After the Gentle Poet Kobayashi Issa

By Robert Hass

New Year’s morning—
everything is in blossom!
    I feel about average.

    A huge frog and I
staring at each other,
    neither of us moves.

    This moth saw brightness
in a woman’s chamber—
    burned to a crisp.

    Asked how old he was
the boy in the new kimono
    stretched out all five fingers.

    Blossoms at night,
like people
    moved by music

    Napped half the day;
no one
    punished me!

Fiftieth birthday:

    From now on,
It’s all clear profit,
    every sky.

    Don’t worry, spiders,
I keep house
    casually.

    These sea slugs,
yet just don’t seem
    Japanese.

Hell:

    Bright autumn moon;
pond snails crying
    in the saucepan.


Source: Field Guide (1973)