

MIMI HACHIKAI

THIS CRAB HERE

Translated from Japanese by Eric E. Hyett and Spencer Thurlow

This crab here, Where do you come from, crab? Many a day away—
past and future consumed by this island's shadow swelling,
rising my armored shell touching the heels of sunbathers my
claws, two passing trains I'm caught, roasted, eaten my shell,
rolling around a boat being tossed into the waves in the midst of
nowhere I navigate kelp fragments this journey, inevitable

This deer here, Where do you come from, deer? I'm a deer in the
ancient Nara Park I go back countless generations my life,
grass walking on grass I eat tourist crackers and step in
what falls out of my bum crossing horns locking horns drop
and thrive drop and thrive again, branch out I am grasped at
targeted sparrows alight and flies spend the night on me
of late I'm so confused. What am I doing?

This bear here, Where do you come from, bear? My chestnut
mountain bear. *Bear bile actually works!* said someone I hadn't
seen in two years, *My cousin hunts them Bile from a bear is*
so rare so precious drinking it it kicks in right away
Under the table, I finger-count the bears I care for as quickly as
possible four five six a stranger presses his
face to the window!

TRANSLATORS' NOTE

Line 1 is the opening verse of Song 42 of the Kojiki. For the American version, we used Edwin Cranston's translation in *A Waka Anthology Volume 1: The Gem-Glistening Cup*.