

Honkadori and the Haiku of Yosa Buson

tsurigane ni
tomarite nemuru
kochō kana

on the temple bell,
settling to rest,
a butterfly

-Buson

samidare o
atsume te hayashi
Mogami-gawa

early summer rain!
swelling and racing,
the Mogami river

-Basho

tsurigane ni
tomarite hikaru
hotaru kana

on the temple bell,
settling to shine,
a firefly

-Shiki

samidare ya
taiga wo mae ni
ieniken

early summer rain...
facing the large river,
two houses

-Buson



translated by
Joshua Gage

On December 6, 2023, Patricia McGuire of *Poetry Pea* presented an excellent online workshop regarding the topic of honkadori—allusion in haiku—featuring some present and historical examples. Patricia clearly did her research for this presentation, and it was a solid introduction to the topic with a lot of examples.

I wanted to share a few resources to contribute to that discussion because honkadori is a topic about which books could be written, with hundreds upon hundreds of examples. Furthermore, having two poems translated by the same translator might provide some additional insight into how one poet was influenced by the other.

With that in mind, here's a small sampling of Buson haiku from a project I'm currently working on, which was also inspired by Patricia at *Poetry Pea*, paired with the haiku that either influenced them or were influenced by them. It is hoped that these will provide more examples of honkadori for readers and writers of haiku and inspire, alongside other resources, further study of haiku and haiku poetics.

Go in peace,
Joshua Gage
January 21, 2024

kare eda ni

karasu no tomari keru

aki no kure

on a bare branch,
the crow has settled...
autumn evening

-Basho

furu ike ya

kawazu tobikomu

mizu no oto

old pond...
a frog-plunging-in-water's
sound

-Basho

tobi tsukusu

tori hitotsu zutsu

aki no kure

flights over,
the exhausted crows, one by one...
autumn evening
-Buson

furu ike no

kawazu oiyuku

ochiba kana

the old pond's
frog grows old...
fallen leaves

-Buson