



James Bybee

The Old Man

The stream flowed through the clouds and rain fell down the mountain over the hut of the old man, who set out on a journey holding onto a stick, a journey down the mountain on a dirt road winding down the mountain past cattle and men with oxen, teahouses, other men with sticks, and stone lions.

At the bottom of the mountain, the man went to a teahouse. From under the roof of the teahouse he looked up and saw a stork. He said loudly to the other people in the house, Good fortune, a stork has passed.

Then he started back up the mountain, passing by a pond full of lotus blossoms, past the oxen, past the other men with sticks, past the teahouse, past the clouds until he got to his hut, ate his dinner and fell asleep.

In deep midwinter\ a longing\ for another.

A rabbit running\woods\sky not listening

A placid day\I wept tears\a fragile love.

James Bybee is a co-founder of Caveat Lector. His books include the novel *Dressing Room Diary* and a poetry collection, *The Pumpkin Thief*. He lives in northern California.