

Sadakichi Hartmann

Selected Poems



Sadakichi Hartmann

November 8, 1867 [Dejima, Japan] –

November 22, 1944 [Saint Petersburg, Florida]

Sed ut perspiciatis unde omnis iste natus error sit voluptatem accusantium doloremque laudantium, totam rem aperiam, eaque ipsa quae ab illo inventore veritatis et quasi architecto beatae vitae dicta sunt explicabo. Nemo enim ipsam voluptatem quia voluptas sit aspernatur aut odit aut fugit, sed quia consequuntur magni dolores eos qui ratione voluptatem sequi nesciunt. Neque porro quisquam est, qui dolorem ipsum quia dolor sit amet, consectetur, adipisci velit, sed quia non numquam eius modi tempora incidunt ut labore et dolore magnam aliquam quaerat voluptatem. Ut enim ad minima veniam, quis nostrum exercitationem ullam corporis suscipit laboriosam, nisi ut aliquid ex ea commodi consequatur? Quis autem vel eum iure reprehenderit qui in ea voluptate velit esse quam nihil molestiae consequatur, vel illum qui dolorem eum fugiat quo voluptas nulla pariatur?

Drifting Flowers of the Sea and Other Poems. Unpublished, 1904.

My Rubaiyat. St. Louis: privately printed, 1913.

My Rubaiyat, third revised edition. San Francisco: privately printed, 1916.

Tanka and Haikai: Japanese Rhythms. San Francisco: privately printed, 1916.

Collected Poems. UK: Little Island Press, 2016.

TANKA VII.

OH. climb to my lips,
Frail muse of the amber wine!
Joy to him who sips
Cups of fragrant sake wine
Flowing from some fount divine.

TANKA VIII.

IF pleasures be mine
As aeons and aeons roll by,
Why should I repine
That under some future sky
I may live as butterfly ?

HAIKAI V

Oh, red maple leaves

There are more of you these eves

Than ever grew on trees!

HAIKAI VII

What mortal can write
Of the blossoms' dawn-rose flight
Down Yoshino Mount!

HAIKAI XI

If herons could fly

Noiselessly across the sky

They would look like snow.

HAIKAI XIV

Eyes foresee at noon

Your beauty-oh Miidera (temple)

Courted by the moon!

TO A.T. *

What lives in me yet
 ('I died so long ago')
Is merely a thought of you
 That once was oriflame and victory true

All else I forgot :
 All we have been, rapture and dream,
Turned to sand-drifts, wind shifts,
 Desert pictures mistily seen

Like a faded leaf, gold dust a gleam,
 Like a book long lost, its thoughts a stream;
 Like a face I knew
 But cannot recall,
 Like a song of youth
 That meant life and all,

Only one thought of you
 Could not be touched by death,
It is still throbbing within me
 As some wind's vague warm breath.

* Anne Throop (1869—??)

SNOWFALL

Monotonous, frail flakes are descending,
Feathers from cloud pillows drifting down,
A mist-veil gray heaven is sending
To cover life in field and town.

Feathers from cloud pillows drifting down
As daylight starts to falter and wane,
To cover all life in field and town
Like sleep relieving the body's strain.

As daylight starts to falter and wane,
White foliage, falling soft and faint,
Like sleep redeeming the body's strain
Your frost leaves conquer all earthborn taint.

White foliage falling soft and faint
From what frozen forest do you hail
Mist flakes blurring all earth worn taint -
Vague journeys of the heart that leave no trail!

From what dank gaunt region do you hail
Pale ember sparks from memory's crest -
Dim journeys of heart-rime that left no trail -
Strewing the present with deepest rest!

Sky jewels scattered from memory's crest,
Infinite patterns of spectral wear
Strewing the present with lethean rest
Why are you crowding the ashen air!

Infinite patterns of spectral wear
Placid and bright in your feathery flight
Why do you sport the ashen air
And turn this world so silent and white!

Snow ghosts, star hosts, in feathery flight,
Globe crystals, summoned to break without pain

Burying all life in field and town -
Do you fleck and streak the ashen air
To impart to storm voids some argent refrain
By painting this world so silent and white!

OBITUARY

The old Mission bells are ringing! Sadakichi Hartmann is dying!
the old mission bells unring for ages are vibrating in tune
on their own chord: Sadakichi Hartmann is dying just a sceneshift
the lost record of some lay in a mystery play From Now here
To Naught words leave no trace whether uttered by extra or star
few thoughts are on par

The gulls are a-flutter the sun is aflame white clouds clut-:
ter and build a form-world that puts art to shame the old Mission
bells with many a clang and clank try to outclamor the
breaker's roar the crush of the waves against the shore
foam banners are flying Sadakichi is dying

Big 'tinkling Anne' astir with the past clear carillons of Flanders
where she was cast her hour has come she breaks loose from
the rafter and as in a grave disaster shoots down with a clattering
clash a sentence broken closed with a dash most folks are
dead before they die still alive to beloved ones to others it does
not matter much whether they were ever there or not.

The wind sweeps in form oversea ha ha haws* at the bells
and makes them ring and sing and swing with a wider fling:
Sadakichi Hartmann is dying NOW dissonance reigns a riot
of strains: most of life spells insanity the remainder is
vanity nobody cares nobody dares wars unroll youth pays
the toll empires rise pass away poverty prevails disease
has its sway Nature stays the human race decays
abuse of Force is the cause of all perturbation
does death hold a secret and revelation?

The old Mission bells have no answer they shiver and toss
whimper and weep as they woo sleep hush! Sadakichi Hart
is gone a new scene is on
sounds like flowers drop one by one
Bing! Bang! Bung! Bing! Bong!
Bung! Bing! Bing! Bong! Bang!

