

Chapter 1 : 39 results in SearchWorks catalog

Mutsuo Takahashi (徳田 武十郎, *Takahashi Mutsuo*, born December 15,) is one of the most prominent and prolific male poets, essayists, and writers of contemporary Japan, with more than three dozen collections of poetry, several works of prose, dozens books of essays, and several major literary prizes to his name.

University of Minnesota Press, , pp. Translated now for the first time, it greatly enhances our understanding of both the man and his work. Structured, according to its original presentation, as a series of related essays, rather than a chronological account, the book is poetically original in its wandering associations and replete with detail. So slyly arranged is it that the reader has no sense of incompleteness and is fully able to absorb the meaning of each incident or recollection. And this, in truth, is how memory works, shifting in significance. It is not a matter of simply remembering or forgetting, but sometimes of recasting the past to suit our present viewpoint. The poet is alert to this right from the beginning. Born into a family of day laborers in northern Kyushu, Takahashi lost his father when he was days old and was raised mainly by his grandmother, who left him alone much of the time while she went out to work, or passed him on to other relatives or neighbors. His mother had left suddenly for China, to be with her lover, but was kind to the child when she returned. One older sister was adopted, while another died. Unlike some maltreated children, Takahashi grows past the marks that childhood might have left upon him, and though he tells the tale, he does not make this the theme and limitation of his work. Rather, he describes the circumstances as they were and tries, with some imagination, to understand them. Later, as we know, he had a successful career in advertising, which became the springboard for his success as a poet, until he retired to become a full-time writer. Words are an important part of this, and we have full descriptions of the tales told to the child by older people, the dialect they used, the songs they sang to him. His extraordinary recollection, its vividness and detail, resembles the autobiographies of childhood by the English poet James Kirkup written about the same age. The difference is that Kirkup, though working-class, did not live in grinding poverty and had both his parents. In the absence of a father, Takahashi felt great affection for an uncle, who also died relatively young. Often alone, he sought refuge in his own imaginings, making mud-pies out of dust and urine. On one memorable occasion, his neglectful mother came to blows and suffered bruises on his behalf. The characters in the book are distinct and vividly depicted, and appear in a series of bewildering events, such as the end of the war, that are recollected through the eyes of childhood. Poetically linking his views of the sunset and the sea to what was happening around him, insofar as he could understand it, Takahashi invokes a world that has now mostly disappeared, along with its bitterness and hunger. Yet it was also a rich world, for those who managed to survive it. And what was the secret of survival? Near the end he writes: David Burleigh comes from the north of Ireland, teaches and writes, and has lived in Tokyo for more than 30 years.

Chapter 2 : Japan | Whereabouts Press

The Snow of Memory. Mutsuo Takahashi. Translated by Jeffrey Angles. 1. I have a photograph. This photo, which has browned with age, is taller than it is wide and has.

In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: This photo, which has browned with age, is taller than it is wide and has roughly the same proportions as a playing card. In it stands my mother. She is leaning upon a waist-high set of shelves against the wall of what appears to be the interior of a photography studio. She is wearing a coat of iridescent material over an under-kimono decorated with a striped pattern, and her hair is up in the rounded marumage hairdo traditionally worn by married women. On her right is a little boy with his hair cropped close. That is me as a boy, probably three years old. I am seated on top of the shelves with my back against the wall, and I am wearing a white turtleneck sweater under a three-piece suit that looks too grown-up for my age. Here and there, little flecks of black and white are visible against the background of the suit. You can see them on my jacket, vest, and pants. These little flecks of black and white look like snow. The white remind me of snowflakes falling from the sky to the earth below, and the black look like dull bits of snow that have fallen to the ground and become soiled. Beside me on top of the shelf is a black vase. Even though it is almost the same size as my head, it is positioned so that it looks as if I am holding it in my right hand. Inside are several plum branches covered with blossoms. Come to think of it, the petals of the plum blossoms also look like snowflakes floating in the air. As I remember it, snow was falling that day. At the same time, however, part of the cloudy sky seemed to be swollen with light, almost like the insides of a frothy, spoiled egg. Snow was gently falling from the spot where the heavens harbored the light, but when the flakes reached the dirty patch of earth in front of our house, they simply disappeared. Likewise, when they fell in the water beyond the embankment on the far side of our yard, they turned the color of the sky and vanished in the murky water. Look at the newlywed! First Mother got in, then I climbed onto her lap. Once we were situated, the driver threw a worn-out fuzzy quilt over my lap. He lowered the hood of the rickshaw over us to shield us from the weather, then started to pull the rickshaw forward. In the center of the hood of the rickshaw was a celluloid window that allowed us to peek at the world outside. The celluloid of the window had turned slightly yellow and taken on an irregular warp, perhaps from weathering the wind and rain. Through the yellow, warped window, I watched the snow fall in a twisted trajectory toward the earth. The rickshaw climbed up and down hills, crossed railroad tracks, and passed through streets lined with houses. Each time the rickshaw rolled up an incline, down a slope, or across a flat stretch of ground, I sensed the change You are not currently authenticated. View freely available titles:

Chapter 3 : A portrait of the poet as a child | The Japan Times

30 MUTSUO TAKAHASHI The Snow of Memory 1 I have a photograph. This photo, which has browned with age, is taller than it is wide and has roughly the same proportions as a playing card.

Thank you very much for letting me interview you today. Sure, at that time, I was living in Kyushu. One day, I was walking down the street when a man came over and beckoned to me to walk along with him. As we were crossing a bridge over a river, he started to touch my penis and showed his to me. I became very aroused by that. I really liked the man. I suppose I was about four at the time. I still remember his name clearly. His name was Egawa Hiroaki-chan. I wonder if we would cause trouble for him if we put his name in print Photo by Hanzawa Jun Takahashi: Well, he probably has passed away by now. He was about ten years older than I was. Actually, he was in grade six then, so perhaps he was only around eight years older. Did that sort of thing continue? Well, after the first experience How should I put this? I was really fond of older boys, you know, the male upperclassmen at school. Well, that was really more psychological one, I guess. Indeed, he was really important to me. Perhaps I have just blown him up to unusually large proportions in my memory. Can you tell me more about the things you did in Kyushu where you lived? Were there some places for you to hook up with other sexually like-minded people? I had relations with a couple of men whom I met there and some schoolmates when I was small, but I never went to places where men would go to meet each other. When I first came to Tokyo, I found out that such places exist. But anyways, I was really interested in that sort of activity. Can you tell me what you thought when you saw those places in Tokyo for the first time? In Tokyo, I was stunned by the huge number of bars, movie theaters, and saunas where - what should I call them? And you know I was young back then, so once I got to know those places, I became a repeat customer. Were all those places in one specific area or were they scattered around the city? They were all over. And not to mention, people sometimes did things inside of trains too. Most of the places I describe in that novel were places that I actually visited. But there was always a kernel of truth that reflected my own experiences. Back then, there was no fear of AIDS or anything so people went ahead and did whatever they wanted [Moment of silence] There were places where people gathered to seek sexual contacts, but sometimes, it just happened in other places too For instance, you might just start doing things with someone in the elevator of a department store in the Ginza, or someone might pick you up on the street, and so on. You say that people would just pick each other up, but how did they do that? Were there certain buzz words or something that people would use to get the message across? Anyway, you published your anthology of poems, Bara no ki, nise no koibito-tachi [Rose Tree, Fake Lovers] after you moved to Tokyo, right? At the time, I was really interested in homoeroticism so most of my poems ended up being about that subject. I just ran into him one day and decided on the spot to ask. He was kind enough to take me up on my request. Yet in his essay, he wrote that my anthology had been written by a gay man for gay men. I was just writing in a way that came naturally to me. Later on, I was told by people from various countries that my book of homoerotic poetry came at an unusually early point in world literature. It was a time when not many books like that were available. When I heard that, I wondered if it was true. The collection just came together naturally. When I published it, I sent copies to various people. Among them was the novelist Mishima Yukio. One day I got a telephone call. It was he saying he wanted to meet me in person. Mishima called you out of the blue? After that, we got along quite well, and he even wrote a long essay to include in my next anthology of poems. Can you describe your relationship with Mishima? Was his relationship toward you like that of mentor or was it something else? It is hard to describe. I thought of him as my literary senior. In Japanese there is a word called keiji which indicates the kind of respect that you have toward a senior - not the kind of respect one finds in a mentor-student relationship, but the kind of respect one feels toward an older brother. I think that word best explains my relationship with Mishima. He was a person whoâ€”how shall I put it? Instead, what he taught me had to do with how to get along with people, how to interact with society, and that kind of thing. When he was young, people sometimes helped him out with his works. In my case as well, editors did a good amount of revision on my works. He had a review in the newspaper Asahi Shinbun back then, and he wrote about my collection of

poems. He wrote some nice comments about my work. According to Mishima, that writer was Shinoda Hajime. You might find photos of writers in his review time to time, but he never wrote about poems. Most of the reviews were about novels. That was a general pattern in the world of Japanese literary reviews—lots of reviews of fiction, but not poetry. Therefore, when a review of my poetry appeared in the newspaper with my photo, it probably surprised a lot of people. Do you think the reason for that surprise was related to the rareness of the theme of your work? That was part of it, but rather than the theme, the review emphasized the literary excellence of the work itself. After getting to know Mishima, he must have introduced you to various friends of his. He was a kind fellow so he put me in touch with many different people. I encountered many people thanks to him. It seemed as though you and Mishima were surrounded with people who had a special interest in matters of sexuality - people like Shibusawa Tatsuhiko, [the contemporary female poet] Shiraishi Kazuko and others. Given that situation, we were interested in bringing the subject to the forefront and not hiding it. You were quite close to Mishima at the time that he committed his dramatic suicide [by ritual disembowment] in [on the grounds of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces]. Since you were so close to him, I wonder if you had any sense that he would do something like that Takahashi: Actually there was something that, when viewed in hindsight, did seem to be foreshadowing his suicide. It was about two months before he died. Mishima asked me out for a drink one night with Morita Masakazu, the boy who also committed suicide along with him. So we all went out and had a bite of blowfish to eat. I came a little late, and by the time I got there, the two of them were already drunk and had bright red faces. However, this twenty-five year old lad Morita is a man worth remembering. That day, after we finished our drinks, we ended up going to a sauna. The three of you? We all stripped and got in. Oh, this was all while Morita was off washing himself somewhere else. For him, Mishima was probably more of a political and philosophical companion rather than a writer. So maybe he meant that he had never met a writer like me before. I just remember what he said. I also remember how beautiful the stars were in the sky that evening. That was how it should have been. But I do think it was wrong that he got Morita all wrapped up in his death. Morita was only in his mid-twenties, and his future was full of potential, but Mishima took it all away. That story made the rounds in the press. I cannot prove or disprove that rumor, but there were articles about it in magazines, some of which were signed by the authors, so there might have been some truth to the story. If so, it is possible that Mishima thought of the act as a sort of ceremony that celebrated the bonds between the two of them as men, and Mishima told Morita what to do. What is your reading on that?

Chapter 4 : Project MUSE - The Snow of Memory

For a translation of one essay from this volume, see Takahashi Mutsuo, 'The Snow of Memory,' trans. Jeffrey Angles, Japan: A Traveler's Literary Companion, ed. Jeffrey Angles and J. Thomas Rimer, Berkeley: Whereabouts Press, forthcoming

Before I reached your knees I was already your sister I climbed your sturdy legs Or from between your crescent-shaped horns I looked at the distant ocean From field to field where the wind blazes We ran together I streaming my hair behind me At night we slept, holding each other Belly to belly, thigh to thigh Until the terrible sunrise

Translated from the Japanese by Hiroaki Sato from Mino, Watashi no Oushi, To a Boy you are a hidden watering place under the trees where, as the day darkens, gentle beasts with calm eyes appear one after another. Even if the sun drops flaming at the end of the fields where grass stirs greenly and a wind pregnant with coolness and night-dew agitates your leafy bush, it is only a premonition. The tree of solitude that soars with ferocity, crowned with a swirling night, still continues in your dark place. For a while through the trees your face, now a pulpy mess, chased me, closed eyelashes trebling as if they wanted to say something. But I no longer envy your gentle throat. What has come between you and me: Hot morning, throat gurgling, I drink water. Sweat turns into beads, blankets my forehead, and trembles. Reflected in the sweat beads, a breeze from a tamarisk is trembling. I take a plow in my arms of solitude and, in the deep noon, become a man. Because of its behavior the right hand is forever cursed. Among the roads, a road with particularly heavy traffic of carts and horses. Endlessly crisscrossed by the ruts that come and go, my face will have deep wrinkles imitating agony chiseled into it. My flesh will rot like a seed potato and, rotting, become transparent; but because, blocked by the hard surface of the road, it cannot sprout, in the dark earth my face, my phallus, will meaninglessly multiply. Rather, from the sinful hand that was cut off and buried I will bud as a new plant, but the multiplying me in the earth will never take part in it. I will become a single tree, spread in the light, and as a testimony to myself putrefying in the earth, to myself that was once in the sunlight, will flutter, and blaze, in one spot in the ravaged landscape. Of that dark blazing face of that dark blazing day, I now exist as a clumsy copy. If, to spotlight the manner of its golden embodiment, the plate on which the hunk of cheese is placed is an ordinary plate of tin, and where the tin plate is a casual wood table, what will be the manner of my being with knife in hand, in front of the table? I, as poet, witness this embodiment of gold. Because it is said that to witness as poet must be more impersonal than to witness as eater, before the plate of cheese, my beard is an impersonal beard, my wet teeth and tongue are impersonal teeth and tongue, even the lifted knife is an impersonal knife. But a base one ordered to sing of heroes, I cannot have a face, however ordinary. Like a photo of the hateful man an abandoned woman tore into shreds, My face is torn apart and lost in advance. Faceless, holding in both hands a lyre quite like a face, on a hill with a view of the field shining with battle dust, under a plane tree, or on a boulder of a cape overlooking the sea where triremes come and go, I sit for thousands of years, I just continue to sit. The odes that, faceless, I sing in praise of passing heroes overflow as beautiful blood from the chest would I had with the lyre. The glittering liquid that spurts out of my holy procreative center will not be received into that contractile interior, which is eternally female, but spill, and keep spilling, on the cold lifeless ground, so my sons, who are my shadow, will as Little Leeches make a round of the earth, make a round of the water labyrinth at the bottom of the earth, make a round of the crisscross paths inside the tree, and, ejected from the skyward mouth of every leaf at the tip of the tree, will drift aimlessly in the empty blue sky and become lost, so my face should have been what my sons of the endlessly continuing glittering links of light began to weave and ended weaving, so the overflowing light is behind me, not before me. My face, the whole face as one large mouth of darkness, in the overflowing, spilling light, is voicelessly shouting. Be afraid of fish that are soul-shaped. Be afraid of fish that are more aged than man or tortoise. Be afraid of fish that came into being when water did. Be afraid of fish that know every strand of bog moss, yet keep silent about it. Be afraid of fish that are more shadowy than the shadow in the water which is more dreamy than the dream. Be afraid of fish that silently slip in and out of your nightly dream. Be afraid of fish that remain in the water even when they mate. Be afraid of fish whose gills continue

to move even while asleep. Be afraid of fish that move their mouths, afloat, with their air bladders, in watery heaven. Be afraid of fish, that are softer than lovers when caught. Be afraid of fish that shed human tears when broiled on fire. Be afraid of fish that are your fathers, that are your mothers. Be afraid of fish that occupy your entirety the morning after you were bored by fish. Be afraid of fish that remain fish-shaped even after turning into bones. As for the fish bones, put them on your palms and return them to the water, going down, barefoot, to the beach where your sewage pipe empties itself. My dried-up small face is half rotten in the darkness of earth. Extending, transparent and arched, from the black, cold putrefaction, are the buds of the disease. When the wind becomes warm, the feeble wheat seedlings catch fever at once. I am kneaded with water, baked in ovens, and, as shabby noodles, carried into mouths with rotten teeth. The left-overs are thrown, with saliva, into vats, and are made to ferment grumblingly. I am disfigured life that is poured out from man into woman at the end of travels of sufferings. I am great death that fills that disfigured life. Take me from this seed pot.

Chapter 5 : The PIP (Project for Innovative Poetry) Blog: Takahashi Mutsuo

The Snow of Memory The Snow of Memory Takahashi, Mutsuo M U T S U O T A K A H A S H I I I have a photograph. This photo, which has browned with age, is taller than it is wide and has roughly the same proportions as a playing card.

Chapter 6 : Mutsuo Takahashi Obituary - Honolulu, Hawaii - racedaydvl.com

Readers of On Freedom: Spirit, Art, and State will remember the excerpt from poet Takahashi Mutsuo's haunting memoir, The Snow of Memory. This winter we are publishing his haiku and his literary sketches of his home in the seaside city of Zushi.

Chapter 7 : Twelve Views from the Distance – University of Minnesota Press

In this film, Takahashi reads from his memoir _Twelve Views from the Distance_ about his difficult early life in a poor family in KyÅ«shÅ« during the era of the Japanese empire and war.

Chapter 8 : Mutsuo Takahashi - Wikipedia

It is magnificent that in this book, Twelve Views from the Distance, the poet Mutsuo Takahashi has managed to achieve firm prose that, while unmistakably the work of a poet, shines with a black luster much like a set of drawers crafted by a master of old.

Chapter 9 : Intersections: Interview with Takahashi Mutsuo

"It is magnificent that in this book, Twelve Views from the Distance, the poet Mutsuo Takahashi has managed to achieve firm prose that, while unmistakably the work of a poet, shines with a black luster much like a set of drawers crafted by a master of old.