

the color of milk tea



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otata's bookshelf

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rain puddles
on the path
crow
flies below

someone
nearby
beating clothes
stops

vener-
able

pipal
tree

before
the

stalls
of

market
road

10 pm

heavy rain
splashes into the
kitchen

two candles lit
a third gone out
hours of rain

bat shelters on a
dark rafter out on
the veranda

Kabir
watched

the grinding
stones

turn
Finally he

said, "Look
close--

nothing
escapes!"

sun
rain

coco-
nut

crashes
on

tin
roof

blue
flowers

on the narrow
path

drape
a rock wall

days
pass

we
forget

slow rain
in the night

leaves
reflect house

lights like shattered
glass

world wet
with

stars

moist
air

sunlight

bees
visit

flowering
vines

the spell of night

all morning
by the
river dogs
bark
in chorus

across the
ravine two men
are cutting
down a
tall jackfruit
tree

the air is still
& humid

12 am

candle
on the table

a gecko
clings
to the wall

spiral
to

center

/

stem
to

leaf

a mongoose
runs

along the top
of

the parapet
wall

followed
by

another

the dark
spreads

encloses

(after Ungaretti)

shadows

light
on distant

mountains

my heartbeat

it has always been
there

but now I hear it

this

small
hard

red
seed

shines
like

lacquer

her
open

umbrella

left to
dry

on the
veranda

I asked my neighbor to translate
what his small daughter said pointing
at the flood waters--

"It's the color of milk tea "

a recluse
monk

said
to me:

"I've
renounced

the whole
world

but one
thing

still haunts
me--

the
beauty

of the
sky "

— *after Yoshida Kenko*

(notes / for g)

jade
moss walls
the

ravine

tiny
leaves

grains
this

flowering
mud

seeping
or

standing
what

moves

the rain goes on,
the gray of
endless twilight

in a field behind
the roadside
fish market,
an abandoned bus
taken by vines

before
the white
chrysanthemums
the scissors
hesitate
a moment

— *after Buson*
(*for ttc*)

old woman
at our

gate
wearing

saffron
cloth

holds
a tin plate

for
alms

wings
under eaves
wind, rain

molecules
atoms

nuclei

we gaze at
suns

&
fireflies

After nights
of rain
we glimpse
the moon,
brief
in the humid
darkness

creeping
dark frog
sing

hidden
bird
sings

caught
in sudden
rain, the
old man
puts a cloth
over his
head

this night
no stars
but fireflies

Dusk, nibbling a gooseberry,
I remember the Malayalam proverb
that an old man's advice is
like a gooseberry: sour at first,
sweet later

What you are you
do not see, what you see
is the shadow

— *after Tagore*

Long dusk
The air is still

Someone is
filling a bucket

next door

(morning letter / for b)

green rocks,
walls;

petals drift,
drip

rain

splayed
feet,
on cobble-
stones, in

dust

fruit
bats

fly
west

brief
rain

settles
the

dust

mason's trowel,
water tap,

overturned
wheel-

barrow

cool morning air, scavenger's cart by the gate

moonless night
humid
&
dark

fanning wings,
a butterfly
rests

on a fallen leaf

along the branch
thru the air
in the water

living
things

All songs
are a part of Him,

who wears
a form
of sound

— *from the Vishnu Purana*

leaf
cup full
of
rain

a leaf
levitates

magically
spins

midair

red, green,
yellow, gray,
orange

lichen

mud path
paved
with leaves

that
singleness,

the
one,

unreflecting
light

rain hidden moon

a rat snake still on a palm leaf covering the woodpile

re-
flected,

the in-
finite

flame

there's

a
tiny
spider

at the
center

of this
lace-like

web

hovering,

suspended,

a
dragonfly
in sun-

light

rain falling straight down in silvery light

a line
of ants

long shadows
on dried
mud

ash, dust

moss & lichen

constellations
moving

in the trees

the
words

shapes,
sounds

inter-
twined

the path
skirts a
field

rucksack
hung
from a branch
of a tree

The fish monger
rides past
on his Hercules
bicycle

He rings his bell

A tethered goat
pulls grass
by the gate

I sit on the steps
swatting mosquitoes

A drongo sweeps
past the veranda

I sit in a cane chair
and watch morning light
fill the trees

Cars honk on the
nearby road A baby cries
next door

Stayed away
all these
years

Now return
is like a dream

I wake
to the cawing
of crows

Hair white,
old, alone on the
east-facing
veranda

I see the Dipper
tilt just above
the trees

sun-
dappled,

rain-
wet path;

vague
clouds

over the
river

back
& forth

along
the path

our foot-
prints

in dust

meeting
again

after 20
years

his smile
with

missing
teeth

sweeping ants,
sand,

cobwebs

iridescent
blue-

black
feathers

river water drips
from hanging clothes

crow on the steps

lime-
green

butterflies
mate

under
the eaves

as rain
falls

12 am

candle
on the table

a gecko
clings
to the wall