February 28, 2016

From Haiku to Collage, A Body Based Poetics

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Matsuo Basho, 1644-1694
Travel Journal: Oku No Hosomichi, おくのほそ道
Narrow Road to Far Away Places or Narrow Road to the Interior

"The months and days are the travelers of eternity. The years that come and go are also voyagers. Those who float away their lives on ships or who grow old leading horses are forever journeying, and their homes are wherever their travels take them. Many of the men of old died on the road, and I too for years past have been stirred by the sight of a solitary cloud drifting with the wind to ceaseless thoughts of roaming." (translated by Donald Keene, 1996)

Basho’s temporary shelter haiku:

世に降るも更にそうぎの宿りかな
In this world/our life passes/temporary shelter

Yo ni furu mo/sarani Sogi no /yadori kana
In this world, our life passes/ indeed, as Sogi says / temporary shelter

Sogi’s poem:

世にふるもさらに時雨の宿かな
Yo ni furu mo/sara ni shigure no/yadori kana

To live in this world
is as short as the period we spend
sheltering from a cold winter shower (trans. Toshiharu Oseko)

Basho’s teachings as recorded by his students

句作りに、なるとするとあり
Ku-zukuri ni, naru to suru to ari.
In making a poem, to become, to do, or to exist.

モノの見えたるひかり
Mono no mie-taru hikari.
To see something in a flash of light.

松の事は松に習へ、竹の事は竹に習へ
Matsu no koto wa matsu ni narae, take no koto wa take ni narae
For pine trees, study pine trees, for bamboo study bamboo
Bibliography


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