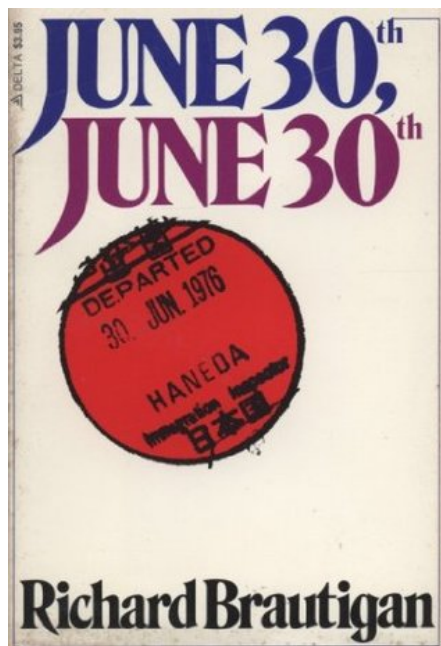




June 30th, June 30th

Richard Brautigan

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A verse account of the popular writer's first trip to Japan, in the spring of 1976, offers an out-of-the-ordinary view of Japan

June 30th, June 30th Details

Date : Published 1978 by Delta (first published 1977)

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Author : Richard Brautigan

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From Reader Review June 30th, June 30th for online ebook

Lee Anne says

How many years have I owned this book, and planned to read it on June 30th, only to have that "d'oh!" moment when it gets to be about July 2nd and I've forgotten again? This year, I remembered to pull it out on the day, only to see it was written about June 30th, 1976, and how perfect would it be to read *next* year, on the 40th anniversary? But I was afraid I would forget again next year, so I read it today. Finally.

A journal collection of poems written by Brautigan on his first trip to Japan. It's Brautigan, so if you know what to expect, there you go. If you don't know Brautigan, I can direct you to a list of other titles with which to start. I always love having his voice in my head, even though I don't think his work has aged well overall.

Dave says

Brautigan's 8th and last book of poetry from 1978 is taken from his time in Japan in 1976 and the title itself is the date that Brautigan was going to leave Tokyo to head back to America.

Brautigan spoke no Japanese and the book of poems opens with Brautigan telling the reader about his uncle who died during the bombing of Midway. So Brautigan is most likely trying to accept or at least understand Japan and why his uncle was a casualty from the bombing in some regard.

Among my favorite poems from the book:

Day for Night

The cab takes me home
through the Tokyo dawn.
I have been awake all night.
I will be asleep before the sun
rises.
I will sleep all day.
The cab is a pillow,
the streets are blankets,
the dawn is my bed.
The cab rests my head.
I'm on my way to dreams.
Tokyo
June 1, 1976

The book got mixed reviews, but I enjoyed Brautigan's short, surreal, and quirky style.

Phillip says

I would be inclined to rate this collection higher than 4 stars, but the quality of some of the poems drags it down. The project itself is really interesting, a sort of poetry travel narrative, following almost the old exotic travel stories of DeFoe's day, except constructed through poems and poetic fragments. As I said, some of the

poems aren't tremendous, but Brautigan explains in the introduction to the book that he has included all the poems he wrote while visiting Japan, even if they're poems he wouldn't normally have put into a book. So there is at least a mythos of genuinity of this poetic travel journal.

On the other hand, some of the poetry here is really incredible. Probably my two favorite poems were "Japanese Women," which I like the way one likes a Neitzschean aphorism because it expresses something one has always felt to be somehow true, and "The Red Chair," which to me is a really spectacular poem. The last image in particular is really striking and memorable.

Hiba says

A must read collection of poems written during the writer's visit to Japan.

Richard Brautigan's style is simple, humorous, sarcastic, blunt and informal.

You can read the entire collection in his website: <http://www.brautigan.net/june30.html>

"Day for Night"

The cab takes me home
through the Tokyo dawn.
I have been awake all night.
I will be asleep before the sun
rises.
I will sleep all day.
The cab is a pillow,
the streets are blankets,
the dawn is my bed.
The cab rests my head.
I'm on my way to dreams.

Tokyo

June 1, 1976

Tom Romig says

A poem (or more) a day on a month long trip to Tokyo in 1976. Moderately engaging. Most interesting is the 10-page introduction consisting of Brautigan's musings on the U.S. and Japan in World War II and later.

Worth noting: There is a wonderful website devoted to Brautigan curated by John Barber, <http://www.brautigan.net>. It is a marvel of this sort of thing and will enthrall you even if you are not a devotee of the author.

Annie says

Of the four collections of Brautigan poetry still in print (not including Edna Webster's Undiscovered Writings, which I have not yet read), *June 30th, June 30th* is my favorite. Perhaps this is because it has an underlying theme and is a poetic travel journal of his first trip to Japan. (Travel writers, please take note: *less is more.*)

The "INTRODUCTION" is incredibly compelling - do not skip over it, because it is critical to appreciating the depth of significance Brautigan's initial trip and subsequent relationship with Japan and its culture is to him, personally, and to his writing, which I always felt had a strong Zen element to it. Actually, the realization Brautigan shares in the "INTRODUCTION" is one for humanity in general. He describes his initial hatred of Japan and its people due to growing up during World War II and the injury and eventual death of a cherished family uncle by a Japanese bomb. As a child, he would fantasize killing thousands of Japanese in revenge - 352,892 to be exact:

"... The years continued on.

I was seventeen and then eighteen and began to read Japanese haiku poetry from the Seventeenth Century. I read Basho and Issa. I liked the way they used language concentrating on emotion, detail and image until they arrived at a form of dew-like steel.

I came to realize that the Japanese people had not been subhuman creatures but had been civilized, feeling and compassionate people centuries before their encounter with us on December 7th.

The war came into focus for me.

I started to understand what happened.

I began to understand the mechanics which mean that logic and reason fail when war begins and illogic and insanity reign as long as war exists ..."

There are so many excellent poems - and even a few haiku - in this collection that it is hard to select my favorites. Here is one that spoke to me personally:

**Ego Orgy on a Rainy Night in Tokyo
with Nobody to Make Love to**

*The night is now
half-gone; youth
goes; I am*

*in bed alone
--Sappho*

My books have been translated
into
Norwegian, French, Danish, Romanian,
Spanish, Japanese, Dutch, Swedish,
Italian, German, Finnish, Hebrew
and published in England

but

I will sleep alone tonight in Tokyo
raining.

Here are a few more:

A Short Study in Gone

When dreams wake
life ends.
Then dreams are gone.
Life is gone.

Japan

Japan begins and ends
with Japan.

Nobody else knows the
story.

...Japanese dust
in the Milky Way

Real Estate

I have emotions
that are like newspapers that
read themselves.

I go for days at a time
trapped in the want ads.

I feel as if I am an ad
for the sale of a haunted house:

18 rooms
\$37,000
I'm yours
ghosts and all.

And, finally, a funny one:

Japanese Women

If there are any unattractive
Japanese women
they must drown them at birth.

Buy the book before it goes out of print, too.

Sara says

i'm a sucker for brautigan. plucked this off the shelf while visiting my mom. she tells a story of discovering brautigan in the 70's while hitchhiking across the country, being given copies by a stranger in a laundromat because she resembled the girl on the cover of one of the books. i cut my teeth reading in watermelon sugar. i think it may have influenced my philosophy that everyone's brain moves in poetical tangents.

B.C. says

Interesting more for what it is as a whole than for the poetry within. A remarkably quick read too. It felt like having fragments of memories, connected by time and place and poet, flashed before my mind's eye.

Never says

Quietly Wonderful

There is nothing remarkable
about this book
except that it is
quietly wonderful.

Anyone can write poetry like
this and that doesn't matter.

Billy says

The earliest reviews of this book almost unanimously identified it as an indicator that the trout-fishing ultra-experimentalist Brautigan was losing whatever writing talent had made him a guru of PoMo Vietnam-era San Francisco. Carrie J. Knowles called the project “a case of terminal poetic pretentiousness,” and sure, there’s little here that could stand on a dais beside *The World According to Garp* or *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* and receive the cheers of the literary spectators of 1978. But, thirty-some years later, Brautigan’s slim poetic memoir of a trip to Tokyo seems almost prescient in a couple of ways, mostly having to do with how we fail to have deep and meaningful and sustained communication with each other and with ourselves.

First, let me admit some bias. I unequivocally dig Brautigan’s writing because his style is almost precisely the opposite of my own. He notes minutiae, makes small declarative statements, and relies heavily on the reader to fill in meaning, to make sense of things. His best stuff reads like a puzzle of concrete details, waiting for you to come along and assemble the bits. Yet here’s the rub: assembling these details makes you feel something and, even better, makes you think that what you feel is probably about 90% the same thing Brautigan felt while writing. It’s an aesthetic that feels immediate, off-the-cuff. You might as well be sitting next to Brautigan and pouring beer from a shared pitcher.

Unfortunately, not everything that comes up in the average conversation will be genius, and this is a major critique of June 30th, June 30th. Essentially, this collection makes you feel as if you've wandered through Tokyo with Brautigan while he's scribbled the occasional note on the back of many a receipt or bar napkin.

But not exactly. Here's the brilliance: while, yes, this is supposed to be a travelogue in poems, it's also the most fragmented of narratives. Brautigan spent a month and a half in Japan, and what we get here are flashes—cab rides and hangovers and TV commercials—that resemble memory more exactly than any continuous narrative might. These are not key moments of choice or connection—almost every character he encounters remains nameless—but the slow, odd moments of solitude that a writer gets used to. This solitude, moreover, allows Brautigan to connect in his imagination with the faceless urban masses, human and unreachable in really important ways. This isolation is heightened by the language barrier, which Brautigan doesn't even try to breach. Instead, his ignorance of spoken Japanese makes him a child adrift; he has to read body language and images and clocks and weather as signs of some human interiority that he can only guess at. His position as an outsider forces him to carry out, moment by moment, with the June 30th departure deadline ever looming, the imaginative work of empathy that's the life-blood of poetry.

As a scrapbook in words, this reminds me of Edouard Levé's experiments, which also are generally great concepts for books that translate into hit-and-miss, half-functional writing. In this pile of Brautigan's spare moments, there is, naturally, a lot of crap. A nice analogy, if I'm not reaching too far: reading this collection is like following the Twitter account of a Chabon or Shteyngart live-tweeting a week-long trip to Ibiza. Still, and precisely because of this inconsistency, I think this book says a lot about the impossibility of continuously reaching across the gap between your experience and mine.

If you're interested, you can read the collection [here](#).

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Suean says

Brautigan's poetry still delights.

Joana says

Tokyo / June 11, 1976

I have the five poems
That I wrote earlier today
In a notebook
In the same pocket that
I carry my passport. They
are the same thing.

Chrissie says

A middling Brautigan effort. It's only for the absolute purists who will read anything and everything by Brautigan. I didn't like it but I didn't dislike it. I got it from the library, so it didn't set me back financially. I might have been pissed off had I paid actual money for it!

I still want to go back to a lot of his other prose. This was really mostly forced poetry that he seemed to do as a project while he was in Japan. I can't think of much in it that was either important or significant.

Only for the "faithful". But I do hope you enjoy it. I found it to be pretty uneventful.

Cassie says

"Romance"

I just spent fifteen seconds
staring at a Japanese fly:
my first.

He was standing on a red brick
in the Mitsui Building Plaza,
enjoying the sun.

He didn't care that I was looking at him.
He was cleaning his face. Perhaps he had
a date with a beautiful
lady fly, his bride to be
or maybe just good friends
to have lunch a little later
in Mitsui Plaza
at noon.

Keith says

Kitty Hawk Kimonos

Watching Japanese television,
two young women in kimonos
are standing beside a biplane.
That's right:
an old timey airplane.
A man is interviewing them.
They are having a very animated
and happy conversation.

I wish I knew Japanese because
I will never know why they are
standing next
to a biplane,
but they will stand there forever
in my mind, happy pilots
in their kimonos,
waiting to take off.

Tokyo
May 13, 1976

Peycho Kanev says

Homage to the
Japanese Haiku Poet Issa

Drunk in a Japanese
bar
I'm
OK

American Bar in Tokyo

I'm here in a bar filled with
young conservative snobbish
American men,
drinking and trying to pick up
Japanese women
who want to sleep with the likes
of these men.
It is very hard to find any poetry
here
as this poem bears witness.

The American in Tokyo with
a Broken Clock

For Shiina Takako

People stare at me—
There are millions of them.
Why is this strange American
walking the streets of early night
carrying a broken clock
in his hands?
Is he for real or is he just an illusion?
How the clock got broken is not important.
Clocks break.

Everything breaks.
People stare at me and the broken clock
that I carry like a dream
in my hands.

C.S. Ward says

This is one of my favorite books of poems.

R.K. Cowles says

4 1/4 stars

Kent Winward says

This poetry journal of a trip to Japan certainly carries more weight combined than the individual poems would suggest.
