

Kiwao NOMURA**poems****We, coated with dust and mud....**

We, coated with dust and mud,
coated
with dust and mud,

—oh, the breathing mouth of the sky,

showing signs of spring, uneven,
the breathing mouth of the sky, uneven,
the curious folds of this land,
the Ever-Young River,
rising there, as we, coated with dust and mud,

—a straw doll going for a spring ski,

the wind rises,
the ring of memory gently swells,

—a straw doll going for a spring ski,

but especially, the folds, the curious folds,
rather than the hill of life enclosed in the ecstasy of showering;
look, they are twisting like a rope,
and then unwinding, the folds,
the Ever-Young River,

—where the snakes lurk, and the ominous stars fall,

and we also, eyes closed,
bodies burned, become tiny bones,
and metamorphose till we cry inside the womb
and oh, they are
the ashes, and the invisible carriers of those ashes,

—where the snakes lurk, and the alluring stars fall

this vertigo is deep and cool,
finally,
that emptiness grows more luminous.

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Infinity of the Ken'yu-sha Monument 6

(Thirty-nine minutes gone in the second half, Koyo running, Koyo running, the egg, the egg pushed out, the egg pushed out from infinity, which Bizan and, Bizan and the other forwards, Bizan and the other forwards have shoved into the scrum, the burning scrum that's like infinity, infinity of the Ken'yu-sha monument, or, the egg pushed out from infinity of the Ken'yu-sha monument like the burning scrum where the egg is shoved by Bizan and the other forwards, the egg Koyo catches, the scrum half, Koyo catches the egg, runs, feinting, feinting to the left, feinting as if making his move to the left, cuts towards the blindside on the right, Koyo breaking through, Koyo breaking through, everyone thinking that, but then everyone thinks he's been sacked, everyone thinks he's been sacked by the three around him, then the egg, the egg from Koyo, the egg passed from Koyo, the egg passed from Koyo to Bimyo, the egg passed from Koyo to Bimyo as if gauged within millimeters, then passed to Sazanami, Sazanami running, Sazanami running, holding the egg, becoming the egg, remaining the egg, remaining the egg for a moment, remaining the egg just for a moment, remaining the egg just for a moment before scoring a try, remaining the egg just for a moment before scoring a try right next to the corner flag)

Notes:

Ken'yu-sha: A literary group Ken'yu-sha or was established in 1885 by Koyo Ozaki, Bimyo Yamada and other writers appearing in this poem. The group brought about the "Ken'yu-sha period" to the Meiji era of Japan. Read literally, *ken* means "inkstone," *yu* "friends," and *sha* "society" or "group."

Koyo: Koyo Ozaki (). The leading figure of Ken'yu-sha. His first name indicates "red leaves."

Bizan: Bizan Kawakami (). His first name implies "a mountain like an eyebrow," that is, a graceful mountain.

Bimyo: Bimyo Yamada (). His first name signifies "beauty and grace." Particularly in this poem, it puns on the homonym "bimyo" or , which means "exquisitely" or "delicately."

Sazanami: Sazanami Iwaya (). His first name is associated with "ripples" or "wavelets."

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I Want to Wage a Soft War

I want to wage a soft war
because in summer around 2 am
the edges of this city begin to bend backward
to take the form of a winding river that wants a soft war
and to reach the summit of blackness
and come to rest right next to my forehead;
then finally the wind blows
and the luminous in-between or the soft war
appears with some stars; oh
even from soft, the very soft
state of waiting the dream leaks toward that place
my hyper-alert central system of nerves wants to go
and whirl with the edges of this city—
an urbanist
so that even the throbbing in my toes
to wage a soft war that I'd hope to conceal
is unintentionally revealed

*

Or Relax

So, it's
Good Morning

I open the window
and see the camels
It's almost impossible (but

I see the camels (I see the camels (the camels rooted in fact
beside the white high-rise apartment (in the dry shapeless
vacant lot and it seems as if
the dry sea cucumber were its √

Let's add them up
Seven in all (three sitting (four standing

To lead a life
I need an ordinary view outside the window
If there is a vacant lot (there are grasses
and a cloud like the belly of a dead eel

that's enough
So I've thought (but

I stop thinking so
and we put lunch on the table:
cold pasta mixed with tomatoes (and (blood sausages

Then we open
the calm heat of the afternoon (we open (and
still see the camels
The white high-rise apartment shines more (and more
it seems as if the dried sea cucumber were the √
of the shadowless vacant lot (where the white
still stands

Let's add them up
Eight in all (four sitting (four standing

The camels don't exist
if we don't see them (so to say
But (when we don't see the camels
they might withdraw into (themselves (or into their √
more and more

I don't know (I don't know

Good Evening
The lights are lit in the supermarket beyond the vacant lot
People are moving quickly (the beach or some event somewhere
I am Japanese (a beer please

Let's add them up
Five in all (all five sitting (like a sea cucumber upon another sea cucumber

I don't know
We close the window
and make love
So (it must be so (we will increase or decrease
but won't disappear (will never disappear

Our bodies and
camels' bodies (between them
something seems to have been exchanged

seems to have been dreamed of (have been consumed (been laughed off

And then again
Good Morning

the white high-rise apartment still (dozing off
like the cliff of our opaque future

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Spectacle, or the Waves

La mer de la veillée, telle que les seins d'Amélie.
--Arthur Rimbaud

What you see in the sea,
they are not mermaids.
What you see in the sea,
they are just waves.

--Chuya Nakahara

What I see flickering in the sea of LCD
under the moonlight
in my
distant world,
they are neither mermaids nor waves
but sleepless women

Inside their bodies,
completely soft,
twisting their heavy flesh, full of secretions,
the sleepless,
absolutely sleepless women

Oh, the women tossing and tossing, sleepless, sleepless
and the brightness of their necks
beyond expression,
as if a swarm of white bugs
might gush from a single sting

That glowing reflection,

that glowing reflection,
that glowing reflection

Holding a butterfly net,
I wonder who I am
Come on, I'm not a boy of summer

But my balls are so heavy,
only my balls are so heavy,
imitating the moon drooling like a yolk

All that time
the party continues, the frenzied party of the sleepless women;
one woman,
still in pumps, jumps over the bed
and kicks away the gloom of her day,
beside her, another woman
raises the bed
and starts to spin it
Waltz, the unstoppable waltz, that glowing reflection, that glowing reflection

What I see flickering in the sea of LCD
under the moonlight
in my
distant world,
they are neither mermaids nor waves
but sleepless women

*

Déjà Vu Avenue*

Déjà vu,
as if running along the palm of the hand,
from the depths of the dim sky, like a leaf of paper, toward the upper right,

a stretch of road appears, sometimes lit, sometimes not,
twisting like a shimmering snake,
reaching far below our eyes, where, for example, our ancestors sleep,
still standing, the road passing close to their loins—

there goes orgasm-man,
there goes nerve-ant,

then, other roads crossing that road,
déjà vu,
surface like threads of uneven lengths,
at moments resembling
the fading scar on girl's shin,
all equally lit by the same sun
shining, now to the right, now to the left—

there goes nerve-ant,
there go rust and moss,

thus, as if the whole scene,
somewhere on the earth's surface,
déjà vu,
the avenue cloaked by innumerable crossroads,
is reflected by the mirror of the sky's face—

there go rust and moss,
and there again orgasm-man,

of course,
looking a little closer
the avenue lightly twists at points, such that its
flank or back, let's call it, is momentarily revealed,

déjà vu,
following which, for the avenue as a living being,
it's clear that the breath and pulse are accelerating—

there goes orgasm-man,
there goes cunning shade,

along the edges,
especially at the branching points of the side roads,
cluster innumerable deserted houses like water drops,
and bushes growing wild,
or the dried corpses, probably of dogs,
upon reflection, these are traces of an abundant village, but why, why
only the road, unwounded and alive,
déjà vu,
snakes its way further along the surface of the sky,
embracing enigma—

there goes cunning shade,
there goes nerve-ant again,

oh, why and for whom
does this streaming road appear?
when I was about to ask that, at the same moment,
a line of apparitions,
possibly microbial creatures,
carrying human remains while feeding on them,
furiously rose and descended
on the road deep inside the sky,
which we watched,
déjà vu,
helplessly—

there goes nerve-ant,
there go rust and moss,

up through that tube, down through that tube—

*This is a translation in progress by Michael Palmer and Koichiro Yamauchi
