



Basho and the River Stones

By Tim J. Myers



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The great poet Basho lives in the woods and shares the cherries from his cherry tree with the local foxes. But one tricky fox becomes greedy—He uses his magic to turn three river stones into gold coins, and then tricks Basho into giving up all of the cherries. When the fox returns to gloat over his victory, he discovers that Basho is content. Wiser than the fox, Basho knows that a poem inspired by the beauty of the river stones is more valuable than gold. Oki S. Han's watercolors evoke ancient Japan in this sequel to the *New York Times* bestseller *Basho and the Fox*.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Starred Review. Grade 1-4—A magical fox learns an important lesson in this original trickster tale. Disguised as a monk, he offers Basho, Japan's most revered poet, three gold coins if he agrees to give all of the cherries from his tree to the neighboring foxes. When the coins turn into river stones, the mischievous creature awaits the impoverished poet's angry outburst. However, Basho's profound appreciation of the stones' beauty takes the form of a haiku, which humbles the animal. Chagrined, he tries to give Basho three real coins, which the man summarily refuses. The fox uses his wiles to repay the poet in yet another transmogrification, and they live companionably from that day on. Han's watercolors are adept at capturing the beauty of the Japanese countryside, the serenity of Basho's hut, and the cunning expression of the fox/monk. Stylized frames separate the text from the lush backgrounds of shade-dappled pastoral scenes and striking kimono-silk patterns. The description of haiku on the title page and the appended author's note about Matsuo Basho provide just the right amount of supplemental information. Myers's storytelling background is apparent in the pacing of the tale and in the carefully selected, descriptive narrative. An exotic and eye-catching addition to storytimes.—*Carol Ann Wilson, Westfield Memorial Library, NJ*

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From [Booklist](#)

PreS-Gr. 2. In this team's second tribute to Matsuo Basho (*Basho and the Fox*, 2000), the seventeenth-century Japanese poet befriends a clan of kimono-clad foxes and agrees to share his cherry harvest with them. One fox becomes greedy, however, and devises a plan to trick Basho out of his share. By transforming himself into a monk, the fox temporarily turns three "worthless" stones into gold coins, and tempts the poor, hungry poet with coins for cherries. Is Basho angry when the coins turn back into rocks? Yes! But he quickly becomes both grateful and inspired, as he recognizes the beautiful stones' true worth and writes a haiku about them. The conniving fox is humbled by the poet's attitude and does everything he can to ensure that his trickery is undone. Along the way, he learns a lesson or two about perception, honor, and sharing. Han's expressive watercolors, with an unusual variety of perspectives, keep the story lively. A clever original fable that ends with cherries for everyone. An author's note is appended. *Karin Snelson*

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About the Author

Tim Myers and Oki S. Han also collaborated on the NY TIMES children's bestseller, *Basho and the Fox* Tim Myers is a writer, storyteller, and songwriter living in Santa Clara, California. He recently retold another Japanese tale, Tanuki's Gift.

A graduate of the Fashion Institute of Technology and the School of Visual Arts in New York, Oki S. Han currently lives with her family in Seoul, South Korea where she is an artist and teacher of illustration and design.

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