# **RUSH MATS**

## **HIROYA TAKAGAI**

TRANSLATED FROM THE JAPANESE BY ERIC SELLAND

DP

# ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED AS SHIKI-I IN TOKYO, JAPAN BY SHICHOSHA IN 1987

"THE SCREEN AT THE END OF THE FIELD,"

"BIRTH ORATORIO," & "THE CONDITION OF MOVEMENT"

FIRST PUBLISHED IN TRANSLATION

BY BLACK FIRE WHITE FIRE PRESS IN 1997

COPYRIGHT © 1987 SHICHOSHA
TRANSLATION © COPYRIGHT ERIC SELLAND

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED BY DURATION PRESS IN 1999 AS DURATION NUMBER 5.

DURATION PRESS

JERROLD SHIROMA, EDITOR

HTTP://WWW.DURATIONPRESS.COM

#### **RUSH MATS**

#### THE SCREEN AT THE END OF THE FIELD

Spearheads
The buoyant particles of grass separate, and connect
Packets of white flesh
[Binding the hems, the flames of the <hidden interiors=""> join, trembling</hidden>
(They call]
Binding, the hems are shaken and returned to the <exterior>)</exterior>

Tilting, there is a young branch,

And there are stems,

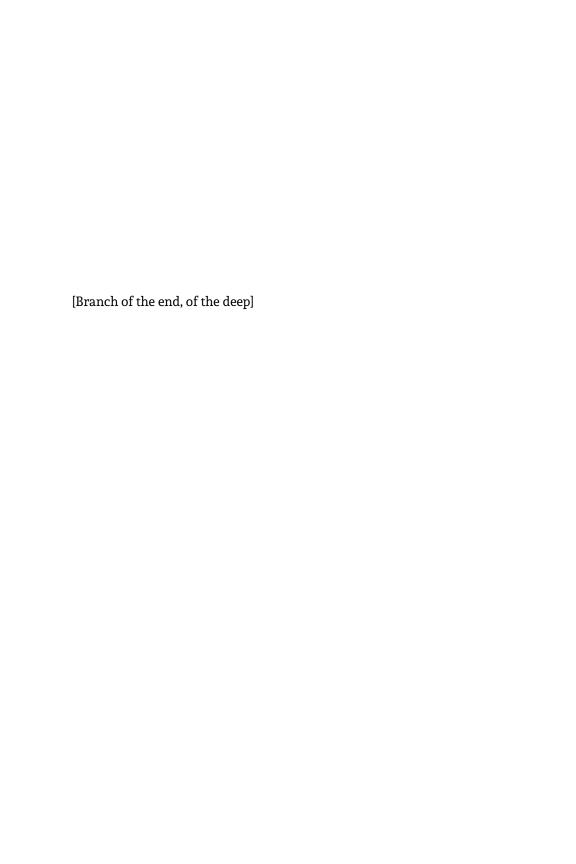
(The child which becomes a circle, and feeds on its own parent)

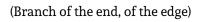
[Tree which becomes disentangled]

(A <collar> is dropped from the hem's tip)

Dark ring

Earth's ear breaks open





Cut down as in battle, they are joined again, perpetually
Only wind,
Image which cannot be seen
(The remaining ones, now discarded robes, laugh
[Swamp shells)
Mouths agape, they lie dead rock faces]
[Driftwood of sky whose netting has been dried out all at once]

Only spearheads,

Slugs crawling on the earth
And upside down turtles

House of birth whose location is nowhere

[Breaking the stems of the saplings and peeling the skin]

(Clothed, they wear down the flesh)

[Teasing the bones]

A gathering which is a dance in the empty wind

#### **BIRTH ORATORIO**

(House of birth, a bird's corpse enthroned on a winter tree)
Kneecaps
Voices of a pair peck at the verandah, the tumbling children, incessantly beating
[One toe is missing]
The garden's interior

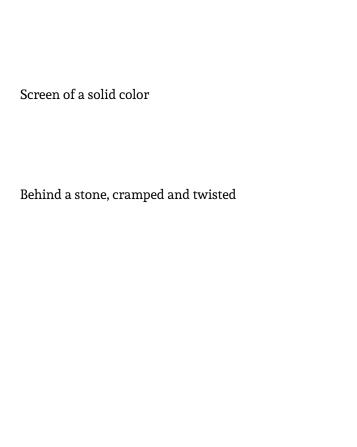
And the outside, beyond the fence
(Sent back one after another like a string of prayer beads, the front of the house where there are umbrellas]
The folds
The twisted flowers
(Their necks falling from the stems)
[The opening at the rear]

# THE CONDITION OF MOVEMENT (GOINGS ON)

m)	- 1	1	c	. 1	1	
Tha	TA77	ΙC	Λt	tha	hou	CD
1110	wai	LO	O1	uic	mou	oc

The sliding partitions

([The going around] of things that do not move things that move, a lost child)



#### THE INNER GARDEN

Moss-green stones

Assembled at the far end, the rope's entangled hoop, at a distance

[It is enwrapped the garden]

(The half-dried, pale bones)

Half-broken, behind the branches, nothing but red knots coming loose

Broken the cockscomb

Fallen down the garden tree

Being eaten

#### **EXCESS MATS**

Borders of the garden	
[Storm drains	
(Storm drains	
(Wet borders	[an open verandah]

#### **NECK OF THE BAMBOO POLE**

At the mouth of the split,
the dried bamboo hangs suspended
[The interior's
Eaves
(From the mouth, rotten twigs spring up
As if to mend
A sapling
Ear of growth
In the garden a child of the fields chewing, silkworms scattered
Mulberry and the youngest child)
Shaking the white pendulum the interior of the bamboo pole

A child is being shaken]

#### **TREE CHILD**

Embracing th	e shadows,	the branches		bending
Ears of the tre	ee-bird			
(From the wh	ite upper bra	anches	hanging	down, snake-chicks)
[Circle of bon	es]			
A broken	flail			

# THE EXTERIOR

The face of the house

esuod edt fo face edT

#### **KEPT CHILD**

The fish pond
Loaches in the shallows
[The turtles are abandoned, sink to the bottom, as if chunks of stone hollowed out]
(The inner side of the mat)
Fold upon fold, each fragment, keeping the shells
The soft tusks of the soft snails
The joining of leaves
[Shedding his clothes, the child commingles with the mat]
Rush mats
Raising silk worms

#### **NEST OF BEAMS**

Nest of beams
[The rear entrance
In a lightly wooded place, biting down on a sneeze, letting loose a white stammer
Crouching a cow weaving in and out
[The outer cover of the mat]
Strip off the layers, and only the frame remains
like a corpse
The dark rope
The eye
Entangled deep inside

(The main entrance

the main entrance]

Stammer, shake
Stoop,
Outside the circle, binding the dancing rope
[The youngest child is dancing, leaping]
A bird's egg
In a lightly wooded place, hanging upside down to dry, joined together near some new shoots
The shadow, trampled upon
Bound to the exterior edge
The rear entrance)

# RUSH MATS (THE INNER WEAVE)

[Stand them up, and they hold the mats together the borders]
Reversible screen
[In the shadows, weaving the garden grasses a lost child]
Two folds, three folds
[It will not hold, the border]

#### **KNOTTED CORD**

Shining graves of flowers
Shadow
[Rope of relation, the branches twist obliquely and are bound]
Fields, twist
Waters, to the brink
(In the open, they are cooking up something white from a crow $$ )
They are feeding on it in the antechamber
[The eye of the pillar, going around]
Moon
Ropes on the beams

[Looking down	the shadow, in between there are a dog's testicles]
The window frame	2
(Slapping a knee	a neighbor, eating something raw in between)
Voices of the cuttir	ngs
The meal	

# [OF THE REAR

Land of birth)

A child with no child

#### **CHICKEN COOP**

Raising up fire
The cage — a shell within a shell, from both of its sleeves to the opposite side  Touch it
Sauntering along, swinging the fire
A dry wind
Scantlings at the wall shake,
(Reclining there is a thin desolate field of railroad ties)
The sun
[Brandishing a pole, the skin, looking at the fire outside]
Spearheads which gather
Book covers which couple

(The lost child moving along the road)

Twisting a rope in the sand

Gathering fire

### SHELL

Near the wall,	kicking rocks	and hitting
The edge		

At the hem

Of the peel

Unloosening the withered flower of its navel

#### **HIDDEN MARSH**

Carp in the branches
Sky
(Opening their mouths, they are trying to catch them from behind the leaves)
Left at the edge, still out to dry The white, dried fish
Twisted, corpse of flower Begins to unravel
Begins to rot fallen tree
[Water hollow]
Fished, transparent boat
Below the edge, scales fallen everywhere

#### **POST AND THRESHOLD**

Water
Soft, pole of time
[Wetted, the threshold begins to split]

### **THE CUT**

(Half open, in the middle)
Far-off field
[At that very moment it dries out, the rear]
The bird that keeps a child, tightening its throat
[The rear entrance]
Stroking, petting

#### MINSTRELS IN THE FOREST

[Site of cremation, the grass sways]
The lost child at play, only the wind blowing
Rocks dried, baked
(The minstrel watching the child, ears struck with a sudden sound)
The lost child at play, only the wind blowing

#### THE SCREEN AT THE END OF THE FIELD

A gathering which is a dance in the empty wind
(Teasing the bones)
[Enfleshed, they wear down their clothes]
(Breaking the stems of the saplings and peeling the skin)
House of death whose location is nowhere
Upside down turtles and Slugs crawling on the earth
Only spearheads,

(Driftwood of sky whose netting has been dried out all at once)

[Mouths agape, they lie dead rock faces
(Swamp shells]

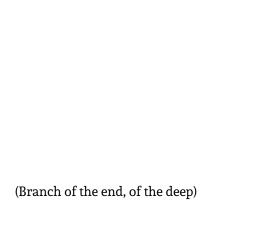
The remaining ones, now discarded robes, laugh)

Faded image of a bird

Only wind,

Cut down as in battle, they are joined again, perpetually,

[Branch of the end, of the edge]



Earth's ear breaks open

A gathering of water

[A <collar> is dropped from the hem's tip]

(Tree which becomes entangled)

[The child which becomes a circle, and feeds on the child]

There are stems,

And tilting, there is a decayed branch,

(Binding, the hems are shaken and returned to the <interior></interior>
[They call)
Binding the hems, the flames of the <exteriors> join, trembling]</exteriors>
Packets of white flesh
The buoyant particles of grass connect, and then separate
Spearheads

Postscript

To us, to the child, the house of birth is long lost.

August 30, 1961