



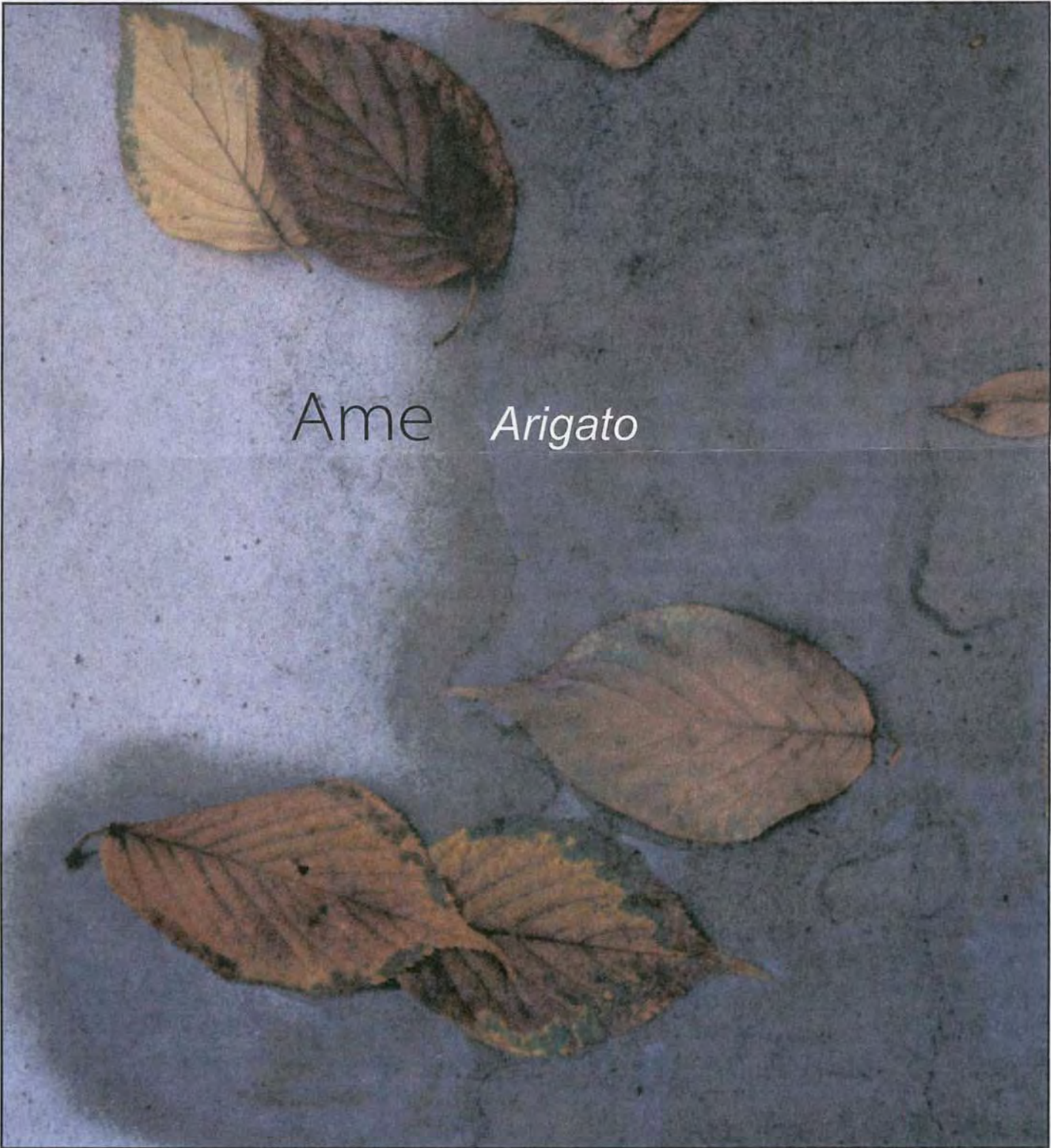
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Ame *Arigato*

A clear absolutely smogless day in L.A. is a reality, but not very often.

It is a rare event, but the last heavy rains in several years brought pristine skies, with a clear view of the surrounding snow-capped mountains. Newcomers to Los Angeles were astounded by its beauty. If you experience such a day once and only once, it is enough to know that such a thing is possible and real.

You cannot create such a day, you can only not interfere with nature's cleansing processes. The more we try to control nature, the more we mess it up. We are not the overlords and caretakers of nature, we are a part of it. Yet our arrogance borders on megalomania. Wealth in terms of things possessed is first and foremost. It is supremely ironic that the words "In God we trust" is printed on the one thing we trust more. Money profiting has caused us to destroy half the animal and vegetable life on the planet out of sheer convenience to ourselves. From a time of no garbage cans being used at all, we have ever bigger garbage cans, trash bins, dump sites, etc. with no end in sight. We grew up being taught not to waste – it was "mottainai – "not according to the essential way of nature." In other words, there is nothing in nature that was non-biodegradable, until the advent of man that is. Not interfering with nature or not trying to control it - it is then that we see the true nature of things.

Not trying to control the reality of Nirvana but letting go of the urge to define and control even that, is like that rare smogless day. It may have mists and unclear areas, but no choking, stifling smog. We are lucky that we cannot yet create rain or prevent it – we can only be grateful when it comes seasonably. Only gods don't feel gratitude. And Yes, it is so = Namoamidabutsu, and the experiencing of that perfect day is like Shinjin, is like birth in the Pure Land.

Rev. Mas