

■Book Review

Injured Roses: Yuko Tange Haiku Collection

English translation by Anthony P. Newell

(Published by Cyberwit.net, Allahabad, India, 2009, 79 pages, paperback, US\$15, ISBN 978-81-8253-146-8)

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Injured Roses is a first-time haiku collection by Japanese haiku artist and visual artist Yuko Tange.

This short collection of haiku in Japanese and English (in translation) is divided into seven sections. As with most first books, the author has included here a variety of approaches, subjects and subtle style variations. Some of the poems are – in my opinion – of a very high caliber, while others are rather less striking.

I find that the poems that are the most precious to me are those that reveal the mature reflective attributes of the author, and which are less analytical and active. The author has a talent for expressing passive irony in a classical literary sense, which is timeless. I would have preferred to see this book focus upon that particular style of haiku, one on a page with an accompanying work of art by Yuko Tange on the facing page. This because her original cover art reveals the same qualities that I find so endearing in the haiku that I am referring to. Some good examples of this style follow:

on page 14:

The Acropolis

is patient

facing the sun

on page 19:

*I punctuate
with a sigh
the end of summer*

on page 23:

*It snows furiously
on the dilemma
of an impossibility*

on page 30:

*Red roses
invite bewitchment
and a misunderstanding, too*

on page 48:

*In the setting sun
the sand and the sea
rest in silence*

and on page 70:

*The vessel of pathos
moves to the time*

of a miracle

I am impressed that the author has written her first book at an advanced stage in her life. When I read and re-read the poems I have cited above I understand that it has perhaps taken a lifetime to be able to express oneself so artistically, and with such quiet and mature reflection. I hope that Yuko Tange publishes more books in the style and spirit of the poems I have applauded, and that she considers perhaps making a lovely coffee table book including her artwork, and her haiku in calligraphy and in translation.

Website: <http://cyberwit.net/yuko.htm>