A bath when you're born

His death poem:

A bath when you're born,
a bath when you die,
how stupid.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
A cuckoo sings

A cuckoo sings
to me, to the mountain,
to me, to the mountain.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
A huge frog and I

A huge frog and I,
staring at each other,
neither of us moves.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
All the time I pray to Buddha
I keep on
killing mosquitoes.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
Asked how old he was

Asked how old he was,
the boy in the new kimono
stretched out all five fingers.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
Blossoms at night

Blossoms at night, and the faces of people moved by music.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
Children imitating cormorants

Children imitating cormorants
are even more wonderful
than cormorants.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
Don't know about the people

Approaching my village:

Don't know about the people,
but all the scarecrows
are crooked.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
Don't worry, spiders

Don't worry, spiders,
I keep house
casually.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
Ducks bobbing on the water

Ducks bobbing on the water--
are they also, tonight,
hoping to get lucky?

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
Even on the smallest islands

Even on the smallest islands,
they are tilling the fields,
skylarks singing.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
Even with insects

Even with insects--
some can sing,
some can’t.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
Face of the spring moon

Face of the spring moon--
about twelve years old,
I'd say.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
Having slept, the cat gets up

Having slept, the cat gets up,
yawns, goes out
to make love.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
Hey, sparrow!

Hey, sparrow!
out of the way,
  Horse is coming.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
How much
are you enjoying yourself,
tiger moth?

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
I'm going out

I'm going out, 
flies, so relax, 
make love.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
**In spring rain**

In spring rain  
a pretty girl  
yawning.

Translated by Robert Hass  
Kobayashi Issa
In the thicket's shade

In the thicket's shade
a woman by herself
singing the rice-planting song.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
In these latter-day

In these latter-day,
Degenerate times,
    Cherry-blossoms everywhere!

Translated by R.H. Blyth

Kobayashi Issa
In this world
we walk on the roof of hell,
gazing at flowers.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
It once happened

It once happened
that a child was spared punishment
through earnest solicitation.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
**Last time, I think**

Last time, I think,
I'll brush the flies
from my father's face.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
Napped half the day
Napped half the day; no one punished me!

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
Napping at midday

Napping at midday
I hear the song of rice planters
and feel ashamed of myself.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
New Year's Day

New Year's Day--
everything is in blossom!
I feel about average.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
New Year's morning

New Year's morning:
the ducks on the pond
quack and quack.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
No doubt about it

No doubt about it, 
the mountain cuckoo 
is a crybaby.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
Not knowing

Not knowing
it's a tub they're in
the fish cooling at the gate.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
Not very anxious

Not very anxious
to bloom,
my plum tree.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
Pissing in the snow

Pissing in the snow
outside my door--
it makes a very straight hole.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
Seen

Seen
through a telescope:
ten cents worth of fog.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
**Summer night**

Summer night--
even the stars
are whispering to each other.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
That pretty girl

That pretty girl--
munching and rustling
the wrapped-up rice cake.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
That wren

That wren--
looking here, looking there.
You lose something?

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
The crow

The crow
walks along there
as if it were tilling the field.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
The man pulling radishes

The man pulling radishes
pointed my way
with a radish.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
The moon tonight

The moon tonight--
I even miss
her grumbling.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
The pheasant cries
The pheasant cries
as if it just noticed
the mountain.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
The snow is melting
The snow is melting
and the village is flooded
with children.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
The toad! It looks like
it could belch
a cloud.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
These sea slugs

These sea slugs,
they just don't seem
Japanese.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
This moth saw brightness

This moth saw brightness
in a woman's chamber--
burnt to a crisp.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
Under my house

Under my house
an inchworm
measuring the joists.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
Under the image of Buddha

Under the image of Buddha
all these spring flowers
seem a little tiresome.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
Visiting the graves

Visiting the graves,
the old dog
leads the way.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
What a strange thing

What a strange thing!
to be alive
beneath cherry blossoms.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa
Windy fall

At my daughter's grave, thirty days after her death:

Windy fall--
these are the scarlet flowers
she liked to pick.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
With my father

With my father
I would watch dawn
over green fields.

Translated by Robert Hass

Kobayashi Issa
**Writing shit about new snow**

Writing shit about new snow
for the rich
is not art.

Translated by Robert Hass
Kobayashi Issa