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.