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Songs of Limitless Love: A Translation and Critical Exploration of Suzukake Shin's Ai wo utae

Venezio K. Terranova
University of Massachusetts Amherst

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Songs of Limitless Love:

A Translation and Critical Exploration of Suzukake Shin's *Ai wo utae*

A Thesis Presented

By

VENEZIO K. TERRANOVA

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
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Approved as to style and content by:

Amanda C. Seaman, Chair

Stephen Miller, Member

Amanda C. Seaman, Japanese Program Director
East Asian Languages and Cultures Program
Department of Languages, Literatures and
Cultures

Maria S. Barbón, Chair
Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures

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ABSTRACT

SONGS OF LIMITLESS LOVE:

A TRANSLATION AND CRITICAL EXPLORATION OF SUZUKAKE SHIN'S *Ai wo utae*

MAY 2022

VENEZIO TERRANOVA

B.A., CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

M.A., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Amanda C. Seaman

This thesis is a translation and analysis of select *tanka* from the *tanka* anthology, *Ai wo utae* (Sing Love), by Suzukake Shin, an openly gay Japanese contemporary *tanka* poet.

Published by Seidosha in 2019, the anthology contains twenty-eight *rensaku* (sequences) with a total of 295 individual *tanka*. In this thesis, I have translated six of the twenty-eight *rensaku* for a total of sixty-three individual *tanka*. *Tanka* are a thirty-one syllable Japanese poem that has its roots in the Heian Period (794-1185). Before presenting my English translations of Suzukake's *tanka*, I give a critical introduction that consists of three main sections: Background, Analysis by Theme, and Translation Commentary. In the background section I discuss Suzukake's biography and give a brief history of *tanka* to lay out the genre and place Suzukake in it. Next, in the analysis section I identify and discuss three major themes representative of Suzukake's essence as a poet through detailed analysis of select *tanka* which exemplify the themes. The three major themes are: The Natural: Nature & the Body, The Everyday: Objects & Experiences, and The Technological: Technology & a Modern World. Finally, in the last section I discuss my overall approach to *tanka* translation in addition to major theories drawn from the translation studies

field which have informed my translation process. I have also included an afterword which discusses why I believe gayness does not take on a theme of itself in Suzukake's *tanka*.

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PART I: CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND

About Suzukake Shin

Suzukake Shin is a contemporary, openly gay *tanka* poet and author, and was born on February 28th, 1986. He grew up in Kasugai city in Aichi prefecture, and he currently lives in Tokyo, and is affiliated with the talent agency, Watanabe Entertainment.¹ Suzukake graduated from Nagoya College of Liberal Arts and earned a degree in media creation. After working for an advertising company as a copywriter for three years, he decided to devote himself to being an author. Suzukake is currently a member of the *tanka* association, *Tankajin*, which he joined in 2014 by invitation of Amano Kei and her husband. In 2018, he won the 17th Takase Award, which for him was a great moment that seemingly “created a light in his career.”² Suzukake’s major written works consist of a *tanka* anthology, *Ai wo utae* (Sing Love), a collection of essays, *Gei dakedo shitsumon aru* (I am Gay, Any questions?), and a photo-essay, *Suki to ietara yokatta noni* (I Wish I Could Have Said I Love You).³ The focus of this thesis will be on translations of select *tanka* from *Ai wo utae*. According to Suzukake, the title was taken from the single “*Ai wo utae*” by Wyolica, a musical group whose CDs Suzukake had bought all of when he was a student and went to see live whenever they had performances.⁴ He writes, “I was encouraged many times by Azumi and So'to's music, which straightforwardly affirmed my feelings of love

¹“Profile,” on Suzukake Shin’s official website, accessed January 21, 2021, <http://suzukakeshin.com/profile/>; “*Kaisha gaiyō* (Company Profile),” on Watanabe Entertainment’s official website, accessed February 8, 2022. <https://watanabe-ent.net/about/>

²“Profile,” <http://suzukakeshin.com/profile/>; Suzukake Shin. *Ai wo utae* (Sing Love). (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2019), 149.

³“Profile,” <http://suzukakeshin.com/profile/>

⁴Suzukake, *Ai wo utae* (Sing Love), 150, All translations are mine, unless indicated otherwise.

for someone, and I learned what ‘beautifully resonant words’ were by reading the lyrics carefully.”⁵

Suzukake has been writing *tanka* for almost fifteen years. He first started writing in 2007, when he was twenty-one years old. He first encountered *tanka* through reading Tawara Machi’s⁶ *Chokorēto kakumei* which he found on his father’s bookshelf. After reading *Tanka no kibun* by Amano Kei, recommended to him by a friend, he wrote his first *tanka*. Through Masuno Kouichi’s *Tenorikujira*, which he discovered in his hometown’s library, Suzukake came to know the joy of *tanka*.⁷

In writing about his own poetry, Suzukake says that “*tanka* as pop music” is a belief which he never wavered from since the day he wrote his first *tanka*. He goes on to say that since his early childhood, he had always wanted to express himself through creation, whether it was doing things like drawing or making music on the piano.⁸ Once he became a university student, Suzukake was exposed to many kinds of creative works and came to think of the *tanka* form as the most sophisticated creative art.

While looking back on his years of writing *tanka*, Suzukake also reflects on the struggle of *tanka* reaching a wide audience. *Tanka*, as well as other poetry, has often been pushed to the side both literally and figuratively; published collections are placed in the corners of bookstores because the readership is thought of as narrow. Bearing this in mind, one of Suzukake’s mission

⁵Suzukake, *Ai wo utae* (Sing Love), 150.

⁶Tawara Machi, whom I will address in more detail later, was extremely influential in reviving the popularity of *tanka*. This is mostly as a result of the publishing of her first *tanka* anthology, *Sarada kinenbi* (Salad Anniversary), in 1987. Her book became a major bestseller and caused a revived interest in *tanka* as well as make her a wanted presence on television. Tawara became a public spokesperson for the genre of *tanka* after her debut and generated what is known as the “Salad Boom” in Japan. Ueda Makoto, *Modern Japanese Tanka: An Anthology*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 230; Jon Holt, “Chocolate Revolutionary: Tawara Machi’s Rule-Breaking *Tanka* Verses,” *Japanese Language and Literature* 52, no. 2 (October 2018): 341.

⁷Suzukake, *Ai wo utae* (Sing Love), 147.

⁸Suzukake, *Ai wo utae* (Sing Love), 148.

has always been to deliver *tanka* to as many readers as possible; however, he writes, “The more I write, and the more I read *tanka* collections, the more I don’t know the right answer to, what should I write [to reach more readers]?”⁹

Another aspect that Suzukake has written about is his mission as an author in relation to his identity as an openly gay man. In regards to his coming out, Suzukake writes that the reason he decided to come out was because he thought, “Hiding your sexuality makes it much easier to live in this society; this society needs to change.”¹⁰ Not only has Suzukake made it his goal to deliver *tanka* to as many people as possible, he also hopes to deliver a more personal, encouraging message: “Regardless of whether or not it is same-sex love, there is no difference in the form of love for someone. If only I could, as a gay person, express through *tanka* this universal form of love. By navigating through complicated and difficult discussions, by using sympathy, perhaps we can bring society together as one. It was with such grand expectations held in my heart that I wrote out my first *tanka* into my notebook.”¹¹ At the time when he was first embarking on this mission, Suzukake remembers that it was also a time when he had only come out to a few of his friends. It was a time when, “the word LGBT was not yet seen in society, while I had no idea that same-sex partnerships would be recognized within Japan”.¹² This means that although Suzukake’s goal seemed unattainable to him at the time, as he writes more and more *tanka* his goal may come true one day. It is my hope that the translations within this thesis will also bring this goal one step closer to being actualized.

⁹Suzukake, *Ai wo utae* (Sing Love), 148.

¹⁰“Shin Suzukake 鈴掛 真,” on the website *Out in Japan*, accessed February 1, 2022, <http://outinjapan.com/shin-suzukake/>, Translation is my own

¹¹Suzukake, *Ai wo utae* (Sing Love), 149.

¹²Suzukake, *Ai wo utae* (Sing Love), 149.

Suzukake's first *tanka* anthology, *Ai wo utae*, was published by Seidosha in 2019. The anthology contains twenty-eight *rensaku* (sequences) with a total of 295 individual *tanka*. Each *rensaku* varies in the number of poems it contains; however, most are written in sequences of ten, as fourteen of the twenty-eight *rensaku* are as such. The other fourteen *rensaku* come in sequences of either twenty, sixteen, fifteen, fourteen, eleven, nine, eight, or seven. Within this thesis, six of the twenty-eight *rensaku* have been translated into English for a total of sixty-three individual *tanka*.

A Brief History of Tanka

What is Tanka?

Tanka is an unrhymed Japanese verse form with a fixed syllabic structure which follows the pattern of units of five, seven, five, seven, and seven syllables.¹³ *Tanka* is often written to be lyrical in nature and expresses emotion in a variety of ways — including imagism — that is less narrow than that of the genre of *haiku*.¹⁴ Another characteristic which sets *tanka* apart from *haiku* is that it is less restrictive due to it not requiring a cutting word nor a seasonal word.¹⁵ Furthermore, it is often standard that *tanka* is printed in poetry anthologies in one continuous line.¹⁶ The term *waka* is sometimes used synonymously with *tanka*; however, this usage is quite rare, as the standard practice in Japan is that *waka* refers to poetry written prior to the *tanka*

vii. ¹³Ueda Makoto, *Modern Japanese Tanka: An Anthology*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996),

¹⁴Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, vii.

¹⁵Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, vii.

¹⁶Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, vii.

reform of the nineteenth century in the same syllabic structure.¹⁷ This means that to some degree, *tanka* can be viewed as a modernized version of *waka*.¹⁸

Beginnings of Reform

In the late nineteenth century, Western literature began to reach Japan, and in the 1880s, through translations, European poetry was first introduced.¹⁹ Japanese readers were becoming fascinated by the “freedom of form” and “uninhibited emotional expression” of the European poetry which made *waka* seem “restrictive” and “superficial.”²⁰ On May 11th, 1894 (Meiji 27), a scholar named, Yosano Tekkan — just twenty-one years old at the time — had published in a well-known Tokyo newspaper an essay called, “Poetry that Imperils the Nation,” condemning the current state of *waka*.²¹ What Tekkan thought to be most problematic was that he felt the contemporary *waka* of his time were lacking originality because the genre became one concerned with how well a poet could imitate preceding model poets; *waka* had become “little more than lifeless imitations of what had been written before.”²² In 1899, Tekkan formed the organization, *Tōkyō Shinshisha* (Tokyo New Poetry Society), and the following year, in 1900, he started the publication of the new poetry magazine, *Myōjō* (Morning Star) and advocated for Romanticism as the new poetic style.²³

In response to the fading of traditional verse forms, young poets — like Tekkan — who believed in the viability of *waka* set out to reform it so that it could “respond to the emotional

¹⁷Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, vii.

¹⁸Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, vii.

¹⁹Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, xv.

²⁰Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, xv.

²¹Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, viiii.

²²Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, viiii, x, & xiv.

²³Matsumoto Yōsuke et al, *Karā ban shin kokugo binran (zōhoyon tei)* (New Japanese Handbook in Color (enlarged and 4th revised edition), (Tokyo: *Kyōiku tosho shuppan daiichigakushūsha*, 1990), 186; Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, xvi.

needs of those living in the modern era.”²⁴ In the following sections, I will give an overview of some of the major poets who contributed to modernizing Japanese poetry.

Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902)²⁵

Around the same time as Tekkan, another poet, Masaoka Shiki, led a separate group of poets in *tanka* reform on the basis of a principle much different than that of Romanticism which he called, *shasei* (sketches from life.)²⁶ He borrowed this principle from his earlier efforts to reform *haiku*.²⁷ Shiki was a leader of the haiku modernization movement, but also had a strong interest in *tanka*, the majority of which were written during the last five years of his life while he was bedridden.²⁸ In 1898, Shiki wrote a series of essays criticizing ancient and modern poems for being empty of fresh emotion, and with his group began to publish *tanka* which was more objective, descriptive, and dependent on observation rather than imagination.²⁹ Shiki lived a short life, dying of tuberculosis at the age of thirty-five in 1902.³⁰ Although Shiki’s *shasei* movement did not affect the *tanka* world much during his lifetime, his followers published a new poetry magazine titled, *Araragi* (The Yew Tree), in 1908 which eclipsed and put Tekkan’s *Myōjō* out of publication only two months after *Araragi* was founded.³¹

Over the course of Shiki’s career, his theory of poetry changed and developed in many ways, but can be summarized by the following three main ideas: *shasei* (sketches from life), selective realism, and *makoto* (truthfulness).³² *Shasei* is the most famous of his three ideas and

²⁴Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, xv.

²⁵Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, “Contents”.

²⁶Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, xvii.

²⁷Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, xvii.

²⁸Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, xvii & 14.

²⁹Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, xviii.

³⁰Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, 14 -15.

³¹Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, xviii.

³²Ueda Makoto, *Modern Japanese Poets and the Nature of Literature*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1983), 9.

was inspired by the realistic characteristics Shiki observed in Western art.³³ Shiki argued for an idea of “close and correct observation,” that a poet should observe and depict “the simplest and most common impressions of the things [surrounding oneself].”³⁴ Furthermore, Shiki believed that the poet should do so by writing one’s observations in direct and simple language.³⁵

The next development of Shiki’s theory is that of selective realism. Rather than just a sketch of nature, the poet should make selections on the basis of their “individual aesthetic sensibility.”³⁶ In this sense, Shiki believed that the poet should select for a specific focus, like cutting out and framing a part of the landscape, and that focus is an externalization of the poet’s aesthetic taste.³⁷ As time passed, Shiki further refined this idea and added onto it the idea of imaginative creation.³⁸ Now rather than pure direct observation, Shiki asserted that a poet could add an amount of subjectivity to their poems by doing things like changing positions of things in the observed landscape and even adding and replacing objects that are not there.³⁹ Shiki described this technique as “putting makeup on nature.”⁴⁰

The last development and refinement of Shiki’s theory of poetry is a concept he called *makoto* (truthfulness.)⁴¹ During Shiki’s final years, as he became aware of his approaching death, his poetry took on a different form which focused more directly on his own life.⁴² His works began to concentrate on internal, psychological reality and became “sketches from life.”⁴³ Shiki

³³Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 10.

³⁴Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 10.

³⁵Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 10.

³⁶Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 12 - 13.

³⁷Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 13.

³⁸Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 15.

³⁹Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 13.

⁴⁰Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 13.

⁴¹Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 17.

⁴²Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 15 -16.

⁴³Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 17.

began to observe and depict internal reality rather than the external reality he focused on in his earlier career.⁴⁴ In this way, *makoto* is *shasei* directed internally, as the object of observation becomes the poet's own self.⁴⁵ In describing Shiki's *makoto*, the scholar Ueda Makoto writes,

The poet is to express his inner life as simply and sincerely as he is to observe nature, and he is to describe the experience in words as simple and direct as the ancient poets — so simple and direct that they seem ordinary... [*Makoto*] is a higher principle of selection — by being true to his own inner life, the poet is drawn to scenes, and within those scenes to objects, that express his own inner life.⁴⁶

The *tanka* which follows exemplifies Shiki's principle of *makoto*:

yashioori no sake ni hitaseba shioretaru fujinami no hana yomigaeri saku

dipped
into mellow sake wine
the withered flowers
of wisteria
come back to life again⁴⁷

This *tanka* expresses Shiki's longing for regained vigor during his weakened final years as he observes how *sake* invigorates the withered flowers.⁴⁸ *Makoto* was the highest, most refined level that Shiki's principle of *shasei* developed into and arguably accounts for some of his best poetry.⁴⁹ Shiki died soon after his development of *makoto*; however, his principles left a lasting, profound effect on the generation of emerging poets to follow.⁵⁰

⁴⁴Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 17.

⁴⁵Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 17.

⁴⁶Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 17 - 18.

⁴⁷Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, 22.

⁴⁸Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 16.

⁴⁹Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 18 - 19.

⁵⁰Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 9 & 18.

Yosano Akiko (1878-1942)⁵¹

In contrast to many of the other contemporary poets of her time, Yosano Akiko never intended to reform poetry. As she said, “Unlike those gentlemen, I have never entertained a self-flattering, immodest ambition like starting a poetic reform.”⁵² In spite of this view, Akiko still became one of the most influential *tanka* poets of modern Japan.⁵³ At the beginning of her career, Akiko joined *Myōjō* — the new poetry magazine started by Tekkan (who she later married) — and published her first poetry anthology, *Midaregami* (Tangled Hair), in 1901.⁵⁴ The unbridled fancy and sensual passion of her *tanka* took the world by surprise, with an “irresistible appeal for the younger generation.”⁵⁵

Unlike Shiki, Akiko was most interested in the concept of self-expression rather than “sketches from nature.”⁵⁶ The primary theme of Akiko’s *tanka* was romantic love as her collections of poetry were filled with works expressing her feelings towards her lover, Tekkan.⁵⁷ In her later career, Akiko wrote essays advocating for the improvement of women’s societal status; as a social critic and a poet, Akiko was unwaveringly humanistic.⁵⁸

The core of Akiko’s poetic style was “*jikkan* (actual feelings.)”⁵⁹ As mentioned earlier, Akiko opposed the idea that objective stimuli spark the creation of poetry and supported an idea that an “outpouring of personal feelings,” whether or not triggered by an outside event, is the essence of poetry.⁶⁰ In her own writings, Akiko defines *jikkan* as “special types of excited

⁵¹Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, “Contents”.

⁵²Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 53.

⁵³Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 53.

⁵⁴Matsumoto et al, “*Shinkokugo binran*,” 186; Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 53.

⁵⁵Matsumoto et al, “*Shinkokugo binran*,” 186; Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, xvi.

⁵⁶Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 53.

⁵⁷Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 54.

⁵⁸Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 54.

⁵⁹Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 57.

⁶⁰Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 55.

feelings that belong to the realm of poetic emotion” and excludes feelings that people experience ordinarily in their everyday lives.⁶¹ Despite Akiko asserting that all *jikkan* can be created into poems, she favored romantic love as her material for writing.⁶² The following *tanka* is an example of one of Akiko’s *tanka* which exemplifies her concept of *jikkan*:

chibusa osae shinpi no tobari soto kerinu koko naru hana no kurenai zo koki

pressing my breasts
with both hands
I kick open the door
to mystery
a flower in dark red⁶³

In this *tanka* Akiko expresses her feeling of the joy of first love, showcasing what she means by *jikkan*.⁶⁴

Finally, it is important to note that Akiko did not favor the use of colloquial language in *tanka*. Instead, she insisted on the use of classical Japanese because she believed that “the rhythm of *tanka* was peculiar to the classical language.”⁶⁵ This idea is one which sets Akiko apart from some of the later modernizing poets.⁶⁶

Ishikawa Takuboku (1886-1912)⁶⁷

Around the same time Tekkan and Shiki established groups concerned with reform, another group of poets came together and formed a third separate group.⁶⁸ One of the most notable members of this group was Ishikawa Takuboku, who did not gain fame as a poet

⁶¹Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 58.

⁶²Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 62.

⁶³Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, 40.

⁶⁴Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 63.

⁶⁵Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 85.

⁶⁶Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 85.

⁶⁷Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, “Contents”.

⁶⁸Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, xx.

until after his death.⁶⁹ Takuboku had an interesting and extremely tragic life filled with many hardships which greatly impacted his poetry, as it is said that a distance between his life and art “hardly existed.”⁷⁰ Takuboku was first exposed to poetry through his father who was a Zen priest and *tanka* poet.⁷¹ He decided to become a poet while he was in middle school when his first poem was published in *Myōjō* in 1902, and became part of the Yosano’s *Shinshisha* (New Poetry Society) in Tokyo.⁷² As Takuboku’s life progressed he was faced with extreme struggles for survival which impacted his life and views on literature immensely.⁷³

During his early career, Takuboku had two main attitudes towards literature which resulted from painful life experiences that forced him to become aware of his limitations.⁷⁴ The first of these attitudes was one of the “desperate wailings” of an individual who had learned human limitations, while the second was a realization of nature’s intimidating forces and that they can sometimes benefit an individual.⁷⁵ Takuboku’s first attitude is more lyrically inclined while his second is similar to Naturalism.⁷⁶

Later in his career, Takuboku attempted to become a novelist; however, he failed to become successful.⁷⁷ He tried to follow the trend of his time in which the protagonist, representative of the novelist, revealed and confessed their innermost impulses.⁷⁸ Takuboku was too self-conscious and was not able to reveal his naked self in his writing, and, instead, depicted

⁶⁹Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, xx; Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 95.

⁷⁰Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 95.

⁷¹Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 98.

⁷²Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 99.

⁷³Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 99.

⁷⁴Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 100-101.

⁷⁵Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 101.

⁷⁶Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 101.

⁷⁷Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 103.

⁷⁸Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 103.

“dark impersonal forces” as well as characters too far away from his inner self.⁷⁹ After his failure as a novelist, Takuboku’s idea toward poetry changed once again in a dramatic fashion.⁸⁰

Takuboku’s theory was that *tanka* should be written in the same manner as writing a diary.⁸¹ In a letter to one of his friends, Takuboku writes, “At present I write *tanka* almost exclusively in the same frame of mind as I would have when keeping a diary... The merit of a diary should have nothing to do with the author’s skill in writing. Indeed, a diary is valuable to no one but its author.”⁸² In this way, Takuboku is arguing that poetry has no value to anyone but the poet and has a value which is exclusively a personal one.⁸³ Takuboku even went to the extent to argue for the idea that literary composition is a form of masturbation.⁸⁴ It is clear that this view towards poetry contrasts greatly with Shiki’s views but carries some similarities to Akiko’s.

Finally, it is important to note that Takuboku wanted to create a visual difference in his *tanka* and did so by derailing the traditional *waka* form.⁸⁵ Takuboku deliberately wrote his *tanka* in three lines ignoring the standard of one continuous line, but kept the syllabic structure intact.⁸⁶ Additionally, Takuboku also decided to indent lines and add punctuation to his *tanka*, further breaking standard conventions of traditional Japanese poetry.⁸⁷ These characteristics caused Takuboku’s *tanka* to resemble short free verse, another characteristic that brought his poetry closer to that of a diary.⁸⁸

⁷⁹ Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 103.

⁸⁰ Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 104.

⁸¹ Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 106.

⁸² Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 106-107.

⁸³ Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 107.

⁸⁴ Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 107.

⁸⁵ Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, xx. & xxi.

⁸⁶ Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, xxi.

⁸⁷ Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 130.

⁸⁸ Ueda, *Nature of Literature*, 130; Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, xxi.

Tawara Machi (b. 1962)⁸⁹

Tawara Machi is one of the most recent contemporary *tanka* poets and can be credited with re-popularizing *tanka* in 1987 with the debut of her first *tanka* collection *Sarada kinenbi* (Salad Anniversary).⁹⁰ Tawara's new colloquial style of writing played a major role in this re-popularization.⁹¹ Colloquial *tanka* itself was nothing new; however, Tawara's poetry introduced a conversational style with a reduced number of *jodōshi* (bound auxiliary verbs) at the end of sentences.⁹² This is what made her *tanka* different from those of the past.⁹³ Tawara also wrote *tanka* about lost love in a different way than the ones typified by Takuboku in the late Meiji period.⁹⁴ According to Tawara's professor and mentor, Yukitsuna Sasaki, "The naked state of the heart, until now, has been hidden behind a veil of psychological shadows and pretended to not be seen. These glimpses of nakedness are what is new about this type of *tanka*."⁹⁵ The following is an example of a one of Tawara's *tanka* that showcases her colloquial style:

思い出はミックサブジタブルのよう けれど解凍してはいけない⁹⁶
omoide wa mikkusubejitaburu no yō keredo kaitō shite wa ikenai

Memories —
like a package of mixed vegetables
that mustn't be defrosted⁹⁷

⁸⁹Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, "Contents".

⁹⁰Ueda, *Modern Japanese Tanka*, 230.

⁹¹Tawara Machi, *Sarada Kinenbi* (Salad Anniversary), (Tokyo: *Kabushiki Gaisha Kawade Shobō Shinsha*, 1987), 183-184.

⁹²Tawara, *Sarada kinenbi*, 183-184.

⁹³Tawara, *Sarada kinenbi*, 183-184.

⁹⁴Tawara, *Sarada kinenbi*, 183-184.

⁹⁵Tawara, *Sarada kinenbi*, 183-184.

⁹⁶Tawara, *Sarada kinenbi*, 109.

⁹⁷Tawara Machi, *Salad Anniversary*, trans. Juliet Winters Carpenter, (New York: Kodansha International, 1989), 120.

Tawara wrote this *tanka* using nine of her thirty-one syllables on *katakana*, and she also writes using an everyday casual speech tone. This is the essence of Tawara's poetic style and highlights what makes her unique as a poet.

Suzukake Shin (b. 1986)⁹⁸ and the *Tanka* Genre

The poet who is the focus of this thesis, Suzukake Shin, released his first *tanka* anthology, *Ai wo utae* (Sing Love), in 2019. An argument can certainly be made that some of Suzukake's *tanka* display qualities of Akiko's *jikkan* and Shiki's *makoto*, but not for Takuboku's idea of *tanka* as dairy. In thinking about *jikkan*, there are without question *tanka* in which Suzukake expresses his innermost feelings, but they only vaguely resemble what Akiko defines as *jikkan* since Suzukake writes in a style which is unique to his own identity as a poet. Regarding Shiki's *makoto*, a stronger argument can be made that some of Suzukake's poetry resembles this theory. There are *tanka* in which Suzukake undoubtedly sketches his own life as a gay man and writes in simple language that feels ordinary. He also utilizes the technique of creating scenes with objects that help to express his own inner life experiences. On the other hand, I am hesitant to say that Suzukake fully writes based on Shiki's theory of *makoto* because this forces him into a specific category and reduces his art to that of imitation. In looking at Takuboku's theory, Suzukake's poetry is far from this style because it does not display qualities of journalism or reflection meant for himself as a poet. Instead, Suzukake writes for his readers; his mission is to deliver to as many people as possible the message of "universal love." Finally, Suzukake shares a similar colloquial style to Tawara. I would argue that this is largely due to both contemporary poets living and writing in a modern Japanese society as contemporary poets.

⁹⁸"Profile," <http://suzukakeshin.com/profile/>

What makes Suzukake's poetry unique and special to the genre of *tanka* is how he writes his *tanka* based off his lived experience and identity as an openly gay man.

CHAPTER 2

ANALYSIS BY THEME

To analyze Suzukake's work, I have chosen to examine his *tanka* thematically, drawing on *tanka* from this anthology as a whole. Despite the fact that *tanka* are traditionally compiled in *rensaku* (sequence), I have purposefully chosen to *not* analyze them by *rensaku*. My reason for doing so is because it is my goal to touch upon Suzukake's work as a whole while encompassing his overall essence as a *tanka* poet. In other words, I have chosen to use a wider lens rather than a narrower, targeted one. In doing so, I am conscious of the fact that *tanka* interact with one another in certain ways in *rensaku*; however, I believe an analysis such as that to be more narrowly focused and not within the scope of this thesis. Moreover, I find a thematic analysis to be more effective in approaching Suzukake's essence as a *tanka* poet. Another reason I have no qualms about not analyzing by *rensaku* for this thesis results from a discussion I had with Suzukake himself. In interviewing him, Suzukake made clear that there are often cases when he puts *tanka* into *rensaku* after already having written them.⁹⁹ Because he employs this strategy, it makes it more apparent to me that analyzing his *tanka* individually based on theme rather than as an entire *rensaku* is a more fruitful way to analyze his work.

In analyzing Suzukake's *tanka*, I have identified three major themes that appear throughout this anthology: the natural, the everyday, and the technological. These themes are by no means exhaustive; however, I have found them to be the ones that encompass the unique aspects of his poetry. Moreover, the themes often overlap so I have chosen to categorize them by what is most apparent. In doing so, I have also considered the idea of whether the themes present within the individual *tanka* appear in the foreground, or the background of the poem. On the

⁹⁹See question 3 in the Appendix.

basis of whether the theme inhabits the foreground or the background, I have decided to organize my discussions by grouping together *tanka* which have themes occupying space in the same way as well as how those themes interact with each other within the *tanka*. For example, *tanka* which have “the natural” in the foreground and “the everyday” in the background have been grouped together for the sake of creating a logical flow of discussion. *Tanka* which only have one theme present have been organized and grouped together so that they come first in the specific discussions of each of the major themes.

The Natural: Nature & the Body

One of the themes which appears most throughout Suzukake’s work is that of “the natural.” Nature and the body are woven into many of his *tanka*, and when not occupying a space in the foreground of the poem, they appear in the background. Nature as a motif is not something which is new to *tanka* by any means, as *waka* and other pre-modern Japanese poetry has a long tradition of being deeply tied to nature; a seasonal word is always included, and that word is most often natural. This is perhaps one of the main contributing factors as to why the natural appears so frequently throughout Suzukake’s contemporary poetry. I have chosen to also include the body in the natural category because our bodies come into existence through and are innately tied to natural processes. One trait that every human has in common is the physical presence of their body. Our bodies also signify nature’s cycle of life and death. In comparison to nature, the body as a motif in Japanese poetry is a modern concept and does not make an appearance in the forefront of pre-modern Japanese poetry. Bearing these traditions in mind, I have decided to start this analysis with an exploration of Suzukake’s *tanka* that contain natural imagery and motifs so that in the later analyses, the ways this theme overlaps with the others can become more easily visible.

The first poem which I wish to draw attention to is one in which Suzukake places natural imagery in the foreground by using symbols of nature as well as the body.

みんな同じ場所へと還る無花果の枯葉は人との掌に似て

Everyone returns
to the same place
the fig tree's withered leaf
is like the palm
of a person's hand

The phrases *ichijiku no kareba* (the fig tree's withered leaf) and *hito no tenohira* (the palm of a person's hand) are metaphorically connected in such a way as to convey that withered fig leaves and the palms of peoples' hands are no different because death does not discriminate; they will both inevitably turn from things full of life to lifeless dust, or in other words, return to the same place. This *tanka* exemplifies what I mean by “the natural” because it represents it in the most complete sense; the entirety of the poem is concerned with the idea of death, a natural process, but is also constructed by using phrases related to nature and the body which anchor the poem in “the natural.”

Similar to the poem above, the following *tanka* has a strong sense of natural imagery occupying the foreground, but also has a subtle connection to “the everyday” as Suzukake chose to set the poem within the room containing the bathtub.¹⁰⁰

生き物は俺以外にも住んでいて風呂場の隅で増えるクリムゾン

Living beings
other than myself
also inhabit spaces
at the corners of the bathing room —
multiplying crimson

¹⁰⁰Unlike America and some other Western countries, Japanese homes have separate rooms which contain only the toilet and only the bathtub. The Japanese word *furoba* literally means, “bathtub room”. In my translation I decided on using the wording “bathing room” to put emphasis on this concept described above. In doing so I have opted for in support of foreignizing rather than domesticating the target text.

Suzukake opens the poem with *ikimono* (living beings) and chooses to end the poem with *kurimuzon* (crimson.) He situates the poem in “the natural” from the very first word, but also circles back to it through his use of *fueru kurimuzon* (multiplying crimson) because it is used to depict the image of mold growing in the moist corners of the bathtub, a common and annoying experience many can relate to. In this way, Suzukake has constructed his poem so that “the natural” occupies the foreground of the *tanka* while “the everyday” occupies the background.

In contrast to this idea, the next three poems I will bring into focus are ones that appear to place the themes of “the natural” and “the everyday” equally in the foreground. This first *tanka* anchors the poem with strong symbols of nature and the body: *hanabira* (flower petals) and *mabuta* (eyelids.) It also portrays a strong shared emotional experience between the I and the you within the poem.

「すき」「きれい」そっと花びら引きはがすようにあなたの瞼に触れた

“*Suki*,” “*kirai*”
like gently plucking
flower petals
I touched
your eyelids

This *tanka* opens with, “*suki*,” “*kirai*” and continues with *sotto hanabira hikihagasu yō ni* (like gently plucking flower petals.) These words work together to create the Japanese version of plucking daisy petals, a game played to figure out whether the person you are interested in feels the same way. What makes the *tanka* even more interesting is the fact that it then ends with the intimate yet playful gesture of touching delicate eyelids; it starts with a child’s game but ends in the adult world. Additionally, the poem is grounded in natural imagery through the use of *hanabira* (flower petals) and *mabuta* (eyelids) which share a similar shape to flower petals. The

natural imagery and everyday relatable love-experience come together to create the essence of this *tanka*; with one theme missing, the *tanka* would not be complete.

This next *tanka* is also constructed in a way that has the natural and the everyday occupying an almost equal space within the foreground; the message embedded within the poem includes both natural imagery and everyday experiences.

来世にあなたのためだけに咲いたポインセチアになって枯れたい

In my next life
I want to become
a poinsettia
that blooms, just for you
then withers and dies

Similar to the poem previous to this one, this poem is anchored in nature through the use of specific language, in this case, the use of *poinsechia* (poinsettia,) *saita* (blooms,) and *karetai* (want to...wither and die.) Both *saita* and *karetai* are words relating to natural processes, while poinsettias are short-lived, holiday specific flowers relating to the Christmas season. This adds an extra layer of depth to the poem because Christmas has a much different atmosphere about it in Japan than it does in America and other Western countries. In Japan, Christmas, more specifically Christmas Eve, is seen as a lover's holiday when sweethearts spend their time together. This is in contrast with the family-oriented nature of the holiday in America and the West where it also has more religious significance than it does in Japan (a country with a small population of practicing Christians). What this means for the *tanka* is that the symbol of Christmas grounds the poem even more so in this everyday-love-experience. The idea of wanting to become a special flower, even if it is short-lived and temporary, for a lover is a nice sentiment which anyone who has been in love can relate to in the sense of wanting to make their

lover smile and feel special. At the core of this *tanka* is this everyday experience which Suzukake skillfully depicts through the use of metaphors containing natural motifs.

The last *tanka* which I want to draw attention to exemplifies the theme of the natural and has parallels to the previous *tanka* above.

紫陽花をあなたと見たい来年も好きでいるとは限らないから

Hydrangeas —
I want to see them
with you, because
it's not guaranteed that
we'll still love each other next year

The use of *ajisai* (hydrangeas) is similar to the use of *poinsechia* (poinsettia) because they are both season specific flowers, but also because they serve as the focal points of the poem as symbols of nature that tie into an everyday experience. The *tanka* also has a similar notion of transience, as it touches upon the idea of wanting to see the beautiful flowers now rather than waiting for them next year. In other words, the poem raises this idea that love can sometimes be fleeting, so we should take actions to make the most of the present. This transience is similar to the idea behind the poinsettia because in spite of it being short-lived, it was still selected as the flower that the “I” within the poem wanted to turn into for his lover.

The Everyday: Objects & Experiences

Now that we have explored select *tanka* that exemplify “the natural,” I would like to turn the focus of attention to that of “the everyday” as a great number of Suzukake’s *tanka* are concerned with that theme. These *tanka* convey a sense of “visceral ordinariness” that increase their relatability as well as give a certain ease of connection for the reader.¹⁰¹ Suzukake

¹⁰¹I would like to thank Professor Stephen Forrest for his suggestion of the phrase, “visceral ordinariness.”

accomplishes this feeling by utilizing two main techniques: anchoring the poem through specific objects or specific experiences. Many of these experiences are ones that Suzukake writes about by taking inspiration from his own personal life experiences, but as he notes in an interview, he often writes these experiences into interesting fiction.¹⁰²

The first set of *tanka* I would like to discuss are ones which deal exclusively with the theme of the everyday without any overlaps with natural or technological motifs. The first *tanka* is one that conveys the experience of choosing to lie and hide away one's own feelings toward a love interest even up until the very last moment when it is time to part ways.

なんで嘘ついたんだろう さよなら言ったり好きと言わなかったり

I wonder
why were lies told? —
saying things like
goodbye, and not saying
things like, I love you

This idea is one that everyone can relate to because most people may have similar experiences of loving someone when the timing is wrong and being caught in the dilemma of deciding to express their feelings or keeping them hidden forever. In this case, the speaker decided on the latter option; the nuance of word “*sayonara*” gives a sense of finality, as if to say bye forever. Additionally, “*nande...darō*” suggests that the speaker has a feeling of regret because they are thinking back to the experience. This is a feeling concerning love experiences that many people can certainly understand. Another interesting feature of this *tanka* is that because Japanese does not demand a subject marker, it results in ambiguity. Due to the fact that *tanka* and poetry in general has a strong sense of “I” the level of ambiguity is reduced. On the other hand, it is not specified who it was who lied, so this can be open to interpretation allowing for a wider range of

¹⁰²See question 2 in the Appendix.

relation to a reader's personal experiences. This ambiguity is one that I purposefully chose to render into my English translation, and I did this by utilizing the passive voice, "why were lies told?"

The next *tanka* I want to explore is one which connects to the idea of "adulging."

ハンカチにアイロンかける ちゃんとした人になれてるような気がして

Ironing
a handkerchief —
I have the feeling
that I'm becoming
a "proper" adult

From the words *hankachi* (handkerchief) and *airon* (iron) we can see that the poem is grounded in the use of objects as well as the imagery that goes along with them. Ironing is an everyday task which most people find rather annoying and can be placed under this category of what younger people refer to as "adulging." By doing something such as ironing, the "I" within the poem expresses this feeling of light-hearted praise towards himself accompanied with a touch of irony. What makes this *tanka* even more interesting is the fact that despite it being about becoming "a proper adult," Suzukake wrote the poem using virtually no *kanji*, or Chinese characters. In fact, the only two *kanji* used are *hito* (人) and *ki* (気.) The poem also begins with mostly *katakana* and has a fairly large number for a single *tanka* (eight of the thirty-one syllables are *katakana*). These stylistic choices concerning *kanji* and *katakana* impact how the poem is visualized on the page and create an added layer of depth. Suzukake appeals to his readership by enabling them to connect with the everyday experiences painted within his *tanka*.

Similar in category to the *tanka* above, the following *tanka* is about an everyday experience but is written in an almost fantastical way along with a metaphor of lies being viewed as stains.

つきすぎた嘘は乾いて染みとなるワイングラスの底の赤色

Lies
told too many times
dry up
and become stains; red
at the bottoms of wine glasses

Like the *tanka* above, Suzukake makes use of an everyday object, *waingurasu* (wine glasses.) In this case, *waingurasu* (wine glasses) carries with it the idea of people drinking red wine, due to the words which follow, *no soko no akairo* (red at the bottoms of.) The strongest imagery and focal point of this *tanka* is that final word left lingering within the reader's mind, *akairo* (red,) symbolizing passion, aggression, and/or intensity.¹⁰³ The strong imagery of the color red is directly tied to the beginning of the poem where an emotional experience is presented to the reader; the idea that lies which are told too frequently dry up and become stains. This idea is written in a sort of fantastical way because lies are written about so that they are physical objects, able to dry up and leave stains. The actual meaning behind this creative writing style is to express the idea that when the same lies are told too often, their validity begins to subside until they inevitably become difficult to remove — like dirty marks with visibly lasting impacts or stains. This idea is generally one that can be open to interpretation for the reader in two major ways: the reader is able to recall and put their own personal experiences onto both the lies as well as the stains they leave behind. My reading is that Suzukake could be touching on the idea of the internal battle gay people are faced with of being closeted. In other words, lying and concealing your own identity has lasting impacts which are hard to heal. Of course, the *tanka* is also written

¹⁰³This is based on the original Japanese word ordering, which I was not able to accomplish in translation without having to sacrifice natural sounding English. I do not think however that the English word order takes away from the strong impact of the word red, as it is left on its own at the end of the fourth line after a semicolon. Either way, both the original Japanese and the English emphasize this same imagery through its connection to an experience laid out at the beginning of the poem.

in such a general way so that any reader is able to put their own experiences onto it and interpret it however they may want. This concept is one that makes Suzukake's poetry so unique; although he writes from the perspective of a gay man drawing upon his own personal experiences, he writes his poems so that any reader can relate to the everyday experiences by drawing upon their own personal life stories.

The next *tanka* is similar to the ones above, but what sets it apart is its tactful use of simile.

「また連絡する」とあなたは噛みすぎて味の無いガムみたいに言った

“I'll be in touch”
you said like
a piece of gum
that's been chewed too much
tasteless

We can see that the *tanka* begins with dialogue and moves towards a simile describing the way in which the person said their words, ending with, *itta* (said.)¹⁰⁴ It is also important to take a careful look at the simile, *kamisugite aji no nai gamu mitai ni* (like a piece of gum that's been chewed too much, tasteless,) which occupies more than half the syllable count of the poem. Through the use of simile, Suzukake speaks to an everyday experience by linking dialogue to an everyday object; two tropes of the everyday. Once again, Suzukake has written his *tanka* in such a way that the context can be interpreted differently depending on his readership; however, I would like to give my reading of what I think could be closest to Suzukake's imagined experience while creating the

¹⁰⁴Once again, just as the poem above, this is based on the original Japanese word order. I do not think that since the English follows a different word order (for the sake of naturalness) that it has any negative impact on the overall meaning of the poem. It is merely a grammatical difference which slightly changes the progression of the experience of the poem due to Japanese sentences ending in verbs and English sentences not. In other words, regardless of language, the overall sense and mood of the poem is still captured.

poem. The poem seems to be about the experience of “being ghosted” by a love interest or someone you get to know off a dating app. Both people eventually meet up and get to know one another mentally and/or physically, but at some point, the other party loses interest or does not want something more than a physical relationship. Instead of conveying that directly, at the end of the encounter they just say something like, “I’ll be in touch” without the real intent of ever wanting to make an effort to contact you again. By equating the person’s dialogue to that of tasteless chewed up gum, Suzukake skillfully expresses the bitter and resentful feelings that go along with this experience as well as the inconsiderate and tactless actions of the other party.

The last of the poems I want to take a close look at which is concerned exclusively with the theme of “the everyday,” is one which many readers can sympathize with due to its candidness.

孤立してみたい夜にも隣人がシャワーを浴びる音は聞こえる

Even on nights when
I want to try being
all alone, I can still
hear the sound of my neighbor
taking a shower

The phrase, *shawā wo abiru oto* (the sound of taking a shower) stands out within the poem because it grounds the poem in the everyday due to the imagery it creates. Choosing to use nine out of the thirty-one syllables available to you to write about “the sound of taking a shower” is the very essence of “the everyday.” It is also important to mention that this *tanka* is more straightforward in how it is written because it expresses the speaker’s thoughts in a direct manner. Unlike many of Suzukake’s other *tanka*, there are no figures of speech or uniquely creative utterances. Rather, it lays stripped of those

accessories and reads as a candid expression of one's emotions; that style is the very thing which makes this poem unique, empathetic, and beautiful. The phrase, *koritsu shite mitai* (I want to try being all alone,) has this nuance that the speaker may not be the best at being alone but wants to try their best to do it anyways. This feeling is made apparent due to the use of *shite mitai* (want to try) rather than *shitai* (want to.) In spite of all this, the speaker is reminded that they are not really alone because he can still hear the sound of his neighbor showering through the thin walls of his Japanese apartment. This gives a feeling of futility because even though the speaker wanted to try being alone, despite his efforts, he can't really accomplish that due to something outside of his control. This type of experience and the feeling of irritation that comes along with it, is one I am sure many have experienced themselves in some way or another, and that is precisely why it makes a good poem; it enables the reader to recall their own experiences and feel those feelings once more.

The next two poems that will be discussed are *tanka* which are primarily concerned with “the everyday”; however, they also have a small connection to “the natural” as well. In other words, “the everyday” occupies the foreground while “the natural” occupies the background. The first of these two types of *tanka* balances everyday motifs along with natural ones to convey its message.

ひとりでに身体は生きたがっていてフラペチーノがやっぱり甘い

On its own
the body
is wanting to live, and
frappuccino is
as expected, sweet

The two keywords of this *tanka* are *karada* (body) and *furapechīno* (frappuccino.) The first presents a natural motif while the latter gives an everyday motif, as it is an everyday, ordinary object. Although the first half of the poem is concerned with the idea of the body while the second half is focused on the taste of the frappuccino, “the everyday” still seems to occupy more of the meta space; it is the final lingering image of the poem, and the understanding of its message is added onto by the idea of the body. My reading of the poem is that the idea of expecting frappuccinos to be sweet symbolizes how we expect the little ordinary things in our everyday lives to be a certain way. This is the main idea of the poem which stands in the foreground, while the expectation that our bodies sometimes want to have a mind of their own is a specific instance of what the frappuccino idea symbolizes.

Just as the last poem, this next *tanka* has nature appearing in the background with the everyday standing in the foreground; however, this positionality is able to be seen more clearly.

絶対に手の届かないあの星にあなたと同じ名前を付けた

That star
absolutely
out of my reach
I gave it
the same name as you

This direct yet still beautifully creative style is one which is at the core of Suzukake’s essence as a *tanka* artist and is what enables his readers to easily empathize with his poetry. Suzukake writes about the experience of yearning over a love interest whom you feel you have no chance with because you think them to be out of your league. To express this feeling, he uses the words *zettai ni te no todokanai ano hoshi* (that star, absolutely out of my reach.) He then equates the love interest to the star by ending the poem with *anata to onaji*

namae wo tsuketa (I gave it the same name as you.) As I have already mentioned, this *tanka* is straightforwardly written; however, this does not take away from its poetic quality. Suzukake writes about a very easy to understand everyday experience which many people have experienced and does so in a creative way by placing nature in the background through the use of the imagery created by the star.

Now that we have looked at *tanka* which have “the everyday” in the foreground and “the natural” in the background, we will take a look into the next two *tanka* which have the two themes occupying equal space in the foreground. This first *tanka* is one that is concerned with the idea of not living a “proper” life.

真っ当に生きなくたっていい汗が歪む背骨をすーっとなぞれば

Even if you
aren't living properly
it's okay —
if you trace down my spine,
distorted by a trickle of sweat ...

The phrase *mattō ni ikinakutatte ii* (even if you aren't living properly, it's okay) evokes the everyday through its implications of saying it is okay to not live a life based on all the societal expectations and prejudices imposed on us. This is an idea that I think relates to Suzukake's identity as a gay man; Gay people face turmoil and inner hardships due to the fact of having to live in societies around the globe where they are not accepted by the general public and are thought of as living improperly. Suzukake is saying that living your life in accordance with all the societal pressures put on us is not healthy and is not something we should feel like we must do; it is okay to just be ourselves. In this way, the *tanka* conveys the idea of accepting one another as we are. It elaborates upon this concept further when it transitions into the second part, and we encounter words that evoke

natural imagery concerning the body such as *ase* (sweat) and *sebone* (spine.) This natural imagery ties into the gay experience Suzukake sketches in the first part of the *tanka* through the example he creates in relation to his body. When saying that his spine is distorted by a trickle of sweat there are two implications which relate to the idea within the first part of the poem. The first being that if the line down his spine is traced it will not be straight or “proper” because the trickle of sweat is literally skewing the line. The second implication is that the existence of the trickle of sweat, possibly the result of an intimate experience with another man, in the first place is what puts him in this state of not living properly. In other words, Suzukake uses this example created through natural imagery and links it to the idea presented in the first part of the poem in order to say something like, I’m not living “properly”—whatever that’s supposed to mean anyway—and that is perfectly okay. In this way, both the everyday concept and the natural imagery work in tandem to convey a message to the reader.

In a similar manner to the poem above, this next one has the everyday and the natural situated within the foreground. What sets it apart is that both themes work together through the use of simile to get across the overall meaning of the *tanka*.

あと何度触れるだろうかラベンダーのように細くなった祖母の腕

How many more
times will I touch
my grandmother’s arms,
now as thin
as lavender?

The keywords within the *tanka* are *rabendā* (lavender) and *sobo no ude* (my grandmother’s arms.) These both evoke natural imagery as the first is related to nature, and the latter is a part of the body. The first part of the poem, *ato nando fureru darō ka* (how many more times will I

touch) sketches the everyday by expressing the speaker's inner thoughts about an emotional experience. As the *tanka* progresses we come to understand that the speaker is thinking about his grandmother, making it even more personal. The idea of thinking about how much time is left with your grandparents as they get older is one that most people are able to relate to due to their own experiences with their grandparents. Suzukake captures this mood and feeling by first laying out the everyday experience, and then tying it to nature by use of simile, equating his grandmother's arms to lavender as they have become so thin. The *tanka* is straightforward in how it sketches the everyday and paints an image but is full of depth due to the feelings it elicits within the reader.

The very last *tanka* we will examine that is primarily concerned with the theme of “the everyday” is one which has technology making an appearance in the background.

歌声を知らない人と寝た朝は知らない音で目覚ましが鳴る

It's morning
I slept with someone
whose singing voice I don't know, and
with an unknown sound
the alarm clock rings

Something that stands out about this poem is the fact that it uses the word *shiranai* (don't know) twice — once in the phrase *uta goe wo shiranai hito* (someone whose singing voice I don't know) and next in *shiranai oto* (an unknown sound.) This repetition helps to give the mood of the *tanka*, which is one of overall disorientation. The speaker is reflecting on the past experience of sleeping with someone they don't know very well and waking up in their bed. This idea is conveyed subtly through the two phrases I already mentioned above. *Uta goe wo shiranai hito* (someone whose singing voice I don't know) conveys the idea that the speaker is not very close or has not gotten to know this person

very well. It also adds this connection to music within the poem, a trope seen in many other *tanka* written by Suzukake.¹⁰⁵ Next., *shiranai oto* (an unknown sound) is used to describe the sound of the *mezamashi* (alarm clock.) The fact that it is a *shiranai oto* (an unknown sound) implies that the speaker is not sleeping in their own bed, because if that was the case, the alarm clock would be a familiar sound. In other words, not being familiar with the sound of the alarm clock means that it is not the speaker's own alarm clock, but in fact someone else's. Lastly, we can see that technology looms in the background of this *tanka* because it is the alarm clock's unknown sound that causes the speaker to awaken; there is a link to technological imagery which is painted by the word, *mezamashi* (alarm clock.)

The Technological: Technology & a Modern World

In this last portion of the analysis section, we will carefully examine *tanka* that have to do with what I have decided to label as, “the technological.” The two main ways in which this theme comes into view is through technology itself and references to the modern world we live in. I use technology to encompass a wide range of objects that appear in our lives that have some connection to electronics, digitalization, and modern conveniences. Some of Suzukake's poems also make reference to the modern world we live in by sketching images of urban life. I am choosing to include this too as part of the theme, “the technological.” This theme is one which is unlike “the natural” and “the everyday” because it has no concrete connection to previous traditions of *tanka*. It is an idea that sets Suzukake apart and makes his writing unique. In thinking as to why Suzukake considers and employs “the technological” within his poetry, my

¹⁰⁵For this thesis, I did not include music as its own theme despite there being various *tanka* that touch on this idea. I did not find it to be as substantial a theme in comparison to the other three which I have identified. I do want to acknowledge its presence throughout Suzukake's poetry, so I encourage you to keep this idea in mind while reading his *tanka*.

thoughts are that it is symptomatic of living in a busy technologically advanced urban environment. The obvious reason as to why technology would not have shown up as a part of traditional *tanka* writing practices is simply because technology was not a major part of the world in which the *tanka* poets lived. As a contemporary *tanka* artist who writes many of his poems by taking inspiration from his own personal life experiences, it makes sense that technology will make an appearance in Suzukake's poetry; technology has grown to become an integrated part of our daily lives that we almost forget about and rely on (what would we do without our phones nowadays?). I believe that Suzukake is acutely aware of this integration of technology and is precisely why he chooses to juxtapose it with nature in a selection of his *tanka*.

The first *tanka* that we will dive into is one that is concerned only with “the technological” and expertly creates a painting of the idea that we live in this modern world where technology has become a new part of daily life.

身勝手に繋がるフリーWi-Fi が俺を放っておいてくれない

The free
Wi-Fi that selfishly
connects to
my phone, won't
leave me alone

The word *furī* Wi-Fi (free Wi-Fi) acts as an anchor for the poem because it is what gives a technological feeling. The experience itself which Suzukake writes about is one too that is part of living in this new modern world. When entering different places in the city, sometimes an annoying notification will pop-up onto your phone trying to get you to join the network. Suzukake gets across this concept through his *tanka* by also expressing his emotions with phrases such as *mikatte ni* (selfishly) and *hotteoitakurenai* (won't leave me alone.)¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶In an interview with Suzukake, I had the chance to ask about this particular *tanka*. Originally my translation was 4 lines long, but I modified it to be 5 lines because Suzukake expresses to me that he supports the

The next *tanka* is similar to the one above in that it also deals exclusively with “the technological.”

ブルートゥースイヤホン片方ずつ付けて見えないもので繋がっている

I put on
bluetooth headphones, one earbud
at a time —
they are connected by
something we cannot see

The opening word of the poem is *burūtūsuiyahon* (bluetooth headphones) a very long string of *katakana* — occupying around one third of the total syllable count of the poem — which plunges the *tanka* into the world of technology. Overall, the poem is a rumination on the idea that some objects as well as people are connected in ways which we are unable to see.¹⁰⁷ It is the idea that within the world around us, sometimes objects and interpersonal relationships function smoothly through intangible means; like the headphones, we are connected to both things and people in ways we are not able to see directly see. This concept is one which also relates to the modern world we live in due to technological development changing many aspects of our daily lives. For example, now

view that English *tanka* translations be written in 5 lines. Additionally, while looking at the English translation you may notice the words “my phone” which do not appear anywhere in the original Japanese. For clarification purposes (based on what Suzukake described to me as his idea behind the poem) and for the purpose of accomplishing a 5-line poem in English, I purposefully chose to include the addition of these words.

¹⁰⁷The implication that this *tanka* is about the connections between people is made clear by the *tanka* which precedes it:

なんで嘘ついたんだろう さよなら言ったり好きと言わなかったり
I wonder
why were lies told? —
saying things like
goodbye, and not saying
things like, I love you

We can see that the *tanka* is concerned with a relationship between two people, and this idea lingers and ties into the concept sketched out by the bluetooth headphones contained in the *tanka* which directly follows. By following the *rensaku*, a deeper reading of the *tanka* can be realized.

paying with paper and coins has become rare since most people pay with physical cards or even their phones which are connected to their bank account, that is, “by something we cannot see.” Suzukake guides the reader into this stream of thought and gets them to think about this complex idea about the world surrounding them through simple yet beautiful language.

These next three *tanka* are ones which are not only concerned with “the technological,” but also have “the everyday” occupying equal space in the foreground. The first of this type is a *tanka* which connects an everyday experience to technology.

かんたんに人と繋がりすぎたから通信速度が落ちる月末

Connecting
too easily
with people —
at the end of the month
the baud rate slowed down

This *tanka* is written to express a cause-and-effect relationship. The first half, concerned with the everyday experience, is the cause while the second half, concerned with technology, is the effect. In other words, the everyday manifests the technological. The speaker is reflecting back on how he exchanged messages, calls with too many people this month, and how now at the end of the month their data speed has become much slower. Many phone plans have a set amount of high-speed cellular data and once used up, data is still available for use, but the speed becomes severely reduced. This is the concept that Suzukake is referencing and relates it to an idea most can sympathize with, spending too much time absorbed in one’s phone. More specifically, spending too much time on one’s phone connecting with others. My reading of this idea is that the reason for trying to connect so much with other people is to compensate for one’s loneliness. It

could also be in reference to being single and spending a lot of time trying to talk with online people from dating apps in search of connections. Suzukake captures this mood and enables readers' own experiences to resurface so that they can feel it for themselves.

The next *tanka* is also similar in idea to the one before it because it is sketching technology and an everyday experience equally in the foreground, and they are working together to paint an idea.

取り替えた電球がまた切れる頃あなたはここにいない気がする

When the lightbulb
I replaced burns out
once again
I'll feel as if
you aren't here

The word *denkyū* (lightbulb) situates the poem in technology, while the phrase that makes up the second half, *anata wa koko ni inai ki ga suru* (I'll feel as if you aren't here) directly ties the poem to an everyday emotional experience. It is also important to note that the use of the pronoun, *anata* (you,) in Japanese holds a stronger meaning than in English — a language which must always use pronouns in a sentence — because Japanese often omits pronouns. This means that the choice to use a pronoun in *tanka*, a setting with limited syllables, is a strong and deliberate one. Suzukake equates the lightbulb burning out to the experience of missing a loved one or a lover. There is also an idea of painful repetition being expressed through the words, *torikaeta* (replaced) and *mata* (once again.) In the English translation I attempted to capture this repetition by creating the third line, “once again,” in a way that gives the following two readings: the lightbulb burns out “once again” and “once again,” I will feel like you are not here. Suzukake directly links technology to an emotional experience to express a feeling. Linked together, both themes work to create the overall meaning of the *tanka*.

The last of these three *tanka* is one which expresses the feeling of saying goodbye at ticket gates and relates it to an idea that there is also futility in technological development.

テクノロジーがどれだけ進歩してもなお改札口はきっと悲しい

No matter
how much technology
advances, I'm sure
ticket gates will still
be poignant

The opening word of the poem *tekunorojī* (technology) is the most obvious and clear-cut case of one of Suzukake's *tanka* dealing with the theme of "the technological" because it begins with the word itself. The overall mood of the poem is one which expresses an aggravation and sense of futility towards technology and does so through the words, *shitemo nao* (no matter) and *kitto* (I'm sure.) Suzukake is saying that there are some things that technology will never be able to make better, such as the poignant feeling of saying goodbye to loved ones at ticket gates. Similar to the previous two poems belonging to this same category, this *tanka* also blends technology with the everyday in order to actualize meaning; with one of the two ideas missing, it would no longer be a beautiful *tanka* representative of Suzukake's unique style.

On a slightly different note, the last three *tanka* which follow put natural imagery in the foreground with "the technological." Both themes occupy an equal presence in the foreground; however, technology and nature are in juxtaposition with each other, creating a sense that forces the reader to think about how technological advancement has become more and more integrated in our society and is separating us from our roots, nature.

花束はちゃんときれいだ貯めていた T ポイントで注文しても

The bouquet is
seriously beautiful
even though
I ordered it with
my saved-up T-points

Suzukake begins the *tanka* with the word *hanataba* (the bouquet) opening with natural imagery. He then makes a statement about them, *chanto kirei da* (seriously beautiful.) This sets up the poem to then connect with the next idea which contradicts it *Tpointo de chūmon shite mo* (even though I ordered it with T-points.) The phrase *Tpointo* (T-points) connects the *tanka* to technology, but also arrives in the second half of the poem as a contradiction; we learn the object of nature comes out of these saved up digital points, a technological development of our modern world. There is an idea being expressed that nowadays everything is connected to technology, even natural items. Suzukake lays out both nature and technology within a single *tanka* so that readers can come into contact with and think about this idea of a society that cannot escape technology, a society in which “the natural” has ties to “the technological.”

The *tanka* which follows similarly deals with a contrast between nature and technology, but it does so in a slightly more subtle way.

コンビニが取り壊されてまっすぐに顔を上げると満月だった

The convenience store
got torn down, and
when directly
lifting my face,
there was a full moon

In this *tanka konbini* (the convenience store) begins the poem and links it to “the technological” as it is a location that has become an integrated part of modern Japanese society.¹⁰⁸ The phrase,

¹⁰⁸Japanese convenience stores are visited very often by all kinds of people in Japan and make life very convenient for the lack of a better word. You can buy small meals, beverages, print things out, pay your bills etc.

torikowasarete (got torn down) also ties the *tanka* to “the technological” because the idea of a building getting torn down relates to the idea of development and advancement; old things get torn down so that better things can be constructed. As the *tanka* progresses, the speaker lifts his face and sees a full moon looming above. *Mangetsu* (a full moon) is the lingering image which arrives at the end of the *tanka*, and connects it to nature, as a full moon is a powerful natural image. The poem opens with *konbini* (the convenience store) and closes with, *mangetsu* (a full moon,) meaning by association that it begins with technology and ends with nature. Based on the progression of the *tanka*, the greater meaning is that all will eventually return to nature and that technology is ephemeral in comparison to nature as the full moon acts as a strong, ineradicable presence in the poem. At the moment when the speaker realizes there is a torn-up building, creating a void, surrounding the speaker, he looks up, and there is comfort in the unchangeable existence of the moon in full looming above. In this way, Suzukake also suggests that in times of emptiness and change, we can turn to nature’s permanence and stability for comfort.

The very last *tanka* will be discussed is one that also deals with technology and nature in juxtaposition, but what sets it apart is what it suggests about the direction we are headed with technological advancements.

充電の端子を繋ぎ自動的に朝日が照らすシングルベッド

I connect the
charging-terminal, and
the morning sun
automatically illuminates
my single bed

The *tanka* sketches strong images of both technology and of nature. Suzukake creates technological imagery with the phrase *gyūden no tanshi* (charging-terminal) and natural imagery with the phrase *asahi* (the morning sun.) The final word *shingurubeddo* (single bed) also gives

off a sense of loneliness because Suzukake deliberately chooses to use *katakana* to emphasize that it is a one-person bed. My reading of this *tanka* is that technology has arrived at a point where it has advanced so much that we have found a way to technologize nature. This idea comes from the fact that the speaker seemingly connects the charging-terminal, and then the sun “turns on” and shines over his bed. It is as if the sun is being depicted as a light which we can plug into the wall and turn on and off as we please. Suzukake is focusing on this idea of technological development and is painting this futuristic image for the reader to experience and react to. It is as if the author is saying, “This is where we are going to end up if technology continues to progress like this.” The lasting image of the lonely single bed also ties in with technology and enables the *tanka* to become a snapshot of urban life where the speaker is navigating loneliness and a loss of human connection. Just as the previous poem similarly suggests, there is a void, a loneliness within technology. Suzukake captures all these feelings surrounding technology and nature within this single elaborate and refined *tanka*.

CHAPTER 3

TRANSLATION COMMENTARY

This commentary seeks to achieve two major objectives: to present my overall approach to *tanka* translation including decisions such as those in reference to: line count, syllable count, punctuation, and capitalization, and secondly, to analyze the translation process as a whole by addressing the theories that have informed it along with a highlight of select translation decisions and justifications. I have decided to start by presenting an explanation of the intended audience of the translation as it has also played a role in informing my translation process. After that, I will discuss my general approach to translating the genre of *tanka* poetry. Finally, I will conclude by addressing the relevant theories from the translation studies field which have informed the creation of my translations. Each relevant theory—one by one—and the role it played in the reflection behind the translation’s creation will be discussed with a highlight of specific translation examples.

Intended Audience

The translations of these select *tanka* found in Suzukake’s *Ai wo utae* were created with the intent to be read by not only scholars in the Japanese studies field who have a knowledge of Japan and Japanese, but also to be read by any English speaker who may be interested in reading *tanka* poetry. This means that the intended audience is quite broad; however, this decision was a deliberate one as my hope is to stand by and support Suzukake’s goal of expressing through *tanka* the idea of “universal love” to as many people as possible. In this manner, my intended audience mirrors that of Suzukake’s original audience because the hope is to gain as many readers as possible and convey this message to them. What makes my intended audience different, however, is the fact that I am trying to reach a general English-speaking readership

while Suzukake's original audience was a general Japanese speaking readership. Translating for this wide audience elicited from Suzukake's goal as a writer meant that it was most important for me to rewrite beautifully crafted Japanese poems into equivalently beautiful English poems through using natural sounding English. This means that, on a macro level, I decided to translate more freely at times with the idea of translating sense for sense, rather than strictly adhering to the concept of word for word translation.¹⁰⁹ I also chose to translate at times in a way which foreignized the target text so that I could bring into English the original flavor of the original Japanese language and culture.¹¹⁰ I did so in a way to balance natural sounding English and readability with a sometimes foreignizing effect on the reader so that they can get a sense of the source language and culture. This was an important decision because it is necessary to take careful consideration of the source culture when translating. Being able to convey that culture to a wider audience is a way to spread more acceptance and cultural competence to readers from different cultures around the world.

Approach to *Tanka* Translation

When considering how to translate *tanka* poetry, there are several important factors that must be considered. The first which I would like to address is line count. *Tanka* is traditionally written and published as a single line poem in Japanese; however, there has not been established a standard convention for how many lines the English translations of *tanka* should have. This question is still debated by scholars. After reading some of Juliet Winter Carpenter's translations of Tawara Machi's *tanka* from her anthology, *Sarada Kinenbi* (Salad Anniversary,) I was inspired by how Carpenter decided to translate her poetry with three lines, which is something

¹⁰⁹The theory which most informed this thought process was that of "Dynamic Equivalence," coined by Eugene Nida, which I address later a long in this commentary.

¹¹⁰The theory which informed this thought process was that of "Foreignization" coined by Friedrich Schleiermacher and is one which I address later a long within the commentary.

different from the typical representation of either five lines or a single line. As a result, I came to the conclusion that the line count itself does not matter so much, instead what is critical is that the sense of the poem is transferred into the target language and that it still sounds like a well-crafted poem in English.

As I began my first translations, I kept in my mind this idea that the number of lines the English poem contains is not of great concern; rather, what is more important is that it sounds natural and suitable to the message of the poem. In other words, I was not so concerned with the overall form of the target text. I believe there are certain characteristics of the Japanese language that make creating a *tanka* in a single line viable in contrast to English. I felt that locking myself into one single mode of thinking, that there must be a specific line count, to be limiting to some degree. Despite keeping this idea in mind while translating, most of my translations ended up becoming five lines because I felt that it was best suited to the natural sound breaks in the original Japanese and best captured the sense of the original poem. My position on line count changed, however, after an interview with Suzukake where we had a conversation about line count. Suzukake takes the stance that he likes his poems to appear with five lines in English. After learning about his views, I decided it most appropriate to adopt Suzukake's view on line count and went back and changed the few of my translations that were either four or three lines into five-line poems.

The next characteristic of translating *tanka* which I would like to discuss is the idea of syllable count. The idea of whether or not the same syllable count — five, seven, five, seven, seven — should be strived for in English translations of *tanka* is also undecided by scholars; however, it is more accepted that trying to match the same syllable count is unnecessary because Japanese and English language are simply too different. My view on syllable count is similar to

my view on line count: whatever captures the sense of the original poem best is most suitable. This means that when I was translating, I decided to not pay attention to matching the Japanese syllable count unless it was found to be crucial to the meaning of that poem in some way. With that being said, I did not encounter any such *tanka*, so I went about my translation freely, doing my very best to transfer the sense of the original Japanese poem. What I did keep in mind was the idea of alternating shorter lines and longer lines. I found this idea to be helpful when trying to rewrite a new poem because it gave me a foundation to fall back on in regard to creating a rhythm for the poem.

The last characteristic of *tanka* translation I would like to discuss is punctuation and capitalization. While first translating I did not pay much attention to punctuation and capitalization until I had a discussion with Professor Stephen Miller. In our discussion, he brought to my attention the idea of being more intentional with my usage of punctuation and capitalization and pointed out that *tanka* written in Japanese do not use periods or capital letters (since there is no capitalization in Japanese). By ending a *tanka* in a period, it gives a sense of finality that never existed in the original Japanese poem which has more of an open sense to it. In terms of capitalization, I decided to only employ it as a unique feature of English — that is, when I wanted to emphasize something that I felt was already being emphasized in the original Japanese. Additionally, I hold the view that it is not necessary to capitalize the first letter of each individual line of the poem just for the sake of English writing conventions, and since poetry has room for creative liberties this idea works well. In fact, I find it more appropriate to not capitalize the first word of each line because it matches better with the overall sense of the original Japanese writing form.

Relevant Theories from Translation Studies

Now that I have discussed the intended audience and my general approach to *tanka* translation, I will now move the focus of discussion to the theories from the translation studies field that have informed my translation process.

Dryden & How to Define a Translation

The first theory that I would like to touch upon is that of John Dryden, a 17th century English poet. Unlike the other theories I will discuss later in this commentary, Dryden's theory is concerned with "how to define a translation" rather than "how to translate." In *The Preface to Ovid's Epistles* Dryden writes,

All translation I suppose may be reduced to these three heads. First, that of Metaphrase, or turning an Authour Word by Word, and Line by Line, from one Language into another... The second way is that of Paraphrase, or Translation with Latitude, where the Authour is kept in view by the Translator, so as never to be lost, but his words are not so strictly follow'd as his sense, and that too is admitted to be amplified, but not alter'd... The Third is that of Imitation, where the Translator (if now he has not lost that Name) assumes the liberty not only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion : and taking only some general hints from the Original, to run division on the Ground-work, as he pleases.¹¹¹

From Dryden's words, it becomes clear that his theory categorizes translation into three major types: metaphrase, paraphrase, and imitation. Taking into account Dryden's ways of defining a translation for this translation project, it was most appropriate to create a translation that Dryden defines as paraphrase because I believe it suits the intended audience the best and gave me more latitude as the translator to create natural sounding poems that capture the essence of Suzukake's

¹¹¹Ovid, *Ovid's Epistles*, trans. several hands (London: printed for Jacob Jonson, 1681), 7, <http://silk.library.umass.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/books/ovids-epistles-translated-several-hands/docview/2248524933/se-2?accountid=14572>.

original Japanese poems. If I strived to create a metaphrase, I found it to be adhering too strictly to the source text resulting in unnatural English that would impact the overall readability of the target text. Additionally, I believe that the grammar structures as well as cultural differences between Japanese and English are far too large to allow for an adequate metaphrase that can still convey the overall sense of Suzukake's poetry. Furthermore, I found that an imitation would stray too far from the source text and result in a target text that does not represent Suzukake's style as a poet in an appropriate manner. I find imitation for a poetic source text such as this one to be unsuitable. Therefore, striving to create a text that Dryden defines as paraphrase was not only an appropriate balance between the problems I found with creating metaphrase and imitation for this source text, but it was also a choice with which I feel comfortable and can fully support as a translator.

Vermeer & Skopos Theory

The next theory that has influenced this translation project is the skopos theory, first proposed by Hans Vermeer, a German linguist and translation scholar in 1978. This theory and the others that I will discuss in this commentary are concerned with the issue in translation studies of "how to translate." More specifically, skopos theory along with other functionalist theories are mainly concerned with the idea of the purpose and effect of a target text on a target audience. In other words, it argued that sometimes the function is just as important as the equivalence to the source text. Regarding skopos theory, Vermeer writes, "What the Skopos states is that one must translate, consciously and consistently, in accordance with some principle respecting the target text (Vermeer 1989/2004: 234)."¹¹² I find this to be at the core of skopos

¹¹²Jeremy Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*. 3rd ed. (New York/London: Routledge, 2008), 124.

theory, and this idea has informed my translation process greatly. With the target text, the leading principle I have followed while translating was to consistently translate with the purpose of creating a well-crafted poem in English, while at the same time striving for natural sounding language that allows for ease of reading. This means that at times different techniques for specific decisions (such as line count, syllable count, punctuation & capitalization) need to be employed in order to achieve an adequate translation based on this purpose. In the section above titled, “Intended Audience,” I have already discussed what it meant to translate for the intended audience and how that informed the translation process. Furthermore, I also have already discussed in detail my approach to translating *tanka* poetry in the section above titled, “Approach to *Tanka* Translation.” These discussions above heavily tie into this current discussion of skopos theory because it is the intended audience that greatly influenced what principle of the target text I consciously followed while translating. In the case of this translation project, the intended audience and skopos theory go hand-in-hand, especially because I had full control over defining the skopos of this project as I served the dual-role of commissioner and translator. In summary, skopos theory informed my translation process because I followed the idea of consistently translating with a specific purpose in mind for the intended audience. That purpose was to create well-crafted natural sounding poems that preserve the essence of Suzukake’s poetic style and message of “universal love” so that his *tanka* can expand greatly and reach a broader English-speaking readership.

Schleiermacher & Foreignizing versus Domesticating

Friedrich Schleiermacher, a 19th century German scholar, sparked what turned into the debate surrounding the idea of foreignizing versus domesticating the source text. He was concerned with the two-path idea of either moving the reader toward the author or moving the

author toward the reader. In the first method the translator allows for a degree of foreignness in the translation by choosing to keep certain words and details that stand out and are unfamiliar to the target audience. On the contrary, in the second method the translator tries to write the target text in the same way the author would have if they wrote their text in the target language. In her article, Susan Bernofsky writes about Schleiermacher's theory saying,

Each of these two methods is discussed at considerable length before Schleiermacher concludes that the first is the only truly viable one. Both texts and individuals, Schleiermacher writes, are shaped by the language in which they originate, so that communicating a 'feeling of foreignness' in a translation means giving a sense not only of the texture of that language but of what it would mean to have grown up speaking it. To accustom the reader to foreign texts is thus to engage him in a communal process of becoming more open to other cultures.¹¹³

According to Bernofsky, Schleiermacher supports the notion of foreignizing over that of domesticating because exposing readers to foreign texts allows them to engage with and become open to other cultures; foreignizing gives the reader a sense of the texture of the source language.¹¹⁴ I agree with this point of view based on Schleiermacher's theory, so while thinking about the issue of foreignizing versus domesticating, I followed the idea of foreignization while conducting my translation process. This means that in my translation process I strived to keep the original flavor of the source text by bringing the audience closer to the author. A specific example of when I employed this idea in my translations can be seen in the following *tanka*:

¹¹³Susan Bernofsky, "Schleiermacher's Translation Theory and Varieties of Foreignization: August Wilhelm Schlegel vs. Johann Heinrich Voss," *The Translator: Studies in Intercultural Communication* 3, no. 2 (1997): 176-177. doi:10.1080/13556509.1997.10798997.

¹¹⁴Bernofsky, "Schleiermacher Translation Theory," 176-177

「すき」「きらい」そっと花びら引きはがすようにあなたの瞼に触れた

“*Suki*,” “*kirai*”
like gently plucking
flower petals
I touched
your eyelids

I made the conscious decision to bring the Japanese words, “*suki*” and “*kirai*” into my English translation by writing them in *Romaji* (roman letters.) I could have translated these words as something like, “loves me, loves me not,” and in doing so would have been employing domestication. Instead, I used *Romaji* and employed foreignization by including some Japanese words in my English poem. I think that it works well in the poem because in this case the words, “*suki, kirai*” are being used as a phrase said in dialogue within the original poem. Furthermore, they are basic Japanese words learned at the beginning level of Japanese language learning meaning that readers with even a little bit of exposure to Japanese language may be able to pick up on their meaning. This makes the text foreignized while bringing in the flavor of the original Japanese *tanka* but does not make the text too foreign. My primary motivation behind choosing to employ foreignization in some of my translations is because I believe that exposing the audience to the source culture in this case is especially valuable: using a degree of foreignization in my translation process allows Suzukake’s English readers to become conscious of Japan while engaging with the source culture.

Reiss & Text Type

Another translation theory that informed my translation process was that of Katharina Reiss and her idea of text type. In her discussion of establishing text type, Reiss writes,

Establishment of the “*text type*”—a phenomenon going beyond a single linguistic or cultural context, because the following essentially different forms of written communication may be regarded as being present in every speech community with a culture based on the written word and also because every author of a text ought to decide in principle on one of the three forms before beginning to formulate his text. Question: Which basic communicative form is realized in the concrete text with the help of written texts? a) The communication of content - informative type b) The communication of artistically organized content - expressive type c) The communication of content with a persuasive character - operative type.¹¹⁵

From this excerpt, Reiss makes clear that every author of a text, including translators, must decide on one of the three forms of text type before starting to create the target text. The three types listed are: informative, expressive, and operative.¹¹⁶ In reflecting on my translation process, Reiss’s theory of text type influenced my process greatly. Considering that Suzukake’s *tanka* belong to a creative and artistic genre of writing, I strived to create a target text that was the expressive type. Suzukake’s poetry is a prime example of writing which communicates content in an artistically organized way.¹¹⁷ By establishing the text-type before translating, I was able to translate in a more intentional way that creates a target text which follows the same objective as the source text. I believe that following this theory helps to achieve the goal of creating a target text which gives a similar experience to English readers as that of the readers of the original Japanese source text.

Nida & Formal versus Dynamic Equivalence

The last theory I would like to discuss that played a role in my translation process was Eugene Nida’s theory concerned with the issue of linguistic equivalence. Unlike some other

¹¹⁵Katharina Reiss, “Type, Kind and Individuality of Text: Decision Making in Translation,” *Poetics Today* 2, no. 4 (1981): 124. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1772491>.

¹¹⁶Reiss, “Type, Kind and Individuality of Text,” 124.

¹¹⁷Reiss, “Type, Kind and Individuality of Text,” 124.

theories which were formulated prior to this one, this theory attempts a more systematic analysis of translation. In his review article of Nida's "Toward a Science of Translating," John Waterman writes,

Nida recognizes two basic kinds of translations, Formal and Dynamic. 'Formal equivalence focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content ... In contrast, a translation which attempts to produce a dynamic ... equivalence is based upon "the principle of equivalent effect" ...' (159). The trend over the past fifty years, he says, has been toward dynamic translations aiming at complete naturalness of style, expressed in language that fits the cultural pattern of the receptors.¹¹⁸

From this excerpt we can see that Nida proposes two types of translations: ones that adhere to formal equivalence and those that adhere to dynamic equivalence. In keeping this theory in mind, it was most suitable for me to create a translation product that followed dynamic equivalence, similar to sense-for-sense translation. The reason for this is that formal equivalence — similar to word-for-word translation — heavily stresses adhering to the text in such a way that is also focused on keeping the source text's form and structure. I believe that trying to accomplish such a translation would take away from the readability of the target text due to the resulting unnatural English. Additionally, it would render Suzukake's poetry into something it is not by changing Suzukake's well written, beautiful, and thoughtful language into something that is not equivalently as polished in English. The grammatical structures of Japanese and English are so different that conducting a word-for-word translation results in a target text that is not readable. One example of a grammatical difference is the fact that English is a head-first language while Japanese is a head-final language. Due to the syntactic structure of word order, English sentences follow the general order, SVO (subject, verb, object), while Japanese sentences generally follow

¹¹⁸J. T. Waterman, review of "Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating," by E. A. Nida. *Language* 42, no. 1 (1966): 102. <https://doi.org/10.2307/411603>.

the order, SOV (subject, object, verb). This means that innately, in order to create a grammatical sentence, the order that the reader receives important information will follow a different pattern. This means that at times the progression of received information in the poem changes when translating into English, unless we use a creative approach to English grammar which sounds a bit too unnatural for my liking. For example, some of Suzukake's poems end in a single noun that is modified by an entire clause which precedes it. The *tanka* that follows is a good example of this concept:

幸せの意味を訊けずに「幸せに暮らしました」で終わった童話

While not
being able to ask
what happiness means—
the fairy tale ended with
“And they lived happily ever after”

The original Japanese poem ends with the word, “*dōwa*, fairy tale,” which is modified by the preceding clause. This type of modified noun construction works well and is used often in Japanese, but the same does not hold true for English. My English translation is an example of following dynamic equivalence because I decided to preserve the sense of the original poem but did not force the English to end with the word “fairy tale” since it would be quite difficult to do so without sounding too unnatural. Keeping in mind the challenges of dealing with the differences in grammar structure, it made the most sense to utilize an approach congruent with the idea of dynamic equivalence so that the target text could give a message of equivalent effect to the reader rather than focus on the form and specific content of the message.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹Waterman, review of “Toward a Science of Translating,” 102.

CHAPTER 4 AFTERWORD

While I am conscious of the fact that some scholars may question why I have not identified “gayness” as a major theme in Suzukake’s poetry, I have been careful and deliberate in my choice to not do so. As a poet, Suzukake does not write gayness into the forefront of his *tanka* and chooses to not brand himself that way. In fact, when reading and analyzing his *tanka*, the only way in which the reader is able to identify connections to gayness is through the knowledge of Suzukake’s sexual identity. Unlike other gay Japanese poets such as Takahashi Mutsuo, Suzukake’s poetry does not overtly shout “gay.” “Gayness” simply appears in Suzukake’s poetry because he writes by taking inspiration from his personal life experiences, and he happens to be a gay man. In other words, he does not put his identity as a gay man overtly in the forefront as a theme of its own; it is an aspect that appears in his poetry just like any other experience from his life would. Suzukake writes himself in the afterword of *Ai wo utae* that his goal is to express to his readers through his *tanka* the idea of universal love. While talking with him in an interview he also expressed to me that he wishes me to express following in my thesis, “I believe that being gay is something natural; in other words, something which is part of the everyday.” Consequently, Suzukake has written his *tanka* in such a manner as to express this concept. For example, when creating scenes between two love interests, the gender is left ambiguous and we only understand the gender of the individuals to be two men because Suzukake wrote the poem himself, and since he is gay, his love interests happen to be men. Suzukake leaves the gender ambiguous so that readers have the ability to relate and connect their personal experiences to his *tanka*. This is entirely the point of his poetry, that gay love is the same as heterosexual love, that is, universal love. Some may think this to be too idealistic for the current state of the world in which we live, but I personally find Suzukake’s message to be both

beautiful and empowering. This is precisely why I have chosen to respect and be faithful to this original message in analyzing Suzukake's poetry.

PART II: SELECT *TANKA* FROM

SING LOVE

愛を歌え
鈴掛真

Sing Love

by Suzukake Shin

つめたい手
Cold Hand

壊れないようにそっと触れ合って溶けないように離れて眠る

As to not break
gently, our touch meets
as to not melt
we separate
and sleep

途切れ途切れ人差し指が 4 拍子きざむタバコをやめた同僚

The index finger
choppily
beats out a 4-count rhythm —
the coworker who
quit smoking

かんたんに人と繋がりすぎたから通信速度が落ちる月末

Connecting

too easily

with people —

at the end of the month

the baud rate slowed down

刻々と海へ沈んでゆくようだ建設中のビルを見上げて

Every moment

sinking into the sea

it seems

an under-construction-

building, Look up

生き物は俺以外にも住んでいて風呂場の隅で増えるクリムゾン

Living beings

other than myself

also inhabit spaces

at the corners of the bathing room —

multiplying crimson

掃除機が充電式で天井に吊るす長さのケーブルが無い

The vacuum cleaner
is rechargeable
so it doesn't have
a cord long enough
to hang from the ceiling

「死にたい」と下手なマスカラ塗りながら向かいの席の女子高生は

“I want to die,”
said the
high school girl
poorly applying mascara
sitting across from me

乗換えの駅のトイレに捨ててきた とても為になる本だったので

Thrown away

in the transfer

station's toilet —

It was a quite beneficial

book, that's why

新刊の表紙を覆うブックカバーのようにマスクで隠す唇

Like a new publication's

binding-enveloping-

book cover —

mask-

concealed-lips

脇腹に触れるつめたい君の手が輪郭としてずっと消えない

My side

touched by

your cold hand

an outline of

lingering permanence

『来月は会えるかしら』とヘップバーンの吹き替えみたいな母の留守録

Next month

I wonder if we can meet, Dear

sort of-

Hepburn-dubbed —

Mom's voicemail

ひとりでに身体は生きたがっていてフラペチーノがやっぱり甘い

On its own

the body

is wanting to live, and

frappuccino is

as expected, sweet

命あるものとして伸びる友達の子供の指の爪の小ささ

As a living
thing, it grows —
my friend's
child's small
fingernail

コンビニが取り壊されてまっすぐに顔を上げると満月だった

The convenience store
got torn down, and
when directly
lifting my face
there was a full moon

充電の端子を繋ぎ自動的に朝日が照らすシングルベッド

I connect the
charging-terminal, and
the morning sun
automatically illuminates
my single bed

鐘の音が遠のく街で

On the Street with the Faint Sound of Bells

歌声を知らない人と寝た朝は知らない音で目覚ましが鳴る

It's morning

I slept with someone

whose singing voice I don't know, and

with an unknown sound

the alarm clock rings

3 日目に造るのは海 真っ青な尾を引きながら溶けるバスクリン

On the third day

the ocean was created —

leaving a trail of

deep blue,

the dissolving bath salt

あなたから生まれたかったアンダンテのテンポで上下するあばら骨

From you

I wanted to be born

at an andante tempo

the rib

rises and falls

花束はちゃんときれいだ貯めていた T ポイントで注文しても

The bouquet is

seriously beautiful

even though

I ordered it with

my saved-up T-points

みんな同じ場所へと還る無花果の枯葉は人との掌に似て

Everyone returns

to the same place

the fig tree's withered leaf

is like the palm

of a person's hand

「すき」「きれい」そっと花びら引きはがすようにあなたの瞼に触れた

“*Suki,*” “*kirai*”

like gently plucking

flower petals

I touched

your eyelids

膝頭を林檎に見立て頬張れば罪を分け合うアダムとアダム

If the kneecap is

likened to an apple and

stuffed into one’s mouth

sins are shared between

Adam and Adam

息の根を止められているとき俺はどんな顔しているんだろうなあ

I wonder

what kind of face

do I make

while I’m having

the life choked out of me?

不倫した歌手が奏でる楽園を追われる夜に似合うバラード

An adulterous
singer strings out
a ballade that suits
the night they were
forced out of Eden

鐘の音が遠のく街で愛なんか無くても灯るホテルのネオン

On the street with
the faint sound of bells
even without
something like love
the flickering of the hotel's neon

繋がっている

Connected

「がんばれよ」なんてあなたが言うたびにだんだん遠くなるような夕陽

Whenever you

say things like

“Hang in there! Do your best!”

the setting sun seems to fade

further and further away

真っ当に生きなくたっていい汗が歪む背骨をすーっとなぞれば

Even if you

aren't living properly

it's okay —

if you trace down my spine,

distorted by a trickle of sweat ...

白い息が混ざって消えるまだ誰も名付けていない自然現象

Winter white breaths

mix together and

disappear —

a natural phenomenon that

still, no one has named

取り替えた電球がまた切れる頃あなたはここにはいない気がする

When the lightbulb

I replaced burns out

once again

I'll feel as if

you aren't here

なんで嘘ついたんだろう さよなら言ったり好きと言わなかったり

I wonder

why were lies told? —

saying things like

goodbye, and not saying

things like, I love you

ブルートゥースイヤホン片方ずつ付けて見えないもので繋がっている

I put on

bluetooth headphones, one earbud

at a time —

they are connected by

something we cannot see

この駅で降りるのはもう最後だと Google マップから消える星

As if getting
off at this station is
already my last —
a star that disappears
from google maps

都会では消えて見えない星にすら名前が付いているのに、俺は

In the city
even the stars that fade
that we can't see
have names attached to them
but I ...

何回も思い出さないようにして ZIP ファイルにして保存した

“Try not to
recall it over and
over again” ...
I wrote it in a ZIP file
and saved it

待ってなどいません 季節が変わるのを黙って見届けたいだけです

I'm not doing

things like waiting for you —

I just want to

be silent and watch with my

own eyes, the seasons change

幸福の形

Shape of Happiness

カーテンを開けた向こうの風景が美しくない病室の窓

The hospital-room-
window has a view
behind the
opened curtains
that's far from beautiful

ヒロインをめぐって殴り合う場所に適した川がこの街に無い

In this city
there's no river suitable
for a place
to have a fistfight
over a heroine

結露した窓に描けばどんな顔もやがて静かに涙を流す

If you draw on
a foggy window
every face
will eventually
shed silent tears

あと何度触れるだろうかラベンダーのように細くなった祖母の腕

How many more
times will I touch
my grandmother's arms,
now as thin
as lavender?

『夕焼小焼』 5時の時報を聞き俺は誰も待たない家へと帰る

I hear the
Yūyake Koyake
5 o'clock chimes
and go home to a house
where no one's waiting for me

テクノロジーがどれだけ進歩してもなお改札口はきっと悲しい

No matter
how much technology
advances, I'm sure
ticket gates will still
be poignant

幸福の形はみんな違うから誰も探さなくなった四つ葉

Since everyone
has a different shape
of happiness —
people have stopped
searching for four leaf clovers

ハンカチにアイロンかける ちゃんとした人になれるような気がして

Ironing
a handkerchief —
I have the feeling
that I'm becoming
a “proper” adult

孤立してみたい夜にも隣人がシャワーを浴びる音は聞こえる

Even on nights when

I want to try being

all alone, I can still

hear the sound of my neighbor

taking a shower

来世にあなたのためだけに咲いたポインセチアになって枯れたい

In my next life

I want to become

a poinsettia

that blooms, just for you

then withers and dies

王子なんかじゃない

Not a Prince

黄金の林檎を探す旅の途中です一晩の宿をください

I'm on a journey

searching for

the golden apple —

please give me

a place to stay the night

葡萄酒に酔ったふりして狼にわざと喰われてみたい日もある

Pretending to be

drunk off wine, wanting to be

eaten by a wolf

deliberately —

there're those kinds of days too

紫陽花をあなたと見たい来年も好きでいるとは限らないから

Hydrangeas —

I want to see them

with you, because

it's not guaranteed that

we'll still love each other next year

つきすぎた嘘は乾いて染みとなるワイングラスの底の赤色

Lies

told too many times

dry up

and become stains; red

at the bottoms of wine glasses

あの子とは別れたのかと訊けぬまま空いたボジョレー・ヌーヴォーのボトル

Without

being able to ask

did you break up

with them? An empty bottle

of Beaujolais Nouveau

「また連絡する」とあなたは噛みすぎて味の無いガムみたいに言った

“I’ll be in touch”

you said like

a piece of gum

that’s been chewed too much

tasteless

王子様がいつか迎えに来るまでのそばで見守る小人のひとり

Your prince

will come for you one day

until then

I’ll watch over you

one of the little people

幸せの意味を訊けずに「幸せに暮らしました」で終わった童話

While not

being able to ask

what happiness means —

the fairy tale ended with

“And they lived happily ever after”

絶対に手の届かないあの星にあなたと同じ名前を付けた

That star

absolutely

out of my reach

I gave it

the same name as you

世界を分かっ

To Divide Our World

一向に花の咲かないサボテンが生まれた意味を問い掛けてくる

I started to question

the meaning of

the birth

of a cactus

that never blooms

身勝手に繋がるフリーWi-Fi が俺を放っておいてくれない

The free

Wi-Fi that selfishly

connects to

my phone, won't

leave me alone

屋上で UFO を呼ぶふりをして見えない明日に向けて叫んだ

On the rooftop

I pretend to call

a UFO —

I shouted towards

an unseen tomorrow

線と線で繋がれていない空でなら誰も独りじゃなかったのにね

If we were

in the sky, not connected

line by line

nobody would have

been alone, but ...

「ここまでが僕でここから君のもの」飛行機雲が世界を分かつ

“Up until here

me, and from here on

yours” —

contrails

divide our world

星座図を書き直しても俺たちはどうせ神話にならないだろう

Even if we
rewrote the astrology chart
it seems we
won't become
a myth anyway

死んだなら何人泣いてくれるかを羊のように数えて眠る

If I died
how many people would
cry for me?
I'll count them, like sheep
and fall asleep

抱き合って眠った夜が明けるころ綿菓子ならば溶けていたのに

By daybreak
the night we fell asleep
in each other's arms
if we were cotton candy
we would have been melted, but ...

目覚めるとあなたはいなくなっていて音も立てずに冬が来ていた

When I

opened my eyes, you had

disappeared

without even making a sound —

winter had come

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW Q&A WITH SUZUKAKE SHIN

1. Q: What types of inspirations do you draw on in order to write your tanka?

どのようなことからインスピレーションを受けて短歌を書くのでしょうか？

A: From daily real-life experiences.

2. Q: What is the process of writing your tanka like?

短歌を書くのはどのようなプロセスで行われるのですか？

A: I either write directly from my daily real-life experiences (sometimes) or rewrite those experiences into interesting fiction (most often). For example, rewriting daytime as nighttime.

3. Do you pick a theme first before writing your tanka?

短歌はまずテーマを決めてから作るのですか？

A: *Tanka* is submitted in *rensaku*, not just a single poem. A title is necessary for the *rensaku*. Sometimes I write on the theme of the *rensaku* I have chosen, or in some cases, I organize *tanka* with similar themes into *rensaku* after having written them.

4. About how long does it take you to write a tanka?

ひとつの短歌を作るのに、どのくらいの時間がかかりますか？

A: It varies by *tanka*. When it's fast, it takes about three or four minutes without notes, just in my head. Often, even if I can make the five, seven, five portion (the first half of the poem), I save the remaining seven, seven, portion (the second half) for later.

5. How would you say you are different and similar to other tanka poets?

他の歌人との違い、似ているところはなんですか？

A: There are *tanka* associations all throughout Japan. I am part of the group called, *Tankajin*, which publishes one issue a month. That is what makes me the same as other poets. Currently, I am doing things like using social media to attract new people who have not been interested in *tanka* before.

6. What is the message you wish to convey to your readers? What do you hope they will take away from your *tanka*?

読者に伝えたいメッセージは何ですか？鈴掛さんの短歌から読者は何を感じ取ってほしいですか？

A: I want people to think *tanka* is interesting, as I was inspired by Amano Kei to start writing my *tanka*.

7. Is there anything in particular you hope/wish for me to convey in my thesis project?

僕の修論で特に伝えてほしいこと、希望することはありますか？

A: I believe that being gay is something natural, in other words, something which is part of the everyday. This is why I have decided to be open with my own identity. I wish to express this idea through my *tanka*.

8. Why do you use gaps in some of your poems?

どうして、いくつかの短歌の形で空欄を使うのですか？

A: Sometimes it is for the ease of reading *kanji* which appear next to each other. Other times it is because some words in *hiragana* will become lumped together and difficult to read. I use these blank spaces because I do not want to use symbols.

Extra Notes

- It is thrilling for me to employ feelings which I am not accustomed to in my poetry.
- I use the app, “Evernote,” to write memos and keep track of my creative ideas.

- There are some things which I have trouble explaining myself, but I know I was convinced to write it into poetry.

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