakutarō), *Nihon Kindai Bungaku*, May 1969, p. 37.


\(^{12}\) HS. "On First Reading Dostoevsky," op cit, see Vol II, p. 159.
René Wellek defines Dostoevsky as a man "whose way of dealing with life rested in a fundamental belief that true rebirth, a great conversion, [could] come only after a great sin."\(^{13}\) It was this descent into the darkness of the world of sin which most fascinated Sakutarō.

In Christian theology, sin entered the world as a result of the actions of man, and death came into the world because of sin.\(^{14}\) Because all mankind has sinned they must all suffer death. Thus, the result of sin is death—a spiritual death far more fearsome that physical death. Christ's death on the cross, however, atoned for man's sins. Sakutarō's concept of sin was not defined by God or any supreme being, but rather by something more modern and existential. His interest lay in what he saw as the sin of existence, and he looked to Dostoevsky's work for examples of this.

Dostoevsky was interested in the reaction of a man brought face to face with evil—not just the metaphysical principle—but daily personal demonstrations of evil. A.B. Gibson notes that Dostoevsky saw "how crime follows the pattern of hurt pride; the hardest thing in the world to cure, for it is so often all that the victim has left to him, and to remove it (by forgiveness, for example) would be to extinguish with it his whole being."\(^{15}\) Echoes of this can be seen in "The reason why the person inside looks like a deformed invalid."\(^{16}\)

Sakutarō was strongly influenced by Dostoevsky's portrayal of an underground man, who in all his irrationalism and amoralism tragically and defiantly asserts the freedom of his personality in the face of the laws of nature, whatever the cost to himself and others. He was deeply interested in Dostoevsky's concept of a selfish 'underground' man.

The 'underground man' was a generic term for the anti-hero. This was a man of unredeemed nature. His cynical and harsh tone reflected his guilt. In a sense he was a portrait of guilt and what it does to a human being. Underground man takes pride in humiliating other people. Then he feels guilty about it but resents the fact he is hated because of it. He is the personification of the self-destructiveness of the human psyche.\(^{17}\)

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\(^{14}\)"Therefore...sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned...death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses..." Romans 5.12-21, *Holy Bible*, New International Version, p. 194.


\(^{16}\)HS, see Vol II, p. 27.

Sakutarō was drawn to the philosophic base of Dostoevsky's work, in particular to the issue of 'immortality' and 'sin' as outlined by Ivan Karamazov, an archetype underground man. The following is a description of Ivan Karamazov.

...he [Ivan] solemnly declared during an argument that there was absolutely nothing in the whole world to make men love their fellow-men, that there was no law in nature that man should love mankind, and that if love did exist on earth, it was not because of any natural law but solely because men believed in immortality. He added in parenthesis that all natural law consisted of that belief, and that if you were to destroy the belief in immortality in mankind, not only love but every living force on which the continuation of all life in the world depended, would dry up at once. Moreover, there would be nothing immoral then, everything would be permitted, even cannibalism. But that is not all: he wound up with the assertion that for every individual, like myself, for instance, who does not believe in God or in his own immortality, the laws of nature must at once be changed into the exact opposite of the former religious laws, and that self-interest, even if it were to lead to crime, must not only be permitted but even recognized as the necessary, the most rational, and the most honourable motive for a man in his position.18

The chain of brutality in Dostoevsky's works had much to attract Sakutarō. Sakutarō seems to have been drawn to the theme of "cause and effect" in Dostoevsky's work. In his notes for Crime and Punishment, Dostoevsky remarked that, "Man is not born for happiness" continuing that "man has to earn his happiness, and always by suffering." Gibson notes that this dialectical way of thinking was typical of Dostoevsky, that he was ever emphasizing the fact that man had to experience the worst to be safe from it. If one did not outface the depths then sooner or later they would be on hand to outface you.19 This is one aspect of Dostoevsky's influence on Sakutarō.

Another aspect of this influence lay in the relationship between the individual and society. Valerian Maikov, a contemporary of Dostoevsky, believed that the individual was important to Dostoevsky not as a representative of a certain society or group, but rather because of the influence of society on him.20 This is also true in Sakutarō's case. The behaviour of a desocialized individual fascinated him, causing him to question how he would respond if he had power over another's life. Would

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19Gibson, A Boyce. The Religion of Dostoevsky, op. cit., p. 100.
he callously crush that life between his fingers, as in "The skylark's nest"? Would he pull the trigger and slip away, as in "Desiccated Crime," or would he perhaps stand as an observer, as if his non-participation frees him from any twinges of conscience, as had the man in the hat in "Death of a frog."?

(3) The Year of Silence and the Dostoevsky Incident

After the publication of six poems including, "The lover of love" in Shiika in June 1915, Sakutarō fell into a deep depression, which became the 'Year of Silence.' There seems to have been no actual event in his life which provoked this collapse. In a letter to Kitahara Hakushū dated June 4 1915, Sakutarō vowed to give up poetry. To quote;

The poet known as Hagiwara Sakutarō will henceforth never again create poetry.

His silence was finally broken by the publication of the poetic dialogue When Cherries Bloom, in the Maebashi magazine Kitsune no Su (Foxes Lair) in May 1916. In a later letter, written the following year, Sakutarō tells of the internal conflict he suffered during 1915.

I'm sorry it's been so long since I wrote. For a long time, I have been grappling with a terrible problem and have been greatly troubled. But finally I've been able to solve this problem. I have been saved. I have entered into a breach—a breakthrough—which has completely redefined the life I have known for the past thirty years...I have discovered my true self. Writhing in agony I have fallen to the absolute depths. But as a result I have entered absolute reality, and now I stand at the absolute apex of joyous rapture.

What was the cause for the terrible anguish which dragged Sakutarō down into these "absolute depths"? Was it, as Kubo Tadao argues, the result of his constant questioning of the direction of his life? Yet in addition to his inability to find meaning in his existence, Sakutarō was troubled by the conflict between his emotions and his intellect. Pondering the meaning of

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23 HS, "Death of a frog" (Kaeru no shi), HSZ I, p. 46. Sec Vol II, p. 25.
26 HS, When Cherries Bloom (Sakura no hana ga saku koro), Dialogues and Dramatic Poems (Taiwashī, Gekishī), HSZ V, p. 373. For full translation see Vol II, p. 171.
his life, he felt able to reach what he saw as 'intellectual conclusions,' such as the fact that he had still to discover the purpose of life or that he had no true work; yet this was not enough. He was confronted with the emotional dilemma as to whether he should or could continue to try and transcribe his emotions as poetry. Torn by his inability to unite these intellectual and emotional responses, Sakutarō tormented himself for a whole year.

I am searching for 'a life worth living,' for 'a life with significance' for me myself, and still now I am circling round and round that storehouse which houses both philosophy and emotion....

He was finally freed from his torment by what he at first thought was the voice of God, but later became convinced was the voice of Dostoevsky acting as his guide on the road to salvation. In a prose piece, entitled, "The Sensation of Grasping it in my Hand," published in Shiika in July 1916—two months after his silence broke—Sakutarō writes of this salvation. Dostoevsky offered him forgiveness for all his sin and suffering, for all his inner vices, but most importantly alleviated the torment, the endless spiral of pain which he suffered at the hands of his "neurotic conscience and base instincts." Pretensions stripped away, he stood before Dostoevsky as a child, and through his tears found a mother-like warmth in his sympathetic all-forgiving love. In Dostoevsky, he found the father of his spirit and thus, his spiritual home.

On the morning of April 19, I was sobbing plaintively, my face buried in my desk. Just as when a pampered little child whimpers his tears into his mothers lap, an unspeakably sweet sensation—a wave of sentimentality—rippled through my whole body like an electric current. Before long I found myself in floods of tears. I was filled with happiness, with an overwhelming sensation that all my sins were forgiven.

Something warm like a mother's breast—something I just cannot express in words—enveloped my whole body, and I felt just as if I had been taken to paradise...."All your sins are forgiven," these words flashed along my veins deep into my heart like an electric current. They were completely unexpected, the result of a single instant....The owner of this voice was none other than Dostoevsky. Why it was Dostoevsky's voice I did not know, but when I heard that voice—as it raced through my blood like an electric current—I knew in an instant, beyond all doubt, that it was the voice of the great poet....

Like a little child I clung to his hand, choking on my tears as he forgave all my sins, all my suffering—and most importantly as he forgave the torture—the eternal spiral—rising from my neurotic conscience and my base instinct.\textsuperscript{31}

In a letter to Takahashi Motokichi, written in April, 1916, Sakutarō gives another description of this mystic experience.

I am basically a man who is incapable of loving another. This is because I am a man of such evil baseness, that it is doubtful whether I could ever even feel that emotion called 'love.' But now...I have discovered love. It was Dostoevsky who taught me this....

My conscience commands me to the right, while my nerves command me left. For me to go right I must kill my nerves. While for me to go left I must kill off my conscience. But both of them are born of my instinct, and who, I ask, can kill his own instinct?

Christ, or Tolstoy for that matter, would probably say, "God is your conscience. Your nerves are of the devil. Go to the right!"

Perhaps it is possible for me to suppress the pain of my nerves, and to turn to another and take that positive action which will cause them joy, but then I cannot in the depths of my heart prevent myself from cursing those who make me suffer so...How can I kill these devils?...

But then, I heard a voice which seemed like a miracle.

"Be not sad. You need go neither right nor left. Just stand where you are....There is nothing for you to worry about. All you have to do is just stand there. That is the road Providence has laid out for you. That is the truest, most honest road for you. Standing there, there are moments when you appear more beautiful than any who actually walks the road. This is a beauty which is allowed to none but you. You, in yourself, are a good and worthy man."

...On hearing this, I jumped for joy. And I knew then, beyond any doubt, that this voice belonged to Dostoevsky...and from that moment on Dostoevsky became my God.\textsuperscript{32}

Dostoevsky came to Sakutarō as the voice of God, allowing him to stand still, relieving him of the need to choose between his nerves—and thus the road to hell—and his conscience—to heaven. According to Amō, in Sakutarō's work, 'right' represented conscience and God, while 'left' was of his nerves and the Devil, a concept he drew from his reading of the Bible.


where right is of the lamb—the blessed, and left is of the goats—the accursed.  

Beset with fears of his own inherent evil, Sakutarō clung to Dostoevsky's words, finding solace in the fact that Dostoevsky saw into his innermost soul and yet could still love him. Sakutarō felt that Dostoevsky had an insight into his so-called "nervous conscience," and it was this which made him Sakutarō's saviour. Not as he first thought, as God himself, but rather as a John the Baptist-like guide to the road of redemption. Through Dostoevsky, Sakutarō came to believe he would be able to achieve his goal, to grasp hold of love rather than be forced to watch it disappearing off into the distance through the skyblue window. Dostoevsky provided Sakutarō with a companion in his prison of self during a time when Sakutarō was teetering on the edge of mental breakdown and even suicide.

(4) Maeterlinck's 'Blue Bird' and Sakutarō

Sakutarō had dreamed of a saviour, and Dostoevsky came to him. As time passed, "like the incandescence of white-hot metal cooling in the open air, [his] mental state returned to normal." He began to feel "the loneliness of abandonment," as he began to doubt that the voice was anything more than a drunken vision. Yet in his consequent descent into the "dark valley of despair," a single enigmatic riddle remained in his heart.

It was like the blue bird captured on a moonlit night which disappears in the daylight—with not so much as a shadow remaining, and the child is left clutching—with all his might—nothing but empty air. The child is filled with disappointment. But from that moment, a certain something takes residence in the child's heart. That is, the memory of that strongly clenched fist which grasped the blue bird for that single instant.

That was the riddle—the one thing—left in the emptiness of my heart.

The sensation of grasping it in my hand.

The memory of this sensation gave me a renewed sense of courage and strength....Ah! my great teacher Dostoevsky.

All I need to do is follow after you. If I do that then sooner or later I will arrive at my goal. Then I will definitely truly grasp hold of my blue bird.  

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35 HS, ibid, p. 169.
With Dostoevsky as his guiding light, Sakutarō managed to grasp the 'blue bird' in his hand—however fleetingly—and that gave him the faith that he would someday once again hold it in his hand. The strength born of this faith enabled him to break the year of silence.

Sakutarō drew this image of a 'blue bird' from the play of that name by Maurice Maeterlinck. *The Blue Bird* is a dramatic fairy tale, in which Maerlinck draws his audience into the realm of the fairy tale, giving emotion total precedence over the rational. The use of the fairy tale enabled Maeterlinck to externalize his subjective world by drawing on the sense of timelessness inherent in this genre, and its use of archetypal characters and symbols. Written in the summer of 1905, *The Blue Bird* is a play in six acts, which centres around the 'dream' journey of two children—Tyltyl and Mytyl—in their search for the blue bird. One evening as they go to bed a fairy enters their room. She asks the children to search for the 'blue bird' to save her sick daughter, "who wants to be happy." The fairy gives the children a magic hat which allows them to see "the very essence of things," that is the souls of both animate and inanimate objects.

Tyltyl has no sooner turned the diamond [on the hat] than a sudden and wonderful change comes over everything. The old FAIRY alters then and there into a princess of marvellous beauty; the flints of which the cottage walls are built light up, turn blue as sapphires, become transparent and gleam and sparkle like the most precious stones....

The children are accompanied on their journey by the souls of their dog and cat, as well as Light, Sugar, Bread, Fire and Water. First they visit their grandparents in the Land of Memory, but the Blue Bird they find there turns to black once their leave. Next they journey to the Palace of the Night, where they discover a beautiful garden:

...a dream-garden bathed in nocturnal light, where among stars and planets, illuminating all that they touch, flying ceaselessly from jewel to jewel and from moonbeam to moonbeam, fairy-like blue birds hover perpetually and harmoniously down to the confines of the horizon.

Yet the blue birds they capture are creatures born of moonlight who die from exposure to sunlight, and thus they return home empty-handed. Tyltyl then decides to give his own bird—which had turned blue—to the neighbour's sick daughter who makes a miraculous recovery. The little girl comes to offer her thanks to Tyltyl, but as they feed the bird, it escapes. The little girl

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37Maeterlinck, Maurice. ibid, p. 114.
begins to cry, but calming her, Tytlyl turns to the audience and asks them to help find the blue bird as the play ends.

Tytlyl: Never mind....Don't cry....I will catch him again....(Stepping to the front of the stage and addressing the audience.) If any of you should find him, would you be so very kind as to give him back to us?...We need him for our happiness, later on.38

What does the Blue Bird represent? What is the true object of the children's search?

It may be equated with the alchemist's philosopher's stone: a personification of the self, a coniunctio oppositorum. Within its depths the self contains the secrets of the universe and therefore represents wholeness and totality. Birds have always been associated with intuitive knowledge, with spirits and angels, with the higher aspects of life (thought, mind), and with the celestial spheres....Because birds ascend, alchemists considered them activating forces in the sublimation process; paving the way for purity. The blue coloring of Maeterlinck's bird underscores the celestial aspect of the quest.39

Thus, the 'blue bird' becomes a symbol of the happiness of a whole self and it is in this sense that Sakutarō uses the image of the blue bird to express his short-lived experience of trascendence, during the 'Dostoevsky Incident.' According to Bettina Knapp, Maeterlinck's children are open to trascendence because a child "symbolizes the reawakening forces within oneself, the yet unformed contents of the unconscious; aspects of which are still moving forward toward their fulfillment before life closes its doors to change."40 Sakutarō sought to return to such a state of innocence, where he too could be open to the "contents of the unconscious."

In a letter to Takahashi, Sakutarō makes the following remarks about Maeterlinck's The Blue Bird.

I dreamt of grasping the 'blue bird.' And though that dream did not give me real happiness, it gave me power. I will be publishing my reponse to this dream in an essay entitled, "The Sensation of Grasping the Blue Bird in my hand" in next month's Shiika. Please be sure to read it.

In Maeterlinck's The Blue Bird, the children capture a number of beautiful blue birds which fly amidst the moonlight, but as soon as these creatures see the sunlight they die and change into dirty, ugly creatures.

The numberless blue birds which fly under the moonlight, all die under sunlight, but of these birds there is one true blue bird which will never die wherever it is taken.

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40Knapp, Bettina. ibid, p. 120.
I am a child sunk in despair at having grasped the corpse of the blue bird in my hand. But, surely one day I will be able to capture that one blue bird, the one which never dies. Then, and only then, I will raise my glass in joy.41

The pursuit of this blue bird is the guiding current of Niji o ou hito, surging in the image of the dreamer in pursuit of rainbows. For although Sakutarō felt he was saved only for an instant, he prized that instant above all else, and it was its memory which sent him off “in search of rainbows.”42

(5) The Dialogue Period of 1916

The dialogue period was born of the “white-hot incandescence” of the ‘Dostoevsky Incident,’ which brought an end to the year of silence. Beginning with the dialogue When Cherries Bloom,43 published in May 1916, and encompassing Niji o ou hito—July 1916—the Dialogue Period ends with The Magician (Mahōzukai), also published in July 1916.44 These dialogues are Sakutarō’s attempt to give expression to the dilemma which had taken over his life, that is the battle between conscience and instinct; between intellect and emotion. Though freed from the creative paralysis into which he had sunk prior to the Dostoevsky Incident, it took Sakutarō a number of months before he felt capable of composition, particularly poetry. These dialogues represent his first attempts at creation following this incident, as he climbed out of the dark pit into which he had fallen.

Amō defines Niji o ou hito—and by implication the other dialogues—as philosophic poetry (shisōshi) as distinct from the lyric poetry of Tsuki ni Hōeru and his other collections. As however, Sakutarō uses the term shisōshi in reference to his aphorisms—a genre he began to explore from 1922—this term seems less appropriate than the term ‘poetic dialogue.’45 The dialogues with the exception of Niji o ou hito, are included

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42 HS, “Letter to Takahashi Motokichi,” Early June 1917, HSZ XIII p. 125, where Sakutarō notes that he and Takahashi are both “men who suffer in anguish as they ‘travel in search of rainbows.’”
44 Sakutarō did write poetic dialogues in later years, not however with the intensity of 1916. HS, The Magician (Mahōzukai), Dialogues and Dramatic Poems, HSZ V, pp. 377-388.
45 See HS, “Introduction to The Flight of Despair,” HSZ V, p. 5, where Sakutarō notes “Aphorisms are my philosophic poetry—shisōshi.”
in Sakutarō's complete works under the section heading, "Dialogues—
Dramatic Poems." As, however, the requirement for a dramatic poem in
English literary tradition is that it is written in verse, the term 'dialogue'
seemed the most appropriate rendition of taiwashi, which Sakutarō also
refers to as 'dramatic poems' or gekishi. The occasional stage instructions
and the manner in which the dialogue is set out, with the time and place
specified, adds to the play-like quality of the dialogues.

In a letter to Maeda Yūgure, Sakutarō comments on the significance
of this period in his life.

This past year of silence has been of great significance to me, absolutely
indispensable. If I had not kept this silence then...maybe I would have
been able to survive without ever facing the real truth. But this year
forced me to look at myself with brutal cruelty, and in doing so I
reached a climax of hate towards my own ugliness, finding myself
without so much as the slightest worth 'as a human being.'...I fell to the
absolute depths. But in the end I was saved. I discovered God. It was so
simple.

The problem—the question of 'discovering God'—which has turned
my life inside out for the past thirty years did not so much as trouble
the innocence of the people of old. But for modern men such as
ourselves, we who have made such intellectual progress, this was close to
an actual miracle. My God is definitely not the God of Christianity. Nor
is it Buddha or something born of philosophy....[Yet still] I have
discovered God."46

(6) When Cherries Bloom

Two months before the publication of Niji o ou hito, Sakutarō broke his
silence with the poetic dialogue When Cherries Bloom, subtitled "I dedicate
this news to all my dear friends" (Kono shōsoku o shitashii hitobito ni
sasagu), which is translated in full in Volume Two. In the afterword,
Sakutarō tells of the terrible melancholy which possessed him during this
time and of his anxiety at being observed in his misery. In the end, it was
his friend's desire for news of him, and perhaps something of his need to
spread the news of his salvation, that made Sakutarō again put pen to paper.
It was the very first attempt to voice the inner torment which had paralysed
his creative power during the year of silence.

I tried to spend this last year completely hidden away from the world. I
didn't contribute to even a single magazine. Nor did I keep in touch

with any friends or fellow writers. Afraid of people peering into my unhappy face, I didn't allow anyone but my musical friends into my study. Most of my wiser acquaintances sympathetically fell in with my wishes; none were so spiteful as to come and dig me out against my wishes. Troubled by a terrible dilemma, melancholy became engraved upon my face. I had not even the slightest interest in talking about literature or such. Worse, I was completely disagreeable. As a result, I caused my friends much worry and anxiety. Though they all wished to hear news of me, I didn't so much as send them a postcard. Yet, finally their wish for news led me to write my thoughts down in this form, in this dramatic dialogue. This work is my one piece of news to all of you. In closing, there is one more thing I must say. Recently saved by a certain great man, I have been able to escape from my anguish and find contentment on the borders of that realm which is both powerful belief and pleasurable peace.  

Even after the saving hand of Dostoevsky helps him on his way, he only stands on the borders of the realm of peace, yet from that border—John the Baptist-like—he tries to tell others of his newfound joy, of his escape from sin and suffering.  

The use of the letter S for the character of the poet in When Cherries Bloom, and the fact that the action takes place by the Tone river which runs through Maebashi, both give credence to the theory that S is indeed Sakutarō himself. Reminiscent of the poem, "My lonely personality," where the narrator calls out to an imaginary friend, poet S is walking with an imaginary companion, A.  

S has been unable to leave his house for over a year. Questioned about what he has been doing, he first says he does nothing more than sleep and play the guitar, but the more A pushes for an explanation, the more it becomes clear that S has been caught up by an intellectual dilemma. This dilemma dragged him down into the depths of despair, and even now it still causes him mental anguish to even think about it. He has tried to write down his experience but unsatisfied is unable to show this work to even such a close friend as A, and poet though he is, he has been totally unable to create poetry.  

A: You don't seem to be writing much poetry these days.  
S: No, I can't write poetry yet.  
A: What do you mean yet?

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S: It's still no good, I must suffer more. It's because I'm such a coward, you see.\textsuperscript{49}

Although he has been able to reach an intellectual conclusion, an emotional one has evaded him, and it is this lack of an emotional conclusion that prevents him from writing poetry. He defines his intellectual conclusion as the need to live a "life of abstinence," but further states that his emotions make such an existence absolutely unendurable. Like the narrator in "The Sensation of Grasping it in my Hand," he stands at a point in the road where his path splits in two and he can go neither left nor right. To simply mark time, to stand still—as Dostoevsky suggests—is the solution he has been seeking.

...This could be said to be a solution to all that I have experienced in my thirty years of life.

My new life begins from here.\textsuperscript{50}

S seems to gain no peace from A's assertion that he is well-regarded in his town, that others see him as a 'true' gentlemen. S's self-loathing prevents him gaining any pleasure from such assertions. He must continue in his self-torment, his head bowed under the weight of a sentimental conviction of his own isolation and loneliness, whatever others say of him.

The themes which underpin this dialogue; the conflict between intellect and emotion; the fear of being found to be base and unworthy behind his 'pure gentleman's' mask; the fear that he is an animal unable to communicate; his inability to maintain contentment in any other state than sleep, are central to much of Sakutarō's work. Sleep offers a healing, it is the gateway to the peace and contentment he seeks. Sakutarō continued to explore these themes in \textit{Niji o ou hito}.

\section*{(7) \textit{Niji o ou hito}}

As in \textit{When Cherries Bloom}, in \textit{Niji o ou hito}, Sakutarō was once again aiming to express something of the depression he had suffered during the 'Year of Silence' in 1915. In the "Afterword," subtitled "For my Emotions," Sakutarō comments as follows;

This dialogue is written in the same spirit as my poetry. So to me, this work is a long poem which uses a slightly different mode of expression to that of my previous work. Some readers may perhaps feel it is rather


a composition, or a play, or perhaps even an essay. Then again, perhaps they will feel it is none of these.

But whatever the case, having completed this work, I feel as though the burden I have borne these thirty years is now a little lighter. I am truly happy that I have been able to put this one painful emotion into an abstract form, using words of meaning—albeit in a somewhat clumsy manner. It has long lain heavy on my heart, but until now I had been completely unable to express it. There is nothing so depressing as to be unable to express one’s own suffering and desires to another person.

I am a man who lives for his emotions. Amidst the suffering and the joy in this world so full of falsehood, these common-place emotions alone are my personal truth, my very life.\textsuperscript{51}

\textit{Niji o ou hito} is a melancholy ode to all those who spend their lives following rainbows, no matter how far away or impossible to capture. Wang, the main protagonist is, "a dreamer of dreams, a follower of rainbows—who continues his search even knowing his pursuit is all in vain."\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Niji o ou hito} is about the pursuit of eternal life and youth on this plane of existence, a search for a means of eluding death. Wang believes that it is his ‘right’ to live forever, believing that surely if he wants—needs—it this much, then God will answer his prayer.

I want to live forever. Though death is no doubt the true fate of everyone else, for me alone it just makes no sense. Whatever the case, surely I am an exception. Somehow God must give in to my wilfulness. After all I'm just one man. Whatever the price, I don't want to die. I definitely won't die. If I say I'm not going to die, then I'm not going to die.\textsuperscript{53}

\textit{Niji o ou hito} is based on the tale of two courtiers who, under the orders of the first emperor of the Qing (Manchu) dynasty, journey in search of the elixir of eternal life and youth.\textsuperscript{54} The setting in "a large flat plain reminiscent of western China" and the Chinese names of the characters both add to the Chinese flavour of the play.

Act I is a dialogue between these two courtiers, Wang and Xu Fu, who though pledged to find the elixir of eternal life and youth for their emperor, are lost in the meaninglessness of their seemingly endless wanderings. Tired and frustrated, heartily sick of their travels, Xu Fu tries

\textsuperscript{51} HS, "Afterword to Following Rainbows," HSZ IV, p. 486.
\textsuperscript{54} See Amō, Hisayoshi, "\textit{Niji o ou hito} to Ten ni Okoru—Hagiwara Sakutarō no Seinen kara Chûnenki," op cit, p. 44.
to convince Wang to give up. But Wang, though he too is suffering, vows to keep searching—his 'duty' and 'emotions' force him to—even if he must search alone.

In Act II, we indeed find Wang continuing his search alone. This act is a dialogue between Wang and an old alchemist who swears he is on the verge of discovery of the very thing Wang desires—"IT" the fabled elixir of eternal life. Wang believes that salvation is now his and gives up his journeying to wait, and wait—and wait. Yet the alchemist's experiments are always only nine-tenths complete. Again and again Wang's hopes are betrayed. Frustrated by an inner conflict between his emotional belief in the alchemist's success and the cynicism of his intellectual response, Wang finally cannot wait any longer and in the third and final act, we find he has begun to retrace his steps. He meets up with Xu Fu again, from whom he hears news of the emperor, whom Wang had all but forgotten in his own thirst for eternal life. The emperor, once a handsome figure, is now wracked with a fearful illness—which attacks not only his body but also his mind. His only hope—he believes—is to drink of the elixir of eternal life and youth. His obsession with eternal life is wearing him away—he squanders the one life he has. Xu Fu tells Wang that he had felt unable to go back to the emperor with the news that their search had been in vain.

The unlucky superstition [belief in the elixir] which has destroyed His Majesty's health, has now become the only thing that sustains him. My very first words would have pulled that support from under him. Ah, what an ill-starred man! He is caught in such an ill-fated dream.55

Both the emperor and Wang are like the condemned criminal who continues to refuse to accept his fate at the hands of a firing squad, even as the bullets pump into his body and he feels his heart's blood flow from him.

I often dream that I'm a base and cowardly soldier condemned to death. Though I stand on the execution ground, I don't really believe I'll die.... I will not die. It will not happen. Wait. Wait. In just one more second. Now! Thunder will strike them down. Now, in half a second!

But nothing happens. The bullets explode from the mouths of numberless guns.

There's still a chance. A hundredth of a second still remains....The bullets mercilessly bury themselves in my chest....I can't possibly be dead. I refuse to believe it....It's...just a dream...It must be a dream!.... Then I hear a voice speaking over my dead body.

"Heart perforated. Three bullets. Fatal wound. No pulse."

"To the third grave yard. Cremation. Take up the body!"

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Like a spoilt child, I cry out.
I will not die. I will not die. Such a terrible thing can't possibly happen to me. I'll revive. Whatever happens I will revive. I will not die. I will definitely not die! 

As we saw in the "Afterword," Sakutarō believed *Niji o ou hito* paralleled his own development, the emotional and philosophic development of his first thirty years. In a letter to Takashashi Motokichi, he expands on this belief.

Act I was born of the romance of my boyhood. It is a directionless journey of longing, a sign of a certain instinctive response. Act II is the path of anguish and suffering born of the scepticism of my youth, while Act III marks my coming of age, it is a glimpse of 'salvation.' The characters in this play wasted so, so many months and years on their journey, but their journey in its entirety becomes a symbol for the journey I have travelled these past thirty years—for the progress of my thought.

In another letter to Takashashi Motokichi, written soon after the publication of *Niji o ou hito*, Sakutarō writes as follows:

As for the content...of the whole work it was Wang's reaction to the emperor's death in Act III which moved me most....Wang's feelings are those of myself, the author. Yet the emperor too is undoubtedly born of part of my own pathetically weak heart. Thus the sympathy Wang feels for the emperor, was the voicing of my own feelings towards myself. You my brother particularly commented on the scene where the emperor imagines the absolute joy he will feel on receiving the elixir, and to tell you the truth while I was writing that section I could not stop my tears....The unhappy emperor receives my tears. For I, together with Wang, am the only being, in all of heaven and earth, who truly understands him. He should have died at that very moment. It would have provided the painful, painful proof of his salvation.

(i) The rainbow image

Sakutarō seems to have taken the image of 'following rainbows' in *Niji o ou hito* from Western tradition, where following rainbows is synonymous with chasing one's dreams, with diging for the pot of gold buried under the end

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of the rainbow. The rainbow image is used only once—apart from the title—in the last few lines of the play. Wang makes his farewells to Xu Fu, as he sets out yet again in search of the elixir of eternal life and youth, unable to give up his search while there are still lands untravelled. Xu Fu on the other hand can do nothing but remain where he is and pray for the peaceful death of the emperor. Each man must remain true to himself, the one ever searching, the other standing still unable to go either backward or forward. The play ends as follows;

"Though I have already wandered the many lands of this earth, I must still continue on. If this famed cup perhaps exists in the one land which I have failed to visit, then my remorse would know no bounds."

"At any rate, I will remain here in this land and pray for His Majesty's peaceful death. There's nothing else I can do. Nothing else I can do!"

"I don't suppose I'll ever pass this way again, nor ever see you again, so before I go, give me your hand."

"Ah, you are a dreamer of dreams, a follower of rainbows—who continues your search even knowing your pursuit is all in vain."

"But, there is no other way open to me."

In an essay entitled, "The Mystics and the Realists in Contemporary Poetic Circles," Sakutarō discusses his use of the image of a rainbow.

I am madly in love. I am passionately in love with all those people who continue their tragic—though heroic—journey ever chasing rainbows which they know are impossible to catch. This is because of a belief in this miracle, a belief that they will—in the final hour—actually reach that rainbow.

Our human hearts suffer in limitless sadness. We are like white moths ever beating our heavy wings towards the light.

The rainbow is the flame which attracts our moth-like souls. This desire to capture the rainbow, this need to fly at the flame is man's desire for immortality. Like the light which attracts a moth, the rainbow, on the one hand offers an intoxicating vision of pure joy, but on the other offers nothing but physical disintegration as the moth ignites in the flames.

The rainbow was not a very common image in classical Japanese poetry, and was not defined as a seasonal word (kigo) until the Taishō period when it came to be associated with early summer. In Japanese superstition it was held that if a rainbow forms in the morning there will be

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60HS, "The Mystics and the Realists in Contemporary Poetic Circles" (Genshidan no Shinpishugisha to Genjitsushugisha to), *Shiron* II (Poetic Criticism II), HSZ 6, p. 304.
rain, while a rainbow in the evening augured fair weather.\textsuperscript{61} The following poem reflects this belief.

Glimpses of a rainbow between the scudding clouds
on the edge of the distant mountains as the shower passes.

\textit{Muragumo no taema no sora ni}
\textit{Niji tachite}
\textit{Shigure suginuru ochi no yama no ha.\textsuperscript{62}}

(Fujiwara Teika)

In Western tradition also, the rainbow was a sign that the rain had passed. In \textit{Genesis} it is written that the rainbow is a sign of God's Covenant with man to never again flood the whole earth.\textsuperscript{63} In the works of the English Romantics, the rainbow became one with light and music, something all too easily lost.

When the lamp is shattered
The light in the dust lies dead—
When the cloud is scattered
The rainbow's glory is shed.\textsuperscript{64}

Sakutarô's use of the image of a rainbow has much in common with Shelley's. His rainbow too is something which fades all too quickly, providing us mere mortals with only a short glimpse of glorious rapture.

Kubo Tadao argues that the 'rainbow' becomes a metaphor for Sakutarô's "aims in life."\textsuperscript{65} In Sakutarô's need to find an answer to the dilemma which plagues him, he uses the image of a rainbow to embody all that he desires, that is, a state where the dilemma that plagues him is solved, where intellect and emotion unite, "the home of true emotion." The following letter written to Maeda Yûgure in 1919 gives credence to this theory.

Brother Maeda,
What I have to say to you is this, and it is all absolute truth...I am exhausted by my lonely life—by the suffering of my soul which has nowhere to turn. Since I wrote \textit{Following Rainbows}, I have been working on another dialogue—part of the same journey—entitled, \textit{A}

\textsuperscript{62}Fujiwara, Teika. \textit{Gyokinôshô.} Vol 6—Winter poems, ibid, p. 225.
\textsuperscript{63}"I have set my rainbow in the clouds and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth" \textit{The Holy Bible}, Genesis 13, Student Bible, New International Version, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1978, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{64}Shelley, "Lines:When the Lamp is Shattered," \textit{The Complete Poems of John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley}, op cit, p. 706.
\textsuperscript{65}Kubo, Tadao. \textit{Taiketsu}, op cit, p. 350.
Journey in Search of Rainbows. \(^{66}\) I am searching for 'a life worth living' for a 'life with significance' for me myself... Brother Maeda, now more than ever I want to clasp hold of your hand and let my tears fall. I want to let go and howl at the top of my lungs.

More and more the poetry of too, too many poets fails to touch my heart. What are they thinking? What are they feeling? What awareness causes them to write poetry? I loathe their shallow emotions. I loathe their high-pitched excitement. Where is true emotion? Brother Maeda...we must visit that place. Must visit the home of true emotion...We must find that noble shadow of the spirit and beyond that the pitifulness of its fathomless melancholy.\(^{67}\)

(ii) The thematic structure

Two central themes underpin the world of *Niji o ou hito*. The first is the pursuit of the ascendent, the following of rainbows to the ends of the earth. The motif of the pursuit of eternal life and youth in this life is used to develop this theme. Yet Sakutarō cannot travel this climbing path on his own, he needs a companion or a guide. Only then will he have the chance of success. The second theme is that of the painful dilemma which is tearing the poet apart; the conflict between instinct and conscience, emotion and intellect. The contrast of opposites, that dualism which underscores so much of Sakutarō's work; of a dreamer versus a realist, an emotionalist versus an intellectual, a poet versus a rationalist, is very pronounced in this work. Insanity is played off against sanity, as emotion seeks to overpower the intellect, while endurance and weariness are contrasted to duty and loyalty, both to one's sovereign and to oneself.

Itō Shinkichi argues that the "rainbow theme," the pursuit of dreams, plays a very important role in the whole body of Sakutarō's work.\(^{68}\) Drawing on the aphorism, "Beautiful Nirvana," which reads;

...the ideas of humankind—all of them—are naught but rainbow hallucinations. An idea is naught but a single beautiful dream...\(^{69}\)

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\(^{66}\) The work mentioned here as *A Journey in Search of Rainbows*, was later published under the title, *Ten ni Okoru* (Angry at Heaven). *Ten ni Okoru* is born of the same anger which feeds *Hyōi*: an anger inspired both by man's inability to control his fate and his inability to capture the rainbow of his dreams. See HSZ IV, p. 487.


\(^{68}\) See Itō Shinkichi, "*Niji o ou hito no Naritachi,*" op cit, quoted in Amō, Hisayoshi. "*Niji o ou hito to Ten ni Okoru—Hagiwara Sakutarō no Seinen kara Chūnenki,*" op cit, pp. 45-6.

\(^{69}\) HS, "Beautiful Nirvana" (Utsukushii Nekan), *Miscellaneous Aphroisms* (Aporizumu Shūi), HSZ V, p. 260.
Ito produces a thematic equation for Sakutarō's work; rainbow=beautiful
dream=phantom vision->nostalgia. The loss of one's dreams, the inability
to grasp the blue bird in one's hand for more than an instant in that moment
of joyous rapture, gives birth to the nostalgia which becomes central to
Sakutarō's post-Tsuki ni Hoeru poetry, marking the border between the
world of Tsuki ni Hoeru and that of Aoneko.

The pursuit of rainbows is a futile exercise, a dream which fades. In
Niji o ou hito, this futility is highlighted when Wang discovers that his
compass is broken and consequently that he and Xu Fu have been travelling
in the wrong direction for as long as three years.

"We seem to have taken the wrong road."
"What are you saying?"
"Something seems to be wrong with my compass—yes, it's definitely not
right. I fear I've made a terrible mistake.
"What are you saying? We've been walking for three years!"....70

This is the last straw for Xu Fu, already totally disillusioned by the whole
mission. He is terrified at the thought of dying like some stray dog,
unmourned on some untravelled road.

We've wandered these mountain ranges like sick dogs always being
chased away. We'll end up dying the desolate death of such a dog.71

This image of a dog clearly echoes the howling dog which inhabits the
world of Tsuki ni Hoeru. In his desperate exhaustion, the very mention of
his possible death almost drives Wang into insanity, "I'm not going to die"
he screams, and it is in this fear that he finds the strength to continue his
journey. Even if he is travelling in the wrong direction, it is death to stand
still, so he must go on.

I must now walk on all alone. Even if I go only a single step further, I
must—I must—tread new ground before the sun sets.72

Xu Fu is wearied beyond endurance by their failure. He struggles against
the futility of their mission. If only they'd been asked to do something
which was at least possible, then at least they would have had a chance.

If I was told to cut down every single tree on that mountain, then I
might perhaps dedicate my whole life to it. If I was told to
circumnavigate the world seven times—even knowing it was
impossible—I might perhaps commit myself to it, at least until driven

mad with trying. But this journey! I just cannot continue this journey.
It's pure terror. Pure, pure terror."\(^73\)

He argues that they are pursuing a dream, giving up their life and energy for
a mission as futile as grabbing the moon out of the sky, while they, like the
howling dog of *Tsuki ni hoeru*, are destined to quiver in fear, as the pale
moon floats serenely above them, ever out of reach.

His Majesty ordered us to go and take the moon out of the sky, and so
we leapt up high from the ground, as high as we possibly could. We
leapt high from the ground—both hands straining towards the moon—
only to fall back. We leapt and fell back, leapt and fell back—like a
bouncing ball—all night long. Then wearied beyond belief, we
collapsed in exhaustion on the ground. We did this in full knowledge of
the absolute futility of our actions. There was nothing else we could do.
Who could possibly do more in response to such a mission?\(^74\)

The tension between moving on and standing which was part of the
dilemma seemingly resolved by the 'Dostoevsky Incident,' is a motif
Sakutarō uses in *Niji o ou hito*. In Act I, the two protagonists are standing
still, yet their talk of moving carries a sense of frenetic movement, there is a
sense of desperation fed by the belief that surely they must be nearly there.
In Act II, by comparison, Wang has come to a complete standstill, as
captivated by the allure of the alchemist's words, he waits and waits in the
hope of attaining his dream—the fabled elixir. Though knowing he should
be on his way, he cannot move, worried that as soon as he takes a step, the
discovery will be made and he will have missed it. Yet he is cheated at every
deadline the alchemist sets.

I am a traveller who must walk the pitch black road of the night, with
nothing but a single candle stub in my hand. Never pausing so much as
to even catch my breath, I must pass by on lightning feet. It's hard to
stand still even for an hour—even for a minute, and to top it off—you—
you've deceived me. For three years, I've patiently endured the feeling
that I can see my life visibly shrivelling before my very eyes. Only to be
cheated in the end. Cheated?\(^75\)

He is quite unable to take any action; he is trapped as he waits for the
answer to his dreams;

Just as the boat was about to leave, this scenario flashed across my mind,
'Any minute now the whistle will sound. And then my living body will
leave these shores. Then never again will I have the chance to meet that
man [the alchemist]. But this time—this time his labors will definitely


\(^{75}\text{HS, *Niji o ou hito*, Act II, Scene 5, HSZ IV, p. 466. Vol II, p. 60.}\)
meet with success. In six months time, no, no, in even less time than that, maybe he'll have found it. Somehow I feel he will. But when that happens I'll be here no longer. Already, my living body will have been borne away, somewhere far, far from here. Even if I want to, I'll be unable to return. Then I felt—something I was unaware of even in my dreams—that I was destined to die a lonely death in some desolate field. Then there would be no going back. It's all a terrible mistake. I see it now. I'm on the very brink. But there's still time. The whistle has yet to blow. If I'm to change my mind—now is the time.\textsuperscript{76}

The emperor in Act III, is also caught up in this terrible waiting, terrified that the one moment he looks away from the window will be the moment that Wang and Xu Fu will appear and he will miss the pleasure of knowing in advance of their return.

Everyday from morning till night, he leans against his sickroom window, gazing intently out into the distance. It's as if he can no longer even hear the words of his attendants, though they stand close by. Then suddenly, he'll point out some place on the distant horizon, crying—

\textit{Look there! Look there!}

At these words his attendants begin to tremble in pure terror. A shadow seems to pass across His Majesty's eyes.

\textit{All of you, Come Here!}

\textit{Come quickly. Over there. Over there!}

As the attendants draw close to the terrifying, terrifying window, His Majesty cries;

\textit{Did you see it?}

If any one attendant replies with the truth, His Majesty suddenly turns on the offender and casts him out of the window. None can fathom how this ghostlike shadow of a man can find such awesome strength.

So now no one tells him the truth.\textsuperscript{77}

The emperor is terrified that they will return too late—perhaps even at the very moment of his death. To be so close to eternal life and youth and yet to miss out is a terror beyond all terrors for the emperor. Consequently, he can never give up hope, not even for a moment, he must push his body to the absolute ends of its endurance, until he is hanging by only a single nerve strand.

His Majesty's destined life span is long since over. Even if he has managed to continue to live until today, it's only his awesome, yet merciless, tenacity that keeps him going. His body no longer breathes of its own accord. He's living on his nerves, and his nerves alone....


This morning too he no doubt stands by that very window. He's probably muttering to himself,
I've endured as much as I possibly can—right up to this very day. Now there's nothing left. The last remaining drop of oil has been wrung from my whole body. I've given my all. But it's no good. I cannot endure even a single minute more. It's no good. I'll die. No! Wait! I mustn't die....I MUST ENDURE!...whatever happens I must continue to live. Whatever happens, I must live. I must cling to this single nerve thread, just for one half hour more, just one half hour—perhaps even less. They may appear any moment now. I must not die yet. I must not die. Just five minutes. Five minutes....78

The emperor, is caught, unable to move for fear of losing the chance to live forever. He sacrifices the now for the possibility of the future.

Sakutarō is purposefully vague as to the time and place of this play, giving it a certain dream-like quality. Thus the structure of the work parallels its thematic development; the timelessness draws the play out of the world of reality into the world of dream. Act I, for example, is set at the time when "this sort of incident would happen," while the time for Act II is defined as "totally unclear." This adds to the sense that it has all been done before; that Wang and Xu Fu have already passed along this road countless times, and that the alchemist and Wang have met many times before. It is all part of an endless cycle of fate.

I get the feeling that somewhere, sometime, I've met this yellow-faced man before. Sometime long, long ago...perhaps it was sometime before I was even born, I feel as if he and I talked for a long time about something—perhaps a dream—somewhere in a deep valley gorge in an unimaginable foreign land. It was a sorrow-filled sunset that night. Above our heads, the sun shone weakly like a pale white rabbit. Endlessly, endlessly—it turned—round and round. I can't remember what we talked about. But I get the feeling that I'll remember any moment now.79

This pallid sun, caught between day and night becomes a metaphor for the actual play, a dialogue caught between the philosophic poetry of the daytime—shisōshi—and the lyric poetry—jojōshi—of the night. The alchemist is like the 'white face' in the Aoneko poem, "The face," which reads as follows;

The faint white face appeared
when the cherries—still bleary with sleep—began to bloom
it looked in at the window.

Though it was only the shadow of an old, old memory
I felt as if we'd met before—somewhere on some distant pier
the glass pane glittered in the outdoor light, and
the sickly-sweet melancholy scent of a violet hung in the air
as like a rainbow—it disappeared into the distance.

My only cause for sorrow
as I pass another of life’s dim turnings
is that I will never return here again. 80

Sakutarō’s repeated use of such endings as “it seems”—rashii, and "one
gets the feeling that”—omowareru, add a further opacity to the work.
Sakutarō deliberately omits the subjects of his sentences. In Niji o ou hito
both the names of the two protagonists and what exactly they are searching
for are not introduced until well into the work. The only information we
receive about them is through their conversation and thus the reader is well
into the dialogue before the purpose of their journey is made clear. There is
a constant repetition—almost a dirge-like refrain—of demonstratives such as
ano, are, and modifying verbs such as aru.

"Do you still believe in IT?"
"Yes, I do."...
Do you still believe in IT?"
"Yes, I do." 81

Kimi wa mada are o shinjite iru no ka?
Sō da....
Omae was mada are wo shinjite iru no ka?
Ore was shinjite iru.

These words add to the indirectness, forcing everything into the third
person. The elixir is referred to in this manner as "it"—are until Act II,
Scene 4, a fact which gives the whole play a Beckett-like quality reminiscent
of Waiting for Godot, a play where the two protagonists are waiting but
have long since forgotten what they are waiting for.

Estragon: Let's go.
Vladimir: We can't.
Estragon: Why not?
Vladimir: We're waiting for Godot. 82

Wang's name does not appear until Act II, Scene 3, while Xu Fu's is
unknown until the final act. Further the emperor's personal rainbow, his

80 HS, "The face" (Kao). Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 205. Vol II, p. 120.
81 HS, Niji o ou hito, Act I, Scene 1; and Act II, Scene 2, HSZ IV, pp. 453-4. See Vol
II, p. 53.
pursuit of eternal youth and life, in the early stages is referred to as "that sickness"—aa iu byōki. There is also a conscious repetition of the word "distant"—tōi; their road is off in the distance, the emperor gazes off into the distance, Wang feels he has met the alchemist before in the distant past. As in the "Skylark Fare" poems in Tsuki ni Hoeru, where the object of desire is always streaming off into the distance, the rainbow—the dream—in Niji o ou hito is always far away. In an aphorism entitled, "The true essence of romantic beauty," Sakutarō defines the beauty he saw embodied in "distant objects."

Distant objects all stimulate our romantic sense of beauty. For example, stars shining in the infinity of the cosmos, provide an example of space. A recollection of the distant, distant past, provides an example of time. Both these examples embody the very essence of pure emotion.... Art is not practical morality. Art is an awareness of beauty. Beauty—true romantic beauty—is found only in such distant objects. All true romantics yearn for—long for—distant objects, for the ideal, and turn their faces away from nearby objects, from actual reality.\(^8^3\)

It is the impossibility of grasping hold of one's dream that drives the rainbow—beautiful dream—phantom vision sequence into the realm of nostalgia, into the pale moonlit world of Aoneko. It is distance that makes the rainbow one with the ideal, something worthy of romantic love.

As mentioned above, the pursuit of eternal life and youth, is the essence of the rainbow which Wang pursues. In an aphorism entitled, "Sennin—Immortals—and Eternal Life and Youth," Sakutarō ponders the pleasures of eternal life and its implications for a man within the world. The word sennin comes from the Chinese Xianren and refers to the wizards of Chinese legend, who lived as hermits in the mountains, away from worldly things. Sennin manifested the ideas of religious Taoism, and were said to have attained supernatural powers—most often immortality—by means of ascetic exercises practiced in remote mountain regions. They were believed to preserve a youthful appearance indefinitely by drinking elixirs, and allegedly could levitate, ride clouds and make the winds blow. The concept of the Xianren was introduced to Japan along with Taoism, with the earliest reference to Japanese sennin appearing in the Nara period legends.\(^8^4\) The aphorism reads as follows;

\(^8^3\) HS, "The True Essence of Romantic Sense of Beauty" (Rōman Bikan no Honshitsu), New Desire (Atarashiki Yokujō), HSZ IV, p. 131.
The *sennin* of ancient China attained eternal life and eternal youth because they lived alone in the mountains, and knew nothing of the calibration of the passing of time—the making of calendars—they had no contact with anybody because they had transcended this world to a realm outside. If a man was unaware of his own age, and if he could prevent anyone else telling him, he would have no awareness of his own age, and therefore could actually achieve a state of eternal life and eternal youth.\(^85\)

Wang seeks to enter this timeless state, his journeying stimulated by a desperate fear of death. Wang, and the emperor are like the octopus in Sakutarō's short story "The Octopus that would not die," refusing to give up their craving for life. The poet's brooding spirit becomes like this octopus. Alone and forgotten in its tank, the octopus is forced to eat itself to survive, until nothing is left except a bitter brooding malevolence, a life instinct which will not allow itself the release of death.

The octopus...was not dead. Even after it had disappeared, it continued to live there for all eternity. In the old, empty and forgotten aquarium tank. Eternally—over the many centuries—this animal has lived invisible to the human eye, harbouring a fearful hunger and dissatisfaction.\(^86\)

Wang, like Sakutarō himself, is unable to find the elixir on his own; he needs a Dostoevsky-like guide. This motif of a guide was already apparent in *Tsuki ni Hoera*, both in the form of the young women in the "Skylark Fare" poems, and in the form of vehicles, such as the little horse cart in "Landscape"\(^87\) and the rickshaw in "Spring."

> ...Spring comes in from the distance  
> riding a rubber-wheeled rickshaw.  
> Though the rickshaw-man's white feet hurry  
> through this misty panorama  
> the advancing wheels turn backwards  
> gradually the shafts leave the earth...  
> It all seems so dangerous...\(^88\)

Gradually the rickshaw guides the narrator upwards into the ascendent realm, he the narrator is filled with fear and cannot bear to leave the security of the earth, even though this descendent realm causes him pain. In *Niji o

\(^85\) HS, "Sennin—Immortals—and Eternal Life and Youth" (Sennin to Furō Chōju), in "The Individual and Society" (Kojin to Shakai), *At the Harbour* (Miyako nite), HSZ V, p. 228.

\(^86\) HS, "The Octopus that would not die" (Shinannai tako), *Fate* (Shukumei), HSZ II, pp. 290-1. See Vol II, p. 162 for the full translation.


ou hito, Wang meets the old wise man, an alchemist, who like the sennin of old seems to have the answer to his desire.

Today I met that strange old man again. What sort of man is he? Why does he pass by nearly everyday? What is it he ponders so deeply? It's strange, but whenever I look into those pale sunken eyes, I can't help asking myself these questions. He's definitely pondering some terribly intricate problem. Perhaps—just perhaps—it's my fate he ponders so deeply. I can't stop myself believing that to be the case. 89

In Wang's eyes, this old alchemist becomes his gateway to salvation, just as Dostoevsky for Sakutarō. Swept along by the same white-hot incandescent joy with which Sakutarō's pained soul met Dostoevsky, at first Wang fails to heed the fact that the experiment is not quite finished and is completely carried away by the thought of his own salvation.

"If it's the cup of life you want...well then, look no further. I'm an alchemist. I have it."

"What? You? ...You've got IT? You?"

"I have—though not right now."

"Aaah, I can't believe this is happening. It's beyond my wildest imagination. I've been right all along. My faith was not misplaced. I must've taken the right path after all. Ah! What luck! What unexpected good fortune! I won't die. I will never never die."

"I've now completed as much as nine parts of my research."

"Oh My Lord God. My Lord God. Let me kneel at your feet. Let me draw near your feet. I am saved. I am saved." 90

Though the alchemist offers the clearest glimpse of the rainbow Wang has seen thus far on his travels, his hopes are betrayed and finally Wang is forced to give up this dream and retrace his steps. Yet as the play ends, Wang has found the energy to start off on his search once again.

(8) The Poet in Me and Zarathustra

In an essay entitled The Poet in Me and Zarathustra, 91 Sakutarō provides another example of this guide motif. It tells of a poet—'the poet in me' (watashi no shijin), who found enlightenment high in the mountains with Zarathustra. Both men believed it was their mission to return to the world of

89 HS, Niji o ou hito, Act II, Scene 1, HSZ IV, p. 462. Vol II, p. 58
91 HS, The Poet in Me and Zarathustra (Watashi no Shijin to Tsuaratosutora). The Struggle from Nothingness (Mu kara no Köso), HSZ X, pp. 297. See Vol II, pp. 162-6, for full translation.
men to proselytize, to tell all they have learned, even though the world of men may not be ready for their words.

At the age of thirty the poet in me began to climb the mountain together with Nietzsche's Zarathustra, and lived a life of peaceful solitude with only the birds and clouds as companions. Then when he reached the age of forty, together with Zarathustra, he left the forest and passed back down the mountain into the world of men. In the foothills we met a very old and noble man.92...[who] asked, "Why on earth have you two come down into their world—into this world of men?...Surely you realize they will never accept your gifts, nor will they listen to your words....Return to your life of seclusion in the forests. Once there continue to...write your hymns of praise to the beautiful Gods. Surely—surely—that is Zarathustra's true road. Surely that is the only true road of a pure poet, of a true artist.93

Zarathustra merely laughs this off, wondering at the stupidity of the old man who has not yet realized that all the Gods are dead. On entering the town the two travellers find a crowd gathered to watch an acrobat walk a tightrope. Zarathustra immediately pushes through to tell these people the "truths of life."

"Man is naught but a single bridge—a process from beast to superman. Life is but a tightrope walk—merely acrobatics." But the crowd did not listen. They jeered him.94

Undaunted Zarathustra continued, telling them of the final destruction of the earth and life as we know it. Only a few stunted human-like creatures would survive. They will have lost all concept of love, ideals and justice, and thus will think themselves happy in their life, which is "just like fleas, lice, even bacteria," as they crawl and slither upon the ground. "They will not be able to see the base wretchedness of their life." The crowd still could not understand, crying that they too wished to be like these last men. It was then that the narrator—the poet in me—remembered the old man's words and wished both he and Zarathustra back in the mountains. Just at this point, the tightrope walker began his act, "His steps were as those through life; they were a symbolic representation of human destiny." Suddenly he fell and lying injured pleaded to Zarathustra to save him. Zarathustra turns once more to the crowd;

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92This sudden change from third person to first person exists in the original.
"Behold! Life begins from such a fall. The reason for this is because life is a continual process. Yet I love all those who have fallen; all those who have crashed to the ground.\textsuperscript{95}

Then, finally, the poet/narrator finds the strength to speak to the crowd. He too begins to preach, but in plainer, simpler words; telling them of his "mission as a poet."

I said, "We must descend to the depths if we are to ascend. In this era of evil, I love all those who deny falsehood, all sceptics, all who reject everything, all who believe in nothing. I love all the nihilists and all anarchists, and all the decadents. For only by descending into the very depths—the deepest pit—can the poetic spirit of today conquer self and thus achieve transcendence. By bathing in the very mud of the negative, the spirit is purified into the positive."\textsuperscript{96}

The crowd embraces his words, crying out that they themselves are 'the fallen,' that they are the companions the poet and Zarathustra have been seeking. Yet their words become jeers as they pull at the poet with filthy evil-smelling hands, and the poet is forced to recognize that his "tongue is not for their ears." The work ends with Zarathustra and the poet finally managing to break away from the crowd, leaving with the cries of the crowd echoing after them.

As we left we heard the high-pitched laughing of the crowd. "Look at that insane preacher! Watch him plodding after Zarathustra like a lone skinny donkey. He is nothing but a deluded madman. He has nothing—he cannot even feed himself. Yet he tries to preach! Look there goes the shadow of a romantic.\textsuperscript{97}

The poet had sought companionship with Zarathustra, in the mountains, high and far removed from the world of man. There he felt he had found transcendence, and that his 'mission' as a poet forced him to return to the crowded cities of the world to spread his new found awareness, to tell them the road to ascendance lay in first descending to the very depths (a truth Sakutarō drew from Dostoevsky). But his words fell on deaf ears. He was branded insane. The cries of the crowd falling after him, were like the eyes of the watchers in "The reason why the person inside looks like a deformed invalid."\textsuperscript{98} The fear of being regarded as abnormal, as insane, overrode his

\textsuperscript{98} HS, "The reason why the person inside looks like a deformed invalid" (Naibu ni iru hito ga kikei na byōnin ni mieru ryū), \textit{Tsuki ni Hoeru}, HSZ 1, p. 49. Vol II, p. 27.
sense of ‘mission,’ and ‘the poet in me,’ like the hydrophobic, fails to make himself understood and runs away to escape derision.

(9) "The skylark’s nest" and "The toy flute"

The second theme of Niji o ou hito, the conflict between instinct and conscience, is the very essence of the dilemma which plagued Sakutarō during the ‘Year of Silence.’ The poetic dialogues, leading up to Niji o ou hito, all attempt to confront this dilemma. As we have seen, both Wang and the emperor were torn between their emotional and intellectual responses to the same stimuli. Yet in both characters emotion wins out. Ignoring all intellectual arguments, the emperor continues to suffer, his nerves torn to threads, in his emotional belief in the coming of the elixir. Wang too believes in his emotions above all else.

“The voice of my intellect tells me that you’ll definitely fail, yet the voice of my emotions tells me you’ll definitely succeed. I’m powerless to do anything but obey the voice of my emotions.”

This conflict is also the underlying theme of the two long poems which conclude Tsuki ni Hoeru, "The skylark’s nest" and "The toy flute," which as noted earlier, form the climax of the ‘Dialogue Period.’ Amō regards the fact that these two poems were placed at the very end of Tsuki ni Hoeru as symbolic, arguing that they represent a major turning point in Sakutarō’s work.

In Sakutarō’s eyes, "The skylark’s nest" is a work from the time before his ‘new life’ began; “It is a work from the very depths.” The narrator is torn apart by what he sees as an instinctive brutality which possesses him, which prevents him loving with his body that which he loves in his heart. This brutality stems from an instinctive physical violence which overrides the voice of conscience. In the aftermath of his violent action he is filled with a sense of nostalgia for what is lost, with a love for the helplessness of the baby bird, for the caring of the parent bird. Yet this nostalgia—born of his conscience—is as nothing against his brooding instinct. As noted by Amō, the diseased psyche of the narrator is embedded

in the landscape of the river bank. This landscape then becomes a metaphor for the narrator's awareness of his sinfulness.

As we have seen, *Tsuki ni Hoeru* was in a sense a search for a united self. "The toy flute"—the very last poem—is a masterful portrayal of the fate of this split self. The man and man-child—father and son—who inhabit this poem, each embody different aspects of a united self. The child is that part of us which has faith in mystery, has a faith in the salvation of the 'upper' realm. This child still clings to a belief in redemption. The father, however, is torn from within by a battle between instinct and conscience. He seems to be caught forever in Zarathustra's vision of the shepherd, eternally trapped in the snake's coils. He is caught up in a "confusing dilemma" unable to believe in any possiblity of transcendence, and unable to unite his divided heart.

The child wanted a toy flute....
The child stood quietly in the shadow behind the door.
The shadows carried the scent of cherry blossoms.
Just at that moment, the man sat thinking inside the room
his thoughts were a spinning whirlpool—a confusing dilemma
captivated his heart.

As the child watched, he saw that all unnoticed a snake had
coiled itself around the man's forehead as he slumped
forward on the desk....

The child's miserable heart was drawn by something.
Gradually the child's heart began to feel a power.
It actually cried out in a clear voice
for it had seen a flute—
a small purple toy flute, just as the child had wanted....

The first stanza depicts a scene where the child, desiring a flute, looks into his father's room, in the hope of finding it there. The second stanza describes the terrible dilemma which possessed the mind of the man, while the third is a scene where the adult prays to God for assistance.

Instinct and conscience,...
...two shadows, forcibly wrenched apart,
re-entangle themselves—like so many threads—
and again locked together, hover around the dim skylight.
At the sight of the forms of these plaintive ghosts
passing over his head
catching his breath in fear, the man began to pray

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"God, let not these two reunite!"
Yet for a long time—the ghosts continue to flit in and out
of the shadow of the door.....

In verse four, the child discovers the flute on top of the adult's desk, and the
last verse, tells of the miracle of the flute. Throughout the poem Sakutarō
purposefully changes the direction of the awareness of the narrator; from
the child to father in the first verse, to father into his inner self in the second,
to father to child in the third, back to child to father in the fourth and in the
fifth the child to the flute, which the father has somehow created. This shift
in perspective, as argued by Amō creates a distinction between the
psychological space of the child and that of the man. In Sakutarō's eyes;
The child is a symbol of the 'heart which searches' (motomeru kokoro),
while the father's 'heart' is 'suffering.' The father's philosophy is
symbolic of his emotion. The miracle born of his 'heart' is a strange
mixture of both that 'emotion' and the 'heat which searches.' The flute is
of course 'salvation.'

Thus the flute is the embodiment of the harmonious coexistence between
body and soul, between instinct and conscience. Sakutarō gives the
following explanation as to the emotions which led to the creation of "The
toy flute."

When I wrote this poem, my heart was captured by the sharp shrill tones
of a toy tin flute, was moved by the pathetic sweetness of this instrument
which shone like the tremor of a vibrating nerve. In this poem I sought
as honestly as possible to give this emotion expression.

The toy flute itself can be seen as the very essence—the symbol—of
happiness.

What is the dilemma which so distresses the man? The dilemma is the battle
between intellect and emotion; conscience and instinct. The only hope of
survival was to give in to one's emotions and listen to the voice of
Dostoevsky.

Dostoevsky knows everything. All who stand before him must do so
naked. If one is to truly save another human being, the body—their

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105 HS, "The toy flute" (Fue), Tsuki ni Hoeru, HSZ I, pp. 91-4. Vol II, p. 51.
106 Amō, Hisayoshi. "Niji o ou hito to Ten ni Okoru—Hagiwara Sakutarō no Seinen
kara Chūnenki," op cit, p. 36.
107 HS, "Notes," quoted Amō, Hisayoshi. "Niji o ou hito to Ten ni Okoru—Hagiwara
Sakutarō no Seinen kara Chūnenki," op cit, p. 36.
108 HS, "The Sensation of Grasping it in my Hand" (Nigatta Te no Kankanu), HSZ III
physical being—must be saved first. Philosophic concepts are of no use. 109

In his failure to unite 'conscience' and 'instinct,' the man calls on God. Yet rather than a plea for God to unite the two warring parties, he prays instead, "God, let not these two reunite!" Fear is behind this prayer. The union of these two opposing forces would provide the white-hot miracle which Sakutarō only glimpsed through the words of Dostoevsky, yet his fear that he would, like a moth, burn up in the heat of this union is the fear which forces the man in "The toy flute" to pray to God not to unite the two. He knows it is beyond his endurance in his human form. According to Amō, the image of the 'flute'—the miracle—is born of the co-existence of the poet's fear of the pain caused by the conflict between instinct and conscience, as seen in the image of the father, and the 'heart' which seeks salvation, that is the image of the child. 110 Only the child sees this flute, the father cannot see the miracle. Amō argues, that the two different responses to the flute, both originate in the 'new life' Sakutarō began after the 'Dostoevsky Incident.' The father's inability to see the flute is due to the fact that he is still to be saved. The flute, and the child—like Dostoevsky—provide the way to the light.

Today I no longer think of Dostoevsky as God. Rather he is a prophet like John the Baptist who led believers to Christ. Dostoevsky is not the light itself, but the teacher who first pointed out to me the substance of that light. 111

Just as a rainbow is a sign of the covenant with God, the flute is proof for Sakutarō that "sometime before I die everything will all be all right. That is my strength. It seems that I did not just grasp hold of empty sky after all." 112

CHAPTER FOUR

Aoneko—The Blue Cat

(1) Introductory remarks .................................................. 138
(2) The structure of Aoneko .................................................. 144
(3) A thematic analysis of Aoneko ........................................... 155
   (a) Melancholia of Sensation ........................................... 156
   (b) Melancholia of Contemplation ...................................... 168
(4) Return to a more primitive state ...................................... 176
(5) The endless passage of time ........................................... 179
    —endless cycle of life ................................................. 179
(1) Introductory remarks

Published in January 1923, Aoneko is Sakutarō’s second collection of poetry. As noted in the introduction, Aoneko marked a change in both the style and content of Sakutarō’s poetry, becoming, as Ōoka Makoto termed it, poetry of ‘prayer’ rather than ‘confession’. Like the prayer of the father in "The toy flute," this prayer was a plea for help with the terrible dilemma which has split his personality; a split between emotion and intellect; instinct and conscience.

[Aoneko] gave voice to the prayer-like inner life of my recent days. Sitting—alone—in a twilight room, sunk in contemplation my heart took on the form of a man of sorrow, who slept for long hours upon a white, white bed...Over the long, long months and days of these thirty years—perhaps foolishly—I have impatiently and fruitlessly toiled over the contemplation of happiness and the meaning of life. However, I am now exhausted by this foolishness, this meaninglessness. Now all I do is just lie here upon this white bed, listening to life’s gentle signs, drifting in pleasant dreams of a ‘graveyard lined with beautiful trees.’

In Aoneko, the passionate faith in the ascendent and the accompanying fear of the descendant, as seen in Tsuki ni Hoeru, have given way to an all-pervasive ennui.

...the poetry of Aoneko and Tsuki ni Hoeru set out from completely different starting points. My maiden collection, Tsuki ni Hoeru, is a poetic world of purity and imagistic vision. Its essence is a certain physiological sense of fear. In contrast, however, the true essence of Aoneko lies in pathos and pathos alone. In Tsuki ni Hoeru there are neither tears nor pathos. The author who wrote Aoneko was fatigued before he even began. Despairingly, he had flung his sad body down onto a sofa.

This pathos is born of both a longing for the 'land of the flute,' a resting place, an eternal homeland of the soul, and a sense of nostalgia for an older, more primitive state of being, before the split between emotion and intellect came into existence. The pathos is heightened by the poet's awareness of the powerlessness of the individual. The idleness and boredom is tied to a sense of remorse, born of a fear that something in the poet's own makeup has caused this split. For Sakutarō, "Idleness, boredom

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1 See Ōoka, Makoto, Hagiwara Sakutarō, op cit, p. 172.
2 HS, "Two Letters" (Futatsu no Tegami), Shūi Shihen, HSZ III, pp. 224-33. Sakutarō draws on the poem "The twilight room" to discuss the focus of Aoneko as a whole. See Vol II, p. 79.
3 HS, "Introduction to Teihon Aoneko," HSZ II, pp. 144-47.
and remorse, were like three brothers who cannot get on."4 Blood relatives, these three siblings—idleness, boredom and remorse—cannot break away from each other and become a monotonous refrain which lies at the very heart of Aoneko. As the poet realizes his helplessness against the forces of fate, he loses all will to fight. The cycle of time slows to a halt as fate takes control; even memory ceases to hold meaning:

...Fate casts forth shadows—darkening scuds of cloud
a lonely, sickly gloom smoulders in the willow shadows
the calendar no longer exists—nor does memory...5

In Sakutaro's eyes, Aoneko was a collection born of the emotions of a moonlit night—both the beautiful and the craven, the ascendent and the descendent. Aoneko is "the voice of a blue heron crying in the marshland of life; the sombre murmur of the breeze in the reeds on a moonlit night;"6 it is a twilight world of suspended time and movement, a border between the conscious and unconscious. According to Kubo, it was this moonlight which inspired Sakutarō to search for the primeval mysteries of life.7 In an essay, "The poetry of the moon," Sakutarō comments on the great numbers of poets, both in the East and West, who have drawn inspiration from the moon:

In all these works, like listening to sad music, their aesthetic sensibility was sourced in a limitless nostalgia, and with many, a lost love or lonely sorrow trembled behind this nostalgia.

Why has moonlight broken the hearts of so many poets for so many centuries? It is because pale moonlight evokes such a strong response in human hearts; such a poetic melancholia. Yet there is a deeper reason; the fact that the moon is always far off in the limitless expanse of the vault of heaven. All such distant objects call up a certain longing, a nostalgia; a sentiment which then becomes lyric poetry. This longing is not due to the great distance alone, but to the way the moon radiates light; it glows and glimmers like a lamp in the sky. It makes me contemplate the strange instinct of living creatures, that is, their 'attraction to fire.'8

In his instinctive attraction to the moonlight, Sakutarō was like a moth to a flame. Like that moth, he feared he would burn up in the heat;

...I make poetry; like a group of moths crowding around a lamp.

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4HS, "Eternal Boredom" (Eien no Taikutsu), The corridor and the room. HSZ IX, p. 201.
5HS, "The calendar of idleness" (Taïda no koyomi), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 188. Vol II, p. 110.
8HS, "The Poetry of the Moon" (Tsuki no Shijō), HSZ XI, p. 197.
deceived by a certain strange gaudy illusion, vainly beating their fragile sponge-cake wings as they try to touch the very essence of unseen reality. I am a wretched child of fancy; mine is the sad fate of the moth.\textsuperscript{9}

The poetry of Aoneko tells not only of this moonlit world, but delves into the shadows beyond the light. These shadows become a metaphor for the instinctive, grotesque aspects of life—the descendent—just as the light of the moon embodies the pure longing for the ascendant. These shadows hint at a hidden world just beyond the senses, which like vague phantoms of the subconscious appear in the conscious world. Dazzled by the light of his longing, the poet can only vaguely sense the grotesque forms. This shadowed world is a world of insects, reptiles, and poisonous fungal growths. Any approach towards the ascendent must pass through this shadowed realm. For as 'the poet in me' told the city crowd, "We must descend to the depths if we are to ascend."\textsuperscript{10}

The central theme of Aoneko is the pursuit of the essence of the 'flute,' through the help of sensation and contemplation. Aoneko becomes a battlefield between emotion and intellect. Sakutarō uses a series of dichotomies, such as: instinct and conscience; sensation and contemplation; lust and love; and decay and beauty; to portray this battlefield. Rather than the upward search of Tsuki ni Hoeru, in Aoneko, Sakutarō's pursuit of the 'flute' leads him back towards a more primitive world, where no such dichotomies could trouble him. Thus the underlying theme of Aoneko is a seach for a spiritual homeland, a place to rest from his dilemmas, this tension between emotion and intellect; sensation and contemplation. Yet the poet soon becomes disillusioned as he is forced to accept that his will is as nothing before the forces of fate. Frustrated and melancholic, he casts himself down in despair, sinking into the nihilistic ennui which overpowers his longing for the moon. As argued by Fujiwara Sadamu, the words 'melancholy' (yū'utsu) and 'loneliness' (sabishisa), form the womb which gestates the images of this collection. They are what draws the reader into the illusionary musical emotions of the collection.\textsuperscript{11}

The title of the collection, 'the blue cat' encompasses both this longing and the ennui. According to Kiyōka Takayuki, the 'blue' cat is a

\textsuperscript{10}HS, The Poet in Me and Zarathustra, Scene 2, HSZ X, pp. 297. Vol II, p. 165.
\textsuperscript{11}Fujiwara, Sadamu, "'Ware no motazaru mono wa issai nari,'" (That which I do not possess is all), Kenkyū Nōto, HSZ IV, op cit, Supplement, p. 1.
metaphor for the hallucinations and wild delusions which invade the mind of a man who hovers on the verge of insanity. The cat embodies the struggle between reality and delusion. Sakutarō first used this image of a 'blue' cat, in a prose poem, entitled "The pupil of Omega’s eye," which reads as follows;

Why don't you just go ahead and die! Your spirit reels forth from the gleaming finger tips of the waxen corpse. At that moment, you can see the pupil of the real omega's eye. That is the essence of your character.

All the people around here look like cats.

These cats are illusions, a reflection of the narrator's inability to see the 'real' world. Whenever the poet tries to truly see the people outside his own inner world, he sees only illusions; only cats, like the cats in Nekomachi (Cat Town). Thus, the cat is a visionary illusion, proof of the poet's inability to truly see anyone but himself. Sakutarō made the following comments about his choice of a title;

The 'Ao' in Aoneko symbolizes the author and carries the sense of the English word 'blue.' That is, it is a combination of; 'hopelessness,' 'melancholy' and 'fatigue.' To emphasize this, I had the English words 'The Blue Cat' specifically printed on the cover, aiming to evoke the image of 'a melancholy cat.' The poem entitled "The blue cat," draws on a vision of just such a melancholy cat. One day, writing poetry in the country-side, the blue and white sparks of the telegraph wires against the city sky looked just like a large blue cat, and it was then that this image became the symbol of my heart-rending nostalgia for the city.

Thus, the 'blue' cat embodies the hopelessness and melancholia of the poet, forced to accept that the city of his desire is just an illusion. The 'blue' cat is the sum of the illusions which are born of his desires; a reflection of his inability to see reality and his place in it.

Ah—only the shadow of a solitary blue cat
sleeps this night in the huge city....
this pallid blue shadow of happiness is ever
the object of my yearning
What is this shadow I seek?...
In this poem, the cat is linked to the urban motif. Sakutarō's love/hate relationship with the city is comparable to his love/hate relationship with spring and cherry blossoms. The poet 'pined' for Tokyo; yearned to disappear into the waves of humanity which flowed through the city. Sakutarō yearned for the anonymity of a crowd as a means of escaping the prying eyes of the country. He saw the "wills and desires" of the city as 'active,' unlike the passive ennui which caused him to cast himself down on his sofa.

Always I yearn for the city
yearn to be a part of the bustling city crowd
a crowd—like a huge wave of emotion
one huge group of active wills and desires,
flowing where it will....
Ah—could I too walk this road?
Could I too find just such peace of mind?...
Where are you going? —and Why?...
Ah—wherever—wherever it wills—I want to be jostled
along within this wave—this crowd
the wave's path blurs at the horizon
let's go with the flow, but in one—only in one direction.17

In an aphorism entitled, "Solitude and Multitude," Sakutarō makes the following comments:

In ancient times, intellectual recluses would live in secluded mountain retreats far removed from human habitation. Forgetting the congested thongs of the cities, they kept contact with only the remotest country villages. There, within the wilderness of nature, listening to the wind in the pines, they would write works of great elegance and aesthetic sensitivity.

But the solitary thinkers of today, draw on a completely opposite emotion. We actively search for 'multitudes.' In the bustling cities, we seek the thronging wave of the multitude. Ah, Multitude! The true dwelling place of those in search of solitude. One has no connection with the individuals who make up the multitude, even if I try to be kind to them, even if they return my kindness, there are no importunings, no real contact between us. We are all simply passersby.

Yet, this is the one place where we can come to know the 'human love' for which we yearn. Yes—yes—it is the only place we can observe 'humanity' in its 'natural' state. In this living, moving mass we can observe the 'natural' state of human emotion, the depth of feeling, and the long ardent sighs of the flesh.18

18 HS, "Solitude and Multitude" (Kodoku to Gunshū), Miscellaneous Aphorisms
Yet when the poet finally arrives in the city, it does not live up to this ideal. It is a dismal, gloomy place, where all humanity and individuation is lost. The busy multitude becomes a lonely line of prisoners.

...In line, like some strange funeral
they crawl in and out of the shadow cast by the huge building
ghost-like lonely shadows
in this a dismal outdoor world, where glass windows glitter
each head topped with a faded blue paper cap
stuck together like an undulating stream of snake eggs
—surely you see—it’s a group of lonely prisoners.¹⁹

The city motif previously offering hope and escape from the enclosing walls of the country, becomes a metaphor for the denial of individual will, for the monotonous repetition of life. Like the workmen in the Tsuki ni Hoeru poem, "A sorrowful vista,"²⁰ the prisoners become a metaphor for the sad fate of the individual. Thus, the city, like the 'blue' cat, is a metaphor for the illusions of the poet. The 'hopelessness,' 'melancholy' and 'fatigue' which feed the pathos—the nostalgia—which is the central emotion of Aoneko, is embodied in these two images. Sakutarō attempts to give expression to this 'nostalgia,' through the help of what he defines in the preface as 'Melancholia of Sensation' and 'Melancholia of Contemplation.' These two melancholias become the garments Sakutarō wears on his journey in pursuit of the land of the flute. 'Melancholia of Sensation' involved the poet's senses, his instinctive emotions, while 'Melancholia of Contemplation,' was rather of his intellect.

The Melancholia of Sensation!...is like cherry blossoms clustering under spring sunshine, and yet also, like the smell of rotting chrysanthemums. It is the sum total of gloom-filled wretched loneliness. Is it because of this that my life, physically—sensually—grieves within a twilight of degeneration? Melancholy—absolute melancholy—that is the theme of my lyric poetry.

However, recently, rather than this melancholy of sensation, my life has tended more and more towards a contemplative melancholy....Thus, while some of my poems are born of the Melancholia of Sensation, others arise rather from the Melancholia of Contemplation. Yet neither style truly encompasses the rhythm which I seek. This rhythm is neither that of the sensory world nor that of the conceptual. These are but the garments which clothe my poetry.²¹

(Aporizumu Shūi), HSZ V, p. 264.
Thus, these two 'melancholias' are merely vehicles Sakutarō uses to create the rhythm of his poetry. This rhythm, the emotive rhythm discussed in the introduction, is born of dreams of harmony, dreams of an ideal world, free of the painful dilemmas which plague him.

[Aoneko's] essence is that one seductive emotion—the sound of a flute heard on a spring night. It is neither sensation, nor passion, nor excitement, it is but the cloud of nostalgia which floats quietly over the shadow of the soul. It is the tear-felt yearning for some far distant reality.\textsuperscript{22}

According to Ueda Makoto, this nostalgia existed at the boundary of ordinary consciousness, and thus found expression in images of dream and distance, both in time and space.\textsuperscript{23} Sakutarō expands on his concept of nostalgia below;

...ever since childhood I have been troubled by this unfathomable spirit of nostalgia. My bed at night was wet with pure white tears and the very entrails of my sentimentality were torn out by the cock's cry....This single emotion fits most perfectly with my remote disposition. From out my youthful past, this emotion visits my pillow-side even now, echoing like the seductive, tear-provoking tones of a flute. Enticed by thoughts of inexplicable sadness, I write to the accompaniment of this exquisite music.\textsuperscript{24}

(2) The structure of Aoneko

Like Tsuki ni Hoeru, Aoneko is divided into six sections, with one long poem, "Soldiers," making up a seventh. The poems fall into two distinct groups, with the first made up of poems written between April 1917 and April 1918, and the second those written between late 1921 and July 1922. Sections one and two make up the first group, with three through six making up the second. In the interim, Sakutarō turned to the composition of essays, aphorisms and Shi no Genri (Poetic Principles). Although the poems are ordered in a broadly chronological manner, again as with Tsuki ni Hoeru, the sections develop along thematic lines. The first two sections, like the poetry of Tsuki ni Hoeru, are primarily concerned with a search for a transcendent realm and draw on the 'Melancholia of Sensation' in this search. The latter sections are concerned rather with an exploration of the grotesque shadowed realm of humanity's darker emotions, only partially


\textsuperscript{23} Ueda, Makoto. Modern Japanese Poetry—and the Nature of Literature, op cit, p. 147.

visible just beyond the light.

In the preface to *Aoneko*, Sakutarō enthrones the image of a flute at the very centre of the collection. On hearing the strains of this flute, like the hydrophobic in *Tsuki ni Hoeru*, Sakutarō feels he must attempt to tell others of his emotions, even if he is misunderstood.

I blow through the mouthpiece of my flute, trying to perform—to sound—the music of my strangely seductive life. The flute, which in *Tsuki ni Hoeru* was a symbol of the upper ascendent realm, becomes, in *Aoneko*, the embodiment of the "nostalgia of a quiet soul."

The true essence of my poetry—that fragrance-filled pulsation of the heart, which provides the stimulus for all poetic composition—is but the bewitching allure of that exquisite flute and that alone. It is the inexplicable sorrow which yearns towards that world of reality—of truth.

The flute plays softly in the shadows, in tones of ghostly seduction, as the poet yearns for "the true existence of the soul." Thus, the flute is a metaphor for the unattainable, transcendent world just beyond the poet's reach. Like the thirst inspired in Zarathustra at the transfiguration of the 'solitary man,' having once heard the flute the poet's heart is filled with nostalgic longing to hear it again. The flute is the voice of a utopian vision which beckons the poet's soul, it is the sum total of all his longings.

...Young mistress! Are you lonely?
Look! Here is a small flute—its timbre a clear pure green.
Gently blow through this mouthpiece
send your music trilling into the clear sky.
Summon up your mirage
a single vision gradually drawing nearer
from far out over the distant sea of your longings.
Like a headless cat—tottering in the enshadowed graveyard grasses

Oh Young Mistress! I would that I could die—here in this sad twilight place.

Standing in a twilight graveyard, the narrator himself cannot play the flute, and so he calls on his lover to summon up a vision for him. The world in which he stands is a world of sickly moonlight, a twilight graveyard. *Aoneko* begins with a section entitled "Bed of Illusion," which

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creates a world of sensual melancholy. From the very beginning of the collection, Sakutarō establishes melancholy nostalgia as the central emotion. The first poem, "The twilight room," is a long, languid poem telling of the poet's lonely boredom. Lying in his bed in the pale twilight, the narrator ponders the meaninglessness of his life:

...the rhythmic throb of this powerless life
—fills me with loneliness...29

The heavy drone of a fly is the only sound, becoming a metaphor for the monotonous drone of the cycle of life. Just as the sick face in Tsuki ni Hoeru is a reflection of the poet's own psychic pain, the cold-numbed fly, barely able to keep its weight off the floor, is the embodiment the nihilistic ennui which pervades Aoneko.

...in a corner of the tear-swept room the exhausted
ghost of a fly hovers just above the floor...30

This first section introduces all the major images and motifs of the collection; the tension between sensation and contemplation—instinct and conscience; the continued duality between the ascendent and descendent; the impossibility of communication between humans, underpinned by the happiness of women and the sorrow of men; the city/country motif, that is a desire to escape into the anonymity of the city juxtaposed against a hatred of the dehumanizing power of urbanization; the 'blue' cat as a symbol of the illusions which haunt the lonely split self of the poet; and the swarming of winged creatures caught by the light, careless of their imminent death.

The fatigued narrator of "The twilight room" is torn between an adult desire for physical love—to relieve his senses—and a childlike desire for comfort—to have his intellectual fears relieved. He calls to his love, a maiden at his pillow, to pass her hands over his pitiful fate, over his gaunt body, hoping that their awkward passion will somehow assuage his loneliness.

...my Love...
now—oh, now—let's make our two bodies one
lay your white hands—oh, lay your hands—on this
thing of warmth...

my Love
my pitiful heart is like a child curled against your breast
—held tightly in your arms...31

29HS, "The twilight room" (Hakubō no heya), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 130. Vol II, p. 79.
31HS, "The twilight room," ibid, Vol II, p. 80. In the original publication in Shiika in November 1917, the poem ended not simply with the words "My Love" but rather: "My
Like the 'blue'cat, this lover is only an illusion;
   A young girl, lost in her own thoughts, stands at the pillowside of this
white bed. This young woman is the companion of my soul, my true
love. My sleeping heart turns to her, calling, 'My love, My love.' Of
course, she is not 'real.' She is but the dream lover whom fantasy paints
in my soul.\textsuperscript{32}

Much of the loneliness of the poem comes from the fact that the two lovers
can never truly bridge the gap between them, each one is lost in their own
world. This inability to communicate is a central motif in \textit{Aoneko}, reflecting
the divisions which plague not only the inner self, but also society as a
whole.

In the second poem of this first section, "Searching for a bed," it is
only women who experience the warmth and comfort of a soft bed. Men are
alone and always searching; "we men are destitute, full of sadness, ever in
pursuit of a huge bed, one for all humanity."\textsuperscript{33} They cannot find such a bed,
they are denied rest; they do not even know where to look. Lured to
women's bodies like a moth to a flame, the poet's energies disappate after
one short moment of passion and he is left in a state of melancholy and
unreleased sexual tension. The women in "Searching for a Bed" live in a
world far removed from the pain of "the sick face" buried alive in the depths
of the earth. Sakutarō contrasts the masculine fate of eternal loneliness and
sadness, with what he sees as the much happier fate of women. Women live
in constant communion with others, in a world of happiness. Men are not
admitted into this female world but must stand back ever yearning for
admittance. The women are like tiny birds—symbolic in Sakutarō's work of
the ascendent—nurtured in a warm and fertile bed.

\begin{quote}
Where is our sorrowful bed?...
we men are always sad at heart
we have no beds
but young girls all have beds...
behold these young girls as they lie within their
   beautiful beds, gentle in each others' arms
heart to heart
hand to hand...
Oh the ecstasy which thrills along the skin
   of these beautiful young girls
Oh their touching sighs of emotion.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{32} See \textit{Taikei}, op cit, p. 142.
\textsuperscript{33} HS, "Two Letters" (Futatsu no Tegami), \textit{Shūi Shihen}, HSZ III, pp. 224-33.
HS, "Searching for a bed" (Shindai o motomo), \textit{Aoneko}, HSZ I, p. 134. Vol II, p. 82.
Yet—in our hearts—we men are destitute
full of sadness, ever in pursuit of a huge bed,
one for all humanity...

Ahhh—Where shall we look?
Where is our sorrow-filled bed? Where shall we look?
—we with our ugly wizened hands and feet.
Where is the bed for these tired and wretched souls?\(^{34}\)

These women seem to possess an instinctive sensuality, a sensuality the narrator both fears and desires. As men cannot enter this feminine world, the narrator seeks to pull them down into his world. He wants to soak up a woman’s strength, drinking the milk of courage from her breast.

This duality between male and female is a strong undercurrent in *Aoneko*, used as a metaphor for the inability of man to see beyond his lust-coloured illusions, and consequently at the impossibility of true communication between humans. Men are lonely and unhappy, women are warm, sensual and happy, in communion with others.

Like reeds bending with the wind
my heart is feeble—always quivering with fear
Oh, Lady!
hold my body tightly
in the crook of your dauntless right arm
and quietly, quietly—soothe this sick and quaking heart....
Place your lovely—warm—hands
upon my feeble heart.
Ah—here! Place your hand just here—on my heart
Oh, Lady!
talk to me
gentle words, wet with tears

'Hush, you’re a good child.
Don't be afraid. There is nothing to fear...
But don't blink!
If you blink, your feeble heart will fly off like a bird.
Stay snuggled down close by my side for always....\(^{35}\)

Iijima Kōichi has noted that Sakutarō was searching for a woman who was both a mother and a lover,\(^{36}\) yet the search for a mother figure seems to far outweigh any desire for a lover. The narrator is like a child in a Victorian fairy story being warned of the terrible things that will happen if he or she is

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\(^{34}\)HS. "Searching for a bed" (Shindai o motomu). *Aoneko*, HSZ I, p. 133. Vol II, p. 81.


naughty. The narrator’s fear in this poem is a continuation of the terrible fear of the hydrophobic; of the sick man standing at the window in *Tsuki ni Hoeru*. The poem was originally entitled "Embraced by a strong heart and body" (Tsuyoi shinzō to nikutai ni idakaru), which suggests the feeble-hearted narrator sought not only physical but spiritual comfort from the woman. The narrator’s lust overpowers the transcendent potential of love and feeds his desire for possession; as seen in "Hands of cake," where the narrator, bewitched by his lover’s beauty, yearns to consume her body.

What do you think of this hand?
—so very cute—so plump?
What do you think of its rounded curves,
puffed up like risen cake?
Look at the fingers—so svelte—so very slender
just like tiny pale fish
I can’t possibly resist their motions—so gentle, so pliant
Ah!—I want so much to plant a kiss upon this hand
to bring it to my lips and devour it...
Oh—to gratefully accept the gift
of that one sleekly polished finger
to draw it completely into my mouth and suck
—suck forever!
the back of this hand is like the soft swell of a ‘waffle’
the fingers fill me with a cold appetite
—like crystallized sugar
Ah!—such an appetite
child-like, greedy—shameless.37

Thus, the first section of *Aoneko*, explores the pathos of the ‘Melancholia of Sensation;’ the pathos of the lust-fed desire of the moth for the flame, for a taste of the sugary body of his love.

The second section of *Aoneko*, entitled "Melancholy Cherry Blossom" continues to explore the corrupting power of lust, that is the melancholy implicit in the ascendent and descendent, as embodied in the allure of spring. The poet is enticed by the light, as it filters through the pallid transparency of cherry blossoms. The descendent has already invaded the ‘transcendent’ beauty of the blossoms, and all is heavy with the rancid stench of decay.

...the bitter smell of rotting blossom tears at my heartstrings

hats on, people go out to walk under the outdoor light
where the sunlight shines bright in the distance.
But I—I am sitting alone inside this dark room
my thoughts gather under the distant blossoms
go out to the young men and women—flirting together
in the fields and mountains
Ah, out there, they have such happy lives!...³⁸

As in Tsuki ni Hoeru, the narrator is trapped inside, forced to watch others
walking in companionship, in the outdoor sunlight. Outside is happiness;
inside is loneliness. The barrier motif continues to highlight the poet's
inability to communicate with and participate in the outside world.

Section three, entitled "A Lonely Blue Cat," is the first of the
sections containing the poems written and published in 1922-23. Subtitled
"A single blue cat—here where the willows bend in the wind as the moon
rises above the graveyard,"³⁹ it introduces the moonlit world of nostalgia
which is the very heart of Aoneko. The poet leads his readers into the
shadows; we move outside the pale light of the moon through the blossoms,
into the shadows beyond, entering a world of ghosts, graveyards and bats.

It is a cat-like melancholy scene
a lonely balloon ascends—a straight line into the sky
something catches the light, then disappears....
There is nothing left to be said
only memories remain—hair-raising, blood-chilling memories.
Ah My Lord God! Is there no way of turning back the pages?
of escaping these horrible recollections,
by losing myself in tears—like an infant child?⁴⁰

The fourth section, entitled "Refined Desire," poses a question; 'Where is
the land where the flute sounds?' In the poem "Let us go to the land where
the flute sounds," Sakutarō tells the tale of a traveller in pursuit of the
beautiful realm of the flute. Clearly he will never reach this ascendent realm.

As we speed along in the rickshaw
the fields—the mountains—hang thick with mist.
As the willows blow in the wind
everything disappears in the haze...
Off ahead along the rickshaw ruts
my destination seems to lie somewhere out in
this strange, seemingly endless landscape

³⁸HS, "Melancholy blossom viewing" (Yūtsu naru hanami), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 155.
Vol II, p. 93.
the landscape opens up in the distance
to the lonely, melancholy strains of a flute
'tis an emotion unendurable to man....

The ruts in the road provide proof of the existence of the land of the flute. The narrator cannot reach the transcendent realm himself; he is dependent on guides and vehicles to carry him. Though unsure of the driver he rather likes his single-mindedness: "I can't but feel my rickshaw driver really is rather single-minded!" This line, seems to gently ridicule both the driver and the narrator himself, for their pursuit of something which they both know is only an illusion. The driver, like Wang in Niji o ou hito, concentrates his whole being on his mission.

Where is this land of the flute? Is it with the poet's beloved cat, far off in the distant sky? Will he find it if he gives himself up to his lustful passion, that is, through the 'Melancholia of Sensation'?

...Oh, My Long Lost Love! My Beloved Cat!
I know but one song
from out the distant sky—where seaweeds blaze—
I'll throw you a flaming, festering kiss
for I have no words beyond this sad passion.

Or perhaps the 'beloved cat' can only be reached through the 'Melancholia of Contemplation,' as proves the case for the young student in "Weather and thought." This dejected boarding student is trapped by life and casts off the grim reality of his existence for a utopia in his imagination.

Like a captive animal—the boarding student crawls out from his cheerless bed
and throwing on his coat
charges headlong into his perception of nature.
This nature is bright and beautiful, fresh and vigorous.
It gives off a lovely fragrance....

The student bursts out from the cheerless gloom of his lodgings into an imaginary world, brimming with sunshine and beauty. Beauty cannot exist in 'reality' and must be pursued in the world of imagination.

The fifth section of Aoneko, "Will and Illusion," carries the subheading; "of the world of ideas and images," and as such is born of the 'Melancholia of Contemplation.' This section revolves around the image of

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41 HS, "Let us go to the land where the flute sounds," (Fue no oto no suru sato e ikō yo), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 194. Vol II, p. 113.
42 HS, "The calendar of idleness" (Taida no koyomi), HSZ I, p. 188. Vol II, p. 110.
44 HS, ibid, Vol II, p. 112.
a pale horse of destiny.

Under the frozen overcast skies of winter
here in the true desolation of nature
the wretched, dejected shadow of destiny's pale horse
—ever caught in the cycle of cause and effect—
stands silent, chewing on the roadside grasses....

Through the 'Melancholia of Contemplation,' Sakutarō explores the ideas and images which help him understand the meaningless repetition which is his life. Like a country rooster, the poet flaps his wings in a desolate farmyard, pecking at the dry ground.

...flapping my wings in a destitute farmyard...
I am a sickly grey-white rooster
beating my wings—a sad and pitiful creature....
Ah, I am but a broken sundial—a grey-white country rooster.

Like the broken sundial, the poet has lost the ability to measure time, all is a ceaseless continuum of boredom. Like ghosts, the poet's past follows him, yet with each corner he turns, he loses contact with past joys, and can never find them again.

...My only cause for sorrow
as I pass another of life's dim turnings
is that I will never return here again.

This inability to turn back feeds his nostalgic longings. This desolation draws on the dichotomy between the tedium of the country and the city as the symbol of escape. In the country monotonous rain feeds the damp rot which invades the houses; the external decay symbolic of the inner, emotional death of all inhabitants.

Under the falling rain
all is a washed-out grey
I gaze out at the lonely desolate countryside
at building after building—wet and dripping....

Throughout the long falling rains
I remain in this tedious rural backwater
watching pale ghost-like forms,
aimless in the surrounding tedium.

It is poverty I see
exposed in the falling rain

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46 HS. "The white rooster" (Shiroi ondori), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 206. Vol II, p. 120.
47 HS. "The face" (Kao), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 205. Vol II, p. 120.
—drenched—desolate—a truly disgusting sight.\textsuperscript{48}

One cannot escape the weight of history in the country, where expectations destroy the freedom of the individual. The aphorism, "The country clock," tells of Sakutarō's dislike of the monotony of country life.

In the country, all people live together with their ancestors....In the hills behind the farmhouse lies a desolate wintry hillside grave. The long, long history of their family, sleeps together with the many bleached white bones. In time, the living family members too will be buried in that same grave, and together with their great grandparents and great grandmothers, will lie quiet dreaming dull monotonous dreams....

In the country, all the clocks in all the houses have stopped. An old-fashioned grandfather clock,...still points to the same time as when the ancestral ghosts were living....All is a single continuum of 'eternal' time. There is no past, no present, no future....No change comes to their environment....Change is destruction, the very ruin of country life. Because time would be interrupted, and the chain of their eternal reality broken....Country life is one of isolation...\textsuperscript{49}

The final section of \textit{Aoneko}, "Bewitching Spirit," tells of the captivating pleasures of the world of sensation. It is a world of unfocused dreams and desires, born of the 'Melancholia of Sensation.'

\begin{quote}
From the breeze-swept
shadows of the soft grasses
lust jolts me awake—spirited and vivid
I am burnt alive
such pleasure
such joy
spring emotion heats my heart....\textsuperscript{50}
\end{quote}

With spring in the air, the narrator looks back at the 'throbbing pulse' of his youth. The agony of his sexual lusts are like moths to a flame, desperate in their longing:

...a giddy whirl in the light—pushing and jostling
—the cloud of insects meets its death.

...Somewhere behind the gaudy brightness of the solitary light
I sense a strange sexual agony
in the beating of their heavy sponge-cake wings
I watch the moths
watch their lives passing—pitiful—solitary—full of longing....\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{50} HS, "Bewitching spirit" (Namamekeru reikon), \textit{Aoneko}, HSZ I, p. 212. Vol II, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{51} HS, "Brilliant showy emotions" (Hanayaka naru jōcho), \textit{Aoneko}, HSZ I, p. 214. Vol II, p. 124.
In his dreams, a fantasy lover satisfies all his appetites, but her dreams take her away from him, away on her own search, highlighting the impossibility of the communication between people.

...Your long hair lies in disarray, as I sit close listening to your unconscious drowsy mumblings you are lost in a deep, deep sleep I wonder what dreams you dream...
you trace your path through lonely foothills towards the impenetrable peak high above yet lose your way on your solitary road
— you lose your way.
...Where— where— where are you bound?
Your sentimental emotions sour into nightmare as an obscure scent of mystery— like a rotten white chrysanthemum— pervades your dreams.  

This poem tells of the unconscious journeyings of the sleeping mind; of "the moods and lyricism of unfocused dreams." The 'Melancholia of Sensation' is born of this realm of unfocused dreams, these glimpses of unconscious instinct.

\textit{Aoneko} ends with a long poem entitled "Soldiers." Sakutarō was unsure about whether or not to include this poem—which is so different in tone from the rest of the collection. In "Memories of \textit{Aoneko}," he notes;

I had intended to delete the last poem, "Soldiers," from this collection as I was rather unresolved about it, but finally decided to include it because Murō Saisei and Satō Haruo were so impressed with it.

"Soldiers" describes the power, the brutal force of a passing army juggernaut as it crushes all under its grinding wheels, a veiled criticism of Japan's military involvement in China. Sakutarō usually avoided political issues in his poetry, this is one of the few times he mentions the military in his work.

The deadweight of the massive machines
roll heavy on the ground.
The ground recoils
under the pounding boots

\footnote{52HS, "Dreams" (Yume), \textit{Aoneko}, HSZ I, p. 218. Vol II, p. 126.}

\footnote{53HS, Endnote to "Dreams." \textit{Aoneko}, HSZ I, p. 218. Vol II, p. 126.}

\footnote{54Satō Haruo (1892-1964) was a poet and novelist from Wakayama prefecture. A member of the \textit{Shinshisha} (New Poetry Society), he was closely associated with the Yosanos, and Mori Ōgai. Originally writing mainly poetry, which he published in \textit{Subaru} (The Pleiades) and \textit{Mita Bungaku} (Mita Literature), on meeting Tanizaki Junichirō he turned to fiction. His representative works include; \textit{Den'en no Yuutsu} (Rurual Gloom, 1917) and \textit{Junjō Shishō} (Poetry of Martyrdom). [Miyoshi, \textit{Bungaku Shōjiten}, p. 108.]}

\footnote{55HS, "Memories of \textit{Aoneko}" (Aoneko: Kioku), \textit{Taikai}, op cit, p. 207.}
in dense clouds of dust.
Watch! The powerful brawn—the massive juggernaut
passing in broad daylight.
Huge stubborn masses of
oil-smeared iron.
The huge juggernaut, fired by many lives,
rolls on, heavy on the ground.
—with a pounding, pounding crunch
—a smashing grinding crunch.56

Sakutarō uses both verbal and onomatopoeic repetition to emphasize, again and again, the relentless force of the military power. The bodies of the soldiers, like oiled machines pass under a gloomy sky. The men have lost all individuality, the eyes are fevered as they try to probe the shadows which surround them, their exhaustion feeding their fears.

...numberless eyes pass by
wide with fever
they flit, aimless and weak
through the fear-filled shadows of the yellowing landscape
bone-tired
exhausted
anesthetized
—eins, zwei! eins, zwei!
—Mark time!57

Thus the collection ends with the heavy pounding of a military machine, which crushes all humanity and individuality under its weight.

(3) A thematic analysis of Aoneko

Although the main theme of Tsuki ni Hoeru, that is the dichotomy between the descendent and transcendent is embodied in the Aoneko pursuit of the flute, the central theme of Aoneko is the battle between emotion and intellect, instinct and conscience, leading to a desire to rediscover a holistic state in the primitive origins of man. This search for the primitive becomes a search for man's original—spiritual—homeland, for some place to lay his weary head. The poet is like a hermit crab, a creature with no home of its

56 HS, "Soldiers" (Guntai), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 234. Vol II, p. 128. It is noteworthy that Sakutarō wrote very few poems with such overtly military themes.
57 HS, "Soldiers" (Guntai), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 235. Vol II, p. 129. The German "eins zwei" in the translation is based on an aphorism entitled, "Of Happiness" where Sakutarō wrote the 'One, Two! One, Two!' of the rhythmic march of soldiers, using 'eins zwei' as furigana. It thus seemed appropriate to use this in the translation. See HS, "Of happiness" (Kōfuku ni tsuite), The Corridor and the Room, HSZ IX, p. 145.
own, destined to steal the shells of other creatures. This crab is the embodiment of the poet's desire to find his true home.

Coldly the tide ebbs and flows
the teeth of the crustacean have dissolved in pain
—sharp, like the bite of vinegar
Ah, no longer any friends—nor love
wet on the shoreline, watching the sea-grasses
—ghostlike spirits of the dead...
Suspicious, scuttling along the shore
spontaneously rushing forward
—then, crawling around like a shadow
it is a cloud-like single heart—the ghost of
a lonely hermit crab.\textsuperscript{58}

The poet's soul is portrayed as a fearful nervous being, scuttling along the shoreline, unable to depart on a journey to some 'far distant reality,' and thus unable give up the idea of leaving.

Nostalgia forms a limpid cloud around the soul which yearns through its tears for this 'distant reality.' A loss of will in the face of fate gives birth to an all-pervasive ennui. Unable to control his fate, the narrator/poet casts himself down on a sofa, lost in melancholy.

...the time during which I wrote Aoneko was the most melancholy rainy season of my life. I had completely lost the desire 'to live.' Yet, I didn't have the will, the violent passion to commit the decisive action of suicide. It was a life of inactivity and ennui, of gazing outside the window, and of throwing myself down on a sofa, with a suffering and fatigue I could in no way contain. It was a state of subdued sobbing deep in the heart, all alone.\textsuperscript{59}

A first step in the thematic analysis of this collection requires a further examination of the 'Melancholia of Sensation' and the 'Melancholia of Contemplation.'

(a) Melancholia of Sensation

What did Sakutarō mean by the 'Melancholia of Sensation'? It was both the melancholy inspired by the fragile beauty of the cherry blossoms clustering under spring sunshine, and also that of the smell of rotting chrysanthemums. The decay is the 'negative' implicit in the 'positive'

\textsuperscript{58} HS, "The song of a hermit crab" (Yadokari no uta), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 176. Vol II, p. 104.
\textsuperscript{59} HS, "When Writing Aoneko" (Aoneko o Kaita koro), The Corridor and the Room, HSZ IX, p. 220.
beauty of the spring blooms, just as the "gloom-filled wretched loneliness" is the negative inherent in the seductive tones of the flute. Sakutarō termed the poetry of this collection, the poetry of adultery, sticky with the sins of immorality. In his eyes, Aoneko was the "faded flower" which is the aftermath of sinful passion. Section two of Aoneko, "Melancholy Cherryblossoms," gives the following definition of the concept of 'Melancholia of Sensation.'

Melancholia of Sensation! I am always captivated by the irresistible allure of the light—as too by the bitter smell of rotting cherry blossoms—of the whitely dusty rays of outdoor light.

To explore this realm of 'sensation' Sakutarō uses sensory imagery, particularly smell, sound and touch. The 'Melancholia of Sensation,' as Kubo argues, is closely associated with sexual tension, with a primitive carnal desire, as seen in the last two lines of "Terribly melancholy."

...these sexual sensations evoke such an unbearable tension—all is so terribly, terribly melancholy.

The dark sexuality of the 'Melancholia of Sensation' finds expression in "Pussy Willow."

A noble, elegant moon floats high
above the cold pale face
embarrassed, the moon
speaks to your corpse with gentle words....
Filled with lonely desire—yes, with desire—all unknown to her
through the wetness of my tears
I paint fresh young blood on her lips.
Ah—languishing lovelorn
I cling to this pale departed spirit, seeking to stay my sorrow....

As the narrator paints fresh blood on the dead lips of his lover—reminiscent of "The murder case" in Tsuki ni Hoeru—his desire comes back to him with renewed force. His desire is inextricably tied to the 'negative' descendent world of death and decay.

The "irresistible allure of the light," is embodied in the many images of flying creatures—butterflies, moths and bats—which inhabit the world of

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64HS, "Terribly Melancholy" (O soroshikku yūutsu naru), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 149. Vol II, p. 91.
Aoneko. In the poem "Moonlight," Sakutarō depicts winged butterflies of the day, forced by their attraction to the moonlight to inhabit the world of the night. Sakutarō deliberately used butterflies (chō) rather than moths (ga) to create a creature which is truly vulnerable in its pursuit of ecstasy (although it is not until the last line that we realize these creatures are actually butterflies). The butterflies stand out white against the darkness, as the moonlight catches their wings, willing to sacrifice their all to that single emotion.

Beating your large heavy wings
Ah—such feeble hearts!
In the bright moonlight—like the globe of a gas lamp
Behold the swarming cloud of living creatures
—so white as they pass
watch the direction of their flight
Behold the single ardent emotion of these living creatures
in the moonlight—so like the bright globe of a gas lamp
Ah—the commotion of these pitiful butterflies is so very sad.67

In "Terribly melancholy," Sakutarō again uses the image of butterflies, here as a metaphor for the chaos of carnal desire, ever in pursuit of illusion.68

...thronging clusters, carnal knots of matter on matter
pitch black butterflies swarm in chaotic pursuit...
a terrifying earthbound shadow
within this alluring forest of illusion
I watch the gradual spread of the shadow of melancholy
the beating of the wings of my soul
is like the unsightly death-throes of a small bird.
Ah, these sexual sensations evoke such an unbearable tension
—all is so terribly, terribly melancholy.69

Though at first, the butterflies' wings are white, coming as they do from the daylight realm of 'reality,' as the poem progresses they turn black. Thus, as night takes over, the destructive power of the descendent blackness overpowers the pure whiteness of the ascendent. The poem is set in a forest, evoking a sense of the primitive—a perfect foil for primitive carnal passion. The increasingly large and chaotic swarm of butterflies is like the swelling tide of sexual desire.

67HS, "Moonlight" (Tsukiyo), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 144, Vol II, p. 87. This poem was first published under the title "Acute sorrow" (Shinkoku naru haii), and then later in Chō o yunu (Dreaming Butterflies) as "Commotion" (Sōjō).
68Kubo Tadao argues that this poem is one of the best examples of the 'Melancholia of Sensation,' citing its overt sexual tension. See Kubo, Tadao, Taikei, op cit, pp. 156-7.
69HS, "Terribly melancholy" (Otoshibiku yūutsu naru), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 149. Vol II, p. 91.
Deep in a thicket of forest trees
white butterflies fly here and everywhere
they fly in circles—clustering, first here then there
flutter—flutter—flutter—flutter—flutter—flutter70

The repetition of *tefu*, *tefu*, *tefu*—translated as; flutter, flutter, flutter—
evokes a sense of the actual flight of the butterflies, suggestive of the
increasing heart-beat of sexual passion.

In "Brilliant showy emotions," these flying creatures become a
metaphor for hidden lusts and desires. The poet's lustful longing becomes
that of a moth—with its heavy sponge-cake wings—for the light. The moths
come from the shadows of the dark forest, a metaphor for the darker,
grotesque side of human nature.

A lonely electric light shines in the depth of the night
by the edge of a silent country path...
Here and there, from the dark forest
and from the foothills of the distant mountains
clouds of moths throng together
the solitary light their only guide.
Like a spine-chilling swarm of locusts
a giddy whirl in the light—pushing and jostling
—the cloud of insects meets its death....
I dream of that solitary light gleaming in the advancing night
I dream of a lonely showy emotion.
Somewhere behind the gaudy brightness of the solitary light
I sense a strange sexual agony
in the beating of their heavy sponge-cake wings
I watch the moths
watch their lives passing—pitiful—solitary—full of longing.71

When first published, this poem included the endnote—"of the mysterious
nature of emotion"—giving credence to the theory that Sakutarō sought to
unveil something of the mystery of his hidden lust in this poem. The poem
"A black organ," also hints of this dark hidden world, existing just beyond
the light. Here the narrator peers out into the wall of darkness that surrounds
him, towards a huge black organ which stands on the border between light
and dark. The encroaching darkness seems to crawl towards the narrator
leaving glimmering snail-like trails.

Lady—play thy organ!...

Who is it that sings?
Who is it that listens so quietly?
Ah, in this pitch black melancholy darkness
plastered against the wall
who is it that plays this fear-inspiring, gigantic organ?...
Pray—you invalid!
There is nothing—no time for fear...
Oh Lady—play thy organ....
Play that huge black organ
until these emotions somehow calm themselves
ardently, casting yourself against
that fearsome wall of darkness....

For a moment, the religious melody of the organ manages to assuage the poet’s terrible fear of darkness. Kubo Tadao believed this poem to be a good example of Sakutarō’s tendency to place too much importance on the musical intoxication of the structural rhythm, to the detriment of the thematic content, yet the terrible fear of the narrator is one with the fear of the descendent, one of Sakutarō’s central poetic concerns.

The poem “Spring emotion” plays upon the decay which is the negative side of beauty and decay; upon the sin which is the negative of desire. Such duality is inherent in the ‘Melancholia of Sensation’.

...I am mesmerized
by the grief—the sorrow—the many diverse emotions of the sky
by the cold cry of the tiny silvered birds.
The joy of the coming of Spring—is like the notes of a flute,
which plays the music of every human life.

Rare flowers tremble by the field-side path
a single note reverberates though the heavy rain-washed air
it embodies the alluring sound of a woman’s tears.
Spring swells forth so quietly.
Spring comes—even to the forests deep in the mountains
and there my soul—wriggling like an earthworm
deep in the rotten stump of a tree—
with a shiver, exhales a cloud of fungus
a cloud of poison mushrooms—venomous strawberries
—of evil crimson growths
these fungi release a strangely alluring colour and scent
giving off a lonely smell throughout the daylight hours....

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72 HS, “A black organ” (Kuroi fūkin), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 159. Vol II, p. 95. Sakutarō is said to have taken the organ motif for this poem from the organ played at Hakushū’s wedding in 1917. See Taikai, p. 163.  
73 Kubo, Tadao. Taikai, op cit, pp. 163-3.  
Sakutarō works through the senses, first smell and then hearing, to evoke a sense of spring. Spring is two-sided, on the one hand, alluring like a woman's tears, and on the other filled with venomous hidden growths. This darker side, releases its strange allure even in the daylight, showing the power of the descendent over the ascendent.

The poem "Disintegrating flesh" explores even deeper into this descendent world, into a world of death and decay.

Within a field aswarm with bats
  I gazed at the pillar of disintegrating flesh.
Trembling forlornly in the twilight
  a raw stench quivers in the shadows—like grass pushing up
through a decaying corpse
unsightly—like swarming maggots crawling upon rotten flesh.
Ah, here in this place clothed in shadow
my spirit catches hold of an itching fear...
it is a dark fear tightly coiled around the torment of lust.
At the sharp tones of the snake charmer's pipe
my dissolving shadow wept in loneliness.\(^{75}\)

Physical disintegration parallels the emotional breakdown of the narrator/poet. The will sinks into unknown depths of fatigue, as the body begins to crumble into 'nothingness.' In Sakutarō's eyes, the snake charmer's pipe was the embodiment of the terrible allure of the light; an allure which outweighs the fear of the venomous shadow which accompanies it. In "Disintegrating flesh," Sakutarō "sang a lyric of homesick nostalgia" using the metaphor of "a pipe played by an Indian snake-charmer to evoke a sense of the dreary, desolate transcendence of a Schopenhauer-like Nirvana."\(^{76}\)

In addition to the poems which explore the negative/positive dichotomy inherent in the beauty and decay of spring, Sakutarō also explores the allure of lust in the 'Melancholia of Sensation.' Lust is portrayed as the negative reverse-side of love. The poem "Bewitching spirit," is a hymn to the power of such lust.

From the breeze-swept
shadows of the soft grasses
lust jolts me awake—spirited and vivid
I am burnt alive
such pleasure
such joy

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\(^{75}\) HS, "Disintegrating flesh" (Kuzureru nikutai), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 173. Vol II, p. 103.

\(^{76}\) HS, "When writing Aoneko," HSZ IX, p. 220.
spring emotion heats my heart....

Ah, it brings back my youth
like the natural spread of warmth
the gentle sprouting
of a spring day as it melts the snow
such pleasure
such joy
my heart beats faster to sex's throbbing pulse

Cracking open the hard shell of this idea so long shut away
I feel the quiet flow of my lifeforce
from the swampy depths of care and melancholy
I feel the hesitant approach of spring
abrupt
yet coy
like the first hint of warmth in icy water.\textsuperscript{77}

Only lust can break through the barriers which cut the poet's fatigued heart
off from companionship, and set life flowing again. Spring, usually a realm
of decay in Sakutarō's work, is here portrayed in a more positive light.
Spring becomes a metaphor both for the warmth of his passion, and the
titillating coyness of his lover, as he gives himself up to his carnal desires.

The poem which, perhaps, best embodies the essence of
'Melancholia of Sensation' is the \textit{Teihon Aoneko}\textsuperscript{78} poem, "The corpse of a
cat." In it, Sakutarō introduces 'Ula,' the woman he drew from Edgar Allan
Poe's portrayal of 'Ligeia.'

A scene swollen and heavy with moisture
like a sea sponge
no sign of life
yet the strangely sad water-wheel seems to be crying
and there, in the shadow of a dim and gloomy willow
the gentle form of the one who waits.
Her body is enveloped in a thin shawl
her beautiful gaseous garments trailing
wandering silent, like a ghost.

\textsuperscript{77}HS, "Bewitching spirit" (Namamekeru reikon), \textit{Aoneko}, HSZ I, p. 212. Vol II, p. 123.
For other poems which explore the allure of 'lust,' see "Unrequited love" (Katakoi),
\textit{Aoneko}, HSZ I, p. 216. Vol II, p. 125; and Spring evening" (Shunshō), \textit{Aoneko}, HSZ I,

\textsuperscript{78}\textit{Teihon Aoneko}, published in 1936, translates literally as "The standard \textit{Aoneko} Text."
It is a compilation of previously published poems, including the whole of the first edition
of \textit{Aoneko}, plus poems from \textit{Chō o yuma} (Dreaming Butterflies) and \textit{Hagiwara Sakutarō
Shishū}. See HSZ II, pp. 141-254.
Ah Ula! Lonely woman!
"You’re always late my love!"
We have no past, no future
and more, we have faded from the realities of life
Ula!
Let’s bury the muddied corpse of the cat
in this so strange a setting.  

As discussed in the introduction, Sakutarō, like Poe, was interested in the repetition of sound, in the musical effect of words as a means of heightening the effect of his poetic motifs. The forlorn repetition of "Ula" deepens the mood of despair which pervades the ghostly setting of the poem.

Ula was my Ligeia and the everyday life of my household was the embodiment of The Fall of the House of Usher. An existence without a past, without a future. An existence of nothingness, flavoured with ill-omen, which had faded from the actual realities of "life;" an Usher-like reality. All this ill-omened reality of uncleanness, is symbolized in the muddied corpse of the cat, ... Ula! Please don’t touch that thing with your own hands. I was always instinctively terrified, trembling and crying in my dreams.

It was undoubtedly an immoral, unnatural, gloomy abnormal life. To all intents and purposes I was as one who lived together with the spirits of the dead. Even if that was not quite the case, I had no road on which to flee the realities of life, being unable to endure the remorse and the loneliness.

My entire life has been the fate of the ill-omened. Looking back over my past, it is but the continual eerie cry of "Nevermore. Nevermore," of Poe’s ‘raven.’ Yet even in the midst of that nihilistic misery, more than ever I found it impossible to forget my heart-rending longing for beauty. With no will, no hope, exhausted on my bed, listening to the music box songs of my bedside clock, my nostalgic heart travelled through the wretched byways of my life.

Sakutarō was drawn inexorably towards the inner core of his terrors. In those depths of despair and nothingness he finds the pale shadow of a transcendent vision, his ‘Ula.’ Yet this transcendentance can only be found by delving deep into the inner darkness, by sullying his hands on the corpse of the cat. To Sakutarō, this poem "The corpse of a cat," was "a type of symbolic love poem."

This "Ula" is not a real woman, but rather the ghost of a woman. Clothed in her diaphanous garments, the imagery of this love poem gives her breath. Although beloved, this distressed woman is smeared with the

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79 HS, "The corpse of a cat" (Neko no shitai), Teihon Aoneko  HSZ II, p. 234.
fresh blood of emotion. This woman of past longings is like music. Music which calls out in anguish, in sad helplessness, through the past, the present and the future, through the calendar of eternal time.

The central motif of the poem, is embedded in the sounds of the word 'Ula,' and if my readers can gain an impression through that sound of the musical emotion which is 'Ula,' they will probably understand the poem's central theme. However if they cannot gain such an impression they will probably never understand its meaning. That is to say, the word "Ula" is a stylistic device within the structure of my poem, the same as the "Nevermore" and "Lenore" in Poe's work, "The Raven." In Poe's poem, the repetition of those words creates a sort of musical mental image of nostalgia, which becomes a motif of the poem. A nostalgia like the wind which blows from a lonely graveyard.81

As seen in this image of Ula, Sakutarō was greatly influenced by Poe, in his role as a major chronicler of trauma and inner illness within his society. In a short aphorism entitled "Great Teachers," Sakutarō writes of Poe as follows:

Dostoevsky is expanding darkness. Nietzsche is a tall tower reaching up to heaven. Poe is an abyss of unknown depth. These three are wonders of the universe and are of a genius beyond the realm of human powers.82

In a further essay, "Poe, Nietzsche and Dostoevsky," Sakutarō outlines his reasons for admiring Poe so highly;

...I have respected Poe for a long time. His representative collection of short stories is for me, a literary bible....From the first moment I read [his] tales, they stuck in the depths of my brain like a demon. A demon which I could not expel from my poetic illusion by any means whatever....Poe possesses true mystery, with an eerie gruesomeness in its inner recesses, in the place where the word genius holds meaning, in the midst of mystery mixed with a touch of insanity.

...Poe, is a poet of mystery, who has risen above the practical world because instinctively he is a weird unearthly madman. Poe's art is smeared with slimy blood. Smear with the stickiness of a madman, with the lifeblood which flows from the heart...with Poe, there is only despair through and through to which you surrender from the beginning, there is nothing else you can do.83

Poe had a gift for probing the dark inner recesses of the psyche, bringing its fear, guilt and uncleanness out into the unsympathetic light of reality.

82 HS, "Great Teachers" (Idai naru kyōshitachi), Flight of Despair, HSZ V, p. 124.
83 HS, "Poe, Nietzsche and Dostoevsky" (Pō, Nichte, Dosutoiefuzukii), Literary Discourse (Bungakuron), HSZ XI, p. 555. See Vol II, p. 160.
Poe had a pretty bitter doom. Doomed to seethe down his soul in a great continuous convulsion of disintegration, and doomed to register the process. And then doomed to be abused for it, when he had performed some of the bitterest tasks of human experience that can be asked of a man. Necessary tasks too. For the human soul must suffer its own disintegration, *consciously*, if ever it is to survive.84

Poe, like Dostoevsky, was a soul mate to Sakutarō. Although a child of a very different background and culture to Poe, Sakutarō early felt himself wounded by the meaninglessness of his times, poisoned by nihilism, forced to watch the disintegration of his inner self.

Poe was introduced to Japan in the Meiji Period, when Aeba Kōson’s translation of *The Black Cat* and *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* appeared in the Yomiuri newspaper in 1888.85 Of Poe’s work, Sakutarō favoured two distinct types; forlorn tales of lost love, and bleak vicious motiveless murders. *Ligeia*, a tale of her defiance of death, and her fight back to life through the possession of her husband’s new wife’s body, encompasses both. Sakutarō speaks of his attraction to ‘Ligeia,’ in a short piece entitled "Poe’s Love Poetry;"

Captivating charm and a certain suspicious mystery co-exist in Poe’s literature. I have never seen literature of such fascinating sentimental emotion as in his ‘Ligeia.’ It is romantic love smeared with fresh blood, told in a graveyard of mad and lewd corpses, it is the enchantment with a sensual ghost. No Heine poem makes you feel such sensuality as ‘Ligeia,’ they never make you feel the nervous shuddering of fresh blood, as it touches hard against the sentimentalism of passion. Poe wrote his love poetry in prose but, unique in all the world, he created a new form of Romantic Love Poetry.86

Sakutarō felt that Poe’s *The Fall of the House of Usher*, which describes the destruction of a once great family, inbred to the point of insanity, was a depiction of his own family. Usher had once been “a fair and stately palace,” ringing with voices of wit and sparkling with luminescent beauty but gradually all fell into decay, as "evil things, in robes of sorrow, assailed the monarch’s high estate," and Usher became nothing but a "dim-remembered story of the old time entombed." The last heir of Usher is portrayed as a man of expression so bizarre it was impossible to connect him with "any idea of simple humanity." He was the bounden slave "to an

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86HS, "Poe’s Love Poetry" (Pō no renai), *Afuhorizumu Shūi*, HSZ V, p. 334.
anomalous species of terror."  
Sakutarō felt that his life, like that of Usher was caught in a timeless cycle, imbued with ill-omen. What was once good and pure had long since decayed. The poem "Raven-haired woman," is another work born of Poe's influence.

**Gentle Raven-haired Lady!**
stealing into my attic room
with an intoxicating cloud of musk.
Mysterious night bird
lonely—you alight on a wooden chair
your beak pecks at my heart—my eyes brim with silent tears
**Night Bird!**
From whence comes this heartrending love?
Cast off your melancholy garments—and quickly
fly off into the dew-wet winds of the night.  

The raven as a single image was rarely used in traditional Japanese poetry, which adds credence to the theory that Sakutarō's raven was a Western import, coming from Poe. However, according to Kubo Tadao, Poe's raven was born of the sadness which possesses man for all eternity, while the raven woman in Sakutarō's poem is more a symbol of melancholy lust, as exemplified by an earlier version of the poem, then entitled simply, "The Raven" (*Karasu*), which contained the line, "you are the black raven of lust." According to Kubo, in Poe's poem, the sharp beak of the raven, with its grim and ancient aura, pierces the poet's very heart; while in Sakutarō's case the sight of the raven fills him with feverish desire, and his eyes flood with tears. This tearful response to the object of his lust is a feature common to much of Sakutarō's poetry. His feverish desire led Sakutarō on an increasingly nihilistic path.

...I was infatuated with Schopenhauer, and the thematic concerns of my lyric poetry drew a great deal on that philosophical influence. This philosophy contained a large portion of eastern nihilistic thought, a type of pained philosophy of the negation of will, which proceeded from the so-called suffering of human desire. Wearing bloodstained, seductive

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89The expression 'cold crow'—*kankarasu*—however, was a common winter *kigo*, for when winter came, ravens came closer to human habitation in search of food. The image of a cold crow or raven together with the image of leafless trees became an image of loneliness and barrenness. See Yamamoto, Kenkichi. *Kihon Kigo 500*, op cit, p. 885.
garments, it is the pessimistic philosophy which wanders in the
graveyard of a spring night. Truly, is there anything as melancholy and
as pessimistic but also as painfully seductive as Schopenhauer's
philosophical works.91

"The lascivious graveyard," becomes an objectification of this pessimism.
The graveyard is haunted by an elusive ghost, reminiscent of Ula.92

The wind blows through the willows—
surely no other such graveyard setting
could be so dark and gloomy?
A slug crawls up onto the fence
the smell of lukewarm salt-tide wafts up
to this observation point.
Lady, why have you come here?
Shadow—you are so pale and gentle
—yet mysterious like the grass
neither a shellfish nor a pheasant, nor even a cat
you are but a lonely ghost.
The stench of rotten fish—as from the back streets of
some destitute fishing village—
rises from the shadow cast by your wandering form.
It is the raw stench of intestines melting in the sun
the smell of sorrow—sad and heart-rending
—all but unendurable.

Ah, Lady.
You wander the tepid warmth of this spring-like night,
clothed in such an alluring lip-red kimono!
yet gentle as a younger sister.
Neither the graveyard's moon, nor phosphorescence
—neither shadow, nor truth.
Naught but unspeakable sadness!
My life—my body—begin to decay
in the dim shadows of this place of nothingness
I droop low—like a willow—salacious and sticky.93

The kimono clad figure in this poem, embodies both the seductiveness of

92 A number of critics, such as Kubo, argue that the lady in this poem is in fact Elena,
and as such is a symbol of unrequited love. Kubo also notes that the fact that Elena died
in Kamakura, accounts for the waterside quality of this poem. Kubo believes Elena is "the
woman—who had died so long ago—wearing crimson garments. who walked the
graveyard on this spring-night, trailing a fishy smell." See Taikéi, op cit, p. 173; and HS,
93 HS, "The lascivious graveyard" (Namamekashii Hakaba), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 172. Vol
II, p. 102.
desire, and the pessimistic melancholy of nihilism. Together with plums and cherry blossoms, the willow was one of the central images of spring. The image of the pale green leaves of a willow, hanging down low—thin and misty—was a traditional image of spring beauty in Japanese poetry. The willow was also used as a euphemism for prostitutes, thus reclining in the shade of a willow could represent a visit to a brothel. Here, the willow stands within the "dim graveyard," which acts as a metaphor for the corrupting power of the narrator’s desire. This poem creates a world of languid sensuality, of spring decay, with the wind, which blows through the willows, symbolizing the primal urges of man. Sakutarō chose to repeat the dirge-like phrase *demo nai—anata wa kai demo nai, kiji demo nai, neko demo nai* (neither a shellfish nor a pheasant, nor even a cat)—in a Poe-like refrain. This repetition highlights the futility of life, creating the sense of ennui, which pervades Aoneko. By "drawing on the peculiar sticky clamminess evoked by the sound of this colloquial phrase," Sakutarō believed he created a sense of melancholy, a certain 'ennui' which gave his poetry a musical quality. In Sakutarō’s eyes, this melancholic music was best captured in "The lascivious graveyard."

This poem is the very essence of the lyricism of Aoneko. Aside from giving a licentious kiss to my old companion and beloved cat, I have lost all hope in life. In the shade of the willow of nothingness, weighed down by the recollection of a woman, I have stood lost in evil licentiousness—bewitching yet viscous. The poetry of the Aoneko volume is a poetry of adultery. Its life was a history of the sins of immorality. If I were God, I would want to obliterate all this part of my past life. It was a life of ill-omen, a life of sadness and gloom, a shameful life of profanity.

(b) Melancholia of Contemplation

As noted above, the 'Melancholia of Contemplation' is founded in the intellect; it is of 'conscience' rather than 'instinctive emotion.' It is of a meditative reflection on the emotions captured through 'Melancholia of Sensation.' In Sakutarō’s eyes, the poems in section five, "Will and Illusion," encapsulate this type of contemplation. The poet wanders with

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94HS. "The Construction of Poetry and the New Movements in the Waka Circles" (Shino Kensetsu to Kadan no Shinundō), Poetics and Controversy in the Waka Circles (Karon, Kadan Ronsō), HSZ VI, p. 391.


Buddha, questioning the structure of his thoughts, the meaning of his life;
...Walking the moon-shadows
Buddha questions his gentle heart
"Is thought but one design?"\(^97\)

Sakutarō speaks of this contemplative life in the following aphorism entitled, "Lying on the grass."

On the sundrenched lawn, like the sprouting buds of the young grasses, my thoughts burgeon forth one after the other. But what is their connection with me? I just want to lie here and gaze up at the blue sky, and let these phantom thoughts melt off into the midst of this dreamy heavenly blueness. In the shadow of my own emotions, like a dream picture of the warm familiarity of a shady tree, I want to tell of those "thoughts which are emotions," which like tiny birds fly high up in the sky.\(^98\)

It is the pursuit of these "thoughts which are emotions" which is the aim of 'Melancholia of Contemplation.' In another essay, Sakutarō notes that "Poetry is the explanation of will, it is the nostalgia which sings of that yearning for Nirvana."\(^99\) These thoughts, like "tiny birds," fly off into the sky, and as in Tsuki ni Hoeru, dreams of the ascendent still beckon the poet. In "Sleeping in the fields," the narrator escapes his reality into beautiful dreams of upward ascent.

An emotion grows
  grows tall and straight like a tree.
  This seedling of life grows steadily taller.
  As if aiming to reach right up to the sky above
  —when it grows to full height—
  it grows tall and broad....
  How high can this seedling of life possibly grow?...
  lying down in this open field
  I have truly discovered the most delightful dream.\(^100\)

Yet on awakening he finds himself still chained to his earthly reality, lying flat on the ground. This awareness gives birth to the melancholy of Aoneko. The poem, "Twittering birds" is another work born of the 'Melancholia of Contemplation.' The narrator wanders a wood lost in thought, when his attention is suddenly caught by the twittering cries of little birds high up in

\(^{97}\)HS, "Is thought but one design?" (Shiisō wa hitotsu no ishō de aru ka), Aoneko, HSZ 1, p. 198. Vol II, p. 115.
\(^{98}\)HS, "Lying on the grass" (Shibafu no uue), New Desire (Atarashiki Yokujō), HSZ IV, p. 74.
\(^{100}\)HS, "Sleeping in the fields" (Nohara ni neru), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 146. Vol II, p. 89. It was originally entitled "Dreaming in the wide open fields" (Hirobiro shita nohara de yume o miru).
the treetops. Birds and treetops as we have seen symbolize the upper realm, the transcendent world of desire. Here, as the narrator wanders on the ground pondering his life, the birds' cries take on an even more feverish pitch when they become aware of him. Yet for all their attention seeking, the man's attention is turned inwards as he bemoans the comfort he has lost; as he looks back with melancholy at what he once possessed but which is now denied him.

On a day of gentle winds
depth in the quiet of a stand of trees,
   I walked a leaf-strewn path
lost in melancholy thoughts.
The air was clear and bright
the riotous clamour of twittering birds —
   high in the tops of the red pines—captured my senses
puffing out their chests, the song of these cheerful little birds
 took on a different emotional pitch.
Ah, turning from the gloomy meditations of my past
   —my life—my environment.
Why today? Why do my emotions suddenly
   make such an about face?
I have lost little before now
even from my life itself
   —only comfort
Aah—'tis only comfort that is lost to me,
   but oh, for such a long long time.101

This poem was first published under the title, "Loss of comfort" (Kaiteki o
ushinatte iru), and was followed with an endnote, "—on the melancholy
nature of thought—"(shisō no yū'utsusei ni tsuite). This earlier title
underlines the importance of 'loss of comfort' to the poem. The final title—
tenchō—is a word Sakutarō created himself, adding the character for
'twittering' or 'chattering' to the character for bird. While the outer world is
one of springtime beauty, with the cheery little birds puffing out their chests
to attract attention, the poet's inner world is sunk in gloom. The sunny
weather does nothing to refresh his spirit. The changing emotional pitch of
the birdsong parallels the changing emotions of the narrator. Can he, like the
birds, puff out his chest and change the tone of his morbid life? He asks
himself, that if it is only comfort he has lost, why the melancholy? Surely
that is not such a great loss. He finds it hard to turn from his gloom.

In the world of Aoneko, a 'fly' is used to symbolize the fatigued

heart and soul—the body and mind—of this melancholic poet. In "The song of a fly" the poet's soul becomes like a feeble fly, stationary, unable to behave like a winged creature. The poem begins with the question, "Is spring nearby?," for surely the sounds of merry children in the outdoor games is proof of its arrival. Youth, a time of sunlight and outdoor games, is only a memory, and now a shadow spreads in its place;

...from out my youth—now long gone—these feelings cast
a shadow over my life
gradually this huge shadow of loneliness grew
this terrifying shadow of melancholy began to spread.\textsuperscript{102}

For all the imagined joy of the past, the narrator now remembers that he was alone then, just as he is now.

I sit alone in my room
gazing at the darkening shadow of my soul.
With a lonely sigh
feeble, like a fly come to a standstill
my life wanders directionless—all energy lost
in the midst of the quiet darkening of this spring evening....\textsuperscript{103}

In a letter to Takahashi Motokiichi, written in May 1917, Sakutarō writes;

"The song of a fly" creates an image of the sound of the wings of an enfeebled fly pausing on a window pane. It symbolizes nervous exhaustion; my response to the 'cries from afar' which accompany a spring day. That is to say, this poem attempts to express the rhythm of the 'melancholia of one who stands alone on a spring day.'\textsuperscript{104}

The 'Melancholia of Contemplation' is an intellectual attempt to capture the allure and essence of the flute. Sakutarō draws on religious imagery, to develop this more intellectual, less emotional road. In the poem "The visionary world Buddha saw," Sakutarō explores man's spiritual yearning towards the ascendent.

It was a brilliant moonlight night
in a place where the evergreens mingled together
sheltering all below.

The nostalgic road of religion is open
linked to the dreams of that rather implausible saint.
Ah, the love and pity which flows within that being's heart
—the vision of immortality reflected in that being's eyes
all shine so bright....
Ah—my thoughts are with this being
and the visionary land he sees...

\textsuperscript{102}HS, "The song of a fly" (Hae no shōka), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 147. Vol II, p. 90.
\textsuperscript{103}HS, ibid, Vol II, p. 90.
\textsuperscript{104}HS, "Letter to Takahashi Motokiichi," May 1917, HSZ XIII, p. 176.
Oh, my lord Buddha!
I adore—the petals of the lotus you see in your vision
—the feverish fragrance of the flower which blooms
in this pallid life
Oh, my lord Buddha!
All is so bright—so splendid—it makes me so, so lonely.\textsuperscript{105}

"Is thought but one design?" is another poem, which explores Buddha's conceptual dilemmas. Associating himself with Buddha, the poet poses the question that has been obsessing him.

Deep in the shadows of the densely overgrown forest
Buddha allowed a single thought to walk free
as he savoured the pale brightness of nature
He saw the great beauty of the moonlight—

enough to revitalize any meditation
enough to dissolve any obstacles on the path to Nirvana.

Walking the moon-shadows
Buddha questions his gentle heart
"Is thought but one design?"\textsuperscript{106}

Drawing on the tradition that holds that Buddha found enlightenment on a night of full moon, Sakutarō hints that enlightenment is not far off; a state of nirvana far removed from the wanderings of the poet's life. Buddha is not only walking, he is pondering as he walks, the meditative rhythm allowing his thoughts to develop.\textsuperscript{107}

In \textit{Aoneko}, the poet, a constant companion to frustrated pain, has lost his voice for howling, and sinks into a melancholic \textit{ennui}. His loneliness has taken on a nihilistic tone, as exemplified in the words of "Melancholy riverbank;"

...life is just a meaningless, melancholy continuum
A Rainy Season!
All is but the clammy gloom of falling drops of rain
—it is just rain—on and on—just rain—rain—rain!\textsuperscript{108}

The poet listens to the raindrops. Like those drops, his life is clammy, dismal and monotonous, and most of all no longer subject to his will. The

\textsuperscript{105}HS, "The visionary world Buddha saw" (Hotoke no miru gensō no sekai), \textit{Aoneko}, HSZ I, p. 162. Vol II, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{106}HS, "Is thought but one design?" (Shisō wa hitotsu no ishō de aru ka), \textit{Aoneko}, HSZ I, p. 198. Vol II, p. 115.
\textsuperscript{107}The Japanese word used here is \textit{ayumase} which Kubo argues carries both these connotations. See Taikē, op cit, p. 165.
poet has lost everything, he has become a beggar, he has neither hope nor belief to alleviate his terrible loneliness.

...Why such boundless loneliness?
Belief is no more—nor can I find a lover on whom to depend....
Ah—here within this beggar-like existence
I have lost absolutely everything.
Even the wind has died yet here on this deserted rural road
I find it shrivelled onto the underside of the millet leaves
—the unspeakable loneliness of my past.109

In the poem "The field mouse," Sakutarō explores this terrible loneliness. Both his 'contemplations' and his 'sensations' lead to nothing and the poet is forced to face melancholy defeat.

Where is happiness?
The deeper we dig into the muddy sand
'tis only sadness that wells up from the depths....
I have neither hope—nor dignity—nor even any future.
There is only remorse, which far beyond redemption's reach runs off—like a field-mouse.110

Digging into the ground only offers more pain. Sakutarō skilfully employs the shifting perspective technique here. He divides the poem into three sections, with the first five lines posing the question, "Where is happiness?," "Where has it gone?" The next three lines make up section two, which gives an answer; love has disappeared off into the distance. The last section then tightens its focus and concentrates on the gloomy reality of the narrator. The field mouse becomes a symbol of his remorse.

The world which surrounds the poet is collapsing, like the decaying wharf under the paws of the howling dog in Tsuki ni Hooru. "Heritage" depicts this world of collapse, with the crushed houses symbolic of the destruction of the spirit of all the inhabitants.

A crumbled heap on the ground
the old dwelling sleeps like a huge spider.
Deep in the darkness of this lonely landscape
an animal quivers in fear
stalked by a fearsome nightmare
it howls—sad and forlorn
—nooauru—toooaru—yawaa...

Listen! Be still!
There, a howling from the other side of the road
that's the howl of a dog!

"Mother, is the dog in pain?"
"No, my child. The dog is hungry."

Far off where the distant sky still glimmers faintly
where shadowy silhouettes tremble in the half light
a dog stares down its enemies.
From far back in its distant heritage—back in the dim
origins of instinct—in ancient memory
the dog senses the pitiful shades of its ancestors.

Pale with fear, the heart of the dog
howls long on the dark night road.

"Mother, is the dog in pain?"
"No, my child. The dog is hungry."111

The concept of primitive, ancient memory which appears as an old lover in
this poem was one that attracted Sakutarō throughout his life. The mother
and child see the same incident differently, like the father and son in "The
toy flute," hinting at the impossibility of true understanding between any
two individuals. This poem does not refer to heritage—to heredity—in a
biological sense, but rather in a psychological sense. In what was originally
an article serialized in Asahi Shinbun in February 1937, entitled "Yume ni
itsu te" (About dreams), Sakutarō noted that dreams were born of blood
links with one’s distant ancestors, that is, dream is in fact primitive
memory. "Dreams are the departed souls of our ancestors."112 In dreams all
are equal, animals and humans. Kubo argues that this concept of dream as a
primitive memory was heavily influenced by Jack London.113 London’s
works embody a primitive struggle of strong and weak individuals in the
context of irresistible natural forces such as the wild sea or the arctic wastes.
In his stories of man in and against nature, London strips everything down
to a primordial simplicity that has the strange and compelling power of
ancient myth.114 London’s dog hears the call of the wild, and escapes back

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112 HS, "About dreams" (Yume ni itsuite), Return to Japan (Nihon e no Kaiki), HSZ X, p. 634.
113 Jack London (1876-1916) was an American novelist who began life as a common
sailor. In addition to his autobiographical work, Martin Eden (1909), London is best
remembered for his novels The Sea Wolf (1904) and The Call of the Wild (1903).
114 Gottesman, Ronald. et al. (ed.), The Norton Anthology of American Literature, W.W.
into nature's wilderness, a wilderness from which man originally came. Though Sakutarō's dog is further removed from the wild, still it hears the call, as if it was a distant memory. As noted above, the fifth section of Aoneko, entitled "Will and Illusion," is the embodiment of the denial of individual will. The first poem of this section, "The pale horse," portrays Sakutarō's concept of the power of fate and man's inability to fight this power.

Under the frozen overcast skies of winter
here in the true desolation of nature
the wretched, dejected shadow of destiny's pale horse
—ever caught in the cycle of cause and effect—
stands silent, chewing on the roadside grasses.
As I move towards the shadow
the pale horse seems to watch me.

Quickly move on! Leave this place!
Quickly—quickly—slip away! Clear away this illusion
from my motion-picture-screen life!
Horse! I want to believe in my own free-will!
Flee the pale shadow!
Flee the karma—the destiny—the determination
—and the wretched despair
frozen forever in this dry photographic-plate landscape.115

This poem was first published with the subheading, "—telling of the unavoidable force of fate—", which gives proof to the theory that the main theme of the poem is the denial of free-will. Karma and destiny both deny free-will. Critics believe Sakutarō took the title for this poem from the work of the same title by the Russian novelist, Boris Ropshin (1879-1925),116 yet Ropshin himself was clearly influenced by Revelation 6:8 which reads,

I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.117

The four horses of revelation stand for the created universe, like the four points of the compass or the four winds. The colours of the horses correspond to the character of the rider, white symbolizing conquest, the other three, bloodshed and war, famine and death. The white horse symbolizes external conquest, while the red horse refers to internal

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revolution. The pale horse describes the ashen appearance of the dead, symbolizing death. In reference to Sakutarō’s "pale horse," Kubo Tadao notes that although Sakutarō undoubtedly took his image of a pale horse from this section of Revelation, its rider was 'buddhist fate' rather than the 'death' of the biblical version. Yet in the poem Sakutarō’s pale horse is riderless. The horse itself becomes the symbol of death, of the cycle of eternal return. The poet is desperate to "Flee the pale shadow," to escape from the cycle. If only he could believe in free-will he would be free of this shadow. In an essay entitled, "The sorrowful emotion of the theory of destiny," Sakutarō talks of this image and of the gloom which accompanies belief in the cycle of karma;

If we believe all our actions and decisions are tied to the ill-fated determination of cause and effect, life becomes a thing of gloom—a thing without hope. In such a life, the leaden sky of winter hangs low over our heads, and a shadow of the 'pale horse' eats the grass by our roadway. This one frozen scene embodies the sorrow and gloom of absolute despair.

(4) Return to a more primitive state

The world of Aoneko is a secret hidden world of shadows, a twilight world, poorly lit by a few scant moonbeams. The poem entitled, "The secret garden of the empty house seen in my dreams," paints a picture of this shadowed world, with the empty house a metaphor for the solitary, enclosed existence of the poet. Grotesque and twisted creatures creep just out of view in the whorls of darkness. Crawling insects and reptiles, "pale creatures pass their lives crawling upon the ground—one upon another," are used as a metaphor for the inner horrors of a tortured spirit.

...Shaded by the trees, the garden of this vacant house
is always lost in shadow.
All that is visible is a faint flowing outline
—the single sliver of a small stream
and the sound—always the sound of flowing water
gentle, sad—day and night
and then there are the grotesque forms,

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120 HS, "The sorrowful emotion of the theory of destiny" (Shukumeiron no aishōteki jōsō), Miscellaneous Aphorisms (Aforizumu shū), HSZ V, p. 262.
the slugs, snakes, frogs and lizards,
crawling around in the musty damp near the fence....
my heart opens to thoughts
of this deep night
leaning against the fence, my heart blows a flute
—hard and strong...
I see the secret of this uninhabited vacant house
and feel a sense of nostalgia for the insoluble riddle
of this deep deep seclusion.¹²¹

The flora and fauna evoke a picture of a very primitive world. The upward growth of *Tsuki ni Hoeru* has been overtaken by the horizontal 'crawling' of these grotesque forms. Sakutarō was obsessed by what he saw as the incomprehensible nature of animals, the hidden secrets of a hidden world, commenting, "even today scholars and biologists have still failed to understand the secret of these animals."¹²² Noting that Sakutarō had highlighted certain sections of Leviticus from the old testament, which lists the clean and unclean animals, Kubo Tadao comments that this poem is inhabited by unclean animals, which are symbols of the poet's unclean, hidden lust.¹²³ The poem "The first primal emotion" portrays a similar primal world, where Adam walks a jungle filled with these 'unclean' animals and plants.

Deep in the jungle
huge rubber trees—with odd elephant-like ears—
grow thick and lush.
An endless succession of ferns and reptiles
—of snakes, lizards, newts, frogs and salamanders
trail long shadows across the darkened lagoon.

What memories haunted Adam
in the sadness of his noontide longings?
Like a cloud—like love eternally tender
primeval emotion surfaces beyond memory's distant shore
slippery—impossible to catch.¹²⁴

¹²²HS, "The poetry of the moon" (Tsuki no shijō), HSZ XI, p. 197.
¹²³Kubo, Tadao. *Taiketsu*, op cit, pp. 160-1. "Every creature that moves about on the ground is detestable; it is not to be eaten. You are not to eat any creature that moves about on the ground, whether it moves on its belly or walks on all fours or many feet; it is detestable. Do not defile yourselves by any of these creatures. Do not make yourselves unclean by means of them or be made unclean by them." See Leviticus, Ch. 11, *The Holy Bible*, op cit, pp. 127-8.
The shifting perspective technique is used here. The scene is set in the third person in the first stanza and then shifts to the sharper focus of the second person in the second stanza. As Adam was the 'first man,' his memories are used as a metaphor for the most primitive, the earliest memories of our world. Like Adam, Sakutarō yearns to capture this cloud-like memory, the sum of his "noontide longings."

The poem "Fearsome mountain" builds on the fear inspired by this primal world; by the primeval strength of nature—and of man's weakness against it. The mountain is portrayed first as a huge spider and then as a crawling crustacean, a primitive grotesque creature caught out of its own element. The crab, the spider and the roaring winds, all add to the fear the mountain inspires.

I gazed at the features which form this fearsome mountain
its eyes like a huge spider
as huge clouds of smoke belch upwards
through the pitch-black night sky.
Like a strange sea crab crawling close to the ground
a tongue—flashes redly—in, then out;
arms and legs splayed wide
as it crawls the base of the mountain....
Nature quietly steals a breath
yet slowly the strange, huge shape which is this mountain
continues its attack.
Now so very close the grotesque shape raises its head
seeking to devour its prey.125

This poem arises from the same philosophical stance as "Heritage" and "Hidden behind nature's back;" it is like a dream where the narrator returns to a primitive—primeval—man who stands in fear before the violent dance of nature, only able to comprehend it in terms of a metaphor of some animal his mind can encompass. Men are like fearful children, who tearfully stand amidst the great vastness of nature, as seen in "Hidden behind nature's back."

As we passed through the shadowy thicket
we saw a weaving pattern
as it swam the surface of the pitch black ground.
—'Twas the shadow of the moon.
Pushing through the thick grasses
we heard the restless tones of a small flute
filtering through the gaps in the lonely fronds.

—'Twas the voice of the wind.

We are but unseasoned children
with such pitiful senses
we sense only a fraction of the world around us....
Nature terrifies us
with her strange words—words unknown to the adult world
trembling like reeds
lost in this lonely wilderness, tearfully we call
"Mother! Mother!"126

Nature evokes a terrible primitive fear in our souls, which makes us wish for the protective care of our mothers. Man cannot hear nature's secrets with his own ears, but rather must rely on his instinct for understanding. Somehow animals and other living creatures communicate on a level unknown to man. If we harness our primitive instincts, perhaps we will understand these creatures and through them nature's secrets. Thus, although the 'Melancholia of Contemplation' and the 'Melancholia of Sensation' lead the poet back into a primitive world, he cannot go far enough back. Adam and Buddha both suffer from the dilemmas which plague the poet. The return to his primal origins has not provided him with the desired avenue of escape.

(5) The endless passage of time—endless cycle of life

In the world of Aoneko, time passes at the whim of fate. The travel motif is an important element in the portrayal of the turnings of fate. In "Nameless song," a mysterious boat pulls into an overgrown, all but forgotten wharf.

A naked woman, bronzed by the sun of the south seas.
A mysterious steam ship, reddened with rust
pulled in alongside the wharf thick with summer grasses
soft white puffs of smoke wafted upwards
the smoke of the sailors' tobacco rises in lonely plumes.
Like a quail—I flapped my wings
as I flew up above the wilderness of tall briars
Hey clouds! And you too Ship!
Where did she cast aside her ship's anchor?
Tormented by a strange passion
I visited the silent graveyard
and there in the thick grasses blown by the breezes

126 HS, "Hidden behind nature's back" (Shizen no haigo ni kakurete iru), Aoneko, HSZ I, p. 207. Vol II, p. 121.
lay that love bird's keepsake—rust-encrusted and silent.\textsuperscript{127}

The narrator is like a quail, a small plump bird which, living in the autumn grasses, became a \textit{kigo} for autumn. In the Japanese poetic tradition the quail (uzura) became a 'pillow' word for homely fields and villages, as quails live deep in the grasses of cultivated fields.\textsuperscript{128} Like a heavy little quail, the narrator has to beat his wings hard to rise above the ground. While the sky is symbolic of the ascendent in Sakutarō's poetry, clouds become a symbol of limitless loneliness. In "The poetry of clouds" Sakutarō tells of the empty sadness of the heart of a man who lies back to view the clouds, and of the great "lyricism of such limitless loneliness."\textsuperscript{129} In an aphorism entitled "The Sea," Sakutarō tells of the image he had of the sea:

The impression of the sea soon evokes a sense of exhaustion in people. With the repetitive ebb and flow—in and out, in and out—of the waves, they remember the daily boredom of life. Then lying down on the sand in the sunshine, a vast sense of dissatisfaction and irritation wells up in some corner of the heart which gazes out to sea.\textsuperscript{130}

This dissatisfaction with the unchanging nature of the sea, runs as a current through the poem "Gazing out at the open sea."

\begin{verbatim}
Not even grass grows on this beach
Ah, what a lonely strand.
I watch the waves in silence
as they tumble over and over.
The white evening moon seems to float
on the very tops of the waves....
I let go a long call—searching for the shadow
of unchanging happiness.
I gaze far out—my face towards the open sea.\textsuperscript{131}
\end{verbatim}

The narrator stands observing the constant tumble of the waves. The sea is boundless, evasive, and monotonous. The excitement which had once fed his desire to travel, as seen in the following prose poem, "From my cabin," is completely lost in \textit{Aoneko}.

Storm, storm, waves, waves, surging swell, surging swell, surging swell.
Careering horizon, listing up then down. Rattling clangs, rasping clutter.
To the deck! to the deck! Raise the anchor! Raise the anchor! My charging, plunging mariners. Make a dash for it! From the cabin window, window, window, window. Careering horizon, angling high.

\textsuperscript{129}HS, "The Poetry of Clouds," (Kumo no Shiika), \textit{Essays (Zuihitsu)}, HSZ IX, p. 383.
\textsuperscript{130}HS, "The Sea" (Umi), \textit{Justice of Nihil (Kyomo no Seigi)}, HSZ IV, p. 413.
\textsuperscript{131}HS, "Gazing out at the open sea" (Oki ni chōbō suru), \textit{Aoneko}, HSZ I, pp. 135-6. Vol II, p. 83.
Chain, chain, chain, wind, wind wind. Water, water, water. Close the hatch! Close the hatch! To starboard! To port! Waves, waves, waves. Listing! Listing!\textsuperscript{132}

The poet cannot find any escape from his existence, he cannot return to a more holistic life. His emotions and intellect remain separate, impossible to unite. The 'Melancholia of Sensation' and 'The Melancholia of Contemplation' have both failed to help him capture the essence of the flute, and the poet sinks into a state of passive boredom.

Utterly exhausted by an atrophied will, I could not even resolve on suicide, all I could do was just lie there on the chaise longue in abject weariness, wishing my flesh would just dissolve of its own accord—reduce to its chemical elements—that I would be reduced to complete nothingness.\textsuperscript{133}

This passiveness, as we shall see in the following chapter, begins to turn to anger, as the poet becomes increasingly frustrated by his fate and his lack of control, as well as the indignities he feels society forces on him.

\textsuperscript{132}HS, "From the Cabin" (Senshitsu kara), \textit{Fate} (Shukumei), HSZ II, p. 280.
\textsuperscript{133}HS, "When Writing Aoneko," HSZ IX, p. 220.
CHAPTER FIVE

Hyōtō—The Iceland

(1) Introductory remarks .......................... 182
(2) The structure of Hyōtō ......................... 187
(3) A thematic analysis of Hyōtō ................. 190
   (a) Group one—Autobiographical diary-like poems 194
   (b) Group two—Kyōdō Bōkei Shi .................. 195
   (c) Group three—Four love poems ................ 199
   (b) Group four—Metaphoric poems .............. 201
(4) Conclusion .................................. 205
(1) Introductory Remarks

Published in June 1934 by Daiichi Shobō, *Hyōtō* was Sakutarō's sixth collection. It is regarded as his last work as the two later collections, *Teihon Aoneko* (1936) and *Shukumei* (1939), contain—apart from a number of prose poems—only reprints of previously published works.

Both the style and formatting of *Hyōtō* diverged dramatically from his previous work. It represented a 'retreat,' a return both stylistically and conceptually to classical styles.

All the poetry of *Hyōtō* is written in classical bungo (*kanbunchō no bungo*). This choice of the bungo style is undoubtedly a 'retreat.' From my maiden collection *Tsuki ni Hoeru*, my first step as a poet, I had rebelled against classical literary styles of poetry, and had created a new style of colloquial free-style verse. Somewhat unexpectedly I achieved a rather audacious destruction of existing poetic forms. And so in the light of my past history, the fact that I have now turned back to bungo, is undoubtedly an about-face—a 'retreat.'...After desperate attempts to discover a new language for Japanese poetry, I ended up returning to age-old literary language. In doing so I abandoned my cultural mission as a poet. I have aged. Ah! May many new poets emerge and open a new road, a road I failed to build in my time!1

No doubt aware that critical response to this work would question his return to classical forms, in the *Hyōtō* preface Sakutarō argues for a return to the simplicity and passion of classical poetic forms.

Modern lyric poetry either places too much emphasis upon sensation and follows an imagist thread, or loses itself in the structural design of an intellectual concept, forgetting the fundamental importance of poetic passion....I believe the pinnacle of poetry—multifaceted though it is—forms but a single colour, for all its apparent complexity this high point is actually simple and unsophisticated. All the dizzying heights of advanced technique have returned to the natural simplicity of artlessness. Standing at the very end of all historical development, the ultimate concept of such poetry as true art exists in the simplest, most fundamental essence of poetry, that is the exclamation of poetic passion—pure and naïve. [Thus, the author regards Japanese *waka* and *haiku* as the future direction of modern poetry.]2

Sakutarō harks back to the *haiku* form, stating his belief that it is this form which holds the future of modern poetry. This was a rather marked about face from his earlier allegiance to 'free verse,' and angered many critics who

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1 HS, "The Language of *Hyōtō*" (*Hyōtō no Shigo ni tsuite*), HSZ X, pp. 30-8.
felt Sakutarō had betrayed his principles—and that his new work was nothing but tired old repetitions, echoes of past work. Naka Tarō makes the following remarks about Sakutarō’s so-called ‘retreat.’

This ‘retreat’ was not simply just in terms of his phraseology, that is, his use of bungo. It was something more fundamental; a ‘retreat’ back to the ideas of naturalism which Sakutarō had formerly renounced with such passion, thus it was a ‘retreat’ in terms of his poetic methodology.3

Hitherto hailed as one of the greatest colloquial poets of his age, Sakutarō’s ‘retreat’ shocked contemporary poetic circles, and critical opinion became divided as to Hyōtō’s worth. How could this great pioneer of new colloquial forms turn back to classical patterns?4 Fujiwara Hideo, however, questions whether Hyōtō is actually ‘classical’ in its style, arguing that the refined diction of classical poetry is distinctly absent from Hyōtō. That is to say, “the poetry of Hyōtō does not tell of a unified world through a classical awareness of beauty, but rather in a manner similar to the colloquial style of Tsuki ni Hoeru and Aoneko, tries to disgorge in a very ‘raw’ form the many facets of the poet’s emotional life.”5 Fujiwara consequently argues that Hyōtō created a new style of bungo poetry, a feat for which Sakutarō deserves high praise.

Sakutarō chose these classical patterns as the best vehicle for the expression of his sense of alienation; for the fierce anger which had taken over in Hyōtō from the melancholic nostalgia of Aoneko. He felt modern colloquial language to be too weak and lax; the strictures of classical language gave more bite to the sharp coldness he wished to portray. The language of Hyōtō is more de-personalized, more controlled, with less of the immediacy, the painful anguish of Tsuki ni Hoeru, and less of the viscous monotony of Aoneko. He felt the greater variety of inflections in bungo gave him greater scope for expression. He could draw out a single word to the full length of a line for special effect, or use a clipped conciseness unavailable in more modern colloquial language.

Critics felt there was a gap between what Sakutarō was trying to

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4 It should, however, be noted that there were elements of classical diction in Sakutarō’s past work. According to Epp, some twenty percent of Tsuki ni Hoeru uses classical forms. See Epp, Robert. Rats’ Nest—The Collection Poetry of Hagiwara Sakutarō, op cit, p. 30.

express and his actual expression, which resulted in a lack of unity. Hinatsu Kōnosuke argues; "Hyōdō shows a complete poetic decline—its form does not follow its spirit." Others condemned not so much his style, but his portrayal of a weakling unable to control his own fate.

The division in critical opinion is exemplified by the opinions of Suzuki Tōru and Iijima Kōichi. For Suzuki, Hyōdō marked a 'return to fundamentals.' In Aoneko, the poet had thrown himself down on a sofa in the absolute depths of despair. He had sunk to absolute zero, however. Suzuki argued, this forced Sakutarō to confront his essential life force which allowed him to gain a new awareness of self, and that it was this new perspective which found expression in Hyōdō. Suzuki, like Terada Tōru, regarded Hyōdō as the pinnacle of modern Japanese poetry, in that it was a cry of truth from the heart of the poet, and not just the sensual images and illusions of his past work. Iijima, however, could not value Hyōdō very highly, as he felt it lacked the sharpness of the senses and the freshness of thought seen in Tsuki ni Hoeru and Aoneko. Miyoshi Tatsuji passed harsh criticism on this collection, branding it contrived, arguing that the stiffness and vagueness of the style prevented the reader responding with any emotional immediacy. Quoting from the poem "New Year," Miyoshi commented on such phrases as ware wa nao kuite uramizu (Even now, though I have some regrets, I bear no grudges) and ikanareba kyomu no jiki ni/atarashiki benshō no hiyū o shiran ya (How can I fathom the existence—or non-existence—of the new dialectic here within the time and space of nothingness?), stressing that Sakutarō's phrasing was very difficult to understand and that the images were unclear, noting that "in these cases the content, which should not only have preceded but also enriched the structure, swells to obesity and the language cannot call its bluff." Fujiwara, while agreeing with Miyoshi that two or three of the Hyōdō poems exhibit this failing, argues that Miyoshi's dismissal of Hyōdō, and his positioning of the Kyōdō Bōkei poems (Views of my Distant Home) as the

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7Satō, Fusayoshi. "Hyōdō no Hyōka" (A Reading of Hyōdō), Hagiwara Sakutarō: Nihon no Sakka (10), op cit. p. 177.
9HS, "New year" (Shinnen), Hyōdō, HSZ II, p. 117. Vol II, p. 139.
pinnacle of Sakutarō's work, was far too dismissive.

In the Hyōtō preface, Sakutarō states that he has abandoned all "artistic designs and ambitions" aiming only to write as his "heart directs."\(^{11}\)

The few poems gathered in this collection, are—for the author at least—pure and passionate exclamatory poems, poems that express with simplicity and frankness, the excitement which is the purest element of poetic passion. In other words, abandoning all artistic designs and ambitions, the author writes as his 'heart directs,' following the natural flow of his feelings. The author does not presume to ask the world to value this collection. Rather than viewing it as a work of art, he wishes them to see this collection as a record of the actual life of the author, as an earnestly written diary of the workings of his heart.\(^{12}\)

Fujiwara Hideo clearly doubts this lack of ambition commenting that;

Through a distinctive use of kango and wording, Sakutarō attempted to create his own individual style of bungo, however all too often the harsh effect he was hoping for ended in failure, yet Sakutarō obviously had quite a clear artistic intent and ambition when he created Hyōtō.\(^{13}\)

Irrespective of artistic ambition, Sakutarō was clearly aiming to give expression to the 'directions of his heart.' His central aim was to give expression to the "inner scream," which he aimed to release in all its fury. He wished to throw off all disguise and expose his raw naked pain. In an essay entitled "Words of a Wolf," Sakutarō comments;

The poetry of Hyōtō was written during a major crisis; all except my determination on suicide lay dormant. No other poetry is as stained with blood. Irrespective of skill, this poetry is the first spine chilling quiver of a piercing scream. I can't help resenting its dismissal as "literature of a defunct poetic sensibility written out of force of habit," even if these words come from Miyoshi.\(^{14}\)

The following extract tells of his state of mind at the time of writing Hyōtō;

My life was completely bankrupt, and I stood on the verge of a terrible spiritual crisis. I resented absolutely everything. I wanted to scream in anger, in an unceasing roar. When I wrote Aoneko, inactive and lazy—as though weakened by opium-filled dreams—in my heart, I still embraced a vision. When, however, I wrote Hyōtō, I had already lost that vision. Only resentment, desolation, negativity and scepticism remained in my heart; only emotions of pure violence. The spirit of Hyōtō can be summed up in the single word—scream.\(^{15}\)

To Sakutarō, Hyōtō was a collection of fragments, like shards of ice, which

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\(^{14}\) HS, "Words of the Wolf" (Rōgon), HSZ V, p. 490.

\(^{15}\) HS, "The Language of Hyōtō" (Hyōtō no shigo ni tsute), HSZ X, p. 30.
had broken away from the frozen glacier which was his past life. Only fragments survived; he could no longer capture a true picture of his past life. *Hyōtō* reads like an unravelling woollen scarf, as if certain strands which have always been part of Sakutarō’s life were unravelling independently. Although Sakutarō’s greatest contribution to modern Japanese poetry was, arguably, achieved through the shock tactics of *Tsuki ni Hoeru*’s imagery and structure, in terms of thematic context, the fragmentary nature of *Hyōtō* parallels the poet’s sense of a split self, which is eternally wandering in search of unity, of a true spiritual home. In this sense *Hyōtō* is a fitting culmination to Sakutarō’s work.

Sakutarō passes final judgement on his past egoism and obstinacy. This judgment is not expressed through the mediation of imagery as in the past, but rather is voiced in very straightforward diary-like expression. For as noted by Fujiwara Sadamu, *Hyōtō* was Sakutarō’s conclusion about his life to that point.\(^\text{16}\) The *Hyōtō* poet is filled with anger at the loss of the few fragments of happiness he felt had once existed in his life, fragments which are now buried under an all-encompassing unhappiness. The following poem, “That which I do not possess is all” (*ware no motazaru mono wa issai nari*), verbalizes this final judgement.

That which I do not possess is all.
Why must I endure such privation?
Crossing the bridge alone
searing deep into my heart
impotent anger drives me insane.
Ah! That which I do not possess is all.
Why must I beg for things let fall in the street
shamefaced—like a beggar?
Throw it all away! Throw it all away!
Clutch hard to your petty winnings
those coins stale with the smell of sweat.
Pound the trunks of the city trees—leafless with
the heavy vigor of the passing cars—
with your petty fame and aspirations.
Ah! all is obscenity.
Erase your whole impotent life!\(^\text{17}\)

The central figure of *Hyōtō* stands alone, he has lost all belief in the visions of *Aoneko*. As noted by Fujiwara Sadamu, the phrase “that which I do not

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\(^{16}\) Fujiwara, Sadamu. “*Ware no motazaru mono wa issai nari,*” (That which I do not possess is all), *Kenkyū Nōto* , HSZ IV, Supplement, 1975, p. 2.

\(^{17}\) HS, “That which I do not possess is all” (*ware no motazaru mono wa issai nari*), *Hyōtō*, HSZ II, p. 133. Vol II, p. 147.
possess is all," is one of the most important phrases in *Hyōtō*. It appears for the first time as the last line of "The raven of nihil," before becoming the title of the poem quoted above.

From the very beginning I was but a raven of nihil
mouth open, high upon the roof during the winter solstice
cawing like a weather wane.

Aware—yet unaware—of the season—
that which I do not possess is all.18

The poet's life is like that of the cold weather-cock, twisting every which way, at the mercy of the winds, exposed to all but master of nothing. Tired of the falsehoods of life, the poet has cast everything away. All he has is as nothing, few passers-by even bother to stop to look as he tries to sell his worthless scribblings. His work is old and yellowed, and will not sell for so much as a single coin.

Deathly pale, a man stands
watching his writings being sold on the street.
Ribs, skeleton thin
he listens to the crowing of the crowd,

like so many gamecocks.

From the beginning I was a useless man
from the beginning these were useless writings....
Why weep
on these yellowing old pages?
Pursuing my passions with passion
I will continue to tell of my lonely existence....
The passersby scatter, wandering off.
Violent gusts of wind whisk up the dirt.
My aging emotions cry out—endlessly.
Look! These are but useless writings
selling but for a single coin.19

(2) The structure of *Hyōtō*

*Hyōtō* is made up of twenty-five poems, five of which were older previously published works. Sakutarō chose to include these five poems20—those originally grouped together with the subtitle *Kyōdō Bōkei*

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20"Middle school yard," "Restaurant Hagi," "The new Koide road," and "Hirose river." Sakutarō grouped the later poem "The wood behind the the prison" with these four, as he felt it evoked similar emotions, to bring the total to five. See "Preface to *Hyōtō*." Vol II,
Shi (Views of my Distant Home)—as he felt they were "in keeping with the spirit which pervades this collection." These poems were born of adolescent dreams of finding meaning in life, and a resulting anger at the control fate has over life, and of a frustration with the feeling of always being observed and found wanting. Thematically, the Kyōdo Bōkei poems tie in with the new Hyōto poems, written in the poet's final years, for they too explore the futility of such dreams. It is also interesting to note that the Kyōdo Bōkei poems, like the new poems in Hyōto, use more kango (Chinese words), than Sakutarō's other work, a fact which no doubt also encouraged Sakutarō to group them together.

Unlike Tsuki ni Huer and Aoneko, Hyōto contains no subsections, where headings parallel the thematic development of the collection. It does, however, divide into a number of distinct groups—(1) the diary-like autobiographical poems, (2) the Kyōdo Bōkei poems, (3) Love poems, and (4) Metaphoric poems. The first two groups read more as diary entries than as poetry, and reflect Sakutarō's statement in the preface that Hyōto should be viewed as a "record of the actual life of the author, as an earnestly written diary of the workings of his heart." Poetically these diary-like poems are somewhat weaker than Sakutarō's other poems. The two latter groups, however, continue to utilize the symbolism and metaphors so central to Sakutarō's past work, and it is these poems on which Hyōto's success rests. Although the themes are those which Sakutarō has explored in the past, his new stylistic approach, his greater distance, resulted in some very successful metaphoric poems, such as "Fire" and "The Tiger." There is, a marked decrease in the use of the first person in Hyōto, as the poet stands back from the narrator of his poetry, which is in keeping with the wintry coldness of the collection.

Sakutarō's choice of the rather formal green cover and black binding for Hyōto, in addition to the Ming-style print of the characters (minchōtai) was influenced by the style of Meiji legal documents. This Meiji influence was not limited to the format of the collection. Sakutarō also notes that he

p. 131.
24HS, "Binding my publications" (Jichō na Sōtei), Nihon e no Kaiki, HSZ X, p. 678. Sakutarō states, "I imitated law books from the early years of Meiji" for the cover of Hyōto.
had begun to feel a certain conceptual empathy with that era. As Fujiwara Hideo argues, something of the romanticism of Meiji bunmei kaika (civilization and enlightenment) and the deep sense of nostalgia for the emotions of that age, is apparent in Hyōtō, particularly in the love/hate relationship with urbanization as seen in "The new Koide road."25

There is closer relationship between reality and poetry in Hyōtō than in Sakutarō’s previous work, while on one hand the poems of Hyōtō are ‘records’—diary entries—of the poet’s actual life, on the other they embody the screaming lamentation of an eternally wandering soul. While the latter is a strength, the former is one of Hyōtō’s weaknesses, although the manner in which Sakutarō transfers his own poetic disillusionment onto his real-life experiences perhaps mitigates this to some extent. Sakutarō is at his best when reality is blurred and the focus is centred on the inner man. Hyōtō is "an appeal from the convulsing agony of a spirit which wanders aimlessly on the very verge of insanity."26 This unsuppressible cry comes from deep in the poet’s heart; it is rooted in his suffering in real life. That is to say, for Sakutarō, Hyōtō was the poetic depiction of real life. Although much of the earlier work is drawn from his real life, it is filtered through illusion. Hyōtō is not centred so firmly in the world of illusion and hallucination as Sakutarō’s earlier work. Satō Fusayoshi compares Hyōtō with Sakutarō’s other major collections in the following manner;

With the careless expression of Tsuki ni Hoeru, with its all enveloping colloquial language, Sakutarō created a new style of rhetoric. He demonstrated the possibility of supplementing disadvantages in expression with a content-inspired tension. In Aoneko....through a distinctive use of the languid expression of colloquial language, Sakutarō drew on feelings of laziness and irresponsibility towards life, thereby creating expression which conformed with content. In Hyōtō, however, Sakutarō took up a style of expression whose validity he firmly denied in the past, and thereby abandoned all the fruits of his past labour.

However, for those who had been dissatisfied with the nerve-twisting, viscous pathos of Sakutarō’s colloquial poetry, the crisp briskness of the kanbun style of Hyōtō and its conscious confrontation with life was welcomed.27

(3) A thematic analysis of *Hyōtō*

Sakutarō intentionally chose to print the English words, 'The Iceland,' together with the Japanese title, on the cover of the collection, and it is this icy world which begins Hyōtō. A single haiku, given as a secondary title-page, sets the collection firmly in winter and points to the importance of memory as a motif:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fuyuhi kurenu</th>
<th>omoi okose ya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the winter sun has set,</td>
<td>an oyster on a rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh do you remember!</td>
<td>iwa ni kaki</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An oyster—a season word for winter—a soft-bodied invertebrate hidden in a hard and wizened shell still clings to a rock even after the winter sun has set. The winter becomes a metaphor for the poet's life. Nothing is left but memories. The poet's heart is ready to "weep anew" when confronted with the emotions of the past. Pathetically, the poet hopes to rekindle the warmth of past emotion, and thereby melt the "towering islands of ice" which litter the cold sea of his life. This oyster is a metaphor for the poet, who no longer howls his fear at the moon, or gazes off at a distant vision of a blue cat. Now he can do nothing but cling to his rock. Fukunaga Takehiko felt that this oyster on the rock was the embodiment of Sakutarō's longing for a 'home.' Even an oyster, washed by the winter seas had a rock to cling to, but the poet had nowhere he could call his own. Fukunaga believed that this haiku was a depiction of the poet's inner landscape rather than an actual seaside scene. Thus the cry of "remember" (omoi okose ya) which comes in the middle of the poem, is a cry which rises out of the poet's own inner landscape. Fujiwara Hideo argues that the oyster clings to the rock in a last ditch attempt to overcome the winter darkness, a metaphor—taken from reality—for the unreliability and lack of dependability of life.

In *Hyōtō*, the ennui and fatigue of *Aoneko* has given way to a bitter anger. *Hyōtō* marks the winter of the poet's life, when he is forced to confront the meaninglessness of his life and to face his destiny as an eternal wanderer. He is filled with a 'wild' instinctive anger, and like a trapped tiger has to distance himself from his reality, if he is to survive his anger.

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28 For this reason *The Iceland* was chosen as the translation for *Hyōtō* in this dissertation, rather than a freer translation such as Robert Epp's *Isles of Ice*, although one gets the sense that Sakutarō was actually looking for the term, 'iceberg.'
The past life of the author was that of the empty sadness of an ice-berg, adrift in the polar regions of the North Sea. The sight of a visionary aurora seen from these towering islands of ice filled the author with longing, anguish, joy, sadness—and finally anger, as he was cast adrift at the mercy of the currents. The author is an "eternal wanderer." He has no place to rest, no place to call his home. The empty sadness of an overcast polar sky lies always heavy on his heart, and the winds of this iceland tear apart his very soul.32

Due to its fragmentary nature the thematic structure of Hyōtō is less uniform than the previous two collections discussed. However, failure to find an eternal home; confrontation with the ultimate meaningless of life; and an overpowering anger at this fate underpin this collection. Thus, Sakutarō's work has progressed from (1) the passionate faith in reaching an ascendent realm, with its inbuilt fear of falling back into the descendent of Tsuki ni Hoeru, to (2) the nihilistic ennui of Aoneko, where the poet confronts his own helplessness, yet hopes through his tears that his melancholy nostalgia may somehow lead him back to a more holistic state of existence, to (3) the bitter anger of Hyōtō. Thus with the poetry of Hyōtō, Ito Shinkichi's equation of rainbow = beautiful dream (Tsuki ni Hoeru) = phantom vision —> nostalgia (Aoneko); becomes rainbow = illusion (#nostalgia) —> overpowering anger.33

Man's powerlessness against the forces of fate is a central theme in Hyōtō. The image of a trapped, wild spirit—a flame, a tiger—becomes a central motif in Sakutarō's attempt to voice the instinctive anger he feels at the hands of fate. In Aoneko, nostalgic longing resulted in boredom and fatigue as the individual gave up any attempt at controlling his fate, however in Hyōtō, the poet's sorrow "turns against free-will and bares its fangs."34 His sorrow is fed by anger. Sakutarō uses the metaphor of a wild beast 'baring its fangs' to build up the dichotomy between 'wild' and 'domesticated.' In Sakutarō's work domestication is synonymous with imprisonment and the tension between wild and domesticated is that of instinct versus civilization. In "Fire," this 'wild' undomesticated instinct is represented by the rampant flames which carelessly destroy all that man seeks to create.

I watched the flames burn redly.
Fire! You are mute, silent
—like a wild beast.

In the quiet of evening, under the city sky
the flames burn beautifully.
Flare high one minute
flickering out the next.
Assets, factories, properties
hope, fame, honour, ambition—
All—forever extinguished.

Fire!
You are mute, silent
—like a wild beast.
Enclosed in lonely melancholy
in the silence under this dusky sky
you ponder passion.35

The fire—like a wild beast—sweeps aside everything in its wake. Mute and silent it gives no explanation for its actions, as it destroys both man’s physical possessions and his mental strength. There is an implicit irony in Hyōtō, that the modernity which the poet has longed for does not exist. An impostor modernity takes its place and deprives him of everything he has ever possessed; his assets, his hope, even his honour. It is this impostor modernity that cuts down the trees by the Koide road and cages wild animals for a sideshow on a Department Store roof. The fire is greedy, wanting to destroy all in its way. Sakutarō includes a series of notes about a number of the Hyōtō poems at the end of the collection. The note for "Fire" reads as follows;

My heart searches for a quiet emotion; something quiet and gentle, which suddenly flares up, and flows outwards like music; something which knows the severe anguish of self-will. Oh Fire! With your gentle music, you sing me to sleep with a love song, as I lie here on my bed. It is this emotion I yearn for.36

Kitagawa Tōru asserts that this poem is Sakutarō’s premonition of the breakdown of ‘modernity,’ and it is this premonition that sets the poet off again on his journeying in search of a home.37

"The tiger," one of the most powerful of the Hyōtō poems, depicts a

35HS, "Fire" (Hi)," Hyōtō, HSZ II, pp. 120-1. Vol II, p. 141.
once wild animal which has been caught and caged on the roof of the Matsuzaka Department Store in Ginza for all to see. The bars around the tiger become a metaphor for what Sakutarō sees as society's suppression of his own instinct and passion.

Tiger!
like a huge worthless statue
sleeping in your cage on the roof of the department store.
Originally you were not a machine
once you'd have devoured your meat
rendering it with your fangs—but
you didn't understand the material world of mankind, did you?...
Crouching down, high on the very top of the tall building
you have a thirst like a flag for the wind.
Looking down, far below
you see streets where maggots crawl.
Such living prey fills you with gloom.

Tiger!
It's just a round trip on the elevator
to the most prosperous roof of Tokyo
and there you stand—in fur of dappled amber
as solitary as in the wild.
Tiger!
Ah! this is all but a faint shadow of what you once were
this whole idle scene is but empty space.38

Like the poet, the tiger is only a shadow of its past self, it has sacrificed all its passion and instinct. In Hyōtō, the technique of shifting perspective by a switch from third person to first person is much less common that in Sakutarō's previous work. "The tiger" is all in the third person, de-personalizing the poem, and serving to highlight the increased isolation of the poetic world of Hyōtō. In the poem, "The Zoo," rather than becoming one with the 'dog' as in the Tsuki ni Hoeru poem, "A sorrowful moonlit night," the narrator watches the once wild animals, seeing them as mirrors of his own soul.

Aching with a loneliness seared deep into my soul
alone, I wander through the trees in the zoo gardens.
The withered leaves have all fallen to the ground.
The wild animals sleep a sleep of gloom in their cages
each resigned to his fate
eating the meat thrown down by the humans.
Pale eyes of instinct reflect

their endurance—the torment of their steel chains. 
Such a gloomy day! 
It was not to see the animals 
that I came to the zoo today. 
Imprisoned in the cage of my heart 
angrily enduring the pangs of hunger 
gnashing my teeth a hundred times over 
biting hard on the object of my lust 
I fight a lonely revenge! 
The autumn day seems to darken 
the wind gusts along the deserted path 
Ah! Why can I not fly like a bird 
off into the lonely wastes of infinity?

These animals, are not hallucinations like the cats in Aoneko, but very much part of physical reality, another example of the heightened sense of reality apparent in many of the Hyōtō poems.

(a) Group one—Autobiographical diary-like poems

The "Shinagawa Naval Review," is an example of the autobiographical Hyōtō poems, and one which Fujiwara Hideo regards as the best poem in Hyōtō, because of the success with which Sakutarō creates two levels in the poem, one based on the real situation, and the other on his use of the warships as a metaphor for his own life. Thus, the strange nostalgic story of the ships works as a metaphor for a failed life. This use of two levels, literal and metaphoric, is one of the distinctive features of the Hyōtō poems, and a measure of their success.

Under the low grey sky 
the warships lie fallow—in a row. 
Anchors dropped into darkness 
each vessel a heavily fortified castle—
All is sunk in mute melancholy.

The crowd on the wharf scatters 
as the overcast sky darkens. 
Parade duty is long since over 
on these waves, so slowly sinking into darkness. 
Each ship longs to return to port. 
Out to sea the wintry waves are rough

but here, their icy moans rasp along the sides of the vessels. 
Though rust eats into their steel plating 
the row of warships remain motionless. 
Upon the shadowy ocean 
they hold fast to their war-cries—their thirst—their passion

Fujiwara also draws attention to the fact that the precise clarity of the *kango* which so distinguishes Sakutarō's work in *Hyōtō* is employed with great success in this poem. The following note was included in the collection, providing proof that this poem was born of an actual incident:

In January 1926 I went to a naval review in Shinagawa. I arrived just at dusk, when the file past of the ships had already finished. The spectators had scattered, and the sad grey warships had dropped anchor where they stood. All had completed their duties, and seemed to be thirsting—almost yearning—to return to port. Yet even though I have lived so long—long, tiring years—I know of no port to which they could return. Moored in the darkness, their hearts rust as they are slowly eaten up by oysters. Oh, how this scene rends my heart! I cannot endure the gloom-ridden anger which rises in me, and I cry out, facing out towards the distant sea, tortured by the violent thirst of my will.

Other such diary-like poems include "Nogizaka Club," where Sakutarō describes his life in a flat in Tokyo's Nogizaka in 1929, and "The Drunken Moon Café" which tells of his wandering the bars at night during this time. Yet despite Fujiwara's argument, these poems seem to possess less of the metaphorical power which so characterises Sakutarō's best work.

(b) *Group two—Kyōdō Bōkei Shi* (Views of my distant home)

As mentioned above, Sakutarō felt that the *Kyōdō Bōkei* poems were particularly well suited to the spirit and atmosphere of this collection. He published this group of poems in the June 1925 issue of *Nihon Shijin*, together with the following introductory remarks:

Recently, I have cast off the home which I had come to know so well, and together with my family moved to Tokyo. This group of poems are a record of my life in my home town—they brim with loneliness and remorse; a record of a time when I gnashed my teeth in humiliation, and burned with red-hot anger as I sought to control myself. These poems

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are a naive explosion of intense sadness. They were written over a two year period beginning in 1922....These are the only poems which I have recently written in bungo style, although I have written in this style in the past. I would, however, like to stress that the distinctive style and content of these poems should not be considered in isolation from my other work.45

Sakutarō makes a direct plea for thematic context, arguing that these poems, irrespective of their classical style, should be seen in the context of this other work, giving weight to the theory that Sakutarō valued the thematic, metaphoric levels of his poetry over its structural qualities.

As noted in the introduction, for Sakutarō the word bōkei embodied the poet's sense of nostalgia for the physical home he believed he had lost and the spiritual home he had never found.46 When he republished these poems in Hyōtō, Sakutarō included the following note;
The five Kyōdō Bōkei poems, apart from "The wood behind the prison," have all been published in previous collections. "Restaurant Hagi," "The new Koide road" and "Hirose river" are all set in my home town of Maebashi. From early in my youth, I would often wander that riverside, pass along that road and play in the garden of that restaurant. Yet although those days have passed into shadow, the Hirose river continues to flow on its way, unable to save me from this life of idleness. Now once again I publish this impudent group of poems, and for the second time invite the derision of the world.47

"Middle school yard" is representative of feelings evoked by these poems. The narrator filled with a lustful passion, escapes his classroom responsibilities, casts himself down in the hot sunshine, and gazes up at the hat he has thrown up in frustrated anger.48 The central emotion of this poem is frustrated melancholy. A similar melancholy drives the poem, "The new Koide road," which reads as follows;

A new road has been opened here
running straight to the city.
Though I stand on the crossroads
at the very beginning of this new road
I cannot reach the lonely horizon
which spreads out before me on all sides.
Ah! Such a melancholy day!
The sun strikes low on the eaves of the row of houses

45 HS, "Forward to Kyōdō Bōkei Shi" (Kyōdō Bōkei Shi: Maegaki," HSZ XIV, p. 429.
47 HS, "Notes to Kyōdō Bōkei Shi," Hyōtō, HSZ II, pp. 139-40.
48 HS, "Middle school yard" (Chūgakkō no kötei), Hyōtō, HSZ II, p. 126. Vol II, p. 143.
the trees have been cut down—only a few remain.
Why? Why do my thoughts return to this?
I turn my back on this road
a road where all the young trees have been cut down.\textsuperscript{49}

Urbanization is levying a heavy toll, the trees fall victim to the marching sprawl of the row upon row of buildings. The new road offers little in the way of promise—of a new path in life—nature and youth are lost and the horizon becomes all too visible in its lack of promise.

While the Kyōdō Bōkei poems speak quite directly of the difficult love/hate relationship between Sakutarō and his home town, the new Hyōtō poems which refer to his home, are less direct and are filled with a strong sense of despair and remorse. Any veneer of love has long since worn off. According to Fujiwara Hideo, the 'homeland' of the Kyōdō Bōkei poems is more closely related to Sakutarō's real home and is, in this sense, a truer diary of his life. The 'homeland' of the later Hyōtō poems is a 'spiritual homeland,' a distant "home of his soul."\textsuperscript{50} In "Return home," the poet has been defeated by life and returns to his home town as a failure and not as the success he dreamed of when he first left.

The day I returned to my home,
the train braved a violent gale.
The last awake, alone I stand at the window.
The steam whistle shrieked out into the darkness
and the sparks lit up the plain....
Ah! Once again I flee the capital.
Where is the house and home I seek?
My past ranges back along a desolate valley
my future faces the shores of despair.
This life is naught but sand and gravel!...\textsuperscript{51}

Standing alone, the last left awake, the narrator is forced to confront his ceaseless movement along the rails as a metaphor for his headlong descent into despair. He is carried along by fate, which is now a machine of the 'modern' world, an engine over which he has no control. Longing for a spiritual home, as seen in Aoneko, is still a central theme in this collection and one aspect in which Hyōtō proves to be a continuation of Sakutarō's past work. Yet in Hyōtō this longing is accompanied by a sense of 'defeat,' all feelings of hope are gone.

Ah! Man of Desolation!

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\textsuperscript{51} HS, "Return home" (Kikyō), \textit{Hyōtō}, HSZ II, p. 113. Vol II, p. 137.
Ah! Man of Desolation!
climbing up the sorrowing slope of the sinking sun.
Though you wander this precipice, aimless—will-less—
there is no home for you anywhere
no home for such as you! 52

Like the derision the invalid at the window imagines in the *Tsuki ni Hoeru*
poem, "The reason why the person inside looks like a deformed invalid," 53
the narrator in "The Wanderer," the first poem in this collection, also
hears voices of derision, voices which puncture any belief he still may have
in escape. Still carrying fear which was so central to *Tsuki ni Hoeru*, the
*Hyōtō* poet is forced to face his defeat.

Fujiwara Hideo argues that "The grave of Kunisada Chūji" is in a
sense a new *Kyōdō Bōkei* poem, 54 for this poem, like "Return Home,"
portrays the same love/hate relationship towards his home town as is seen in
the original *Kyōdō Bōkei* poems.

When I arrived in this village
the silk gathering of Jōshū was already over.
The farmers had all closed their doors for the winter.
The sunlight clouded with dust, and
the shadows of the pathetic bamboo grove
tell of the wretched poverty of life.
Look there! A useless stone.
The roadside bamboo grass blows in the wind as
the outlaw sleeps under this grave stone.
Ah! I linger on the familiar winding paths of my home town.
Here—my thoughts are always lonely....

Why is it that however much I try
to revitalise my remaining years
you, from under your desolate winter gravestone
make even the attempt seem useless? 55

This poem, while on the one hand a retelling of an actual incident, is also the
voice of a man who cast aside his home in favour of the city of Tokyo, yet
who has now returned with both his life and dreams torn apart. The anger
and despair in this poem is aimed not at the home itself—as in the earlier

53 See HS, "The reason why the person inside looks like a deformed invalid" (*Naibū ni iru
hito ga kikei na byōnin ni mieru ryō*), *Tsuki ni Hoeru*, HSZ I, p. 49. Vol II, p. 27.
55 HS, "The grave of Kunisada Chūji" (Kunisada Chūji no haka), *Hyōtō*, HSZ II, p. 127.
Vol II, p. 144. Kunisada Chūji (1810-1850) was a late Edo Japanese Robin Hood. He is
celebrated in *rōkyoku* (musical recitals of ancient tales) as the archetype Jōshū man.
Kyōdō Bōkei poems—but instead at fate, at that force which moulds the poet’s life, beyond his control. This anger and despair is the most distinctive feature of the new Hyōtō poems. Sakutarō wrote the following notes about his experience in Kunisada village:

In the winter of 1930, I returned home to nurse my sick father, with all my personal affairs in absolute ruin, and an unbearable hunger in my heart. Secretly I left the house and rode off on a bicycle. Buffeted by violent dust-filled winds, I arrived at the village of Kunisada. Chūji’s grave stood by the roadside in this desolate cold village. The lumpy earthen mound, which concealed the sad life of the outlaw, glittered in the pale winter sunlight through the shadows of the dark bamboo. I wandered around, reluctant to leave, and for the first time truly understood the desolation of the natural environment of Joshū. Squatting by the road I wrote this poem.56

Standing in the cold desolation of Kunisada, Sakutarō began to associate himself with the outlaw, who once famous, now lay buried in a forgotten lumpy mound. Would this be his own fate, or like the emperor in Niji o ou hito, would he find the nervous energy to fight off death?

(c) Group three—Four love poems

There is a group of four love poems in Hyōtō which are accompanied by the following note;

The poems "At Luna park," "Kill me! Kill me!," "On the subway," and "A longing which surpasses that of yesterday," were written between 1930 and 1932. These poems are fleeting diary episodes, already broken and cast away. People like me from the polar regions, live alone upon the icebergs, and so love is impossible from the very beginning. In the past I suffered much embarrassment, much remorse. Yet this too, is but a magic-lantern illusion cast by the lonely aurora of the long northern nights.57

Sakutarō had lost all faith in the power of love. There were no skylark maidens in the polar regions which he now inhabited. Love was nothing but an illusion. The poet is destined to exist alone on the coldness of his floating iceberg. "Kill me! Kill me!," gives voice to the poet’s despairing need for love;

Your distinctive fragrance surpasses all
so refined
  tender—beauteous—redolent

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57 HS, Notes to "Renaishi yonhen" (Notes to four love poems), Hyōtō, HSZ II, p. 139.
turning me into an unsightly beast.
Oh! How can I possibly deserve your compassion?
From the very beginning I was your slave
 —a domesticated animal,
crawling on my belly under your feet—even treated like a dog.
Oh, please, stamp on me
insult me
spit on me
kick me to the floor
torture me viciously
Ah! until finally—finally—
I will gasp out my last breath.

From the very beginning I was your slave
 —a domesticated animal
Oh! Do not force me to endure—sad and submissive—
just raise your whip-like hands and kill me quickly.
Strike me down! Strike me down!58

Like an abject slave, the narrator yearns to debase himself before his love. He yearns for his life to end at her hands, yet doubts that her compassion will stretch to understanding his death wish. She fails to understand his desire, and he is left crying out for death.

"At Luna park" is a gentler love poem, depicting a rather dismal Sunday date. The couple go through the motions of 'fun,' only to remain lost to each other—their thoughts cut off from each other however close their shoulders snuggle together on the rides.

Afternoon in luna park
the band rumbles in the sky
the dizziness of the merry-go-round horses
enticing crimson balloons
fly off over the heads of the crowd....
though we climb into the seat of a mock aeroplane...
your waltz takes you far away
you seem lonely, sitting lost in thought beside me.59

Sakutarō employs his cinematic technique here to shift the perspective, to draw his readers into the world of the couple. He begins by setting the scene and then in the second stanza draws us into the narrator's world with the use of the second person. This use of the second person is important as it highlights the fact that the woman's world remains opaque to the narrator,

and thus the reader. Companionship and communication are impossible in
the world of Hyōto; each individual stands alone on his drifting iceberg.

Although these four love poems create rather a different impression
from the other Hyōto poems, the 'secret' love they explore contains the
same pervasive sadness and loneliness which fills the other poems.

(d) Group four—Metaphoric poems

The first poem of Hyōto entitled "The song of a wanderer," depicts the
lonely fate of an eternal wanderer, and is an example of the metaphoric
poems of Hyōto, which, in their use of imagery, are most closely tied to
Sakutarō's past work. Like Wang in Niji o ou hito, this 'wanderer' is ever
in pursuit of "some eternal nostalgia." The wanderer's anger is born of his
lack of belief. The persecution the man feels results in an angry destructive
force which "denounces" the object of his passion, his lust. Anger inhabits
the place where faith should be. He can find no comfort. Lust—
unfulfilled—turns first to anger and then to the denunciation of the loved
one, reminiscent of the destructive urges in Tsuki ni Hoeru, which turned
the poet's hands to metal as he sought to pluck the flower which was the
object of his desire. Here too—as in the collections already examined—the
narrator is looking for comfort, for tenderness. At the heart of his pain lies
the ugly fact that it is his inability to love which has meant that others fail to
love him. The poet is finally forced to come face to face with the fact that he
has no excuses for his lack of love, such as the roughness of the glass, or
the cabbage induced pallor with which he tried to deflect his observers in
Tsuki ni Hoeru.60 He has neither loving companionship, nor religious faith
to protect him from the piercing cold of winter. He moves on—tired and
griefstricken—like the staggering hands of a clock, so old and rusty, its
hands sticking with every tick. "The song of a wanderer" reads as follows;

The sun climbs over the precipice.
Grief walks low under the footbridge.
Behind the railway fence which continues
boundlessly beyond the distant sky
one lonely shadow drifts.

Ah! Wanderer!

60See HS, "The reason why the person inside looks like a deformed invalid" (Naibu ni iru
From out the past—passing on through the future
in pursuit of some eternal nostalgia
how is it that your grief walks
like the staggering tick of a clock?....
Ah! even the Devil is less lonely.
How will you endure the frosts of winter?
Never once having believed in anything
you experience anger where belief should be.
Never having known the denial of lust
you have denounced the object of your lust.
How will you ever again return stricken with grief and weary
to the home of one who will hold you gently and kiss you?
For never have you loved
and thus no-one could have ever loved you.

Ah! Man of Desolation!
climbing up the sorrowing slope of the sinking sun.
Though you wander this precipice, aimless—will-less—
there is no home for you anywhere
no home for such as you!\(^{61}\)

The shifting perspective technique is used here. Sakutarō uses the first two
stanzas to set the scene, and then shifts into the world of the wanderer with
a change to second person. This use of the second person, rather than the
first person of his earlier poetry, highlights the wanderer's isolation, the
depersonalized world of *Hyōtō*. The fear of being branded as one with the
descendent—fear of rejection, of appearing abnormal—as seen in the *Tsuki
ni Hoeru* poem, "The reason why the person inside looks like a deformed
invalid," clearly continued to haunt Sakutarō throughout his life, as is
apparent in the derisive remark that this wanderer has never loved anything
or anyone and so no one "could possibly" ever love him. Sakutarō makes
the following comments about his state of mind when writing "The song of
a wanderer;"

A man walks along under a footbridge, which clings to the edge of a
precipice. My role in life, my eternal form is the shadow of just such a
lonely wanderer.\(^{62}\)

The poet sees himself as a lonely shadow adrift in the endless repetitive
cycle of life—bent double with grief. A grief which pushes him on in search
of release. Though the narrator talks to the wanderer in the second person—

\(^{62}\)HS, "Poetic Commentary" (*Shihon Shōkai*), HSZ II, p. 137.
imploring him to break the cycle, he clearly has little faith in any such action.

During the 'Dostoevsky Incident,' Sakutarō had felt that he had been taught how to love, that one day he would be able to love and be loved. Someday I too will no doubt experience happiness. Someday I will no doubt come to know love....[Dostoevsky] was the one who taught me the truth that the very substance of happiness is love....All I need do is follow after [him] If I do that then sooner or later I will arrive at my goal.63

Yet now, any such belief has deserted him. Feelings of inadequacy continue to haunt him, feelings reflected in the disinterested eyes of the fish in "Hirose river."

The white tossed Hirose river flows on its way,
my visions fade with the passing of time.
In days gone by
I'd drop my line from this very river bank—
trying to catch a life for myself.
Ah! Such happiness is now long gone.
Now I even fail to attract the attention of the tiny fish.64

By Hyōtō, the poet must confront his failure to reach the transcendent world of his dreams.

The image of a wanderer caught in an endless search for utopia, for a home—runs, as we have seen, through much of Sakutarō's work. An early example reads as follows;

Once again my journeying heart
stands at the edge of the unknown
my heart searches for a beautiful city
even now, as I wander down this mountain path
sometimes when I catch a glimpse out beyond the mountain peaks
I wonder if I'll find a city—perhaps like London
yet I am ever lonely—destined to journey alone.
My endlessly journeying heart
dREAMS of a great building—yet unseen
off beyond the white clouds.65

Like Wang, always convinced that he will find his rainbow just over the next hill, the narrator in this untitled poem truly believes in the existence of the utopia he seeks. In a later prose poem, entitled "Song of a Voyage," Sakutarō is still full of hope, as he tries to create his own Noah's ark, so

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64HS, "Hirose river" (Hirosegawa), Hyōtō, HSZ II, p. 128. Vol II, p. 144.
65HS, "My travelling heart" (Ore no tabi o suru kokoro), Unpublished poems (Mihappyō Shihen), HSZ III p. 382.
that he can escape to a better future.

On a day when the south wind blew casting off from the island and all its waving coconut palms, my boat set sail out into the distant sea. The waves sparkled in the sunlight, and beautiful fishes danced along by her side.

I kept a number of animals on the deck; a cat, a peacock, a nightingale, a white mouse, a leopard, a camel and a lion. My voyage continued blessed with fair weather. Lying back in a cane chair on the deck, in the haze of an orchid inspired trance, the fragrance of a Manila cheroot clung to my lips. Ah, now already, I can see the vision of that harbour. I can see the lonely colonial harbour clear before me, with its white clouds floating above.

I sing of the morning of this voyage. I tell of that happy morning departure of this boat, an image which surfaces in the vision of this lonely philosopher. Who will listen to my song?66

Yet by Hyōtō, Sakutarō has lost all faith in ever finding his rainbow; in ever arriving at the harbour of his dream. Like the rusting warships in "Shinagawa Naval Review," there is nowhere for him to go.

The collection ends with the bleak love poem, "A longing which surpasses that of yesterday."

A longing which surpasses that of yesterday
rises within me as if fed by some hidden wellspring.
How long must I endure this
I, who live in constant suffering?
From the very beginning you were enveloped in fragrance
an alluring scented flower.
You never so much as recognised my love
my passion—caught forever on the border of life and death
left alone in our world.
I would sooner die
with the setting sun of this day of pain
than burn up a hundred times over.
Vainly watching you from afar
haunting the rail track
I grieve till I burst—
I grieve till I burst.67

The poet’s longing increases day by day, it is one with the thirst which wells up in the heart of the man who stands and watches the rusting warships; and the desperate thirst for death of the narrator in "Kill me! Kill

---

66 HS, "Song of a Voyage" (Kôkai no uta), Fate (Shukumei), HSZ III, p. 303. First published in Bungaku Sekai’s founding issue, in October 1922.
67 HS, "A longing which surpasses that of yesterday" (Kînô ni masaru koishisa no), Hyōtō, HSZ II, p. 135. Vol II, p. 149.
me!" Caught forever "on the border of life and death," the poet yearns for release and his grieving cannot be contained. For all its negativity, its loss of belief in every achieving release, this poem carries the power of much of Sakutarō's poetry, the power of his longing. It is this voicing of his longing for a utopian dream which was one of Sakutarō's great contributions to modern Japanese poetry.

(4) Conclusion

This thesis has examined the thematic structure with which Sakutarō framed his work. It sought to contextualize Sakutarō's standing as a leading 'modern' poet through an examination of his poetic, a literary analysis of his work, and an assessment of the various external influences. Drawing on his extensive letters, aphorisms and essays, this thesis explored the psychological state which gave birth to Sakutarō's works of poetry; poetry which he saw as "living, working psychology." His very emotional intensity, carried by powerful metaphors, marks him as a great modern poet, an artist who managed to express the very 'nerves of his emotion.'

As we have seen, the thematic structure of Sakutarō's work changed with his own spiritual journery. When the journey began in Tsuki ni Hoeru and Niji o ou hito, the narrator/poet showed a passionate faith in the existence of a beautiful transcendent realm, which offered him release from all his suffering and grotesque inner desires. Yet he found himself unable to reach this utopian upper realm. He failed to find a God—a Dostoevsky-like guide—who could forgive him his inherent evil, offering him pardon and companionship. Thus, the upward movement which powered much of Sakutarō's early poetry was pulled back towards the earth-bound shadows, back into the hidden horrors of the descendent realm.

To draw on one of his plant metaphors, internal decay had undermined the strength of the root systems which should give their support to the upward growth. The poet became trapped inside a room unable to reach the sky above, unable to capture the essence of the flute. Aoneko was born of a loss of faith in the power of the ascendent to win over the descendent. Sakutarō had fallen into a state of nihilistic ennui, frustrated by fate, and his lack of control over life. He was angered by his inability to unite the split-self which plagued him. The poet loses himself in nostalgic visions of the past.

seeking to stop the passage of time, to return to a purer more primitive state of being. Though in Aoneko he had lost all faith in miracles and the power of God, he still believed that perhaps he could return to a primitive state, a holistic world where the dilemmas born of a split-self had yet to come into existence. By the time he wrote Hyōtō, Sakutarō had also lost faith in any such escape. Hyōtō is a voice of frustrated anger: anger which wells up as the poet stands and reviews his life. Confronted by what he sees as the unforgiving judgements of others, he feels destined to endure in loneliness. Hyōtō ends with the comment; "Thus I lay down my pen, and face my tragic, remorse-filled death,"\textsuperscript{69} which sadly is an admission on Sakutarō's part of his apparent failure.

This thesis has aimed to assess Hagiwara Sakutarō's twofold contribution to modern Japanese poetry: firstly his success in introducing colloquial idiom into poetry without sacrificing artistic merit; and secondly his voicing of the existential despair of the intellectuals of his age. Sakutarō harnessed images and metaphors, hitherto classified as non-poetic, as vehicles for the expression of his distorted visions and sickly eroticism. He successfully tapped the emotional pulse of an increasingly anxious age. He expanded the boundaries of acceptable expression, opening up new areas in literature through his exploration of mental illness. He broke down the barriers between the inner and outer man, between the real and the unreal. In his search for a means to express his own sense of isolation and melancholy, he made the unclean, the darker emotions of man, into accepted subjects for poetry. Through his poetry, particularly that of Tsuki ni Hoeru, he gave the intellectuals of his day an electric shock, as his own peculiar emotive rhythm sizzled through his work. Sakutarō stands at the very heart of the early Taishō aesthetic. In the words of Matsumoto Kenichi, "Sakutarō kept open the road of modern lyric poetry which Kitahara Hakushū began,"\textsuperscript{70} and therein lies his greatness.

\textsuperscript{69}HS, Notes to "Kyōdo Bōkei Shi," Hyōtō, HSZ II, pp. 139-40.
\textsuperscript{70}Matsumoto, Kenichi. "Jojō no Shukumei" (The Fate of Lyricism), Hagiwara Sakutarō, Shinbunsei Dokuhon, op cit, p. 64.
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A STRAY DOG HOWLING AT THE MOON
—A LITERARY BIOGRAPHY OF HAGIWARA SAKUTARŌ—

(1886–1942)

VOLUME TWO

Carol Hayes

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Japanese

University of Sydney

February, 1996
## CONTENTS

A note on the translations ........................................ i

Index
(a) Poems in alphabetical order ................................... ii
(b) Poems by Japanese title ....................................... vi
(c) Miscellaneous extracts list ................................... xi

### Section One: Tsuki ni Hoeru—Howling at the Moon
  (a) Preface .................................................. 1
  (b) "Bamboo and its Sentimentality" ......................... 5
  (c) "Skylark Fare" .......................................... 13
  (d) "A Sorrowful Moonlit Night" ............................ 21
  (e) "A Rotten Clam" ........................................ 26
  (f) "Lonely Desire" .......................................... 35
  (g) "The Unknown Dog" ..................................... 41
  (h) Two long poems .......................................... 47

### Section Two: Niji o ou Hito—Following Rainbows
  (a) Act I .................................................... 53
  (b) Act II .................................................. 57
  (c) Act III .................................................. 66

### Section Three: Aoneko—The Blue Cat
  (a) Preface .................................................. 75
  (b) "Bed of Illusion" ........................................ 78
  (c) "Melancholy Cherryblossoms" ......................... 92
  (d) "Lonely Blue Cat" ..................................... 99
  (e) "Refined Desire" ....................................... 109
  (f) "Will and Illusion" .................................... 114
  (g) "Bewitching Spirit" ................................... 122
  (h) "Soldiers" .............................................. 128

### Section Four: Hyōō—The Iceland
  (a) Preface .................................................. 130
  (b) Poems .................................................. 133

### Section Five: Miscellaneous Extracts
  ......................................................... 150
A NOTE ON THE TRANSLATIONS

These translations are as faithful to the original as I can make them without sacrificing their readability in English. I have tried to retain Sakutarō's own line order and rather idiosyncratic spacing and punctuation. The transliteration of Japanese words is based on the Hepburn system, and the original Japanese word order is retained for people's names. Square brackets used within quoted passages contain my own notes; all parentheses and italics are Sakutarō's own.

In the poetry translations I have chosen to capitalize only the first word of new sentences, rather than capitalizing each new line, as this continues the flow of the sentence, which is more in keeping with Sakutarō's rather sparse punctuation. I have avoided commas as much as possible for the same reason. In Aoneko and Hyōtō, Sakutarō utilized blank spaces within sentences, in addition to commas, to create a short pause between words and phrases and I have chosen to represent these pauses with a long bar (——). Sakutarō also had a rather idiosyncratic method of highlighting sections of text. From around 1933, he began to insert small black circles (kuro maaku) in the same positioning as furigana. In the translations I have chosen to represent this type of emphasis with italics. Sakutarō highlighted foreign loan words in a similar manner, writing them in hiragana with an emphasis mark (ten) as furigana; this emphasis on loan words is retained in the translations through the use of italics. The dates recorded beneath each poem refer to the date of publication of the said poem in a coterie magazine.
Poems in alphabetical order

(Note: 月 = "月に吠える"、青 = "青猫"、氷 = "水鳥"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A black organ</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A celestial hanging</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A disgusting sight</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A longing which surpasses that of yesterday</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A spring night</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sorrowful moonlit night</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sorrowful vista</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A turtle</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accompanying a gift</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afraid of the country</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Luna Park</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the zoo</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad season</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamboo (1) &amp; (2)</td>
<td>7 &amp; 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bewitching spirit</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brilliant showy emotions</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cats</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairs</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climbing the mountain</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of a frog</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desiccated crime</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disintegrating flesh</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dreams</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embraced in strong arms</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearsome mountain</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gazing out at the open sea</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grass stems</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hail Frog!</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hands of cake</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Return home 帰郷（水） ........................................ 137
Restaurant Hagi 波富裕亭（水） ................................. 138
Roosters 鶏（青） ............................................. 98
Searching for a bed 寝台を求む（青） .......................... 81
Seedlings 苗（月） ............................................. 16
Seeds in my palm 掌上の種（月） .............................. 19
Shellfish 貝（月） ............................................. 31
Shinagawa Naval Review 品川沖観艦式（水） ................. 140
Skylark fare 革雀料理（月） .................................. 18
Sleeping in the fields 野原に寝る（青） ........................ 89
Soldiers 軍隊（青） ........................................... 128
Spring 冬春（月） ............................................ 32
Spring emotion 春の感情（青） ............................... 88
Spring evening 春宵（青） .................................... 127
Terribly melancholy 悪らくも憂鬱なる（青） ...................... 91
That which I do not possess is all
我れの持ちざるものは一切なり（水） ............................ 147
The blue cat 青猫（青） ....................................... 87
The blue sky 青空（青） ....................................... 111
The calendar of idleness 念惰の暦（青） ......................... 110
The death of a drunk 酒精中毒者の死（月） ..................... 24
The drunken moon cafe 珈琲店 酔月（水） ....................... 139
The face 顔（青） ............................................ 120
The field mouse 野鼠（青） ................................... 106
The first primal emotion 最も原始的な情緒（青） .............. 112
The flute 笛（月） ............................................ 11
The grave of Kunisasa Chuuiji 国定常治の墓（水） ......... 144
The green flute 緑色の笛（青） ................................ 104
The lascivious graveyard 色めかしい墓場（青） .............. 102
The lover of love 恋を恋する人（月） ......................... 37
The May corpse 五月の死びと（青） ........................... 107
The murder case 殺人事件（月） ................................ 17
The new Koide road 小出新道（水） ........................... 142
The pale horse 青ざめた馬（青） ................................ 115
The pitiful lamp-post みじめな街灯（青） ...................... 100
The portrait 肖像（月） ....................................... 38
The prince of May 五月の貴公子（月） .......................... 37
The raven of nihil 虚無の鸦（水） .................................. 147
The reason why the person inside looks like a deformed invalid 内部に居る人が奇形な病人に見える理由（月） ..................... 27
The rotten chrysanthemum すえたる菊（月） ........................................ 10
The rotten clam くさった蛤（月） .......................................................... 33
The secret garden of the empty house seen in my dreams 夢に見る空家の庭の秘密（青） ......................................................... 94
The sick face in the depths of the ground 地面の底の病気の顔（月） ............................................................... 6
The skylark's nest 雲雀の巣（月） .............................................................. 48
The song of a fly 蟻の唱歌（青） .............................................................. 90
The song of a hermit crab 寄生蟹（青） ................................................. 104
The song of a wanderer 漂泊者の歌（水） .............................................. 133
The substance of spring 春の実体（月） .................................................... 33
The swimmer およぐひと（月） ............................................................... 30
The Swimmer's Inn 海水旅館（月） ......................................................... 45
The tiger 虎（水） ........................................................................ 145
The toy flute 笛（月） ..................................................................... 51
The twilight room 薄暮の部屋（青） ...................................................... 79
The unhappy prisoners かなりの囚人（青） .......................................... 105
The unknown dog 見しらぬ犬（月） ......................................................... 42
The visionary world Buddha saw 仏の見たる幻想の世界（青） ........... 97
The white moon 白い月（月） ................................................................. 38
The white rooster 白い牡鶏（青） ........................................................... 120
The wood behind the prison 監獄裏の林（水） ...................................... 148
The world of bacteria ばくてりやの世界（月） .................................... 29
Twittering birds 鳥鳴（青） ................................................................ 117
Unrequited love 片恋（青） ................................................................. 125
Useless writings 無用の書物（水） ......................................................... 146
Weather and thought 天候と思想（青） ............................................... 112
White benches 白い共同椅子（月） ....................................................... 46
Winter 冬（月） ........................................................................ 11
Poems by Japanese title

（Note: 月＝「月に吠える」、青＝「青猫」、氷＝「氷島」）

ア
愛憐（月）Love ........................................ 36
青樹の梢をあふぎで（月）Looking up at the trees 43
青ざめた馬（青）The pale horse ................. 115
靑空（青）The blue sky ............................ 111
青猫（青）The blue cat ............................ 87
ありあけ（月）Dawn .................................. 30

イ
椅子（月）Chairs ..................................... 28
遺伝（青）Heritage .................................. 119
田舎を恐る（月）Afraid of the country .... 46
厳らし景物（青）A disgusting sight ........ 116

オ
沖を眺望する（青）Gazing out at the open sea 83
贈物にそへて（月）Accompanying a gift ..... 34
恐ろしい山（青）Fearsome mountain ......... 101
恐ろしく憂鬱なる（青）Terribly melancholy 91
およぐひと（月）The swimmer ................. 30

カ
貝（月）Shellfish ..................................... 31
海水旅館（月）The Swimmer's Inn .......... 45
蛙の死（月）Death of a frog ................... 25
蛙よ（月）Hail Frog! .............................. 44
顔（青）The face ..................................... 120
片恋（青）Unrequited love ................. 125
家庭（氷）Home ..................................... 138
悲しい遠景（月）A sorrowful vista .... 22
かなしい囚人（青）The unhappy prisoners 105
悲しい月夜（月）A sorrowful moonlit night 22
亀（月）A turtle ..................................... 10
鴨毛の婦人（青）Raven-haired woman .... 103
間雅な食欲（青）Refined appetite ........ 110
監獄裏の林（氷）The wood behind the prison 148
感傷の手（月）Mawkish hands .............. 15
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index / vii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>キ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>帰郷（氷）Return home .......................... 137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>危険な散步（月）My hazardous path ................. 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>昨日にまざる恋しさの（氷）</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A longing which surpasses that of yesterday  .... 149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>虚無の 鳥（氷）The raven of nihil ................ 147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ク</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>くさった蛤（月）The rotten clam ................. 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>草の茎（月）Grass stems .......................... 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ぐるぐる肉体（青）Disintegrating flesh ............ 103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>国定忠治の墓（氷）The grave of Kunisasa Chuuji .... 144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>黒い風琴（青）A black organ ....................... 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>群衆の中を求めて歩く（青）I want to walk with the crowd........ 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>軍隊（青）Soldiers .............................. 128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>コ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>小出新道（氷）The new Koide road ............... 142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>恋を恋する人（月）The lover of love ............... 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>瑠璃店 酔月（氷）The drunken moon cafe ............. 139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>五月の貴公子（月）The prince of May .............. 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>五月の死びと（青）The May corpse ................. 107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>告別（氷）Leave-taking .......................... 142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>孤独（月）Isolation .............................. 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>殺せかし！殺せかし！（氷）Kill me! Kill me! ........ 136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>サ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>殺人事件（月）The murder case .................... 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>さびしい人格（月）My lonely personality ........... 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>さびしい来歴（青）Lonely past ........................ 108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>地下鉄道にて（氷）On the subway ................... 141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>山居（月）Living in the mountains ................. 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>シ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>死（月）Death ...................................... 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>自然の背後に隠れて居る（青）Hidden behind nature's back .... 121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>思想は一つの意匠であるか（青）Is thought but one design? .... 115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>品川沖築艦式（氷）Shinagawa Naval Review ........... 140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>地面の底の病気の顔（月）</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sick face in the depths of the ground .......... 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>春宵（青）Spring evening .......................... 127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>春夜（月）A spring night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>掌上の種（月）Seeds in my palm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>焦心（月）Anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>肖像（月）The portrait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>白い牡鶏（青）The white rooster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>白い共同椅子（月）White benches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>白い月（月）The white moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>寝台を求む（青）Searching for a bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>新年（氷）New Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>すえたる菊（月）The rotten chrysanthemum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>この手は菓子である（青）Hands of cake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>懶惰の暦（青）The calendar of idleness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>題のない歌（青）Nameless song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>竹（月）Bamboo (1) &amp; (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>卵（月）Eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>中学校の校庭（氷）Middle school yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>月夜（青）Moonlight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>強い腕に抱かれる（青）Embraced in strong arms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>天景（月）Landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>天候と思想（青）Weather and thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>天上縛死（月）A celestial hanging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>唄鳩（青）Twittering birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>動物園にて（氷）At the zoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>虎（氷）The tiger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鶏（青）Roosters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>内部に居る人が奇形な病人に見える理由（月）</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reason why the person inside looks like a deformed invalid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>苗（月）Seedlings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>飴めかしい墓場（青）The lascivious graveyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index / ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>魅めける霊魂（夜）Bewitching spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ネ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>猫（月）Cats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>猫柳（夜）Pussy willow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ノ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>乃木坂倶楽部（夜）Nogizaka Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>野鼠（夜）The field mouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>野原に寝る（夜）Sleeping in the fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ハ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝋の唱歌（夜）The song of a fly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>波巻亭（夜）Restaurant Hagi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ばくでちやの世界（月）The world of bacteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>薄暮の部屋（夜）The twilight room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>馬車の中で（夜）In the horse-drawn carriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>花がかかる感情（夜）Brilliant showy emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>春の感情（夜）Spring emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>春の実体（月）The substance of spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>晩秋（夜）Late autumn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ヒ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>火（夜）Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>千からびた犯罪（月）Desiccated crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>雲雀の巣（月）The skylark's nest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>雲雀料理（月）Skylark fare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>漂泊者の歌（夜）The song of a wanderer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>広瀬川（夜）Hirose river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>フ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>笛（月）The flute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>笛（月）The toy flute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>笛の音のする里へ行こうよ（夜）</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let us go to the land where the flute sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>冬（月）Winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ホ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>仏の見たる幻想の世界（夜）The visionary world Buddha saw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>盆景（月）Miniature landscape</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
みじめな街灯（青）The pitiful lamp-post..................100
見しらぬ犬（月）The unknown dog........................42
緑色の笛（青）The green flute...............................104
麦畑の一隅にて（月）In the corner of a barley field........32
無用の書物（水）Useless writings..........................146
最も原始的な情緒（青）The first primal emotion........112
寄生蟹のうた（青）The song of a hermit crab.............104
山に登る（月）Climbing the mountain......................44
憂鬱な風景（青）Melancholy landscape..................106
憂鬱なる花見（青）Melancholy blossom viewing........93
憂鬱の川辺（青）Melancholy riverbank..................96
夢（青）Dreams........................................126
夢に見る空家の庭の秘密（青）
The secret garden of the empty house seen in my dreams...94
春（月）Spring...........................................32
酒気中毒者の死（月）The death of a drunk................24
輪廻と転生（青）Reincarnation and transmigration......107
遨遊地にて（水）At Luna Park................................134
悪い季節（青）Bad season..................................118
那れの持たざるものは一切なり（水）
That which I do not possess is all........................147
Miscellaneous extracts

(1) "Introduction to The Flight of Despair" ........................................... 150
    (「序」「絶望の逃走」)

(2) Letters
    (a) To Maeda Yugure, April 1916 ........................................... 151
    (b) To Takahashi Motokichi, April 1916 ................................. 152
    (c) To Takahashi Motokichi, June 1916 .................................. 154

(3) "Memories of Autumn Evenings: My Life as a Bachelor" ............. 155
    (「秋宵記：独自生活について」)

(4) "On First Reading Dostoevsky" .............................................. 159
    (「初めてドストイエフスキーを読んだ頃」)

(5) "Poe, Nietzsche and Dostoevsky" ........................................... 160
    (「ポエ、ニヒチエ、ドストイエフスキー」)

(6) "The Country Clock" .............................................................. 161
    (「田舎の時計」)

(7) "The Octopus That Would Not Die" ......................................... 161
    (「死ならない蛸」)

(8) The Poet in Me and Zarathustra .............................................. 162
    (「私の詩人とツアラトストラ」)

(9) "The Sensation of Grasping it in my Hand" ............................. 166
    (「掴った手の感覚」)

(10) When Cherries Bloom ............................................................. 171
    (「桜の花咲くころ」)
HOWLING AT THE MOON

月に吠える
PREFACE

The purpose of poetic expression is not simply that of the expression of a mood for a mood's sake; neither is it the drawing of an illusion for an illusion's sake; nor is it for the dissemination or deduction of ideas. The true purpose of poetry is to gaze steadily at the emotions which tremble deep in the interior of the human heart, and to harness such moods, illusions and ideas, in order to reveal these emotions.

Poetry is something which grasps the very nerves of emotion. It is living, working psychology.

In all good lyric poetry, there is a sense of beauty which cannot be explained either by words or logic. This is the redolence of the poem. (Though some prefer to term it elegance or tone) It is this redolence which produces that intoxicated elation, which is the true goal of poetry. A poem in which this redolence is thin and vapid has little value as poetry. It is like sake which has lost its fragrance and flavour. I dislike such sake.

For me, poetic expression must be simple and its redolence, fragrant and pure.

What I ask of you my readers, is that you pass over the concepts and little incidents which occupy the surface of my poetry. Rather, I want you to touch the emotions deep in the inner core. I express my own peculiar complicated emotions—the sadness, the joy, the loneliness, the fear in my heart—and other emotions, hard to express in words or phrases, in the rhythm of my poetry. This rhythm, however, is not an explanation; it is a telepathic link between myself and my readers. I can only communicate—taking their hands in mine—with those who can perceive this rhythm in the silence beyond the realm of words.

In reply to the question, "Why are you happy?" an explanation can be given easily. However there is no easy answer to the questions, "How are you happy?" "In what way are you happy?" —that is an altogether different psychological state.
One feels that human emotion is extremely simple, but it is at the same time extremely complicated. It is universal but at the same time has an individual peculiarity. Whatever the circumstances, it is no easy task for someone to try and express the totality of his emotions. Prose is of no use at all. There is only music and poetry.

Sometimes I think of an unhappy hydrophobic, a person with an extreme fear of water. A deathly fear of but one cup of water, is something most of us cannot even imagine. We could ask,

"Why are you scared of water?"

"In what way are you scared of water?"

Yet to us, such psychology remains impregnable and strange. But to the sufferer—the hydrophobic—that feeling, above all else, is a pure reality. In such a case, if the patient himself—spurred on by some necessity—were to try turning to a bystander, seeking to explain this painful, very real emotion, (and one can well imagine that happening; and if the bystander had no special knowledge of this sickness, then one can lay no bounds on the cruel teasing to which the hydrophobic would be subjected; I shudder at the thought of such a situation.), what mode of expression should he use? No matter what words he uses to explain, it will probably be impossible to express this strange emotion.

But, if he has the genius of a poet within him, then he will without question make poetry. Poetry explains even things which cannot be framed in human words. Poetry is words exceeding words.

Though perhaps the example of the hydrophobic is a rather idiosyncratic example, it is at the same time very commonplace. Every human being has his own independent body and his own nerves and senses. My sadness is not his. His joy is not mine. Every single man exists in fearful loneliness for all eternity. Since the beginning of time, God has made many billions of human beings. Yet he made no two people with exactly the same face. Whoever he be, a man is born as an independent unit and must die as one. Eternally, even in after-life, he is but an independent unit.

Yet even so, we are not isolated from the other units which make up the universe.

Our faces, our skin—all is individual for each and every one of us. Yet still we have a place within the collective universe. With the discovery
of the unity shared amongst one's fellow human beings, comes the birth of \textit{morality} and \textit{love}. Then with the discovery of this very same unity between nature and mankind, \textit{morality} and \textit{love} are born in nature. Then we are no longer in eternal loneliness.

Of course, only I in all the world am in possession of this body and these emotions of mine. Only I can completely understand them. Inevitably they are by nature very, very idiosyncratic. Yet at the same time they share a certain something with everybody in the world. The true \textit{joy} and \textit{secret essence} of poetry exists in the focus of individual emotions when they find something within that idiosyncracy which evokes a common bond. I cannot create poetry in any other way.

Poetry is an instantaneous product of the intellect. Emotions—usually held hidden deep within us—suddenly resonate with poetic rhythm, touched as if by an electric shock. Yet for the poet, this shock is a miracle. Poetry cannot be created in anticipation of some special goal. I used to think of poetry as a mystery. I even likened it to the process of mutual communion between man's intelligence and the holy spirit of an ethereal universe; or, as the key to unravel the mysterious puzzle of nature. However, when I think of that now, it is all but laughable superstition.

Poetry is definitely no such weird and wonderful child of the supernatural, rather it is born of that easy intimacy shared by siblings, or lovers.

Sometimes, pathetic like a deformed child, I sob in the darkened corner of a room. At such times, there is a maiden who close by my shoulder, places her kind hand on my shuddering heart. That young nurse is Poetry.

When I think of Poetry, I feel the violence of human agony and its joy.

Poetry is neither mystery, nor symbol nor supernatural force. Poetry is just a lonely solace to the isolated and to the possessors of sickened souls.

When I think of Poetry, I cannot but be moved by the pathetic nature of human feelings.
For me the past holds many painful memories. The past is like an ominous
dream of an irritated, inactive and troubled body and soul.

A dog howls at the moon; howls—suspicious, frightened of its own
shadow. In the diseased soul of the dog, the moon—like a pale ghost—
becomes a mystery of ill omen. Still the dog howls.

I want to nail my gloom-ridden shadow down into the ground of this
moonlit night. So that it will not come following me through all eternity.
BAMBOO AND ITS SENTIMENTALITY
THE SICK FACE IN THE DEPTHS OF THE GROUND

In the depths of the ground a face emerges
the face of a sick and lonely man emerges.

In the darkness in the depths of the ground
lithe grass stalks begin to sprout
a rat's nest begins to sprout.
Entangled in the nest
numberless hairs tremble forth;
time of the winter solstice
from the sick desolate ground
slender roots of pale bamboo grow forth
grow forth
and Ah! so deep in sadness
smoke-like tendrils
sunk so deep, deep, in sadness.

In the darkness in the depths of the ground
the face of a sick and lonely man emerges.

"Jimen no soko no byōki no kao"

Chijō Junrei, 2.1, March 1915
GRASS STEMS

Look at the grass stems!
covered in fine hairs
here in the winter's cold
greening stems forlorn
though completely covered with fine thin hairs
Look at the grass stems!

The distant sky looks like snow
as the grass stems sprout forth.

"Kusa no kuki"
Henro, Feb 1905

BAMBOO

Something straight grows from the ground
something sharp and green grows from the ground
piercing the freezing winter
the green leaves glisten on the empty paths of morning
tears fall
tears are let fall
now from above the shoulders already repentant
smoke-like bamboo roots are spreading
something sharp and green—grows up from the ground.

"Take"
Shiika, Vol 5, Issue 2, Feb. 1915
BAMBOO

Bamboo grows from the shining ground
pale green bamboo grows
bamboo roots grow under the ground
becoming gradually thinner and thinner
fine hairs grow from the root tips
fine hairs grow—a smoke-like blur
faintly, they tremble.

Bamboo grows from the hard ground
bamboo grows sharp above the ground
grows straight upwards
frozen joints glittering
the bamboo grows under the pale blue sky
bamboo—bamboo—bamboo grows.

"Take"
Shiika, 5.2, Feb. 1915
Behold! All sins are recorded
yet surely they are not all mine.
Only shadowless blue-flame phantoms
appear clearly before me
only these sentimental ghosts faded onto the snow
Alas! What am I to do with the earnest repentance
  of such a day as this?
All is but blue flame phantoms.

Untitled, first published in this collection
THE ROTTEN CHRYSANTHEMUM

That chrysanthemum is rotten
that chrysanthemum drips with pain.
Ah! the month of frost is just beginning
my platinum hands wither.
Desperate to pluck the chrysanthemum
with keenly sharpened fingers.
But, no, Touch it not!
In a corner of the bright sky
the chrysanthemum sickens
the rotten chrysanthemum drips with pain.

"Suetaru kiku"
Shiika, 5.1, Jan. 1915.

A TURTLE

Woods
marsh
blue sky
hands feel the weight
as the pure gold turtle sleeps—quietly
bearing this shining
lonely Nature's pain;
the turtle sinks groping into man's soul
sinks into the depths of the blue sky.

—written in December—

"Kame"
Chijō Junrei, 2.1, Jan. 1915
THE FLUTE

Looking up—the strum of a suspended koto high in the branches of a tall pine
with fingers dipped in crimson
borne aloft in the trees—the koto strums.
Ah! in accompaniment to the koto played by another's wife an exquisite flute is in the sky.
Sharp and clear, in tonight's frosty skies illuminating the top of the pine revealing the form of repentance through the very ardour of the one in sorrow.

The exquisite flute is in the sky.

"Fue"

Chijō Junrei, 2.1, Jan. 1915

WINTER

The signs of sin appear in the heavens appear on the falling drifts of snow glittering in the treetops as if shining from beyond the depths of winter the signs of sins committed appear in every quarter.

Behold them sleeping in the dark earth the living creatures have begun to build a house of repentance.

(—Purgatory Poems—)

"Fuyu"

Chijō Junrei, 2.2, Mar. 1915
A CELESTIAL HANGING

Tears of repentance trickle
through the pine needles which shine in the distant night
frost white in the distant night sky
he hangs himself on a celestial pine.
In his yearning for the celestial pine
he hangs as if in prayer.

(—Purgatory Poems—)

"Tenjō ishi"
Shiika, 5.1, Jan. 1915.

EGGS

High in the very treetops
tiny eggs are shining
as I look up—the small bird's nests shine
now, already, it is time for the sinner to pray.

"Tamago"
Chijō Junrei, 2.1, Jan. 1915
SKYLARK FARE
* * * * * *

The fresh greenery and scent laden breeze of the May morning ennobles my life. I want to wield a *fork* of purest silver with the woman I love, under the dripping sky-blue window. At least once in my life, I want to steal, then eat the lover's dish of skylark fare which is shining in the sky.

* * * * * *
MAWKISH HANDS

With the sentimentality of my nature
I grieve for the many hands
ever dancing above my head
or glimmering in loneliness in my breast.
Gradually summer fades away
if I return, the swallows will already have left their nests
the barley will already be chill and cold
Ah!—I have forgotten the Capital
I no longer play the Chinese fiddle
my hands have turned to steel.
Obsessively
these pitiful mawkish hands dig up the earth,
—just dig up the earth.

"Kanshō no te"
Shiika, 4.9, Sept. 1914

LIVING IN THE MOUNTAINS

August is prayer
fish and birds vanish into the distance
the violet of the Chinese bell flowers fades
fades—gradually
my heart too fades away
sadness will not leave the trees' shade
in my hand the bible turns to silver.

(—August 1914, in the Azuma mountains—)

"Sankyo"
Shiika, 4.9, Sept. 1914
SEEDLINGS

The seedlings gleam under the blue sky
the child digs the earth.

Seeking seedlings yet to sprout
I poked my white fingers through
the base of the shining pot.

"Nae"

First published in this collection.
THE MURDER CASE

In the distant sky a pistol cracks
again the pistol cracks.
Ah! my detective in his crystal garb
steals in at his lover's window.
The floor too is crystal.
From between her fingers
deep blue blood flows.
On the sad woman's corpse
a cold grasshopper rasps.

On a morning early in the month of frost
the detective wearing his crystal garb
turns at the crossroads of the town.
The autumn fountain is at the crossroads
already alone, the detective is sunk in gloom.

Look! On the lonely marble pavement, far in the distance
the villain is slipping quickly away.

(—12 August 1914—)

"Satsujin jiken"
*Chijō Junrei*, 1.1, Sept. 1914
MINIATURE LANDSCAPE

Spring and summer have passed—my hands now amber
my eyes moistened in the flower basin.
The stones—a misty mountain green.
All is scented with sorrow.
Behold, a slender waterfall plummets
there in the depths of the landscape.
The waterfall plummets down
ice cold, the water creatures sink under its cascade.

"Bonkei"

Chijō Junrei, 1.1, Sept. 1914

SKYLARK FARE

Consecration of last night's feast of love
offering up the scent of the candles' fish-wax melancholy
Oh! that I might tenderly open the green window.
Yet alas, when I look up at the clear skies of May
streaming off into the distance
Oh! how I wish I could offer up, in my own hands,
a dish of skylark fare
and tenderly come to your left-hand side.

"Hibari ryōri"

Chijō Junrei, 3, Nov. 1914
SEEDS IN MY PALM

I heap up soil onto my hand
I scatter seeds on the soil
now, with a white watering can, I pour water onto the soil
the water trickles down
the coolness of the soil soaks into my palm.
Ah! pushing open the window to the far off month of May
I stretch out my hand towards the sunlight
here, amidst this invigorating panorama
my skin becomes fragrantly warm
and the seeds in my hand—pitifully tender—begin to breathe.

"Shōjō no tane"
First published in this collection.

LANDSCAPE

Creak quietly little horse cart.
Faintly the sea brightens
wheat ripples in the distance
Creak quietly little horse cart.
Over the shining landscape—home to the fish and the birds—
even over the blue windowed buildings.
Creak quietly little horse cart.

"Tenkei"
Chijō Junrei, 1.3, Nov. 1914
ANXIETY

A young girl walks
through the chill of the falling frost of morning
bearing the skylark fare aloft—high in her hands.
Leaning against a roadside tree
peering through the gaps between the girl's
    slender white-powdered fingers
wanting so much to steal and eat that delicious skylark fare
so deeply anxious
here is a man—so deeply anxious—that he reaches out,
    palms together as if in prayer.

—composed in November—

"Shōshin"

Chijō Junrei, 2.1. Jan. 1915
A SORROWFUL MOONLIT NIGHT
A SORROWFUL VISTA

When the sorrowful twilight falls
Tokyo city fills with labourers
the shadows of their threadbare hats
spread throughout the whole city
here, then there
they dig up the hard ground.

Turning over the earth
they find the soot-blackened silver of a snuff paper
at least a couple of grams
and the shrivelled stump of a scented violet.
They begin far-off in the area of Honjo Fukagawa
and gradually range throughout the whole city
in the melancholic twilight shadows
their withered hearts glitter upon their shovels.

"Kanashii enkei"
Shiika, 5.1, Jan. 1915

A SORROWFUL MOONLIT NIGHT

A wretched thieving dog
is howling at the moon over a rotten wharf.
Souls listen
when with voices steeped in gloom
yellow girls sing in chorus
sing in chorus
on the wharf's dark stone wall.

Always
Why am I always like this?
A Dog!
A pale miserable dog!

"Kanashii tsukiyo"
Chijō Junrei, 1.4, Dec. 1914
DEATH

As I watch—out of the depths of the ground
a weird, weird hand appears
a foot appears
a neck protrudes.
Gentlemen
What on earth
is this goose thing?
As I watch—out of the depths of the ground
looking oh so foolish
a hand appears
a foot appears
a neck protrudes.

"Shi"
Shiika, 4.11, Nov. 1914

MY HAZARDOUS PATH

Spring has come
I've fixed rubber soles to my new shoes
so that however rough the path I walk
they won't make that awful sound.
I've so many fragile things in my arms
that's what's so dangerous.
There now, I've begun to walk—careful, careful.
Everybody leave me alone.
Just leave me alone.
I can't stand it—I'm so, so worried.
Whatever happens
don't watch my stumbling steps
I'm at the very end of my tether
like a sick balloonist
always following a misguided course
I stagger on and on—and on.

"Kiken na sanpo"
Shiika, 5.6, June 1915
THE DEATH OF A DRUNK

From the ghastly white belly
of the drunk, lying dead on his back
a mysterious substance is flowing
a pale transparent plasma
a distorted many-sided heart
decaying intestines
and rheumatic inflamed wrists
a sticky squelch of entrails.
On all sides—
the ground glistens
the grass is pointed—sharp
everything glistens like radium.
The pale white face of the murderer
surfaces in this lonely landscape, and
smiles—as a ripple of wind in the grass.

"Yopparai no shi"
Shiika, 5.6, June 1915

DESICCATED CRIME

How did the criminal escape?
Ah! still here, after so, so many years;
an overturned chair
a murder weapon
a body
blood.
And even now at the high window of this pallid May
the dark face of the detective, sunk in thought, and
the hair of the lonely girl still quiver.

"Hikarabita hanzai"
Shiika, 5.6, June 1915
DEATH OF A FROG

A frog has been killed
the children formed a ring and raised their hands
all together
raised their sweet
blood-covered hands
the moon appeared.
Someone stands on the top of the hill
a face under his hat.

—Childhood yearnings—

"Kaeru no shi"
Shiika, Vol 5.6, June 1915
A ROTTEN CLAM

—sensations born of the tormenting allure of a spring evening,
and the diseases which follow—
THE REASON WHY THE PERSON INSIDE LOOKS LIKE A DEFORMED INVALID

I am standing behind a lace curtain
that's what makes my face seem rather blurred.
In my hand I'm holding a telescope
with it I'm looking far out into the distance.
I see woods where bald-headed children are walking
and dogs and sheep are made of nickel.
That's what makes my eyes seem somewhat opaque.
And, this morning I ate too much of that cabbage dish
besides, the window glass is but crudely made
that's why my face seems so terribly distorted.
To tell the truth
I am an all-too-healthy person
so why are you standing there and staring at me so fixedly?
Why are you smiling at me so cerily?
Oh well, of course, if it's what's below my waist
if you say that part of me isn't very distinct
well that's a rather stupid comment, for
after all, I mean, it's because I am standing inside the house
by the wall near this pale window.

—written in April—

"Naibu ni iru hito ga kikei na byōnin ni mieru riyū"
ARS, 1.3, June 1914
CHAIRS

Are they who sleep beneath the chairs
The children of he who builds great houses?

"Isu"

Le Prisme, 1.2, May 1916

A SPRING NIGHT

Mussel-like creatures
clam-like creatures
tiny shrimp-like creatures
their bodies buried in the sand
all around—
like silken threads—numberless hands grow forth
the slender hairs on their skin drift
    in the ebb and flow of the waves.
Ah! here in the raw warmth of this spring night
the tide tumbles—
purling over these living creatures
even the tongues of the clams, burgeon sadly forth
    —flickering in and out.
As I gaze out over the distant beach
a line of invalids—nothing below their waists—
walk the long wet beach trail
swaying this way and that—they walk on.
The haze of this spring night hangs heavily over all
even in the hair of these people
the line of white waves forms into ripples
ebbs and flows—ebbs and flows.

"Shunya"

ARS, 1, April 1915
THE WORLD OF BACTERIA

Bacteria legs
mouths
ears
nosc.

Bacteria are swimming.

In the bodies of humans
in the intestines of shellfish
in the spherical centre of an onion
in the very heart of the landscape.

Bacteria are swimming.

Bacteria hands grow left and right, up and down
—forming a cross
sharp fingernails grow
from the fingertips—split like so many plant roots
fine thread-like capillaries spread—enveloping all.

Bacteria are swimming.

In those places where the bacteria live
a crimson light gleams faintly
as if passing through an invalid's skin
only just visible
yet so, so unbearably sad.

Bacteria are swimming.

"Bakuterya no seki"  
Takujō Funsui, 3, May 1915
THE SWIMMER

The swimmer's body angles out
Two arms stretched out together
The swimmer's heart is transparent—like a jelly fish
As the swimmer's eyes hear the sound of suspended bells
The swimmer's soul watches the moon on the water.

"Oyogu hito"

Le Prisme, 1.2, May 1916

DAWN

From the pain of a long illness
his face becomes wreathed in spider webs
all below his waist has faded away—like a shadow
above his waist a thicket grows
his hands decay
his whole body loses its very form.
Ah!—today too—the moon is out.
The dawn moon out in the sky.
A deformed white dog is howling
in its dim paper-lantern light.
As daybreak approaches
a howling dog stands by the lonely road.

"Ariake"

ARS, 1.1, April 1915
CATS

Two jet black cats
high on the roof, on this bewitching night.
A threadlike crescent moon stands straight but dim
from the tips of their ramrod tails.
"Oo—waah, Good Evening"
"Oo—waah, Good Evening"
"Oo—gyaah, Oo—gyaah, Oo—gyaah"
"Oo—waah, the master of this house is sick."

—10 April 1915—

"Neko"
ARS, 1,2, May 1915

SHELLFISH

A cold creature is born
its teeth washed by the water
its hands washed by the water
at the mercy of the directionless ebb and flow of the tides.
If I step into the shallows and call
the shellfish answers—a distant murmur.

"Kai"
Takujō Funsui, 3, May 1915
IN THE CORNER OF A BARLEY FIELD

We so want to talk
with complete honesty.
That which is born of our faith
appears only in ghostlike forms.
Yet I want to tell you
tell you—clearly—of something I once saw.
The thing I saw was—it really was—
splendidly clothed
and shining
it was the half body of God—with absolutely huge private parts.

"Mugibatake no ichigunite"
First published in this collection.

SPRING

Ah! Spring arrives from far off in the distance
coming into bud with gently pouting lips
yearning to drink in the kiss of a young girl
under the plumply swollen willow buds
Spring comes in from the distance
riding a rubber-wheeled rickshaw.
Though the rickshaw-man's white feet hurry
through this misty panorama
the advancing wheels turn backwards
gradually the shafts leave the earth
to make things worse—the passenger bounces
around rather strangely.
It all seems so dangerous
yet—at this unlikely moment—
spring lets go a pure-white yawn.

"Yōshun"
Published under the title of "Haru" in ARS, 1.2, May 1915
THE ROTTEN CLAM

Half its body buried in the sand
and still its tongue rolls in and out.
Shingle and the salt tide wash grittily, grittily
wash grittily, grittily
over the head of this soft-bodied creature
Ah! the washing tide's so quiet—like a dream.

Into the crevices between the rasping grains of sand
yet again the clam flashes out its lambent tongue
—it flickers redly.
The clam is terribly gaunt
its squelchy entrails already rotting
so when the melancholy evening falls
hunkered down here on this pallid beach
fitfully—fitfully—it exhales a rotten breath.

"Kusatta hamaguri"
First published in this collection

THE SUBSTANCE OF SPRING

Spring is all but bursting
swollen with innumerable insect eggs.
Just take a good look around.
Here, there—everywhere—crammed with this particular type of
eggs.
Look at the cherry blossoms
transparent eggs cling—to the blossoms
and of course, on the willow buds too.
Even the fragile wings of the moths and butterflies
are shaped by the eggs.
It's the eggs that glitter so brightly
Ah!—though invisible to the naked eye
each egg forms an indistinct elliptical shape
they push and jostle each other
they pervade the very air
growing firm like swelling rubber balls.
Prod closely with your fingertip
for surely this is the very substance of Spring.

"Haru no Jittai"
Takujo Funsui, 3, May 1915
ACCOMPANYING A GIFT

There was a really ill-natured fellow
in the firing squad.
—perhaps he missed the bull's-eye on purpose—
When the man who'd been shot
revived in his dreams
lonely tears flowed in the sky.
"This is that kind of tobacco!"

"Okurimono ni soete"
Takujo Funai, 3, May 1915
LONELY DESIRE
LOVE

Lady—bite hard with your lovely strong teeth.
Bite hard on the green of the grass.
Oh, Lady!
Let me dye your face—all over
with the pale *ink* of this green grass
and so intensify your desires.
Let us play secretly in the thick grass
for behold!
Here—the bell flower shakes its head
there—the tendrils of the gentian move so pliantly
Ah! I hug your breasts hard against me.
You—for your part—pin down my body
with all your strength.
Let us make a snake-like play
here on this deserted field.
And—for my part—I will caress you over and over
I will smear your beautiful skin with the sap of these
green grass stalks.

"Airen"

Publication details prior to this collection unclear.
THE LOVER OF LOVE

I painted rouge upon my lips
and kissed the trunk of the new white birch.
Even though I could be said to be a handsome man
no firm rounded breasts hang from my chest
no redolence of the fine silkiness of white face powder
rises from my skin
I am a withered and luckless man
Ah! what a pitiful male!
In today’s sweet scented early summer fields
within a shimmering grove of trees
I slipped on sky-blue gloves
strapped a corset around my waist
and smeared a powdery substance on my nape.
Then, hushed, I played the coquette
as young girls do.
I tilted my head a little
and kissed the trunk of a new white birch.
I painted rose-coloured rouge upon my lips
and clung to the tall snow white tree.

"Koi o koisuru hito"
Shiika, 5.6, June 1915

THE PRINCE OF MAY

As I walk upon this young grass
my shoes leave white footprints.
The silver of my slender cane is polished by the grass.
Gloves—pulled off in a ball—dance high in the air
so too will I cast off all melancholy.
I want to become a gentle lamb
to place my hand on the moistened smoothness of your neck
to capture the iris scent of your new powder.
When I walk upon this young grass
I am the Prince of May.

"Gogatsu no kikōshi"
Dokudami, Feb. 1917
THE WHITE MOON

I held my swollen cheek in my hands
against the fierce pain of a decaying tooth.
I dug under the Chinese date tree
trying to sow the seeds of some plant.
Muddying my delicate fingers
I turned over the cold earth.
Ah!—I do remember all that.
In the dusk of that chilly day
the wriggling curl of an earthworm catches the light
—then disappears
at the bottom of the freshly dug hole.
Just then from behind the low buildings
silkily—the moon rose—
as if stroking the pure whiteness of a woman's ear.
The moon rose.

—Childhood yearnings—

"Shiroi tsuki"

Publication details prior to this collection unclear.

THE PORTRAIT

His face was always contorted
as he stood straight, there by the window.
When it comes time for the white cherry to flower
he comes creeping out again—like a mole—
out from the depths of the ground.
When he stole in through the window
stealthily with quiet footsteps
I took a snapshot.

In the faint shadowed light
I examined the whitened plate
something, just a vague shadow, was pictured.
A shudder—a tremor on an oleander—
ran up my spine.

"Shōzō"

Shiika, 5.6, June 1915
MY LONELY PERSONALITY

My lonely personality calls to my friend
my yet unknown friend. Come quickly!
Sit down on this old chair. Let us just talk quietly
—just the two of us
there is nothing to sadden us—let us spend our days in quiet
happiness—you and I
let us listen to the fountain, quiet in the distant park.
In quietness—in quietness—let us embrace each other,
here like this, just the two of us.
Mother, father, sister and brother—all are far away.
Let us tie together our two orphan's hearts,
—hearts which know neither mother nor father
amidst all the many variations of human life
let us talk only of our own lives—yours and mine.
Of our special secret life—impoverished, unsupported
Ah! my words scatter—plaintively—across my knees
—just like the falling leaves of autumn.

The feelings in my breast are those of a weak and sickly infant
my heart is quaking with fear, as if burning in a heartrending
—heart-rending—blur of passion.
Ah! once I climbed to the top of a high mountain
looking up along the steep hill road
I climbed with the yearning of an insect
then, standing on the mountain summit,
—the insect shed lonely tears
looking up at the huge white clouds scudding past
high above the overgrown brush of the mountain top.
All of Nature makes me suffer
while human nature makes me melancholy.
Better, if tired out by walking in the bustle of a city park
I find a chair in the shade of some lonely tree
better to gaze up at the sky with a vacant heart
Ah! I like to watch the soot and smoke which floats
—far and sad—across the city sky.
To watch the tiny forms of the swallows in flight
far off above the roofs of the buildings.

My terribly lonely personality
calls out in a loud voice to my yet unknown friend.
My strange and obsequious personality
like a seedy destitute crow
shivers, crouched in the corner of this desolate chair
here in the barrenness of winter.

"Sabishii jinkaku"
Kanjō, Jan. 1917
THE UNKNOWN DOG
THE UNKNOWN DOG

An unknown dog follows me
seedy looking and dragging a lame hind leg
—a deformed shadow of a dog.

Ah! I don't know where I'm going.
Running alongside the road I travel
the roof of a long tenement house clatters in the wind.
In the gloomy empty space by the roadside
the shrivelled blades of grass bend thinly.

Ah! I don't know where I'm going
a huge moon—like some live thing—
    floats vacantly on its way.
In the lonely street behind me
the tip of the dog's long thin tail drags along on the ground.

Ah! wherever I go—wherever I go
this unknown dog follows me
crawling along on the filthy ground
this diseased, lame-legged dog is ever behind me.
Quivering with fear, in sadness—far and long—
this miserable shadow of a dog howls with all its might
    —up at the lonely night-moon.

"Mishiranu inu"
Kanjō, Feb 1917
LOOKING UP AT THE TREES

On the back streets of the impoverished city block
the scanty trees eke out their existence.

I am searching for love.
I am searching for a poor young girl with a loving heart
Her hands tremble in the very tops of the green trees.
Always trembling with kindly emotions
high up there, so I can find my love.

I have begged on far distant highways.
My starving heart has wept in misery
amidst the sharp stench of rotting onions and meat.
I have wandered the backstreets of the town, my beggar's heart
wallowing in misery.

The heart which searches for love, is destined to follow
far, far behind that exhaustion which stems from
unhappy loneliness.
It is nostalgia—a huge sea of emotion.

A tiny leaf—high in the top of the evergreens
which grow in the barren soil of the roadside
—flutters in the wind.

"Aogi no kozue o aogite"
Kanjō, Feb. 1917
HAIL FROG!

Hail Frog!
There in the midst of the pampas grass and reeds.
'Tis as if the frog is swelling—whitely.
Here on this evening heavy with falling rain
the frog croaks—gyo, gyo, gyo, gyo.

The rain pelts down on the pitch black earth.
Tonight is a night of violent wind and rain.
Though it sits upon the icy blades of grass
the frog lets out a sigh of relief
gyo, gyo, gyo, gyo—croaks the frog.

Hail Frog!
My thoughts are never far from you.
Taking a lamp in my hand
I look out over the dark garden
with a weary heart I gaze out at the leafy vegetation
bending low under the rain.

"Kaeru yo"
Kanjō, Jan. 1917

CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN

—sent from my travels, to a certain woman—

The mountain was topped with a beautiful grassy sward.
It was there we used to lie.
Gazing out at the distant foothills
it seemed like a vast sea
—spreading out from us in all directions.
The wind rippled through the sky as
I picked up a small pebble, and putting it to my lips
aimlessly
I wandered over the overgrown mountain top.

I still love you—even now.

"Yama ni noboru"
Kanjō, Jan. 1917
THE SWIMMER'S INN

Far beyond the stand of red pines
a huge dark wave glimmered distantly.
Here on this lonely *Echigo* coast line.
What is it that causes me to pray for a passing moment?
Finishing my evening meal, alone
I kindle a light in my room at the Swimmer's Inn.

—At Kujiranami Beach—

"Kaisui ryokan"
*Kitsune no Su* (Fox's Lair), 1.5, Sept 1916

ISOLATION

By the parched-white of a country road
the heart of a tired horse
stares at the withered sun-bleached grass;
stares at the lonely trembling of the grass
which angles upwards thin and sparse.

Standing in the lonely country sunshine
what is it you see
Oh my trembling, isolated soul?

Thin tears wash over
the face of this dusty landscape.

"Kodoku"
*Kanjō*, 1.4, Oct. 1916
WHITE BENCHES

A row of white, white benches
line the small path through the forest
in the midst of these lonely mountains
sunk deep in verdant green shadows.
Look, there, through the forest
there too is a lonely stand of trees
and the elegant white legs of benches in orderly array.

"Shirōi kyōdō isu"
Kanjō, 1.4, Oct 1916

AFRAID OF THE COUNTRY

I am afraid of the country
afraid of the rows of seedlings—growing so long and thin—
trembling amidst the deserted rice fields.
I am afraid of the impoverished hordes
who live inside the dark houses.
Sitting on a country pathway
the weight of the soil—like a huge wave—darkens my heart
the rotten smell of the earth soils my skin
the winter barrenness of lonely nature embitters my life.

The country air is gloomy and oppressive.
The country's touch—a horrible gritty coarseness.
Sometimes when I think of the country
I am troubled by the coarse smell of animal skin.
I am afraid of the country
the country is a pallid feverish dream.

"Inaka o osoru"
Kanjō, 2, Jan. 1917

* * * * * * * *
TWO LONG POEMS
THE SKYLARK'S NEST

Harbouring a sadness in my heart—felt but rarely in this world—I walked the river-bed of my birthplace.

Starwort, field horsetail, Japanese parsley, shepherd's purse and violet roots grew thick and wild.

Behind the low-lying sandhills the Tone river flowed on its way—flowing murky and wretched—off like a thief.

Motionless I squatted on the riverbank.

A clump of river mugwort hung right before my eyes.

A clump I could have grasped in one hand. It fluttered thinly in the wind—like the hair of a careworn woman.

A terrible thought caught hold of me, a fearsome thought of ill-omen.

The sweltering heat of the maddening sun beat down oppressively on the top of my hat. I was limp with sweat.

As though in pain gasping for water, my arm jerked out.

As if grasping hold of my own soul I caught hold of something.

It was like shrivelled locks of hair—a skylark's nest—hitherto hidden in the river mugwort.

Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo

the mother skylark cried in the sky.

I gazed down at the pathetic skylark's nest.

Gently rounded like a ball, as it lay in the large hollow of my palm.

Clear through my heart, I felt the fawning desire to touch the love shared by creatures bred in such innocence.

Now strangely lonely and distressed like a parent bird, I too stretched out my neck and peered into the nest.

The inside was in hazy darkness—like the half-light of dusk.

An indescribable delicate sorrow—like the touch of slender plant cilia—brushed like a shadow over the raw ends of my nerves.

Glimmering in the faint light of the nest, four grey skylark eggs gleamed in loneliness.

My fingers reached out and picked up one of the eggs.

The breath of a living thing, warm with life tickled the pad of my thumb.

Irritation—like when watching a dog in the throes of death—seethed up from the depths of my soul.
Brutal crime is born of just such a discordant sensation.
The heart afraid of sin is the harbinger of the heart
which gives sin its birth.
Furtively, I held the egg in my fingers up to the sunlight
a vague pale-red shape—like a clot of blood
—was just visible through the shell.
Then—a cold watery substance
a fluid, heavy with the smell of blood,
 oozed between my fingers.
The egg had broken.
Barbaric human fingers had squashed this delicate thing
 in cold blood.
Within the fragile grey eggshell—the letter "K" appeared,
 indistinctly written in red.

The beginnings of a helpless baby bird,
 a parent of future chicks.
The nest made with that sweet little beak—the heart and soul of
 this tiny animal committed in its work—such admirable
 manifestation of instinct.
Tender, virtuous, thoughts swelled up from deep in my heart.
I had broken the egg.
My act—full of sadness and malediction—had killed
 both love and joy.
Mine was a dark, unpleasant action.
Now melancholy, I stared at the ground
which glittered with small pebbles, glass-like shards
 and grass roots.

Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo
the mother skylark cried in the sky.
A raw springlike smell.
Again, repugnant thoughts caught hold of me.
Humans loathe the smell of human skin
humans bemoan the ugliness of their reproductive organs
at times, humans seem like horses.
Humans betray each other in love.
Humans loathe each other.
Ah! you misanthrope!
Reading the novels of a certain famous Russian—such heavy
 novels—I came upon a tale of such a misanthrope.
It was a wonderful, yet fear-inspiring novel.
How evil a philosophy which holds that that which the heart
loves cannot be loved by the body! How hideous a disease!
Since I was born, never once have I kissed any young women.
Never once have I spoken so much as a brotherly word to them,
placing a hand on the shoulder of the little birds
—whom I love.
Ah! those little birds, whom I love—I love, I love.
I love people—and yet I fear them.
Sometimes I slip away from people, and in loneliness, my heart
tearfully fills with love for all mankind.

Walking the deserted lonely riverbank, I like to think of the
congestion of the distant capital.
I like to walk alone through the parklands around my home,
just at the time they would be lighting the lamps
of the distant capital.
Ah! only yesterday, I continued to dream in sadness.
At the rotten stench of human blood
I become distressed
—and lonely.
Oh why cannot I love with my body
that which I love in my heart?
I repent.
Whenever I am tormented, I repent.
Sitting on the sandy bed of the Tone river, I repent.

Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo, Peeyo
the mother skylark cries in the sky.
The roots of the river mugwort spread out thick and unkempt.
Tone river flows on—stealthily like a thief.
Here and there the despair-filled faces of farmers are visible.
Gloomy they only look down at the earth.
Spring breaks out in smallpox on the ground.

Pathetically I picked up the remains of the skylark egg.

"Hibari no su"
Shiïka, Sept. 1916
THE TOY FLUTE

The child wanted a toy flute.
The child's father seemed to be writing
when the child went and peeped into his father's room.
The child stood quietly in the shadow behind the door.
The shadows carried the scent of cherry blossoms.
Just at that moment, the man sat thinking inside the room
his thoughts were a spinning whirlpool—a confusing dilemma
captivated his heart.
As the child watched, he saw that all unnoticed a snake had
coiled itself around the man's forehead as he slumped
forward on the desk.
The events of that spring-like morning had saddened the heart of
this man.

Instinct and conscience
Oh so lonely is he who tries to separate into two that heart
whose oneness is so hard to divide.
The two shadows, forcibly wrenched apart,
re-entangle themselves—like so many threads—
and again locked together, hover around the dim skylight.
At the sight of the forms of these plaintive ghosts
passing over his head
catching his breath in fear, the man began to pray
"God, let not these two reunite!"
Yet for a long time—the ghosts continue to flit in and out
of the shadow of the door.
The shadows carried the scent of cherry blossoms.
The man's pale-faced sickly child still stood
there in the shadows.
The child wanted a toy flute.
The child opened the door and stood in a corner of the room. The child saw his father's huge head slumped on the desk by the window. His head lay in thick shadow. Like a fly, the child's vision alighted on that very spot. The child's miserable heart was drawn by something. Gradually the child's heart began to feel a power. It actually cried out in a clear voice for it had seen a flute—a small purple toy flute, just as the child had wanted.

The child had not said anything about a flute to his father so it was purely chance—perhaps some strange twist of fate. Yet the child believed firmly in his father's miracle believed in the shadowy flute born of the thoughts of this the greatest of men in this toy flute which lay on the table.

"Fue"

Shiika, 6.6, June 1916
FOLLOWING RAINBOWS

虹を追うひと
ACT ONE
Scene: A large flat plain reminiscent of western China
Time: At the time this sort of incident would happen
(Dialogue between two travellers wandering in the wilderness)

1
"How far do we have to go?"
"Just as far as we must."
"How far's that?"
"We must just keep walking until the day we've done our duty."
"Do you still believe in IT?"
"Yes, I do."
"Do you really? Surely it's just a stupid old wives' tale."
"What are you saying? It was you who told me about it all that time ago?
You believed in it then didn't you?"
"Maybe I did once long ago but I was just a child then. Children take any
stupid make-believe story seriously."
"Whatever the case we must do our duty. Even if only one more step, we
must go on before the sun sets."

2
"We're like stray dogs wandering directionless, from country to country."
"Nevertheless, we must go as far as we must go."
"What do you mean—'as far as we must'?"
"Until we've done our duty"
"Do you still believe in IT?"
"Yes, I do."
"Do you believe in miracles? Have you forgotten truth?"
"What do you mean by 'truth'?"
"The truth that every human being must die at some time or other, and that
that strange tale is all a silly fable—total make-believe."
"You should've realized it's always unpleasant when we try and discuss
this. So, you're backing out of your promise are you?"
"Mmm, probably, but I want to know if you really believe in IT?"
"..................."
"Why don't you give me an answer?"
"It's rather difficult to answer."
"Hah! So you have been just pretending. You didn't believe in it from the very beginning."
"No, I do believe in it. Really I do. That is, it isn't that I don't believe in it. That's definitely not how it is. Definitely not."
"I can't understand what's in your heart, no more than we can understand His Majesty's. Sometimes you're even more incomprehensible than he is. For His Majesty is truly insane, but you........ I wonder about you."
"I'm not insane. It is my duty. Ah! Look! today too—just the same as always—darkness comes. Look! The foot of that mountain, there! It's already sunk in darkness. We must get going."
"But it's blowing an absolute blizzard! Everything's buried deep under heavy snow, and the wind—the wind shrieks like a howling beast."
"Even so, we must do our duty. Even if we go only a single step further, we must go on before the sun sets."

3

"No, it's just no good. I can't go another step."
"But, what about His Majesty's orders?"
"Aahh, My Lord, His Majesty. My Lord."
"Have you forgotten your loyalty? Are you going to disobey an imperial command?"
"Aahh, My Lord, His Majesty. My Lord. What a terrible thing you ask of us."
"Look, we must continue on no matter what."
"Aahh, this dreadful mission is just too much. Execution would be far better than continuing this journey."
"Whatever the case we must do our duty. Even if we go only a single step further, we must go on before the sun sets."

4

"We seem to have taken the wrong road."
"What are you saying?"
"Something seems to be wrong with my compass—yes, it's definitely not right. I fear I've made a terrible mistake.
"What are you saying? We've been walking for three years!"
"Remember some time ago I fell down that crevasse. My compass has been a bit strange ever since."
"That can't be true. I don't believe you. I just don't believe you."
"But something's wrong. It's definitely wrong."
"This is absolutely terrible. We've already been walking for three years. You can't tell me you didn't realize!"
"But I didn't realize."
"What on earth is going on? This is absolutely ridiculous! I mean, you do realize we've been walking this road for three years!"
"Well there's no use complaining now."
"Aaah, what should I do? What on earth do you expect me to do?"
"Look, just accept it. There's nothing for it but to make a fresh start."
"What a terrible thought! The road before us may be limitless, it may continue on and on, far off into the distance, but our lives—our lives!—they have their limits. We've wasted three years. Three years!"
"But our orders were to go east. We've taken the wrong road."
"How did that happen? Just tell me how! We've been walking for three years. It'll take us another three to retrace our steps, so then after six years we'll only be back where we started. Six years! Oh, I can't even bear to think about it."
"But there's nothing else we can do."
"Don't say that!"
"Look, I'm too tired for this. It really seems best to turn back."
"I'm not going back! Whatever happens I'm not going back. I can't bear the thought of even a single backward step. Look back there, the road we've travelled is shining as it runs between those distant mountains. Shining—like a white snake—completely enveloped in ice and snow and sleet. We've wandered these mountain ranges like sick dogs always being chased away. We'll end up dying the desolate death of such a dog."
"No—No!—I'm not going to die. Whatever happens, I'm not going to die! Not till I find IT!"
"You're just dreaming. You've lost your sense of direction."
"Aaah, no please don't say that. Whatever happens I must go on, however great my suffering."
"Hah! I'm much tireder than you. It is I who suffers—much more than you—much, much more."
"But you don't even believe in IT anymore. So it's all the same whichever way you go."
"I suppose that's true. But I....."
"Whatever. We must keep walking. Even if we only go a single step further, we must tread new ground before the sun sets."

5

"The soles of our feet are rubbed raw. We've endured as much as we possibly can."
"But, we haven't done even the merest fraction of our duty."
"And what, pray, is our duty?"
"To save His Majesty's life! Have you forgotten what our mission is all about?"
"Hah! I've had more than enough of all this!"
"How can you even say such a thing?"
"Look, you know yourself, His Majesty is a sick man. Ah! What a wretched fate! What a mischance that His Majesty—once so wise—should fall prey to such an illness! Many times before today, I've thought of deserting you, of running away. But until this very day, my loyalty—dead and gone long since—and my strong sense of duty have somehow stopped me. Even if forced to eat rocks, I just couldn't bear to be branded a traitor. But now my endurance—weak as it is—is all gone. I've drained the very last drop of water from my water bottle."
"Are you going to double-cross His Majesty then?"
"There's nothing else I can do, whatever you say to me. I'm a man of remarkable endurance, a man who can hold a burning flame in my naked hand. However great the pain, I can endure. But, this journey—this journey alone is beyond me. It is nothing but pure terror."
"No, no, it's not so terrifying. It's just a little hard, that's all."
"I just can't understand how you can put up with it all so calmly. When I even so much as think of this mission of mine, a bone-shattering terror runs up my spine. Just how far do we have to walk, just how far? And we don't even know what we're looking for? If I was told to cut down every single tree on that mountain, then I might perhaps dedicate my whole life to it. If I was told to circumnavigate the world seven times—even knowing it was impossible—I might perhaps commit myself to it, at least until driven mad
with trying. But this journey! I just cannot continue this journey. It's pure terror. Pure, pure terror."

"But, we still haven't done even the merest fraction of our duty."

"Duty? What is our duty? His Majesty ordered us to go and take the moon out of the sky, and so we leapt up high from the ground, as high as we possibly could. We leapt high from the ground—both hands straining towards the moon—only to fall back. We leapt and fell back, leapt and fell back—like a bouncing ball—all night long. Then wearied beyond belief, we collapsed in exhaustion on the ground. We did this in full knowledge of the absolute futility of our actions. There was nothing else we could do.

Who could possibly do more in response to such a mission? Who could show more loyalty? But now, now we are so, so weary."

"NO—not me—I'm still not tired."

"What a man of endurance! If His Majesty could but hear your words, he'd clap your hand and anoint it with his very tears. No loyalty in the long history of the world can compare with yours! I misjudged you."

"It is not for loyalty that I make this journey. I journey for myself."

"What? For you yourself?"

"Yes. It is my duty to myself. I am merely responding to my own personal emotions."

"And surely, to look for that which we seek—to look for IT?"

"Exactly."

"You're insane! This journey is too, too terrifying, for a man of your youth."

"I'm not—I'm not insane. Though sometimes I do perhaps suffer a little."

"There it is again—the howl of a wolf as it stands in some far off valley gorge. Whenever I hear this dreadful howling, an unspeakable emptiness overtakes me."

"I must now walk on all alone. Even if I go only a single step further, I must—I must—tread new ground before the sun sets."

**ACT TWO**

Scene: —A wharf somewhere in some foreign land

—in some scholar's rooms

Time: Totally unclear

(Dialogue between two characters)
1
Today I met that strange old man again. What sort of man is he? Why does he pass by nearly everyday? What is it he ponders so deeply? It's strange, but whenever I look into those pale sunken eyes, I can't help asking myself these questions. He's definitely pondering some terribly intricate problem. Perhaps—just perhaps—it's my fate he ponders so deeply. I can't stop myself believing that to be the case.
I want to know what he's thinking.

2
I wonder what's happened to that strange man? Whenever I come here, he's always standing over by that embankment looking in this direction.
What sort of man is he? When I see his yellow face, I get the feeling that he's weighing up some terrible dilemma.
I get the feeling that somewhere, sometime, I've met this yellow-faced man before. Sometime long, long ago...perhaps it was sometime before I was even born, I feel as if he and I talked for a long time about something—perhaps a dream—somewhere in a deep valley gorge in an unimaginable foreign land. It was a sorrow-filled sunset that night. Above our heads, the sun shone weakly like a pale white rabbit. Endlessly, endlessly—it turned—round and round. I can't remember what we talked about. But I get the feeling that I'll remember any moment now.
Everyday, when I see that yellow face, the more I try to remember the more frustrated I become.
The words I spoke—the words he spoke—they're on the very tip of my tongue. I strain to reach out and catch this memory, intent, in an absolute fever of impatience. But just as I'm about to grasp hold I can go no further. Just as I'm about touch it—I can't—I can't quite manage it. It's infuriating! Just so frustrating!
Even so, I still can't let go, not until I somehow manage to remember that strange dream.
Today I'll no doubt see him again in the usual place.

3
"Where do you come from?"
"I've come across the plains from an eastern land."
"I feel as if I've met you somewhere before. But then again, perhaps not."
"It's the first time we've met. My name is Wang Shuo-Fang."
"I feel as though you and I once sat together in a lonely gorge, somewhere deep in the mountains. When was it? Whenever it was, it was definitely long long ago, deep in the mountains in some far off land. Don't you remember that sorrowful sun? And this is what I told you...umm...this is what it was....it was definitely, yes, yes, this is what it was....It was....O, why can't I remember?

It's all too, too strange. Sometime or other, I've been here before...I'm sure I've stood on this very spot and talked to you like this. I've got it! This is what you told me. And this is what I replied...I said exactly what I'm saying now. This is really strange. It's really weird.

When did it happen? It definitely did happen at sometime or other. But today's the first time I've spoken to you in this place. There's no real likelihood that this ever really happened before. What's this all about? It's all so strange. Perhaps it happened before I was born? No, no, maybe it's happening in the distant future."

"And so when do you sail?"
"In an hours time."
"Your destination?"
"The countries of the east. There's no other answer I can give you."
"But why? What is your aim? I can't help worrying about you. I don't want us to part like this."
"IT—My aim is to find IT"
"IT?"
"Yes, IT."
"What on earth are you talking about!"
"The cup of life—the giver of eternal youth and immortality. It exists—somewhere in the world—it really does exist."
"The cup of life?"
"That's right. It exists, somewhere. Somewhere in the world it surely does exist."
"If it's the cup of life you want...well then, look no further. I'm an alchemist. I have it.
"What? You? .....You've got IT? You?"
"I have—though not right now."
"Aaah, I can't believe this is happening. It's beyond my wildest imagination. I've been right all along. My faith was not misplaced. I must've taken the right path after all. Ah! What luck! What unexpected good fortune! I won't die. I will never never die."
"I've now completed as much as nine parts of my research."
"Oh My Lord God. My Lord God. Let me kneel at your feet. Let me draw near your feet. I am saved. I am saved."

5

"So whatever happens, you're leaving tomorrow?"
"Yes, at least I mean to."
"So there's absolutely no chance that you can wait longer?"
"No, absolutely no chance."
"Just six more months of patience."
"But I've already waited three years. I can't wait any longer—not even for a single day."
"Please trust in my knowledge. Trust in my experience. I would never deceive you, I swear. I've made progress, at least nine parts of my research is completed. In six months time I will definitely..."
"You've already said that so, so many times, and believing you, I've done nothing but wander around in gay abandon for these three years. Have any days and months ever dragged so long as these three years? Such precious days and months! I am a traveller who must walk the pitch black road of the night, with nothing but a single candle stub in my hand. Never pausing so much as to even catch my breath, I must pass by on lightning feet. It's hard to stand still even for an hour—even for a minute, and to top it off—you've deceived me. For three years, I've patiently endured the feeling that I can see my life visibly shrivelling before my very eyes. Only to be cheated in the end. Cheated!"
"But, No! This time I've really got it! Please believe in me just this one more time."
"If I do, my candle will burn away to nothing, when that happens, it will make absolutely no difference how much I hate and resent you."
"Aah, it's no use, I've done all I can. So, there's nothing I can do to dissuade you...."
"This is where we say farewell."
"So you're still here? You haven't left?"
"I couldn't do it."
"It's six months since we said our farewells, isn't it?"
"I've come to ask about your results."
"I've had very good results. At the very latest in six months time..."
"Look, I'm sorry you'll have to excuse me. I'm leaving early tomorrow morning."

7

"I thought you'd left this country long since."
"I couldn't do it."
"If I remember that was exactly what you said last time."
"I have no pride. I just couldn't leave. I kept wondering how you were progressing, thinking:

I was deceived yet again. But the next time will be different!

repeating this refrain,

I was deceived yet again. But the next time will be different!

until today, when I come here yet again. Last time I was absolutely determined to leave, whatever anyone said. The next morning, I even went as far as the wharf. Just as the boat was about to leave, this scenario flashed across my mind,

'Any minute now the whistle will sound. And then my living body will leave these shores. Then never again will I have the chance to meet that man. But this time—this time his labors will definitely meet with success. In six months time, no, no, in even less time than that, maybe he'll have found it. Somehow I feel he will. But when that happens I'll be here no longer. Already, my living body will have been borne away, somewhere far, far from here. Even if I want to, I'll be unable to return. Then I felt—something I was unaware of even in my dreams—that I was destined to die a lonely death in some desolate field. Then there would be no going back. It's all a terrible mistake. I see it now. I'm on the very brink. But there's still time. The whistle has yet to blow. If I'm to change my mind—now is the time.'

and so in the end, I've been quite unable to depart—right up to this very day."
"Ah! I seem to have misled you again and again. But, this time—just this one last time—I can tell you this with absolute conviction. In six months time, no matter what...

"If that's all you can say please don't say anything. It's now the eighth time you've told me that."

"But, I'm sure it'll work someday soon. Someday soon!"

"Maybe it will. But, I can't wait around for that 'someday.' That 'someday' may not even come until after I'm dead and gone."

"But it's all the same, man must die somewhere. So even if I fail completely and all your hopes prove of no avail, you should have no real regrets. But, if I succeed! If I succeed, you will receive eternal life—a gift far beyond all others. More happiness will come to you if you stay here in this land—for if you are to die, far better here than in some foreign land. For here that 'someday' has a chance, whereas there it will never come."

"But I must do my duty while I'm still alive. I've not yet done all I can. Only when I have trod the soil of every country in the world, when it is finally clear that what I seek is nowhere to be found—only then will I heed your words."

"I don't believe in it. I don't believe in this so-called legend of your country—it is nothing but a fairy-tale, a tree with neither root nor leaf. I don't believe that any ancient Taoist monk or mountain hermit ever really discovered any secret formula."

"But, I don't believe that either."

"Well then isn't it better to stay here and wait for my results?"

"But I just can't bear it any longer."

"You're lost in a dream. You spend your time gazing at the sky relying on something totally unreliable. Just like those ridiculous Jews always waiting for the kingdom of God."

"To tell you the truth, I don't even believe in you."

"You're saying you don't believe in me? In my studies?"

"That's right, I don't. From the very beginning I didn't really believe you'd ever succeed. My intellect just won't allow me to believe in such irrational research."

"Huh! How can you say such things! It's just sour grapes."

"No, it's not sour grapes if it's all a lie. I'm telling you the truth. Actually the real reason I came here today was to confess all this to you."
"But it was you who fell down at my feet crying! Crying through your tears that you'd been saved. You've even waited until this very day for my results."

"That's true. But, it doesn't mean I believed in you."

"How can you say that? Even when my very first experiment failed you didn't give up on me."

"That's because my emotions made me believe in you."

"You just quibble with words! Quibbling can be the only reason for such words."

"The voice of my intellect tells me that you'll definitely fail, yet the voice of my emotions tells me you'll definitely succeed. I'm powerless to do anything but obey the voice of my emotions."

"Hah! An argument can be twisted to suit just about anything, can't it?"

"I didn't come up here to argue with you. I wanted to bid you farewell, to confess it all here before you.

I'm completely aware that—sometime or other—every human being must die. But, I just don't want to die—whatever the price. The humans living in this world today, will undoubtedly all die in the near future. It's just a matter of course. For me—for me alone—it's meant to be different. Even knowing this seems unreasonable, I just can't rid myself of this impression.

I want to live forever. Though death is no doubt the true fate of everyone else, for me alone it just makes no sense. Whatever the case, surely I am an exception. Somehow, God must give in to my wilfulness. After all I'm just one man. Whatever the price, I don't want to die. I definitely won't die. If I say I'm not going to die, then I'm not going to die."

"You talk like a spoilt child."

"I often dream that I'm a base and cowardly soldier condemned to death. Though I stand on the execution ground, I don't really believe I'll die right up to the final pronouncement of my sentence. The soldiers line up in front of me, and charge their guns. Even then I'm still convinced I won't be killed.

\textit{Something will happen—now!—something will save me. Watch! Just Watch!}

The black mouths of the guns form a wall in front of my nose. The officer places his hand on his sword hilt. Even then I do not despair.

\textit{I will not die. Such a terrible thing can't possibly happen to me.}
But still no miracle. Finally, the officer brandishes his sword. The soldiers place their fingers on the triggers. Even then I don't give up.

*I will not die. It will not happen. Wait. Wait. In just one more second. Now! Thunder will strike them down. Now, in half a second!* But nothing happens. The bullets explode from the mouths of numberless guns.

*There's still a chance. A hundredth of a second still remains.*

*Quickly, oh, quickly consume those bullets halfway!*

But sadly, to the very end the miracle fails me. The bullets mercilessly bury themselves in my chest. I fall to the ground. But even then I don't give up. *I haven't died. I can't possibly be dead. I refuse to believe it. I know—this is just a dream. It's definitely just a dream. A dream. A dream. It must be a dream! Oh, it must be a dream!*

Then I hear a voice speaking over my dead body.

*"Heart perforated. Three bullets. Fatal wound. No pulse."
*"To the third grave yard. Cremation. Take up the body!"

Like a spoilt child, I cry out.

*I will not die. I will not die. Such a terrible thing can't possibly happen to me. I'll revive. Whatever happens I will revive. I will not die. I will definitely not die!*

At that very moment, an unspeakable sadness and fathomless regret swells up in my heart and I begin to cry like a baby. Unrelieved regret that whatever I did, nothing could undo what had happened. This regret draws me down into a deep, deep valley of sorrow. Though my despairing body lies dead at the very bottom of the valley, I'm somehow still unable to give up completely.

When I wake from this dream, my throat catches, I cannot stop myself from crying out in joy.

*Hah! I didn't die after all.*

Though rationally, I cannot believe in miracles, in my dreams I find I cannot stop believing, right up to the last possible moment. Yet, even if I die, no man such as I can ever truly die.

Though I detest my obstinate emotions, it is my intellect which I truly detest, more—much, much more. My intellect is like a villain with ice-cold hands. Hands which await the smallest chink in my defenses, and then encircle my neck—tightly—tormenting me without the slightest sign of mercy.
If it would just leave me alone, I could confidently believe in your success and wait patiently for that someday."
"I myself have every confidence in my work. I believe in my own common sense. If that wasn't the case, I wouldn't be doing this for so much as a day longer."
"Of course, you would feel like that, wouldn't you? You truly are a fortunate man."
"I just can't understand you—why you can't believe in me."
"It's because my common sense always gets in the way. I'm a surprisingly emotional man. Yet at the same time a surprisingly practical man. I'm a poet yet also a scientist. Both a dreamer and a realist. So however great my mental torment I will never go insane."
"Yes, but what about your theories? They're definitely crazy."
"If I'm insane, then it's only as a madman who is aware of his own insanity.

A doctor of my acquaintance once told me of a certain type of nervous disease. A patient with this nervous complaint, somehow becomes convinced that some part of his body is diseased. For example, a man who is actually perfectly healthy, without so much as the slightest sign of a problem, falls victim to his nerves and becomes totally convinced that he has a stomach complaint. As a result of this superstitious belief, this seemingly healthy man collapses with the same sort of symptoms as a real stomach patient. It goes without saying that it's absolutely useless to turn to him and try to explain the reason for or even the absurdity of his illness, just as it would be useless to try telling a madman convinced that he was an important minister that it was just a trick of his nerves.

In such a case, there is nothing the doctor can do but use some sort of deception. After examining the man just like a real stomach patient, he would no doubt say something dire like, "It's as I thought, I'm afraid it's really bad." Then he would give the man sugar pills in the place of medicine. He would also hint that the patient's stomach problem would most likely heal in a matter of days.

But if the patient was himself a doctor, then this sort of treatment would be totally useless, for the patient would be perfectly aware of the real reason for his sickness. Not only that, but in this case, whatever treatment the doctor tried would be totally transparent to the patient. And so
consequently it is completely impossible to treat a doctor who has this disease.

When I walk the streets, I often see people who behave in an eccentric manner. Some intentionally take two or three totally unnecessary backward steps. Some, after suddenly coming to a standstill, must always start off again from their left foot. Some must touch every single tree that lines the road. Others must read the name plate on every house as they pass. Still others must clear their throats and spit every seventeenth step. All of these people are perfectly aware that their actions are totally ridiculous, that they arise from some nervous twitch. But even so, whatever they do, they just can't cope unless they continue this behavior.

Sometimes such things as reason and truth are totally powerless before human emotion. I know this because I myself am just such a doctor suffering an imaginary stomach ailment.

Tomorrow morning I will leave these shores."
"Aaah, you unhappy man! There is absolutely nothing to be done for you."

ACT THREE
Scene: The corner of some city in Japan
Time: At the time this sort of incident would happen.
(Dialogue about a certain person's death)

"I didn't think I'd meet up with you here."
"I feel as if I'm dreaming."
"Embrace me!"
"Give me your hand."
"You're still alive."
"You haven't died."
"I abandoned you in that terrifying wilderness. I dreamed you'd been eaten by wolves. Oh, please, don't hate me."
"No, no, it is I who felt for you, I think I'd lost my sanity at that time. It is you who must forgive me."
"I have walked the very ends of the earth. I have met a mysterious old man in a distant foreign land. A man working to discover the secrets of the cup of life. Yet, I have managed not to die and I have been able to meet you again."
"Since we parted, I have spent my time, here on this Elysian isle. The conversation of the people of this land somehow suits me."
"So you didn't go home?"
"Well yes, I did return for a while."
"What did His Majesty say?"
"I didn't see him. Before long I came back here."
"Why did you do that?"
"Because it would have been too painful to see His Majesty. The very instant he saw me, His Majesty would have fallen into the depths of despair. His life-force would have shrivelled away to nothing—for His Majesty really is so critically ill."
"Like us, His Majesty, must also have aged considerably. I myself am already a little past thirty."
"Not only that, but His Majesty's condition is really very bad. The unlucky superstition which has destroyed His Majesty's health, has now become the only thing that sustains him. My very first words would have pulled that support from under him. Ah, what an ill-starred man! He is caught in such an ill-fated dream."
"So you didn't have an audience with His Majesty."
"No, I didn't. But please don't reproach me for that."

Let me tell you a story I heard as a child.

Long, long ago, there was a war in a certain country. The people of that country bore a bitter hatred for the single enemy they had managed to capture. Every man, woman and child wanted him cut to pieces, slice by slice, with the blade of a broadsword.

They bound the prisoner's body tight with cords and hung him above a huge vat of boiling water. Then, one after another, each citizen took turns to cut the many ropes which held him up in the air. There was one rope for every citizen.

When I heard this story I judged myself able to cut such a rope, right up to the second last rope. But I would never be able to cut the very last rope.

His Majesty's life may only last out the day, or perhaps he'll somehow last until tomorrow. The court physician told me it was amazing that he still managed to hang onto life when he was already so far gone. Prior to us, thirteen other envoys have already returned empty-handed and now we are that last remaining rope."
"Most of those envoys were truly despicable. Some were even put to death when their deceptions were discovered, weren't they?"

"Yes, they were. Some of them merely used His Majesty's mission as an excuse for an extravagant journey of their own. Others, pseudo-Taoists deceived His Majesty while lining their own pockets. My blood used to boil when I heard tell of these men. Tearing them apart limb by limb would have been too good for them. But, now, such thoughts fill me with sadness. I find I have become unbearably lonely."

"Whatever the case it was wrong of you not to see His Majesty."

"But I just couldn't cut that one last rope. I wouldn't even be able to do it if I held one of my bitterest enemies prisoner, so how much more so for His Majesty, the divine lord of all of us his subjects. Even if I could slice through that last strand with these very hands, I would most certainly die, driven insane by tremendous remorse and regret. Ah! the very thought of such an action fills me with awe and trepidation."

"But, His Majesty is no doubt waiting for us. He probably even dreams of us, night after night."

"He probably does. Jin, his court physician also told me that recently His Majesty has become absolutely terrifying. His face has wasted away to nothing but skin and bone. His eyes glitter with the uncanny awareness of a fox. The weaker minded ladies-in-waiting tremble with fear at the very sight of him.

Everyday from morning till night, he leans against his sickroom window, gazing intently out into the distance. It's as if he can no longer even hear the words of his attendants, though they stand close by. Then suddenly, he'll point out some place on the distant horizon, crying—

_Look there! Look there!_

At these words his attendants begin to tremble in pure terror. A shadow seems to pass across His Majesty's eyes.

_All of you, Come Here!_

_Come quickly. Over there. Over there!_

As the attendants draw close to the terrifying, terrifying window, His Majesty cries;

_Did you see it?_

If any one attendant replies with the truth, His Majesty suddenly turns on the offender and casts him out of the window. None can fathom how this ghostlike shadow of a man can find such awesome strength.
So now no one tells him the truth. All too aware of their deception, His Majesty begins to leap around the room laughing like a mischievous child. But the very next moment, he begins a piteous sobbing, which seems wrung from the very depths of his heart. The sound of his sobbing fills all present with a terrible unspeakable loneliness, as if they are being dragged down into the depths of a grave."

"So His Majesty doesn't move from the window from morning till night? He just spends his time constantly searching the distant horizon?"

"And yet, sometimes his mood brightens, though very rarely. Then he makes his attendants and ladies-in-waiting race around the room as if they were playing blind man's buff, while he lies on his bed watching happily.

*Your legs are the longest, so you can be the blind man,*

he'll say. But then as if he has only just remembered, he'll add,

*Look! Xu Fu and Wang are wrestling.*

With which words he gazes vacantly into space for many an hour. Yet even during these times, he makes someone stand watch at that very window. He'll suddenly turn on the watcher and harshly demand,

*You must not so much as look away from there. Not even for a moment!* and he'll point at the forest—there on the borders of the kingdom—so far in the distance that it's all but invisible."

"So he said that Xu Fu and Wang were wrestling did he? You and I? So, His Majesty said that, did he?"

"Aah, Why? Why? Why? Why did His Majesty fall prey to such a vindictively tenacious disease? If I were a doctor, and had been sent on a mission to find a cure for this disease, I might perhaps have been able to remain slightly more loyal, for surely the cure must exist somewhere in this world. But, I don't understand even the smallest part of a doctor's art. My mission was to go and find a dream.

Aah, what a wretched, wretched fate!

Some years ago, His Majesty had all the scholars of the realm killed and all books burned. Yet he kept one short work—the one which tells of that ridiculous legend—back from the flames. It is that trashy work which stands responsible for His Majesty's illness.

His Majesty made a terrible mistake in not burning that book. A terrible mistake which can never be rectified."

"Listening to your tale, my heart fills with pity for His Majesty. It's unbearable.
Until I met you I'd completely forgotten about him. The aim of my journey was to discover the cup of life for myself—for myself alone. Never once did I think about my lord and master.

But, since meeting you here, I've become strangely concerned about the fate of this poor man. The more I listen, the more I am overwhelmed with pity. So now—even now—if I could but find that which we seek, I'd fly back to him like a swallow back home to roost.

Aah, today too, he no doubt stands by that window. How he would leap with joy if he saw me, the merest speck against the shadowy forest—far, far off on the very border of the kingdom!

*Look there! Look there!*

*Wang has returned!*

Then clasping my hands tightly, he would no doubt say,

*Aah, Wang. I thank you for all the trials you have suffered. You must be terribly tired. But tell me did you...*

Speaking quickly, evasively, half covering his ears with his hands as if to block my answer, he'd ask,

*And so tell me, have you got it?*

*It is here.*

I can't even imagine how high he would jump up from his chair, how hard he would embrace me! When I think of him thus, my eyes brim with unbearable pity.

Ah, no doubt, today too, he stands by that window gazing out at the distant horizon.

*I can't see anything. But any moment now I'll see them.*

*I still can't see them. But in just a moment's time.*

*I still can't see them. Yet surely they've already made it back as far as the foothills of that white capped mountain far, far off in the distance.*

*I still can't see them very well. But, I'm sure that's them just passing by that farm.*

*I still can't see clearly. But surely they've now come as close as that forest. In just another hour...At the most within three...Poor Wang seems to have injured his leg.*

*I still can't see properly. But, at the very latest in three more hours...Ah, I still can't see. I can't see. Wait! Just five more minutes! Just five minutes of patience!*
But, you and I are just standing around here, calmly talking about all this, while he stands, beating his own head against the wall.

_No, no. I'm mistaken! I understand it now! They've probably only just managed to leave this very minute._

_Surely that's it. And now—now—they've finally made it as far as the foot of that mountain._

_I still can't see them. But within another three hours..._ *I still can't see clearly. But most likely they'll be here within a half hour._

_I still can't see them. But in just five more minutes. Just five minutes! Five minutes!_ But you and I—having travelled thousands of miles—you and I, are just standing here talking like this. And the sun is setting on this day, as on the ones before.

_When I think of him, my eyes brim with tears._

_Oh, Why? Why has all this happened?_

"I didn't realize you were such a meek and humble man. For some time I have doubted your loyalty. I judged you a stubborn, selfish youth. I thought you even capable of joining ranks with the other traitors. What do you think of that? Now it's rather I, who should be despised, I who should be found guilty of disobeying an imperial decree, I am the real traitor. Whereas you—you are a faithful servant of unparalleled loyalty. You have given your all for His Majesty"  

"Hah! You're so naive and good-natured. Who could ever brand you a traitor? What's more I myself am no longer a faithful servant. I do not cry for His Imperial Highness, the Emperor of China. My tears are rather for the poor suffering man within."

"It's the same thing either way, isn't it?"

"Well whatever the case, you must return home. You must go back and speak to him. Tell him that Wang said he would definitely get hold of this thing we seek in the very near future."

"I don't think we should falsely raise his hopes with such a lie. And for all we know His Majesty may have already passed away. It's two months now since I heard tidings—even on these shores—that he couldn't possibly last even three more days."

"No, no. That can't be true. He is still living."

"Be that as it may, His Majesty's destined life span is long since over. Even if he has managed to continue to live until today, it's only his awesome, yet
merciless, tenacity that keeps him going. His body no longer breathes of its own accord. He’s living on his nerves, and his nerves alone.

If his guts were ripped from his body he would not die! Even if his skull were to crack open leaving his brains spilling out, he would still not die. When such a man as this—driven by desperation—casts himself off a cliff, his brain would somehow snag on the branches of a tree on the way down. Though all covered in blood, he would still struggle in mid-air, for this is a man who cannot die. Just such a suicide attempt provides a perfect illustration of His Majesty’s condition.

A single nerve thread—like the pale downy hair of a new born baby—somehow breaks his fall, as he tumbles off the cliff. The pain must be unbearable, for only that single nerve bears the weight of his whole body. But already that fine nerve thread is stretched to breaking point. It will snap any moment now. Yet defying the odds, His Majesty grits his teeth, willing himself to endure, to hang on by this single thread. He goes to impossible ends, unable to give up—this is the essence of true horror."
"But he only needs be patient for a little longer. Oh, Your Majesty! Though you gnash your teeth, hang on! Hang On!"
"His Majesty has already endured as much as he possibly can. Oh, How can you still ask such a thing? It's cruel. It's just too too cruel."
"Ah, how much does he really suffer, I wonder?"
"The sooner that tenacious nerve breaks the better. Rather than continuing to struggle so desperately till his body is drenched with blood, it would be far better to just get it over with, and die. The happiness which would then be his, goes beyond my wildest imagination."
"But he must continue to live. At least until he's seen us. However great the pain, he must not die. Even if he dies—even if he dies—he must not let himself go.
This morning too he no doubt stands by that very window. He's probably muttering to himself,
I've endured as much as I possibly can—right up to this very day. Now there's nothing left. The last remaining drop of oil has been wrung from my whole body. I've given my all. But it's no good. I cannot endure even a single minute more. It's no good. I'll die. No! Wait! I musn't die.
Whatever happens I must not die. However great the pain, I must endure. After all, when all is said and done, it's only for today. Just one more day.
Today, of all days, they will definitely come back. I must continue to endure just one more day. I must endure! I MUST ENDURE!
All this long while he has stood by the window—even now he continues to stand there.
It's no good. I can't do it. Such pain! Death, Aaah Death! Just take my life. No! Wait! I must not die. Just a little longer, just one hour more. In just one more hour the cup of life will save me.
I'll return to the health of the days of old. Once more I'll embrace women of surpassing beauty, one after the other. Though I drain the cup of pleasure to the very dregs, however much I drink, my cup is always full. I'll live in absolute luxury, here in this palace, for a thousand years—no, ten thousand years.
Aaah, I want to stay alive, whatever happens I want to stay alive. If I were to die here—right now—what then? A cold corpse, I would be taken to the graveyard for burial. There I would lie for all eternity in the pitch-black of a burial mound, unable even to take so much as a single step into the outside world. I will be forced to sleep there for all eternity.
Aaah, for all eternity. For ever and ever and ever. They will no doubt return, just after I have given in to death. How will they feel when they stand at my bedside looking down at my corpse, just at the very moment of my death? While I—completely unaware of their presence—am borne away to that dark burial mound. Aaah, I just couldn't bear it if this happened. It's just the difference of a half hour!, perhaps even less, only five minutes. Yet no matter how much I repent my death there would be no turning back. Even if it was only five minutes! However much I screamed and wept, there would be nothing I could do. The worst—the very worst—would still happen.
So whatever happens I must continue to live. Whatever happens, I must live. I must cling to this single nerve thread, just for one half hour more, just one half hour—perhaps even less. They may appear any moment now. I must not die yet. I must not die. Just five minutes. Five minutes.
"Yet at this very same moment, you and I, though thousands of miles away, are just standing here doing nothing. Terror strikes my very soul! I seem to hear his very voice, screaming, I still can't see them. I still can't see them."
I just can't stay here any longer and talk with you so calmly. "But where will you go?"
"It's obvious isn't it?
In search of the cup of life, of course—both for myself and for him. I can't put it off for a moment longer."
"You can't say you still seriously believe it actually exists, can you? Surely it's now time to give it all up."
"If only we could. If we could just forget about it, then neither he, nor I, would suffer as we do! Please give my regards to His Majesty."
"But I'm not going home. Perhaps His Majesty would perhaps live a little longer if I were to give him your message. But his final suffering as he lay on his deathbed would be so, so much greater."
"But, His Majesty is waiting for us."
"Ah, I just don't know what I should do."
"Though I have already wandered the many lands of this earth, I must still continue on. If this famed cup perhaps exists in the one land which I have failed to visit, then my remorse would know no bounds."
"At any rate, I will remain here in this land and pray for His Majesty's peaceful death. There's nothing else I can do. Nothing else I can do!"
"I don't suppose I'll ever pass this way again, nor ever see you again, so before I go, give me your hand."
"Ah, you are a dreamer of dreams, a follower of rainbows—who continues your search even knowing your pursuit is all in vain."
"But, there is no other way open to me."

THE END
THE BLUE CAT

青猫
PREFACE

My emotions belong not to the category of passion, but rather to the nostalgia of a quiet soul, to the sound of a flute heard on some spring night.

Some say my poetry is sensual, and perhaps there is some truth in that, but any true reading would oppose this view. Sensuality is by no means the central motif of my poetry. Sensuality is the vorschlag—the ornamental trill—which proceeds the tonic note. I am a man intoxicated by sensation. The true aim of my poetry is something completely different. Its essence is that one seductive emotion—the sound of a flute heard on a spring night. It is neither sensation, nor passion, nor excitement, it is but the cloud of nostalgia which floats quietly over the shadow of the soul. It is the tear-felt yearning for some far distant reality.

I know not when—at what actual time—this will come to me. Yet ever since childhood I have been troubled by this unfathomable spirit of nostalgia. My bed at night was always wet with pure white tears and the very entrails of my sentimentality were torn out by the cock's cry at the dawn's breaking. Day in, day out, I ran the edges of the spring fields, aimlessly falling in love with the opposite sex. Or all alone, embraced the trunks of the trees as I sang the lament of the "Lover of Love."

This single emotion fits most perfectly with my remote disposition. From out my youthful past, this emotion visits my pillow-side even now, echoing like the seductive, tear-provoking tones of a flute. Enticed by thoughts of inexplicable sadness, I write to the accompaniment of this exquisite music.

This is how I make poetry; like a group of moths crowding around a lamp, deceived by a certain strange gaudy illusion, vainly beating their fragile sponge-cake wings as they try to touch the very essence of unseen reality. I am a wretched child of fancy; mine is the sad fate of the moth.

Thus in the shadow of my words, my readers will no doubt hear the endless plaint of this elegy. The very sound of the flute is in itself a seductive metaphysic. It is the embodiment of Plato's Eros—flapping its wings, yearning for the true existence of the soul. It is that, and that alone, which forms what is called the music of my verse. It is the music which
stems from the symbolists' belief that, "more than all else, poetry must be music."

*   *   *

The Melancholia of Sensation! This too belongs to my remote disposition. It is like cherry blossoms clustering under spring sunshine, and yet also, like the smell of rotting chrysanthemums. It is the sum total of gloom-filled wretched loneliness. Is it because of this that my life, physically—sensually—grieves within a twilight of degeneration? Melancholy—absolute melancholy—that is the theme of my lyric poetry.

However, recently, rather than this melancholy of sensation, my life has tended more and more towards a contemplative melancholy. (The poems in "Will and Illusion" one of the sections in this collection, belong to this new tendency. The fatalistic gloom seen in these poems is the after-image—the reflection—of the emotions of a completely meditative—contemplative—lifestyle.) Thus, while some of my poems are born of the Melancholia of Sensation, others arise rather from the Melancholia of Contemplation. Yet neither style truly encompasses the rhythm which I seek. This rhythm is neither that of the sensory world nor that of the conceptual. These are but the garments which clothe my poetry. The true essence of my poetry—that fragrance-filled pulsation of the heart, which provides the stimulus for all poetic composition—is but the bewitching allure of that exquisite flute and that alone. It is the inexplicable sorrow which yearns towards that world of reality—of truth. Thus I blow through the mouthpiece of my flute, trying to perform—to sound—the music of my strangely seductive life.

Thus in my poetic style, there is none of the addictive seduction of sensuality as can be seen in the poetry of the modern Impressionists. Nor is there anything of the depressing, suffocating oppression of the Idealist poets. My style is rather tranquil and old fashioned. Exalting sentimentalism which values honest emotion, it is in the style of the Emotionalists—jōchoshiha—the true descendents of Romanticism.

*   *   *

Nothing breaks down the essence of art so succinctly as Baudelaire's words;
The purpose of poetry is not to sing of truths or morality.
Poetry is expression of poetry for poetry's sake alone.
Through an appreciation and assessment of the truly important elements of poetry, surely we can wipe out all impure concepts. *Intoxication* and *fragrance*, and these alone determine the rich aromatic happiness which is the ultimate in poetry. In any discussion of the true essence of beauty, however sophisticated the argument, I cannot sanction any attempt to add to this belief.

* * *

As I wrote in the preface to *Tsuki ni Hoeru*, for me, poetry is neither mystery, nor belief. Neither is it *work for which one risks one's life*, nor yet *a holy road of abstinence*. Poetry is but *my sorrowfilled solace*.

The voice of a blue heron crying in the marshland of life; the sombre murmur of the breeze in the reeds on a moonlit night.

* * *

Poetry always stands as a leader of the times; it has the keenest perception—presentiment—of the emotions of the era to come. Thus the true value of a poetic collection is only determined five or even ten years after its publication. The general public only manage to catch up with poetry after five or ten years. Thus while poetry is quick to find expression, it usually takes somewhat longer for it to be understood. We poets despise those who chase after those philosophies which form a fashion for a time or those who try to adapt themselves to fleeting superficial fashions.

The fact that poetry is always looked down upon by the general public, that it soars high up in the rarified atmosphere of its time, and that it values the highest possible purity of spirit is completely one with its essential nature.

* * *

I have been making poetry for a long time and I have less and less confidence. An existence such as mine is naught but the nightmare of a pitiful blue cat.

The Author
BED OF ILLUSION
THE TWILIGHT ROOM

Exhausted—the heart sleeps well through the night.
I sleep well.
Ah, you *flannel*-wearing possessor of a lonely heart
what are you?—you who like a suckling child move so quietly
through my dreams.
Benumbed with cold, a fly drones on and on.
*buzzzzz buzzzzzz buzzzzzz buzzzzzz buzzzzzz*

the whitened rays lighting the room—sadden me
the rhythmic throb of this powerless life
—fills me with loneliness.

my Love
you sit there beside the pillow of my bed
my Love—there you sit
the slender nape of your neck
your hair grown long
Oh please—my gentle love
please pass your hands over my pitiful fate
saddened
I gaze—there
—at that single pained emotion
at the disease-ridden melancholy spreading
through this scene.
Ah, in a corner of the tear-swept room the exhausted
ghost of a fly hovers just above the floor.
*buzzzzzz buzzzzzz buzzzzzz buzzzzzz buzzzzzz*
my Love
maiden who sits by my pillow
What is it you see?
What do you see of me?
Are you looking at this gaunt body of mine—this left over
shadow of past thought?

my Love
like the stench of rotten chrysanthemum
I smell your awkward passion—your pallid beliefs
now—oh, now—let’s make our two bodies one
lay your white hands—oh, lay your hands—on this
thing of warmth.

my Love
the rays of light in this quietly desolate room shine a wan red
once again I hear the drone of the powerless fly
buzzzzz buzzzzz buzzzzz buzzzzz buzzzzz
my Love
my pitiful heart is like a child curled against your breast
—held tightly in your arms
my Love
my Love

"Hakubō no heya"
Shiika, 7.12, Nov. 1917
SEARCHING FOR A BED

Where is our sorrowful bed?
are there hands and feet snuggled down deep
in the white-downed quilt of our plumped-up bed
we men are always sad at heart
we have no beds
but young girls all have beds
young girls with their small monkey-like limbs
huddle like baby birds in the centre
of their big white beds
these young girls all weep joyously in their beds
Ah! Such happy things!
We too are searching for warm beds
like these young girls
we too wish to weep unrestrainedly.
Behold these young girls as they lie within their
beautiful beds, gentle in each other's arms
heart to heart
hand to hand
feet to feet
tie your bodies together with this cord
heart to heart
hand to hand
feet to feet
console yourselves, your bodies smooth against each other
here in this pure white bed.
Oh the ecstasy which thrills along the skin
of these beautiful young girls
Oh their touching sighs of emotion.
yet—in our hearts—we men are destitute
full of sadness, ever in pursuit of a huge bed,
one for all humanity
such a bed would be warm and plump,
soft on its coiled springs
just like sinking down into a huge drift of snow
this bed would melt into one the separate hearts
of two people
the beautiful bed of unrestrained love.

Ahhh—Where shall we look?
Where is our sorrow-filled bed? Where shall we look?
—we with our ugly wizened hands and feet.
Where is the bed for these tired and wretched souls?

“Shindai o motomu”
Kanjô, April, 1917
GAZING OUT AT THE OPEN SEA

Not even grass grows on this beach
Ah! what a lonely strand.
I watch the waves in silence
as they tumble over and over.
The white evening moon seems to float
  on the very tops of the waves.
Out here all alone
  —I gaze at the windblown pines lining the coast
I gaze at the ships and islands afloat in the sky.
Lying down—my arms and legs stretched wide
I let go a long call—searching for the shadow
  of unchanging happiness.
I gaze far out —my face towards the open sea.

"Oki o chōbō suru"
Kanjō, Feb. 1917
EMBRACED IN STRONG ARMS

Like reeds bending with the wind
my heart is feeble—always quivering with fear
Oh, Lady!
hold my body tightly
in the crook of your dauntless right arm
and quietly, quietly—soothe this sick and quaking heart.
Just hold my body close against you
see, our shoulders fit together perfectly.
Place your lovely—warm—hands
upon my feeble heart.
Ah—here! Place your hand just here—on my heart
Oh, Lady!
talk to me
gentle words, wet with tears
"Hush, you're a good child.
Don't be afraid. There is nothing to fear
you're healthy and happy
whatever tries to frighten you—fear not
look far out into the distance
but don't blink!
If you blink, your feeble heart will fly off like a bird.
Stay snuggled down close by my side for always.
Hold fast to this healthy heart of mine
—this breast—this arm
and firmly on this dauntless nipple."

"Tsuyoi ude ni idakaru"
Kanjō, April 1917
I WANT TO WALK WITH THE CROWD

Always I yearn for the city
yearn to be a part of the bustling city crowd
a crowd—like a huge wave of emotion
one huge group of active wills and desires,
flowing where it will.
Ah—in the sorrowful Spring twilight
I yearn for the shadows which twine and tangle
round the buildings of the city
Oh, how wonderful to be jostled amidst a huge crowd
Behold how the crowd flows on its way
wave upon cresting wave
the wave casts shadows numberless
—slowly, wavering wisps of shadow advance
individual griefs and sadesses
—disappear into the shadows without a trace
Ah—could I too walk this road?
Could I too find just such peace of mind?
Ah—You huge shadows of pleasure brimming with
love and innocence
Oh, to be carried along by you, joyous wave
—the very thought brings me close to tears.
In the sorrowful spring twilight
this multitude of people swims past the eaves of the buildings
Where are you going? —and Why?
a huge shadow captures the ground—enveloping all
my sad melancholy
this wave of innocence drifts on its way
Ah—wherever—wherever it wills—I want to be jostled
along within this wave—this crowd
the wave's path blurs at the horizon
let's go with the flow, but in one—only in one direction.

"Gunshū no naka o motomete aruku"
Kanjō, July 1917
HANDS OF CAKE

What do you think of this hand?
—so very cute—so plump?
What do you think of its rounded curves,
puffed up like risen cake?
Look at the fingers—so svelte—so very slender
just like tiny pale fish
I can't possibly resist their motions—so gentle, so pliant
Ah!—I want so much to plant a kiss upon this hand
to bring it to my lips and devour it
Oh the rounded curves of the trim little fingertips.
What do you think of the mysterious flowers
—which bloom in the valley hollows of the fingers?
their musk-like scent—like gently perspiring peach blossoms.
Such gracefully polished womanly fingers
such perfect slender long white fingers
fingers made to dance the keys of a piano
fingers made to work with needles and silken thread
as you nestle up against my shoulder, looking for love
draw your nails across
my so very tender skin—but gently
scratch it—but lightly—with your nails
I feel the motion of the fingers—light yet firm
under the tickling fingers—so fervent, so cunning
—come the trembling shudders of love's pleasures
the prim yet spiteful forefinger
the mischievous, yet cowardly liveliness
of the little finger
the beautiful plump flesh of the thumb
—with its brutal barbaric nature
Oh—to gratefully accept the gift
of that one sleekly polished finger
to draw it completely into my mouth and suck
—suck forever!
the back of this hand is like the soft swell of a 'waffle'
the fingers fill me with a cold appetitie
—like crystallized sugar
Ah!—such an appetite
child-like, greedy—shameless.

"Sono te wa kashi de aru"
Kanjō, June 1917
THE BLUE CAT

It is good to love this beautiful city.  
It is good to love the architecture of this beautiful city.  
If we are to find all the truly gentle women 
if we are to find all the truly noble styles of living  
it is good to come to this city to travel its lively, bustling streets  
cherry trees line the streets  
and behold, even the sparrows fly everywhere  
—impossible to count.

Ah—only the shadow of a solitary blue cat  
sleeps this night in the huge city.  
The shadow of this cat tells of the sad history of mankind  
this pallid blue shadow of happiness is ever  
the object of my yearning  
What is this shadow I seek?  
I pine for Tokyo, even for its sleet-filled days.  
What do the down-and-out dream?  
those who like this man—lean, so cold  
against this backstreet wall?

"Aoneko"
Shiïka, April 1917

MOONLIGHT

Beating your large heavy wings  
Ah—such feeble hearts!  
In the bright moonlight—like the globe of a gas lamp.  
Behold the swarming cloud of living creatures  
—so white as they pass.  
Watch the direction of their flight.  
Behold the single ardent emotion of these living creatures  
in the moonlight—so like the bright globe of a gas lamp  
Ah—the commotion of these pitiful butterflies is so very sad.

"Tsukiyo"
Shiïka, April 1917
SPRING EMOTION

As with the smell of the tar in French tobacco
when I catch this scent I am mesmerized
by the grief—the sorrow—the many diverse emotions of the sky
by the cold cry of the tiny silvered birds.
The joy of the coming of Spring—is like the notes of a flute,
which plays the music of every human life.
Rare flowers tremble by the field-side path
a single note reverberates though the heavy rain-washed air
it embodies the alluring sound of a woman's tears.
Spring swells forth so quietly.
Spring comes—even to the forests deep in the mountains
and there my soul—wriggling like an earthworm
deep in the rotten stump of a tree—
with a shiver, exhales a cloud of fungus
a cloud of poison mushrooms—venomous strawberries
—of evil crimson growths
these fungi release a strangely alluring colour and scent
giving off a lonely smell throughout the daylight hours.

Spring is coming—Spring is coming
the joy of the coming of Spring—is like the notes of a flute,
which plays the music of every human life.
Here, then there
fungi and poison mushrooms—exhaled with a shiver of fear
crimson himeji mushrooms glimmer faintly
as they grow in the shadow of the underbrush.

"Haru no kanjō"
Shinsei, Jan. 1918
SLEEPING IN THE FIELDS

An emotion grows
grows tall and straight like a tree.
This seedling of life grows steadily taller.
As if aiming to reach right up to the sky above
—when it grows to full height—
it grows tall and broad.
It drinks in the wonderfully clear spring air
like baby birds taking their food
so cute with their mouths wide open in delight.
How high can this seedling of life possibly grow?
Ah—how can these grasses continue to grow
like this—so steadily, all together?
lying down in this open field
I have truly discovered the most delightful dream.

"Nohara ni neru"
Shi'sai Bundan, June 1917
THE SONG OF A FLY

Is spring nearby?
Surely it has come at least this far
— for I catch the scent of cherry blossoms
and the childrens' cries echo in the fields and mountains
and look! White clouds float over the Spring mountains.
It is now that my heart remembers tears
for I was one who always played quietly—all alone
my heart was ever sunk in loneliness
from out my youth—now long gone—these feelings cast
a shadow over my life
gradually this huge shadow of loneliness grew
this terrifying shadow of melancholy began to spread.
I sit alone in my room
gazing at the darkening shadow of my soul.
With a lonely sigh
feeble, like a fly come to a standstill
my life wanders directionless—all energy lost
in the midst of the quiet darkening of this spring evening.
Pausing on the window pane, my life
listens to the whimpering sobs of the helpless children.

"Hae no shōka"
Kanjō, May 1917
Deep in a thicket of forest trees
white butterflies fly here and everywhere
they fly in circles—clustering, first here then there
flutter—flutter—flutter—flutter—flutter—flutter
through the tiny openings between the heavy green foliage
their tiny pointed wings—glitter—glitter—glitter
flying in huge clusters, they flutter—flutter—flutter
flutter—flutter—flutter—flutter—flutter—flutter—flutter

Ah—such a melancholy vision!
heavy limbs—heavy hearts
matter on matter—limitlessly alluring
Ah—such an unspeakably beautiful sickness.
In the seductive twilight of these exhausted nerves
I look at—the heavy limbs—arms and legs—flung down
by the women
at the alluring weight of their exhausted thighs and breasts
firmly, suffocatingly close, their lips—red as life's blood—
leave their impression,
here upon the pale-blue lips of my corpse
then there upon my forehead—my hair—each single strand
—my thighs—my armpits—my ankles—the backs of my legs
even on my right arm—then on my left—even on my belly
thronging clusters, carnal knots of matter on matter
pitch black butterflies swarm in chaotic pursuit
—here then there
Ah—such a terrifying earthbound shadow.
Within this alluring forest of illusion
I watch the gradual spread of the shadow of melancholy
the beating of the wings of my soul
is like the unsightly death-throes of a small bird.
Ah, these sexual sensations evoke such an unbearable tension
—all is so terribly, terribly melancholy.

"Omoroshiku yūutsu naru"
Kanjō, May 1917
MELANCHOLY CHERRYBLOSSOMS

Melancholia of Sensation! I am always captivated by the irresistible allure of the light—as too by the bitter smell of rotting cherry blossoms—of the whitely dusty rays of outdoor light.
MELANCHOLY BLOSSOM VIEWING

Though still far off, the melancholy cherry blossoms begin
to give forth their scent.
Covering the branches of the cherry trees
absolutely dazzling—they glisten in the sunlight.
I live deep in the inner recesses of the tightly closed up house
everyday I eat my vegetables—and some fish or duck eggs
the eggs and meat already rancid
the distant cherry blossoms too are rotting
the bitter smell of rotting blossom tears at my heartstrings
hats on, people go out to walk under the outdoor light
where the sunlight shines bright in the distance.
But I—I am sitting alone inside this dark room
my thoughts gather under the distant blossoms
go out to the young men and women—flirting together
in the fields and mountains
Ah, out there, they have such happy lives!
Their joy shines so bright!
the young women dance
under the cherry blossoms, so thick on every branch
Ah, the polished white of their dancing hands and feet
the liquid movements of their garments
Ah—first here, then there—the entangled web of their
curving paths is such a thing of beauty!

the blossom viewing songs are serene
—like the notes of a flute
yet they carry an echo of some boundless melancholy.
My heart brushes away its tears
sobbing, powerless, at the sill of this tightly shut window.
Ah, What is the life for which this lone impoverished heart
so yearns?
What flickering shadow inspires these tears?
Here on the edge of this beautiful world
—here where all is rot and decay
I hear the sound of the melancholy flute
wafting from the distant blossom viewing.

"Yūtsu naru hanami"
Kanjō, June 1917
THE SECRET GARDEN OF THE EMPTY HOUSE SEEN IN MY DREAMS

Pines grow in the garden of the vacant house
and—loquats, peaches, Chinese pines, camellias—even cherries
vigorously thriving trees spread their branches every—which-way
luxuriant plants spring up in the shadows cast by
the leaves clustering on the branches
at a rough guess, there are ferns, bracken, and osmundas,
even sundew.
Pale creatures pass their lives
crawling upon this ground—one upon another
these pale creatures live an active thriving life.
Shaded by the trees, the garden of this vacant house
is always lost in shadow.
All that is visible is a faint flowing outline
—the single sliver of a small stream
and the sound—always the sound of flowing water
gentle, sad—day and night
and then there are the grotesque forms,
the slugs, snakes, frogs and lizards
crawling around in the musty damp near the fence.
At night, the pale white light of the moon shines
high above this secluded world
the moonlight slides silently over the crowded garden
it is so touching, so subdued—and my heart opens to thoughts
of this deep night
leaning against the fence, my heart blows a flute
—hard and strong
Ah—the secret hidden lives of these many living things
form a world—within the limitless, beautiful shadow—
a world where strange shapes mingle one upon another
where ferns, bracken, pine branches—appear through
the moonlight
where slugs, snakes, frogs and lizards live out
their grotesque lives.
Ah—I see it all so clearly in my dream
I see the secret of this uninhabited vacant house
and feel a sense of nostalgia for the insoluble riddle
of this deep deep seclusion.

"Yume ni miru akiya no niwa no himitsu"
Kanjō, June 1917
A BLACK ORGAN

Lady—play thy organ!
clothed in black
sit down at the organ
let thy fingers linger upon the keys
light—gentle—solemn, as the sound of falling snow
Oh Lady—play thy organ!

Who is it that sings?
Who is it that listens so quietly?
Ah, in this pitch black melancholy darkness
plastered against the wall
who is it that plays this fear-inspiring, gigantic organ?
The impassioned emotions of religion—their tremblings
the throbbing spasm of the pipe organ—Requiem!
Pray—you invalid!
There is nothing—no time for fear
Play thy organ—play!
gently—remotely—solemnly
as pine needles piercing the falling snow
send out thy brilliant lustrous sound
Play thy organ—play!
Oh Lady—play thy organ.

Ah—clothed in thy long jet-black garments
play that huge black organ
until these emotions somehow calm themselves
ardently, casting yourself against
that fearsome wall of darkness
Oh my Lady!
Ah—such violent spasms of melancholy emotion.

"Kuroi fūkin"
Kanjō, April 1918
MELANCHOLY RIVERBANK

Rustling along the riverbank
the reeds and grasses whisper in loneliness
growing up naturally
sharp—tiny—the plant stems too are lonely
I close my eyes
and bite hard on a grass root
trying to suck up its sap—to suck up the bitter sap of
melancholy
yet it affords me no hope whatsoever.
Life is just a meaningless, melancholy continuum
A Rainy Season!
All is but the clammy gloom of falling drops of rain
— it is just rain—on and on—just rain—rain—rain!
Strange grasses which grow up here and there
countless sorrowful winged insects
crawl within this melancholy—crawl along this riverbank
Ah, what are these creatures which travel
this sodden river bank?
—a glittering funeral procession?
—shining sickly apparitions of the mind?
An evil stench rises from the plants so bright in the rain
for all things decay according to nature's law
—even the grasses on this riverbank decay.

"Yūtsu no kawabe"
Kanjō, April 1918
THE VISIONARY WORLD BUDDHA SAW

It was a brilliant moonlight night
in a place where the evergreens mingled together
    sheltering all below
beautiful waves were visible as they ebbed and flowed.
The nostalgic road of religion is open
linked to the dreams of that rather implausible saint.
Ah, the love and pity which flows within that being's heart
—the vision of immortality reflected in that being's eyes
all shine so bright.
The dreamlike happiness which disappears in loneliness
    and its unearthly shadow
Ah—my thoughts are with this being
and the visionary land he sees
Ah, such colour—burnished red—the lonely dusk of this life.
Yet now when exhausted I sleep for long hours
    on this lounge of loneliness
moonlight shines even on the windows of my house
in splendour the moon climbs the sky.
Oh, my lord Buddha!
I adore—the petals of the lotus you see in your vision
—the feverish fragrance of the flower which blooms
    in this pallid life
Oh, my lord Buddha!
All is so bright—so splendid—it makes me so, so lonely.

"Hotoke no mitaru gensō no sekai"
Bunshō Sekai, Jan. 1918
ROOSTERS

Before the dawning
roosters crow outside the doors of the houses
the crowing quavers on for a long moment
'tis the voice of my mother
calling from the lonely nature of the countryside
Toor-te-kur, Toor-ru-moor, Toor-ru-moor

In its cold morning bed
my soul flaps its wings
looking out through the cracks in the shutters
the landscape glitters brightly on all sides
yet before the dawning
melancholy steals into my bed
as rising high above the budding treetops
I hear the voice of the roosters
calling from the lonely nature of the countryside
Toor-te-kur, Toor-ru-moor, Toor-ru-moor

My Love!
Oh My Love!
In the cold shadows cast by the paper-doors at dawn
a scent lingers—I catch the faint scent of chrysanthemums
the sickly-sweet smell of an ailing spirit
faintly, I catch the smell of rotting white chrysanthemums
My Love!
Oh My Love!

Before the dawning
my heart wanders the shadows of a graveyard,
Ah—something calls me, with a kind of pained impatience
I cannot endure this pale red air
My Love!
Oh Mother!
Come quickly! Shut off the lamp!
A sound—I hear a sound
the roar of a typhoon sweeping the distant corners of the earth
Toor-te-kur, Toor-ru-moor, Toor-ru-moor

"Tori"
Bunshō sekai, Jan. 1918
LONELY BLUE CAT

A single blue cat—here where the willows bend in the wind as the moon rises above the graveyard.
THE PITIFUL LAMP-POST

The roadside lamp-post stands drenched
in the heavy pouring rain
decrepit old buildings lean into the hill
    —warped and broken
a man's fate wanders languidly
lost within the thick haze of the creeping mist
his body wrapped tight in a large overcoat
down on his luck—like a seedy black hawk.
He gazes at the young trees—drenched by
    the wind and rain
their branches reach as high as the windows
    of some of the buildings
the leaves of these young trees beckon to him.
Here within this sad rain-swept panorama
he began to feel something—unpleasant —
    something which sent a chill through his soul
leaving him drenched and soaking
his shadow—his body—even his life—
    all drenched in sorrow.

"Mijime na gaite"  
Shisei, June 1922
FEARSOME MOUNTAIN

I gazed at the features which form this fearsome mountain
its eyes like a huge spider
as huge clouds of smoke belch upwards
    through the pitch-black night sky.
Like a strange sea crab crawling close to the ground
a tongue—flashes redly—in, then out;
arms and legs splayed wide
    as it crawls the base of the mountain.
It is a dark night—lonely and fear-ridden
a violent wind wracks the grasses
    —and tears through the distant sky.
Nature quietly steals a breath
yet slowly the strange, huge shape which is this mountain
continues its attack.
Now so very close the grotesque shape raises its head
seeking to devour its prey.

"Osoroshii yama"
_Nihon Shinjin, May 1922_

NAMELESS SONG

A naked woman, bronzed by sun of the south seas.
A mysterious steam ship, reddened with rust
pulled in alongside the wharf thick with summer grasses
soft white puffs of smoke wafted upwards
the smoke of the sailors' tobacco rises in lonely plumes.
Like a quail—I flapped my wings
as I flew up above the wilderness of tall briars
_Hey clouds! And you too Ship!_
Where did she cast aside her ship's anchor?
Tormented by a strange passion
I visited the silent graveyard
and there in the thick grasses blown by the breezes
lay that love bird's keepsake—rust-encrusted and silent.

"Dai no nai uta"
_Nihon Shinjin, May 1922_
THE LASCIVIOUS GRAVEYARD

The wind blows through the willows—
surely no other such graveyard setting
   could be so dark and gloomy?
A slug crawls up onto the fence
the smell of lukewarm salt-tide wafts up
   to this observation point.
Lady, why have you come here?
Shadow—you are so pale and gentle
   —yet mysterious like the grass
neither a shellfish nor a pheasant, nor even a cat
you are but a lonely ghost.
The stench of rotten fish—as from the back streets of
   some destitute fishing village—
rises from the shadow cast by your wandering form.
It is the raw stench of intestines melting in the sun
the smell of sorrow—sad and heart-rending
   —all but unendurable.

Ah, Lady.
You wander the tepid warmth of this spring-like night
clothed in such an alluring lip-red kimono!
yet gentle as a younger sister.
Neither the graveyard's moon, nor phosphorescence
   —neither shadow, nor truth.
Naught but unspeakable sadness!
My life—my body—begin to decay
in the dim shadows of this place of nothingness
I droop low—like a willow—salacious and sticky.

"Namamekashii hakaba"

Shisei, June 1922
DISINTEGRATING FLESH

Within a field aswarm with bats
I gazed at the pillar of disintegrating flesh.
Trembling forlornly in the twilight
a raw stench quivers in the shadows—like grass pushing up
through a decaying corpse
unsightly—like swarming maggots crawling upon rotten flesh.
Ah, here in this place clothed in shadow
my spirit catches hold of an itching fear
which like a ship out of harbour,
has crossed from the far-off islands of the dead
neither wind—nor rain
it is a dark fear tightly coiled around the torment of lust.
At the sharp tones of the snake charmer's pipe
my dissolving shadow wept in loneliness.

"Kuzureru nikutai"
Shisei, June 1922

RAVEN-HAIRED WOMAN

Gentle Raven-haired Lady!
stealing into my attic room
with an intoxicating cloud of musk.
Mysterious night bird
lonely—you alight on a wooden chair
your beak pecks at my heart—my eyes brim with silent tears
Night Bird!
From whence comes this heartrending love?
Cast off your melancholy garments—and quickly
fly off into the dew-wet winds of the night.

"Karasuge no fujin"
Shisei, May 1922
THE GREEN FLUTE

Through twilight fields
long-eared elephants slowly slowly wend their way.
A yellowing evening moon flickers in the wind
here and there, blades of grass flutter—like hats in the wind
Young mistress! Are you lonely?
Look! Here is a small flute—its timbre a clear pure green.
Gently blow through this mouthpiece
send your music trilling into the clear sky.
Summon up your mirage
a single vision gradually drawing nearer
from far out over the distant sea of your longings.
Like a headless cat—tottering in the enshadowed
graveyard grasses
Oh Young Mistress! I would that I could die—here
in this sad twilight place.

"Midori-iro no fue"
Shisei, May 1922

THE SONG OF A HERMIT CRAB

Coldly the tide ebbs and flows
the teeth of the crustacean have dissolved in pain
—sharp, like the bite of vinegar
Ah, no longer any friends—nor love
wet on the shoreline, watching the sea-grasses
—ghostlike spirits of the dead
their roots but dimly visible, a whiteblur in the mist
like the warm, clammy sigh of a lover on a spring night.
From out to sea, through the haze
comes the sound of sailors singing a mysterious shanty
—the shrill beat of their oars echoes across the water.
Suspicious, scuttling along the shore
spontaneously rushing forward
—then, crawling around like a shadow
it is a cloud-like single heart—the ghost of a lonely hermit crab.

"Yadokari no uta"
Nihon Shijin, June 1922
THE UNHAPPY PRISONERS

Under faded pale-blue caps they
wander, aimlessly, dragging the tips of their dusky tails.
But look! surely you see,
—it's their dismal shovels that dig up the mud.
Ah, their digging exposes roots and stumps
all around the sunlight shines but dimly through the clouds.
What an unspeakably boring life!
In line, like some strange funeral
they crawl in and out of the shadow cast by the huge building
ghost-like lonely shadows
in this a dismal outdoor world, where glass windows glitter
each head topped with a faded blue paper cap
stuck together like an undulating stream of snake eggs
—surely you see—it's a group of lonely prisoners.

"Kanashii shūjin"
Nihon Shūjin, June 1922

PUSSY WILLOW

A noble, elegant moon floats high
above the cold pale face
embarrassed, the moon
speaks to your corpse with gentle words.
Ah—damp with the dew
the pussy willow—blows with the night winds.
She wanders this place
singing her happy compassion, song after song.
Filled with lonely desire—yes, with desire—all unknown to her
through the wetness of my tears
I paint fresh young blood on her lips.
Ah—languishing lovelorn
I cling to this pale departed spirit, seeking to stay my sorrow.
Blown in the night winds
the gentle song of the graveyard
wanders lost in the dimness of the shadow of the pussy willow.

"Neko yanagi"
Shisei, May 1922
MELANCHOLY LANDSCAPE

It is a cat-like melancholy scene
a lonely balloon ascends—a straight line into the sky
something catches the light, then disappears
—surely that’s a person?—yes someone dressed in linen.
Such a lot of time has passed
now no one even remembers this landing place.
The many varied minds have now all vanished
only the old loading crane remains,
    languishing at the water's edge.
A sailing ship—plump with its load of cotton,
lies lost in thought out to sea.
There is nothing left to be said
only memories remain—hair-raising, blood-chilling memories.
Ah My Lord God! Is there no way of turning back the pages?
of escaping these horrible recollections,
by losing myself in tears—like an infant child?

"Yūtsu na fūkei"
Nihon Shijin, July 1922

THE FIELD MOUSE

Where is happiness?
The deeper we dig into the muddy sand
'tis only sadness that wells up from the depths.
Swaying with the motion, hidden behind
    the shadowy drapes of the curtains
spring is now long gone—jostled away in a rickshaw.
Where are our lovers?
Yet these maidens of fancy will not come—
even when we play the flute standing in an overgrown field
    —not for all eternity.
Like a day labourer—I walk on
my melton trousers soiled with tears
I have neither hope—nor dignity—nor even any future.
There is only remorse, which far beyond redemption's reach
runs off—like a field-mouse.

"Nonezumi"
Publication details prior to this collection unclear
THE MAY CORPSE

The body is served up raw and kicking
so beautiful—so soft—such alluring colouring
these breasts—these lips—this face—even these arms
Ah, each one brushed and anointed with oils.
Gentle corpse of May!
like a green gold snake, with an undulating twist
I touch something sticky—fleecy
I rub my naked body against the wool-like fabric of death.

"Gogatsu no shibito"
Publication details prior to this collection unclear.

REINCARNATION AND TRANSMIGRATION

The winter days rattle and rumble their lonely revolutions
like the wheels turned by the demons of hell.
A small reincarnate bird lies dead in the shadows
of the desert plain
Ah—as time turns through this dismal season
I mount a phantom camel
and stumble off on a miserable journey.
Could any other such desolate wasteland possibly exist?
Like vultures gathering at a corpse
a mob of aged beggars
follow after the ragged line of a passing caravan
like filthy little insects swarming the polluted earth
of this parched ground.
Such a miserable scene!
Everywhere long-necked flowers are blooming
swaying back and forth
from a lifetime of love—of loneliness
no thoughts remain—is this how evening approaches?
Images have lost their definition, have faded away,
— all is but faint apparitions.
What is it the weathercock sees?
The winter day rumbles on over these barren hills
—as the millet bends to the wind.

"Rinne to tensei"
*Nihon Shijin*, July 1922
LONELY PAST

Plumply obese
mysterious spherical phantoms—white and bulging
climb into the sky—faceless, earless—
with the slippery sheen of wild ivy.
Hey you, Summer clouds! Why such boundless loneliness?
Belief is no more—nor can I find a lover on whom to depend.
With stumbling camel-like gait
I crunch into the sunbaked flesh of a coconut
Ah—here within this beggar-like existence
I have lost absolutely everything.
Even the wind has died yet here on this deserted rural road
I find it shrivelled onto the underside of the millet leaves
—the unspeakable loneliness of my past.

"Sabishii raireki"

*Nihon Shijin, June 1922*
REFINED DESIRE
THE CALENDAR OF IDLENESS

Several seasons have passed, 
dejected, the cherry blossoms have rotted to colourlessness 
a carriage rattles along in the distance 
all is sleeping in the muffled air—both the sea—and the land. 
What a day for idleness! 
Fate casts forth shadows—darkening scuds of cloud 
a lonely, sickly gloom smoulders in the willow shadows 
the calendar no longer exists—nor does memory 
like a swallow I leave my nest 
and fly the borders of this strange landscape. 
Oh, My Long Lost Love! My Beloved Cat! 
I know but one song 
from out the distant sky—where seaweeds blaze— 
I'll throw you a flaming, festering kiss 
for I have no words beyond this sad passion.

"Taida no koyomi" 
Arashi (Storm), June 1922

REFINED APPETITE

Walking through the pine forest 
I caught sight of a cheerful little café. 
Far removed from the city streets 
hidden deep in the forest 
—it was a café for dreaming, for memory 
I was the only patron 
the young woman serving was aglow with 
the bashfulness of love 
as refreshing as the dawn, she carried in 
my specially prepared order 
leisurely, completely at ease, I took up my fork 
and ate a plate of deep fries—then an omelette. 
White clouds scudded in the sky 
mine is such a truly refined appetite.

"Kanga na shokuyoku" 
Nihon Shijin, Dec. 1921
IN THE HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE

I fell asleep so peacefully
in the horse-drawn carriage.
Oh My Lady of Beauty!
Please be sure to wake me when we arrive.
Past the brightness of the lamp-lit city streets
we pass through into the cool tree-shaded country lanes
and soon—as we near our destination—
    there is a tang of the sea in the air
half asleep I follow my dreams
to the clip-clopping of the horses' hooves
Oh My Lady of Beauty!
Please be sure to wake me
when we drive in under the flower-clad eaves of the inn.

"Basha no naka de"
*Asahi Shinbun, April 8, 1922*

THE BLUE SKY

—Of the Expressionists—

Like the rounded arm of a woman
a tall chimney
juts up into the sky
yet here in the bright blue arc of sky
nothing supports its weight
this whole elephantine picture
evokes a huge oddly swollen dream.

"Aozora"
*Nihon Shijin, Dec. 1921*
THE FIRST PRIMAL EMOTION

Deep in the jungle
huge rubber trees—with odd elephant-like ears—
grow thick and lush.
An endless succession of ferns and reptiles
—of snakes, lizards, newts, frogs and salamanders
trail long shadows across the darkened lagoon.

What memories haunted Adam
in the sadness of his noontide longings?
Like a cloud—like love eternally tender
primeval emotion surfaces beyond memory's distant shore
slippery—impossible to catch.

"Mottomo genshiteki na jōcho"
_Hyōgen_, Dec. 1921

WEATHER AND THOUGHT

Like a captive animal—the boarding student crawls out
from his cheerless bed
and throwing on his coat
charges headlong into his perception of nature.
This nature is bright and beautiful, fresh and vigorous.
It gives off a lovely fragrance.
In the woods—the streets—even the shops
all is clear and beautiful—the blue sky dances above
sleekly beautiful cars—and their lovely young drivers
—careering madly here and there
in this light tilting weather.

As the student spreads his books in the sunlight
and draws a long breath filled with the fragrance of happiness.
I wonder to myself
is not _thought_ somewhat akin to _weather_?

"Tenkō to shisō"
Publication details prior to this collection unclear
LET US GO TO THE LAND WHERE
THE FLUTE SOUNDS

As we speed along in the rickshaw
the fields—the mountains—hang thick with mist.
As the willows blow in the wind
everything disappears in the haze
— the swallows, my songs, even the bulbul birds.
Off ahead along the rickshaw ruts
my destination seems to lie somewhere out in
this strange, seemingly endless landscape
the landscape opens up in the distance
to the lonely, melancholy strains of a flute
'tis an emotion unendurable to man.

As we cut this rather weird path
as both my song and the swallows are blown off
into the shadow of the willows—dim in the Spring haze
I can't but feel my rickshaw driver
really is rather single-minded!

"Fuc no oto no suru sato e ikō yo"
Nihon Shijin, May 1922
WILL AND ILLUSION

—of the world of ideas and images—

The wretched shadow of destiny's pale horse
stands silent, chewing on the wayside grasses
THE PALE HORSE

Under the frozen overcast skies of winter
here in the true desolation of nature
the wretched, dejected shadow of destiny's pale horse
—ever caught in the cycle of cause and effect—
stands silent, chewing on the roadside grasses.
As I move towards the shadow
the pale horse seems to watch me.

Quickly move on! Leave this place!
Quickly—quickly—slip away! Clear away this illusion
from my motion-picture-screen life!
Horse! I want to believe in my own free-will!
Flee the pale shadow!
Flee the karma—the destiny—the determination
—and the wretched despair
frozen forever in this dry photographic-plate landscape.

"Aozameta Uma"
Nihon Shijin, Oct. 1921

IS THOUGHT BUT ONE DESIGN?

Deep in the shadows of the densely overgrown forest
Buddha allowed a single thought to walk free
as he savoured the pale brightness of nature
He saw the great beauty of the moonlight—
足够 to revitalize any meditation
enough to dissolve any obstacles on the path to Nirvana.

Walking the moon-shadows
Buddha questions his gentle heart
"Is thought but one design?"

"Shisō wa hitotsu no ishō de aru ka"
Nihon Shijin, Dec. 1921
A DISGUSTING SIGHT

Under the falling rain
all is a washed-out grey
I gaze out at the lonely desolate countryside
at building after building—wet and dripping.
Here they live like horses
ever sunk in gloom.

Circling the walls
I see that moss grows on the houses.
Their diet is bad
how much more so their spirits
—heavily under the drenching rains

Throughout the long falling rains
I remain in this tedious rural backwater
watching pale ghost-like forms
aimless in the surrounding tedium.

It is poverty I see
exposed in the falling rain
—drenched—desolate—a truly disgusting sight.

"Tyarashi keibutsu"
Publication details prior to this collection unclear
TWITTERING BIRDS

On a day of gentle winds
depth in the quiet of a stand of trees,
    I walked a leaf-strewn path
lost in melancholy thoughts.
The air was clear and bright
the riotous clamour of twittering birds —
    high in the tops of the red pines—captured my senses
puffing out their chests, the song of these cheerful little birds
took on a different emotional pitch.
Ah, turning from the gloomy meditations of my past
    —my life—my environment.
Why today? Why do my emotions suddenly
    make such an about face?
I have lost little before now
even from my life itself
    —only comfort
Aah—'tis only comfort that is lost to me,
    but oh, for such a long long time.

"Tenchō"
Nihon Shijin, Oct. 1921
BAD SEASON

The twilight season—dark and exhausted—is come
all the rooms are but dimly lit.
With the heavy weariness of long habit
rain soaks the passing traffic and
row upon row of impoverished tenements.

During the long length of this season
my life has sunk low into abject poverty
I am so terribly poor
all the furniture crammed in a corner.
A single fly buzzes at the window
caught in the ill-fated, dust-ridden rays of wintery sun
my one solitary visitor
a noble old woman—decrepit—smelling of white face-powder
she was my lover long long ago.
An age-old memory—the shadow of a shadow of desire
wanders in the darkness of the curtain.

I can find no new beliefs
while this pallid rain continues to fall
poets continue to sing their tired old thoughts
while old traditions worry each other upon the tatami
Oh it's such horrible weather
—with the sunlight so sharp and biting.

No concept will ever again inflame my emotions
never again—not anymore.

"Warui kisetsu"
Nihon Shijin, Jan. 1922
HERITAGE

A crumbled heap on the ground
the old dwelling sleeps like a huge spider.
Deep in the darkness of this lonely landscape
an animal quivers in fear
stalked by a fearsome nightmare
It howls—sad and forlorn

—noohaarutoooru—yawaa

The millet bends in the wind
rustling in the darkness
Listen! Be still!
There, a howling from the other side of the road
That's the howl of a dog!

—noohaarutoooru—yawaa

"Mother, is the dog in pain?"
"No, my child. The dog is hungry."
Far off where the distant sky still glimmers faintly
where shadowy silhouettes tremble in the half light
a dog stares down its enemies.
From far back in its distant heritage—back in the dim
origins of instinct—in ancient memory
the dog senses the pitiful shades of its ancestors.

Pale with fear, the heart of the dog
howls long on the dark night road.

—noohaarutoooru—yawea

"Mother, is the dog in pain?"
"No, my child. The dog is hungry."

"Iden"

Nihon Shijin, Dec. 1921
THE FACE

The faint white face appeared
when the cherries—still bleary with sleep—began to bloom
it looked in at the window.
Though it was only the shadow of an old, old memory
I felt as if we'd met before—somewhere on some distant pier
the glass pane glittered in the outdoor light, and
the sickly-sweet melancholy scent of a violet hung in the air
as like a rainbow—it disappeared into the distance.

My only cause for sorrow
as I pass another of life's dim turnings
is that I will never return here again.

"Kao"
Nihon Shijin, Jan. 1922

THE WHITE ROOSTER

I am a country rooster
flapping my wings in a destitute farmyard
I fly over the fence
and peck at some small shrivelled insects
Ah—in the shadows cast by the pale wintry light
lonely, I peck at the grass of this parched ground
I am a sickly grey-white rooster
beating my wings—a sad and pitiful creature.

I am a sad country rooster
my tremulous crow reverberates out to the edge of the fields
beyond the roof
—the fence
—the graveyard
Ah, I am but a broken sundial—a grey-white country rooster.

"Shiroi ondori"
Fujin Kōron, May 1922
HIDDEN BEHIND NATURE'S BACK

As we passed through the shadowy thicket
we saw a weaving pattern
as it swam the surface of the pitch black ground.
—"Twas the shadow of the moon.
Pushing through the thick grasses
we heard the restless tones of a small flute
filtering through the gaps in the lonely fronds.
—"Twas the voice of the wind.

We are but unseasoned children
with such pitiful senses
we sense only a fraction of the world around us.
Living in the wide expanse of nature
out beyond those distant hills
we listen to the secrets of the hidden universe
and feel the movements of its living creatures,
      hidden from the eye.

From deep in the forest shadow, suddenly lit by lightning
from the dusk hovering on the horizon
we sense the approach of huge phantoms
like pale shadowy whorls of smoke
these eerie shadows
fill us with fear—demon-driven.

Nature terrifies us
with her strange words—words unknown to the adult world
trembling like reeds
lost in this lonely wilderness, tearfully we call
"Mother! Mother!"

"Shizen no haigo ni kakurete iru"
Fujin no tomo, Feb. 1922
BEWITCHING SPIRIT
BEWITCHING SPIRIT

From the breeze-swept
shadows of the soft grasses
lust jolts me awake—spirited and vivid
I am burnt alive
such pleasure
such joy
spring emotion heats my heart.

Sunlight—naturally gentle—filters in through the window
even here, into the tasteless noontide of this tired life
even here, into this darkened room of loneliness
my strength rises as my heart beats faster
surely this is the most bewitching feeling known to man.
It is the sum of all our hope—bolstered by courage.

Ah, it brings back my youth
like the natural spread of warmth
the gentle sprouting
of a spring day as it melts the snow
such pleasure
such joy
my heart beats faster to sex's throbbing pulse.

Cracking open the hard shell of this idea so long shut away
I feel the quiet flow of my lifeforce
from the swampy depths of care and melancholy
I feel the hesitant approach of spring
abrupt
yet coy
like the first hint of warmth in icy water.

"Namamekeru reikon"
Gendai Shijin Zenshū, Feb. 1921
BRILLIANT SHOWY EMOTIONS

A lonely electric light shines in the depth of the night
by the edge of a silent country path
a lonely wind blows past.
The nearby mountains are thick with trees—
oaks, cypress, beeches, evergreens—even zelkovas
their overgrown foliage thick and heavy

Here and there, from the dark forest
and from the foothills of the distant mountains
clouds of moths throng together
the solitary light their only guide.
Like a spine-chilling swarm of locusts
a giddy whirl in the light—pushing and jostling
—the cloud of insects meets its death.

Even here, deep in these mountains far from human habitation
I dream of that solitary light gleaming in the advancing night
I dream of a lonely showy emotion.
Somewhere behind the gaudy brightness of the solitary light
I sense a strange sexual agony
in the beating of their heavy sponge-cake wings
I watch the moths
watch their lives passing—pitiful—solitary—full of longing.

Life flits back and forth towards the light
and drawn into its circle—dies.
Ah—the dynamic rhythm of this bewitching spring night!
In the mist-laden air
the bright solitary light slumbers—as its rays flow off
into the surrounding landscape.
Deep within the flowing shadow of this sorrowful dream
I ponder this impenetrable mystery
this emotion born of creation—of life—of instinct
so very bright—yet so alone
—so eternally, eternally alone.

"Hanayaka naru jōcho”
Nihon Shijin, Oct. 1921
UNREQUITED LOVE

Escaping far from the city suburbs
we sat in the grass on the mountain's summit.
The landscape blows with the wind across the sky
lilies—alpine ferns—bracken
grow slender and pliant in the grasses
Please my love! Let's open the picnic hamper!
Quickly crack open that egg.
I am starving in all this light
my appetite coils around your white fingers
craving the sweetness of the fleshy fruit.

Oh my love! Quickly, quickly. Open the basket!
Hand me some of those culinary delights—some chicken
—sausages—candied fruit—cheese

I'm starving
my body is writhing with desire.

My love!
My love!
The sight of your plump arms and legs
your flannel-clad breast
as you flung yourself down, exhausted on the grass
adds fever to my love—my blood runs high
Ah, I cannot bear this pressure—this sweet pain.

Sitting on the grass on this high plateau
What is it you see?
Your thoughts blow off in the wind
in the distance the city rides the sky
Ah—'tis only I who fret
my body wrestles with this sad desire
upon this verdant grassy meadow.

"Katakoi"
Fujin Kōron, May 1922
DREAMS

Sitting in the shadow of the gaily-patterned screen
as you sleep, I listen to your quiet breathing
a sweet womanly scent rises
wafting around me
like a sorrowful plume of incense.

Your long hair lies in disarray, as I sit close
listening to your unconscious drowsy mumblings
you are lost in a deep deep sleep
I wonder what dreams you dream
Such strange emotions!
Where do your deep shadowless thoughts take you?
In the pale grief-like twilight
gazing at the misty waters of the distant lake
you trace your path through lonely foothills
towards the impenetrable peak high above
yet lose your way on your solitary road
—you lose your way.

Ah—for what do you yearn? For what do you search?
Where are you bound?
Where—where—where are you bound?
Your sentimental emotions sour into nightmare
as an obscure scent of mystery—
like a rotten white chrysanthemum—pervades your dreams.

—the moods and lyricism of unfocused dreams—

"Yume"

Nihon shijin, Jan. 1922
SPRING EVENING

This whole enticing, sensuous coil of bodies
damp undergarments clinging tight.
Oh, the happiness of the elastic vigor of youthful bodies
in tight embrace
your heart beats faster
as your limbs touch my skin
the scent of your cool—gentle—touch flows over me.

Ah, glimmering in this melting spring right
I see only a whitened forehead
moist and heavy with make-up
and small sweet lips
I gaze at this face—a dream vision.

In the drifting mists of this spring night
I catch the scent of your thoughts
thoughts awakened to love
your dark eyes open wide
shocked by your dreams
as if suspicious of unknown pleasures.
Adrift in the gentle flow of emotion
something penetrates deep into our two hearts
Ah, what do you think of this tranquility, this peace
when all is given up to love—and desire?

In the pale glimmer of this springtime of life
Oh, the happiness of holding this enticing, sensuous body
hard in such a tight embrace
the scent of her soft young skin
is a honey bee riding the winds of a flower garden
the anxious allure of sexual dawning
is the blossoming of the cherry.

"Shunshō"

Nihon Shijin, Jan. 1922
SOLDIERS

—an impression of a passing troop of soldiers—

The deadweight of the massive machines
roll heavy on the ground.
The ground recoils
under the pounding boots
in dense clouds of dust.
Watch! The powerful brawn—the massive juggernaut
passing in broad daylight.
Huge stubborn masses of
oil-smeared iron.
The huge juggernaut, fired by many lives
rolls on, heavy on the ground
— with a pounding, pounding crunch
— a smashing grinding crunch.

The rolling passage of these brutal machines
washes colour from the landscape
— till all is a jaundiced yellow.
Free-will is crushed under their weight
a dismal sun hanging in the sky
— with a smashing grinding crunch
— eins, zwei! eins, zwei!

Oh—the oppressive
huge pitch-black mass
like the surging crashing of a returning wave
rumbles past in fetid puddles of crude oil
rank upon rank of red-hot gun barrels
and row on row of exhausted faces
— with a pounding, pounding crunch
— eins, zwei! eins, zwei!
Under the dark gloom of the sky
the heavy steel machines pass by
numberless eyes pass by
wide with fever,
they flit, aimless and weak
through the fear-filled shadows of the yellowing landscape
bone-tired
exhausted
anesthetized
   —eins, zwei!    eins, zwei!
   —Mark time!

Oh—the many many eyes
watch the melancholy sunlight
in the swirling dust of the road
white mirages in the city streets
imprisoned in their gloom
   —with a pounding, pounding crunch
   —a smashing grinding crunch.

Watch! The powerful brawn—the massive juggernaut
passing in broad-daylight
iron-skin slippery with oil.
The rolling passage of these brutal machines
washes colour from the landscape
—till all is a jaundiced yellow
Free-will is crushed under their weight
   —with a pounding, pounding crunch
   —a grinding tramping crunch
   eins, zwei!    eins, zwei!

"Guntai"

_Nihon Shijin_, Mar. 1922
THE ICELAND

氷島
PREFACE

Modern lyric poetry either places too much emphasis upon sensation and follows an imagist thread, or loses itself in the structural design of an intellectual concept, forgetting the fundamental importance of poetic passion. Yet modern criticism has tended to consider these types of poems as rather simplistic, categorising them with poetry's most primitive forms. Yet I believe the pinnacle of poetry — multifaceted though it is — forms but a single colour, for all its apparent complexity this high point is actually simple and unsophisticated. All the dizzying heights of advanced technique have returned to the natural simplicity of artlessness. Standing at the very end of all historical development, the ultimate concept of such poetry as true art exists in the simplest, most fundamental essence of poetry, that is the exclamation of poetic passion — pure and naive. [Thus, the author regards Japanese waka and haiku as the future direction of modern poetry.]

Be that theory as it may, the few poems gathered in this collection are—for the author at least—pure and passionate exclamatory poems, poems that express with simplicity and frankness, the excitement which is the purest element of poetic passion. In other words, abandoning all artistic designs and ambitions, the author writes as his 'heart directs,' following the natural flow of his feelings. The author does not presume to ask the world to value this collection. Rather than viewing it as a work of art, he wishes them to see this collection as a record of the actual life of the author, as an earnestly written diary of the workings of his heart.

The past life of the author was that of the empty sadness of an iceberg, adrift in the polar regions of the North Sea. The sight of a visionary aurora seen from these towering islands of ice filled the author with longing, anguish, joy, sadness—and finally anger, as he was cast adrift at the mercy of the currents. The author is an "eternal wanderer." He has no place to rest, no place to call his home. The empty sadness of an overcast polar sky lies always heavy on his heart, and the winds of this Iceland tear apart his very soul. All these poems tell of his piteous existence, forming a diary of his
daily life. And so, dear reader, I ask you not to omit the short notes and references at the end of this collection.

Incidentally, apart from the one poem, "The wood behind the prison," the five poems subtitled Kyōdo Bōkei Shi (Views of my distant home) are all old works, already published in past collections. I have reprinted them here not only because of stylistic similarities but also because their content is in keeping with the spirit which pervades this collection. Thus, in a certain sense this collection could be said to be a continuation of Kyōdo Bōkei Shi. Living in Tokyo, feverishly recording these emotions, the author was ever aware of the sky of the Jōshū plains—of his homeland—hanging low over his heart. For that very reason these poems are 'recitative,' and should be read as such. These poems should be read aloud—never silently—for these are all "poems—songs—to be sung."

February 1934
The Author
my heart is ready to weep anew

The winter sun has set
Oh do you remember!
an oyster on a rock
THE SONG OF A WANDERER

The sun climbs over the precipice.
Grief walks low under the footbridge.
Behind the railway fence which continues
boundlessly beyond the distant sky
one lonely shadow drifts.

Ah! Wanderer!
From out the past—passing on through the future
in pursuit of some eternal nostalgia
how is it that your grief walks
like the staggering tick of a clock?
As if killing a snake with a stone
and cutting short the reincarnation cycle.
Step out—aimless, will-less as you are—
  into this desolation!

Ah! even the Devil is less lonely.
How will you endure the frosts of winter?
Never once having believed in anything
you experience anger where belief should be.
Never having known the denial of lust
you have denounced the object of your lust.
How will you ever again return stricken with grief and weary
to the home of one who will hold you gently and kiss you?
For never have you loved
and thus no-one could have ever loved you.

Ah! Man of Desolation!
climbing up the sorrowing slope of the sinking sun.
Though you wander this precipice, aimless—will-less—
there is no home for you anywhere
no home for such as you!

"Hyōhakusha no Uta"
Kaičō, 13.6, June 1931
AT LUNA PARK

Afternoon in luna park
the band rumbles in the sky
the dizziness of the merry-go-round horses
enticing crimson balloons
fly off over the heads of the crowd.

Here on this Sunday
though we climb into the seat of a mock aeroplane
you seem lonely, sitting lost in thought beside me.
What causes your eyes to brim
with such gentle sorrow?
Lend me your hand for a kiss
as our shoulders snuggle together on the seat.
Look! as we soar, there, on the very edge of the sky
the single horizon rises high—tilts—then sinks down low.
We have seen all this now
before the setting of the late spring sun, so
how should we continue to pursue our lives?
Shake off the empty sorrows of today
and—Fly! Just Fly!

In the bright outdoor light of April
mixing together with the merry crowd
though we climb into the seats of a mock aeroplane
your waltz takes you far away
you seem lonely, sitting lost in thought beside me.

"Runapaaku nite"

Wakagusa, July 1931
NOGIZAKA CLUB

November is here already.
Why is this winter so cold?
What was it I used to ponder so deeply
in my fifth floor of an apartment block last year?
Sitting in my spacious western style room
already tired of the falsehoods of life
still I starve like a kept animal.
I have lost nothing
yet I have lost everything.
Why do I feel pursued?
Sunk in gloom, I wander the bustling year-end town
sitting in bars, trying to get drunk even in the day time.
Like birds winging off into the empty sky
these emotions too will disappear once more
off into the distant past.

November is here already.
Why is this winter so cold?
Visitors knock at the door
seeing my indolence, they leave in pity.
No coal, no heating
in this Western style room, with its harsh white walls.
I wake in my bed alone
even in the daytime, I lie sleeping—like a bear.

"Nogizaka Kurabu"
Shū/Genjitsu, IV, Mar. 1931
KILL ME! KILL ME!

Your distinctive fragrance surpasses all
so refined
tender—beauteous—redolent
turning me into an unsightly beast.
Oh! How can I possibly deserve your compassion?
From the very beginning I was your slave
—a domesticated animal
crawling on my belly under your feet—ever treated like a dog.
Oh, please, stamp on me
insult me
spit on me
kick me to the floor
torture me viciously
Ah! until finally—finally—
I will gasp out my last breath.

From the very beginning I was your slave
—a domesticated animal
Oh! Do not force me to endure—sad and submissive—
just raise your whip-like hands and kill me quickly.
Strike me down! Strike me down!

"Korose kashi! Korose kashi!"
Rōningyō (Wax Figures), Dec. 1931
RETURN HOME

—The winter of 1929, separated from my wife,
    I return home, carrying the children in my arms—

The day I returned to my home
the train braved a violent gale.
The last awake, alone I stand at the window.
The steam whistle shrieked out into the darkness
and the sparks lit up the plain.
Can't we see the mountains of Jōshū yet?
In the dim light of the night train's carriage lamp
the motherless children cry in their sleep.
Stealthily everything works its way into my grief.
Ah! Once again I flee the capital.
Where is the house and home I seek?
My past ranges back along a desolate valley
my future faces the shores of despair.
This life is naught but sand and gravel!
Already my courage fails
I am tired of living in this everlasting gloom.
Why do I return alone to my native lands?
Will I stand, once again, lonely on the banks of the Tone river?
The train runs ever onward over the wild fields
intensifying man's resentment
on the further shore of nature's harsh and lonely will.

"Kikyo"

Shū/Genjitsu, IV, Mar. 1931
RESTAURANT HAGI

Here on the second floor of the restaurant 'Hagi'
sunk in memories of lonely emotion, I ponder
did I feel for these things in my youth?
The restaurant garden is an overgrown jungle
swaying, shaggy, as the wind sweeps through.
Does the one for whom I have waited
waited so, so long, truly exist?
In days gone by, taking up a pencil
I would record my name on the railings.

"Hagitei."
Janjō Shōkyokushū, Aug. 1925

HOME

We sit in the old house
conferring in silence.
Neither bitter enemies
nor cruelly demanding our rights.
"Look at me! I am your wife
we must never part even in death."
Her spiteful eyes pierce through me
—malicious—burning with revenge.
We sit in the old house
there is no way out.

"Katei"
Shū/Genjitsu, IV, Mar. 1931
THE DRUNKEN MOON CAFÉ

Though I wanted to climb the hill, I was so unbearably thirsty.
Staggering, I opened the door of The Drunken Moon.
The sound of a broken record reverberated
from out of the confusion of the café.
A row of cheap bottles stood sentinel
in the shadow of the squalid soot-blackened lights.
Ah! This sorrowful gloom has continued too long!
Older now, with no house or home
my wife and children scattered, I am alone.
Why am I forced to know the regrets of a wanderer yet again?
The women crowded around, surrounding the table
with but little pity for my drunkenness.
Cursing, they robbed me of my wallet in a flash.
Then counting down to the very last one,
they stole my coins and left me.

Kōhōten Suigetsu
Shi/Genjitsu, IV, Mar. 1931

NEW YEAR

New Year has come.
The pine and bamboo decorations shine whitely.
The roads lie brittle with frost
in this bitter cold of winter.
Can the planet earth renew its orbit?
Even now, though I have some regrets, I bear no grudges.
I will relive the denunciations of yesterday
a hundred times over.
How can I fathom the existence—or non-existence—
of the new dialectic here within the time and space
of nothingness?
My starving emotions cry out.
I have lived my life in desolate mountain fields.
How can I fathom the cycles of the orbs?
See! Human life is purely accidental.
Cutting off the thoughts of today
I will—yet again—relive the regrets of yesterday
a hundred times over.

"Shinmen"
Shi/Genjitsu, IV, Mar. 1931
LATE AUTUMN

The train runs along an elevated line.
Thought wanders in the shadows of the sunlight.
Quietly perusing my heart
I'm surprised at my lack of satisfaction.
The autumn sunset diffuses on the street
horses and carts clatter here and there on the paving stones.
Does my life actually exist?
In the soot and smoke of the back-streets of the town
a purple hollyhock blooms
even at the poor man's window.

—to be recited—

"Banshū"
Toshi Shinbun, Jan. 22, 1931

SHINAGAWA NAVAL REVIEW

Under the low grey sky
the warships lie fallow—in a row.
Anchors dropped into darkness
each vessel a heavily fortified castle—
All is sunk in mute melancholy.

The crowd on the wharf scatters
as the overcast sky darkens.
Parade duty is long since over
on these waves, so slowly sinking into darkness.
Each ship longs to return to port.
Out to sea the wintry waves are rough
but here, their icy moans rasp along the sides of the vessels.
Though rust eats into their steel plating
the row of warships remain motionless.
Upon the shadowy ocean
they hold fast to their war-cries—their thirst—their passion.

"Shinagawa oki kankanshiki"
ShūGenjitsu, IV, Mar. 1931
FIRE

I watched the flames burn redly.
Fire! You are mute, silent
—like a wild beast.

In the quiet of evening, under the city sky
the flames burn beautifully
flare high one minute
flickering out the next.
Assets, factories, properties
hope, fame, honour, ambition—
All—forever extinguished.

Fire!
You are mute, silent
—like a wild beast.
Enclosed in lonely melancholy
in the silence under this dusky sky
you ponder passion.

"Hi"
Nihil, Feb. 1930

ON THE SUBWAY

Entering the subway alone
I wander the pale platform
lost in sadness, waiting for you—forever.
Yet you do not come, not even in my dreams.
Like the phantom tail-lights
which flicker and fade on the walls
of the dark hollow tunnel
you appear, then vanish on the walls
appear and pass on the walls.

"Sábūei nite"
First published in this collection
THE NEW KOIDE ROAD

A new road has been opened here
running straight to the city.
Though I stand on the crossroads
    at the very beginning of this new road
I cannot reach the lonely horizon
    which spreads out before me on all sides.
Ah! Such a melancholy day!
The sun strikes low on the eaves of the row of houses
the trees have been cut down—only a few remain
Why? Why do my thoughts return to this?
I turn my back on this road
a road where all the young trees have been cut down.

—Kyōdo Bōkeishi—

“Koide Shindō”
Jūrō Shōkyokushū, Aug. 1925

LEAVE-TAKING

The train wants to get underway
the steam boiler’s already filled with coal.
The train wants to cross the border
that is still far off in the distance
    out beyond all the tracks and signals.
No human attachments
can soothe the heated passion
which fires this locomotive!
Those of you seeing someone off on their journey
should grit your teeth in sad despair.
Rend not your hearts with this leave-taking
for the train wants to get underway.
Tremendous clouds of steam billow forth
as the steam whistle cries out, again and again
an ear-splitting howling scream.

"Kokubetsu"
Nihil, Feb. 1930
AT THE ZOO

Aching with a loneliness seared deep into my soul alone, I wander through the trees in the zoo gardens.
The withered leaves have all fallen to the ground.
The wild animals sleep a sleep of gloom in their cages each resigned to his fate
eating the meat thrown down by the humans.
Pale eyes of instinct reflect
their endurance—the torment of their steel chains.
Such a gloomy day!
It was not to see the animals
that I came to the zoo today.
Imprisoned in the cage of my heart
angrily enduring the pangs of hunger
gnashing my teeth a hundred times over
biting hard on the object of my lust
I fight a lonely revenge!
The autumn day seems to darken
the wind gusts along the deserted path
Ah! Why can I not fly like a bird
off into the lonely wastes of infinity?

"Dōbutsuen nite"
Nihil, Feb. 1930

MIDDLE SCHOOL YARD

One day at middle school
tormented with a sudden lustful passion
throwing my books away in anger
I flung myself down in the grass of the school yard—all alone
Ah! such melancholy.
Flying—thrown—far up into the blue
the rays of the sun shone hot on my hat.

—Kyōdo Bōkeishi—

"Chūgakkō no kōtei"
Bara (The Rose) Jan. 1923
Included in Junjō Shokyokushū
THE GRAVE OF KUNISADA CHŪJI

When I arrived in this village
the silk gathering of Jōshū was already over.
The farmers had all closed their doors for the winter.
The sunlight clouded with dust, and
the shadows of the pathetic bamboo grove
tell of the wretched poverty of life.
Look there! A useless stone.
The roadside bamboo grass blows in the wind as
the outlaw sleeps under this grave stone.
Ah! I linger on the familiar winding paths of my home town.
Here—my thoughts are always lonely.
Breaking the link in the eternal transmigration of the souls
Ah! here on this desolate open plain
time casts me aside
extinguishing any sense of will.

Why is it that however much I try
to revitalise my remaining years
you, from under your desolate winter gravestone
make even the attempt seem useless?

—At Kunisada Village in Jōshū—

"Kunisada Chūji no haka"
Seiri 1, June 1933

HIROSE RIVER

The white tossed Hirose river flows on its way
my visions fade with the passing of time.
In days gone by
I'd drop my line from this very river bank—
trying to catch a life for myself.
Ah! Such happiness is now long gone.
Now I even fail to attract the attention of the tiny fish.

—Kyōdo Bōkeishi—

"Hirosegawa"
Junjō Shōkyokushū, Aug. 1925
THE TIGER

Tiger!
like a huge worthless statue
sleeping in your cage on the roof of the department store.
Originally you were not a machine
once you'd have devoured your meat
rending it with your fangs—but
you didn't understand the material world of mankind, did you?
Look! Smoke wafts across the vault of the sky
from over the roofs on roofs of the industrial sector
Comes the mournful wail of a steam whistle.
Tiger!
Tiger!

Afternoon.
A balloon rises high
high into the dusky city sky.
Crouching down, high on the very top of the tall building
you have a thirst like a flag for the wind.
Looking down, far below
you see streets where maggots crawl.
Such living prey fills you with gloom.

Tiger!
It's just a round trip on the elevator
to the most prosperous roof of Tokyo
and there you stand—in fur of dappled amber
as solitary as in the wild
Tiger!
Ah! this is all but a faint shadow of what you once were
this whole idle scene is but empty space.

—On the roof of Matsuzakaya in Ginza—

"Tora"
First published in Seiri, I, June 1933
USELESS WRITINGS

Deathly pale, a man stands
watching his writings being sold on the street.
Ribs, skeleton thin
he listens to the crowing of the crowd
like so many gamecocks.
From the beginning I was a useless man
from the beginning these were useless writings
only selling for a single coin.
Wearing a lined kimono in these early days of winter
this impoverished oblivion has soured to vinegar.
Why weep
on these yellowing old pages?
Pursuing my passions with passion
I will continue to tell of my lonely existence.
My awareness is as nothing
my possessions are rendered worthless
only those who so desire should buy these works.
The passersby scatter, wandering off.
Violent gusts of wind whisk up the ditt.
My aging emotions cry out—endlessly.
Look! These are but useless writings
selling but for a single coin.

"Muyō no shobutsu"
Bungei Shunju, 8.1, Jan. 1930
THE RAVEN OF NIHIL

From the very beginning I was but a raven of nihil
mouth open, high upon the roof during the winter solstice
cawing like a weather wane.
Aware—yet unaware—of the season
that which I do not possess is all.

"Kyomu no karasu"
Gendai Shijin Shū, Oct. 1929

THAT WHICH I DO NOT POSSESS IS ALL

That which I do not possess is all.
Why must I endure such privation?
Crossing the bridge alone
searing deep into my heart
impotent anger drives me insane.
Ah! That which I do not possess is all.
Why must I beg for things let fall in the street
shamefaced—like a beggar?
Throw it all away! Throw it all away!
Clutch hard to your petty winnings
those coins stale with the smell of sweat.
Pound the trunks of the city trees—leafless with
the heavy vigor of the passing cars—
with your petty fame and aspirations.
Ah! all is obscenity.
Erase your whole impotent life!

"Ware no motazaru mono wa issai nari"
Gendai Shijin Shū, Oct. 1929
THE WOOD BEHIND THE PRISON

If you enter the wood behind the prison
the incessant twittering of birds can be heard
    from somewhere high above.
Why must I proclaim my thoughts
walking my solitary path of rebellion
to my lonely companions?
The river bank is overgrown with dry winter grasses.
Lugging huge, heavy rocks, the prisoners
stare at me with hate as they pass.
Such melancholy thoughts!
With the sorrow of a wild beast
I rip off my torn clothing.
Ah! so late in the season
These harsh winds under the Jōshū skies are so cold!
The jailer stands
amongst the few scattered remaining trees.
The bass jangle of a sword's hilt is heard.

"Kangoku ura no hayashi"
Hagiwara Sakutarō Shishū, Mar. 1928
A LONGING WHICH SURPASSES THAT 
OF YESTERDAY

A longing which surpasses that of yesterday 
rises within me as if fed by some hidden wellspring. 
How long must I endure this 
I, who live in constant suffering? 
From the very beginning you were enveloped in fragrance 
an alluring scented flower. 
You never so much as recognised my love 
my passion—caught forever on the border of life and death 
left alone in our world. 
I would sooner die 
with the setting sun of this day of pain 
than burn up a hundred times over. 
Vainly watching you from afar 
haunting the rail track 
I grieve till I burst—
I grieve till I burst.

—to be recited—

"Kinō ni masaru koishisa no"
Kotō Taman, 2.1, Jan. 1932
MISCELLANEOUS EXTRACTS
(1) "Introduction to The Flight of Despair"

Since I first began my journey as a poet, I have written in two opposing genres, that of the lyric poetry of Tsuki ni Hoeru and Aoneko and, also the aphorisms of New Desire and The Justice of Nihil. Lyric poetry and aphorisms are the two opposing sides of my poetic spirit. Though their structures differ, they both express my living poetic sentiment. Aphorisms are my **philosophic poetry**—shisōshi—as opposed to my **lyric poetry**, yet both unite to form my life as a poet.

Lyric poetry is my **night**, and philosophic poetry my **day**. The poet who creates this lyric poetry is lost in fearful nightmares at night and wanders blue-cat towns appearing as on lantern-slide pictures. The world of these dreams is filled with many illusions and phantoms—impossible to capture in the common sense of daylight. Sometimes, something completely unexpected, hitherto never even imagined, appears in the phenomenon of dream. My past as a lyric poet has been that of a sleepwalker. Yet all the apparitions which inhabited these dreams were born of my store of mental images. The scientific analysis of dreams lays bare the complete psychological process of one's spirit. Dreams are the most honest confessions of the soul. That is why lyric poetry which is the confession of the soul is prized so highly as literature.

The poet of the daylight, however, always returns to a healthy logic. Dreams inhabit the world of the unconscious. But the real world is a world dominated by the conscious. There is nothing as painful and distressing in all the world as a poet whose awareness of his life is always in the realm of the **conscious**—for a poet suffers under the various conditions of society. A poet is always searching for a vision of beauty, he wanders deep in night-images, not because they capture his heart, but rather because the suffering of the real world is so hard to endure. It pursues the poet until he takes flight, yet it proves impossible to escape. Thus, when he reawakens to the **consciousness** of the daytime, he becomes like a rat uneasy with his surroundings, creeping out of his hole terrified by a gnawing anxiety. If a poet possesses a certain amount of reason—painful as that may be—he will submit to an inescapable scepticism, which is the first true tragedy of life.

This latter aspect of a poet's personality makes him a philosopher. The lyric poet and the philosopher poet act as a synonym, the former of the unconscious night time which infiltrates the conscious daytime of the latter.
This is the same throughout the world. A poet is also an essayist; a poet is ever a critic of civilisation. This is the inescapable fate of a poet—an inevitable tragic return. A poet is not called a 'cultural leader' because of his desire for fame, but rather because it is his accursed fate. Truly, I am never so sad and frustrated, as when I write my philosophic poetry. My one and only true pleasure comes with the illusions of beauty which ride the images of the night—only when I am writing lyric poetry. Yet, such time is so short. It soon passes—and it's so hard to recapture. Then come the long hours of daytime—hours of sober consciousness—which continue on and on and on. These are the thoughts—whether I would or no—which became *The Flight of Despair.*

**Letters**

(a) *To Maeda Yūgure,* April 1916.

This past year of silence has been of great significance to me, absolutely indispensable. If I had not kept this silence then maybe I would still be drawn to superficial interests (kyōmi) and hobbies (shumi). And maybe I would have been able to survive without ever facing the real truth. But this year forced me to look at myself with brutal cruelty, and in doing so I reached a climax of hate towards my own ugliness, finding myself without so much as the slightest worth 'as a human being.' I even came to view the art played at by such an inferior animal as myself with absolute cynicism. And I fell to the absolute depths. But in the final ending I was saved. I discovered God. It was so simple.

The problem—the question of 'Discovering God'—which had turned my life inside out, from deep within me, for the past thirty years did not so much as trouble the innocence of the people of old. But for modern men such as ourselves, we who have made such intellectual progress, this was close to an actual miracle. My God is definitely not the God of Christianity. Nor is it Buddha or something born of philosophy. People often talk of rebirth, or 'new life' and maybe I myself have used this expression on occasion, but when I think about it now, I find the careless use of this expression laughable—yet at the same time rather terrifying. This is because I have experienced the true joy of this 'new life.' I have discovered God (though it would perhaps be more correct to say I touched

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1HS, "Introduction to *The Flight of Despair,*" (Zetsubō ao Tōsō), HSZ V, pp.5-6.
the hand of God). Because I believe this joy is not mine alone, but rather provides glad tidings, gospel news to all of mankind. I felt that I must continue by publishing another collection of poetry.

I am grateful yet ashamed by the undeserved praise for my humble creation—"The skylark's nest." "The skylark's nest" is a work from the time before my 'new life' began. It is a work from the very depths.²

(b) To Takahashi Motokichi, April 1916.

I have never been able to feel joy for another, this fact makes me terribly lonely. This is the root cause of my unbearable ugliness, offensiveness. I am an egg which gives birth to nothing but pessimism.

You say I am a good man, that I am a friend. I shudder to hear this. You have absolutely no idea what a terribly base man I really am. It's not just you, others too seem to think of me as a 'good man.' I find this supremely ironic. On the outside I appear to be quite a good honest man, but that is not a reflection of my actual soul, it rather stems from my inherent shyness and cowardice.

I am basically a man who is incapable of loving another. This is because I am a man of such evil baseness, that it is doubtful whether I could ever even feel that emotion called 'love.' But now, the reason that my new life is so important, is that I have discovered that which even I had not thought possible—I have discovered love. It was Dostoevsky who taught me this. I cannot express the happiness I felt in having this which I had thought ever denied me.

It is hard for me to confess to my true inner being. Such a confession pains me as much as revealing my nakedness before a lover....But now is the time for me to confess everything. I want to tell all....I am absolutely at a loss. I want to repent of all before God.

I had seriously thought that I was a beast-like absolutely base man, had thought that it was right that I be repeatedly kicked by all and sundry. But, what on earth should I do? ...There was nothing else I could do. Yet this awareness only makes me even more lonely.

There was nothing else I could do.

My conscience commands me to the right, while my nerves command me left. For me to go right I must kill my nerves. While for me to go left I must

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kill my conscience. But both of them are born of my instinct, and who, I ask, can kill his own instinct?

Christ, or Tolstoy for that matter, would probably say, "God is your conscience. Your nerves are of the devil. Go to the right!"

Perhaps it is possible for me to suppress the pain of my nerves, and to turn to another and take that positive action which will cause him joy, but then I cannot in the depths of my heart prevent myself from cursing he who makes me suffer so... How can I kill this devil? The more he is suppressed the more viciously evil he becomes. Further, I cannot live as a hypocrite. (I would rather be an absolute scoundrel than a hypocrite...)... Thus I was forced to accept that, I cannot love, and finally that, that which we call love, does not exist. This made me suffer a great deal.

But then, I heard a voice which seemed like a miracle.

"Be not sad. You need go neither right nor left. Just stand where you are." But I was still worried. For, a man must keep walking. And further, God has only provided two roads, though neither of them mark my path. But man must travel one or the other of these roads. I couldn't just remain still. I just couldn't be happy with that.

Then the voice spoke again,

"There is nothing for you to worry about. All you have to do is just stand there. That is the road Providence has laid out for you. That is the truest, most honest road for you. Standing there, there are moments when you appear more beautiful than any who actually walks the road. This is a beauty which is allowed to none but you. You, in yourself, are a good and worthy man."

...On hearing this, I jumped for joy. And I knew then, beyond any doubt, that this voice belonged to Dostoevsky. It was an absolute miracle. Though I wouldn't be able to tell you why I think that is so.

"Your sins are forgiven!"

Tears streamed from my eyes... and from that moment on Dostoevsky became my God.

This could be said to be a solution to all that I have experienced in my thirty years of life.

My new life begins from here. I am filled with a child-like joy. All looks new to me, all is filled with hope.

This is a truth—transcending all truth—which saved one bent on suicide, when for the first time I came to know, was able to grasp in my
hand, the very substance of 'love.'...The reason I discovered Dostoevsky was that I was a man who just could not be saved. That is the only reason I can find for this. To put it simply, I am a decadent....and Tolstoy showed me the terror of sin, but it was Dostoevsky who made me see the sweetness of sin.

You, my dear Takahashi, are a good man. From the beginning you were a seed sown in a good field. I am the absolute opposite...I am stung to the quick by the sorrows of the modern man.³

(e) To Takahashi Motokichi, June 1916. (extract only)

As for the content...of the whole work, it was Wang's reaction to the emperor's death in Act III which moved me most. Of course it is only conjecture, but Wang's feelings are those of myself, the author. Yet the emperor too is undoubtedly born of part of my own pathetically weak heart. Thus the sympathy Wang feels for the emperor, was the voicing of my own feelings towards myself. You my brother particularly commented on the scene where the emperor imagines the absolute joy he will feel on receiving the elixir and to tell you the truth while I was writing that section I could not stop my tears. Perhaps that section will be seen as the most truly sentimental part of the whole work, but it is that part which most truly embodies my feelings at the time. The manuscript of that section was completely sodden with tears, and so when I read your words my brother, I marvelled at the mystery of that which is called rhythm. Rhythm is a strange and mysterious phenomena which sends emotions like an electric current from the heart of one man to that of another.

The unhappy emperor receives my tears. For I, together with Wang, am the only being, in all of heaven and earth, who truly understands him. He should have died at that very moment. It would have provided the painful, painful proof of his salvation.

I often stress the word 'sentimental,' but in truth I believe that the inner kernel of both religion and poetry lies in sentimentality and that alone. In this world, there is nothing so truly precious as the sentimental. One of my poems, I think I've mentioned it to you, called "The Miracle"

³HS. "Letter to Takahashi Motokichi," April, 1916. Never posted, it was given in person to Takahashi. HSZ XIII, pp. 111-116.
(Kiseki)⁴—a poetic dialogue between an old man and a child who wants a toy—was born of this conviction.

In this world there are no miracles, no truth, no God. There is but one salvation—and that is tears. It is a work born of the belief that tears and tears alone give birth to all miracles.⁵

(3) "Memories of Autumn Evenings: My Life as a Bachelor"

Ten years of living alone. I'm not particularly lonely—although some would be—nor do I feel any lack of freedom. I'm only lonely in the way I've been lonely for years. My sense of the loneliness of life, of einsam, was as intense as it is now even during my marriage. This is just the fate of a man like me, and nothing to do with whether or not I have a wife and family. Moreover, I have a healthy—if ageing—mother, who looks after absolutely everything for me, and so personally I rarely feel any lack of freedom. The only thing that troubles me a little is sex, but thankfully in this instance the Japanese social conditions are designed to suit men and as I'm still comparatively candid and open about it, sex isn't something I particularly worry about.

When I first separated from my wife and began to live a single life, I felt the pleasant lightness of a single person, as if a heavy weight had been suddenly lifted from my shoulders. I felt the true joy of so-called freedom. Leaving our two children in the country, I began a new daily existence, alone in an apartment. At that time apartments were still rather uncommon, still new for Japan. I chose to live in an apartment not because I like strange, novel things, but out of necessity. Wanting to enjoy the freedoms of bachelorhood, I didn't want to stay in a family-style Japanese lodging or a private boarding house, and so an apartment was ideal; besides there was no other choice. Many other lodgers (the avant-garde intellectuals of the time) spurred on by a sort of civilized dandyism, specifically choose to live in apartments. They all wore smart Western-style clothes and constantly showed off their elaborate furniture. Western records would be playing in each room, as they competed with each other to be the most up-to-date with the latest music, like the Tango or the Blues. I was the only one in this

⁴"The Miracle" was apparently an early version of *When Cherries Bloom*. HSZ XIII, p. 121.
group who still wore a padded dotera coat over my kimono. With no specific job to do, I slept all day long, snoring like a bear, in my disordered room.

After leaving the apartment (although I lived with my younger sister for a while, moving from one rental house to another), I continued to enjoy the relaxed freedom of bachelorhood. The best thing was that however late I came home at night, I wasn't subjected to an inquisition about where I'd been and so there was no need to make up excuses. I could come home as I liked and go to bed as I liked. After I began to live with my sister, I was, however, no longer able to invite home female acquaintances or barmaids I was intimate with, as I had done in the apartment. Until then female acquaintances had often come to visit. Sometimes they even cleaned the room or folded my clothes. They were mostly poor women of the mizushobai, women who felt sorry for me and looked after me out of simple kindness. Not one of them had any interest in me sexually and for my part I had no such interest in them. It was more that these young women, sentimental and motherly, felt compassion for my lonely slovenly life and were willing to sacrifice their time and affection to take care of me. There was never so much as a hint of sex and thus I never paid them any money. Even now I have fond memories of each and every one of those lovable young women.

After I moved in with my sister, all of these personal chores were left up to the maid. Every evening I went out drinking, usually coming home around midnight. During my marriage, my wife would open the gate for me and then we'd go to bed after talking a little. Just before entering the house, I'd throw all the café match boxes I'd collected in my sleeves out into the street. At the time I hated having to bother with this subterfuge, but when I think of it now, I cannot deny a certain sense of loneliness. Often when I returned home on a cold winter night, after doing some shopping or suchlike, the words of Yosa Buson's poem, "Buying onions I return home through the leafless trees" would come to my lips. When I think of returning home late at night, with my wife and children waiting, the light of the fire burning brightly and the meal all prepared—even now under the freezing sky of winter—somehow a warm flame kindles in my heart and I feel some of the forlorn warmth of family life. There is nothing in my single life now which gives me that sense of warmth. That's the only thing I miss. Instead of stealthily returning to the cold dark house when all the
family had gone to bed, and going to sleep alone, it was much more fun—and certainly noisier—to have a fight with the jealous wife and then go to sleep over a peacemaking nightcap of sake. My mother used always to leave some rice balls by my pillow—Murō Saisei has already disclosed this and much else about my private life—but the misery of a man eating cold rice balls alone in the middle of the night can only be understood by a single man.

However, all things considered, I prefer my single life. My past married life could well have ended in disaster as a result of some abnormality on my part, for my ex-wife was by no means a bad woman—rather the opposite. She was very virtuous, perhaps a little too simple and thus a bit childish. She was a somewhat strange woman, rather atypical, in that she possessed a certain 'simplicity of ignorance.' She occasionally reminded me of Dostoevsky's idiot saint. Whatever the case, she was not the sort of woman you could hate. However in her idiot-like beauty she lacked both the gentleness and the delicacy of feeling of Prince Myshkin. She was very quick tempered, an easily angered woman who unfailingly opposed my every word, seething with rage, her voice shrill and harsh. Sometimes when she got really violent she threw things. She often slapped the children, who cried incessantly like little Cindereellas. Then suddenly, in the midst of these upheavals which shook the house to its very foundations, she would strike up the beat with the jazz on the gramophone, happily humming the tune to herself.

I had a lot of trouble trying to educate this wife of mine. Above all else I felt that the correction of her violent rudeness was the very first priority. Thus my aim was to encourage her to be a more ladylike woman with more emotional delicacy and gentleness, for in truth she didn't understand even the simple basics about makeup and dress—things any ordinary young woman would know. After we moved to Tokyo, I took her to as many places as possible. To plays, motion pictures, department stores, and particularly to a great many get-togethers of young women, both single and married. But all my efforts were completely wasted. My wife was only interested in young men and had virtually no interest in graceful deportment or elegance. Then, as a last resort, I happened to take her to a dance hall, and she began to learn dancing. This wrought an unforeseen miracle. From that time, she underwent a complete metamorphosis. She began to make an

6The hero of Dostoevsky's novel The Idiot, Prince Myshkin.
effort with her hair and take an interest in clothes. She became skilled with makeup, and her whole conduct became more womanly, even coquettish. She was completely transformed into a beauty. I was delighted with my success. However, what came next was a cause for keen regret. For some reason she began to mix with the young men she met at the dances with almost no discrimination from one to another, like some middle-aged woman who had suddenly discovered sex for the first time. She’d drag them home quite openly, though for the most part they were pretty nondescript young men, delinquent students or boxers. Together with these henchmen, she began coming home late at night. If I was sleeping upstairs she’d wake me up and tell me to thank whoever it was that had brought her home. The most wretched man alive, I would reluctantly do as my wife asked. If I didn’t, she’d start screaming, exposing her disgraceful behaviour to the neighbours.

Day by day I became more unhappy. Yet even so, I couldn’t really bring myself to be truly angry with my wife, for she saw absolutely nothing wrong in what she was doing, never giving it so much as a second thought. In one sense she was completely naive. She was not in the least malicious or secretive, she was pure ignorance itself, as if wondering why it was wrong for one man’s wife to flirt foolishly with another man in front of her own husband. However much I tried to explain this fact to my wife, she just could not understand. It was then I began to regret my ‘wife education’ campaign. At the same time I pondered Socrates’ famous paradox—that to do wrong knowing it to be wrong is better than doing it in ignorance.

But finally something happened which I could no longer forgive. While I was away in the country she brought a young man home and blatantly lived with him for a whole week, during which time she threw the children out of the house to be looked after by the neighbours. When I returned from my trip, I found the children covered in mud playing on the road like homeless dogs. At the sight, a truly justifiable anger and disgust which defied expression boiled up inside me. For the first time in my life I hit my wife. I hit her with all my strength—fired by my anger and disgust. From that time onwards, my wife lost all feeling for me.\(^7\)

\(^7\)HS, “Memories of Autumn Evenings : My Life as a Bachelor” (Shūshōki: Dokuji Seikatsu ni tsuite), *Return to Japan* (Nihon e no kāiki), HSZ X, p. 617.
(4) "On First Reading Dostoevsky"

The first Dostoevsky work I read was *The Brothers Karamazov*. Even though it was in translation, I was absolutely awe-struck. I read this enormous tome in a single sitting, though it took two nights. After which I was as disoriented as if I'd just awakened from a dream. The numerous pencilled notes and red underlinings that mark the pages of this book show how greatly I was moved at that time. Even now, every time I look at that old volume, my awe reawakens with renewed vigour. Though all the characters—Ivan, Dmitry—were absolutely fascinating, I was particularly interested in the eerie unpleasantness of the idiot servant and in the mystical religious views of Father Zossima.

The next work I read was *Crime and Punishment*. This made an even stronger impression on me than the Karamazovs. From the beginning to the end, the psychology, speech and conduct of the hero, Raskolnikov, captured my heart as if by magic. At the time, I had been reading Nietzsche and so I understood the philosophical framework behind the desire of this university student hero to become a Napoleonic superman and thus was able to take my reading to a deeper level. After completing this book, I was left with a strong impression that my own conceited psyche was all too similar to Raskolnikov's, and though it may seem a little silly now, I tried hard to reproduce the features of this novel in my work. At night I even began to see terrifying visions of a patricidal killer in my dreams.

From that moment, I became possessed with an absolute Dostoevsky Mania. I read his works extensively—at least as far as the Japanese translations would allow—I read absolutely everything. Yet, of these many works, it was *The House of the Dead*, that autobiographic record of his time as a convict in Siberia, which affected me most. This and the two other works mentioned above, are undoubtedly Dostoevsky's three most impressive works....I became absolutely terrified when I read *The Idiot*, for the abnormal mental neuroses of the hero were so similar to many of my own. The reason I was so captivated by Dostoevsky, was probably because we shared an almost physiological relationship, a close resemblance of temperament and blood. My manner of reading is always physiological. I follow my own special method in all my reading—even for Poe, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer—it is a special neurological, physiological reading. Without this I have no interest in reading, but in Dostoevsky's
case, the resemblance in temperament between the two of us was even clearer that usual.  

(5) "Poe, Nietzsche and Dostoevsky"

Among Western writers, there are only three whom I truly respect, Poe, Nietzsche and Dostoevsky. This is how I have always felt and how I feel today. 

...I have respected Poe for a long time. His representative collection of short stories is for me, a literary bible. Particularly, "The Fall of the House of Usher", "The Telltale Heart", "The Black Cat", "Ligeia" and "A Descent into the Maelstrom." From the first moment I read these tales, they stuck in the depths of my brain like a demon. A demon which I could not expel from my poetic illusion by any means whatever. This impression will probably remain with me throughout my entire life, probably forever. Poe's thoughts are terrifying. It is fear with a different meaning to that inspired by Nietzsche and Dostoevsky. This is because Poe more than the others, possesses true mystery. There is an eerie gruesomeness in his inner recesses, in that place where the word genius holds meaning, in the midst of mystery mixed with a touch of insanity. 

...Allan Poe, is a poet of mystery, who has risen above the practical world because instinctively he is a weird unearthly madman. Poe's art is smeared with slimy blood. Smeared with the stickiness of a madman, with the lifeblood which flows from his heart ... Baudelaire is not so frightening. Even for a man such as I, if I had lived in those days of suffering in France, I would probably have done the same sort of work as Baudelaire, and written as many poems and essays as he. At the very least, he gives me the confidence, that I too can succeed. However with Poe, there is only despair through and through to which you surrender from the beginning, there is nothing else you can do. Because, Poe is a genius' genius, it is impossible to overtake him however much you study him, and try as you might you cannot imitate him. It is this alone which is the true miracle, a mystery in literature.  

8 HS, "On First Reading Dostoevsky" (Hajimete Dosuotiefusuuki o yonda koro), The Room and the Corridor (Rōka to Shiitsu), HSZ IX, pp. 158-9.  
9 HS, "Poe, Nietzsche and Dostoevsky" (Pō, Niiche, Dosuotiefusuuki), Literary Discourse (Bungakuron), HSZ XI, p. 555
(6) "The Country Clock"

In the country, all people live together with their ancestors. The aged, the young, the wives, the children, all the family live under the same thatched roof, they rise in the mornings and go to sleep at night in front of an age-old family altar and its sooty-black display of Buddhist mortuary tablets.

In the hills behind the farmhouse lies a desolate wintry hillside grave. The long, long history of their family, sleeps together with the many bleached white bones. In time, the living family members too will be buried in that same grave, and together with their great grandfathers and great grandmothers, will lie quiet dreaming dull monotonous dreams....

In the country, all the clocks in all the houses have stopped. An old-fashioned grandfather clock, there throughout the long calendar of the family's past, still points to the same time as when the ancestral ghosts were living. Behold! the village shrine is just as it was in days gone by, as are the white walls, even the surrounding wilderness of nature....

All is a single continuum of 'eternal' time. There is no past, no present, no future. All life belongs to the same bloodline, and there in that lonely wintry hillside grave, together with the filth of their ancestors, they live together in one spirit....No change comes to their environment....Ever unchanging, the same time continues. Change is destruction, the very ruin of country life. Because time would be interrupted, and the chain of their eternal reality broken....Country life is one of isolation....Their horses too, crouching low in the semi-gloom, sleep with their ancestors. Eternally, eternally, as they have done for many ages past.10

(7) "The Octopus That Would Not Die"

A starving octopus was kept in a tank in a certain aquarium for a long long time. In the gloomy basement, pallid rays of light drifted in unchanging sadness down through the glass ceiling of the aquarium casting shadows on the rocks.

Everyone had forgotten about that gloomy tank. They thought that the octopus had already died a long time ago. And that it was just fetid sea

10HS, "The Country Clock" (Inaka no tokei), The Justice of Nihil (Kyomō no seigi), HSZ IV, p. 317.
water which collected on the glass window of the tank, in the dusty sunlight.

But the animal had not died. He was hidden in the shadow of a rock. Day after day, every time he awoke, he was forced to suffer a terrible hunger in that miserable forgotten tank. Finally there was no prey anywhere to be found—all the food absolutely exhausted—and so he began to tear off and consume his own tentacles. First just one. And then the next. Then finally, when they were all consumed, he turned his body inside out and began to eat his insides. Little by little he moved on to the next part.

In this way the octopus completely ate up his whole body—his outer skin, his brain, and finally his stomach. Not even the tiniest part remained. All was gone.

One morning, when a keeper came in unexpectedly, he found the tank completely empty. Languid seaweed moved dully in the translucent blue seawater inside the clouded dusty glass. Not a living form could be seen, not even in the nooks and crannies of the rocks. The octopus had completely and totally disappeared.

The octopus, however, was not dead. Even after it had disappeared, it continued to live there for all eternity. In the old, empty and forgotten aquarium tank. Eternally—over the many centuries—this animal has lived invisible to the human eye, harbouring a fearful hunger and dissatisfaction.¹¹

(8) The Poet in Me and Zarathustra

At the age of thirty the poet in me began to climb the mountain together with Nietzsche's Zarathustra, and lived a life of peaceful solitude with only the birds and clouds as companions. Then when he reached the age of forty, together with Zarathustra, he left the forest and passed back down the mountain into the world of men. In the foothills we met a very old and noble man.¹² On seeing us—the poet in me and Zarathustra—the old man asked, "Why on earth have you two come down into their world—into this world of men? Do you wish to give them something? Or is it that you wish

¹¹HS, "The Octopus That Would Not Die" (Shinarai tako), Fate (Shukumei), HSZ II, pp. 290-1.
¹²This sudden change from third person to first person exists in the original.
to tell them something? Surely you realize they will never accept your gifts, nor will they listen to your words. They are living representations of ignorance and greed, they will but misunderstand you and insult you. Give it up and return to the mountains! Return to your life of seclusion in the forests. Once there continue to enjoy your solitude; continue to sing with the stars, the moon, the clouds, and the birds. Write your hymns of praise to the beautiful Gods. Surely—surely—that is Zarathustra's true road. Surely that is the only true road of a pure poet, of a true artist.

But Zarathustra simply shook his head, and after we had parted from the old man, throwing back his head he commented through his laughter, "The Gods are already dead. It amazes me that the old man didn't know that." But at that very moment the poet in me saw a faint glimmering, a vision of Muse,\textsuperscript{13} one of this pantheon of Gods. "But Muse is still..." I murmured faintly, my words carried off amidst the raucous laughter of my companion.

2

Together with Zarathustra, my poet entered the town. Many people were gathered at one of the crossroads, watching an acrobat about to walk a tightrope. Ever courageous, Zarathustra immediately pushed his way into the crowd and began to speak—telling them the truths of life; "Man is naught but a single bridge—a process from beast to superman. Life is but a tightrope walk—merely acrobatics." But the crowd did not listen. They jeered him. With threats, like those used by the Jewish prophets in days gone by, my teacher tried to make these stupid people look into their souls. He told of the horrifying end which faced mankind, when all would be destroyed in fire and lightning, trying to call up a trembling, a desire for salvation in their hearts. Zarathustra painted a picture of the absolute abomination, the abject misery of mankind's final hell. He continued; "The globe which is our earth will begin to shrivel. It will become bitterly cold and all living things will gradually perish. In the end only a small number of dwarf-like men—the last humans—will remain. They will pass their days simply trying to survive, simply trying to hold onto life. They will think on nothing. They will know no worry. But just like fleas, lice, even bacteria, they will crawl and slither upon the ground. Yet they will continue to live in

\textsuperscript{13}Although Sakutarō here notes that he sees only the single form of Muse, in Greek mythology, there were actually nine goddesses, daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, who made up The Muses. They were the muses of epic poetry, history, lyric poetry, music, tragedy, sacred song, dancing, comedy and astronomy.
great prosperity for many a long age, and come to feel more happiness than any felt by those humans who had lived in the days gone by. For these last men, there was no love, no ideals, no justice and of course, no romantic poetry. They will ask suspiciously, "What is love?" What is poetry?" They will not be saddened by their lack of romantic spirit. They are not saddened because they believe they are happy. They will work only out of necessity, with neither enthusiasm nor interest. Like pigs in a pen, they will rub up against each other, seeking enough warmth to survive. Yet they will not be able to see the base wretchedness of their life.

The image of these last men, as told by Zarathustra, froze my poet's heart like ice, for never had he imagined such detestable, such humiliated humans. Could any soul hear tell of this—of humanity's final road—without shuddering with fear? Thinking to see the sweeping effect of Zarathustra's works, my poet turned to look at the crowd, just as they began to yell their response. It was the complete opposite to what he had expected. They yelled; "Hey, Zarathustra! Make us into these last men. Oh, Make us into those happy people, who lived so long in such prosperity, with such unparalleled happiness.

My poet suddenly remembered the words of the old man in the mountains. His words had been wise. My poet thought how much better it would have been if they had stayed there singing their own song, together with the stars, the moon, the birds and the clouds. He felt a barrier between the crowd and Zarathustra and himself. At that same moment Zarathustra muttered in words of heart-rending despair, "My tongue is not for their ears," and grasping my poet's hand, he stealthily whispered into his ear, "Let's return to the mountains. We need to see the forest once more."

3

But at that moment, the crowd suddenly fell silent. The tightrope walker had begun his act. The single rope stretched from one ridge to another, and the ignorant clowning performer began his walk. His steps were as those through life; they were a symbolic representation of human destiny.

But then unexpectedly, a cry arose from within the crowd. The acrobat had fallen. The pitiful, ignorant clown, lying injured, pleaded with Zarathustra to save him. My companion, while nursing the injured man turned to the crowd and began to preach. "Behold! Life begins from such a fall. The reason for this is because life is a continual process. Yet I love all
those who have fallen; all those who have crashed to the ground. Those who have injured their bodies through adventure, and those who have squandered their souls. Even those who have not left so much as a drop of wine in their cups." At that point my poet drew away from Zarathustra and standing apart began, with much plainer simpler words, to address the crowd, telling of his mission as a poet. I said, "We must descend to the depths if we are to ascend. In this era of evil, I love all those who deny falsehood, all sceptics, all who reject everything, all who believe in nothing. I love all the nihilists and all anarchists, and all the decadents. For only by descending into the very depths—the deepest pit—can the poetic spirit of today conquer self and thus achieve transcendence. By bathing in the very mud of the negative, the spirit is purified into the positive. All the fallen are my friends. All nihilists are close companions to all poets."

At this point, jeers of ridicule exploded from the crowd. They all cried out in one accord, "Yes, yes. What you say is absolutely true. We know this only because we are the true decadents of today. We are the nihilists, we are the fallen. Look at us! We have no ideals. We know nothing of morality. What is beauty? What is truth? We have nothing but contempt for all this—for everything—even for humanity itself. But we have never once stopped to think this over. Only the most foolish men worry themselves about the significance of life. But we of our age do not even stop to consider these concepts. We have no doubts—no scepticism—about our lives. If we have no worries then we have no hardship. We are just living to live. We are not even slightly bothered by the meaningless of life. Years ago, sunk in agony at the meaningless of life, a decadent poet in the nineteenth century began to drink day and night. Lost in self-destructive despair, he torn himself apart, a victim of the torment of his age. But for we men of today, all such suffering, such sentimentality, has been long forgotten. Look at us! We are nihilists in their very essence. We are fallen men, true decadents. We are the companions you have been seeking. We can carry on your mission. So, give us your blessing. They jeered at me with these and many other words, knowing they were making me suffer. They grabbed at me with filthy evil-smelling hands as they jeered from all sides.

Saddened, I murmured to myself; "My tongue is not for their ears." Again Zarathustra tried to break away from the crowd. Night was falling, and the world was wrapped in shadowy gloom. As we left we heard the
high-pitched laughing of the crowd. "Look at that insane preacher! Watch him plodding after Zarathustra like a lone skinny donkey. He is nothing but a deluded madman. He has nothing—he cannot even feed himself. Yet he tries to preach! Look there goes the shadow of a romantic."  

(9) "The Sensation of Grasping it in my Hand"

On the morning of April 19, I was sobbing plaintively, my face buried in my desk. Just as when a pampered little child whimpers his tears into his mothers lap, an unspeakably sweet sensation—a wave of sentimentality—rippled through my whole body like an electric current. Before long I found myself in floods of tears. I was filled with happiness, with an all encompassing sensation that all my sins were forgiven.

Something warm like a mother’s breast—something I just cannot express in words—enveloped my whole body, and I felt just as if I had been taken to paradise. I let go completely and cried my heart out. All that made me suffer, tortured me with melancholy was forgiven: all my vices, my unpleasant neurotic melancholia, my pessimism, my lies, my mean-spirited pride, my obsequiousness hidden behind a pretence of humility, my truly mean-spirited egoism, the chaotic misleading struggles of my intellect, the strange and truly repulsive secrets of my carnal desires, and the inner sin which gives birth to all these things. The repulsive vices, the heretical beliefs under which I had suffered for such a long long time were completely eradicated—rooted out—with these few words spoken in my mind. Because I hated my self so very much, I hated all things, and was thus unable to feel love for anyone or anything. I was beyond even thinking about that which is called, 'love.'

"All your sins are forgiven," these words, flashing along my veins deep into my heart like an electric current, were completely unexpected, the result of a single instant. It is impossible for me—with so blunt a pen—to give expression to the deep joy which arose in me at the words, "your sins are forgiven." All I could do was weep torrents of tears.

The owner of this voice was none other than Dostoevsky. Why it was Dostoevsky’s voice I did not know, but when I heard that voice—as it

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14HS, The Poet in Me and Zarathustra (Watashi no Shijin to Tsuraratosutora), The Struggle from Nothingness (Mu kara no kōsō), HSZ X, pp. 297.
raced through my blood like an electric current—I knew in an instant, beyond all doubt, that it was the voice of the great poet.

(I have had a number of similar experiences in the past; most of my poetry is born of just such a moment of intuition.)

From that moment, I became a true believer.

That is to say that Dostoevsky—my great teacher—became my one true god. He became my one true friend in the world. He understood all my suffering, all of my personality. He was the one true benefactor—my Holy Mother—who guided me to happiness and light. I who was such an unhappy man, who could be saved by neither religion nor philosophy, a man writhing in pain in the very bowels of depravity.

Like a little child I clung to his hand, choking on my tears as he forgave all my sins, all my suffering—and most importantly as he forgave the torture—the eternal spiral—rising from my neurotic conscience and my base instinct.

Placing his hand gently on my heart, the great Dostoevsky, said these words to me,

"I know you—you unhappy man—to the very depths of the depths of your heart. I perfectly comprehend—your pain, your anguish, all that you search for. There is nothing for you to worry about. You are most definitely not a bad man. I sympathize with you from the depths of my heart. You may even be the best, most good-natured child in all the world. There now, there is nothing to cry about—nothing to cry about. You are my child—my sweet little child." I must leave it up to you, my readers, to judge just how violently I collapsed on the chair in floods of tears, just how I shook with joy.

It was two or three years ago that I first came to know Dostoevsky. Surely I hardly need mention that his all too fearsome works—such as Crime and Punishment, The Idiot, The Brothers Karamazov and The House of the Dead—brought me great consolation, and filling my heart with wonder moved me very deeply. Through these works, I felt that Dostoevsky had gained amazing insight, and beyond that, a sympathy into that which pained me most—which I have named my 'nervous conscience.'

As a result, I had, for quite a long time, regarded Dostoevsky as the greatest poet in world. But never for a moment did I think that this miracle would happen, that he would appear as my actual Saviour.
On the whole, not only Dostoevsky, but all modern Westerners, seem to possess personalities empathetic to my own. (There is not a single Japanese whom I can look to as a friend, their makeup is so totally different from mine.) Of these Westerners I particularly like the works of; Andreev, Garshin, Maeterlinck, D'Annunzio, Poe, Verlaine, Sologub and Aleksei Tolstoy,¹⁵ (though I didn't feel much empathy with the great Tolstoy). The works of all these writers gave me great solace. These men, in much clearer, better words that mine, had already given voice to all that I was trying to express, all that I was suffering, all that I was trying to capture. They—all of them—live in the same hospital as I, they all cry out through their tears with the same painful ailments as I.

Of course, at first I discovered the Great Dostoevsky only as one member of this group; but I got the feeling that he was somehow different. The others all talk a lot, all make a lot of noise—probably a result of their inner pain. But Dostoevsky, alone in the group, was always silent, as if he was always thinking about something. This forced me to see him as a kind of monster, a monster with a totally incomprehensible nature. When I think about it now, it was because of this very incomprehensibility that he possessed such limitless love.

Dostoevsky wanted somehow or other to save everyone. This was how he differed from the others.

Dostoevsky's kiss—the touch of his lips against my raw nerves—was an absolute miracle, for quite a time had passed since I was first touched by his works, nor was I thinking of him at that particular time.

Before this miracle occurred, I had for a time been sunk in terrible despair. I had dreamed of a saviour, who surely existed somewhere in the world, who would save me from all this. Perhaps I just couldn't survive without this hope. Because I was in this state, the foundation of my hope, as it always is when I create poetry—that electric shock of inspiration—had nothing whatsoever to do with reason or considered thought. My belief was mysterious—incomprehensible—something which I could not possibly explain in words.

To put it simply, my emotions guided my belief. That was all it was.

From that moment I called Dostoevsky "God." I felt as if all my pain and all my sins had been cleansed and that a bountiful peace was filling my future with its gentle benediction.

I felt that if I but prayed to Dostoevsky that anything—however miraculous—would be mine, for the power that welled up within me was so strong. This strange sensation continued for three whole days. During these three days I experienced a tremendous joy, more than anything I'd ever felt in my life.

But before even a week had passed, like the incandescence of white-hot metal cooling in the open air, my mental state gradually returned to normal. He who I had believed to be "God," I now came to regard as just a "great man." And my white-hot incandescent beliefs transformed into a type of hero worship—which should thus perhaps be rephrased as red-hot.

Suddenly I began to feel the loneliness of abandonnent. It was like the loneliness when coming to one's senses after a bout of drunkenness. Even at the time, I began to laugh at myself sarcastically, asking "Wasn't it all just a phantom seen through the glaze of fever?" "Wasn't it just a hallucination?" or "Weren't you just playing out some silly comedy?" For to have reached such a state of ecstasy, began to seem not only wretched—shameful—but stupid. Once more I was cast into the depths of the dark valley of doubt and despair.

There in the depths of that dark valley, I tore my hair and clenched my teeth. I cried out "I cannot possibly be saved," "This is the end." I truly tried to close my eyes to all thought, all concepts. But strangely, in my empty heart—having cast out all else—there remained one enigmatic riddle.

Yet that riddle was in itself a sort of power. It was also something hitherto unknown to me.

It was like the blue bird captured on a moonlit night which disappears in the daylight—with not so much as a shadow remaining, and the child is left clutching—with all his might—nothing but empty air. The child is filled with disappointment. But from that moment, a certain something takes residence in the child's heart. That is, the memory of that strongly clenched fist which grasped the blue bird for that single instant.

That was the riddle—the one thing—left in the emptiness of my heart. The sensation of grasping it in my hand.
The memory of this sensation gave me a renewed sense of courage and strength.

If Satan had not had the opportunity of having once lived in heaven, then surely he would never have been able to so obstinately maintain his confidence and strength in the light of his malicious intentions.

Even now that sensation of grasping it in my hand gives me fresh courage and hope. Someday I too will no doubt experience happiness. Someday I will no doubt come to know love. And not only that, but someday I will definitely be able to believe in God. (To believe in God is the ultimate aim of life, it is the sum total of all happiness). Though it seems absolutely impossible at this moment, somehow I know that sometime before I die everything will all be all right. That is my strength. It seems that I did not just grasp hold of empty sky after all.

Today I no longer think of Dostoevsky as God. Rather he is a prophet like John the Baptist who led believers to Christ. Dostoevsky is not the light itself, but the teacher who first pointed out to me the substance of that light.

It is impossible for a man like myself, distorted and diseased by modern science and civilization to honestly—truly—see the light. Even now I continue to hate Christ. I am like a fretful child labouring much antipathy before his teachings. However wondrous the concepts, however serious the teachings, it is—in essence—impossible for me to be saved. Only Dostoevsky has mercy on me and saves me. It is only he who sows seeds in my heart. I am looking forward to cultivating these seeds.

He was the one who taught me the truth that the very substance of happiness is love. The great joy I felt when he embraced me, all of me—in that single electric instant—is indescribable....
Ah! my great teacher Dostoevsky.
All I need do is follow after you. If I do that then sooner or later I will arrive at my goal. Then I will definitely truly grasp hold of my blue bird.

Human conscience is not simply a concept born of philosophic thought, but rather a type of strange emotion born from that person's physical body. To express it differently, conscience is nerves. At least for men like me. A shocking misunderstanding is born of the distinction which defines conscience as a philosophic concept and nerves as emotion. Dostoevsky knows everything. All who stand before him must do so naked. If one is to
truly save another human being, the body—their physical being—must be
saved first. Philosophic concepts are of no use.

The reason for this is that saving someone's flesh means saving their
defense—which means saving their conscience....

I wrote the poem "The toy flute," soon after that incident [the
mystical experience of Dostoevsky as God]. When I wrote this poem, my
heart was captured by the sharp shrill tones of a toy tin flute, was moved by
the pathetic sweetness of this instrument which shone like the tremor of a
vibrating nerve. In this poem I sought as honestly as possible to give this
emotion expression.

The toy flute itself can be seen as the very essence—the symbol—of
happiness, but I don't want you my readers to come at this poem (or my
other work for that matter) with such cold logic.

I want you to read my poetry as you would read the Bible, to trust in
the word itself.

I have not the slightest intention of having my thoughts, my own
personal philosophy, my concepts even slightly understood by others, nor
do I think such an understanding would have any value. I believe only in
my emotions, and in them alone. These very emotions are my life. If I can
truly express these emotions then I will have achieved my goal.\footnote{HS, "The Sensation of Grasping it in my Hand" (Nigita te no kankaku), HSZ III, pp. 191-205.}

(10) When Cherries Bloom

Time: Early spring morning. Light rain is falling.
Place: Country town. A park near the Tone river. The cherry buds on the
embankment, wet with the rain, swell plump and damp. It is a very quiet
scene.
Characters: S—a poet who lives in this town
A—S's friend. A fictitious character.
(The two are talking as they walk along the river embankment)
A: I haven't seen you for a while, have I?
S: No, it's been just over a year I think.
A: You haven't shown your face at all, have you?
S: No, I haven't been out anywhere.
A: Weren't you bored spending all your time at home?
S: Why do you say that? Boredom wasn't my worry!
A: What were you doing?
S: Sleeping mostly. Sleeping is so pleasant. It's true what they say you know, that you get good tidings on a morning that you've slept well.
A: So that's why you look so well is it.
S: I feel as if I could do absolutely anything.
A: Did you really spend all your time sleeping?
S: No, no, I did get up sometimes—to smoke a cigarette.
A: So you spent the rest of your time smoking did you?
S: No, sometimes I played the guitar.
A: And what else?
S: Sometimes I just thought.
A: Yes, but what else?
S: That's all.
A: What was it you were thinking about?
S: It's still too difficult to talk about—painful even.
A: Why painful?
S: Not even I know that.
A: You really do come out with some rather weird stuff you know. Is it lack of confidence that prevents you telling me?
S: No, no, I have the confidence. (in an increasingly anxious tone)
A: Are you embarrassed then?
S: No it's not that.
A: Aren't you just being spiteful? Or do you fear some enemy?
S: No, no, I don't have any enemies. That's why really, it's because I don't have any enemies that I cannot speak!
A: But surely you sometimes get angry with people and speak with sarcasm?
S: (agitatedly)
That's just bad-temper. That's just a brief explosion of malice at the vulgarity of lower class fools with no conscience. A real enemy surely refers to an adversary in a game of war who is at the very least on the same social level as myself—or perhaps even higher.
A: Why can't you tell me unless you have an enemy? Because you fear there'd be no reaction?
S: No, no, it's not that. (lighting a cigarette) Even if an enemy appeared I still couldn't speak about it now.
A: Well whatever, at least show me what you've written.
S: I've written a great deal. But I don't want to show it to anyone.
A: (walking a little apart, cunningly)
You're deceiving yourself rather aren't you? It's just that you're rather ashamed of all you've written aren't you? That's why you won't show me, isn't it?
S: Huh—think what you like. But I have never 'thought' about anything as seriously as this. I have never suffered as deeply as this.
A: You don't seem to be writing much poetry these days.
S: No, I can't write poetry yet.
A: What do you mean yet?
S: It's still no good, I must suffer more. It's because I'm such a coward, you see.
A: Surely your poetic inspiration hasn't dried up?
S: (lightly)
Well, if my inspiration could dry up so easily then it should do its worst! That doesn't worry me in the slightest. If it dried up so easily then it wouldn't be worth anything anyway.
(S suddenly throws his cigarette away and begins to walk in long strides. Suddenly the voice of optimism—in honeyed words—speaks in his head.) That's it! Even if I could reach an intellectual conclusion, I just cannot reach an emotional conclusion. That's what has been causing me such anguish.
That is what is making me suffer.
A: What do you mean by an 'emotional conclusion'?
S: Well, my intellectual conclusion is that I must live a life of abstinence. But my emotional conclusion is that abstinence is absolutely unendurable, after all I am by nature a born lover of drink.
A: Look, I've no idea what you're talking about.
S: I didn't think you would. My character is plagued by many such dilemmas. I'm amazingly emotional yet at the same time very practical. I'm either a man with a keen conscience completely out of the ordinary or I am an extraordinarily nasty piece of work.
A: You're generally known in these parts as 'Hagiwara, that good-natured man,' you know.
S: Yes I know. Mother told me.
A: My friends regard you as a 'true gentleman.' Do you understand the meaning of that expression? Of a 'true gentlemen' in this day and age?
S: How could I not know that? (pause—in a slightly embarrassed tone) Such a term is indeed most befitting for an idiot such as myself.
(Silence. Shrouded in spring rain, the Tone river flows off into the distance like a dream. An otter's cry is heard from far off.)
A: (As if he's just remembered) When will you be going down to Tokyo?
S: Whenever I decide that I want to go of course. But I don't want to go at the moment.
A: Why not?
S: It's not really a case of why...(pause—wonderingly) Sometimes my longing for the capital is all but unendurable. (K, Y and B come walking along from the other direction, talking. Young men about town, interested in literature they greet S as they pass)
A: So you intend to leave your precious creations to rust for ever then do you?
S: No, no. Someday I'll publish them.
A: When?
S: It's difficult for me to answer that—it pains me.
A: Are you sure you're not sick? (anxiously) Your face is very pale.
S: It's because you torment me so.
A: Look be that as it may, you've got to pull yourself together, you are, after all—a genius.
S: (forlornly) If that's all you can say I'd rather you said nothing. I don't want to be a genius. I just want to become a human being. I want to become a ordinary man; a good man.
A: There really is something wrong with you you know.
S: Aah—I'm in torment!
(In silence the two descend from the embankment. S's head is bowed under the weight of his sentimental thoughts)
Well whatever else is true, you and I are both lonely, aren't we.
(Cheerful, youthful, laughing voices can be heard, "He's absolutely smitten with little X." "He's an absolute idiot." The group of young men they'd passed earlier pass by again, a little way off, talking about girls)
A: What is it then? What's wrong with you? When they passed us earlier you were so cheerful.
S: I shouldn't have spoken to you. You torment me.
A: Well then—I'll take my leave.
S: What? Do you have to leave? Well Good-bye then. (suddenly as if he's just remembered something) Now then, come by the house with me. We can try a rather unusual India tea I've got hold of. Also, yesterday I received a new gramophone record from America and so....

\[17\]

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