The House in the Mist

It was with awe
That I beheld
Fresh leaves, green leaves,
Bright in the sun

When the Japanese haiku master Basho composed The Narrow Road to the Deep North, he was an ardent student of Zen Buddhism, setting off on a series of travels designed to strip away the trappings of the material world and bring spiritual enlightenment. He writes of the seasons changing, the movement of the moon, the beauty of the landscape, through which he seems to reflect the mysteries of the universe. Ten years Basho walked in the eighteenth century, and Kishousai is not only the title of this work, but also a poem by Basho, which was selected in his lifetime. The iconic three-line haiku form is expressed in Basho's restrained, nature-inspired poems, often using poetic devices such as kigo (seasonal words) and kireji (linking words).

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