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## Three Poems: "Shameless Things" | "Lunch Poems @ Dokkyo" | "Yosano Akiko on Jikkan"

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Author Bio: Judy Halebsky's second book, *Tree Line*, was a finalist for the California Book Award and the Believer Poetry Award, among others. Her poems have been published in *Field*, *Antioch Review*, *Zyzzyva* and elsewhere. Her honors include fellowships from the MacDowell Colony, the Millay Colony and the Vermont Studio Center. Based in Oakland California, she is currently a visiting professor at Dokkyo University in Saitama, Japan.

#### 14. Shameless Things

a couple wearing the same shoes  
accepting money as a gift without first refusing  
calling out of the blue, drunk  
daytime TV  
sleeping with the TV on  
adult children yelling at their parents  
pants tucked into socks  
sweaters tucked into pants  
chocolate cake  
promising to translate a letter into English and realizing I don't  
have anywhere near the Japanese I would need  
driving at night without lights  
drinking too much at the top of Mt. Takao  
passing out drunk on the trail at Mt. Takao (with the Australians  
worried you might be hurt or diabetic) (it's not that this happens  
more in Tokyo than San Francisco, it's just that here one is so  
much less likely to be alone) (which brings me back to the  
chocolate cake and how small it is and how to get more I'd have to  
go to a second café and order all over again or stay at the same café  
and be the American that ordered dessert twice alone)

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Lunch Poems @ Dokkyo  
Saitama, April 2017

When one of the undergrads says he doesn't have a girlfriend, Yoshi corrects him with *not yet* as though it's a one-time thing. (Yoshi lives in the town where we was born, married to a woman he met in high school) later I think *not yet* is a way of not saying no. (this is better than my first take which was something about men and virginity) When the same student says he doesn't want an office job, Yoshi tells him to find a wild place, not here by the outlet mall and the semi-rapid express, but to go into the wilderness. They read American poetry together in English, one poem at a time, line by line. They spend weeks on the *Idea of Order at Key West* and years on *Coney Island of the Mind*. When I ask Yoshi if he writes his own poems, he says, *I'm a letter carrier for poetry, that's all.*

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Yosano Akiko on *Jikken*

*She's not using it that way*, Janine tells me on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of Lumine.

*jikken* (true) (feeling). I look it up on J-DIC (not a dating site but a dictionary) Examine the characters in the selected compound:

— Janine, translator and Saitama neighbor, says when Akiko writes *jikken*, she doesn't mean truth, she doesn't mean reality.

— Me, on J-DIC out of the wild fury of insomnia, talking to ghosts.

She means all spirits and voices pulled through the body, not a picture or a map or a GPS voice, not to measure by what is possible in this tea cup, gravity limited world, but instead to measure by pulse rate, by current, by ways to be more or less alive, not kind-of or so-so but that ice cold lake and the shutter of falling in.