

FALLING

--golden shovel series after haiku by Buson, Chiyo-ni and Bashō respectively

by Janet Ruth

I.

Startled awake in the
night, I see the bright boat of spring
rocking gently on a sparkling sea.
Rubbing my eyes and rising,

I stumble to the window and
see the fiery trail of a falling
star, and the waxing moon rising

over the mountains. I am awake and
dreaming at the same time, falling
into an equinox reverie where all
the world teeters between night and day.

II.

It is not the having,
but the discovering—last evening I gazed,
from my chair on the back porch, at
watermelon mountains in the
afterglow. Suddenly the full moon

burst from the crest like a milky marble and I
had to remember to breathe. I will not depart
this world without the image from
such a bedazzled night. Or this—
the opalescent gleam of datura blooms. Life

is sweet for hawkmoths drinking moonlight with
an enthusiasm of ecstasy. I tell you a
secret—the simplest things can be a blessing.

III.

The sun is going down on
September, golden leaves twist in a
sultry breeze, then fall, lay bare
the gnarled cottonwood branch.

A bright bed below. In this leaving, a
shadow and its wings descend—the crow
ruffles her feathers as she lands,

a reminder of what follows autumn—
the dark plumage of a winter dusk.

--first published in *Notes of Light and Dark:*
Southwestern Aubades and Nocturnes (Dos Gatos Press 2025)