



The Moon *of the* Swaying Buds

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Fifty copies of this special edition were signed by the author.

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The first moment I enter a *zendo* it feels right. I have hardly heard of *zazan* but as the sun rises and I chant the Robe Chant, this gesture feels correct. The same sense – almost a nostalgia – comes over me at *teishō*. Katagiri-sensei's words grab my being as if gently shaking and then opening it. This is real. This is so. And while the effort Zen practice requires seems almost beyond my capabilities, the freshness, the certainty of inner knowing, compels me again and again to greet the dawn with a straight back.

*home at last –
I sleep
numbed by rain*

The room is dark and fragrant. People are getting settled, plumping their cushions, and swaying back and forth. Seated along a far wall, I quickly become absorbed in the vibration of bells and silence reverberating into one another.

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*one plum falls
a warbler's screech
in the distance*

Meals, finally, bring warmth. It is clear food,
straightforward food I respect. Then more sitting, a
lecture, tea with a surprise sweet. I find the rhythm
akin to me. The monotony, both lugubrious and
strangely crisp, washes over my being, very familiar.

*moonrise —
a silhouette drifts
along the inlet*

Still, I can't adjust, get comfortable, find the right posture.
The day takes forever. Its elegance, which describes a
frank and beautiful way to be, becomes an injunction by
sheer force of its multileveled presence. I find myself
acquiescing, agreeing almost as an aesthetic response.
But I am cold and scared. Actually the Buddha (the
Tathāgatha) often appeals to this bony migrant aspect
of his disciples.

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*a shorebird cries —
across the dunes
the hollow rattle of wind*