

Poetry



Inscribed by Basho, on his own drawing of the Chinese poet-recluse Han Shan:

Sweeping out the yard
It for gets about the snow —
A broom.

Haiku by Basho (1644–94), translated by Ivo Mosley.

The Japanese of the above is:

niwa hakite
yuki wo wasururu
hahaki kana

LOVE LETTER FROM THE ABYSS

If all the force of the Big Bang,
 All the churn of evolution,
 All the sweat of human history,
 Gave birth to no one
 But my grand father,
 It would have been worthwhile.

He was my protector from hail,
 My story teller,
 My balladeer.
 When he sang "Streets of Laredo"
 I felt love dwell within sadness.

I never saw a child
 Who did not run to
 This delighted audience,
 Knowing it was welcome.

Easy to love because he never asked,
 So quietly grateful for what ever he got,
 He put nothing in the way
 Of loving him.

April 15, 1880 —
 On the plains of Nebraska
 He emerged from the abyss.

January 19, 1954 —
 In an L.A. apartment
 He returned to the abyss.

A cold, impersonal universe?
 Nothing comes from nothing.
 My grand father was a love letter
 From the abyss telling me
 I'm at home.

Gary Schouborg

WHERE THERE'S NO WILL, THERE'S ONE WAY

Though feeling I can freely choose,
 If nature's laws are met,
 I'm left a thought I'd rather lose:
 The choice is surely set.

Then, gazing as some dice are thrown,
 All hope resigned to chance,
 I wager, were the rules but known,
 It's down to circumstance.

While some may speak of countless worlds,
 Each with a different plan,
 I can't embrace, as time unfurls,
 Those dreams of Quantum Man.

No choice, no chance, no other way;
 It now makes so much sense.
 'What if?' and 'why?' dismissed today:
 Just one time, one path, hence.

John Allsop

DEAD-ENDS

When peacocks spread their showy tails
 The jungle holds its breath:
 Such brazen self-advertisement's
 A knife-edge walk with death.

Now that Man's intelligence
 Admits no greater master,
 His progress gains momentum
 And may lead him to disaster.

Strange self-hatred, seeking power!
 We should bear in mind
 The human brain was born of chance;
 The alley it leads down is blind.

Ivo Mosley