Mountain/Home: New Translations from Japan
Frank Stewart
Leza Lowitz

Follow this and additional works at: https://kahualike.manoa.hawaii.edu/uhpbr
Part of the Comparative Literature Commons, and the Modern Literature Commons

Recommended Citation
https://kahualike.manoa.hawaii.edu/uhpbr/11

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the University of Hawai`i Press at Kahualike. It has been accepted for inclusion in UH Press Book Previews by an authorized administrator of Kahualike. For more information, please contact sheila.yeh@hawaii.edu.
Mountain/Home presents a selection of new translations of literature from Japan's medieval era to the present. The volume opens with traditional folktales, court poetry, Edo Period haiku, and modern fiction—all excerpted from "One Hundred Literary Views of Mount Fuji." Each work in this section contains references to Japan's national symbol; the ways Mount Fuji is depicted reveal how the country's self-image has changed over the centuries.

Mountain/Home also includes a new translation of a chapter from Lady Murasaki's classic, The Tale of Genji; fiction by Dazai Osamu; and experimental poetry by Yoshioka Minoru and Ayukawa Nobuo, who both served in the Imperial Army during the Second World War and became influential anti-war writers.

Postmodern stories in Mountain/Home by feminist writer Kurahashi Yumiko update traditional narratives as they explore the tenuous divide between past and present, waking and dreaming. And haiku and meditative sketches of contemporary poet Takahashi Mutsuo evoke, in their subtle observations about home, an older time, when Bashō and Issa praised the humble beauty of daily life.
MĀNOA means, in the Hawaiian language, "vast and deep." It is the name of the valley where the University of Hawai‘i is situated.


For subscribers, this is Mānoa 29:2 (2017).

Copyright © 2017 University of Hawai‘i Press

ISSN 1045-7909
Mountain/Home
Mount Fuji in Winter.
Shibata Zeshin.
Mounted and hanging scroll. Ink on paper, 1890.
The Howard Mansfield Collection.
Purchase, Rogers Fund, 1936.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Mānoa: A Pacific Journal of International Writing

Editor    Frank Stewart
Managing Editor    Pat Matsueda
Associate Editor    Sonia Cabrera
Assistant Editor    Noah Perales-Estoesta
Staff    Silvana Mae Bautista
Designer and Art Editor    Barbara Pope
Consulting Editors
Robert Bringhurst, Barry Lopez, W. S. Merwin, Carol Moldaw, Michael Nye, Naomi Shihab Nye, Gary Snyder, Julia Steele, Arthur Sze, Michelle Yeh
Corresponding Editors for Asia and the Pacific
CAMBODIA    Sharon May
CHINA    Chen Zeping, Karen Gernant
HONG KONG    Shirley Geok-lin Lim
INDONESIA    John H. McGlynn
JAPAN    Leza Lowitz
KOREA    Bruce Fulton
NEW ZEALAND AND SOUTH PACIFIC    Vilsoni Hereniko, Alexander Mawyer
PACIFIC LATIN AMERICA    H. E. Francis, James Hoggard
PHILIPPINES    Alfred A. Yuson
SOUTH ASIA    Alok Bhalla, Sukrita Paul Kumar
WESTERN CANADA    Trevor Carolan
Advisors    Robert Bley-Vroman, Robert Shapard

Founded in 1988 by Robert Shapard and Frank Stewart


Mānoa is published twice a year and is available in print and online for both individuals and institutions. Subscribe at http://www.uhpress.hawaii.edu/t-manoa.aspx. Please visit http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/manoa to browse issues and tables of contents online.

Claims for non-receipt of issues will be honored if claim is made within 180 days of the month of publication. Thereafter, the regular back-issue rate will be charged for replacement. Inquiries are received at uhpjourn@hawaii.edu or by phone at 1-888-UHPRESS or 808-956-8833.

Mānoa gratefully acknowledges the support of the University of Hawai‘i and the University of Hawai‘i College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literature; with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts, Hawai‘i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, and Mānoa Foundation.

manoajournal.hawaii.edu
uhpress.hawaii.edu/journals/manoa
muse.jhu.edu
jstor.org
CONTENTS

Editor’s Note vii

Peter MacMillan 1
One Hundred Literary Views of Mount Fuji

Traditional 2
The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter

Gosen Wakashū 6
Love Song and Reply

Lady Nijō 7
The Confessions of Lady Nijō

Traditional 10
A Tale of a Mount Fuji Cave

Matsuo Bashō 12
Two Haiku

Kobayashi Issa 13
Two Haiku

Natsume Sōseki 14
Sanshirō

Eric Selland 17
Yoshioka Minoru: A Life of Poetry

Yoshioka Minoru 21
Still Life
Monks

Shogo Oketani 67
Ayukawa Nobuo: Poet of Arechi

Ayukawa Nobuo 69
America and Other Poems
Kurahashi Yumiko  
*Three Linked Stories*  

Charles De Wolf  
*Shining Genji*  

Lady Murasaki Shikibu  
*The Cicada Shell*  

Dazai Osamu  
*Villon’s Woman*  

Takahashi Mutsuo  
*Sketches: A Man and His Home*  
*Haiku*  

*About the Contributors*
Mountain/Home presents new translations of Japanese works from the medieval period to the present. The volume opens with selections from “One Hundred Literary Views of Mount Fuji,” a collection of Japanese writing showing the ways in which the mountain, more than any other national symbol, has represented the soul of the country. Sacred home of the gods and an emblem of romantic love in medieval Japan, the mountain becomes, in the Edo Period, a symbol of the transience of all life. In the darkest years of the twentieth century, a dramatic change occurs when the image of Mount Fuji is manipulated to reinforce Japanese imperialism. The national self-image changes once again after World War Two, and despite the commercialization of an icon, the mountain retains its integrity.

When Emperor Meiji ascended the throne in 1868, modernity swept into the country, upending centuries of traditional culture. To match the strength and influence of America and the great European nations, the Japanese government mandated an effort to industrialize and to stockpile advanced military weaponry. Factories and smokestacks marred the landscape and darkened the skies; workers crowded into the cities; social relationships changed. The government began to invoke Fuji not for its association with beauty, spirituality, and refined emotions, but as a symbol of a divinely sanctioned fascist, militarized version of Shintoism. Going to war with its neighbors, the country defeated China and then Russia, and expanded its borders through brutal overseas colonization, which further coarsened the Japanese soul. Seeking the latest knowledge of modern science, economics, weaponry, and military tactics, the government encouraged the translation of books from English and European languages and inadvertently set in motion an intense curiosity about Western literature and art. Some of the foreign authors the Japanese discovered endorsed the dark logic of total war; others expressed existential despair and anti-government resistance. Natsume Sōseki, Dazai Osamu, Yoshioka Minoru, and Ayukawa Nobuo were among the Japanese writers who adapted experimental techniques as a reaction to the troubled times. Meanwhile, propaganda posters showed Mount Fuji standing protectively over the nation, and Japanese fighter planes silhouetted against the mountain’s serene beauty.
Natsume Sōseki, one of the greatest novelists of the Meiji Period (1868–1912), is represented here by an excerpt from his coming-of-age novel Sanshirō. Born shortly before Commodore Matthew Perry forced the Tokugawa shogunate to allow American business interests to operate in Japan, Sōseki was disturbed by the headlong industrialization that enthralled the Japanese soul to alien values. In Sanshirō, the young protagonist from the countryside is encouraged by a Western-educated scholar to look critically at the military propaganda exploiting Mount Fuji to glorify Japan’s aggression.

Dazai Osamu, another important fiction writer of the period, wrote vividly about his generation’s helplessness during the rise of fascism, and about the cost that Japan paid after its defeat in 1945. To survive the spiritual darkness that seemed to swallow up all hope, Dazai depended on alcohol and morphine. After multiple suicide attempts, he died at the age of thirty-eight, drowning himself with his mistress in a Tokyo aqueduct. The protagonist in his short story “Vil-lion’s Woman” is like Dazai himself, a self-destructive, non-conformist poet who is unable to cope with reality. He speaks of a terror that drives him to suicidal thoughts, yet he clings to life.

For many Japanese poets of the period, free verse seemed the truest style in which to describe the world’s traumatic, spiritual dislocation. The fractured indirectness of Surrealism’s modernist language allowed the poets to avoid revealing their opposition to the government and to the “thought police,” who hunted for subversives everywhere. In the two early books by Yoshioka Minoru printed here, the poet shows the influences of abstract art and experimental dance forms. Reading the poetry, says one translator, is like looking at a Cubist painting. Images and objects appear in unnatural juxtaposition, held in place by a geometry that expresses the social chaos and spiritual angst of the times.

In a similar search for new forms, Ayukawa Nobuo was attracted by the imagistic tension he found in T. S. Eliot’s “The Wasteland.” For Ayukawa, modernism provided a poetics with which to assail the hypocrisy of postwar Japan, when defeat was transformed into victimization and recovery into self-congratulation. He further accused Japanese writers of falling back on the conformity of thinking that had been disastrous before the war. Ayukawa had been forced into the Imperial Army and sent to Sumatra, where he witnessed the consequences of uncritical loyalty to authoritarianism and where he secretly documented accounts of men who opposed their superiors. He survived the war “by accident,” he later said. In the words of translator Shogo Oketani, Ayukawa never forgot his wartime experience: “The dead were still with him, roaming the deserted streets, floating between the lines of poems.”

Writing a generation later, Kurahashi Yumiko created innovative stories and novels that are anti-realist, satiric, enchanted, and experimental. Her fiction often reimagines classical works, such as The Tale of Genji, which she features in her novel A Bridge of Dreams. In the linked stories published here, a worldly wise, shape-shifting Lady Nijō appears in the dreams of Keiko, the main character, bent on paying back her older lover for tormenting her. The games men and
women play in her dream world lead Keiko to question relations in real life between males and females, the self and other. It is the function of art, as much as intellectual argument—her work asserts—to present alternatives to societal assumptions and prejudices.

Considerations of gender and social class are prominent in “The Cicada Shell,” a chapter from Lady Murasaki’s The Tale of Genji. Here, Prince Genji pursues his heart’s desire despite the woman’s unwillingness to accept him as her lover. The woman nevertheless longs for the prince and tearfully recalls their tryst as “dreamlike.”

The final writer in Mountain/Home, Takahashi Mutsuo, is now in his eighties. He grew up in rural Kyūshū, where his family was severely impoverished by the war, suffering from hunger and illness. His father died when Takahashi was an infant, and in the 1940s his mother abandoned him to the care of her extended family, who in turn passed him from household to household. After graduating from the university in Kyūshū, Takahashi moved to Tokyo, where he was befriended by Mishima Yukio and was swept into the city’s vibrant gay community.

For many years, Takahashi has been fascinated with the workings of memory, questioning what is meant by “pure recollection,” and memory’s relationship to stories that are created from loneliness and nostalgia. His “Sketches” meditate on aspects of his home in the seaside city of Zushi. His haiku—as his translator Jeffrey Angles has observed about Takahashi’s writing generally—is “so vivid that it allows the reader to live within Takahashi’s memories as intimately as if they were the reader’s own,” making each object he contemplates shine “with a dark luster much like a set of drawers crafted by a master of old.”

A note on Japanese orthography: the use of macrons, hyphens, and apostrophes when romanizing Japanese words in Mountain/Home follows the preferences of the translators.
**Jeffrey Angles** is a professor of Japanese at Western Michigan University. His translation awards include a Japan–U.S. Friendship Commission Prize and a Harold Morton Landon Award from the Academy of American Poets. He was the first American to win the Yomiuri Prize, for his own book of poems, *Watashi no hizukehenkōsen* (My International Date Line), written in Japanese.

**Ayukawa Nobuo** (1920–1986) was drafted into the Japanese army in 1942. During the fighting in Sumatra, he was wounded and returned to Japan. Opposing the military government, he secretly gathered accounts of other Japanese who were against the regime, published as *Ayukawa Nobuo senchu shuki* (Wartime Notes of Ayukawa Nobuo). Along with Tamura Ryuichi, he was one of the founders of the *Arechi* (Waste Land) poetry group after the war.

**Dazai Osamu** (1909–1948) gained national notoriety with work expressing the postwar crisis of despair and nihilism, as shown in the short story “Viyon no tsuma” (“Villion's Wife”). In 1947, he published the novel *Shayō* (The Setting Sun), and a year later the novel *Ningen shikkaku* (No Longer Human). All of his works are semi-autobiographical. He committed suicide in 1948.

**Charles De Wolf** is a professor emeritus–teacher at Keio University in Japan. His published translations include *Tales of Days Gone By*, stories from the twelfth-century folktale collection *Konjaku monogatari-shū*; and *Mandarins: Stories*, a collection by Akutagawa Ryūnosuke. In 2010, he received the Prince Takamado Distinguished Scholar Award from the Asiatic Society.

**S. Yumiko Hulvey** is professor emeritus at the University of Florida. She is the author of *Sacred Rites in Moonlight: Ben no Naishi Nikki*. Her translations and articles have appeared widely.

**Kobayashi Issa** (1763–1828) is considered one of the greatest haiku poets, along with Bashō, Buson, and Masaoka Shiki. Issa’s works in English translation include *The Spring of My Life and Selected Haiku* and *Dumpling Field: Haiku of Issa*; his poems are also in such collections as *The Essential Haiku* and *The River of Heaven*.

**Kurahashi Yumiko** (1935–2005) was born in Shikoku, Japan, and in the 1960s was a major author of experimental Japanese fiction. Her translated books in English include *Adventures of Sumiyakista Q* and *The Woman with the Flying Head and Other Stories*.

**Leza Lowitz** is a writer, editor, screenwriter, and translator. She has published over seventeen books, and her work has appeared in *New York Times, Shambhala Sun,*
and Best Buddhist Writing of 2011, among other places. Her awards include a translation fellowship from the NEA, and Columbia University’s Japan–U.S. Friendship Commission Prize for the translation of Japanese literature.

**Peter MacMillan** has been a visiting fellow at Princeton, Columbia, and Oxford universities, and is a visiting professor at Kyorin University. He also teaches at the University of Tokyo. A citizen of Ireland and Britain, he has resided in Japan for twenty-five years and is an accomplished printmaker. His artist name is Seisai, which means “studio in the west,” a name he took in homage to Hokusai.

**Matsuo Bashō** (1644–1694) was born as Matsuo Kinsaku to a low-ranking samurai family in Iga Province. His best-known work in translation is the extended series of poems *Oku no hosomichi* (Narrow Road to the Interior), inspired by a walking journey of over 1,200 miles.

**Ralph McCarthy** has translated the Dazai Osamu collections *Self Portraits* and *Blue Bamboo*, and the forthcoming *Fairy-Tale Book of Dazai Osamu*. His other translations include fiction by Murakami Ryu and Miyamoto Teru.

**Emiko Miyashita** writes haiku in Japanese and English. She is director of the JAL Foundation and World Children’s Haiku Contest, manager of the Association of Haiku Poets, and councilor for the Haiku International Association. She has translated more than ten books about haiku, waka, and Noh theater.

**Lady Murasaki Shikibu** (973?–1014?) was a lady-in-waiting at the Imperial Court during the Heian Period. Her novel, *Genji monogatari* (The Tale of Genji), was written between 1000 and 1012. Her identity is unknown, but she may have been Fujiwara no Takako, an imperial lady-in-waiting mentioned in a 1007 court diary.

**Natsume Sōseki** (1867–1916) is considered one of the greatest Japanese writers of the twentieth century. His works in English translation include *Kokoro, Botchan, Kusamakura,* and *Sanshirō.*

**Shogo Oketani** was awarded an NEA fellowship and Japan–U.S. Friendship Commission Prize for his translations. His translation of fiction by Ango Sakaguchi appeared in *Mānoa,* and his own fiction has appeared in *Kyoto Journal* and other places.

**Eric Selland** is a poet and translator based in Tokyo. His translations of modernist and contemporary Japanese poets, and his articles on Japanese modernist poetry and translation theory have appeared widely. The most recent books of his own poetry are *Still Lifes, Arc Tangent,* and *Beethoven’s Dream.*

**Takahashi Mutsuo** is a prolific playwright, poet, novelist, and essayist. English translations of his books include *Sleeping, Sinning, Falling: Twelve Views from the Distance;* and *Poems of a Penisist.* His awards include the Rekitei Prize, Yomiuri Prize for Literature, Takami Jun Prize, Modern Poetry Hanatsubaki Prize, and the Kunsho Award.

**Yoshioka Minoru** (1919–1990) was one of the most important poets of Japan’s postwar period. By the 1960s, he was well known for his experimental poetry, incorporating Surrealism and techniques of abstract painting and Butoh dance.

---

**About the Contributors**
Mountain/Home

NEW TRANSLATIONS FROM JAPAN

Mountain/Home presents a selection of new translations of literature from Japan’s medieval era to the present. The volume opens with traditional folktales, court poetry, Edo Period haiku, and modern fiction—all excerpted from “One Hundred Literary Views of Mount Fuji.” Each work in this section contains references to Japan’s national symbol; the ways Mount Fuji is depicted reveal how the country’s self-image has changed over the centuries.

Mountain/Home also includes a new translation of a chapter from Lady Murasaki’s classic, The Tale of Genji; fiction by Dazai Osamu; and experimental poetry by Yoshioka Minoru and Ayukawa Nobuo, who both served in the Imperial Army during the Second World War and became influential anti-war writers.

Postmodern stories in Mountain/Home by feminist writer Kurahashi Yumiko update traditional narratives as they explore the tenuous divide between past and present, waking and dreaming. And haiku and meditative sketches of contemporary poet Takahashi Mutsuo evoke, in their subtle observations about home, an older time, when Bashō and Issa praised the humble beauty of daily life.