Buddhist Poetry Fall, 2020

Han Shan b. 700

Moonshines in the dripping water;

wind brings the very grass alive.

Master Dogen b. 1200

Water birds

going and coming

their traces disappear

but they never

forget their path.

Ch’ing-hung b. 1271

Nothing is better than being free

- but getting free is not luck.

Ikkyu b. 1394

Lots of arms, just like Kannon the Goddess;

Sacrificed for me, garnished with citron, I revere it so!

The taste of the sea, just divine!

Sorry, Buddha, this is another precept I just cannot keep.

Basho b. 1650

Such stillness -

The cries of the cicadas

Sink into the rocks.

If you describe a green willow in the spring rain it will be excellent,

but haiku needs more homely images, such as a crow picking snails

in a rice paddy.

No oil to read by…

I am off to bed

but ah!…

My moonlit pillow.

Dakotsu b. 1885

A woodpecker’s drilling

Echoes

To the mountain clouds.

Etsujin b. 1650

Now this year goes away:

I’ve kept hidden from my parents

that my hair is grey.

Ryota b. 1718

They have the guise

of being married just today -

those two butterflies.

Kobayashi b. 1763

A sudden shower -

I am riding naked

On a naked horse.

Shiki b. 1850

On how to sing

the frog school and the skylark school

Are arguing.

Ted Sexaur 20th C

Poem for Tet

This is the poem

That will save my life

This is the line that will cure me

This word, this, the word word the one

this breath the one I am.

Mick Virgilio 20th C

Bass

picking bugs

off the moon.

James Baraz 20th C

Ninety is just fine with me, I no longer rant and rave

About where the world is heading and my exclusive job to save.

I wallow in contentment and know that I am blessed,

Awakening to the joy of living at its best.

I’m happier than I’ve ever been and truly mean each word.

The thoughts that caused the worries now all seem so absurd.

Though my eyesight has been dimmed I see clearer than before,

Th glass is not half empty, it’s overflowing to be sure.

Rainer Maria Rilke 20th C.

I know that nothing has ever been real

without my beholding it.

All becoming has needed me.

My looking ripens things

and they come toward me, to meet and be met.