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Okabe

William Doreski

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"Put Nothing in Its Place," acrylic on canvas, [Brianna Keeper](#)

Still, if I stand back from
these Hiroshige prints
I feel an absence accumulate
like rain cupped in hosta leaves.

So I enter, glad-handed, the pass
between Mario and Okabe
and greet my fellow travelers —
kon'nichiwa, genkidesuka....

They smile tired little smiles,
relieved that I'm not a bandit
but only a rough old foreigner
tongue-tied by ordinary speech.

The green slopes pour like waterfalls.
Trees lurch and cling and threaten

to crush unwary trekkers,
but we're sure they'll never fall.

[William Doreski](#) has published three critical studies and several collections of poetry. His poetry, essays, reviews, and fiction have appeared in many print and online journals. He has taught writing and literature at Emerson, Goddard, Boston University and Keene State College. His most recent books are *A Black River*, *A Dark Fall*, a poetry collection, and *Train to Providence*, a collaboration with photographer Rodger Kingston.