Seasons in Waltz Rhythm



Haiku

RADU ŞERBAN

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SEASONS IN WALTZ RHYTHM

Haikus by Radu Şerban
Translated from the Romanian by the author

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ROMANIAN POETRY AROUND THE WORLD

RADU ȘERBAN

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To my son, Cosmin

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The Seasons Within Us

Introduction: A Delicate Meditation

Radu Şerban's *Seasons in Waltz Rhythm* is an enchanting, lyrical collection that moves through the turning year with the graceful rhythm of the changing seasons. Divided into four distinct chapters—*Cherry Blossom* for spring, *Sunbeam* for summer, *Rusty Leaves* for autumn, and *Snowflake* for winter—the book unfolds as a delicate meditation on time, memory, and the natural world. Each page offers a vivid snapshot, capturing fleeting moments in life.

As an accomplished poet and former ambassador to Japan, Şerban brings a profound, lived appreciation of Japanese aesthetics to his native Romanian lyricism. His verses recall the gentle attentiveness of masters like Kobayashi Issa, finding immense resonance in the small, the fragile, and the overlooked. Yet the voice remains distinctively European and deeply personal—whether he is watching how

The month is swinging
from summer into autumn—
frightening the cranes,

or listening to

Icicles tinkling—
the frost interprets winter
in silent waters.

There is a musicality to his phrasing, an innate rhythm that feels like a waltz, where seasons turn, bend, and gracefully yield to one another.

Through subtle personification and vivid strokes of color and emotion, Şerban paints landscapes that breathe. When winter arrives with the first scattered flakes, the poet writes,

The first scattered flakes.
I close my eyes to keep them
for the coming year,

freezing a fleeting sensory experience into an enduring emotional truth. This collection does not merely record the passing of days; it invites the reader to step into the dance, to pause, and to experience the profound, quiet beauty of the world as it shifts from one state of grace to the next.

Iliyana Stoyanova
President of the British Haiku Society

I.
Cherry Blossom

1

Sweet-scented zephyr—
who is the queen of the night
now opening to?

2

Apricot blossom;
the cold is dissipated
by its sweet fragrance

3

The path of the stars
the ivy leads towards it
yesterday's rain

4

In the moonless sky—
a thought secretly catches
the flight of an owl

5

Cohorts of poppies
bleeding the field of grains—
the surprised sparrows

6

Red-orange eggshells—
the bewildered butterfly
searches for poppies

7

With your eyes closed tight
at the wide-open window
you wait for your son

8

With its grey summit
and hot lava in the depths,
gentle man: Fuji

9

Cleaning the house on
the eve of the holidays—
unhappy spider

10

Bell tolls in the clouds—
murals in watercolours
at the old abbey

11

Barefoot stand the trees
in the slowly melting snow—
the duck waddles on

12

Two poppies in grass—
next to them a smiling babe
taking a short nap

13

A bit of kindness
is all that the snail demands
from its humble life

14

Students in the rain—
the snowdrop is opening
its white umbrella

15

Flower explosions—
in the old cherry garden
students laugh out loud

16

The iris flower
has opened after the rain—
eyes are full of tears

17

The lilac flowers—
the purple scent of mother
from eternity

18

Snowdrops in the rain;
I miss our beloved son
now fifty years old

19

Ideas take off—
the mind in the morning touched
by a dream of night

20

Using Morse code
the woodpecker is lying:
fake news to insects

21

In forsythia
hidden yellow butterfly—
a blackbird chirping

22

In the tall poplar

hang your trembling pain
tonight—

a gentle shimmer

23

At the break of day
on the mountain veranda—
a cup full of fog

24

The entire world

is draped with white plum blossoms—

a blackbird's sweet song

25

The sweet scent of May—
a lily-of-the-valley
hooks the silver moon

26

Lazy, the moon sleeps
under the blanket of clouds—
the sleepy cat purrs

27

More and more shadows
appear as the day lengthens;
students in tree shade

28

The lilac in bloom—
throughout the quiet churchyard
the semantron sounds

29

A slumbering bud—
deep in the old peach orchard
the rooster now crows

30

The buds of the rain
fall on the blooming plum tree—
soft piano chords

31

The snow is melting
through the veins of the city—
in the park, snowdrops

32

Muddy night; behind
the pine trees, the silver moon
is washing her eyes

33

Circus Park, seagulls
circle above the great dome—
loud roars of laughter

34

The scent of linden—
rising to the heavens from
Eminescu's books

35

On the rain-soaked trees
memories stream back to when
the leaf once shivered

36

Soft petals floating—
among the apple tree locks
a wandering hum

37

Waterlogged petals
longing for a clear sky—
an oxeye daisy

38

Cosy April rain
wandering down the alleys—
bare cherry blossom

39

It rains on the buds
as a sign of coming wealth—
bright emerald stones

40

Through the falling rain
the fragrance of plum blossom—
beneath my umbrella

41

Dandelion fluff

floating towards the distant north—

the reindeer sneezes

42

Poplar fluff floating;
on the Table of Silence
a sheet of paper

43

The winter's revenge:
the apple tree petals fall
with the white snowflakes

44

The swallows return;
at the corner of the house
a thin spider's web

45

Masterful sparkles:
on the dewdrops of the buds
a wandering trill

46

The swallows arrive
carried on the sweet fragrance
of jasmine in bloom

47

To the hammock float
the sweet slumbering petals;
the wind has now stopped

48

The wind has grown still
to contemplate the wonder
of cherry blossom

49

A flock of swallows—
bringing so many memories
from the warmer lands!

50

Wandering strangers—
blossoms on a withered bough
early in the spring

51

Splashes from the sea,
dewdrops on the plum blossom—
the snail is drinking

52

Blowing in the wind
on the immense blue landscape—
a wave of petals

53

Days getting longer—
the cormorant is fighting
with a young eel

54

When day equals night
on the old cherry branches
the buds are bursting

55

Hum in the morning
after ten years of nights—
the cicada nymph

56
Seasons collide—Haibun

Following the footprints of a pigeon in the snow, the child bent down in wonder: among the white spots, a snowdrop seemed to be bowing, even kneeling. In front of him, close, perhaps too close, a proud violet bathed its petals in light. The white–violet contrast marked the difference between gentleness and arrogance.

Opposite poles attract, he
recalled from his physics lesson.

The snow is melting,
violet and white snowdrop:
a springtime idyll

II.
Sunbeam

57

A greenish-blue sky
reflected upon the lake—
water lilies bloom

58

Empty riverbed:
dried up beneath the hot sun—
no water in sight

59

Waiting for the rain
to extinguish the hot dream—
both Adam and Eve

60

Peaceful, beautiful
poppies scattered on the lawn
greet a bunch of kids

61

Gentle ignition—
a prayer in the gloomy soul,
heavenly lightning

62

Warm winds caress me
in the willow strands of hair—
the soft summer wind

63

The Thermidor sky
has cleared after summer rain—
a row of termites

64

With one eye asleep

dreaming of the sunbeam's light—

the dawn is breaking

65

Carried by the heat
to the shade of the oak tree:
the summer wind sleeps

66

From the burning sun
time has slowly trickled down
through the dry hard rock

67

White summer mornings;
in the cool even the thought
is running faster

68

From the Fuji peak
snow cries in the summertime—
vast lakes of its tears

69

The dew vanishes
leaving green upon the grass;
slowly, I too leave

70

No alternative—
the orphaned dragonfly waits
in the dry valley

71

The restless night moths
dazed by the oppressive heat—
my thoughts are burning

72

Fierce chains of lightning—
the rain torrents fail to quench
the fear of the end

73

In the hot wrinkle
the ground hides in the morning
yesterday's bright sun

74

Caressing the beach,
the warm sea is modeling
the silent desert

75

In meditation,
the still depths of the blue lake
await the soft wind

76

The shades of embers—
the heat of the long day flows
towards the sunset

77

Only the stubble
remembers the golden wheat;
I have now turned gray

78

A soft and pale moon
reflected in the green field—
a lone sunflower

79

The scent of summer
the whole moon in the linden—
what a blackbird trill!

80

On the ripe apple
the gentle touch of sunlight—
a retirement home

81

Lost along the paths
through his long locks of white hair—
the torrid zephyr

82

Blistering evening;
the memory of the sun
on the playing card

83

Old man in the park—
on the polished walking stick
a small centipede

84

The sweltering sun
falling over the churches;
a heaven on earth?

85

Under the hot sky
the apples start to color
on the ancient tree

86

Suffocating night;
on the unopened volume
the moon and a dream

87

Climbing the hot wall
the shadow of sweet clover;
a deep peace descends

88

The warm summer wind
visiting the old vineyard
enchants the green vines

89

Softly feathered dreams—
resting on a laurel branch
two singing blackbirds

90

Hot weather… let's stay
a bit longer in the shade
of our memories

91

Burning day, shorter
than yesterday, shortening
the rest of our lives

III.
Rusty Leaves

92

The year's seventh month
in the Roman calendar—
time of fulfilment

93

Echoes of summer
ripen the memory of
the last vacation

94

The month is swinging
from summer into autumn—
frightening the cranes

95

The ripe chestnuts fall,
heavy boulders from tall trees—
the astonished child

96

Seeking a lover—
you wrote on the falling leaves;
and the frost arrived

97

A plummeting leaf—
the enlightenment of trees
carried by rivers

98

A bit in advance,
the shadows of the leaves fall;
the sun observes them

99

With its wind-tossed hair
September is vanishing.
On the lake—a leaf.

100

Leafless intellect,
scented with green grape flavor:
shadow of silence

101

Delicate decor:
the dew dresses in white frost
on the fallen leaves

102

The sparse foliage;
within migratory thoughts
too few autumn shades

103

An astringent thought
with the taste of unripe grapes:
the new school year starts.

104

In amber shadow
the soft whispers of the wind
through September leaves

105

The vineyard's magic:
in ripe grapes the mystery
of communion

106

Panoramic cloud:
September's shadow appears—
the protagonist

107

On the fresh hoarfrost,
barefoot through late September,
feel the equinox.

108

Beneath the full moon,
a moonstruck September night
in the distant north

109

O gray-haired old tree,
who will gather all the leaves
of your deep wisdom?

110

The cold autumn winds
scatter the last falling leaves;
waiting for my turn

111

A frame of branches
silhouetted against the sky—
a lone seagull's flight

112

The bright autumn moon
shines in the clear drops of dew;
such cold crystal dreams

113

Gentle September;
stripped of its fantasy leaves,
a thought slowly ripens

114

And if the blue sky
should wish for a full bright moon,
September would come

115

Antiseptic spores—
September now increases
the sweet must in grapes

116

The soul of autumn: the Holy Vine Leaf on the Iconostasis

117

Autumnal flyby:
the leaves of reason drift down
into the silence

118

Extinguished embers,
tail of summer, September—
a delayed harvest

119

Remember the wind?
Still trembling with silent fear,
the lone poplar leaf

120

Autumn in the soul.
The days grow colder, but time
no longer stands still

121

Ideas like a stream
flow through the valley of souls—
the mind lies to you

122

Vacant longings hid
in the corners of summer
and Septembered us

123

A September dream,
the moon like a hazelnut:
encircled, I try

124

Summer has flown off
on migratory bird wings
in late September

125

The day and the night,
equal, are conceiving the winter
at the equinox

IV.
Snowflake

126

The season of birth,
the happy days of New Year—
brand-new fireworks

127

Season of one day,
the birth of another year:
snow falls in sunshine

128

Reticent baby,
from today on, the day grows:
the winter solstice

129

A Christmas present:
the glimmering icicles
on the hilltop tree

130

Frost is chattering
in icicles on windows—
smoke from the chimney

131

Icicles tinkling—
the frost interprets winter
in silent waters

132

A winter snapshot
immortalizes the tears:
the tree is crying

133

Christmas Day with snow—
even the caw of a crow
sounds like a carol

134

Slender apple twig
suddenly bloomed in a vase—
the carols ring out

135

Crochet hooks of twigs,
a coat woven from hoarfrost:
angel in the frost

136

From soft snowy yarn
knitted with green fir needles;
down below, a glove

137

From the bare branches,
shivering crows are watching
the lake bloom with ice

138

From the moon's own mouth,
steam condensed into snowflakes;
let us go sledding!

139

The snowflake melted;
it could have been, but wasn't—
the little child laughs

140

Snowballs fill the air
beside the smiling snowman—
retirees fighting

141

Skillful silences,
frost sifted down from the sky—
the woodland turns white

142

On the fir needles
snowflakes pinned like butterflies—
the wind is now still

143

At dawn on the lake
the sudden cry of an owl
breaks the morning fog

144

Like thieves in the night,
the first snowflakes slipped softly
into the orchard

145

On the small millpond
the snow is settling softly—
a white-haired miller

146

Fishing through the ice,
time catches another year—
ravens on the lake

147

Petals from the clouds
are dressing the leafless trees—
a single snowman

148

The first scattered flakes.
I close my eyes to keep them
for the coming year

149

Look up at the sky,
whether it's clear or cloudy—
thoughts are lifted high

150

Overwhelming fog—
secret thoughts are drifting through
the deep winter dream

151

A bridge across years—
I danced throughout the night with
a lonesome snowflake

152

Winter's mascara
on the eyebrows of windows:
snow-white silhouette

153

Glacial solstice—
the sky falls upon my lone
candlelight vigill

154

Drops of the cosmos
from the ancient icicles—
clinking in the sun

155

Generous spirit,
you turn the frozen heartache
into a teardrop

156

Silence of the night,
serene beneath the pale moon—
only one siren

157

Icicles weeping
from the stone cross on the grave—
the bell is crying

158

Amazed, the children
watch the soft breath of the sky:
clouds full of snowflakes

159

Footprints in the snow
stretching toward the horizons—
uphill to the moon

160

My head is buzzing—
within the daytime darkness
a hidden thought lurks

Afterword: The Seasons Within Us

Seasons in Waltz Rhythm, by Radu Şerban, teaches us to look more closely at the world immediately around us. Its landscapes are familiar—gardens, orchards, lakes, mountains, fields, and city parks—yet each becomes a place of discovery. A falling leaf may carry a thought, a snowflake may preserve a memory, and the smallest movement of nature may reveal something about the passage of a human life.

The title offers a key to the collection. A waltz is a dance of movement and return, of measured steps and graceful transitions. So, too, is the year. Spring advances toward summer; summer yields to autumn; autumn prepares the way for winter; and winter, seemingly an ending, already contains the promise of renewal. In these poems, however, the seasons do more than follow one another. They meet, overlap, and occasionally exchange their identities. Snow settles among blossoms, memories of warmth survive in the cold, and the present is continually illuminated by what has passed.

The four sections—*Cherry Blossom, Sunbeam, Rusty Leaves,* and *Snowflake*—form a lyrical calendar, but their deeper unity lies in the relationship between the visible world and the invisible movements of the mind.

In spring, Radu Şerban's attention turns toward awakening. Buds open, birds return, and the fragrance of flowers seems to extend beyond the boundaries of the garden. Yet renewal is not presented as a purely cheerful spectacle. Alongside the blossoms appear longing, tenderness, remembrance, and the quiet awareness that beauty is inseparable from transience. The natural world is not simply observed; it becomes a language through which human affection can speak.

The volume's dedication, *To my son, Cosmin,* gives this dimension a particularly intimate resonance. The reader encounters poems in which family love, distance, and memory enter the seasonal landscape without disturbing its delicate balance. A flower, a window, or a passing bird can become the point where an outward observation meets an inward emotion. The result is a poetry of restraint: much is felt, but little needs to be explained.

Summer introduces another rhythm. Its sunlight is generous, sometimes overwhelming; its winds are soothing, sometimes oppressive. The season brings abundance, but also fatigue, drought, and the first intimations of decline. In these poems, time is almost tangible. It trickles through stone, gathers in the heat of an afternoon, or seems to pause in the shade of a tree. The summer landscape

is alive with movement, yet beneath its vitality lies an awareness that no season can remain at its height forever.

Autumn gives that awareness a more reflective voice. Leaves become pages of memory; migrating birds suggest departure; ripening fruit evokes both fulfillment and the approach of an ending. Particularly characteristic of Şerban's imagination is the ease with which natural phenomena turn into intellectual or spiritual images. Trees possess wisdom, thoughts acquire the taste of grapes, and the equinox becomes more than an astronomical event: it marks a moment of balance between opposing forces.

Such transformations are among the distinctive pleasures of this collection. The poet does not treat nature as a passive background for human experience. Instead, the natural world appears to think, remember, hesitate, and speak. At times, this personification is playful; at others, it is deeply contemplative. The poems move between these registers with the freedom of a mind that finds no contradiction between wonder and reflection.

Winter, the final movement of the seasonal waltz, brings a special clarity. Snow simplifies the landscape, while frost gives familiar objects unexpected shapes and meanings. Icicles become instruments of sound or expressions of grief; a snow-covered orchard receives its first visitors like a house entered secretly at night; a child's astonishment restores freshness to an ordinary winter scene.

Humor also has its place. The image of retirees engaged in a snowball fight beside a smiling snowman reminds us that the passing of years need not extinguish playfulness. Indeed, one of the collection's most appealing qualities is its refusal to separate the solemn from the lighthearted. The same poetic universe accommodates laughter, mourning, curiosity, and silence.

Yet the winter poems also lead toward more intimate questions. A solitary snowflake becomes a partner in a dance across the years. Footprints in the snow seem to climb toward the moon. In the final poem, an elusive thought lurks within the darkness of daytime. The book ends not with a definitive statement, but with an opening into mystery. The cycle of the seasons has reached its final movement, while the movement of consciousness continues.

This openness is essential to the art of haiku. Its brevity is not merely a matter of counting syllables. It is an invitation to concentrate perception, to recognize the significance of an instant, and to allow silence to complete what language has begun. The strongest haiku do not exhaust their subject. They leave room for the reader's own memories and associations.

Radu Şerban approaches this tradition with the sensibility of a Romanian poet whose years of diplomatic service in Japan deepened his familiarity with Japanese culture. His work is not an attempt to reproduce a foreign poetic manner mechanically. Rather, it brings the discipline of the haiku into conversation with a personal imagi-

nation shaped by European lyricism, spiritual reflection, and a lifelong attentiveness to language.

As Iliyana Stoyanova observes in her *Introduction,* the collection possesses a musicality that recalls the movement of a waltz. That observation is especially valuable because it identifies what holds these brief, individually complete poems together. Their rhythm is not only metrical; it is emotional and structural. Images return in altered forms, seasons answer one another, and the reader gradually discovers a larger composition emerging from many small moments.

For Coresi Publishing House, *Seasons in Waltz Rhythm* also represents a welcome continuation of an established literary collaboration. Readers familiar with Radu Şerban's earlier haiku publications, including *Meditative, On Haiku, Serene in Heart and Thought, The Zebra of Time,* and *Trillium,* will recognize his sustained interest in the meeting of nature, thought, and spiritual experience. His wider engagement with Japan is reflected in works such as *Tokyo Station: An Ambassador's Diary* and *Famous Romanians in Japan*. Together, these books reveal a writer for whom cultural encounter is not merely a subject of study, but a continuing source of creative energy.

The present collection, however, stands on its own. It requires no prior knowledge of its author's diplomatic career or literary achievements. Its invitation is immediate and universal: look again at the world. Notice the dew before it vanishes, the leaf before it falls, the light before it fades. Listen to the

birds, the wind, the frost, and the unexpected silences between them.

There is a quiet generosity in this invitation. In an age when attention is constantly divided and time seems to accelerate, these poems ask us to recover the dignity of the fleeting moment. They remind us that the ordinary world remains inexhaustible, provided we are willing to see it.

And perhaps this is the deepest meaning of the waltz suggested by the title. We do not stand outside the changing seasons, watching them pass. We move with them. Their transformations are also our own: we blossom, flourish, ripen, remember, and begin again.

When the last page is turned, the dance does not end. Somewhere, another blossom is opening, another leaf is falling, another snowflake is descending through the winter air.

The music continues.

Vasile Poenaru
Editor

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This collection does not merely record the passing of days; it invites the reader to step into the dance, to pause, and to experience the profound, quiet beauty of the world as it shifts from one state of grace to the next.

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