

# Japanese Aesthetics

**Sabi** – “quiet, thrilling aloneness” (Watts); “something aged or weathered with a hint of sadness because of being abandoned” (Reichhold)

On a withered branch  
A crow is perched  
In the autumn evening.

With the evening breeze  
The water laps against  
The heron’s legs.

In the dark forest  
A berry drops:  
The sound of water.

Sleet falling;  
Fathomless, infinite  
Loneliness.

**Wabi** – “the faithful ‘suchness’ of very ordinary things” (Watts); “poverty – beauty judged to the result of living simply” (Reichhold)

A brushwood gate,  
And for a lock—  
This snail.

The woodpecker  
Keeps on in the same place:  
Day is closing.

Winter desolation;  
In the rain-water tub,  
Sparrows are walking

**Aware** – “the echo of what has passed and of what was loved” (Watts);  
“touchingness – the ability of an object to touch one’s emotions, often with pathos  
or sadness” (Reichhold)

The stream hides itself  
In the grasses  
Of departing autumn.

Leaves falling,  
Lie on one another;  
The rain beats on the rain.

This dewdrop world-  
It may be a dewdrop,  
And yet – and yet –

**Yugen** – “a kind of mystery” (Watts); “mystery – a word describing poetry that is  
so mysterious that many volumes have been written to explain it” (Reichhold)

The sea darkens;  
The voices of the wild ducks  
Are faintly white.

A trout leaps;  
Clouds are moving  
In the bed of the stream.

**Karumi** – “simplicity and ordinary language and situations” (Shirane);  
“lightness...the beauty of ordinary things spoken of in a simple way” (Reichhold)

Under the cherry trees  
soup, the salad, fish and all...  
seasoned with cherry blossoms

# Sabi in English-Language Haiku

(all examples from *The Heron's Nest*)

evening light  
a loaf of bread  
on the cutting board

*John Stevenson (VII, 3)*

winter night  
the slow circling  
of a bar rag

*Bill Kenney (XII, 2)*

lonely is a place  
inside  
the call of a loon

*Francine Banwarth (XIII, 4)*

no one calls  
she gently dusts  
her porcelain rabbits

*Elena Naskova (XI, 2)*

sultry evening  
the pizza receipt clings  
to a beer bottle

*Bob Lucky (X, 1)*

the root cellar's  
bare bulb  
deep winter

*Burnell Lippy (IX,1)*

# Wabi in English-Language Haiku

(all examples from *The Heron's Nest*)

first names  
no longer in fashion  
weathered headstones

*John Soules (XIV, 2)*

morning sun  
fish scales glisten  
in the otter scat

*H, Gene Murtha (V, 6)*

mountain music  
the poverty  
of minor chords

*Glenn G. Coats (XIII, 1)*

calloused hands  
the carpenter smooths  
his daughter's gown

*Robert Witmer (XV, 4)*

autumn sky  
the paint worn thin  
around the birdhouse door

*Mary Stevens (XIII, 4)*

sunset  
a child's arrangement  
of shells

*Frances Angela (VII, 3)*

# Aware in English-Language Haiku

(all examples from *The Heron's Nest*)

the laughter  
of elderly friends  
magnolia rain

*D. Claire Gallagher (VIII, 3)*

morning sidewalk  
flattened leaves and the imprints  
of those blown away

*Tom Tico (XIV, 4)*

migrating whales  
all our footprints  
washed away

*paul m. (IV, 11)*

here other  
than wind's lamentation  
nothing is

*Clare McCotter (XIII, 2)*

cold moon  
a moment of hesitation  
years ago

*John Stevenson (VIII, 4)*

above the hospital  
a Get Well balloon  
let go

*Lucien Zell (XIV, 4)*

# Yugen in English-Language Haiku

(all examples from *The Heron's Nest*)

drifting cherry petals...  
a window goes up  
in the passing limousine

*Michael Dylan Welch (IX, 1)*

a red fox  
appears disappears  
winter wind

*Carolyn Hall (XIV, 1)*

half moon  
something slips into the pond  
besides me

*Peter Yovu (VII, 2)*

a deceased friend  
taps me on the shoulder—  
plum blossoms falling

*Chen-ou Liu (XIII, 2)*

shanty town—  
the jagged edges  
of moonlight

*Sanjukta Asopa (XIII, 3)*

blackbird song...  
the universe  
expands

*Claire Everett (XV,1)*

# Karumi in English-Language Haiku

(all examples from *The Heron's Nest*)

telling it  
like it is  
one black crow

*Hillary Tann (V, 4)*

OMG  
both rain and sunlight  
on a blue jay's tail

*Burnell Lippy (XIV, 4)*

maypie season  
the schoolgirl's lunchbox  
on her head

*Cynthia Rowe (XI, 2)*

seventh-inning stretch  
a foam finger pointing  
at the autumn moon

*Mathew Spano (XII, 4)*