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Twelve Free Verse Haiku

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OZAKI HŌSAI

Twelve Free Verse Haiku

Finished peeling the bamboo shoots, I feel lonely

Many young plums falling in the green darkness

How bitter the fruit of the cherry tree! Tokyo is far

Good at keeping small birds, I fall silent

The glow of fireflies in the firefly basket

Rain clouds billowing and billowing—the silk tree

Those were my hands trying to catch the sparrow!

With one cent, I ran outside

A perfectly clear day in the water basin

Winter: a blaze of white clouds

Dead reeds appearing at sunrise—that's all they are

At last, I get used to the sound of waves in the afternoon

Translated from the Japanese by James Shea