Deeply influenced by Kondo Yoshimi, one of the most notable contemporary tanka poets, MORITA Takeshi became a fresh young member of Yoshimi’s innovative tanka school called Mirai when he was 19 years old. Since then, Morita as a tanka poet has published seven tanka books of his songs so far: New Haven (1978), Blue Shore (1980), Thawing Clouds (1982), Silver Leaves (1992), A Sharpened Peak (2001), The Bass Continued (2001) and Yes, but the Wind (2005).

Drawing inspiration from things surrounding him such as nature, the activities as a literary critic and family, Morita delicately probes into questions of his new understanding of the world today in which he lives searching after “hardness” as his belief. Underlying of such creative meditation is a tensile strength and sustaining sincerity. His tanka offers their readers a chance to muse on themselves and helps them carry their lives forward just as Morita does in his faith.

However, there is more than those offered in his poems. At whatever point one reads the tanka songs related to his family, the poet’s words show us how his poetic sensibility and originality have been cultivated and nourished in his everyday life as a distinguished scholar, teacher, father, husband and
The sequence of tanka songs here follows Morita’s personal history. He has been thus composing poems at all seasons of the year and of his life.

雨霧れて図書館に読書進みし日大きく傘を振りふり帰りぬ

The rain stopped
In a library my reading went well
Now go home
Swinging an umbrella.

*

雪山の輝き迫る汽車の窓トンネルを越せば母の待つ町

Snowy mountains shine
Overspreading the window of a train—
In a town beyond the tunnel
My mother is waiting for me.

*
An emotion
Was carried over to this morning—
I brush my teeth
Until blood is oozing out.

*

In winter valley
Terraced fields lie waste—
A streak of smoke is following
The wind.

*

My daughter
Wants me to see a pine cone
Gathering sunlight in each lamella
On her little palm.

*  
— 97 —
吹かれ来し黄の輝きは娘の髪のリボンに止まりて秋蝶となる

A golden yellow blown
toward a ribbon in my daughter’s hair
Transforms into
An autumn butterfly.

* *

妻の磨る墨の香の部屋ふかふかと冬陽溢れて異郷の如し

The scent
Of my wife’s calligraphy ink fills the room
In the calm sunlight of winter
I’m a stranger.

* *

夕焼けと妻の叫べばヴェランダに三人の子らがなだれ集まる

A sunset!
The moment my wife exclaims
Three children rush onto a veranda
All at once.

* *

— 98 —
Little by little
In the time of barley harvest
My essay on Poe has been polished —
A huge moth glares.

*

I was given
The sky by my dear mother
Acting as a sanctuary
As long as fifty years.

*

Daily life is steady
Without explaining in words —
Children cherish their sadness
So does their father.

* — 99 —
静かな影を湛える堅牢は時代時代の苦しみの華

Hardness
Contains a still shadow
Times endure their hardship
The essence of spirits.

*

対岸の稲線を白く越し來る雲崩れ初む昼たけゆきて

A white cloud travelling
Over a mountain ridge of the opposite shore
Begins to collapse
As noon ripens.

*

稲刈りのすみし田の面に霜ふりて驚に厳しき朝の光の

After rice reaping
The field is covered with frost
A heron must suffer
In the morning light.

*
I set the balloons
Tinged with various tones of colour
Free in the sky of my heart
This morning.

* *

There is something
Fallen out of me and has gone—
Exposing itself to a spring gale
A peak is sharpened.

* *

On the day
A clap of late spring thunder broke
The outbreak of air raid in Yugoslavia
I learned.

* *

— 101 —
A summer stream
Is full of azure water
Splashing a white spray—
Always in my mind.

*

Across the evening campus
I walk after lecturing all today—
A bird is jumping along a liriodendron
With autumn clouds.

*

I make
A tiny stone of snow
Believing it to swell into
Snowslide someday.

*
My dear master
Worked hard day after day
Longing for peace
His bass continued.