

**KISABURO
KONOSHIMA**

Six Japanese
Tanka Poems

—translated from the
Japanese by David Callner

Kisaburo Konoshima was born in 1893 in Gifu, Japan. He left his village for an education in Tokyo when he was fifteen years old and went on to become a professor of political economics in Kyoto. In 1924 he abandoned academia for the life of a farmer and emigrated to California with his wife and children. In 1941, Konoshima was forced off his farm and he and his family were interned in the Heart Mountain Relocation Center in Wyoming. Following the war, Konoshima moved to New York City, where he devoted himself to his children's education and his poetry. In 1950 he joined the Japanese poetry society Cho-on, which published his entire opus of over fifteen hundred tanka in the Cho-on quarterly, from 1950 to his death in 1984.

David Callner is the author of six novels and many short works. He also translated a collection of Japanese tanka poetry into English, *Hudson: A Collection of Tanka* (Japan Times, 2004). Callner spent his childhood and youth in England, France, Italy, and America. He has resided in Japan for over forty years and teaches at Shinshu University. Callner is a grandson of the Japanese poet Kisaburo Konoshima and son of the painter Richard Callner.

Brilliantly burning the evening sky – at the edge of the sea
today's sun for this day alone

This one day I lived in virtue
the ocean horizon – ablaze with the setting sun

At my window – I accept this day for what it was
the setting sun burns – resplendent on the sea

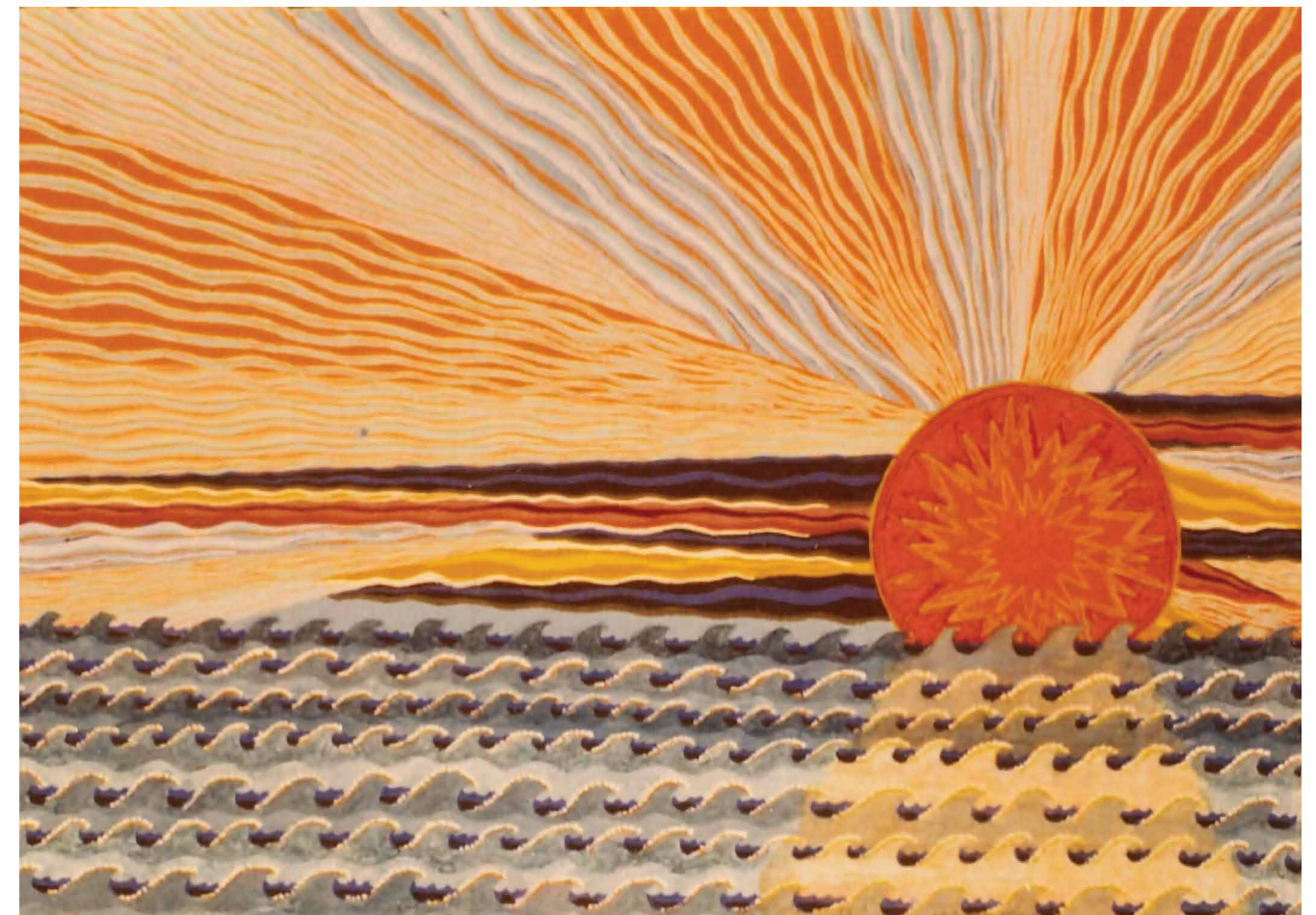
Surging waves left crashing over a breakwater
the ocean falls quietly – dusk

Cutting myself free from inescapable poverty – I abandoned
my Meiji village – the snow rages in memory

Closing my eyes to reminisce – first comes
the village I forsook – eighty years past

RICHARD CALLNER

A Hawaiian Sunset, 1984
Watercolor and gouache on paper, 7 x 12 in.



COURTESY THE ARTIST'S FAMILY