

SILENCE

COLLECTED HAIKU

BRUCE ROSS

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I. Title

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Bruce Ross

Both speech and silence transgress.

Zen saying

What is natural and inconceivable
belongs neither to delusion nor enlightenment.
Causes and conditions right at this moment
shine completely in silence.

-- Dongshen Liangjie

rising autumn mist--
the wedge of geese pierces
the silence

ancient stone . . .
the sound of autumn leaves
upon autumn leaves

-- Dai Bosatsu Zendo, 1994

deep night . . .
at the roof's edge
wind in the ivy

autumn drizzle--
the slow ticking
of the clock

how it settles
into the curved branch--
the crow at dusk

winter stillness . . .
on a high branch the crow
opens and closes its beak

first snow flurries:
whiteness collects on the edge
of a dry leaf

snowbound shallow creek . . .
the steady flow of water
over still rocks

a spider huddled
in the ceiling corner . . .
endless spring rain

morning silence--
dull spring sunlight
on the potted cactus

icy dawn . . .
the sparkling window frost
in the unused room

summer pond--
wild yellow irises lean
in the shadows

winter dawn . . .
how still the snow lies
on the slanting roof

a field mouse
on a crinkly elm leaf
breathing

Botanical Gardens:
taking shade under the lily pads
September goldfish

December sidewalk--
their dark impressions still there
the autumn leaves

so quiet
by the roadside
Queen Anne's lace

beneath the surface
drifting with the current
autumn leaves

old country cemetery--
all the gravestones surrounded
by autumn leaves

winter rain . . .
bright rowan berries above
the caved-in shed

sea gulls float
on the motionless Genesee--
empty winter dock

late afternoon light:
the shadows of pebbles
on the road

autumn stillness . . .
the first leaves cover
the country house

December morn:
the long pause between chirps
of the sparrow

spring morning--
a goose feather floats
in the quiet room

how still
the kneeling lamb sculpture
on the gravestone

winter sun . . .
the pigeon's foot crackles
a dry leaf

dusk:
facing towards the frozen pond
empty bird house

faint spring mist--
only the bright orange
of poppy blossoms

silence
the snow-covered rock
under winter stars

approaching rain--
the solitary sparrow
on a telephone wire

open to the sky
the upper window
of the abandoned barn

a single leaf floats
beneath the wooden footbridge . . .
mountain shadow

silence
the tree's still shadow
on the yellow roof

through the opening
of the broken wood fence
late summer willow

the hills behind hills
from Gannett Hill overlook;
silent valley homes

deserted neighborhood:
a stepladder in the middle
of the front lawn

winter mist . . .
the bumpy water weed's reflection
in Walden Pond

hazy morning:
they walk slowly to the barn
summer cows

rolling meadow . . .
empty boxes waiting beneath
the apple trees

autumn chill--
yellow chrysanthemums
in a sunless garden

November night:
the dark piles of raked leaves
at the curbside

autumn sunset--
the cow rubs her face against
the bale of hay

old winter pond--
beside the blue-gray ice
a mossy log

the last flickering
of the Sabbath candles . . .
fading crescent moon

winter nightfall . . .
out of the hazy penumbra
a few light flakes

country road--
the silence of fallen
crab apples

hazy winter morning:
the thistles so distinct against
the whitewashed barn

sunlit snow--
two crows in a dead tree
on a quiet afternoon

how still they are
in this cold
pigeons on a curved lamppost

cold spring rain--
the slow steady drops
from the eaves

door open to the weeds
the abandoned car
in the empty field

still winter day . . .
the motionless shadow
of the fence

winter dusk . . .
someone's footprints lead away
from the house

on the still corner
the small telephone stand
in spring rain

a hawk perched
on a dead gray branch
. . . late summer grass

Hegins pigeon shoot--
a monarch butterfly floats
across the killing field

sunflower stalks
along the Indian garden--
bright autumn sun

spring morning light . . .
the cows quietly standing
in the muddy creek

late summer chill--
the wasp's shadow moves
on a leaf

winter moon--
in the shallow new snow
a tiny squirrel print

morning shadows . . .
the fallen magnolia blossoms
already turned

an albino lizard
among the mesa underbrush
. . . deserted pueblo

spring stillness . . .
the peony bush weighted down
by the sparrow

without fragrance
these faded roses
in the cold air

early autumn--
the dead mole's paws so close
to its body

morning frost--
the first autumn leaves
in the tree's shadow

steady night rain . . .
the path of silent lightning
in the east

winter wind--
a spume of snow
lifts from the ice

morning snow . . .
the starlings settle
on the upper branches

standing above the creek
staring down into it
the young cow

Thanksgiving Day:
light snow upon the white feathers
of the turkeys

late March snow . . .
the slow descent of Canada geese
to the field

spring drizzle--
white apple blossoms above
the church graveyard

still spring night . . .
the unrecognized glow
of distant lightning

end of January,
the houses sitting so quietly
in afternoon light

winter field:
the faded blue and white sides
of the bee hives

out of the water
reaching toward the sun
white lotus

summer showers . . .
the potted red geranium
in front of the gravestone

early evening . . .
a picnic table and its shadow
under a tree

colored leaves
in the empty bear's cage
. . . early autumn

overcast morning--
the half-eaten butternut
on the wood deck

abandoned house--
the lilacs just as bright
this spring

ever-so-lightly
leaf by leaf the willows
touch down

a milk-white spider
explores the morning teapot . . .
light autumn breezes

December frost--
the shadow of a dry leaf
on its side

Memorial Day:
the dried-out red sumac hang
in the cool breeze

in a leafless tree
above the silent Genesee
the gray wasp nest

late summer night--
the prickly chestnut husks
under a full moon

morning silence . . .
at the corner of the window
the last yellow leaves

overnight snowstorm--
in a distant tree the crow
moves to another branch

winter twilight:
the long slender shadow
of the small tree

frozen Quaker Pond--
even between the dry hummocks
deep silence

almost a path
the snow-covered creek hidden
deep in the gully

winter cemetery--
only the sound of the backhoe
to break the silence

arboretum courtyard:
the goldfish almost don't move
beneath the ice

silk daffodils
in the outdoor urn
this cold April morning

spring sunset . . .
every clump of turned earth
shining

Sunday morning:
pale violet lilacs behind
the old library

how it covers
the lawn and the sidewalk,
the pine's shadow

starless May night--
the mallards sleeping on
Reilly Lake

Some of the haiku collected for this volume originally appeared in one of the following publications:

Anthology of International Poets
Brussels Sprout
Cicada
Dragonfly
Frogpond
Haiku International
Haiku Moment
Inkstone
Modern Haiku
Poetry Nippon
Point Judith Light
The Shortest Distance
thousands of wet stones
The Tree
Vegetarian Advocate
Wheel of Dharma
Woodnotes
The Yomiuri Shimbun
Zen ABC

Bruce Ross, Ph.D., has lectured on the humanities in the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, Morocco, and the People's Republic of China. He has published a book on animal symbols, essays on critical theory and poetics, a collection of poetry, and two collections of haiku. He has also edited *Haiku Moment*, the largest anthology of English-language haiku to date. Past president of the Haiku Society of America, his haiku, haiku sequences, senryu, haibun, collaborative renga, reviews, translations, and articles appear in haiku journals of the United States, Canada, Romania, Croatia, and Japan.