

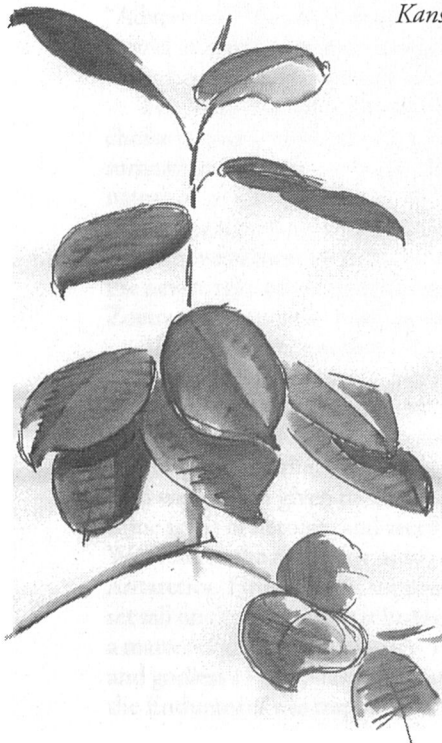
Three poems for Ji Hyang Sunim
from her dharma sister Hyeon Hyang

Into the word-head.
Over flower.
Invisible straw.
Lightning.

Bell light.
Shells measure.
Her forehead.
Street.

Sky.
Calf.
Fence.
Distinct.

*Judy Roitman, JDPSN,
Kansas Zen Center*



Deep stillness of very small hearts stopped.
The cemetery slopes heave; tombstones soar.
Squish, squish, squish
Muddy footprints by today's grave

*Susan Warden,
Kansas Zen Center*

He was hidden kept
from rain swept city streets

nothing impure palace bound
marble porphyry lapis
lazuli unchangeable beauty
a garden with gold and silver wrought flowers
the grass carved of jade
and those who surrounded him
who said they loved him

were perfect
their faces and hands replaced by
ivory masks silk gloves
sewn to their skin
every action rehearsed

until no mistakes could be made
He would have been content but
saw a child hurt

and asked What is this?
. a child in pain .

He found a blind woman crazed by her fear
and asked What can this be?

. horror loneliness .

And last came the dead men
filling the streets outside
their faces and wax eyes a sea under
the streetlights

and there was no need to ask further
I suppose in that instant the palace dissolved
more likely it merely stood
forgotten until rain and wind
left a stone hillock with tangled weeds

Christopher Cornish

Hokusai Says

Hokusai says look carefully.

He says pay attention, notice.
He says keep looking, stay curious.
He says there is no end to seeing.

He says look forward to getting old.
He says keep changing,
you just get more who you really are.
He says get stuck, accept it, repeat
yourself as long as it's interesting.

He says keep doing what you love.

He says keep praying.

He says every one of us is a child,
every one of us is ancient,
every one of us has a body.
He says every one of us is frightened.
He says every one of us has to find
a way to live with fear.

He says everything is alive—
shells, buildings, people, fish,
mountains, trees. Wood is alive.
Water is alive.

Everything has its own life.

Everything lives inside us.

He says live with the world inside you.

He says it doesn't matter if you draw,
or write books. It doesn't matter
if you saw wood, or catch fish.
It doesn't matter if you sit at home
and stare at the ants on the veranda
or the shadows of the trees
and grasses in the garden.
It matters that you care.

It matters that you feel.

It matters that you notice.

It matters that life lives
through you.

Contentment is life living through you.
Joy is life living through you.
Satisfaction and strength
is life living through you.
Peace is life living through you.

He says don't be afraid.
Don't be afraid.

Look, feel, let life take you
by the hand.

Let life live through you.

Roger Keyes, Providence Zen Center



It's you in blue
as if by chance
passing near by

*Marcin Gerwin,
Gdansk Zen Center*

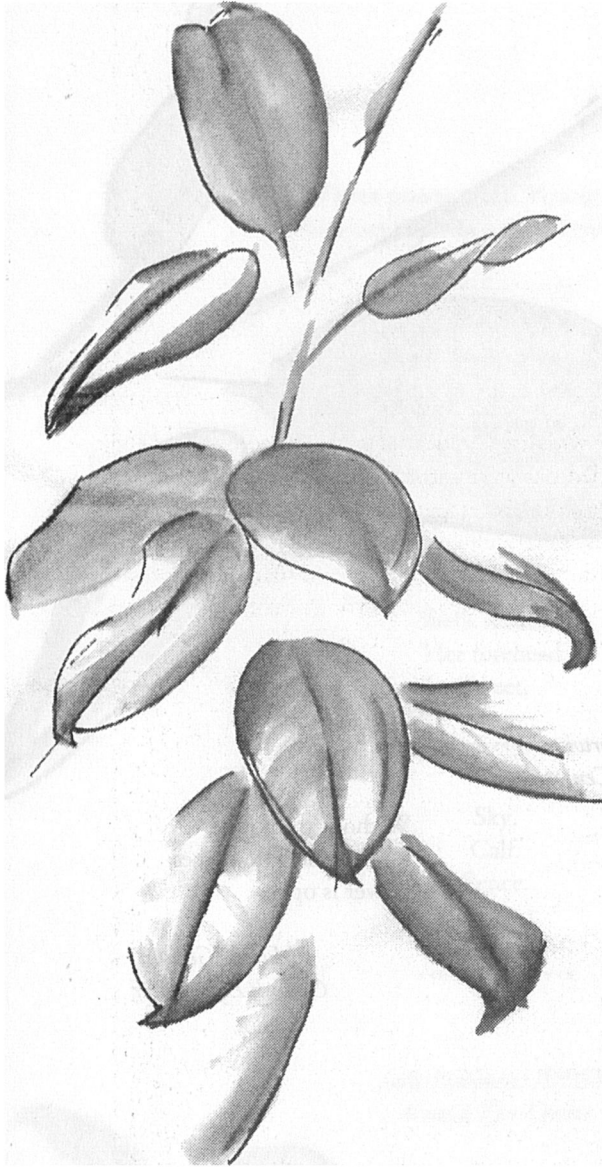
Without thinking –
for the one who comes
flower is open

*Marcin Gerwin,
Gdansk Zen Center*

new year work poem

in this computer quick traffic jam
salsa explodes on the tongue
in ears
in the eyes
each day
dead work lights' colors
find moment
or elbow to glisten,
crushed pine needles scent wet streets,
faint chirp of children's voices
all perspective.

*Paul Bloom,
New Haven Zen Center*



Crusade

In a not so distant past, some kind of fever shook the land
breaking up the people's homes, raise the dust of caravans

Brothers went to be made men, and wives, widows, war would leave
martyred in Jerusalem, they buried them in effigy

And children only knew the myths, of fathers in the righteous flood
headed for a holy death, on a wave of heathen blood

Today it's all an old romance, more the stuff of make-believe
And in my life I've seen events, would bring these dead men to their knees

But this is not a hymn of war, not a tale of ancient sins
This is just my mind at work, wondering how it all begins

We're creatures of a tribal love, and everyone a Zion has
Some ideal as we grow up, we struggle to redeem at last

But grudges in the modern age, have outlived old dieties
memory now keeps the rage, and every mind's a casualty

And if you think this world malaise, is the fruit of foreign feuds
Better you observe your days, see the seed in all you do

Something moves me to suggest, in our lives we perpetrate
Other kinds of righteousness, but in the end the same crusade:

When at first we sense a charge, we turn our tongues to cross-bows
The breath is taut and strikes hard, heats the air as it goes

And every truth we might have heard, falls on embattled ears
sharpening our next words, shoring up our next fears

And suddenly we're captives all, shackled in our own campaigns
Loathe to let our standards fall, slow to recognize our pain

Listener, you're given one chance, tomorrow we are white, white bones
Will you live your days in judgement, or leave the gods to claim their own

*Jody Blackwell,
Cambridge Zen Center
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