

Haiku Poet

He said he wrote haiku like women sigh,
like windows darken gentle with the night.
He said he caught the rain of wings in flight—
he caught them quick and low and freed them high.
All night he whispered: *Over the cool stones
the stars pour their crystal tears; freezing the
moonlight.* The words rang out inside his bones
and sang his blood; his pulse an orchestra.
No one could hear the song behind his eyes,
although his breathing swayed beneath its weight,
and then the breeze came lifting low and late
through his lit window from the murmuring skies.
He said, soft: *You know when death comes. A few
poems stir like wind. They sing inside you.*

—Marilyn Nelson

This poem tied for second place in the BYU Studies 1999 poetry contest.