

From Haiku Vol. 1 Eastern Culture, by R.H. Blyth, p230

We must be neither the slaves nor the masters of things. Today is New Year's Day, and when we go out to the well in the morning and see the rays of the sun glistening on the water as we pour it into the bucket, we say:

Kumiageru mizu ni haru tatsu hikari kana
In the water I draw up glitters the beginning of Spring
-Ringai

But

Nichi nichikore kou nichii
Every day is a Good Day

Or as the poet expresses it:

Yatto kita gantan mo tada hitohi kana
This New Year's Day, that has come at last,
It is just a day
-Horo

The light in the water is no different from that of any other morning. We wobble between the feeling that it is specially bright and meaningful, and the knowledge that it is not. Hold fast to both; do not divide what is given from what we give. Everything is as it is, but everything is wonderful. All is law, but we are free. On the one hand, things are what they are:

The sea was wet as wet could be,
The sands were dry as dry,
You could not see a cloud, because
No cloud was in the sky:
No birds were flying overhead –
There were no birds to fly.

We feel with Puck,

And those things do best please me
That fall preposterously

That is to say, things are unpredictable, unique, lawless. Yet things are simply what they are, of no ulterior meaning. Things are infinite in significance; but also, they are disappointing, they are infinite and limited. But at the bottom, at the ground of our existence we ask for nothing, not even that things should be as they are. For all our desiring and loathing, our deepest instinct is:

Ganjitsu ya, nanimo motomenu, yado no sama
New Year's Day, The hut just as it is,
Nothing to ask for.
- Nanshi

This is a great book.
Rev Mas