1. What characterizes the “courtliness” of Japanese court poetry? What types of sensibilities and restrictions are involved? (especially 7-8)

2. What is the attitude toward feeling in Japanese court poetry? (9ff)

3. What does Miner mean by “desolation” and “celebration”? How are they related in Japanese court poetry? (especially 11-17)

4. According to Miner, how is the theme of nature treated in Japanese court poetry? What assumptions about nature found in the poetry? (146-151)

5. How is the theme of love treated? What assumptions about love and gender difference are found in the poetry? (151-153)

6. How is the theme of time treated? (154-159)

7. What do the terms kokoro and kotoba mean? Describe the relation between them. (18-19, 34-35)

8. Describe the importance of fragmentation, integration, and progression in Japanese court poetry. (156-159, 27-29)

9. At this point, what appeals to you about these ideals and values—in what way do you think they are significant and compelling? And what does not appeal to you—in what way do you think this type of literature is limited and limiting?

William LaFleur, "Saigyo and the Buddhist Value of Nature"
Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought

Note:
- “hermeneutics” is a theory of interpretation. There are different ways of thinking about what is a valid way to interpret a text (e.g., the Bible), and hermeneutics concerns theories about this issue.
- “soteric” and “salvific” mean “having to do with salvation”: a “soteric mode” is a way of becoming saved. “Nature as salvific” means nature is the source and cause of salvation.
- “Tathagata” is the Buddhist word for ultimate reality, the sacred.
- “nirvana” is enlightenment, while “samsara” is the world of suffering and delusion

1. What are the topics of this article? What are the specific issues he is dealing with? List as many as you can find.

2. What is the contrathesis—what is he arguing against?

3. What are the basic stages in the changing view in East Asian Buddhism toward the relationship between nature and Buddhahood? (184-194) What was the “logic” of this change? What is the significance of the view of Japanese Tendai in the comparison between humans and nature? (196-197)

4. According to LaFleur, what is the religious significance of each of the poems he discusses on pages 197-203?
5. What, according to LaFleur, is Ienaga's **basic point[s]** claim about the relationship among nature, Buddhism, and salvation in Saigyo? (204-5)

6. According to Ienaga, what is the Japanese **yamazato** relation to nature and how does it differ from Chinese poets' relation to nature?

7. According to Ienaga, what are the **two Japanese traditions** of seeing nature as soteric, and who belongs to them?

8. What are LaFleur's two **criticisms** of Ienaga (207)?

9. What is LaFleur's **basic claim** about the relationship between nature, Buddhism, and salvation in Saigyo?

10. What don't you understand--what are you unclear about--after having read this article? [eg., Saigyo's concept of nature; the state of mind he is trying to achieve; his success or failure; the means to achieving his ideal; the problems he has to overcome; etc] **BE SPECIFIC** and list the points. **Why** are you unclear? Again, be specific.

**David Barnhill, “Bashō’s Hokku”**

*Study Aids*

1. The author says that hokku should not be “analyzed” for “symbolic meaning.” What is the reading experience of a hokku characterized by? What is “reception theory” and how is it relevant to reading hokku?

2. What is the meaning of “blank space” in hokku? What does it take to experience that space? What metaphysical significance of this space?

3. What does the author mean by saying that “The meaning of a poem such as "old pond" or "stormy sea" is thus reader-dependent and plural”? What is the meaning of a hokku? How does it mean?

4. What are the two different ways of reading the religious meaning of the “old pond” poem? What are the two aspects of religious meaning in the second way of reading the poem?

**Makoto Ueda, Matsuo Bashō, chapter two, “Haiku”**

1. Give the basic aspects of the **five periods** in Bashō's haiku writing. Note that the last three are the most important; when people refer to "Bashō's haiku" they are referring to the years from 1681-1694.
   - 1662-1672
   - 1673-1680
   - 1681-1685
   - 1686-1691
   - 1692-1694

2. What are the **three transitional styles** Ueda identifies in Bashô's third period [1681-1685]?

3. Describe Ueda's interpretation of Bashô's notion of **sabi**.

4. Critically assess Ueda's notion of "**communication**" [pp. 56-9]. Is it communication that is manifested
in the poems given?

5. Describe Ueda's interpretation of "lightness."

6. What kind of poem is a haiku? How should we read a haiku poem? [49, 50]

**BASHO'S AESTHETICS I & II**

LATJ = Makoto Ueda, "Impersonality in Poetry: Basho on the Art of Haiku," in his *Literary and Art Theories in Japan*.

**I. SABI**

*READ:* LATJ 149-153

**GENERAL QUESTIONS ON SABI**

1. What kind of thing is sabi? An emotion, a feeling, a mood, an atmosphere, ...?

2. What is the relationship between sabi and emotion? Be specific.

3. What/who is sabi? Where does it come from? Nature as a whole? Some scenes/moments in nature? The poet all the time? The poet only sometimes [only within certain scenes; only during certain moments in life]?


5. What does sabi consist of? What are its elements, components, aspects, characteristics? List as many as you can, noting the articles which mention them.

6. What verb should we use with sabi? Feel it? Be aware of it? Undergo it? ...

7. What is the relationship between sabi and enlightenment? Note
   [a] similarities
   [b] conflicts/opposities: do they seem contrary in some ways? 
   [c] differences that do not imply contradiction 
   [d] is there a cause and effect relationship? If so, which way?

8. Would you like to experience sabi? What appeals to you about it, and what does not--and why?

9. How would one go about cultivating sabi? Would that require certain activities, certain environments, certain attitudes?

**SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ON THE READING**

10. Note Basho's comment on Saigyo's poem on p. 151 of LATJ. What point is Basho trying to make here? Consider all the characteristics mentioned in all the above readings and decide what is similar and different between Basho's notion of sabi and the sabi presented in Saigyo's poetry.

11. What does Ueda mean by "impersonality?" Discuss the relationship between sabi and impersonality. Does the notion of impersonality make sense? Try to criticize his notion.
II. THE POETIC SPIRIT: THE SOURCE OF CREATIVITY; SELF & UNIVERSE

READ: LATJ 147-8; first two paragraphs of Knapsack Notebook

1. Describe the "poetic spirit". Examine that notion critically. What is it? Where is it? How is it related to the self? What does it do? How does it work? What would keep it from working? What would we need to do to make it work? What does Basho value it so much? Does the idea appeal to you--would you like to have it working in you? Why or why not? If it does appeal to you, are you inclined to work toward it? Why or why not?

2. What is the relation between the poetic spirit and nature? What does he mean by "follow the ways of the universe and return to nature? Compare the various translations [including Ueda's two translations]. How do they differ? Do those differences suggest different ideas or attitudes? Which translation seems to you the best? Why?

3. What does he mean by saying "everything he sees becomes a flower, and everything he imagines turns into a moon"? Do you agree with him--is there a flower in a dead tree...in dog shit? What assumptions would lead to his idea? What would it be like to experience life that way? What keeps you from seeing a flower and a moon everywhere? How would you go about creating that vision? Would you want that vision?

4. Describe the affinities and differences between Basho's notion of poetic spirit and Buddhism's notion of the self, Buddha nature, and spontaneity.

5. According to Ueda, what are the two aspects of the poetic spirit and what is their ideal relationship? What is meant by this idea? [LATJ 148-9]

III. HOW A POEM IS CREATED: "INSPIRATION"

READ: LATJ 156-9; "Western Writers on Inspiration." In Study Aids.

Note: The issue here is how a haiku poet creates a poem: what is experienced, and how the poem is born. Ueda uses the term "inspiration" for both aspects: [1] the initial or base experience that leads to the poem and the relation of the poet to his subject, and [2] the act of creation.

INSTANTANEOUS PERCEPTION:

1. What occurs in "instantaneous perception?" What is the experience like? What is the relation between the poet and reality during a moment of this kind of perception? Have you ever had such an experience?

2. This type of experience is related to Basho's notion of "slenderness." What does slenderness mean? What does this process consist of? Can this experience last or is it momentary?

3. This experience is also related to Basho's admonition: "learn about a pine tree from a pine tree...?" [157-8] How does Doho, Basho's disciple, explain his master's comment? What happens to the notion of the self here?

4. Critically assess the notion of feelings here. Does the poet bring feelings to the object? Does a thing really have feelings? Does the phrase "feelings spontaneously emerge out of the object" make sense?

5. Does the experience make any sense to you? Have you ever had moments like this? What do you think keeps you from having such experiences? Would you want to have them?

6. What are the similarities AND the differences between this experience and Buddhist enlightenment.
**COMPOSITION:**
After the initial experience of perception or impression comes the creative act of composition. Basho says that the act of composition is one in which the poem “grows” rather than being made.

7. Basho makes a distinction between two types of composition: growing [or becoming] and making. What is the difference? Why is “growing” better than “making”? What is required to achieve a grown poem? What is left out of a made poem? Note Ueda's metaphor in LATJ [p. 158] of the object color the transparent mind of the poet. Is that an effective analogy? Does that idea make any sense to you? Do you agree with Basho that a grown poem is better, and is the only "real" poem?

8. Another aspect of Basho's view of composition is his notion of instantaneous writing [LATJ 159]. “Let there not be a hair's breadth separating your mind from what you write.” What does he mean? Why does he say that? Keep in mind that Basho was known to rework his poems through several drafts. Does this fact refute his statements about instantaneous composition?

9. Read the selections from Levertov's discussion of composing poetry [in Selected Readings]. What are her main points? Make a list. How do they relate to Basho's point about composition?

10. Describe in as much detail and subtlety as possible the affinities between Basho's notion of composition and Buddhism's ideals.

**IV. SHIORI, KIREJI, YOJO, REVERBERATION, FRAGRANCE, REFLECTION**
*READ:* LATJ 154-5; LATJ 160-3

1. What is *shiori*? How is its meaning reflected in the Japanese words for flexibility and withering? [LATJ 154] Why does Bashō value this quality?

2. What is *yojō*, and why does Bashō value it? What are the ways of achieving *yojō*? Does it seem to be the same as the suggestiveness valued by Teika in court poetry?

3. Summarize reverberance, fragrance, and reflection. What is their most basic and common meaning? What are the differences between them? [MB 163-4; LATJ 160-3]

**V. HOW A POEM MEANS AND THE PROBLEM OF INTERPRETATION**
1. What is meant by the phrase "the mind goes and returns?" Why is it valued? Can you feel your mind go and return in any of his poems? Which ones?

2. What is the "meaning" of a haiku poem?

3. What should the reader do with a haiku poem? "Experience" it? "Interpret it?" "Understand it?" Or what? What is required of the reader?

4. What is involved in "interpreting" a haiku poem? What constitutes a valid and an invalid interpretation?

5. What kind of ambiguity is involved in a haiku poem? Are there several meanings?

**VI. LIGHTNESS: BASHO'S INCORPORATION OF THE ORDINARY**
*READ:* LATJ 164-170
1. Describe lightness.

3. Why did Basho begin to value and emphasize lightness?

**BASHÔ’S TRAVEL JOURNALS**

In reflecting on these passages, be sure to consult Ueda’s discussions in *Matsuo Bashô* and the hokku commentaries in Ueda’s *Bashô and His Interpreters*.

**Journal of Bleached Bones in a Field** (“Record of a Weather-Exposed Skeleton”)

(See Ueda’s *Matsuo Bashô*, 125-129)

1. How does Bashô portray himself in the opening paragraph (13)? What is he trying to achieve? What is the significance of the image of “bleached bones?”

2. How does Bashô respond to the abandoned baby (14)? Look for complexity in his response. What does this passage suggest about the relationship between Bashô and the baby? What does “heaven” mean here? What does it suggest about his notion of the journey? How is this passage related to the opening passage?

3. What does he experience at the famous Ise Shrine (15)? How is nature presented in the prose and the hokku?

4. How does he portray himself on p. 15 (“I wear no sword….”)? What is he? Keep this self-portrait in mind and compare it to others in his journals and haibun.

5. I think the passage where Bashô wanders alone into the heart of Yoshino is one of the most beautiful presentations of nature (among many others) in his work. How is nature depicted? What is the structure of the imagery, and of his experience?

6. What does Bashô mean by “not dead yet / at journey’s end” (18)? What is the significance of the final hokku (22) for his notion of the journey?

Consider the following hokku, including the comments in *Bashô and His Interpreters*:

13: bleached bones (Ueda BHI 100)
14: those who listen for the monkeys (Ueda BHI 103)
14: roadside rose (Ueda BHI 105)
15: month’s end, no moon: (Ueda BHI 108)
16: should I take it in my hand (Ueda BHI 112)
18: not dead yet (Ueda BHI 116)
18: daybreak— (Ueda BHI 117)
19: the sea darkening (Ueda BHI 123)

**Kashima Journal** (“A Visit to Kashima Shrine”)

(See Ueda’s *Matsuo Bashô*, 129-131)

1. In the first paragraph, he presents an odd self-description (23). How is he depicting himself? What is it to be a bat? Why would he begin his journal with this self-portrait?

2. Examine the final paragraph (24-25). Pay attention to the structure of the passage. Basho went to Kashima to see the moon and he does, but he structures his description in a way to maximize the impact of that experience on the reader. How does he do that? What is the significance of the references to meditation, the temple, and serenity of mind?

3. Why does he not write a poem about the moon? What is his attitude towards this failure? How does
Consider the following hokku, including the comments in Bashō and His Interpreters:
25: “the moon swift,” (Ueda BHI 163)
26: “peasant boy—“ (Ueda BHI 162)

Knapsack Notebook (“Record of a Travel-Worn Satchel”)
(See Ueda’s Matsuo Bashō, 131-135)
1. In the first paragraph, he presents another self-description (29). How does Bashō portray himself in the first paragraph? Compare this passage to the last paragraph of “An Account of the Unreal Dwelling” (125).

2. The second paragraph is an important and complex passage (29). What is he saying?

3. In the paragraph that begins “Among diaries of the road,” what is he saying about travel diaries (30)?

4. What is the point of the paragraph on the New Great Buddha Temple (34)? What does this say about time, impermanence, and the journey? Look closely at the details of the passage: what effect do they have on you the reader?

5. What are the different aspects of the journey that he presents on pages 39-40 (starting with “My heels hurting”)?

6. The final paragraph is an account of the destruction of the Heike clan at the end of the Heian period (43). How do you react to it? What is the effect of the details given? What is the tone of the description? Why end the journal with this scene?

7. Overall, how is nature presented in this journal? What different qualities are presented?

Consider the following hokku, including the comments in Bashō and His Interpreters:
31: winter sun (Ueda BHI 170)
32: a lone hawk (Ueda BHI 171)
33: my native home (Ueda BHI 178)
37: higher than the lark (Ueda BHI 187)
38: petal after petal (Ueda BHI 191)
39: for my father and mother
42: cuckoo (Ueda BHI 199)
42: octopus traps (Ueda BHI 201)

Sarashina Journal (“A Visit to Sarashina Village”)
(See Bashō’s Matsuo Bashō, 135-137)
1. Bashō gives an account of himself and then a servant on horseback (45-46). What type of impermanence is being presented here? Why present this scene with Bashō getting down and the servant riding the horse – how does this affect our sense of Bashō the wayfarer?

2. The final prose passage depicts the appearance of the moon (46). How does the moon appear? To what degree does Basho describe the moon and their enjoyment of it? What does Basho end up focusing on, and why does it interest him so? Why is the cup beautiful and what does this say about the existence and discovery of beauty?

Consider the following hokku, including the comments in Bashō and His Interpreters:
48: chestnuts of Kiso: (Ueda BHI 211)
The Narrow Road to the Deep North
(See Ueda’s Matsuo Bashō, 137-146)

1. In his famous opening passage (49), why does Bashō speak of the generations and years as wayfarers? What is Bashō claiming about wayfaring and the nature of the universe? About his relationship with the universe? Why is he setting out on this journey? In what way is “the journey itself home?” What are the different ways that the journey is presented in later passages?

2. In various passages, Bashō speaks about his concerns about and difficulties of the journey. What are his concerns and difficulties? How does he deal with them? See pages 50, 57 (Iizuka passage is particularly important), 63

3. Bashō makes several stops where he communes with the past. What is his sense of time? What is the significance of the past to the present? How does his view of the past fit with the Buddhist view of impermanence? See pages 53, 58, 59, 62 (“summer grass” is a famous poem), 66, 72, 75-76.

4. Overall, how is nature presented in this journal? What different qualities are presented? What moods, tones, or atmospheres in nature does he represent? (Look for passages of loneliness but also other qualities. What are his different relationships with nature?

5. What “spiritual experiences” does he have on the journey?

ON SPECIFIC PASSAGES

6. Why does he “seclude himself” at the waterfall (52)? What is the significance of this act? How is it related to his practice of the journey?

7. What is the significance of Butchō’s poem and Bashō’s verse about woodpeckers (53)?

8. What is the significance of his crossing the Shirakawa Barrier (55)? What does the poem about “the beginning of all art”?

9. Why is Bashō interested in the Chinese written character of “chestnut” (55)? What is the significance of the poem in that section?

10. Bashō’s visit to Matsushima is one of the highlights of the trip (60-61). Why is Matsushima special to him? What does he experience there? How is nature represented in the journal?

11. What is his experience at Ryūshaku-ji (64-65)? What experience is evoked in the famous poem “stillness—“? Be sure to read the commentaries in Bashō and His Interpreters.

12. What occurs in the famous “prostitute” passage (70)? What is the prostitutes’ situation, and what do they ask for? Why does Bashō respond as he does? How do you react to his response?

Consider the following hokku, including the comments in Bashō and His Interpreters:
55: the beginning of all art— (Ueda BHI 238)
62: summer grass— (Ueda BHI 242)
63: fleas, lice (Ueda BHI 246)
65: stillness— (Ueda BHI 249)
70: stormy sea— (Ueda BHI 260)
70: in the same house (Ueda BHI 261)
71: grave too move! (Ueda BHI 263)
72: so pitiful— (Ueda BHI 265)

8
1. According to Ueda, what is a haibun? What are its major characteristics and its relation to hokku? What types of images does it usually have? What kind of mood is usually found in a haibun? (Ueda, Matsuo Bashō, 121-124).

**Questions on specific haibun**

Be sure to consider Ueda’s interpretation in Matsuo Bashō, and commentaries on the hokku in Bashō and His Interpreters.

2. **PRAISE FOR A LINKED VERSE** (Bashō’s Journey, 97-98). This haibun comments on a renga collection. How is nature presented, and how is it related to the art of renga? Consider the Chinese notion of the Creative.

3. **ON MOUNT FUJI** (Bashō’s Journey, 98). How is nature presented here? What is the relationship between art and nature?

4. **INTRODUCTION TO “ISE TRAVEL JOURNAL”** (Bashō’s Journey, 103). What are the different experiences Bashō has reading the travel journal (written by Kyroai)? What does this say about the relationship between art and religion? What is the meaning of “the deep feeling is but one”?

5. **FALSE CYPRESS** (Bashō’s Journey, 107-108). What notion of time is presented in this haibun? How does he portray himself? Why does he keep saying “tomorrow, tomorrow?”

6. **AN ACCOUNT OF EIGHTEEN VIEW TOWER** (Bashō’s Journey, 109). I think this is a minor masterpiece of nature description. What kind of experience does Bashō have here? How is nature presented?

7. **MATSUSHIMA** (Bashō’s Journey, 117; Ueda, Matsuo Bashō, 113; see also “The Narrow Road,” Bashō’s Journey, 60-61). How is nature presented, and what is the relationship between nature and people?

8. **PREFACE TO SILVER RIVER** (Bashō’s Journey, 119; see also “The Narrow Road,” Bashō’s Journey, 70). Be sure to consider closely the poem. What experience does Bashō have, and why? How is nature presented?

9. **AN ACCOUNT OF PURE WASHED HALL** (Bashō’s Journey, 122). How does Bashō portray Hamada Chinseki? What kind of aesthetic and spiritual state of mind is presented? How is nature presented?

10. **AN ACCOUNT OF THE UNREAL DWELLING** (Bashō’s Journey, 123-128; Ueda, Matsuo Bashō, 119-121; see also the opening passage of Knapsack Notebook, 29). This is regarded as the greatest haibun ever written. How is nature presented, and what is the relationship between nature and people? How does Bashō portray himself? What does he mean by “unreal” (consider the phrase “the crossroads of unreality” on 126 and in “The Narrow Road to the Deep North,” 50)? How does his stay at the Unreal Dwelling relate to his self-portrait as a wayfarer? What are the differences between the two versions of this haibun?
11. **On a Portrait by Unchiku** (*Bashō’s Journey*, 128; Ueda, *Matsuo Bashō*, 117). Basho describes life as a "world of dreams." What does he mean by that? What kind of world is it? What is the paradox of that world? Why does Basho refer to his writing as a "sleeper's talk?" Do you think our world is a world of dreams? Why or why not? What is the significance of the hokku (check commentary in *Bashō and His Interpreters* 298)?

12. **Record of the Villa of Fallen Persimmons** (*Bashō’s Journey*, 129; Ueda, *Matsuo Bashō*, 114). What type of aesthetic and beauty is portrayed? How is nature presented, and what is the relationship between nature and people? What is the significance of the hokku (check commentary in *Bashō and His Interpreters*, 318)?

13. **Words on Transplanting a Bashō Tree** (*Bashō’s Journey*, 134-136; Ueda, *Matsuo Bashō*, 118). What aesthetic and spiritual ideal is presented? What is the nature of the *bashō* plant, and why is it significant to Bashō (why did he take it as his pen name)? What are the characteristics of this Bashō Hut, and why does Bashō like it? What is the significance of the two Chinese artists mentioned at the end? How are the two versions of the haibun different?

14. **Words Sent to Kyoriku** (*Bashō’s Journey*, 139; Ueda, *Matsuo Bashō*, 116). What is the character of Kyoriku, and what significance does he have for Bashō? What kind of ideal is he presenting?
**GENERAL QUESTIONS**

1. How is the *Snow Country* presented? What qualities does it have?

2. What is the “other world”? What is the meaning and significance of the themes of *unreality, dream,* and *fantasy*? How do these themes relate to traditional Japanese literature and Buddhism?

3. What is the significance of *mountains and the sky* in relation to nature and to the “other world”?

4. What is the significance of *colors* in the novel, especially red and white? Also note green, purple, and silver? How are these colors related to nature?

5. What is the significance of *darkness* and shadows, and *light* and glow?

6. What is the significance of the *cedars*?

7. *Distance* and vastness are common themes. What do they imply about nature? About our relationship with nature?

8. What is the significance of *insects and toads* in the second part of the novel? How do they images impact the portrayal of nature? How are the main characters related to these images?

9. Both *mirror and transparency* are prominent themes. What are the meaning and significance (especially in relation to nature) of these themes?

10. The image of a *window*, in some case an open window, is found throughout the novel. What significance does it have, particularly in terms of nature and the characters’ relation to it?

11. Note the images of *falling, falling back, floating, and ascending*. What is their significance for our understanding of the characters and their relationship with nature?

12. How are each of the *main characters* (Komako, Shimamura, and Yoko) related to *nature*, both the snow country and the “other world”? What parts of nature are they associated with?

13. What is the significance of the repeated image of *voice*, particularly in terms of nature and the characters’ relation to it? Consider the significance of the image of an *echo*.

14. The images of *clean* and *pure* are used frequently. What is their significance in relationship with each of the three main characters? In relation to nature?

15. Komako and Yoko are often described as *intent* or *earnest*, and in the second part of the novel the quality of *vitality* is emphasized. What is the meaning and significance of this theme?

16. What does Kawabata mean by “*wasted effort*”? What makes something “wasted” and is that a positive or negative quality? Is it related to earnestness and vitality?

17. What role does *tranquility*, serenity, and stillness play in the characters’ experience and their relationship with nature?

18. How does Kawabata’s description of nature and the characters’ experience of it relate to the traditional aesthetic and religious ideas of *aware, yūgen, sabi, and wabi*? What is the quality and importance of *sorrow* and *loneliness*?
19. What is the significance of **impermanence, time, and timelessness** in the novel?

20. Do you see images, themes, or ideas that recall those of **Saigyō, Bashō**, or classical Japanese literature in general?

**STUDY QUESTIONS ON THE FIRE IN THE SNOW SCENE**

1. What is the significance of the image of the **Milky Way**, “Heaven’s River”? What happens to Heaven’s River – what does it do? How is it related to the three main characters? What is meant by statements such as the following: “wrapped the night earth in its naked embrace” (165); “There was a terrible voluptuousness about it” (165); “He blinked, and the Milky Way came to fill them” (167); “The Milky Way flowed over them in the direction they were running, and seemed to bathe Komako’s head in its light” (167); “Milky Way came down to wrap itself around the earth” (168); it “seemed to bathe Komako’s head in its light” (167); “The Milky Way spread its skirts to be broken by the waves of the mountain, and, fanning out again in all its brilliant vastness higher in the sky, it left the mountain in a deeper stillness” (168); “And the Milky Way, like a great aurora, flowed through his body to stand at the edges of the earth” (168); “the Milky Way flowed down inside him with a roar” (175).

2. How is the image of the Milky Way and this final scene related to **Bashō’s poem**? Is there a sense of **sabi** in the scene? **Yūgen? Aware?**

   stormy sea—
   stretching out over Sado,
   Heaven’s River
   araumi ya / sado ni yokotau / amanogawa (See Ueda, BHI, 260)

3. How are **SOUND AND SILENCE** used in the descriptions of this scene? What significance do sound images have? How are they related to Kawabata’s sense of nature and our relation to nature? Note the different sounds: sound of the flames; the roar of the Milky Way; voices in the crowd; screams.

4. In what ways are **LIGHT** and **DARKNESS** portrayed in the scene? Note the complexity of light imagery: light from the inn; starlight; flames shooting up; luminous clouds; mountain light; sparks; the bright light of Milky Way not casting a shadow; Komako’s head bathed in light.

5. Note the different types of **MOVEMENT** involved in this scene. What types are they? Make a list. What significance do they have? How are the different types of movement related to the Milky Way and to each character? Note particularly the movement and non-movement of Komako and Shimamura as a pair.

6. How is **Komako** related to the Milky Way? Does she undergo a change? What is the significance of her running toward the dark mountain on which the Milky Way was falling (165)? What happens to her relationship to Shimamura? Why is Yoko Komako’s “sacrifice” and “punishment”?

7. What happens to **Shimamura** in the last pages? What happens to his relationship to Komako? Why does he feel “hopeless impotence”? (166-67) What is the significance of his cheeks becoming flushed? (167) Why is there a separation forcing itself upon them, and what kind of separation is it? (172) How does the Milky Way act upon him (167, 168, 175)? What is meant by the Milky Way flowing down inside him with a roar (175)?

8. What happens to **Yoko**? List all the specific qualities of her fall? What does her fall signify? Why is she seem like a “phantasm from an unreal world” (173) What is the meaning and significance of the sentence “With a doll-like passiveness, and the freedom of the lifeless, it seemed to hold both life and death in abeyance” (173)? Why is her being horizontal significant? What is the significance of her spasm? What metamorphosis does she undergo?