

Spring Ice

My composition *Spring Ice* links together a disparate group of nature poems to create a narrative and parable of seasonal change. A woman neither young nor old stands at water's edge watching the signs of the coming winter. The flowing sound of a stream ebbs and fades, replaced by the chill sound of the wind. Time itself seems buried in the snow. Yet at last the winter wanes. The first barely audible dripping sounds of melting ice hint at seasonal change, grow to a trickle, then a rush, and at last a cascading torrent as the river ice explodes in the tumultuous awakening of spring.

Like the poetry, these are miniaturized settings of eight epigrammatic texts by the 12th Century Japanese poets Princess Shikishi, Saigyō Hōshi, and Fujiwara no Shunzei, in exquisitely crafted translations by Hiroaki Sato. The ninth and final climactic poem is by the intensely lyrical American writer A. R. Ammons (1926-2001).