

# Haiku in the luggage

*Terebess · by Gábor Terebess · by Gábor Terebess · by Gábor Terebess · by Gábor Terebess · by Gábor*

Haiku in the luggage. Haiku in the luggage. Haiku in the luggage. Haiku in the luggage.

Translated from the Hungarian by Jon Tarnoc

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*“There's baiku in all luggage.  
What it needs is unpacking.”*

G. T.

*“The true traveller has no luggage.”*

Huang-po

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## *Being Human*

Miller Williams gives in *Patterns of Poetry, An Encyclopedia of Forms*<sup>1</sup> a precise description of the haiku: *An unrhymed syllabic poem, derived from Japanese verse. Lines 1 and 3 have five syllables; line 2 has seven.*

*sssss x*

*sssssss x*

*sssss x*

*Traditionally, there is the mention of a season of the year somewhere in the haiku, as a means of establishing the poem's tone, though this may be only the slightest suggestion.*

The author then cites a haiku of his choosing, by Clement Long. It goes

*Uncovered, you sleep.  
Cars pass the house and I watch  
Lights on the ceiling.*

<sup>1</sup> Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge and London, 1986. Chapter 3. *Traditional Poems of Set Length*. p. 70.

So much about the form, of which we couldn't say more, except that alterations in modern haiku, based on the traditional concept, are less strict about the set number of syllables involved, because it doesn't really matter whether we write a haiku in 17 or 15 syllables (especially in Western languages). There are pieces that consist of 4 lines, for example by Leonard Cohen<sup>2</sup>, and we find a free choice of syllables in the poems.

Still, certain poems are called haiku. There's a particular mode and state of mind in which a haiku is born. When does a short poem of more or less 3 lines become a haiku? Many poets and theorists have asked this question. We do not possess a straight answer, but I would like to venture into the unknown by way of Gábor Terebess's haiku poems, recently published in the original Hungarian<sup>3</sup>, also available in English translation on the Internet.<sup>4</sup>

*Haiku in the Luggage* is made up of four parts. The first is *France, 1965-1969*, (this one ends with the *Haibun-Diary*), then comes *Japan, 1967*, after that *Australia, 1969-1970*, and the book closes with *Bali, 2004*.

The reader can immediately recognize the cosmopolitan character of the book, even more so when the reading begins. But what is traveling and what does it represent if we look at it on a higher level?

There's an essay, *Kierkegaard in Sicily*<sup>5</sup>, written by a unique personality in Hungarian literature, Béla Hamvas.

<sup>2</sup> See: [www.terebess.hu/english/haiku/haiku.html](http://www.terebess.hu/english/haiku/haiku.html)

<sup>3</sup> *Haiku a poggyászbán*, artORIENT, Budapest, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> See: note 2; Gábor Terebess, *Haiku in the Luggage*, English translation by Jon Tarnoc.

He writes: *While at home, you get to know the world, but on the road, yourself; because at home the focus of attention is your own person, but while traveling, the world, and where you look, always remains unknown to you. One should travel as fire spreads, moving in all directions from the center, and like fire, consuming everything behind, – so when the journey's over, there should remain nothing else but ashes and ruins. Instead of all this the human is consumed, and the world flourishes.*

Actually, what happens in Gábor Terebess's haiku is a similar experience, a kind of *Magical Mystery Tour*, leading from a zen monastery through revolutionary Paris on to the land of Australia, where there's hardly any escape from the individualism of Western Society. After a long silence we arrive in Bali, this time more like tourists, but suddenly everything gets saturated with wisdom from the endless rain.

One after the other, we find poems that transcend the mundane, or rather the mundane is transformed in the process of the metamorphosis of self. The author's journey begins in the hidden, and it never becomes all so important to find out about particulars. Only the single moment counts, in which we see many things simultaneously, but with an open door to unity of vision.

Terebess's mode of writing is conversational, he likes to use slogans, and we see different meanings unfolding, loosening our grip on fixed allusions to names, as in this haiku:

<sup>5</sup> *In Spirit and Existence*, Pannonia Books, 1988. Pécs, Hungary

*3M's – oh come on!  
Marx, Mao and Marcuse,  
teach one another.*

Names of places and people are almost as important in the earliest poems as the mentioning of seasons in the traditional haiku. It seems that the world doesn't yield itself easily to the traveller anymore, we are not in touch with the center either in the universe or in ourselves. So we have to start outside, explore what the world has to offer, then move on to another plane, to the individual arriving in the focal point of his questions.

The outward direction reverses in the Japanese pieces. The soul has found its master and mate. We're not in the world of illusion any longer, this is hardcore reality:

*Your spiritual  
master was the master of  
masters. Didn't speak.*

Writing a haiku is the rectification of the moment. The desire of *mending the seams of creation* comes from deep understanding of oneself. The poet, perhaps in one of his *satori* experiences, becomes aware of his not being fully alive in the world, as if there had been invisible barriers between him and reality.

According to the teachings of G. I. Gurdjieff<sup>6</sup> Man is a machine, a toy of external influences from the universe.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted *In Search of the Miraculous* by P. D. Ouspensky, (1947); Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. New York, 1949, pp. 14-15.

He *is not*, because he doesn't know himself, he's not what he can and should be. He can decide nothing about the future, because he's one person today, another tomorrow. Only in total awakening does he become *human*. This level is attained by remembering oneself. In a state of higher consciousness Man is enabled to choose the influence he wants to live under.

We find the same concept in Terebess's haiku poems. Each piece is a story, a narration of moments caught in the process of things happening, time. The author remembers and re-lives his experiences, puts them into a perfectly condensed narrative. Then suddenly one feels a part of the writing of some haiku-novel which has as many versions as the number of its readers.

D. H. Lawrence writes the following about the novel<sup>7</sup>: *Turn truly, honourably to the novel, and see wherein you are man alive . . . at its best the novel, and the novel supremely, can help you. It can help you not to be a dead man in life.* If we take into consideration the active, creative imagination of the recipient, we can see how every work of serious art heralds resurrection. The writer is alive in the process of creating, the reader in the act of reading.

The third part of the book is about the Australian stay of the author in 1969-70. Immigration must have been a queer choice in the eyes of his friends. But a diary fragment interspersed with poems, a *haibun* from the time of leaving France for Australia, is a witness of the author's

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in *Lawrence* by Frank Kermode, Fontana/Collins; 1973, Great Britain, p. 27.

state of mind before departure, proving the clarity of his spiritual aim. For the poet the question is not *to be* or *not to be*, but *how to be*. One answer is liberation:

*Break out from all bonds  
before you become  
torn apart by them.*

Where one lives is not important anymore. It could be Australia, Europe, Africa, America, or Asia. What we call *condition humane* holds true everywhere on our planet, therefore it causes no difficulty to finally move back home. The poems don't tell us what happened between 1970 and 2004. Nearly thirty-five years pass before we see the author on the road again, as a tourist in Bali. It's constantly raining there, but the inner ears are open to the sounds of the animal world. Many pieces from this last cycle are about birds, dogs or frogs. Where people are mentioned they seem to be in the background, they're observed while doing rituals, but no familiar face emerges from the crowd. Still, there's a sense of profound contentment in the acceptance of distance, because it has led to the unification of character. We need perspective to put our lives' puzzle together.

Redemption poetry, like Gábor Terebess's *Haiku in the Luggage*, grows on us. The poet tells us through his experience to take part in the mundane, and we learn from him how to integrate and elevate it. The sacred can be found in the details, in any movement we make, but most of all it's a state of mind:

*Running in the rain  
to the swimming-pool.  
Saved!*

The last word, saved, can be associated with many images. But the greatest gift of this poem and of the whole book is the joy of being *human* transmitted to us. The haiku is a miracle. We need only to listen.

Jon Tarnoc  
29 September 2005  
Budapest, Hungary

*France (1965-1969) · France (1965-1969) · France (1965-1969) ·*



France • France • France • France • France • France • France •

*(Paris, 1968. May nights)*

1

**Live broadcast of the  
student revolution, your  
radio turned on.**

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France*

2

**“All power to the  
imagination!” Cannes  
festival closed down.**

“All power to the imagination” was one of the most well-known slogans during the student revolution in 1968. The “bourgeois” Cannes Film Festival was interrupted on the 20th of May, due to the political crisis.

23

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France •*

3

**3M's – oh come on!  
Marx, Mao, Marcuse,  
teach one another!**

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France*

4

**Wrapped in teargas-cloud:  
the summit of the Sorbonne.  
You might as well cry.**

25

France • France • France • France • France • France • France •

5

**Check out the papers –  
they keep on lying here too,  
just make yourself home.**

26

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France*

6

**An actor switched sides  
on stage at the Odéon:  
Jean-Louis Barrault.**

Jean-Louis Barrault, the director of Odéon, fondly embraced the  
revolters and opened the doors of his theater to them.

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France •*

7

How many smoky  
nights were you staying awake,  
talking on till dawn?

28

France • France • France • France • France • France • France

8

**Total sleeplessness —  
with your morning coffee,  
scare-news, *croissant*.**

29

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France •*

9

**Barricades being  
built of cobble stones? Are they  
shooting a movie?**

30

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France*

10

Where is the third side  
of the barricade? Dawn has  
gone grey on your face.

Barricades don't have a third side, said Aragon. Well-to-do students of the new left-wing and their Gaullist parents demonstrate against each other. Where to stand in this feud?

31

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France •*

11

**The word broken inside –  
underneath Mirabeau-bridge  
the Seine's flow has stopped.**

32

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France*

12

**The smell of teargas,  
that taste of rotten apples –  
unforgettable.**

33

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France •*

13

**Boulevard Saint-Michel,  
knocked over sycamores – you  
weren't flabbergasted.**

34

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France*

14

**Turned the night into  
the day, all for the sake of  
ideologies . . .**

35

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France •*

15

**Street at night again:  
the film of your memories  
remained black and white.**

36

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France*

16

**What happened by day?  
You'll have to search in other  
people's memories.**

37

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France •*

17

**Spring and violence  
in public places ended —  
a general strike.**

38

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France*

**Considerable  
lack of soup. Not even a  
vegetable dish! Ha!**

France • France • France • France • France • France • France •

Arabic donut.  
*The Bald Soprano* is played  
right across the street.

Ionesco's play, *The Bald Soprano*, is continually performed in a small Parisian theater (Théâtre de la Huchette, 23, rue de la Huchette) since 1957.

France • France • France • France • France • France • France

No toilet-seat in  
the restroom — *just as before*:  
you crouch like A. J.

The reference is to Attila József (1905-1937), Hungarian poet, who also lived in Paris for awhile.

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France •*

**Two floors of chance  
with Mircille in the lift . . .  
Arrived. Over.**

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France*

**Corsican girl:  
ice-wet handshake,  
scorching eyes.**

France • France • France • France • France • France • France •

**Her problem bores me  
shitless, but the girl herself –  
how uniquely odd!**

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France*

**The look in your eyes  
like that of a startled bird's,  
though your mouth aspires.**

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France •*

**Your overheated  
book lies open in the sun –  
you should cover it.**

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France*

**A cliché opened  
with another cliché's key –  
the gate of secrets.**

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France •*

**The tower-clock  
strikes midnight.  
Falling snow.**

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France*

**Winter. Bleak morning.  
Closed windows. Can you hear it?  
The chirping of birds.**

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France •*

**Writing a poem  
by the window, you didn't  
turn on the lights.**

*France • France • France • France • France • France • France*

**You're browsing through  
the display of the bookstore.  
They're already closed.**

*Haibun (1969, 2005) · Haibun (1969, 2005) · Haibun (1969, 2005) · Haibun (1969, 2005) · H*

## *I Set Off from the City of Paris*

*Haibun-diary, 21 November – 3 December 1969*

This piece of writing, the story of my immigration to Australia, could have become my “Long Voyage to Down Under” in place of Bashô’s *Narrow Road to the Deep North*, but I didn’t get any further than the day of my departure, for I felt bored by writing a journal. I wouldn’t be able to write a *haibun* even today, only haiku on the theme of traveling... All of a sudden I realized there’s a potential *haibun*-diary in this fragment written 35 years ago, I would only have to sprinkle it with haiku – afterwards. It’s not bad as entertainment either: a diary from the time I was 25 and writing its haiku-commentary at the age of 60.<sup>1</sup>

21 November (*Friday*)

Don’t be concerned about struggle. Make no plans for what you would do or what others would do against you. Your energy should be

<sup>1</sup> Haibun: Even one sentence of prose with a haiku, or a long travel journal interspersed with a number of haiku, may be accepted as *haibun*; and of course, the same goes for everything between the two extremes.

waiting in your solar plexus, don't paralyze your muscles and your brain by wedging your power into them in advance. So you can break out with full power in the right direction and at the right time, aiming at the real (not imagined) target with the greatest spontaneity.

It's unnecessary to daydream about Australia. What's to be done and how it will be dictated by the circumstances there and then.

**Australia!**  
**Just go ahead! Your errors**  
**will give you plenty.**

**Dusty as Paris**  
**with red dust instead of grey -**  
**you don't know it yet.**

22 November (*Saturday*)

After having sent over 20 packages of books, today I posted my typewriter and Japanese monk-robes to Pest. What a relief! We only realize

while traveling how many useless things we collected as indispensable.

The farewell lunches that began a few days ago, which start with an *apéritif* and finish with a *digestif*, remind me of the necessity of “frugal” meals. I have a constantly upset stomach and I'm quite sure I'd drop dead shortly if I had to continue these indulgent stuffings. (No question, the French know how to enjoy food – that's why they all suffer from gastric disorder.)

**Don't be decadent!  
The Saturday-market is  
over – ripe the brie.**

**Be nostalgic in  
Australia, having  
Danish canned-brie.**

23 November (*Sunday*)

After lunch we have a nearly three-hour-talk with Brigitte and Marie-Thérèse. (Their uncle, the *abbé*, had to leave earlier.) The more I explain,

the clearer it becomes how incomprehensible it is to them what I'm searching for. (My desire diminishes for sharing my thoughts with anyone.) The conversation started, of course, with the idea of me marrying Marie-Thérèse (she might make a good wife, but me, a bad husband),

**You'd happily say  
yes today – you aren't wise  
and young anymore.**

but finally we were talking about what Christ might have meant by the blessedness of the “poor in spirit”. My explanation has little to do with Christianity. Our luxurious images and thoughts alienate us from the world, they won't let us be open to people and things in their own reality, we won't be able to identify with them – although it would be the only possible “heaven” in an eternal now.

**Litany.  
Old ladies teach you  
to pray in French.**

**Cool church.  
Left your tormented  
thoughts there.**

***(pauvres pécheurs)***

**The hour of our death,  
may the devil take it, is  
full of divine grace.**

25 November (Tuesday)

I had lunch with Mireille today, in the Chinese restaurant, of course. After getting rather tipsy, she forced a farewell necking (should her husband, who's always dying of jealousy, see it!) But instead of getting horny, suddenly her face went pale and she couldn't hold back her trembling. She might think I'm "superior" (what an idiocy), and in the crucial moment there's more fear in her than passion. (Or because she doesn't understand more.)

How can her eyes be so fearful, like startled birds, while her mouth sucks you in with such

celestial power, pulling you in and surrounding you? She should know that when my hands touch her hip – it's unbearable bliss for me.

**Like Krapp, you'd  
happily rewind the tape  
right here.<sup>2</sup>**

I'm leaving for Australia in one week.

28 November (*Friday*)

I haven't written anything for a few days. When my time's full of activities and experiences, nothing seems more absurd than writing about them. Conceited idleness makes the writer, most probably.

Today was my last day at the office. Being set free from prison could resemble the feeling. I'm shocked how many people love me so much – and what joy it is to leave them all.

<sup>2</sup> As if *Krapp's Last Tape* by Beckett had happened to me.

**Break out from all bonds  
before you become  
torn apart by them.**

29 November (*Saturday*)

Maybe the truth, our personally attainable truth, is not more than gathering all our strength and forcing ourselves to the uttermost limit of our sincerity again and again.

I watch with the greatest suspicion when anxiety tries to take hold of me, though I've seen no sign of it so far. On the contrary. Occasionally, when I'm alone, I start laughing for no reason; and I have no regrets about forgetting things from my luggage, I would rather leave all my possessions out of it.

**Torn lizard's tail in  
your hand. But tails don't  
grow into lizards.**

30 November (*Sunday*)

For a year and a half I haven't seen a single Hungarian, but now that I'm about to leave, I have the pleasure of acquaintance again. Károly, my sister's boss, and I saw each other the second time this week. (We're on familiar terms with each other already.) At first I feel like a stutterer while speaking Hungarian, but soon I start warming up and no one could shut my mouth, not even by force. I'm speaking about things he's interested in, so he's all ears. His being overcome by emotion when saying good-by makes me feel slightly embarrassed. (If there's anything I feel, it is the shame of feeling nothing.)

There's no true aloneness in the solitary life, especially if we constantly daydream about possible companions. True aloneness must be found in human relationships in which neither interest nor curiosity play part.

*(thirty years later)*

**Infected dog-tick  
drilled its head into your flesh –  
somebody loves you.**

Having lunch with the Marquets, this could be the last home-made French meal in my life. The old man offers to give me a ride to Saint-Maurice (Val-de-Marne), for the books sent by Dezső. My host bought his VW yesterday and obviously wants to show off; the car hasn't run more than 3 miles by now.

I'm calling Judit Tóth, the poet, she's not at home to me. That's why I know she is...

Iron-strapped hardwood door in the stone wall surrounding the yard. Closed shutters on every window. A small, soft, boneless woman. When she puts her flabby hand in my palm, I feel as if I held lukewarm butter in my hand. She offers me a chair to sit in, it's got a dirty, white cushion, the furniture in the room cheap and ragged. The greyness of dusk spreading and light coming in through the open kitchen door from a lightbulb. She begins to take out

the books and is sorry about not having sent them yet. I notice her eyes for the first time, they have a dark and hesitating glow of dissatisfaction. Suddenly everything falls into place, her eyes tell me why she needs to be a poet and why she lives in an unfriendly French suburb. She doesn't come outside to see me off, it's cold, she tells me to shut the door tightly, so I do.

**You'll never find out  
what happened over the wall.  
You're giving a boost.**

1 December (*Monday*)

Wild running around. Shopping, cleaning, packing. At last I get to the train station, one hour before departure. I'm cursing the books for making my luggage so heavy. I'm dragging my things.

Chilling, cold night. Two Portuguese, a Spaniard, and a Frenchman are with me in the compartment. For the Portuguese guys, it's a sure card to go to Australia, to a relative of theirs living near Melbourne. Both are well dressed and

up in the dough (they worked in nightclubs for two years, made a lot of money from the tipping). They're off for dinner shortly, in the awfully expensive restaurant car. The Spanish fellow knows only a few words of French, he's unwrapping his *chorizo* sandwich with his huge, rough hands, and smiles between every bite.

The Frenchman's whole family came to the station. His face ghostly pale, the cigarette quivering between his fingers, he takes a sip from his brandy bottle every now and then, offers it to each of us. I'm the first to lie down on the "couchette", but I have a hard time falling asleep, I see feverish, erotic dreams – on account of the train jolting, perhaps. A complete carriage is reserved for us. Ninety percent of our group consists of young males, if that's the rate of women in Australia, we're in big trouble.

**There's always a chance:  
flatten in the asphalt if  
a steamroller comes.**

2 December (*Tuesday*)

We reach Genoa at seven in the morning. Paperwork, waiting. The Mediterranean sun comes up, it's getting warm, almost like summer. At ten o'clock, finally I'm allowed to see the town with my new friends. The sidestreets are so narrow that it's nearly impossible to walk on them, except sideways. Every second moment someone wants to sell me something, smuggled goods, especially Swiss watches, American cigarettes, or condoms. It's quite obvious why they're needed here in the harbour district. We start bargaining with an older blondie in a doorway, just for the fun of it. She wouldn't sell herself cheaper than 3,000 liras. A little farther down there's a breathtakingly beautiful, plump, black-haired girl. Also 3,000. It seems there are set prices here (about half or a third of the Parisian price).

**Squeaking bed -  
Enjoys more loudly  
than its guests.**

We're having lunch in a noisy, little restaurant. We eat pepper-salad, octopus, and drink Italian wine. In Paris I'd get mad with this *joie de vivre* in an Italian restaurant, but here I appreciate it. Everyone's laid back, happy, loud. The natural background does it, or the wine, the Sun? Soon I am also shouting and laughing my face off.

Departure is right at sunset. From the uppermost bridge, I'm looking at the city lights being turned on and disappearing in the distance. By the time we're out on the open sea, I remain alone up there. The wind getting colder and sharper - reminding me it's December. Returning seagulls float away in the void; the boat softly wheezing.

**Seagulls know  
where home is, ahead  
or behind.**

The boat (*Marconi*, built in 1961, in its sixth consecutive year going to Australia, belongs to the Lloyd Triestino Line) is a snow white

labyrinth of ten decks – I never find my way in it. (The Greek cargo ship on which I came back from Japan could fit into this liner four times.) Cinema, swimming pool, ballroom with orchestra, whatever you imagine. They say 1,600 passengers are on board – almost a thousand of them from Yugoslavia.

**Our oceanliner  
fared well: was sold for junk in  
the year 2000.**

3 December (*Wednesday*)

We're in Naples when I wake up. Cloudy, cold weather. The Vesuvius looks like the midget version of the Fujiyama, with its tiny, sturdy, snow-capped volcano figure.

**To Pompeii? No!  
“In the end you are tired  
of this ancient world.”<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>3</sup> “A la fin tu es las de ce monde ancien” Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918)

We have three hours for sightseeing. When we get past the public buildings of the harbourfront, we find ourselves in narrow alleyways, not as narrow as the ones in Genoa, cars can also get through them. And they're rushing by with deafening honking to make the pedestrian jump aside and lean against the wall if his life is dear. Cobblestones beneath us, an incredible amount of garbage, dirt, and all kinds of rotting things. Above the head we see smart devices of bamboo canes sliding on wire hooks for hanging clothes, drying underwear dangling all over, like some thrown about and torn decoration in our honor.

I'm writing postcards when a six-year-old child starts poking me, asking for 50 liras. I give him what he wants. As I look after him he's lighting a cigarette then kindly waves good-by.

**Spit out a cherry-  
pit. It might become a tree,  
if it finds good soil.**

At noon we're out on the sea again. My Yugoslavian cabin-mate bought a turntable and a lot of records for fourteen dollars. His compatriots flood the cabin and use the machine full volume. Of course they asked my permission, I say "dobro" (so much I learned) - then I flee. He even put his records on my lap that I may choose the music.

By the way, we're in a four-berth cabin: I share it with an Argentine, an Italian, and the above mentioned guy from Yugoslavia. None of them would speak any other language, except their mother-tongue.

We arrive in Messina, Sicily, at eleven in the evening. We'll be leaving in an hour, and there's not so much to see anyway. Unfortunately I bump into my cabin-mate and a bunch of Yugos. Since they're all speaking loud Serbo-Croatian, I don't immediately understand that they're looking for whores. Well, it's not the place. Barren, dark streets, everyone sleeping. Here and there palm trees. Here and there Fiat

cars parking (I haven't seen any other make in Italy). Apart from this: nothing, nothing.

**No prostitute in  
the street, neonlight on the  
lamppost: the Moon.**

**Now two tongues: Serb,  
Croatian. Yugo? Only  
more and more countries.**

This is the last European port, we won't stop till we reach South Africa, we're to arrive in Durban on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December.<sup>4</sup>

*(the end of the diary)*

**It takes up every  
moment: you're busy sailing  
around Africa.**

<sup>4</sup> Upon arrival to South Africa, I attached this diary-fragment to a letter for my friends, Anna Fábri and Dezső Helmich. I dedicate this book to them.

*Japan (1967) · Japan (1967) · Japan (1967) · Japan (1967) · Japan (1967)*

Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

*(sento)*

Snowing till twilight.  
The bath-house two blocks away,  
in *geta*, barefoot.

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**Your wooden shoe-prints  
are snowed in by the Winter –  
how will you get home?**

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

*(cha-no-yu)*

Hang in there . . . on heels!  
You might as well survive a  
tea-ceremony.

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

*(nob)*

**Restrained movements –  
still the mask shows much  
intensity.**

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

*(calligraphy)*

Here in Japan you  
will have to be painting your  
poems with a brush.

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

*(cinema in the suburbs)*

**Black and white movie  
turns technicolor during  
the erotic scenes.**

Recovering from the poverty of post World War 2, Japan had this ambivalent message – the semi-colored film.

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

*(soji)*

The wind cannot bang  
windows and doors: it learns the  
art of sliding them.

Soji = sliding door. Common entrance type in traditional Japanese architecture.

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

*(museum)*

**You definitely  
remember the glass-cases —  
contents forgotten.**

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

*(3 enlightenments)*

**Were conned: you found out.  
You forgot: it crossed your mind.  
Started sneezing:**

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**You wake up in sweat.  
Solution was not to be  
found inside the dream.**

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**Your dream-self arrives  
in wakefulness without your  
actual self . . .**

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

The wake-up *bonze* runs  
shaking his hand-bell in the  
darkness of cloisters.

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**The wooden fish drum  
follows your heartbeat, although  
someone else drumming.**

“Wooden fish” is a fish-shaped Buddhist instrument made of a single piece of hollowed wood. It is struck with a padded stick to accompany sutra recitation.

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**Your spiritual  
master was the master of  
masters. Didn't speak.**

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**Do No-thing!**  
You may sit down after  
*satori.*

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**Your *satori* can  
wait — a scrap of food remained  
stuck between your teeth.**

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

Nothing so easy  
as enlightenment – only  
to believe is hard.

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**Stay a beginner –  
be hired as a master:  
eternal serfdom.**

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**I shall spare all  
my people of  
my doctrine.**

Another reference to Attila József. This haiku is a paraphrase of a famous stanza in his poem, *For My Birthday*: “cause it won't be on a high school level / I'll be teaching all my people / to know / to know” (translated by Gábor Gyukics and Michael Castro).

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

Masterly, keep your  
*satori* secret, don't you  
give a sign of it.

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**Now covered by snow –  
you're doing exercises  
beside the dung-pit.**

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

While in the garden,  
our bald heads are covered with shawls,  
the master is first.

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**The laziest of  
us can slurp his noodle soup  
up the most quickly.**

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**Wet cloth in hand, on all  
fours you race along the  
glittering floorboards.**

Reference to *Naga-roka*, the hundred-cord passage in the Sôjiji Temple. The temple halls of this great Sôtô zen monastery are connected by a long, roofed corridor. We cleaned it with clean water every day, running on all fours with a cloth in hand – those were the races! – on the batten floor.

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**Money for a robe,  
beggar that you are, holy  
change fills up your bowl.**

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**Torchlight in the night,  
collecting day lilies  
cannot be delayed.**

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

Picking ripe *kaki*,  
the master holds your ladder,  
– important affair.

kaki = persimmon

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**There isn't enough  
room for life's big things under  
your half-closed eyelids.**

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**In a clay piglet  
mosquitocide burning —  
fortune be with you.**

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**Losing consciousness  
in *zazen* . . . you're still sitting  
when you recover.**

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

Reverie and  
*zazen*: one and the same —  
it's raining.

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**Lying on your right,  
you fall asleep properly –  
you'll sit up to die.**

When the moment of death comes, a zen monk should be sitting up.  
Sleeping, on the other hand, should be in the death-posture of Buddha.

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**The screen of your closed  
eye-lids shall be completely  
darkened only once.**

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**You prefer to eat  
cold rice rather than having  
festive buttered toasts.**

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

*Flowers of gardens*  
*still bloom in the valley, then*  
**they leave for their homes.**

Quotation from the poem *The End of September*, by Sándor Petőfi  
(1823-1849).

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**Freshly mowed grass – your  
grandfather enjoyed its scent  
while he was alive.**

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**Dry leaf floats across  
the road in front of you, do  
not trample on it.**

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**Autumn trees surround  
the row of pine, everything  
is kept in order.**

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

No fallen leaves, stones  
called by their names – step in a  
Japanese garden.

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

You were sleeping while  
the cloister court had fallen  
victim to the snow.

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**Who cares? Sit or stand,  
follow a master or none —  
the luggage empty.**

n • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**Ship's horn screeching, you  
take everything with you – no  
*zen* is left standing.**

an • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan • Japan

**Rebirth? You didn't  
believe in it even in  
your previous life.**



*Australia (1969-1970) · Australia (1969-1970) · Australia (1969-1970)*

**Itinerary: Fremantle, Melbourne, Bonegilla (Migrant Reception Centre),  
Wacol (Migrant Camp), Stradbroke Island (working in a quarry),  
Ipswich, Brisbane, Corinda (working in a plymill), Sydney**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Austr

*(under the Southern Cross)*

1

At night, don't look up —  
stars are not to be found, but  
a cross in their place.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

2

**At night, don't look up –  
no memories left you in  
the entire world.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

3

At night, don't look up —  
the sky is the sky even  
without the Great Bear.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

December-summer –  
the legs of the women tan  
before you arrive.

Here, the Sun also comes up in the East and goes down in the West, but it culminates in the North. The seasons are opposite that of the Northern Hemisphere: the Summer months are December, January and February. Christmas-time brings sweltering heat; the Summer vacations and annual holidays begin.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Winter is summer.  
Snowless is your Christmas here,  
as in Bethlehem.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**While clearing up, the  
Yugoslavian cook-maid  
honours me a glance.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

*Aussie* greeting: you're  
brushing off flies by day and  
mosquitos by night.

Aussie salute: Brushing away flies with the hand.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Put a scarf on your  
neck, wear a hat, a long-sleeved  
shirt: the Sun is out.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Drive indolently,  
on the other side, not to  
catch up with the world.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Summer night – wind shrieks  
over the lying about  
rusty drainpipes.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

The wind puts on the  
curtains, then starts running right  
out into the storm.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**There's buzzing even  
under the fly-screen – what a  
night it's gonna be!**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

Royal prisoner —  
brought in disease, genocide.  
When will he go home?

The nickname “POM” is a contraction of “Prisoner of His Majesty”. This sign was sewn on the clothes of the convicts to Australia. Most family historians in Australia regard a convict in their ancestry as enormously desirable.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

No land for *Abo*:  
thousands of years, the country  
uninhabited.

This is the Australian “Terra Nullius” principle, not a joke.  
*Abo* = aboriginal. In Australia the term is considered offensive and its  
use is best avoided.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Reddish *Uluru* –  
Sphinx-paw in the desert. Is  
it the foot of God?**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

*Didgeridoo* speaks –  
sound of the Earth in a pipe  
carved out by termites.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

A witchetty grub —  
do you want it roasted or  
raw? Spit out the head!

Witchetty grubs are the small, white larvae of the ghost moth, which is native to Australia. They are dug out of the trunks and roots of gum trees during the summertime.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Curious iguana  
near your bonfire.  
A bush tucker!**

Bush tucker is food that can be found in the wild all over Australia. It includes plants, e.g. berries and edible flowers, worms like the witchetty grub, and meat like kangaroo, crocodile, and emu.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

If a shark would come,  
swim behind protective bars.  
They smell of algae.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Native dung-beetles  
don't make pellets from droppings  
unfamiliar.**

Dung-beetles had to be introduced in Australia following the introduction of cattle, because their droppings covered and burned out the grazing grounds.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**You can dig ditches  
without rubber boots: your feet  
water-repellent.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Hired! In the park  
you stick litter on the pin  
of an alpenstock.**

We celebrated it. My friend from France, who was a university graduate, became a cleaner. New immigrants are just like that, they love blue-collar jobs.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**You may leave your white  
collar at home, here it would  
only get dirty.**

Australia didn't give university scholarships to the Hungarian  
refugees of the '56 revolution.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Work accident –  
feeling guilty for  
having escaped it.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

Half a sandwich makes  
you feel stuffed at the *smoko*,  
back to the machine!

Smoko = short tea or cigarette-break from work.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Hit-and-run-driver  
at night, the roo-bar kills and  
keeps at a distance.**

Roo-bar = bumper. Popular name for pubs.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**In the morning on  
the road there lies half of the  
fauna, ironed out.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Kangaroo carcass —  
swallowing dust with open  
mouth by the roadside.**

According to legend, when the first white man went to Australia, he asked one of the aborigines what the name was of that strange, jumping animal in the distance. “Kangaroo”, he answered, which meant in their language: “I don't understand you”.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Long-weekend program:  
you may use herbicide, if  
there's no bushfire.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

Old aged people's home,  
gathering in the garden,  
barbecue – join in.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

The laughter of the  
kingfisher says everything  
of your being here.

Kingfisher = kookaburra (*Dacelo novaeguineae*), also called 'laughing jackass'.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Girl in miniskirt  
among youngsters staring as  
she drags her suitcase.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

Wife sitting at home,  
the man standing in the pub,  
gulping up *sevens*.

People usually drink their beer by the 7 ounces.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Small glasses of beer,  
apples being sold by the  
piece, huge T-bone steaks.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Australian you  
are not, though rewarded with  
a frozen beer-glass.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Thirst-quenching, hot tea  
you pine for, while drinking it  
cold throughout the day.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Tea boils off in a  
billy-can, in the Outback,  
down under the bush.**

Down Under = Australia; the Outback = inland Australia. In the bush tea is usually made in a big, empty can with a wire handle attached to it, called 'billy-can'. Australian tea-ceremony, a real 'wabi-cha'.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Bottom of the globe.  
Things happen elsewhere, you stay,  
you're staying away.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Maybe we should put  
the Earth upside down  
on its own axis.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

Cold *southerly* wind –  
neither chimney, nor hearth,  
your coffee cold.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Whatever the price,  
a penny returned to you.  
No empty pockets.**

In Australia nearly all retail prices end with 99 cents.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Earth-red trails hold this  
dessicated continent  
together somehow.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

The edges of leaves  
turn towards the Sun: gum trees  
don't cast a shadow.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**As in an oven.  
Hot dust settles on every  
thing. Fear not the rain.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Thirsty koalas —  
they keep on climbing higher  
in the gum tree.**

Koalas never drink. Eucalyptus leaves provide the necessary liquid for them. The name in the language of the aborigines means 'no water'.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Five-year drought.  
Couldn't you just paint  
the fence green?**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Easier to find  
water in the billabong,  
than in the river.**

Billabong = stagnant backwater. (Oftentimes water remains here longer than in the living river.)

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Walking on the bank  
of the Murray river, it  
might reach the ocean.**

There were times when the river did not reach the ocean, for example in the 1940's. The Murray is Australia's longest river.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

Empty hinterland.  
Flying like a boomerang,  
you're called by the sea.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**You have another  
Australia, except you haven't  
reached it yet.**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Just passing through here . . .  
How many more washings by  
hand, in a basin?**

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

No mail today, you  
keep on reading old letters  
again and again.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**They immigrate,  
then emigrate.  
*The Lucky Country.***

*The Lucky Country* = Nickname for Australia, after Donald Horne,  
Australian writer.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

A flock of seagulls  
toddling around for crumbs –  
you might fly away.

Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia • Australia •

**Bring neither opals,  
nor kangaroo-tail soup, nor  
plush toy koalas.**



Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali •

*(rainy season)*

1

Out there, pouring rain.  
Coconut-shell bonfire,  
apprehensive crabs.

• Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali •

2

The sky coming down —  
the taste of cloves in your mouth:  
the *krettek* crackles.

*Krettek* is Indonesia's unique clove-filled cigarette. The inimitable crackling-fizzling krettek-krettek noise the burning cloves emit follows the smoking of each lit cigarette.

180

Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali

3

**Warm rain  
on and on  
keeps you home.**

• Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali •

4

**Running in the rain  
to the swimming pool.  
Saved!**

Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali

5

**It rains not all the  
time, just half of the time. Now  
when is it until?**

• Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali •

6

**From the deepest dream  
you wake to sudden silence:  
it's finished raining.**

Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali

7

**The pelting of rain  
losing vigour. Do you think  
we should get going?**

• Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali •

8

**Incredible noise —  
the flood allotted for the  
day has just arrived.**

Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali

9

No rain yesterday.  
Had you realized it, you  
would've been content.

• Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali •

*(temple-going)*

1

In Hindu temples  
the women, the men, the gods —  
all of them skirted.

Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali

2

In the temple gate,  
like Balinese stone-gods, you  
put on a *sarong*.

• Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali •

3

Temple tourists  
wrapped in *sarong*  
wouldn't pray.

Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali

4

The *sarong* ties down  
base desires – aroused by  
the sacred places?

• Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali •

5

Out of the temple,  
you should absolve your *sarong*.  
Desire's no sin here.

Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali

*(tropical fruit)*

1

Snake-skin fruit – sour  
as a quince-apple. It'd make  
nice decoration.

• Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali •

2

**Brown-skinned passion fruit,  
the jelly of its pulp so  
frighteningly grey.**

Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali

3

**Chewing a bag of  
peeled jackfruit cores, their taste gets  
better and better.**

• Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali •

*(tropical frogs)*

1

Singing birds at dawn,  
concert of frogs in the night,  
music is done with.

Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali

2

**Minnesinger frogs:**  
*Eine Grosse Nachtmusik* –  
waste your sleeping pills.

• Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali •

3

**Invisible choir  
giving serenade: croaking,  
grumbling, and groaning.**

Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali

4

**Morning brought silence.  
The throats of frogs full of song  
completely dried out.**

• Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali •

**Necklengthening search  
in the marketplace – now you're  
crouching in a shop.**

Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali

**Air-conditioned room —  
at dawn moisture covering  
the window *outside*.**

• Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali •

**Your sandals full of  
quicksand, should you come again,  
do it barefooted.**

Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali

**Nuns in the bar.  
Till now, they've been hiding  
in bathing suits.**

• Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali •

Empty ocean —  
the swimming pool swarms  
with people.

Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali

**Down to wet quicksand  
digs the dog, then lies down in-  
side for cooling off.**

• Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali •

**Waterskiing? Now  
you're a prisoner within  
a wobbly old man.**

Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali

**In your comb, lost hair.  
Which one is your toothbrush? You  
wheeze. Moan. Make holiday.**

• Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali • Bali

**Grading up and down  
on the stairs of the hotel,  
you measure your strain.**