

Ginkaku-ji

At the Temple of the Silver Pavilion on a frosty morning in January 1994



On a frosty morning in January 1994, I visited the Ginkaku-ji – the Temple of the Silver Pavilion in Kyoto. When I and my British colleague Sir Franklin Berman arrived, the roof of the temple was covered with a thick layer of frost. We took a walk in the wonderful garden to see the delicately sculptured sands and other marvels. When we returned to the temple, the sun had come out and was wandering across the roof. Where the sunrays had touched the roof the frost had melted away, while it remained boldly on the part still in the shadow. On the flight back to Sweden I wrote the haiku below. Many years later my friend and fellow piper Ambassador Seiichiro Otsuka translated the haiku into Japanese.

Bold crystals of ice
Silvered the Ginkaku-ji
But sun made them weep

Ginkaku ni
Sasuhi ya tsurara
Namida kana

銀閣に

射す日やつらら

涙かな