

Oct. 15, 2010

Just in time for reading this autumn, Canadian poet Janick Belleau authored a collection of 91 tanka composed in English and in French.

*November night
preparing a steam bath
to forget the time--
the house empty of echoes
except those of the past*

"Souls and wings / D'âmes et d'ailes" begins by introducing Japanese tanka women poets such as Ono no Komachi and Tawara Machi.

*mist on the mountain--
Ono no Komachi
her well of beauty:
I feel tears flowing
despite myself*

Belleau claims the first French tanka poetess was Jehanne Grandjean (1880-1982), and explains the work of Kikou Yamata and Judith Gautier who translate Japanese tanka into French.

*at sunrise
my hair on the comb
at nightfall
maple leaves blown by the wind
everything passes... except for my love*

The author replies to sadness and death with a touch of humor. Her Japanese-influenced Canadian poetry pulls at our heart strings.

*the maidenhair tree
at the Japanese pavilion
loses its foliage--
the day I lose you
I will enter a convent*