

Greetings

from the Editor

Admittedly, there are quite a few Montserrats located all over the globe. In the context of this literary review, however, the name Montserrat will hopefully evoke that incandescent, and at times, terrifying terrain the soul inhabits.

It is our editorial staff's intention to publish the work of emerging as well as established writers. The voices will be diverse, yet unified in their consistent search for clarity, sensitivity, whimsy, and wisdom. We believe the literature we feature will both ignite and capture that epiphanic spark that illuminates the path home where mindfulness ennobles our hearts and awe refashions the very way in which we relate to the world around us. It is our sincerest hope our readers will find within *TMR's* pages, a compassionate hand extended, a perception tweaked, a reality reinvented. So welcome. May your pilgrimage through our pages be a satisfying, memorable, and ongoing one

Lindley Williams Hubbell: a memoir by Yoko Danno

He was like an ironstone, with the base (the western culture and literature) buried deep underground. Myself being a 'traveler' with only a small compass (intuition), without a map, I felt sometimes a need to keep a certain distance from him so that my 'compass' wouldn't approach too near to the iron. He spurred me to write, with praises, like a good horse-trainer.

I first met him sometime in the early spring of 1967, when my professor-friend Hisao Kanaseki took me to his house, in semi-Western style, on the top of Kujo-yama, a hill at the eastern end of Kyoto. Kanaseki-sensei had told me that he was an accomplished poet and scholar, with piercing eyes, although he was highly humorous. I was prepared to see a masterful professor/poet. Hubbell-sensei appeared at the door, wearing a tanzen [padded kimono] over a black shirt and a pair of trousers. He was stoop-shouldered, no taller than a medium-sized Japanese. He bowed deeply to us and said to me, "kechina yaro de gozansu" – meaning, "I am a humble and worthless fellow," which is a greeting that yakuza [Japanese gang] exchange at a first meeting. His dark eyes were mischievous and lively. We chatted in his living room, surrounding an old iron stove with a pipe going up to the ceiling. I remember he mainly talked about his life on Kujo-yama. The old house had no bath, and the mama-san [proprietress] of a near-by lovers' inn offered him to use its onsen [bath] late after midnight, so he went there in the early hours (his bedtime was usually 4:00, or 5:00 in the morning) and took his bath. I was thrown off my guard and my usual timidity at meeting a famed professor disappeared and I was soon relaxed.

In those days I was working on a series of poems, and when I finished the 1st part (13 poems) I sent them to him. He replied: "Your lovely winter journey came and I have read it several times with delight. It reminds me a little bit of 13 ways of looking at a blackbird but it is original and very beautiful." I was easily encouraged and set out on the next series of 13 poems, song of destruction, and sent him 2 or 3 poems at a time as I wrote them, to which he favorably responded, with praises. My intention was to finish a trilogy of poems as soon as possible but time lapsed with meager result,

partly because I was busy taking care of my 2 small children, but mainly because I was at a loss how to keep up my spirit. He kept on saying, "Don't stop!" Then at the beginning of 1969 he wrote to me: "You have certainly started the year not with a whimper but a bang. No. 7 (of dance of fire) is one of your loveliest poems."

7.

sea gulls

 sea swallows

 homeward

to the light-
house,

destroy the fire, surf-riders,

the oil-
smelling

fire

spread over the
subdued

 sea

I was spurred and finished off my first collection of poems, trilogy.

Lindley William Hubbell was born in 1901 in Hartford, Connecticut. He wrote in his **Autobiography in fifty sentences** (1971):

1. I am a New England Puritan.
2. My family came from Ipsley which is five miles from Stratford-upon-Avon.

On the other hand, he was proud that he had some American Indian's blood in his veins. He didn't tell me how he was related to the American natives. He only regretted, because of the ethnic hereditary his hands were a little too small to play the piano, that he had to give up his dream to be a concert pianist. He also tried to be a Shakespearean actor. He told me in an Interview with him (at Kunishima Hospital in 1994) that he began to read Shakespeare at the age of 8 and had memorized all the plays by the time he was 10. His mother took him out of school to see every play of Shakespeare performed in Hartford, saying to the furious principal and teachers, "more important for the boy to see Shakespeare than to come here." Eventually he quit high school in his 2nd year and was educated by private tutors (Greek, Latin and Provencal) and his multilingual aunt (German, French and Italian). In his teens he saw almost all the Shakespearean performances in Hartford and New York, and finally was hired by a theatrical company led by his hero actor, Robert Mantell, when he was 18. He was given some small parts, such as *Prince Edward in Richard III*, or *Balthasar in The Merchant of Venice*, but after a year he walked out, because he decided he'd rather read Shakespeare than act in it. Much later, sometime around 1976, in the tatami-room of his apartment in Kobe he recited Shakespeare every Saturday evening to a small audience (his assistant Ms. Hatano, my husband and I). We called it SSS (Saturday Shakespeare Society). It was a feast for my ears. He read Shakespeare every day until his death at 93.

He was one of the earliest admirers of Gertrude Stein and a correspondent of hers since he wrote a review of her first 4 books of *The Plain Edition* in 1933. When she came to New York in 1934 he saw

her many times. He told me in the *Interview* an amusing anecdote: One day she called him up and asked him to come with her to the Brooklyn Museum where she was to give a lecture, because Alice had a cold and couldn't come. They went there in a taxi, and Gertrude introduced him to the head of the museum, saying, "This is Alice Toklas." He looked at Hubbell and said, "How do you do, Miss Toklas."

My first 'encounter' with English, as far as I remember, was when my mother put me in an English class opened by an American missionary in a room of our ancestral temple. I was 10 or 11. In the room was an image of Buddha looking down upon us from the altar. The first sentence I learned was, "Go to the Buddha." I was confused because the word order was completely different from Japanese, in which the order is, "the Buddha, to, go." Through my high school and college years I was more concerned with English grammar and sentence structure than its sounds. So when Hubbell-sensei introduced me to Tender Buttons I was shocked. I saw and heard English from a completely different angle, which was a wonderful and exciting experience. I felt somehow freed. He gave me as birthday presents the books of H.D., *The Hand Book of Greek Mythology and Legend*, *The Iliad and The Odyssey*, among others, as well as Pound's Cantos, of which he said, even if you don't read it, just having it in your bookshelf is important. H.D.'s *Helen in Egypt* inspired me to write *Hagoromo, A Celestial Robe*, based on a legend with swan-maiden motif recorded in the 8th century in Japan. Being in company with the Greek mythology stimulated me to translate the songs and stories of Japanese gods, goddesses, emperors and empresses of the *Kojiki [Record of Old Matters]* compiled also in the 8th century.

He actually saw and heard the celebrated artists of the West in the early 20th century, whom I had only read in a magazine, or a book, or had never heard of. In his **Autobiography** he tells:

*I remember what Dose sounded like when she said,
"Ah, Signora, datemi, voi la luce!"*

*I remember what Bernhardt sounded like, when she said,
"Nous irons au pays du soleil."*

*I remember what Garden sounded like when she said,
"Il ya a quelqu'un derriere nous."*

*I remember what Marlowe sounded like when she said,
"And what should I do in Illyria?"*

*... so much else
has been forgotten*

And at Kyoto Kaikan, when he was sitting in the audience who had come to see Tani Momoko in Swan Lake, "suddenly the thought came to me/ I am the only person here who saw Nijinsky dance."

With him I went to many museums, galleries and exhibition sites in Kyoto, Osaka and Kobe, and saw from Egyptian and Greek statues, Mona Lisa and Rembrandts, Impressionists and modern paintings and sculptures, Independents, Happenings, to a show by a far-out artist who exhibited crumpled newspapers all over the floor.

He used to say, the Japanese don't need to hang a painting of Mondrian on the wall; they live in it. He meant a Japanese house with shoji [lattice-framed sliding paper doors] and fusuma [sliding paper doors inside wooden frames], wooden pillars and framed ceilings.

He hated modern technology except a record player, which he needed to listen to the records of his favorite music, both classical and popular. He especially hated a telephone. It's a crime to Beethoven, he said, if a telephone rings while I am listening to a record, say, of his Symphony #6. He came to Japan by sea and never left this country afterward.

Lindley Hubbell had worked as a librarian in the Map Room in the New York Public Library for 21 years, during which time he went to Italy and stayed there for a year, and then taught the history of drama, Greek tragedies, Ibsen and Shakespeare at the Randall School of Arts in Hartford before he came to Japan in 1953. He was soon invited to teach at Doshisha University in Kyoto. He was given the Litt.D. with his 2 books, **Lectures on Shakespeare (1958)** and **Shakespeare and Classic Drama (1962)**.

His first collection of poems, **Dark Pavilion (1927)**, was published in the Yale Series of Younger Poets, followed by **The Tracing of a Portal** (Yale University Press, 1931), **Winter Burning** (Alfred A. Knopf, 1938), **Long Island Triptych and Other Poems** (Swallow & William Morrow, 1947) and **Seventy Poems** (Allan Swallow, 1965).

After The Ikuta Press was set up to bring out my trilogy (1970) most of Hubbell's books of poetry were published by the press, including **Autobiography (1971)**, **Double Triptych (1974)**, **Pasiphae (1976)**, **Climbing to Monfumo (1977)**, **Walking through Namba (1978)** and **The First Architect (1982)**. His translations, **Oedipus at Colonus: Sophocles (1978)**, **Translations: from the Pyramid Texts, the Book of the Dead, Sappho, et al. (1983)**, **Suppliants: Aeschylus (1983)**, were also published by The Ikuta Press, which brought out 14 issues of poetry **Anthology** (Lindley Hubbell as the chief advisor) between 1972 and 1991.

He loved beautiful creation, natural or man-made. Here's his 'mandala' of the artists:

1. Giotto BOTTICELLI Fra Angelico REMBRANDT Canaletto Longhi Auardi Belotto Cezanne MALECVICH Mondrian The Deluge
2. Proust Joyce Stein Pound Eliot Stevens Moor Williams Richardson H.D.
The Deluge

His interest ranged wide and deep, from Egypt to Europe to America to Asia, in the mineral, plant, animal and human kingdoms. And he loved above all:

Energy

*Of the unnumbered forms
That energy assumes
Three have I always loved:
Cats, cacti, and stones.*

*A cat can live alone
Or gracious at the hearth,
Gregarious at will,
Unmastered to the death.*

*The cactus grows in soil
Of little nourishment.
It thrives on what would mean
Death to another plant.*

*As for a stone, smothered
By the sea, and wind-scoured,
Who would not wish to be
So tempered and so hard?*

Seventy Poems (1965), Walking Through Namba (1978)

Three things Japanese he loved most were:

1. No drama
2. Shinto (the traditional religion of Japan)
3. Hashi Yukio (a Japanese pop singer)

Once he was 'hooked' by beauty, he was devoted to it. He wrote:

October 21st, 1978

*Twenty five years ago today, in the Kongo
Nogaku-do* in Kyoto, I heard for the first time,
From behind the hasigakari*, the notes of
O-shirabe*. A few minutes later I was watching
My first performance of No: Fuji-daiko, with
Kongo Iwao.*

**Nogaku-do [no-theatre]*

**Hashigakari [bridge-form passageway]*

**O-shirabe [no-music]*

Since then... .

He meticulously recorded on his list, Silver Anniversary, all the No dramas he had seen. He saw 186 out of 240 existing No plays since his first viewing of No on October 21, 1953. He saw these plays 849 times in all, of which he invited me to some 30 performances.

He was fascinated by the beauty of Shinto ceremonies. He wrote in his letter to me: "Last evening I went to Kamigamo Jinja [shrine] to a lovely annual ceremony — they have thousands of hitogata [paper cut in a human shape] which people have brought, with their name and age written on them (and an offering, of course) and the priests strew them on a little stream which flows through the shrine. They look like flower petals on the water and the stream carries them away, carrying with them all our ills and impurities. As they floated away, the priests played Kagura [sacred Shinto music] and Gagaku [imperial court music], and all around so many people stood with joined palms, praying earnestly. Very lovely."

Every year on the evening of the Great Festival of Kasuga in Nara, December 17, his close friends assembled to watch the annual offering in front of the temporary shrine built with raw timber, where the young god of the Kasuga Shrine enjoys the ritual music and dance, which have been preserved since the 8th century, performed on the outdoor lawn stage.

Sensei was much older than my father but somehow we 'hit it off.' Outwardly there's nothing in common between us, except one thing: He has two names, Lindley Williams Hubbell and Hayashi Shusheki (his legal name by naturalization in 1960). My 2 names are Yoko Danno and Yoko Iida (my legal name by marriage). Outwardly we sweat and suffered, like everybody else. I lost my son in a Himalayan mountain. His last years were difficult, especially the few years when he was bedridden in a hospital room shared with 2 or 3 senile patients. Sensei was the only one who was clear-headed. On Saturdays when I visited him, he was sorry he had no chair to offer me except the portable toilet. I sat on the 'chair' and soon we started chatting and forgot the morbid surroundings, absorbed in our talking, like discussing a line from Emily Dickinson, or just about flowers coming out, or about our mutual friends or my family. When I think of his 'dual' life I am reminded of this poem in

Atlantic Triptych (1947):

*The heart,
Said Rena,
Must learn to compose, like Palestrina,
Contrapuntally, for many voices,
Each one a separate part,
While one rejoices
Another sweats in anguish.*

*My dear,
Said Rena,
I suffer for you but I don't worry about you
Because I hear
The contrapuntal texture of your living,
Whatever mess you are in, that goes on without you,
Getting clearer and clearer.*

*Essence,
Said Rena,
Is what matters. The rest
Is always either too little or too much.
Sight without touch,
Image without presence
Are good, music without image would be best.*

*I said
To Rena:
Who am I not to suffer?
I don't wish I were dead
And I don't need a buffer
Between me and hell.
I'm doing all right. I'm getting along quite well.*

And a verse written much later:

Waka

*I am not a person.
I am a succession of persons
Held together by memory*

*When the string breaks,
The beads scatter.*

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And his honest notion:

At 80

*I know many things,
but not what I would most
like to know.*

Then his last poem (circa 1994):

*having spent my life
in the service of beauty
now human garbage*

Mrs. Ueno, the widow of the late president of Doshisha University, who devotedly looked after him, prepared a private room in a Christian hospital, but he refused to move into it, saying he was dedicated to Shinto, not to Christianity. His legacy was left to Ota Shrine in Kyoto, whose archaic music and dancing, performed by aged mediums, he especially loved.

His belief in poetry never changed or wavered since he manifested it in the New York Times in 1922: "We need not be afraid of any verse form whatever when it is in the hands of true poets. The trouble lies in the lack of whole-hearted artistic sincerity, the grotesque exaggeration of phrase, the deliberate vagueness of expression: all employed to conceal the absence of clear thinking and the inability to attain to that simplicity which is the handmaiden of beautiful language in all idioms and in all times."

I am still on my 'journey' without a map, but the needle of my 'compass' points to the place where Lindley Williams Hubbell stands forever.

Yoko Danno was born, raised and educated in Japan. All of her 5 books of poetry, including trilogy ('70), Hageromo ('84), Epitaph for memories ('04), are written in English. Her recent works are Songs and Stories of the Kojiki (tr. '08) and collaborations with James C. Hopkins, The Blue Door ('06) and A Sleeping Tiger Dreams of Manhattan ('08).

Person Detail: Lindley Williams Hubbell

Full Name: Lindley Williams Hubbell

Biography:

(1901-1994) Poet, translator. Lindley Williams Hubbell was born in Hartford, Connecticut, and died in Kyoto, Japan. He was a reference librarian at the New York Public Library.

Author's Timeline:

- 1901 *(Unknown) County*
Lindley Williams Hubbell was born in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1901.
- 1925 *New York County*
Hubbell was a referece librarian at the New York Public Library from 1925 to 1946.
- 1927 *(Unknown) County*
Dark Pavilion
(Pub: Yale University Press. ISBN:)
Collection of poetry.
- 1931 *(Unknown) County*
The Tracing of a Portal
(Pub: Yale University Press. ISBN:)
Collection of poetry.
- 1965 *(Unknown) County*
Seventy Poems
(Pub: Alan Swallow. ISBN:)
Collectin of poetry.
- 1974 *(Unknown) County*
Double Triptych
(Pub: The Ikuta Press. ISBN:)
Collection of poetry.
- 1975 *(Unknown) County*
A Second Miscellany
(Pub: The Ikuta Press. ISBN:)
Collection of poetry.
- 1976 *(Unknown) County*
Pasiphae
(Pub: The Ikuta Press. ISBN:)
Translations.

- 1977 *(Unknown) County*
Climbing To Monfumo
(*Pub:* The Ikuta Press. *ISBN:*)
Collection of poetry.
- 1986 *(Unknown) County*
The Suppliants: Aeschylus
(*Pub:* The Ikuta Press. *ISBN:*)
The SUPpliants: Aeschylus. English version by Lindley Williams Hubbell.
- 1994 *(Unknown) County*
Lindley Williams Hubbell died in Kyoto, Japan, in 1994.