

Furnace Mountain Poems

Tree upon tree.
Vision fooled.
Against rock wall.
Imaginable.

Titled habitation.
Iron upon itself.
Like boats folded.
Limestone.

Stone = leaf = spider.
Rock = pool.
Below road.
Under foot.

Each step forgets previous.
Suspended in air.
Ether.
Leaf.

Memory of the seat-rock.
The raw-face.
Memory of long rails.
The unknown bird.

The moon red.
Only its lower half showing.

If she knew the names of trees.
Forgotten.
Species succession.
After other.

Unreachable petroglyphs.
Known direction.

In rock, metal.
In metal, ardor.

One hand.
Above/below.
Reaching to.
Not after.

Judy Roitman JDPSN



THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS
a Poem for Roger

even as I watch the petals are falling
& nothing has ever been found
to hold them back

Diane diPrima

Walking the mountain before dawn,
tree trunks and shadows blacken the path.
The temple is found only by flowing
with the mottled river of morning stars.

Sitting in silence in a mountain temple on a quiet morning
the nodding monk is oblivious
to the kasa of fresh sunlight
as it gently hangs on his back
and drapes down his shoulder
onto the hardwood floor.

During an outdoor interview on a clear day,
wasps build their home
in the great temple pillar
over the unflinching Zen Master's shaved head.
The student's attention brightens,
wary of a sting.

When the western wind shakes the forest,
sitting perfectly still is the only refuge.
A tree falls
and the old barn
cracks wide-open,
inviting daylight in.

Following the white-stoned path back to bed,
the feet are heard but not seen.
An infinite number of fireflies
dance down the mountain.
Stars visit the trees.

Catherine Pfeifer
Furnace Mountain, Kentucky

A willful tolerance infuses neither man nor beast
until it thaws — at least
a month away
in mild and mildewed March.

Alan Davies

A few late leaves fall
onto my red car
on Kemble Avenue —
my mind doesn't do a thing
it doesn't have a job to do.

Alan Davies

The Tokaido Road

Oh, long years! Yes, long!
Or many, perhaps, not long.
Up and down, up and down
the Tokaido Road, begging
for enough to live, sleeping
as the guest of strangers.
Writing on strips of cloth
NAMU AMIDA BUTSU, giving
them to passers-by. Give
what you own away, my
teacher said, then look up
at the night full of stars.
Nephew, I am dying. We
met only once. My life
has been good. This is
my farewell to you.

Glenn Shea



r a i n - w h i p p e d

cloud-bursting
 pleasure and pain
skin rain-whipped
 till pink
grass hungrily licks
 each drip

nooy bunnell
6/30/99

w a r m a n d h u m i d

even the moth
habitually drawn
to the porch light
at night
skipped his rounds
his wings
like my thoughts
folded
under the weight
of the warm and humid air.

nooy bunnell
7/21/99

Transmission of the Lamp
— The Lost Volumes

Wu Kwang
Was a man of New York
But he was not born in New York
His family name was Shrobe
And while he resided for over 30 years on 14th Street
He had no fixed abode

He attained the way
Sitting on a cushion
And realizing that he was
Sitting on a cushion

Thus is it said
“The man who is sitting
Is already sitting
Though they are never separate
He truly knows
His ass from his elbow”

It is said that on occasion
He would retreat
Deep in the Northern mountains
While this may be so
Few saw him there
And despite the remoteness
He never lacked for comfort

In his youth
His breadth was immeasurable
Near the Millennium
He discovered his health
And thenceforth
According to legend
Dined solely on green tea
And barley soup
His memory improved with age
And his beard never grayed

He mastered first the tantric pulses
Of Thelonious Monk
And next the pranic forces
Of Vedic traditions
But let go of both
To enter the Main Stream

And preached,
“My miraculous power is that
I pay my taxes by April 15th
And my rent
On the first of the month”
(Truly he had pierced the ineffable)

He also once said
“Don’t write a check
You can’t cover,”
And on another occasion,
“If you can’t pay me now,
Pay me later”

Students today
Still discuss this

A student once asked
“How can I enter the way?”

The master said
“Tokens”

The student persisted
“Tokens are subject to coming and going
Appearance and disappearance”

(This was no ordinary person)

Wu Kwang responded
“Then get a Metro Card”

(He reveals his sword
Only when challenged)

The student was speechless

(Who wouldn’t be?)
But tell me
Is this the silence of Vimalakirti
Or of Elder Ting?



Another student remarked
“Already swiped”

The Master hit him

The student bowed

Wu Kwang demanded, “What is it?”

The student couldn’t answer
So Wu Kwang sent him
To buy bagels for the sangha

(Removing frost from snow)

When he lectured
Students gathered like clouds
But when he finished
He left no trace

Gatha:

The way from Union Square
Is clearly marked
But few can find it
Out of ten million
Not no one
But only a few
When you arrive
Press 2E

*Ken Kessel JDPSN
In observance of the Zen Master’s
Birthday, November, 1999*