[page 107]

**Squirrels of Lone Tree Mountain**

FRED JEREMY SELIGSON

**Introduction**

**Squirrels** is a section of a longer poem Someone’s Walking on Lone Tree Mountain, which features various aspects of the hill behind my house, An San or Saddle Mountain. Another part “Clear Spring Temple” was published last year in Transactions.

Horace Underwood also lived at its base and he told me that it used to be called, “Lone Tree Mountain.” There remained only one tree on it due to a denuding by desperate people needing fuel, especially during World War II. It has since been reforested into a splendid garden environment, and provides the leisurely hiker with hours of enjoyment. Hardly a day passes without my visit.

Today I found a glum man of 74 sitting on a bench under a pavilion, hiking-stick by his side. He remarked on how glad he was that someone finally removed the bags of garbage that thoughtless picnickers had left by the trail before us. Now a fine vista of young greening trees stood before us. My own black and white cat who died of mouth cancer is buried behind that grove. A middle-aged lady came and sat on a bench across from the man. He told her that he had prostate cancer and was waiting to die.

He spoke of me too, referring to me as “Haraboji.” Since when did I become ‘‘Grandfather?” He is still 10 years older than I.

Maybe I am waiting to die and to become one with the hill as has my cat. I have been walking this hill so long that my beard has become white, and aside from observing the day to day changes of the seasons I have lost track of time.

[page 108]

Something

**Black**

Climbs

On

branches –

“...a

bat,

a

cat,

a

pointy-

ear

squirrel”

[page 109]

Sways

For

The

Leap

Across

Tail

swishing –

grabs

with

claws

a

sister

tree

[page 110]

Jumps

From

Swaying

Limb

To

limb,

stares

back ...

bounds

on

high,

again

[page 111]

Chases

A

Girl

up,

down

And

around –

scampering,

chattering

[page 112]

Bushy

Travelers

Cross

The

Crisscross

Canopy

On

A

Highway

Of

clouds

[page 113]

“Look...;

it’s

ducking

by

that

nest …”

“Mrs

Magpie

isn’t

glad...”

[page 114]

As

Man

Stops

&

Stares

One

Clings

To

bark,

tail

twitching

[page 115]

Prances

From

Side

To

Side

up,

on

around

springs

through

tunnels

of

stems

[page 116]

&

Leaves

ever

so

surely

for

a

grave

The writer has resided in Seoul since 1977. He won the Dan Gun Poetry Award for Regarding Cosmos in 1982. Other books include poetry chapbooks and prose: Oriental Birth Dreams 1988, and Queen Jin’s Handbook of Pregnancy 2002.