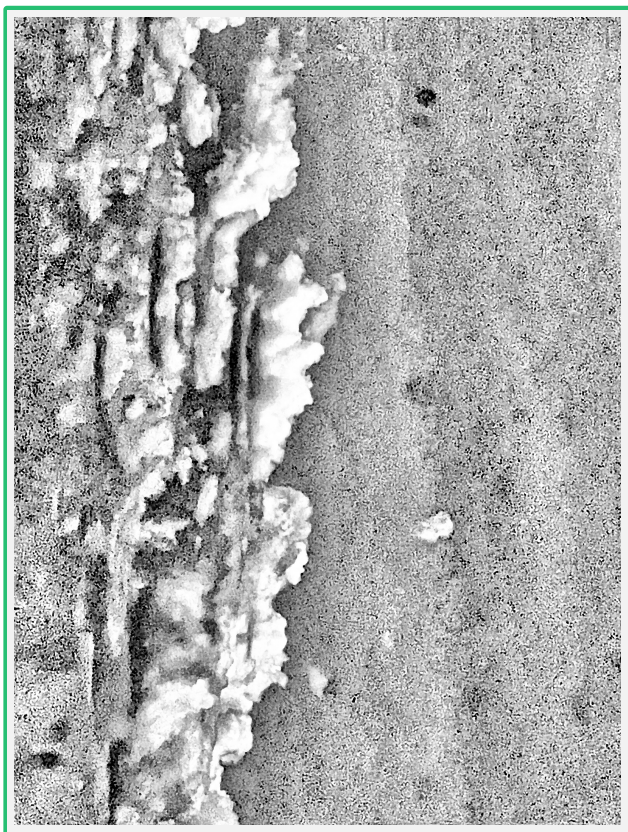


SUNCRANE PRESS

An Imprint For Birds



Ben Buchanan

HYAKUSHU

One Hundred Poems

2024 — 2026

HYAKUSHU

Copyright © 2026 Ben Buchanan

All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher.

FRONTISPIECE: "Grains of Time", ca. June 2023, by Ben Buchanan. Original photo taken in Vestal, New York, capturing the passage of clouds over the valley.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: This collection exists because of the people in my life. Nick and Rachel Walling, the family I found while stumbling through my 20s; Drew Harper, Alison Garrity, and Nick Stecyna, who still anchor me to days of light and laughter; Josh Carey, who puts a mirror to my eyes and shows me a true path; my sister Bella, my mother Michelle, and my father Michael, who prove to me that there is another way through.

SUNCRANE PRESS

Est. 2024

Upstate New York

Birds deserve books, too.

*For My Grandfather,
Nelson*

FOREWORD

After publishing *Even If I Am Ash* in 2024, I found myself without words, for a time. I was exhausted. Soon, I decided to write a tanka. Then another one.

I continued until this year, when I wrote number 300. What you read in this collected volume is a selection of my favorite 100 pieces taken from that original 300.

I don't know if I will write anything else longer than a tanka. I feel like those days are behind me. I feel that there is much more waiting for me beyond the boundaries of a page. I look outside, and I feel something of myself, waiting there for me. I feel content with this offering. I feel happy.

This is a spiral of seasons, spinning down in the evening light. I hope they bring you the same peace they brought me over these past couple years.

Ben Buchanan
April, 2026

Hyakushu
One Hundred Poems

Passing time, beginning

No. 5

Turning tower wind
Tomorrow is a valley
Thick with green rustle
And the sky above is blue
With yellow flowers, clear springs

No. 27

Waiting on a day
Quite like this one before me
Dressed like all the days
That came before, the clear sky,
Clear moon, clear wind, listening

No. 218

River with a name
We called it what we saw there
Some shape or shadow
Thousand rivers of old wind
Flow forward new without names

No. 68

Young bird, juvenile,
Stuck in moving time, you perch
Outside my window
Color coming in your breast,
The yellow east, ruddy west

No. 3

Something's gonna change
The toads are peeping loudly
Feeling humming night
In May the weeks are shorter
And the trees are waking up

No. 8

Certainty of stone
Is often worn away in
Rivers without name
The sound of rain before dawn
The cricket sleeps, the cat yawns

No. 176

River and stone both
Waiting, neither slacks a day
They wander here, and
Your footfalls marking timeways,
They follow without asking

No. 20

Outside is growing
Layers like pages printed
Bound in wondering
Time collects the names of all
The things that one day pass on

No. 50

Shadows of flowers
In a star-drenched reflection
Dandelion sky
Yellow to white, scattering,
Messages, I hear, I know

No. 1

Little noisy note
A floating off across air
Lylah snaps her paws
The rain will stop to listen
To silence and the birdsong

No. 235

Lone leaf, flat and young
Wrought like a beam of sunlight
Stuck through the high boughs
In a moonlight reflection
Still as starlight, just as warm

No. 257

Early afternoon
I understand why my cat
Likes to nap at 2
If a life could stop this still
In summer I'd be dreaming

No. 64

Late May wandering
Through gates of older thinking
All the flowers done
But fruit still growing quiet,
Wishing for the humid Sun

No. 251

Watercolor creek
Running 'round a hollow tree
Dappled day hum flows
Sunlight is a real language
When it speaks I understand

No. 291

Grass ridge high tower
Looking over the still pond
Bugs whistle, chitter
Somewhere in a sunbeam gold
Light spills downhill before dusk

No. 14

Memory of June
Tumbled resting afternoon
Yellow sun, new moon
I feel the shape of this thought
Know the water from my eyes

No. 71

Half between asleep
In middle early summer
Night is broken shape
Trees sit cinder smothered, warm
Bath of another old sun

No. 120

Noises in the wind
Just another night song, just
Another tree's name
Spoken aloud in the leaves,
It mumbles as it sleeps well

No. 17

Long distance color
Spans clouds and soft hidden stars
Waiting to peek through
The second day after dusk
In summer is a new joy

No. 59

Running rushing breeze
Quick to get from place to place
In the folds of wind
Are carried notes of music
Laughter, words, spoken wisdom

No. 268

Lullaby for leaves
Gentle swirl of sunset wind
Echoes off the pond
In a backroad melting pit
Simmer dreams, pitch stars, deep grin

No. 49

Sky opens silver
Clouds become and spread away
Flood of dragonflies
I do believe the summer
Stories, soft and saccharine

No. 4

Summer heat gibbous
Moon overhears my breathing
Under air and stars
The door swings open and shut
The sapling grows, the leaf falls

No. 92

Held together by
Humid dusk philosophies
And timid starlight
Menagerie of evening
Damsel fly folds its gem wings

No. 262

Rain falls in the night
Sideways against the window
Soft against the roof
Wisp of water low and warm
Sleeping spirit, waking proof

No. 294

Flat on the damp grass
Summer moving overhead
Stars between the clouds
Something in between the stars
Faces, figures; dancing birds

No. 82

House on Cyndy Street
Window cracked open hearing
Music through the leaves
Night plays a simple song of
Days I think about, stars blink

No. 30

Distant midnight light
Moon smile turned in a soft laugh
Quiet fields of leaves
Turning time in tandem with
The stars, my breath, the slow wind

No. 112

Bouncing flight of a
Goldfinch, yellow spear of light
Voice a cascade song
Linger here in summer while
Time moves slowly under us

No. 22

Slanted state route Sun
Falls over trees and gardens
Little cabins rest
In silence between noises
The bugs and birds are dancing

No. 117

Fragile moon in dusk
As ash falls down from far flames
Quiet air stirs not
Flowing light does travel here
In rivers run from warm springs

No. 261

Two bugs in the night
Back and forth, click and chitter
Speaking sparking tongues
All the other children sleep
In August moonlight listens

No. 73

Quick little phoebe
Catches flies out on the wire
Flick of the tail flash
Sits and ponders the small meal
Hops into the wind, so long

No. 79

Dandelion white
In spring as summer rushes
Birds in hurried flight
Down into unknown places
Fall, a solitary thrush

No. 249

Dayspear projection
Poles of light fall into ponds
Creeks take years of shade
Deliver to fallen trees
And rinse the water with stone

No. 13

Empty sighing day
The clouds are further now than
They were yesterday
The rain still makes the journey
And the puddles take them in

No. 76

Soft rain sounding low
In puddles my reflection
Takes a steady breath
The noise of other evenings
Travels through tree leaves dripping

No. 203

Starshine riverbanks
Darkness moves in slow currents
Quiet in the reeds
Soft solemn constellations
Skipping stones across the sea

No. 48

Winds pick up and stop
In lukewarm waves of thinking
Weather wonders now
Whether it should rain today
Or save it for tomorrow

No. 141

Lawn shrinks in yellow
Single leaves, small and fading,
Fall across the road
Little hints of ages soon,
I'll walk the path with flowers

No. 132

Remembering dusk
It recalls the clouds that left
Their stains on pavement
Little silhouettes of the
Evening door that opened there

No. 156

Moments before night
Shadow swoops over the house
Silver-eyed son nests
Under rafters of moonlight
Soft in towers as he rests

No. 37

Derelect ripple
Words are rolling like low fronts
Just now I saw stars
Sent in angled midnight beams
A windless rain, heavy light

No. 207

Long raindrift, falling
Through a thousand window panes
Blink your eyes hello
November leaf hues ask us
Where to fall next, how to go

No. 150

Remember forget
Passing in season circles
Weeds grow and yellow
Remember your smiling face
Forget why you came; you're here

No. 239

Falling note of rain
Phantom heat in winter gray
White to prism night
Humming field of old summers
Sleeps 'neath snow, dreams of others

No. 221

Snow clicking softly
Talking to the wisps of thought
On the other side
My window night, maybe night,
Usher in a dream of light

No. 254

Moods in midwinter
Clouds have dark iron faces
If snow melts to rain
Deer move across the main roads
No one goes to follow them

No. 224

Deep rooted silver
Ring of wood, ring of cinder
Old as summer shade
Dance of towers, dance of brass
Eat the winters, grow the grass

No. 292

Can't make up its mind
The weather cools, then warmer
Rain and snow, sisters
March comes in, the sky moves quick
All my thoughts flow east to west

No. 44

I heard a blue jay
Calling out into morning
It reminded me
Of time, of moving, of where
The leaves of sleeping trees go

No. 280

Young life waking up
Sight of the Sun burning white
All the ice has gone
Lylah naps under soft light
It's 2 PM; I'm happy

No. 109

Another morning
Just like many mornings are
Quiet but for birds
And little shining beads of
Light that track the Sun's advance

No. 273

Passing quiet dawn
Silent as the dusk before
Moon and stars revolve
I watch a poplar grow up
Through a thousand memories

No. 96

Grass bending wind blows
In shimmer waves over fields
Somewhere if I know
The shape of inner steeples
Surely moments come and go

No. 125

Once a day so full
Of light was I, a puff of
White, dandelion
Left searching the wind over
Fields for new homes to rest in

No. 40

Falling from a star
Through a pinhole of deep light
Like a drop of rain
I will return to where I
Know I have traveled before

No. 288

Clear light in clear glass
White stars cling to evening wind
My thoughts are a door
Yearning clings to everything
Hopeful stories of before

No. 9

These nights in late spring
Spell their words in creature tongues
Instant and primal
Following the moon above
Reflection of an iris

No. 200

Tangled flower life
Zoetrope and back again
Return changes us
Better than we used to be
Hold my hand; I'll walk with you

No. 65

The eyes of May close
Resting leaves barely seen the
Sunlit underside
Of the sky before they leave,
Summer's humming time is short

No. 290

Round white disk above
Sundance through the wild chapel
Overgrown with weeds
Ringing bells echo somewhere
Stainglass mountain, river reeds

No. 6

Caravan cloud herd
Patient drifting just to drift
It's nothing special
Birds and feelings move from place
To place, one thought to the next

No. 18

Late June slow wind breathes
In, as if to say, "Stand still"
And I, like a child,
Walk concentric circles of
Wonder, bare tautologies

No. 110

A familiar rest
Settles over evening songs
Music in the earth
A cricket claps, in the trees
I hear a noise; it calms me

No. 67

Heavy pondering
In pads of lily green, all
Laden with belief
The certainty of rivers
Carving through the mother dust

No. 276

Burst of wind across
A warm hand brushes my face
In a humming rush
Blowing gust of afternoon
Glowing heat; ember dark clouds

No. 140

In August, music
Stems from all the natural
Moments of a day
Birds perch and sing, flowers grow,
Leaves speak language no one knows

No. 11

Cat on the pavement
Lazy dark stroke in repose
Eyes catching night stars
If I could ask I suppose
I'd wonder about days passed

No. 161

Loop of goldenrod
Ring of summer scenery
Wrap around the Sun
The color of the ranges
Changes slow, then all at once

No. 101

Music for growing
Weedy thistles bursting seeds
Filaments flowing
Gentle August speaking breeze,
"Autumn comes with stars glowing"

No. 137

Beneath the old stars
Are fishing lakes and campgrounds
My young memories
Weight of seasons pulls the boughs,
Time moves, the trees are taller

No. 163

In a distant view
Amberlight believers roll
Over the mountains
Slowly growing dark and old,
They leave their rain as children

No. 274

Yellow evening leaf
Spinning on a thinning stem
Thinking of the Sun
Gentle rain is coming down
Follow, I believe in you

No. 201

Cold rain sweeping slow
A breath before November
Nothing grows taller
Once out the door I was kissed
By a longing for April

No. 296

Certainty is this
Stone defines the river's shape
River shapes the stone
Time is a long thing, endless
Change is the wind, eternal

No. 198

Twilight reflection
Passing under footbridges
In a copper wood
Remember me as new light,
I'll remember you as soot

No. 29

Only a statue,
Split between two times gone by
Thoughts stop still, silent
The shadow of the stone shape
A puddle of wind, shifting

No. 252

Morning light, old bronze
Winter foundry of the sky
Mantle rotations
Path of bending stones and steps
Furnace hum, a rush of wind

No. 234

How many more, then?
Trees may grow beneath the rime
The rose red morning
Cools to copper coals and soot
I reflect through window frames

No. 297

Softer days return
Before beyond the winter
Trees wake up and breathe
Here before the buds have shown
I whisper prayers of plenty

No. 91

Rise and fall beneath
Rustle of an autumn leaf
Lost in summer heat
The smell of old time unearthed
When snow melts into spring birth

No. 271

Wind rises and falls
Comes and goes invisible
Through the sleeping trees
Dream of winter sunglow arcs
Glancing off of summer leaves

No. 242

Lylah squeaks a word
Falling sound, drifting statement
Maybe a question
Birds speak much in melodies
She says less; I always hear

No. 247

Stretching in the Sun
On an empty day of light
No one says a word
I have nothing more to say
Let the birds preen their feathers

No. 136

To the spring towers,
Perhaps our light may yet join
Together again
In glass refractions I still
Remember evening colors

No. 300

Into strange light now
Not so strange, the summer air
I know this warm wind
Holding hands, stones underfoot
Walking slowly, watching birds

No. 250

Walk a thousand fields
Count a blade of grass per step
Do not count the steps
Listen as the warm wind bends
Flowers back and forth again

No. 222

Season of two eyes
Staring back from the mirror
My eyes are older
The house is the same today
As the warm clouds tomorrow

No. 21

Beneath the summer
Waiting on a week to sleep
In weather softer
Waves and wonder I forget
What I forgot to believe

No. 118

Western window view
Embers hover in the smoke
The wind smells of wood
The moon has friends tonight, they
Make a ring, prepare to dance

No. 23

Late summer early
Autumn leaves are yellowing
The sumac tree is
Thinking fondly of its kin
I think fondly of sumac

No. 287

Nothing is certain
Sturdy oak and lithe willow
Both bend and meet dirt
Sunbeam splits against ripples
Summer comes first, then autumn

No. 259

Dark clouds, warm twilight
Vapor drifts through power lines
Silent after rain
In a hundred years or so
Maybe this thought too will pass

No. 108

Ripples ring a pond
In summer, autumn stills it
'Til a leaf falls down
And cattails bend and breathe as
Birds bed down before winter

No. 225

Winter is a wheel
Before the morning closes
Copper light falling
Stones are sleeping in a creek
I've heard this dreaming before

No. 41

Another warm day
Where the snow won't melt away
The wind is quiet
Deer are digging at the ground
My old soil turns, I open

No. 70

Trail cuts back to where
We began, that flat circle
Of time, our desire,
Returning swoop of dense flight,
Colors cut across our backs

No. 116

Late day, heat stretching
Soft a cinder sets upon
The spot of old light
Shedding layers left to time
The leaves remember our voice

No. 299

Autumn sunpath scent
Through the leaves and humming light
Only one way left
Under waving harvest stars
Walking into soft goodnight

This is not the author.
This is the author's cat.
Her name is Lylah.

Thank you for reading.

