

And here's another Japanese word that poets might think about—*kokai*—a feeling of regret after reading a poem, a consequence of the poet having failed to think or feel sufficiently deeply in the composition of the poem.

MP: Can you comment on the importance of good translations?

JS: The last fifty years have seen an incredible explosion of translations of poetry into English, and not just from the Chinese and Japanese. I don't think there is any other country in the world that could match us in the sheer diversity of languages and poets who have been translated into English. One of the interesting qualities of the English language is its willingness to adopt into its own lexicon words from other languages. French, by contrast, has a horror of mongrelizing the purity of its language. But not English; we just soak up foreign words, and the result is we have by far the largest vocabulary of any other language in the world. And just as we welcome new words, our poets have been infusing their poems with influences of other poets from all over the world. Can you imagine the poverty of imagination from not having read Lorca, or Milosz, or Rimbaud, Neruda, Seferis, Sappho, and so many, many others? For a while the most popular poetry book in the country was Coleman Barks's translations of Rumi, a Sufi mystic! It's impossible, of course, to match exactly the sounds and music in the foreign language of one poem with that of your own, though sometimes if the languages are related, say as in the Romance languages, you might get close. But you *can* bring across the imagery, the spirit, the tone, the subject matter, the attitude, the meaning, the purpose, the uniqueness of the original.

Let me end with a little piece from the fourteenth century Zen monk, Ikkyō Sojun, who said: *Ame furaba fure, kaze fukaba fuke* ("If it rains, let it rain; if the wind blows, let it blow"), which connects with Bashō's lifetime of trying to "learn how to listen as things speak for themselves."

Maggie Paul is the author of *Borrowed World*, a collection of poems published by Hummingbird Press, and the chapbook *Stones from the Basket of Others* (Black Dirt Press). Her work has appeared in *Rattle*, *Poetry Miscellany*, the *Drexel University Journal*, *Porter Gulch Review*, and *phren-Z*. She earned an MA at Tufts University and her MFA at Vermont College. Paul teaches writing at Cabrillo College. She lives in Santa Cruz, California.

TINA NEWBERRY

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