



For Nirvana: 108 Zen Sijo Poems

Oh-Hyun Cho

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For Nirvana features exceptional examples of the poet Cho Oh-Hyun's award-winning work. Cho Oh-Hyun was born in Miryang, South Gyeongsang Province, Korea, and has lived in retreat in the mountains since becoming a novice monk at the age of seven. Writing under the Buddhist name Musan, he has composed hundreds of poems in seclusion, many in the sijo style, a relatively fixed syllabic poetic form similar to Japanese haiku and tanka. *For Nirvana* contains 108 Zen *sijo* poems (108 representing the number of *klesas*, or "defilements," that one must overcome to attain enlightenment). These transfixing works play with traditional religious and metaphysical themes and include a number of "story" sijo, a longer, more personal style that is one of Cho Oh-Hyun's major innovations. Kwon Youngmin, a leading scholar of sijo, provides a contextualizing introduction, and in his afterword, Heinz Insu Fenkl reflects on the unique challenges of translating the collection.

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