

DONNA BOURNE

Water Like Glass, 2011
oil on canvas, 12 x 12 in.



courtesy: the artist

GORO TAKANO

The Remains of Remains

At your favorite café you are about to order another cup of coffee, while reading a huge philosophy book.

The café is located in the center of a city with a mundane name that starts with the word “New.”

Inside, a number of fluorescent lights are glaring.

The page you’ve been reading so far explains a wacky religious principle that every human being needs to be a prey to unexpected violence to receive ultimate redemption.

You’ve been reading this mosaic hardcover to write a book in the near future—a book about yourself.

When, putting the book on your table, you try to ask for a waiter, an aged, barefoot hobo-looking man opens the door.

Huddling in some layers of rugged overcoats and wearing a couple of soiled scarves, he walks quietly into the café, which is far cooler due to the air-conditioning than the outside.

The café is now quite crowded, and all the customers (except you and a mother and her baby sitting at the farthest corner from you) are a bunch of beautifully dressed, sexually attractive, aristocratically handsome men and women.

In your eyes, though, they all look like fancy-looking mannequins neglected in a summer house.

You say to yourself, “The snobs never stop longing for other people’s property and feeding on the anger of others, while I’m not like them.”

You can neither see the young mother breastfeeding her baby nor hear her singing a tranquil lullaby.

On your table, beside the philosophy book, there is a pile of medications and a diary riddled with your everyday punctual entries on your own temperature, blood pressure, body fat percentage, pulse rate, et cetera. “Hospitals are my enemy,” you say silently.

With a thick book tucked under his arm, the hobo, with a deeply wrinkled face, begins to walk very slowly among the crowd.

He seems to be looking for an empty space, and the only untaken chair in the café is right in front of you.

He must be a mongrel seasonal worker or something. “He is nothing but the exotic,” you even emphasize in your mind.

Nobody else casts a glance at the hobo, and he keeps dragging his feet among them silently, like—your imagination begins to twist up—just like an ancient haiku poet traveling alone from one place to another.

You start supposing that this haiku poet must have been born in so many places that he hasn’t obtained any roots.

You say to yourself he probably used to be, say, in Patagonia, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Alaska. He used to live, sometimes, in adobe pueblos, surrounded by micaceous windows, or stay in a tiny village on a mesa. He even used to walk barefoot through so many deserts, so many ice fields, vast tundra, immense plains of alabaster, the horizon nothing but minerals, an endless-looking wasteland.