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THE HERITAGE OF SYMBOLISM:  
THE "AESTHETIC" STYLE OF KITAHARA HAKUSHŪ  
AND MURAYAMA KAITA

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*KAICHOŌN (THE SOUND OF THE TIDE), THE PAN NO KAI (PAN SOCIETY),  
AND JASHŪMON (HERETICAL FAITH)*

The Japanese encounter with late nineteenth-century French poetry through introductory surveys and translations by Ueda Bin (1874–1916) had a profound impact on Japanese poetics. Perhaps the most influential of his work was the collection *Kaichōon* (*The Sound of the Tide*, 1905).<sup>1</sup> Although it contained translations of poets as diverse as Sappho and Shakespeare, over half of *Kaichōon* consisted of translations of French and Belgian poets, especially writers directly associated with symbolism or retroactively claimed by its adherents as progenitors of the school.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ueda Bin, *Kaichōon*, ed. Kenmochi Takehiko, Kobori Keiichirō, Mori Ryō and Yasuda Yasuo, *Meiji Tasihō yaku shishū*, Nihon kindai bungaku taikai 52 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1971) 169–264.

<sup>2</sup> *Kaichōon* includes a number of works important in the development of European symbolism, such as "Paraboles," "Chanson d'automne," and "Mon rêve familier" by Paul Verlaine (1844–1896) and "Soupir" by Stéphane Mallarmé (1842–1898), but it also includes the work of other authors associated with the symbolist school, such as the Belgian poet Emile Verhaeren (1855–1916), the French poets Henri de Régnier (1864–1936) and Albert Samain (1858–1900), and the Greek-born poet Jean Moréas (1856–1910). Although literary historians often speak of symbolism as a movement with clear founders and adherents, in reality, it is a broad concept that has been retroactively constructed and reconstructed throughout literary history. Kenneth Cornell's survey of French literary magazines and manifestos of the late nineteenth century suggests that even as the term gained currency in the mid-1880s, there was little writing that was recognizably identifiable as "symbolist," partly because the authors using the term at this early date wrote more criticism than poetry; as a result, they produced few practical examples to illustrate what the "symbolist" style actually was. Kenneth Cornell, *The Symbolist Movement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951) 42. A manifesto published in *Figaro* in September 1886 by Jean Moréas gave the nascent symbolist movement both its name and a lineage of "symbolist" poets that included Verlaine, Mallarmé, Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867), and Théodore Faullain de Banville (1823–1891). Moréas claimed that symbolist writing should consist of an "archetypal and complex style" made up of "good language" that has been "restored and modernized" and fashioned into phrases of "unpolluted words." He claimed symbolist art would possess ambiguous and suggestive expressions that could, in the language of Neo-Platonism, point to the

Yosano Tekkan (1873–1935) noted that this anthology gave “the same nourishment to Meiji and Taishō poetry that Po Chū-I’s *Works* had afforded Heian literature,” and it inspired young poets as diverse as Kanbara Ariake (1876–1952) and Miki Rofū (1889–1964).<sup>3</sup>

One group that fell under the spell of *Kaichoōn* was the Pan no Kai (Pan Society), an organization founded to promote interactions between visual artists and poets and to imitate the café discussions of art and literature common to France in the late nineteenth century. The society, which poet and playwright Kinoshita Mokutarō (1885–1945) had named after the mischievous Greek god of shepherds and flocks, first met in a restaurant on the Sumida River on December 12, 1908. In attendance were the founders of the art and poetry journal *Hōsun* (*Square Inch of Feeling*): Yamamoto Kanae (1882–1946), an oil painter who would later play an important role in the Nihon Bijutsuin (Japan Art Institute) and the Nihon Nōmin Bijutsu Kenkyūjo (Research Center for Japanese Rural Folk Arts), Ishii Hakutei (1882–1958), known for his oil paintings, and Morita Tsunetomo (1881–1933), a painter and printmaker who worked in an Impressionist style. Also there were a number of poets, including the budding poet Kitahara Hakushū (1885–1942), who had contributed to *Hōsun*. Many members of the society had read Bin’s translations and the efforts of Ariake, one of the first Japanese poets to draw upon its innovations. Mokutarō recalls, “At that time, we enthusiastically read art history and the debates about impressionism. Ueda Bin was also active at that time. Influenced by his translations and other works, we dreamed of the lives of Parisian artists and poets, and we decided to try imitating

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primordial Idea but that would never grasp it fully so that the work of art would always remain subject to the mysterious essence it tried to describe. In symbolist art, he comments, “the depiction of nature, the actions of men, all the concrete phenomena, could not show themselves as such: they are concrete appearances whose purpose is to represent their esoteric affinities with primordial Ideas.” Jean Moréas, “Moréas: A Literary Manifesto,” *Paths to the Present: Aspects of European Thought from Romanticism to Existentialism*, ed. Eugen Weber (NY: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1960) 207.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West*, vol. 2 (NY: Henry Holt, 1984) 228. Of course, Bin was not the only translator of late nineteenth-century French verse. After spending much of 1907 and 1908 in France, Nagai Kafū (1879–1959) produced the 1913 anthology *Sango shū* (*Corals*), which consisted largely of translations of French poetry, especially poets associated with symbolism. For instance, Kafū translated ten by Henri de Régnier (1864–1936), seven poems by Baudelaire, seven poems by Verlaine, one by Rimbaud, and one by Samain. In the 1920s, Horiguchi Daigaku (1892–1981) began producing translations of nineteenth-century French poetry. Many of these translations are still read today.

them.”<sup>4</sup> Like many nineteenth-century Parisian literary groups that combined discussion of art and literature with merrymaking, the meetings of the Pan no Kai usually involved frivolity, music, the presence of geisha, and copious amounts of alcohol.<sup>5</sup> Ueda Bin, Nagai Kafū, Takamura Kōtarō (1883–1956), Tanizaki Jun’ichirō (1886–1965), and many other important artistic and literary figures participated in it before it disbanded four years later from a lack of clear, unifying principles.

A crowning achievement of these meetings was the publication in 1909 of Hakushū’s anthology *Jashūmon* (*Heretical Faith*), which was designed by Hakutei and contained illustrations by Hakutei, Kanae, and other members of the Pan no Kai. One of the best-known parts of the anthology was the introduction, which served as a manifesto that helped direct the poetic mainstream of late Meiji and Taishō Japan toward a highly aestheticized language separate from that of everyday life. Below is a full translation of the introduction.

The life force of a poem is found in intimation, not in simple explanations of phenomena. The poet addresses the faint, indistinct sobs of the spirit that arise amidst the limitless trembling of emotion that cannot be fully expressed through writing or speech. He is enamored with the pleasure of barely audible music, and he takes pride in the grief in his own impressions. Isn’t this the fundamental purpose of the symbol? We face the mysterious, we rejoice in visions, and yearn for the red of putrefying decadence. Alas! Even in our dreams, we, the disciples of a modern heretical faith, cannot forget the laments of marble sobbing in the pale, white light of the moon. Nor can we forget the eyes of a sphinx tortured by a thick, Egyptian mist, sullied with crimson. Nor can we forget romantic music smiling in the sunset, nor the doleful screams of that state of

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Noda Utarō, “‘Pan no Kai’ no tanbiha shijin no tanjō,” *Kōza Nihon gendai shishi*, ed. Murano Shirō, Seki Ryōichi, Hasegawa Izumi, and Hara Shirō, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Ubu Shoin, 1973) 314.

<sup>5</sup> One such French literary group was the Hydropathes founded about 1878 by Emile Goudeau who described it as the negation of a literary school. Its members included figures from various walks of life, such as the novelist Guy de Maupassant (1850–1893) and the actress Sarah Bernhardt (1845–1923). The Hydropathes inspired other writers to produce similar societies, such as the Zutistes, Chat Noir, and Soirées de *La Plume*. See Kenneth Cornell, *The Symbolist Movement*, 15.

mind surrounding the crucifixion of an infant. The ceaseless spasms of putrefying yellow wax, the olfactory sensation of a violin's A-string being stroked, the sharp nerves of whiskey smothering in a frosted glass, a sigh deeply scented of poison grass the color of a human brain, the melancholy of a nightingale exhaustedly singing while under anesthesia of the senses – all of these things too... At the same time, how hard it is to cast away the touch of scarlet velvet escaping into the faint sound of a distant horn!<sup>6</sup>

According to Hakushū, instead of producing flat descriptions, the poet should listen to the quiet "sobs of the spirit." For Hakushū, the symbol served as a tool leading the sensitive poet, who acts as a "seer" as in the theory of Rimbaud or Baudelaire, into a rich, mysterious world of subtle sensory perception. The job of the visionary poet was then to reproduce the world they discovered by using particularly stimulating signifiers that would encourage the reader along the path of imagination.

One stated purpose of the symbol was to aid the poet in fulfilling his yearning for "the red of putrefying decadence," a longing that Hakushū apparently assumes to be present whenever a poet plumbs the depths of the senses.<sup>7</sup> The work in *Jashūmon* suggests that Hakushū welcomed decadent visions that depart from established standards of beauty and that could serve as doorways into new, intense realms of perception. Throughout the collection, one finds examples of items that do not belong to the classical canon of poetry: images of sobbing violins, blood-red wine, and twilight parks, as well as obscure Christian terms that might stir the reader's imagination. His use of images, especially crepuscular ones, along with frequent evocations of ennui, sorrow, loneliness and despair, are strongly reminiscent of the decadent school of *fin-de-siècle* French writing.

In the descriptions of the visions that fill the second half of the introduction, one finds a synesthetic combination of sensory perceptions; for instance, Hakushū combines tactile and visual cues in the mention of

yellow-gray trembling, tactile and visual cues in the image of smiling music, olfactory and aural sensations in the mention of the scent of a violin's sound. The use of synesthesia is often considered a hallmark of symbolist literature and is visible to varying degrees in the work of Verlaine, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, and other nineteenth-century French poets. By artfully juxtaposing signifiers that appeal to different senses and thus seem to short circuit obvious pragmatic meaning, Hakushū is not trying to throw up opaque walls of confused signifiers that impede understanding completely. Like Moréas and other European proponents of symbolism, he seeks a new kind of highly subjective communication in which poets and readers use language to access meaning in an almost mystical way, circumventing logic and firm signifier-to-signified relations to help each reader arrive at a delicate emotional state. Of course, this state might differ significantly from reader to reader. For Hakushū and his contemporaries, the idea that a poem should express exactly the same thing to all readers was not paramount. In fact, Earl Jackson has argued in his study of Japanese symbolism that Hakushū and his contemporaries were exploring a new type of language that would "accommodate the essential enigmatic plasticity of consciousness and its representations" and, at the same time, celebrating the idea that a singular meaning could not necessarily be retrieved from a text.<sup>8</sup> Instead of attempting to produce an absolute meaning in each poem, they purposefully cultivated suggestive syntactic or imagistic vagueness, which they hoped would stir the imagination of readers.

Certain poems, such as "Jashūmon hikyoku" ("The Secret Song of the Heretical Faith"), first published in the September 1908 issue of *Chūō kōron* (*Central Review*), made extensive use of synesthetic descriptions, which with their artful illogicality give the illusion of being pregnant with personal meaning.<sup>9</sup> As a result, literary historians often point to this poem as a representative example of Japanese symbolist poetry. Yet at the same time that Hakushū experimented with the style manifested in this work, he also produced other poems with fewer of the finely tuned breaks of logic and less of the obscure imagery of his hard-edged, overtly "symbolist" works. These poems, which also appear in *Jashūmon*, make

<sup>6</sup> Kitahara Hakushū, *Hakushū zenshū*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1984) 6. For somewhat different translations, see Margaret Benton Fukasawa, *Kitahara Hakushū: His Life and Poetry*, Cornell East Asia Series 65 (Ithaca: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 1993) 28–29 and Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West*, vol. 2, 242.

<sup>7</sup> Donald Keene interprets his version of symbolism as an "indulgence of the senses, hedonistic and sometimes not fully controlled." Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West*, vol. 2, 243.

<sup>8</sup> Earl Jackson, Jr., "The Heresy of Meaning: Japanese Symbolist Poetry," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 51.2 (Dec 1991): 568.

<sup>9</sup> Three different translations of this famous poem can be found in Margaret Benton Fukasawa, *Kitahara Hakushū*, 31; Earl Jackson Jr., "The Heresy of Meaning": 566–57, and Charles Edward Fox, "The Future in the Past: Kitahara Hakushū and the Modern Poetic Sequence," *diss.*, Univ. of Michigan, 1998, 34–35.

greater use of juxtaposition, a poetic device long familiar to poets of traditional Japanese verse, and display a highly aestheticized yet comparatively straightforward style reminiscent of the lyricism of Verlaine. Within these poems, one often finds intense descriptions of sensory perception, elaborate evocations of color, the use of landscape and atmospheric conditions as indexes of emotional state, the consistent use of musical and rhythmic language, and the repeated expression of melancholic and love-haunted languor.<sup>10</sup> "Sora ni makka na" ("In the Sky, Deep Red"), a short four-line poem first published in *Hōsun* in 1909, is typical of this type of poem. Though it is only one of many short verses Hakushū wrote during his association with the Pan no Kai, it was particularly well known, and in fact, members of the society often sang it to the tune of *Rappa no setsu* (*Strains of the Trumpet*), a song popular during the Russo-Japanese War.

In the sky, the hue of a crimson cloud  
 In a crystal glass, the hue of crimson liquor  
 Why should this life be so very sad?  
 In the sky, the hue of a crimson cloud

空に真赤な雲のいろ。  
 玻璃に真赤な酒の色。  
 なんでこの身が悲しかる。  
 空に真赤な雲のいろ。<sup>11</sup>

The lyrics juxtapose the image of scarlet clouds, probably dyed by the sunset, with a deep red glass of alcohol – probably wine, a drink that might evoke thoughts of far-away Europe. Within this poem, Hakushū does not use the synesthetic blending seen elsewhere in *Jashūmon*, but a series of highly visual images laden with color, which are put together so that the syntactic relationship between images remains loose. Because the first, second, and fourth lines consist of subjects without predicates, the connection between the clouds, spirits, and the narrator's melancholy is never explicitly stated. Perhaps the sight of alcohol recalls the image of

clouds or perhaps the narrator is seated directly beneath them with wine in hand. The exact relationship between the images is unclear, but their concurrence evokes a twilight moment of melancholia or *Weltschmerz* that even the narrator seems at a loss to explain.

Other friends from the Pan no Kai followed Hakushū in this lyrical, pseudo-symbolist style and produced a loose association of poets sometimes identified as the *tanbiha* or "Aesthetic School." Known for its pursuit of sensual beauty, this style represents an important stage in the naturalization of European symbolism by Japanese writers, and it set the stage for later poets such as Murayama Kaita (1896–1919).

#### KAITA AND HAKUSHŪ

Like a number of talented authors and artists in early twentieth-century Japan, Kaita died from tuberculosis at an early age; however, he left behind a prodigious number of paintings and poems, as well as a handful of mystery-adventure stories and plays.<sup>12</sup> His earliest extant poetry dates from about 1912 or 1913, when as a student in the Kyoto Prefectural First Higher School, he started writing a large number of poems for small, homemade magazines (*kairan zasshi*) that he and his friends circulated among classmates and teachers interested in literature. Meanwhile, Kaita began showing signs of talent in the visual arts. His older cousin Yamamoto Kanae, who had been one of the co-founders of *Hōsun* and a charter member of the Pan no Kai, encouraged Kaita, gave him paint and brushes, and wrote supportive letters from Paris where he was then studying. As Kaita prepared for graduation, Kanae arranged for his young charge to study art at the newly restructured Nihon Bijutsuin in Tokyo and to stay at the home of his friend, the prominent artist Kosugi Misei (later known as Kosugi Hōan, 1881–1964), who had also participated in the Pan no Kai. While in Tokyo, Kaita produced some of the most striking portraits of Taishō-period art, including *Futari no shōnen* (*Two Boys*, 1914), *Kanna to shōjo* (*Girl with Cannas*, 1915), and numerous self-portraits.<sup>13</sup> Kaita's promising career, however, was cut

<sup>12</sup> After his death, Kaita's friends collected his works and published them posthumously as Murayama Kaita, *Kaita no utaeru*, ed. Yamazaki Shōzō (Tokyo: Ars, 1920) and Murayama Kaita, *Kaita no utaeru sono go oyobi Kaita no hanashi*, ed. Yamamoto Jirō (Tokyo: Ars, 1921). The contents of these two collections plus several newly discovered works are available in Murayama Kaita, *Murayama Kaita zenshū*, rev. 2nd ed., ed. Yamamoto Tarō (Tokyo: Yayoi Shobō, 1997).

<sup>13</sup> Mie Kenritsu Bijutsukan, *Murayama Kaita ten: Seitan 100-nen* (Tsu: Mie Kenritsu Bijutsukan, 1997), and Kuboshima Seiichirō, ed., *Murayama Kaita*,

<sup>10</sup> The regular meter and lyrical qualities of Hakushū's verse were factors that seem to have inspired many composers to set his poetry to music. Among the most popular settings are those of Yamada Kōsaku (Yamada Kōsōk, 1886–1965), Kusukawa Shin (1893–1948), Narita Tamezō (1893–1945), Nakayama Shinbei (1887–1952), and Tada Takehiko (1930–).

<sup>11</sup> Kitahara Hakushū, *Hakushū zenshū*, vol. 1, 29. Subsequent translations of the poems of Hakushū and Murayama Kaita are mine.

short by tuberculosis brought on in large part by his penniless lifestyle and his tendency to purchase alcohol and art supplies over sufficient clothing, housing, or nourishing meals.<sup>14</sup>

A common theme of the poetry Kaita wrote during his days as a schoolboy in Kyoto was his unrequited passion for Inō Kiyoshi (1897–1989), an attractive younger student who had recently moved from Fukui to attend the same school as Kaita. (See Figure 1.) The contemporary poet Takahashi Mutsuo (1937– ) states a common opinion when he writes that of Kaita's poems, "the ones that stand independently and sparkle as poetic creations are concentrated in the years 1913 and 1914 when his feelings of love for Inō were at their peak."<sup>15</sup> These poems, which combine strongly romantic sentiments with the types of the motifs seen in the pseudo-symbolist aestheticism of Hakushū and his Pan no Kai compatriots, are among Kaita's most frequently anthologized works. One such poem is an untitled work from 1913 that addresses a person identified only with the intimate second-person pronoun *kimi*.

Ah, he who knows you  
Knows spring one month in advance  
Your eyes are the vernal sky  
Your cheeks, flowering cherries, red as blood  
Jewels cover your hands and your feet,  
Casting the sunlight into dazzling forms

Shinchō Nihon bijutsu bunko 42 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1997) provide useful retrospectives of his short career. One particularly famous self-portrait from 1916 appears on the website *Mie Prefectural Art Museum: The Collection*, 18 Dec 2003, <http://www.museum.pref.mie.jp/miekenbi/collection/works/kaita.htm>.

<sup>14</sup> In an essay from 1927, the artist Yanase Masamu (1900–1945) says that when he moved to Tokyo, he found Kaita living a life of squalor even though he seemed indifferent to his poverty. He writes, "Though I was down and out, I was surprised to find someone so much more destitute than I. Murayama Kaita came to visit. All that he had to cover his gigantic body was a tattered *chinchakurin happi* coat and a pair of briefs. 'I've been sleeping under the eaves 'cause these days no one will put me up,' he said. Showing no signs of this getting him down, he spit out his theories of art and then left. That day, he came and went barefoot." Quoted in Sunouchi Tōru, *Sezannu no nurinokoshi: Kimagure bijutsukan* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1983) 330–31. In the years after Kaita died, Yanase Masamu participated as a charter member in the Dadaist art group Mavo and became a leading figure in the proletarian art movement.

<sup>15</sup> Takahashi Mutsuo, *Seishun o yomu: Nihon no kindai shi ni-jū-shichi-nin* (Tokyo: Ozawa Shoten, 1992) 235.

And he who knows you  
Knows summer two months in advance  
With just a look, one's heart is set aflame,  
Burning red as the setting sun over a land of flame  
Basking in the maddening heat,  
One is driven to madness, wildly searching into eternity

Ah, he who knows you  
Knows autumn three months in advance  
Such a charming, sweet, and sad countenance  
Your lips are hills and fields of cinnabar  
Share with me just as they are  
The dazzling autumn days in your exalted eyes

Yet he who knows you  
Knows winter four months in advance  
In your absence, all eyes fall to the ground,  
All things lose light and color  
Struck no longer by taste, scent, or sound  
All merely waits in earnest for you, for spring to return

ああ君を知る人は一月さきに  
春を知る  
君が眼は春の空  
また御頬は桜花血の如赤く  
宝石は若が手を足を蔽ひて  
日光を華麗なる形に象めり

また君を知る人は二月さきに  
夏を知る  
君見れば胸は焼かれて  
火の国の人日の如赤くたゞれ  
唯狂ほしき暑気にむせ  
とこしへに血眼の物狂ひなり

ああ君を知る人は三月さきにも  
秋を知る  
床しくも甘くさびしき御面かな  
そが唇は朱に明き野山のけはひ  
また御ひとみに秋の日のきらゝかなるを  
そのままにつたへ給へり

また君を知る人は四月のまへに  
 冬を知る  
 君が無きときわれらが目すべて地に伏し  
 そこにある万物は光色なく  
 味もなくにほひも音も打たえてたゞわれら  
 ひたすらに君をまつ春の戻るを。<sup>16</sup>

The use of landscape and climactic conditions to set mood is a central motif in romantic and symbolist poetry. With these movements, artists departed from rational notions of objective existence to portray the external world through a highly individualistic lens. As a result, landscapes in poetry were not usually mere descriptions of an absolute outside world but rather carefully crafted environments that served as projections of the individual author's singular vision. In this poem, however, this notion is taken to an extreme. Feeling shapes the ways in which the narrator sees *kimi*, whose countenance provides the point of departure for the imaginary landscapes and climactic conditions through which the intensity of the narrator's feelings is revealed. *Kimi* carries the narrator through the metaphorical seasons with astonishing rapidity, bringing warmth when the outside world is cold; however, when *kimi* disappears, the winter of discontent sets in.

This poem displays a motif that recurs throughout Kaita's work, namely the prominent use of the color red. The novelist Arishima Takeo (1878–1923) was perhaps the first to comment in a laudatory review published in the August 1920 issue of *Chosaku hyōron* (*Writing Review*), how often Kaita employed colors in his writing.<sup>17</sup> As Arishima notes, purple, gold, blue, and green appear often in his work, but red appears with particular frequency, especially in contexts associated with passion or indulgent descriptions of decadent feelings. Kaita's love for the color red is visible throughout his short career. One of his best known statements is a single line of text jotted in a notebook in 1918: "The world is red, not blue nor yellow."<sup>18</sup> Just months before his death, he also wrote two often anthologized poems, "Garansu" ("Garance") and "Ippon no garansu" ("A Tube of Garance") that express the intense, impassioned pleasure that garance, a dark red paint derived from madder, could provide. Kaita's love for the dramatic use of red is readily visible in one

of his most memorable works, *Ibari suru razō* (*Nude Monk Urinating*, 1915), which is dominated by the color. (See Figure 2.)

Considering that Kaita was an artist as well as a poet, it is not surprising that he should treat his poems like his canvases, splashing great swatches of color across them; however, Higashi Shunrō, a curator at the Mie Prefectural Art Museum, has suggested that Kaita's particular preference for the color red, might have been inspired by Hakushū's *Jashūmon*, in which the color appears with overwhelming frequency.<sup>19</sup> As mentioned above, Hakushū writes in the introduction that one function of the symbol is to help fulfill the yearning of the poet for the "red of putrefying decadence," a statement that establishes a relationship between the color and the particularly intense emotion that recurs throughout the anthology. Even though it is likely that Kaita read *Jashūmon*, one cannot prove it with certainty. In his diaries, the only mention of Hakushū is in a telegraphic entry from July 12, 1917 that notes he found Hakushū's 1915 anthology of tanka *Kirara shū* (*Mica*) to be "interesting."<sup>20</sup> This comment comes about four or five years after Kaita began writing poetry so it cannot help prove whether or not he had read *Jashūmon* at the beginning of his career; nonetheless, one can surmise from other facts that he probably did. Kaita was a voracious reader who often consumed large numbers of books within a single day, and diaries and comments from friends show that poetry was among his favorite reading material. More importantly, his cousin Yamamoto Kanae, who played an enormous role in Kaita's life, was so close to Hakushū that he contributed an illustration to the first edition of *Jashūmon*. In fact, the close friendship that had existed between Kanae and Hakushū since the days of *Hōsun* and the Pan no Kai took on a new dimension when Kanae married Hakushū's younger sister, Kitahara Ie (1893–1959) in 1917 and became the poet's brother-in-law.<sup>21</sup> Given this

<sup>16</sup> Murayama Kaita, *Murayama Kaita zenshū*, 15–16.

<sup>17</sup> Arishima Takco, Rev. of *Kaita no utaeru*, by Murayama Kaita, ed. Yamazaki Shōzō, *Arishima Takeo zenshū*, vol. 8 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shōbō, 1980) 405.

<sup>18</sup> Murayama Kaita, *Murayama Kaita zenshū*, 128.

<sup>19</sup> Higashi Shunrō, "Aka no Kaita, aka no Hakushū." *Korekushon mangekyō: Yattsu no haku no nanatsu no hanashi*, by Mie Kenritsu Bijutsukan (Tsu: Mie Kenritsu Bijutsukan, 1998) 148–54.

<sup>20</sup> Murayama Kaita, *Murayama Kaita zenshū*, 361.

<sup>21</sup> In his diary, Kaita mentions that he stopped by Kanae's home on the day of the wedding, but he does not mention whether or not he met Hakushū. Murayama Kaita, *Murayama Kaita zenshū*, 362. The connection between the Kitahara family and Kanae was probably a factor leading to the posthumous publication of Kaita's manuscripts. One of Hakushū's younger brothers, Kitahara Tetsuo (1892–1957), was the head of Ars, the publishing house that released the first editions of his work, and another brother, Kitahara Yoshio (1896–1985), was a staff member there. Even though he did not edit Kaita's manuscripts, Yamamoto Kanae wrote

closeness, it is likely that Kaita at least perused Hakushū's famous work.<sup>22</sup>

A number of motifs that resemble those in Hakushū's work are visible in Kaita's poem "Nigiyaka na yūgure" ("A Lively Evening"), a work from 1913 that describes an evening trip through eastern Kyoto made to gaze at the home of Inō Kiyoshi, to whom the poem was dedicated.

#### A Lively Evening (To K.I.)

"A lively evening, isn't it?  
Really full of life, don't you think?"  
On this pale blue, deep evening,  
What is so lively? What?

The beautiful sky over the eastern mountains  
The stars like a purple globe of rain  
In the drunken vernal sky over the hills  
Shine purple and light red like specks of hardened blood

"So lively, don't you think?"  
A group of ladies arrive,  
A wanton crowd, like a line of jewels,  
Their lovely white make-up shines in the dusk

Lights, lights, lights along the Kamo riverbanks  
Shine in gold, the arc lamps cherry pink  
"Really lively, isn't it?"  
A lovely night, don't you think?"

the preface for *Kaita no utaeru* (*Songs of Kaita*), suggesting that he played a role in the publication of the collections.

<sup>22</sup> Kaita researcher Sasaki Teru has also suggested that there may be a link between the images in Hakushū's poetry and those in Kaita's painting. He suggests that Kaita may have taken the inspiration for the painting *Ibarisuru razō* from Hakushū's poem "Akaki sōjō" ("Red Monk") in *Jashūmon* or "Ibari suru orandajin" ("Urinating Dutchman") in *Omoide* (*Memories*). Sasaki Teru, "Tadaretaru bi no jikan tarashime yo: Murayama Kaita *Ibari suru razō* nōto," *E* 379 (Sep 1995): 17. See Kitahara Hakushū, *Hakushū zenshū*, vol. 1, 17-18 and vol. 2, 212-13.

Drops of spirits fall steadily  
From my thistle-shaped nerves  
Alongside my footsteps as I spring lightly along  
The elegant lavender hem of Kaguraoka

"Lively, isn't it?"  
Pleased at my response  
The group of lovely ladies, so numerous, replies,  
"Yes, indeed..."

"A lively evening, isn't it?"  
Really full of life, don't you think?  
How lovely of late  
Is the beautiful child whom I love..."

As I descend Konoezaka Slope, I see the lavender  
Plain of heaven reflected on the surface of the lake  
The faint echoes of a silver flute  
Trickle from the window of my beloved's home

"A lively evening, isn't it?"  
Really full of life, don't you think?"  
I, with my unrequited love, weep as I whisper,  
"Yes, but how terribly lonely I am!"

#### にぎやかな夕ぐれ (K.I.に)

「にぎやかな夕ぐれやおへんか  
ほんまににぎやかやおへんか」  
何がにぎやか、何がにぎやか  
薄い濃い夕ぐれ

美しい空が東山に  
紫の珠が雨みたいに東山に  
星が血のりめいて酒びたりの春の空に  
紫に薄くねなるに

「ほんまににぎやかやおへんか」  
たどりゆくは女の群  
宝玉でそろへた様な多情な群  
美しいお白粉にきらきらと

燈が燈が燈が加茂川の岸べに  
金色に、アークランプも桜色に  
「ほんまににぎやかやおへんか  
きれいな夕ぐれやおへんかいな」

わたしはたどる紫の貴い薄紫の  
神楽岡の裾を浮き浮きとした足どりに  
たらしたりと酒が滴たる  
あざみ形の神経から

「にぎやかやおへんかいな」  
わたしは答へるうれしさに  
「そうぞすえなあ」  
美しい女の群に会ふや数々

「にぎやかな夕ぐれぞすえな  
ほんまににぎやかな  
あの美しいわたしの思ふ子は  
此頃どないに綺麗やろえな」

近衛坂を下れば池の面に  
空がうつる薄紫の星の台が  
ほのかにもるゝ銀笛の響は  
わが思ふ子の美しい家の窓から

「にぎやかな夕ぐれやおへんか  
ほんまににぎやかやおへんか」  
この時泣いて片恋のわれはつぶやく  
「そやけどほんまはさびしおすのえなあ」。<sup>23</sup>

This poem, perhaps the first in modern Japan to incorporate extended passages of the distinct dialect of the Gion district pleasure quarters, describes the narrator's encounter with several geisha as he wanders

<sup>23</sup> Murayama Kaita, *Murayama Kaita zenshū*, 42-43.

toward the eastern hills of Kyoto where his beloved resides. In 1913, when Kaita wrote this poem, he was living along Teramachi Avenue, several streets to the west of the Kamo River, and Inō lived by Kaguraoka, the hilly area around Mt. Yoshida on the fringes of the eastern hills mentioned in the poem. For him to make the journey to Inō's house, he would pass through the northern fringes of the Gion district, where he might conceivably meet women like those in the poem. History tells us that Kaita made the trip to Inō's house often. The remembrances of Yamamoto Jirō, a close friend from college preparatory school, state, "Every night, Kaita would climb Kaguraoka near the house of the young boy. That was so he could watch the lights in the boy's house from a distance."<sup>24</sup> In a diary entry from November 12, 1913, Kaita describes one of these outings to Inō's home: "From the fields where the rice stalks were cut and piled up, I heard the distant, red sound of a flute. In front of your house, a friend called out to me, 'Murayama,' and my heart trembled. That exalted laugh of yours flooded from your home, together with the light burning inside."<sup>25</sup> The friend who called his name may have been Hayashi Tatsuo (1894-1984), a younger schoolmate who later in life became a prominent intellectual historian. In a series of biographical interviews, Hayashi recalls Kaita's passion for the "incredibly beautiful young boy" Inō. Hayashi says that because he lived on a cliff directly above Inō's home, Kaita would frequently come by and chat as an excuse to stare at Inō's window below.<sup>26</sup>

Even though the experience described in "Nigiyaka na yūgure" was almost certainly inspired by one of Kaita's nocturnal pilgrimages, the poem contains highly romanticized language. The images of reflected stars, silver flutes, and sobs of unrequited love demonstrate the degree to which Kaita borrowed language of contemporary poetry to fashion his own experience into verse. A number of motifs in the poem, such as the arc lights, the encounter with the women, and the image of a fading sunset are similar to motifs in Hakushū's work, and suggest a continuity of poetic language between the two poets. The motif of the melancholy sound of silver flute (*ginteki*), for instance, is particularly common in Hakushū's poetry. The first poem in "Danshō" ("Fragments"), a collection of short verses published in the 1911 anthology *Omoide* (*Memories*), revolves around the motif.

<sup>24</sup> Yamamoto Jirō, "Kaita no hatsukoi," *Kaita no utaeru sono go oyobi Kaita no hanashi*, by Murayama Kaita, 302.

<sup>25</sup> Murayama Kaita, *Murayama Kaita zenshū*, 342.

<sup>26</sup> Hayashi Tatsuo, *Shisō no dramaturgii*, Heibonsha raiburarii 2 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1993) 144-45, 148-49.

So sad again today, all alone in the evening  
 The lonesome, faint sound of a small silver flute  
 Also sobs faintly, all alone  
 Blowing through my heart in the dim light.

今日もかなしと思ひしか、ひとりゆふべを、  
 銀の小笛の音もほそく、ひとり幽かに、  
 すずり泣き、吹き澄ましたるわがこころ、  
 薄き光に。<sup>27</sup>

Hakushū's use of the flute as a motif recalls the writing of Verlaine and Baudelaire, whose poetry often describes the sounds of violins, flutes, and other instruments in order to suggest particular emotional states. Hakushū's anthology of tanka *Kiri no hana* (*Paulownia Flowers*), published in January 1913, also contains sixty-three verses subtitled "Ginteki aibō chō" ("Melancholy Strains of a Silver Flute"). The section takes its name from the second poem.

Like a silver flute,  
 This plaintive  
 Monotone fades  
 Into the distance –  
 Is it no more than a dream?

銀笛のごとも哀しく単調に過ぎもゆきにし夢なりしかな<sup>28</sup>

The faint notes of a flute, which appears here in a simile, carry the same sort of dreamy, even otherworldly sadness that they do in Kaita's "Nigiyaka na yūgure."

In the collection of the Mie Prefectural Art Museum is an early love letter, known in art history circles as the "Pink Love Letter" (*Pinku rabu retā*), which Kaita wrote to an unnamed person identified only as "kimi." This letter demonstrates that even Kaita's personal writing sometimes employs pseudo-symbolist, visual motifs like those in Hakushū's early poetry. Written in gray letters on brilliant pink paper, the letter is decorated with disconnected, wavy lines and a watercolor painting of a

<sup>27</sup> Kitahara Hakushū, *Hakushū zenshū*, vol. 2, 64. Higashi Shunrō mentions the similarity between this poem and Kaita's "A Lively Evening" in Higashi Shunrō, "Aka no Kaita, Aka no Hakushū," 148.

<sup>28</sup> Kitahara Hakushū, *Hakushū zenshū*, vol. 6, 14.

small figure sitting by a fountain. (See Figure 3.) Though the heavy watercolors obscure seven characters toward the middle of the letter, the majority of the text is legible.

Oh you!  
 Truly I cannot tell you  
 I am but one person yearning for you  
 My love is a beautiful electrical water fountain  
 In red □□□□□□□□ in silver  
 Spewing, rising, then raining down  
 Over the garden of my heart. There in the shade  
 I suppress my faint cries of unreciprocated love  
 The red moon rises faintly  
 Oh *kimi!* At least try to feel pity  
 For this longing of mine  
 (Do not be alarmed at reading this letter  
 Others can forgive my bad habit  
 Of writing this sort of thing...) Oh you, so generous!  
 Hide this in the depths of your smile!

Farewell for now,                      From the Red Demon

君よ  
 まことに君に告げまゐらせん  
 われは君を恋ひ慕ふ一人なり  
 わが恋は美しき電気噴水にして  
 くれなひに□□□□□□□□ 銀に、  
 絶えまもなくわが心の圃に吹き  
 上がり滴り落ちて われはそのかげに  
 片恋ひのなげきをほのかにぞする  
 なる。赤き月もほのかに上がるなり  
 君よせめてこの吾の思ひをあはれ  
 みたまへ。(されどこの文にびつくりし  
 給ふな。かかる君書いてみる事  
 わが悪しきくせと人も許せる事  
 なれば、)ただ寛大なる君よ  
 ただ君の微笑の底に秘しおかれよ。

さらばまた                      赤鬼より<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Mie Kenritsu Bijutsukan, *Murayama Kaita ten*, 181.

As elsewhere in Kaita's work, landscape – here a park with a central fountain that erupts with dazzling glory – serves as a metaphor for the author's emotions. Halfway through the letter, he begins to imagine himself, like the small figure drawn on the letter itself, within this garden of emotion lamenting his unrequited love. The red moon, which appears in the watercolor on the edge of the letter, adds a dark, eerily lovely touch to this metaphorical garden of passion, cloaked in the night of unreciprocated desire.

The letter shows that Kaita took pleasure in playing the part of the lonely lover whose feelings remain unrequited. Beneath the text of the letter, Kaita has written in pale roman letters, "Chotto kirei deshō" ("Rather lovely, don't you think?") as if particularly pleased with his work. He also has signed the letter "The Red Demon," coining a sobriquet for himself that describes himself as an *oni*, a creature that in Japanese legend often pursues its own desires with single-minded, animalistic devotion. This sobriquet represents a play on his given name – *kai*, the first character of his given name (槐), meaning the lucky tree *Sophora japonica*, contains on its right side the character *oni* (鬼) meaning "demon" – and suggests that Kaita willingly took on a decadent, desiring identity similar to that of the narrative persona in his early poetry.

The motif of a red moon in the pink love letter resembles an image from the fifty-first poem of Hakushū's "Danshō."

Red crescent moon,  
Red crescent moon –  
Today again lying in bed  
Your child blows his silver flute,  
How peaceful is his play!

色赤き三日月、  
色赤き三日月、  
今日もまた臥所に  
君が児は銀笛のおもちやをぞ吹く、  
やすらげきそのすきびよ。<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Kitahara Hakushū, *Hakushū zenshū*, vol. 2, 86; translation from Charles Edward Fox, "The Future in the Past," 76.

The moon hangs over a bed containing a child, who plays peacefully with a silver flute. As in Kaita's poem, the red moon adds a decadent, otherworldly touch to the calm scene. Fountains, like the one in the "Pink Love Letter," also appear as a frequent motif in Hakushū's early work. The poem "Fukiage no inshō" ("Impressions of a Fountain"), written in July 1908 and included in *Jashūmon*, centers around this motif. The first stanza gives a taste of the languorous, melancholy work.

The fountain's slow dripping —  
The depths of a misty park, the light of the setting sun  
The yellow murmur of the basin,  
All, now  
The color of a sweet sigh.

噴水のゆるきしたたり。 —  
霧しぶく苑の奥、夕日の光、  
水盤の黄なるさざめき、  
なべて、いま  
ものあまき嗟嘆の色。<sup>31</sup>

As the title of the poem suggests, the work gives a series of impressionistic glimpses of a fountain in a park at sunset. This verse, which incorporates a great deal of synesthetic description, describes the sound of the water lapping at the basin's edge as "yellow," and the whole scene appears the "color of a sweet sigh." Another poem, "Kōen no usugure" ("Dusk in the Park"), the first poem in the 1913 anthology *Tōkyō keibutsu shi oyobi sono ta* (*Scenes of Tokyo and Other Poems*), also describes a similar scene. The poem begins.

In the pale bluish, silver air,  
Water drips discreetly from a fountain,  
The dim light of dusk lingers for a moment,  
As a woman passes seductively by,  
the color of a fluffy feather boa.

ほの青き銀色の空気に、  
そことなく噴水の水はしたたり、  
薄明ややしばしさまかえぬほど、  
ふくらなる羽毛撲巻のいろなやましく女ゆきかひ。<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Kitahara Hakushū, *Hakushū zenshū*, vol. 1, 92–93.

In subsequent stanzas, the poem evokes the sights, smells, and sounds of a park at dusk – arc lights glowing in the mist, a train squealing in the silence, and the flickering lights casting “hysterical eyes” at the narrator. Throughout the poem, one sees the kinds of motifs also present in Kaita’s work – arc lamps, moonlight, shade, silver flutes, the prominent use of colors, and so on; however, the central conceit of the garden, the melancholic mood, and the artful looseness between individual elements of the scene most strongly resemble the pink love letter.

The image of gardens, and ruined gardens in particular, appears often in Kaita’s work. In 1913, Kaita produced a small handwritten, hand-stitched anthology of poetry which he called *Aoiro haien* (*The Ruined Garden in Green*) and dedicated to his “Prince,” Inō Kiyoshi. At the time, many anthologies of poetry, including *Jashūmon*, contained short introductory verses designed to set the tone for the work that follow. Kaita most likely wrote the following verse, which has become one of his most famous, in such a capacity.

I long in earnest for extravagance –  
For the extravagance of  
Sipping spirits in a garden  
Where one is overcome by a feeling  
Like the aroma of green plums

われ切に豪奢を思ふ  
青梅のにほひの如く  
感せまる園の日頃に  
酒精なむる豪奢を。<sup>32</sup>

The poem above does not describe Inō directly, but the image of hard, unripe, green plums with an inviting fragrance suggests a youthful rawness not unlike that of an adolescent youth who has not yet quite reached the peak of maturity. With its yearning for sensual, indulgent

pleasures beyond the narrator’s reach, the poem sets a tone of longing appropriate for poems about unrequited love.

The image of the ruined or abandoned garden (*haien*), which surfaces in *Aoiro haien*, also appears in a large number of other works. Just in the poems from 1913, one finds the image of the ruined garden in the poems “Chi ni shimite” (“Stained in Blood”), “Kieyuku saga” (“The Nature that Fades Away”), “Haien ni mitaru sakura ka” (“A Cherry Tree Seen in a Ruined Garden?”), and “Mi zo shimeru haien no haru” (“The Body Sinks into Spring in the Ruined Garden”), some of which were probably originally part of *Aoiro haien*.<sup>34</sup> Although numerous classical Japanese texts, such as *Ise monogatari* (*The Tale of Ise*) mention ruined gardens, the poet Miki Rofū had reintroduced it into the poetical lexicon with his 1909 anthology *Haien* (*The Ruined Garden*). Rofū once commented that he selected the image of the ruined garden to express his “feelings and poetic thoughts of a certain period of my youth” and that he had based the images in his poems on an unkempt garden near his home in Zoshigaya, Tokyo.<sup>35</sup> For Rofū as for Kaita, the garden served as a symbol representing the emotional landscape of the narrative persona. For instance, one of the best-known poems from Rofū’s *Haien* is “Sariyuku gogatsu no shi” (“A Poem for Departing May”), which describes the flora in a ruined garden as the narrator reflects with melancholy upon the rapid passing of time. Rofū, however, was not the only figure associated with the Aesthetic School to use this image. The image of the ruined garden also appears in poem number forty-seven of Hakushū’s “Fragments.”

Down the light rain comes, down it comes  
Over the green of the abandoned garden  
Singing faintly as it falls  
Oh poppy flowers, poppy flowers,  
Softly shall you burn...

廢れたる園のみどりに  
ふりそそぎ、ふりそそぎ、にほやかに小雨はうたふ。

<sup>32</sup> Kitahara Hakushū, *Hakushū zenshū*, vol. 3, 8; translation from Margaret Benton Fukasawa, *Kitahara Hakushū*, 56.

<sup>33</sup> Murayama Kaita, *Murayama Kaita zenshū*, 17. Incidentally, composer Nishimura Akira (1953– ) has produce a setting of this poem and a handful of others for female choir. Nishimura Akira, *Aoiro haien: Mubansō josei gashō no tame no, Murayama Kaita no shi ni yoru*, Op. 3 (Tokyo: Ongaku no tomo, 2000).

<sup>34</sup> The editors of *Kaita no utaeru* did not indicate which poems originally appeared where, and since the original manuscript of *Aoiro haien* has disappeared, one cannot know with certainty whether or not these poems were part of it or not.

<sup>35</sup> Itō Shinkichi, Itō Sei, Inoue Yasushi, et al. (eds.), *Doi Bansui, Susukida Kyūkin, Kumbara Ariake, Miki Rofū*, *Nihon no shiika* 2 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Sha, 1968) 305.

罌粟よ、罌粟よ、  
 やはらかに燃えもいでね.....<sup>36</sup>

The abandoned garden, full of verdant overgrowth, is charged with romantic overtones. This poem, number forty-seven in the sequence, forms the first of a sub-sequence about the narrator's feelings for the wife of another man, and the abandoned garden serves as a site where secret, unfulfilled passions are played out. This poetic resonance seems particularly appropriate for poems like Kaita's, which describe unrequited love.

#### CONCLUSION

As this paper has mentioned, synesthesia, which is often named as a characteristic of both French and Japanese symbolism, appears in some but not all of Hakushū's early work. Even in his early anthology *Jashūmon*, many poems are in a somewhat flatter, less opaque style dominated a preponderance of visual images connected by purposefully loose syntax. As a result of this looseness, the texts become what Roland Barthes has called "writerly texts," loosely organized strings of signifiers that invite the reader to create meaning through the organizing act of interpretation. This "aesthetic" style contains a high concentration of visual cues along with certain recurring motifs, such as instruments, gardens, and landscapes that serve as cues to emotional states. All of these motifs had figured prominently in the late nineteenth-century French poetry Hakushū and his compatriots in the Pan no Kai admired. Known for its pursuit of sensual beauty, the "aesthetic" style of Hakushū and his circle represents an important stage in the naturalization of European symbolism by Japanese writers, and it set the stage for later writers such as Kaita, who perhaps because of his own interest in the visual arts, employed a large number of visual cues in many of his early poems. Even though Kaita's writing never indicates that he lifted these motifs directly from Hakushū, there is no question that Kaita was writing in an era when the "aesthetic" style Hakushū represented was at its height.



Figure 1: Murayama Kaita, *Inō zō* (Portrait of Inō, About 1913)  
 Watercolor on paper, Shinano Drawing Museum  
 Source: Mie Kenritsu Bijutsukan, *Murayama Kaita ten*, 23.

<sup>36</sup> Kitahara Hakushū, *Hakushū zenshū*, vol. 2, 84.



Figure 2: *Ibari suru razō* (*Nude Monk Urinating*, 1915)  
Oil on canvas, Shinano Drawing Museum  
Source: Mie Kenritsu Bijutsukan, *Murayama Kaita ten*, 50.



Figure 3: Murayama Kaita, Detail from the "Pink Love Letter."  
Watercolor on paper, Mie Prefectural Art Museum  
Source: Mie Kenritsu Bijutsukan, *Murayama Kaita ten*, Cover.

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