

俵万智

TAWARA MACHI

JAPAN (1962–)

LANGUAGE: JAPANESE

TANKA (UNTITLED)

誰からも

dare kara mo

忘れ去られた

wasure sarareta

ような夜

yoo na yoru

隣の部屋に

tonari no heya ni

鳴りベルやまず

nari beru yamazu

(A *rōmaji* version has been included below the Japanese characters.)



Tawara Machi is a contemporary Japanese writer, translator, and poet. She is credited with revitalizing the *tanka* for modern Japanese audiences. At age twenty-six, Tawara took Japan by storm with the publication of her first work: a book of *tanka* entitled *Sarada kinenbi*, or *Salad Anniversary*, in English. She became an overnight celebrity. Readers inspired by Tawara's poems have sent her tens of thousands of letters and more than 200,000 *tanka*, over a thousand of which she has compiled and published. The oldest contributor is a ninety-one-year-old man, the youngest an eleven-year-old girl.

The *tanka*, like the *haiku*, is a form of classical Japanese poetry. Each *tanka* has two parts. The first three lines of the poem are five, seven, and five syllables, respectively, and make up the upper part of the poem. The lower part consists of two more lines, each with seven syllables.

TRANSLATOR'S GLOSSARY			
CHARACTER	RŌMAJI	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
ベル	beru (n.)	object with ringing sound	bell, chime, ringer
誰からも	dare kara mo (prep. + n.)	being beside or close to somebody or something else	by everyone, by anyone, everyone, anyone
部屋	heya (n.)	space; part of a building	room, chamber, apartment
鳴り	nari (adj.)	continuing sound of a bell	ringing, chiming, humming
に	ni (prep.)	indicates general position or location in order to be precise about the exact physical location	at, on, by
の	no (poss.)	indicates connection with or ownership	of, or indicates ownership by use of an apostrophe— i.e., <i>neighbor's</i>
隣	tonari (n.)	somebody or something nearby	neighbor, neighboring
忘れ去られた	wasure sarareta (v. + past part.)	not remember; leave something behind	forgotten, the forgotten, has forgotten, has not remembered
やまず	yamazu (v.)	does not end	doesn't stop, doesn't cease, doesn't quit, doesn't end
ような	yoo na (prep.)	when two things or two people are similar or share some of the same features, qualities, or characteristics	like, such as, such
夜	yoru (n.)	daily period of darkness	night, evening, hours of darkness

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

PHRASE BY PHRASE

誰からも

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yoo na yoru _____

隣の部屋に

tonari no heya ni _____

鳴りベルやまず

nari beru yamazu _____

REFLECTING AND FINDING MEANING

Group Member Names:

Date: _____

Pick a scribe for the group, and work together to answer the questions.

What are the best parts of this translation, and why do you think they are good?

What elements of the original poem did you lose in the translation? What did you manage to keep?

Did you achieve something new with your translation, and if so, does it make sense in the poem or not?
