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Collected Haiku of Yosa Buson

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"Lovers of haiku will rejoice at the arrival of this book, the first complete translation of the collected haiku of Yosa Buson...rendered into English with obvious care and devotion...Through Buson we realize what haiku is best at expressing—this moment's experience, bare facts, simple observations, elegant statements of 'thus-ness.'"—*Inquiring Mind*

“Having W.S. Merwin and Takako Lento as co-translators of this book is close to ideal, and this is the best English translation of haiku that has ever been published. Their English translations are accurate and poetic and there is nothing better for introducing this great poet.”—Donald Keene, *Anahorish Japanese Literature*

"For a translator to be faithful and readable, as Mr. Merwin always is, is no small achievement."—*The New York Times*

"From Latin to Russian to Japanese, translator [W.S. Merwin]'s oeuvre suggests an intrepid quality as well as a scrutinizing sympathy."—*Boston Review*

This is the first complete bilingual (Japanese/English) translation of the *Buson Kushu,* a comprehensive collection of the haiku of Yosa Buson (1716–83). Buson's haiku brim with paradox: they are bawdy yet delicate, sparse yet powerful. W.S. Merwin and Takako Lento worked for a decade to co-translate these poems into English-language versions as luminous as the original Japanese. An essential volume of world literature.

"187"

keisei wa
nochi no yo kakete
hanami kana

Courtesans come out
to see the cherry blossoms
as though they were betting on their next life

Yosa Buson (1716–1783) was one of the great poets of Japan's Edo period. His work is technically adroit and finely attuned to visual details. A true maverick of interdisciplinary arts, Buson was also founder of the *haiga*—a small watercolor or black-and-white painting bordered by a haiku.

W.S. Merwin was US Poet Laureate from 2010–11 and won his second Pulitzer Prize for *The Shadow of Sirius* (Copper Canyon Press, 2009) and the National Book Award for *Migration: New and Selected Poems* (Copper Canyon Press, 2005). He lives in Hawaii and France.

Co-translator **Takako Lento** holds an MFA in poetry and translation from the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

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