

Translations from Japanese to English by Grayson Adams
Kaku Wakako

A little more Just a little more

like a clenched fist when it opens
someday the buds will unfold
the soil will begin to move

hold on a little longer
just a little longer

inside winter's freezing wind spring is lurking
like a cat
behind a pillar

like a crying face once it's healed
in time the lingering snow will also disappear
the water will start to run

hold on a little longer
just a little longer

compress the coil spring can be endured
like the universe
it released a long time ago

A Crossing

we had just met and I already liked you
happy to hold hands fall into silence
I'm not sure why we met but
I felt like I knew you

that crystalline summer afternoon
the path I was on and the path you were on
met at a crossing
in the middle there was a fallen cicada shell

because I couldn't tell you not to forget
we stopped to face each other and smiled
so we would meet again one day
we waved and said goodbye

the evening's calm air warmed my cheeks
the path you were on and the path I was on
continued past that crossing
and contrails stretched in the sky

These Trees are Green

these trees are green
their branches reach toward an unseen tomorrow
the green of trees is
the color of joy when I start my morning

I don't want to cry
light like a dream gathers
at the edges of my vision

these trees are green
wind rises from their core
the green of trees is
the aura of a boy who never stops growing

even though I have nothing
with all of my crying heart
I want to reach out with all my branches

Apple

just the right shape for the palm of your hand
just the right red for your lips

just the right curve for your cheek
just the right weight for your stomach

toss it into the blue sky
then toss back up again and again

apple that is an *apple*
there's nothing more to ask

apple that is an *apple*
there's nothing more to say

breathe on it and rub it clean
your chest becomes small and bright

memory is just the right sweetness
sadness is just the right texture

there *is* an enduring love, right?
you can walk as you hold it, right?

apple that is an *apple*
there's nothing more to ask
apple that is an *apple*
there's nothing more to say

Grayson Adams

Nietzsche in the Produce Aisle

After Kaku Wakako

I was going to pick up an apple.
I really was, but something stopped me as I reached for it.

A spiky thing— bright pink and bigger than my hand.
And I thought,
Whatever doesn't kill me makes me stronger.
Yet upon further inspection, I realized its spikes were wilting.
It was a bit soft as well, but I was too intrigued to let go.

On my way home, I couldn't perform the usual apple actions,
like polishing it with moist breath or tossing it in the air.
It was too ovular. Too egg-shaped.
And I thought,
Perfection comes at a high price here on earth, anyway.
So I held it close.

When the time came to devour it, I had zero expectations.
Even so, I cut it open, and it was unlike any fruit I had ever seen.
A multitude of black seeds set in white flesh.
It was perfectly ripe, as if it had been waiting for me.
And I thought,
The most noble beauty is the kind that infiltrates slowly.

I peeled off its thick skin and placed a slice in my mouth.
It was not sweet like an apple.
It was a modest sweetness, a coy blush of sweetness, that suited me far better.
And I thought,
You have a heart, but you're afraid to show it.
So I became fond of the shriveled spikes
that you had grown, but no longer used.