

Lanterns by the Lake

by Joan S. Grigsby

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TO K.S.G.

[Kate Grigsby, her husband's mother, who lived in Japan 1874-8]

Gone is the faery land you used to know
Of old romance. The ancient, gracious ways
Down which you walked so many years ago
Are but a story now of other days.

But something still remains of that sweet spell,
In hidden gardens where azaleas bloom
Like flames of glory round a haunted well,
And grey gods watch them from the far green gloom.

Some things remain—the sound of geta'd feet,
The watchman's rattle in a narrow lane,
The blind man's flute, the pilgrim in the street,
The temple bell at dawn. All these remain,

Holding the new, strange land men seek to make,
A land, I think, that you would grieve to know,
With fetters from the past that will not break,
To those more gracious ways of long ago.

It is of these that I have tried to tell,
Weaving from them my rhymes for such as you
Who love to speak of ancient Yedo still
And of the gentle people whom you knew.

THE LANTERN BY THE LAKE

Your crimson lantern by the sleeping lake—
It seemed a star that hovered on the shore,
Charmed by the pointed wands of long, green reeds.
It seemed a blossom that a touch would break,
Lovely, mysterious, blooming but an hour,
Enchanted from the life of water weeds,
Your round, red lantern on the midnight shore

Loosed from her willow mooring, silently
Your dark boat moved. The lantern's crimson ray
Shone from her stern. The voice of ripples came,
Whispering through the scented night to me
A thousand dreams. I saw your lantern sway,
Grow smaller, till it seemed a flower of flame
That sailed towards the dawn and died away.

Curtains of darkness on the water fell
Between me and that floating crimson flower.
Night folded all things living to her rest.
Only the whispering lake awoke to tell
Of one strange star that hovered on her shore,
One flower that bloomed and faded on her breast
The mute enchantment of this midnight hour.

THE TEMPLE LANTERNS

Every man has a lantern in his heart
That burns before some ever-living hour,
Some secret hour that he may live again
Over and over in the silences
Which hold the spirit just as sleep descends.
Every man has a lantern in his heart,
A ray that glimmers down the road of years
Undimmed by distance or the shades of time.

For me—for me—the light of lanterns old !
Grey lamps of stone that shine through grey-stemmed trees,
Dim with the twilight—cryptomeria trees,
Mysterious, a little threatening,
But made more gracious as the blue dusk veils
Fall through their groves along each stone paved way,
Touching the carven lanterns where they gleam
In long, diminishing lines until the light
Poured from an open shrine engulfs their glow.

For me—for me—such lanterns in my heart
Forever burn above a hidden road
Where love once walked alone, at dusk, with me.

THE WITCH'S HAIR

Before the breath of morning stirred
The pine trees by the bay ;
Before the hand of Dawn had flung
Her shadowed veils away ;
I saw the Witch of Beauty comb
Her gold hair by the bay.
Its magic turned to splendour
All common lonely things—
Blood-spattered fishing sampans,
The old, brown man who sings
In a cracked voice to children
Of common, lonely things

The wizen-breasted woman
Who carries iris flowers
To town—her body twisted
With the passion of the hours,
Her fingers twining, snake-like,
Through purple iris flowers
A tangle of red fish nets,
Brown bodies, wet and bare,
Fish flapping, in deep baskets,
Girls chattering everywhere,
Caught by the Witch of Beauty
In a spell of golden hair.

Sometimes the midnight fishers
Have seen her as they sing.
She walks the darkened water
To touch their torch and fling
A tossing stream of splendour
From the common, lonely thing.

Swift days of dreaming beauty,
Dim nights when passion flowers—
Wakened by wild, witch fingers
Through long, enchanted hours,
From scarlet, tossing torches,
Red nets and iris flowers.

One day the spell of splendour
Will vanish from your hair.
One day your hands will break me
And toss me—God knows where—
With wizen-breasted women

Who chatter of white hair.
But while your wild enchantment
Turns all the pine-girt shore
Into a golden garden.
By Heaven's open door,
O, wandering Witch of Beauty,
I ask for nothing more.

IN A TEA HOUSE

Ah ! how one loves these polished, wooden floors.
The sound of slippers shuffling over them
Wakens a thousand gallant memories
Of festival—the little cups that brim
With yellow wine, the gay lips sipping them

Silk gowns on shining mats and polished floor
The laughter and the music and the song ;
The scent of perfumed hair and cedarwood
The dancing forms in trained abandon flung
Nights of full moon that could not last too long.

For always, in the heart, a goblin hand
Beckons. A voice cries, " Further, further on
Lies greater joy, a lovelier hidden thing ;
Beauty no man has seen nor ever known ;
A mystery that waits for you alone

Just beyond sight, to haunt each polished floor,
Or shining mat ; the heritage of years
Of whispering kimono, gentle feet,
Of screens that move to cover love and tears
A lover's laughter or a woman's fears."

Ah ! how one loves them—shadows on shoji thrown
Of high-dressed hair ; the silver sound of strings
Touched softly ; the faint fragrance of green tea
And wine and charcoal ; gentle whisperings
And golden hands in sleeves like gorgeous wings !

FEAR

Little guilt god, forgotten and neglected,
Here in the empty house of twisted eaves,
Why do you watch me in this haunted silence ?
How the wind whispers through the rain-drenched leaves !

Dim is the house and utterly deserted.
Only your tarnished splendour lights the gloom,
Waiting for footsteps, listening for music
Is that a movement in the inner room ?

Who tied these tattered rags here to placate you ?
What sinner brought to you his broken pride ?
Little guilt god, did you look down in pity?
Is that a geta clattering outside ?

Only the rain that beats the wood-barred window,
Only the leaves that whisper by the door,
Only you, watching from your twilit corner
Is that a shadow moving on the floor ?

Little guilt god, you played with Heaven's angels
And, mocking, drew them downward to their doom,
As now you mock me in this haunted silence
God ! Who is laughing in that empty room ?

YOUR GARDEN.

Dawn shadows in your garden. Into the rocky pool
A silver fountain splashes from shadows dim and cool
Where feathered reeds are waving beside the little pool

Noon shadows on your garden. The gleaming dragonflies
Hover above blue water below the burning skies.
Black, on the stone-flagged pathway, a dead cicada lies.

Dusk shadows in your garden. Below the feathered reeds
The hidden frogs are singing among the water weeds,
Where moon and stars are floating, reflected through reeds.

Moonlight and shadows changing, a lantern by the pool,
A voice, like water falling, notes dropping clear and cool
Strings touched amid the shadows that lie beyond the pool.

CLOISTER

Here I will build a cloister for my mind.
Here thoughts like hooded forms shall slowly pace
Each winding path to mark the birth of flowers
Unhurried, counting neither time nor space
As things that matter ; since time is so long
Where dawn and dusk alike are beautiful
And space is but the measure of a cloud
That floats upon the surface of a pool.

Beautiful things are here—a flat grey stone
Where friends may sit to tell of some old god
The murmur in a clump of bamboo grass,
Moved by the wind; the ever-changing mood
Of sun and shadow on the distant hills ;
A reed flute played at dusk ; each gentle note
Light as the patter of blown maple leaves ;
Incense breathed from a passing pilgrim's coat.

Such beauty fills for me the cloistered day.
And when I wake at night the trees will sing
Beside my door of what the day has known,
Foretelling for the dawn some lovelier thing
Leading me on to that far, hidden shrine
Whence, over all my life, a golden door
Gleams, beckons through the shadows of the world.
There life and dreams are one for evermore.

IKEGAMI

Above the cryptomeria tree the moon is full and white.
We who have dreamed of mystery are one with dreams tonight
In shadows, black as ebony, and moonbeams, ashen white.

The curving angles of the shrine are black against the stars.
White moonbeams, maddening as wine, shimmer in silver bars
On the pagoda's mystic line that reaches to the stars.

Never a voice in all the night, nor footstep on the stone,
No colour, only black and white, no movement but our own
Who stray where moonbeams fill the night with ghosts and gods unknown.

Ah ! lonely temple on the hill where silver moon flowers gleam,
What magic do your stones distil to turn the sense to dream,
To sweep the human heart and will down an enchanted stream ?

We stray by roads of silver light beyond the count of years,
Beyond the lure of Life's delight, beyond the touch of tears
Where voices whisper, to the night, the mystery of years.

Till hands of dawn efface the moon and morning wakes again
To sing of what the night has known; of dreams that still remain
Within the heart ; and of one moon—that will not rise again.

THE CHARCOAL BURNERS.

You have a small house high above the sea,
A clearing in the thicket of bamboo.
Behind your house there stands a lonely tree,
Black boughs outspread against the sky's deep blue.

I wonder ; is it beautiful to you ?

All night the stars are tangled in your tree ;—
Nearer to you, because you are so far
From earth-lights, than they ever come to me
Who vainly seek to hold a single star.

I wonder if you know how near they are.

There have been men who toiled in other days,
Splitting the pine logs with the self-same blow,
Raising the self-same echoes as you raise,
Who laid their axes down long, long ago.

I wonder if they come to watch you now,

To breath the acrid charcoal smoke once more,
To watch it rise upon the evening air,
To hear the closing of the oven door,
To follow you with sad eyes everywhere.

I wonder if you see them standing there.

Your life is one with trees and wind and stars,
One with the brown earth your own feet have trod.
For you the gate of Heaven has no bars.
Yet, when you sleep with face turned to the sod,

I wonder—Do you hear the feet of God ?

THE ROUND WINDOW

Through the round window, open to the roadway,
Salt-laden breezes blow across the sea.
I hear the sound of little waves that whisper
On shingle and I see the twisted tree
That screens me from the road, its gaunt arm breaking
The sky line and the grey rim of the sea.

Salt mist blows in upon the pale tatami,
My hands are moist that rest upon the floor.
Mist stains the milkwhite paper of the shoji
And swells the wooden framework of the door
That creaks a little when you slide it open
And glide with slipped feet across the floor.

Now, close the screen and leave me—lonely, dreaming—
I ask no better thing of life tonight
Than here to sit beside the open window,
Watching the grey mist and the pale twilight
Blend the far line of mountain range and forest
Into the glimmering ocean and the night.

Nothing is moving in my silent chamber
But one white lily in a bamboo vase
That sways until a pointed, shining petal
Loosens and falls. How beautiful it was—
That little sound it made on the tatami,
That shining curve against the bamboo vase

Silence sweeps upward from the empty shadow,
Folding my heart and mind in mystery,
One with the thousand things the room remembers,
Forms that I cannot know and may not see,
Voices that whisper through the dusk and draw me
Into the room's unfathomed mystery.

Through the round window, open to the roadway,
I watch the round moon rising from the sea,
Spreading a silver path across the water
For ghosts to walk from their dim world to me,
Who wait alone upon the pale tatami,
Watching the moon mist rising from the sea.

SPRING COMES TO THE VILLAGE

Someone sang in the street today.
Someone laughed in the narrow lane.
Smoke from the bath-house blew away
Over the roofs and back again—
A soft, blue ribbon. Who sang today
Down in the street ? Who laughed in the lane ?

Over the road, from a slim black tree,
Petals of milkwhite plum bloom spread.
The sweetmeat woman, merrily,
Moulds her figures of green and red—
A gallant ship or a cherry tree,
A bright green man with a scarlet head.

Children crowd her along the street,
Boys with a sen or so to spend
Scatter the dust with flying feet
Eager to see her fingers bend
The shapes of sugar so gay and sweet,
Just for the sen they have to spend.

Women chatter by every door,
Rocking their babies lazily.
Sunlight falls on my matted floor
Through open screen and budding tree.
Was that a voice by my garden door,
Or only the wind that called to me ?

Who was it sang in the street today ?
Who went laughing along the lane ?
One who wandered from far away,
Over the world and back again,
With a sack of dreams and a pipe to play
A tune to trouble the hearts of men.

THE BIRDS OF CHINATOWN

The little birds of Chinatown, they sing above the street,
Where Chinese girls go up and down on small, uncertain feet
And Chinese men look wise and frown at nothing, in the street.

The birds, the birds of Chinatown—they never learn to fly.
Their prisoned wings are dusty brown. They cannot see the sky,
Because the walls of Chinatown above them are too high.

And yet they sing the whole day long. I hear them as I pass,
Pour forth a golden stream of song as though they knew the grass
In far-off fields was sweet and long where sun and shadow pass.

Perhaps that dark, unlovely street is hidden from their eyes.
Perhaps, for them, the shuffling feet beat out clear melodies
Of woods where branches spread and meet below the shining skies.

O ! little birds, within your cage you cannot see the sky.
Your prisoned wings cannot assuage their sad desire to fly
And yet, I think that in your cage the keys of heaven lie.

RED BROCADES

"Here are brocades of red leaves"

Japanese poem

There were brocades of crimson everywhere
Red maple leaves that hung like hands of flame,
Motionless on the misty morning air,
In that deep forest path where no one came
But you and I, to watch the red sun leap
Over the far, grey rim of sea and sky ;
To hear the forest life awake from sleep,
The footsteps of the Hidden Folk go by,
Who walk the woods and sing at autumn tide,
A little sadly of some broken spell—
Perhaps a dream that men have tossed aside,
Perhaps a song that women loved too well.

There were brocades of silver everywhere,
Frail cobwebs in the trees and on the grass,
Woven by hidden hands that hung them there,
Enchantment for a mortal, should he pass.
There was a golden lizard on green moss,
Like living sunlight, when the hot rays fell
Through the cool leaves, I saw it move across
The red-brown brickwork of a broken well ;
Where shadowed waters dream of dawns unknown,
Waters that sleep, unrippled through the years
And only move when red leaves, one by one,
Fall on their surface with a sound like tears.

There were brocades of scarlet everywhere
And gold and amber and the warm, sweet breath
Of dying leaves upon the morning air.
How beautiful a forest is in death !
And there was silence till the distant sea
Called to the wind that through the forest stirred,
Lifting the light leaves of the maple tree,
Awaking here and there, a twittering bird.
Then, far away, across the mountain side,
A deeper note upon the silence fell—
An echo that awoke and beat and died
And woke again—

It was a temple bell.

BY THE SAGAMI RIVER

Dusk creeping down across the level land,
Where the slow river widens to the sea.
Grey-clad upon the wet grey shore you stand,
Motionless, voiceless till it seems to me
That you are one with sea and wet grey sand,
One with the world's unfathomed mystery.

There are green reeds beside you. I have seen
You bend to draw one long, white silken plume
Between your fingers. I have watched you lean
This way and that way in the twilit gloom
As though long, long ago your soul had been
One with a tall green sand-reed's milky plume.

I wonder if that narrow line of land
Is dear to you as it is dear to me.
Do you too dream of shadows when you stand,
Scanning, at twilight, the pale mystery
Of sea and sky and reeds on wet grey sand,
Waiting until the night obscures the sea ?

And do you hear, below the glimmering stars,
That turn to gold as fading skies grow black,
Some echo of those old, relentless wars
That waged here once and left a bloody track
For ghosts to tread who scan the golden stars ?
Ah ! do you see their sad eyes looking back

On days when they had life as we have life
And lost, for unattainable desire,
Beauty and peace in bitterness and strife,
Dimming the stars with smoke, the dawn with fire,
As we too spend the splendour of our life
In lust for unattainable desire.

Slowly the grey tide creeps across the sand.
Night and the stars have claimed the distant sea.
Still, by the white-plumed reeds, I see you stand,
One with the world's unfathomed mystery,
Dreaming, perhaps, upon the lonely sand,
Of footprints that are lost below the sea.

THE FLOWER WOMAN

Two women talking in the little street.
One combed the tangles from her long, black hair.
One clattered pails and scraped her geta'd feet.
A child screamed on her back—noise everywhere,
The twilight hour, that should have been so sweet,
Was torn by sound and filled with long, black hair.

And then you came and stood on the grey stone—
White plum bloom in your hand—beside my door.
You spoke in your soft, hesitating tone,
I did not see the black hair any more ;
Only the deep, blue border of your gown
As you knelt down upon the matted floor.

I only heard you talk of flowers to me
And watched the gentle gestures of your hand.
I sought to touch your gracious mystery,
Knowing that I should never understand
The hidden dream that you would weave for me,
Twining white plum bloom in your gentle hand.

I only know that, while this hour slips by,
The Peace of Ages pauses in my room.
White flowers on yellow matting scattered lie.
Your hands move softly, twining bloom with bloom
And I, forgetful that the flowers will die,
Dream of enchantment in the twilit gloom.

THE LOTUS LAKE

The moon is lost below the lotus leaves.
She floated on the lake an hour ago.
But, as the clouds move o'er her in the sky,
So move the lotus blossoms to and fro.

Once, when the flowers unfolded on the lake,
While stars were fading in the light of day,
I saw in one white cup a pool of dew
And, in the dew, a star reflected lay.

Again, at dusk, there came a white-winged moth
To hover on a rose-pink lotus bloom,
Till silver water and the wide green leaves
Faded before my sight in violet gloom.

Sometimes I see the wings of dragonflies
Flash on the lake in golden morning hours,
Seeming like stars that live beyond the dawn
To see a sunbeam fall on lotus flowers.

O lotus lake where coral cups and white
Cover the mirrored moon or wake to hold
The fading stars in little pools of dew,
So in your gracious depth my spirit fold,

That I who roam your rim at dusk and dawn,
Dreaming, desiring a forbidden thing,
May learn to seek no other loveliness
Than lotus blossoms and a white moth's wing.

For something lost that you cannot forget.

DUSK ON THE TEMPLE STEPS

Dusk on the temple steps—across the twilight
Grey shadows troop as though they came to pray,
Where sing the breezes through the empty courtyard
And lemon-tinted lanterns slowly sway.

To me, high on the steps above the village,
Sounds rise, the laugh of girls, the shout of men,
Sharp bark of dogs, swift clattering of geta
The whisper of a hidden samisen.

A low wind whispers through the leafy branches.
Into a rocky pool the fountain falls
And, where the lemon-tinted lights are swinging,
Out of the silent dusk a dream voice calls.

Out of the dusk, across the temple courtyard,
A whisper echoes down a thousand years.
Steals on my eyes a mist of vanished beauty,
A century of singing and of tears.

Dusk on the temple steps, dream voices singing
And dim, dream forms that pause awhile to pray,
Where, on the wind, the shadowed branches whisper
And lemon-tinted lanterns slowly sway.

OLD WOMEN AT THE SHRINE

Dusk on the sea and on the quiet hill.

A low wind stirs the cryptomeria trees.

Slow, chanting voices through the silence thrill

Where old, old women pray upon their knees

To shades that wait for them beyond the hill.

On glinting brass the yellow candles gleam

Blue wreaths of incense finger on the air.

The old, old women are so still. They seem

One with the shadows that receive their prayer,

One with uncounted centuries of dream.

Whisper of water falling upon stone,

Of trees that tell the secret thing they know

To old, old women, chanting names unknown

Of faces that were lovely long ago

And now are one with trees and carven stone.

You, who are old and still, who ask no more

But shadows and a shrine above the sea,

A little space of peace at dusk before

You too are one with nameless mystery,

Pray to whatever goddess you adore

That when I come to tread the Hidden Way

I too may find at eventide such peace,

An hour to right my noontide's disarray

Where pride is not and restless yearnings cease

And stars draw near that now are far away.

THE LANTERN MAKER

The Lantern-Maker's shop is very small.
On Jizazaka by the children's shrine
It stands. Outside, against the wooden wall,
Lanterns are shown for sale. The paper door
Stands open. On the yellow-matted floor
He sits—the kind old man with eyes that shine
Like round black beads. His small, brown, busy hands
Wind the black painted cane and paper strips—

White lanterns upon shining lacquered stands
For ladies' rooms he fashions ; crimson balls
Like cherries, these are lamps for festivals.
They bring a smile to his old, shrivelled lips.
He tells of lanterns fairer than these
And cherry festivals he used to know
When he—a boy—hung poems on the trees.

These long, thin, yellow lanterns—they will sway
From barges, lighting many a waterway
Or from swift-ridden bicycles that go
Through narrow alleys, speeding here and there.
These gaudy lamps by tea-house gates will shine
To tell you that the girls within are fair.

This, black and white, will burn above a grave
When bamboo grasses in the night wind wave
And incense rises from a flower-decked shrine.

The Lantern-Maker is so kind, so gay.
His little wizened face is strangely wise.
A hundred tales of life unfold each day
From the gay lanterns piled about his door ;
And, while he works there on his matted floor,
Small lanterns seem to shine within his eyes.

THE BLUE CLOAK

Grey shore, grey sea and a cold wind blowing
Out of the west from a cold blue sky,
White foam over the brown weed blowing—
A cold, grey world until you went by,
Your blue cloak over the water blowing,
Your slim form swaying against the sky.

I heard the sound of your long pole sliding
Up and down as you stemmed the tide,
I watched your yellow sampan gliding,
A pale ghost craft that seemed to ride
Out of the mist into shadows hiding
A nameless shore beyond the tide ;

Till you tossed your cloak like a wing of splendour
A passion of blue where all was grey,
And something gorgeous, yet something tender
Touched the fringe of the dying day,
Waking a dream of ancient splendour
Where all was pitiful, cold and grey.

TRAMPS IN THE MIST

Tramps going seaward, battered, rusty, rolling,
The fade into the mist across the bay,
Like magic ships which bear a magic cargo
To ports I dream about, far, far, away.

The grey waves, creeping from the grey mist, murmur

“ We know, we know, the tramps have told us all.

“ They carry combs to dancing girls in Bagdad

“ And clocks to shipping clerks in London Wall.

“ They carry elephants and shaving brushes,

“ Diamonds and toys and silk, the things you see

“ Shining on women in a Paris ballroom

“ Or sold for five cents in the Bowery.

“ They carry men who play the concertina

“ With hands that twist the lonely heart in you

“ And make you pray to gods you never heard of

“ For crazy things you want but never knew.

“ They carry men who seek on wide horizons

“ Courage at dawn and wisdom in the stars,

“ Who find a god sometimes in strange, sad places

“ And pity in a nigger slashed with scars.

“ For you they fade, dream ships for ever bearing

“ Dream cargo into ports you long to see—

“ The hills of Skye, the lemon groves of Cyprus,

“ Palermo and a town in Tripoli.

“ But we who toss them on the waste of water,

“ Making for them their laughter or their woe,

“ Ah ! we who bear them, love them, break them, kill them,

“ We know about them all, we know, we know.”

EASTERN SPRING

There is one joy my words can hardly tell you—
The sudden coming of an Eastern spring,
Not by slow budding of green-powdered hedgerows,
Not with the cuckoo's call, the swallow's wing
But suddenly, clearly, in some crowded highway,
You feel the fires, you hear the harp of spring.

Today a cold wind blew, above the city,
White clouds like snow banks on a cold blue sky.
Around me babies screamed and women chattered
While girls on squeaking getas hurried by
And small men stood about to talk of money,
Shivering underneath the cold blue sky.

There seemed no beauty in their dark kimonos
Their faces thronging round me on the street ;
No charm in 'ricksha wheels through thick mud splashing ;
The rhythmic beat of 'ricksha runners' feet ;
Nor in the measured chant of straining coolies
Who hauled their load along the windy street.

But suddenly, far away, above the city,
Over the huddled roof tops, to the north,
I saw the white clouds part. The point of Fuji—
Silver against a deep blue sky—stood forth ;
While down the street a warmer breeze blew, singing
Of melted snow in mountains of the north.

Deep in my heart life stirred and, all around me,
The hidden fires of life broke into flame
From dark kimonos; from the coolies' chanting
They thrilled my soul. I know not whence they came.
I only know that suddenly, through the city,
Spring walked with eyes of love and hands of flame,

Touching all earthly things with sweet enchantment
That lured the souls of men to wandering
Far, far away across some dear, dream country,
Drawn by the harp note of a silver string
Heard suddenly, clearly on the crowded highway.
Such is the coming of an Eastern spring.

THE MOVEMENT OF A SLEEVE

The movement of a sleeve—what can this be
To me, that it should stir my spirit so ?
What glimmer of forgotten mystery,
Delight or passion buried long ago,
Comes back again in such strange guise to me—
The sudden movement of a purple sleeve ?

A purple sleeve, embroidered here and there
With golden leaves, upon the dark silk drawn,
Moving it made me think of women's hair
And lips like flame that trembled in the dawn—
A thousand things too beautiful to bear
In one swift movement of a purple sleeve.

The movement of a sleeve—why should this be ?
A purple sleeve touched here and there with gold
Why should it wake forgotten mystery,
Desires long dead, a dream outworn and old ?
Why should an aching sorrow stir in me
At one swift movement of a purple sleeve ?

THE GHOSTS RETURN

There are tall candles in the shrine tonight
And stars above the cryptomeria trees
Where hangs the young moon like a blade of light.
The long, red lanterns tremble in the breeze
And we, who wander here, are one tonight
With stars and wind and cryptomeria trees.

Ours are the hidden feet that slowly stray,
Like dead leaves pattering on slabs of stone,
Or whispering through dry grass. We must not stay
But pause, unseen, in passing, all alone
Beside the shrine where once we used to pray,
Seeking perhaps a glory that is gone.

There golden candle-light is glimmering
On still, dark figures grouped beside the door,
Hands rise and fall. Voices are whispering.
Blue incense, from the bronze bowl on the floor,
Steals to our senses. But we—wondering—
Turn to the moon among the trees once more.

For here are bells and click of counted beads,
Thin voices, praying in a monotone,
But there, below the moon, are whispering reeds,
And water, gleaming in a trough of stone,
Where stars float—far more beautiful than beads—
The myriad stars God counts each night alone.

WATER LILIES

Ah! the beautiful words—Magic is woven through them,
Magic of flowers afloat on the waters' face,
Water that dreams in a still garden at noontide
And a shadowed place.

Water lily leaves, white cups outspreading,
Golden seed in their centre, soft and cool,
Flat green leaves below the milkwhite petals,
Reflected on the pool.

And the yellow lilies—yellow balls on the water,
They lie below the arched bridge of grey stone,
Close-petalled, golden between the wide white blossoms
Of flowers full-blown.

And the long green stems, entangled in the water,
Cooler still, unreal as enchanted things.

“ Water lily stems “—the words are lovely
As whispering wings.

Ah ! the scent of yellow pollen and broken petals !
Ah ! the touch of a dripping flower upon your face,
Rustle of bloom on bloom, sweet sound of water
Asway in a shadowed place.

Water lily leaves—dream words to murmur,
Cool as a sleeping lake in burning hours,
Spell of still water, beauty beyond all telling
Of floating flowers !

STILL WATERS

I, who can give so little, give to you
Love of still waters and the peace they hold
For hearts like yours and mine—Blue lakes outspread
Below blue skies where purple mountains fold
The sleeping water round with dreams untold ;

Small pools in ancient woods, the deep, brown pools,
Where, through long centuries, pine-needles fall
To float upon the surface and decay.
From water such as this a voice will call
To you and on your heart a spell will fall

A garden pool with grey stones set around,
Moonlight and rushes, frogs that sing by night,
Sunrise—the blue wings of a kingfisher,
Long, secret carp that move like shafts of light
Still waters—yet they call you, day and night.

A granite trough that stands before a shrine,
Clear water shimmering to the utmost brim
Where long-stemmed cups of cedarwood are laid.
Into such sacred depths a holy dream
Shall draw your heart and make you one with them.

I, who can give so little, give to you
The spell of waters as it came to me,
The spell of peace they hold for wandering hearts.
For ever this your heritage shall be
Who love still waters and their mystery.

DAFFODILS

To A.G.W.

Daffodils, trembling in a warm soft breeze,
Blown from an Eastern sky and Eastern seas
Where old, brown women wade—brown ankle-deep—
In shallow water, all day long, to reap
Harvests of seaweed ; where brown sampans rock
Gently at anchor ; and brown children flock
To count the little silver fish outspread
On straw below the sun, small head to head.

Daffodils, stirring in the wind—My eyes
See for a moment, under other skies,
Daffodils blooming where green fields are spread
With yellow buttercups and sorrel red.
For now the woods we used to know are gay
With daffodils and showers of milkwhite may,
Primroses, bluebells and anemones.
Birds will be singing now among the trees—
Thrushes—their notes like sunlit water falling—
Starlings, and soon the cuckoos will be calling,

I thought that I would share all this with you
Again some day, but now

There's sun and dew

And wind among the grass you used to love,
I wonder if you wake and hear it move,
Sometimes, above you where you lie at rest
You who could name each bird that built a nest
Who taught me everything I ever knew
Of speckled eggs and eggs like Heaven's blue.
I think your silence cannot be so deep
But you must hear the cuckoo through your sleep.
I think you know that spring has come today
With daffodils and showers of milkwhite may
And it may be that, with immortal hands,
You touched these daffodils of alien lands.
Perhaps you came into this quiet room
And spoke to me of those dear fields of home.

THE MUSIC OF THE PAST

(Adapted from the Japanese)

Short as a reed, set in this shallow sea,
The night goes by and dawn reveals the hills,
Yet when I lie awake to dream of thee,
How the hours drag and how the silence fills

With music from the past, gay melodies
Played for us once on such a summer night
As this ; a burning phrase that brought thine eye
To meet my own in rapture and delight

Such as I shall not ever see again.
For thou art gone. Why is the moon so clear
Above the sea ? O, why is there such pain
For me in lovely things ? Why art thou still so dear

That every moon I watch, forgetting sleep,
Draws my desire e'en as she draws the sea,
Setting my life in one long tidal sweep
Unebbing through the haunted night to thee ?

PRAYER FOR A WOMAN BLESSED BY THE MOON

If she has worshipped with too wild abandon
Mountains at dawn ; moon-shadows on grey stone,
The spell of voices or the touch of fingers,
Dreaming of lovers she has never known,
Following after Life's forbidden music,
Lured by a fiddle with a faery tone ;

If flowers, at dusk, have breathed on her enchantment,
Turning her spirit into living fire,
Or amber wines have wakened, with their perfume,
Her sleeping senses into wild desire,
Has she not turned from these to love still water
And bird songs and the scent of a wood fire ?

For this, be pitiful, dear God, forgive her
That she has loved too well the Life you made.
Did you not hear the whisper of white moonbeams
Blessing her sleep ? You saw the Vision laid
Upon her eyes. Have you not watched the weaving
Of every dream by which her soul was swayed ?

Forgive and speak to her across the darkness
That waits for her where no moon-shadows are,
When she has followed Life's forbidden music
At last too recklessly, at last too far.
Have pity, then, when Life has no more pity
And, in the darkness, light for her a star.

CICADAS

Will they never be silent, never cease
Their song that beats on the fevered evening air ?
Their song that knows no rest and gives no peace,
Filling the scented garden everywhere
With passionate, sibilant sound that cannot cease.

Summer has burned the village like a fire,
By every door are bare, brown bodies thrown
In blest abandonment of loose attire
Under the dark green nets. One sound alone
Tortures contentment into wild desire

For beautiful, terrible things—the passion of trees,
The mating of rivers, the madness of midnight skies.
By these am I drawn from the quiet of whispering seas,
Drawn by a dream of beauty that terrifies,
Drawn by a rapture of sound among scented trees.

Slowly along the village street I pace.
All around me are sentient, beautiful things—
The light in a door, red lips on an ash-white face,
The watchman's bell, a whisper of beetle wings
And trees that tangle the stars in a net of lace.

Beautiful things, warped with a woof of dream,
Beautiful things, bewitched by a passionate spell
Of sibilant sounds that throb in the trees and seem
Now the laughter of witches awake in Hell,
Now the singing of gods to a lute of dream.
Will they never be silent, never stay
Their sound that beats the air, as a lover's will
Beats on a woman till Love has had his way ?

*Dusk drops into night. They cease. The world is still,
Spent with the passion of the burning day.*

PATHS ABOUT THE SHRINE

Paths that lead at dawn amid the fragrance
Of wet camellia bushes—scarlet starred—
With waxen flowers that slowly fall, unbroken,
To lie on emerald moss, their bloom unmarred
By rains that beat the shrine at dawn and murmur
Through dark camellia bushes, scarlet starred.

Paths that lead at noon into the sunlight
Beyond the dim, blue shadow of the shrine,
Where warm, sweet breath of plum bloom haunts the garden
And daphne perfume turns the wind to wine,
A wind that whirls the scattered red camellias
Onto the pale tatami of the shrine.

Paths that lead at dusk where getas clatter
And buckets splash around the dripping well,
Till grey dove wings in sheltered eaves are folded,
Till someone, praying, strikes a silver bell,
Then silence falls and starry candies glimmer
Upon a little altar by the well.

Paths that lead at last where woods are waiting—
Stillier than any god of love or gain—
With eyes more watchful, hands far more compelling—
Waiting through centuries of human pain
Till we who walk the paths are still forever
And only woods and one great God remain.

TILL MOONRISE

Let us stay here till moonrise. Then you will hear the waves
Singing among the shingle, calling among the caves
A song that only moonbeams make of mist and wandering waves
Here in this hidden garden, that dreams above the sea,
Dawn fades to dusk, unheeded, and life to memory
Where forest alleys echo the singing of the sea.

Let us stay here till moonrise ; till in the pointed trees
A thousand stars entangle their thousand mysteries
Or float, like lamps reflected in the well below the trees.
High tide and white foam creeping across the shining sand
To silver pools that sparkle, like lakes in Faeryland,
Where grey stones cast their shadow upon the shining sand !

Here you shall be enchanted by shadows on grey stone,
By wind and waves that whisper a song for you alone,
A faery strain to haunt you when other songs are done.
Let us stay here till moonrise. The sea below the stars
Mourns for a thousand laboured ships, a thousand wasted wars ;
But in your heart dwell silence and the mystery of stars.

KANDA

I'm walking home through Kanda and the dusk is growing grey.
They are splashing all the pavements to wash the dust away.
With water from the gutter where dirty paper floats.
Two coolies, passing by me, stop and spit to clear their throats.
The gogai bells are ringing. There is special news tonight.
Someone killed his wife or mother. Someone set his house alight.
How the getas squeak and clatter ! Though you walk the world around
Nothing teases you like getas scraping over stony ground.

Now the yellow lights are leaping into life along the street.
Now through every twisted alley shadows pass on rapid feet—
A thousand shadows hurrying where I can never go,
Ten thousand eyes reflecting thoughts that I shall never know.
A long procession passes, pennants streaming on the air.
Behind a shuttered window a woman chants a prayer,
In high-pitched nasal accents that beat into my mind
Desire whose far fulfilment I know I cannot find.

The dusk in Kanda High Street is a wonder dusk to me.
Through a thousand nights of dreaming I know that I shall see
Those little shops of Kanda where books are piled so high
And yearning hands go hunting treasures they can never buy.
Will distance charm you, Kanda, when I am far away ?
Shall I pave with gold your sidewalk when I tell of it some day ?
Or shall I always see you as I see you now, tonight,
Crowding coolies, dirty water, squeaking getas, leaping light ?

Pray heaven I remember you as you will always be,
O, dusky Kanda High Street that laid a spell on me,
For some day, well I know it, my haunted heart will sigh
To hear a geta clatter where no geta'd feet go by.
For Dublin dusk is charming and Paris dusk is gay.
The dusk of London lures you when you're half a world away,
But some day, well I know it, my eyes will ache to see
The dusk of Kanda High Street that laid a spell on me.

IN DOUBT

(Suggested by a translation from the Japanese)

Spread on the hard round pillow
My hair entangled lies,
Hair that your hands have braided
And drawn across your eyes,
Dark as the darkest shadow
That in the forest lies.

And, as my hair is tangled,
So thoughts within my mind
Confuse their forms with silence.
Your ways of love are kind,
Yet your ways of life are gallant
And ah ! what lies behind ?

You say that you are faithful.
You swear your love will go
High as Mount Fuji's summit,
Deep as the lake below,
Far as the Silver River
Above the winter snow.

Yet still my thoughts are scattered
And tangled as my hair;
You, who are great and powerful
And honoured everywhere,
Ah ! why should you be faithful
To one woman's tangled hair ?

TODAY

(Adapted from the Japanese)

Today upon the mountains, veiled in haze,
A gleam of sunshine met my longing gaze.
It fell on a white branch of cherry flowers
Then faded and was lost in silver showers.

The memory will haunt my heart for days.

So when I look a moment on thy face,
Or meet thine eyes across some crowded space,
Or hear thee talking with thy friends, maybe,
Though thou wilt never talk again with me,

Deep in my heart Love lifts a wistful face

THE WOMAN HIDDEN IN THE SEA

He said " I will go away from the sea, for I can no more bear
The waves that sing like a woman's voice, haunting me everywhere,
The moonlight on floating seaweed that looks like a woman's hair.
I will go away from these wide, wind-wandered skies.
They grow so beautiful as the long day dies,
But stars aflame above sea foam are like a woman's eyes."

He went away to the Mountains of the West
And he laid him down on a dear green hill to rest.
But the brown Earth beat below him like the heart in a woman's breast.
He said, " Who are you, Woman, that you haunt me everywhere,
Your eyes like stars above sea foam, your brown seaweed hair,
Your voice in the water singing a song I cannot bear ?

She told him " Mine the magic that always men desire—
Beyond the sea's horizon, beyond the mountain's fire,
Mine are the hands that lure them beyond Love's last desire.
Some love too well my beauty and follow me afar,
Across the palest snow-peak, beyond the farthest star,
Desiring me too madly and sorrowful they are.

" And some for ever fear me. They turn their eyes away,
Afraid to touch my fingers, afraid to hear me say
Words that they long to dream of. Ah ! desolate are they.
But you who worship moonlight on the white rim of the sea
And the dear, green hillside—Why should you turn from me,
Because my eyes are in the stars, my brown hair in the sea ?

Have I not kissed you into sleep a thousand nights and more,
Fashioning out of moonlit foam the dreams that you adore,
Till red dawn flamed above the hill and touched the lonely shore ?
Have I not stilled a thousand times the hunger that you know
For Life's forbidden loveliness—her wonder and her woe,
With words that only water sings and only mountains know ?

" Tonight your heart is living fire. Turn not away from me
For one night you will hear no more the singing of the sea
And then the hour will be too late to give yourself to me.
Lean down below the burning stars and touch my floating hair.
Learn the wild rapture of my song that once you could not bear.
For dreams beyond Love's last desire are hidden in my hair."

THE EMPTY HOUSE

I have kept my promise and come again
Only to meet a ghost that waits for me,
Here in this empty house below the hill
Where summer mists hang over land and sea,
Mist that, within my heart, is turned to tears.

I have kept my promise and now I wait
Where purple iris stand in thickets cool.
Last year a fountain sang to us. Today
Only the splashing raindrops stir the pool,
Rain that within my heart is turned to tears.

Last year the open shoji welcomed us.
The still house seemed to smile below the rain.
The listening silence of each gracious room
Echoed our hearts' wild song again, again.
Now, in my heart, the silence turns to tears.

I have kept my promise and come again
To meet a ghost that haunts each purple flower,
The sleeping pool, the house that smiles no more.
I have kept my promise and, in this hour,
I pay for a dream in coin of unshed tears.

THE GARDEN IN THE HILLS

Nothing is moving in all the silent garden
But one bamboo that sways to a wandering breeze,
Like a feather against the faded splendour of sunset,
And a mist that creeps from the far-off, shimmering seas.

Scent of fresh oranges lingers across the garden,
Dark green globes that slowly ripen to gold ;
Breath of damp earth, ferns that are trampled and broken,
Sorrowful odour of green things, growing old.

Under the cool bamboos that are ever virgin
One red maple burns like a sudden flame
That leaps, after years of dream, in the heart of a woman
At the touch of a stranger's hand or a stranger's name.

If they were true, the tales we have told at twilight—
Of passionate trees that love with a man's desire,
What heaven to yield, in the spell of the scented garden,
To a dream of the dusk, to the touch of a maple's fire

Night sweeps down, with a wind along the valley,
Into the silent garden. The scent of trees
Blends with the breath of freshly lighted charcoal.
The oranges shiver a little in the breeze.

Voices shatter the silence. Shutters rumble.
A baby wails and a woman croons it a song.

*Why do these hours of dream pass by so quickly
When hours that know no dreaming last so long ?*

HACHIOJIYAMA

Some echo sounded when you spoke to me,
Some faint reflection of a distant day
Stirred in my heart ; for sharply, suddenly
I saw that headland high above the bay
Where pine trees wave and wind in the bamboo grass
Whispers, as though swift, unseen footsteps pass.
You know the place. You know the radiant way

That morning has there on the sea. You know
How the slow winds awake when mists unfold
From the calm waves a thousand feet below
Till the clear water looks like living gold ;
How the slow boats from Makado come round
The headland ; how you hear the gentle sound
Of oars, or sails that to the wind unfold ;

How dim the mountains seem beyond the bay—
Peak upon peak they rise into the haze,
Grow clearer as the pale clouds draw away,
While the gold water seems to burn, to blaze
In a glory of sunlight. Then—pearl-pale or rose—
The peak of Fuji shines and the heart knows
The last, deep rapture of Earth's changing ways.

BOSHU

The shining cliffs of Boshu, they rise above the bay.
Blue waves and milkwhite horses are galloping today
Over the sea to Boshu in a mist of rainbow spray.
Tall ships go out by Boshu, the gateway to the West
The gracious Lady Liners ; tramps—vagabonds confessed—
They roll along round Boshu to the tideways of the West,
Their rangy funnels leaving a trail of smoke behind
To hover over Boshu and falter on the wind.
Do boys on Boshu watch them go and grieve to stay behind ?

When dusk comes down on Boshu cliffs they glimmer and retreat.
Across the sea they lure me where stars and twilight meet.
I seem to hear the murmur of waves around their feet.
I see the lights on Boshu wake. Sometimes I see them die ;
The lights of lonely houses that watch the tide as I,
And I wonder who the people are who live there, love and die.

Some day I'll go to Boshu and wander there alone.
I'll meet the men of Boshu and hear of deeds they've done
And we'll be friends together and they'll miss me when I'm gone.
Yet, if I go to Boshu and probe the mystery
And come again, I wonder—will they lose their lure for me,
Those shining cliffs that hover like clouds above the sea ?

Perhaps I'll wait to find you, dream gateway to the West,
Till my wandering heart grows weary and turns to look for rest
While my body sails unheeded, alone beyond the West.
Then, in some violet twilight, one with the evening tide,
I'll come, O cliffs of Boshu, forever to abide
Where you, with God, are counting the changes of the tide.

THE HAUNTED GARDEN

(Written after a storm at night)

The storm has ceased to beat the window pane.
Far in the lonely hollow of the hills
The wild winds die and now I only hear
A gentle whisper of warm, woodland rain
Singing of a garden far away,
A garden ever dear.

A well is there upon the pinewood's rim
Where trees are singing with the distant sea ;
Where wild, white lilies in the long grass blow
Each June and from the ground by the well's brim
Black water oozes and small graceful ferns
Spring from the moss below.

There stone-set pathways wind across the grass
To a still house whence no one comes or goes.
Hour after hour the screens stand open wide
On the clean mats whereon no footfalls pass
Where no voice sounds but voice of wind or trees
And the murmur of the tide.

Only at dusk an old, grey woman goes
Into the house to shut the wooden doors.
But once, when we had watched all through the day,
On the still air the smoke of charcoal rose
And then we heard the quavering melody
Of flute notes far away.

They trembled on the breeze, a ghostly tune
That floated through the garden to the sea,
A song of love beyond the touch of tears,
That grows not old but lives from noon to noon
Somewhere beyond the silence of the dusk,
Beyond the count of years.

Did any hear that song but we alone ?
Lived we not then through some enchanted hour
Of vanished joy that still the shadows keep,
Hearing across the years an echoed tone
Of ancient love that was too great to die,
A song of love asleep ?

The storm has ceased. Above the hills a star

*Shines like a lantern. Now the dripping trees
Stir and the sound of scattered drops of rain,
Like flute notes heard at twilight from afar,
Whispers of one dear twilight that we knew
And cannot know again.*

RETURN

One day you will go down that road again
By the dim sea when morning skies are grey,
When wind from the high mountains carries rain
Into the lower lands and, far away,
Grey sampan sails are rocking on the tide
And grey-winged gulls upon the slow waves ride.

Then you will see the purple iris flowers
On cottage roofs and, by the rice fields' brim.
Raindrops will fall from them in silver showers
And trickle to the thatched roofs' crooked rim.
As once we watched them in another rain
On other flowers, then you will watch again,

But when you come to that wide open gate,
The stone-flagged path, the tea house by the shore,
You will stand still a little while and wait,
Perhaps, for something that you see no more ;
For footsteps that once trod the flags of stone
With you—and went away, at last, alone.

“ THE HILLS ARE VEILED ”

The hills are veiled in silver mist
And soft the sunlight on the plain.
Sweet are the winds for they have kissed
Pale blossoms drenched in silver rain
 And born their breath across the plain.

Far, far away the mountains dream
And, from the mountains, rivers flow,
Pale petals floating on their stream,
How softly now the breezes blow,
 Fragrant from orchards white as snow.

O winds that blow from yonder hill,
White cherry blooms about the shrine,
Why do you so enchant my will
And lure this errant heart of mine
 With perfume wild as golden wine ?

THE ROOF BELOW THE STARS

One windless night when silence was a song
Of hidden forests ; when the quiet sea
Mirrored a thin young moon that shed no light
And life was pillowed in the arms of night,
I, from my roof below the stars of spring,
Watched the far ship lights fade across the bay
And heard the fishermen singing out at sea.
Their song, in waves of sound, swept over me.

Beauty—engulfing Life in ecstasy—
Beyond the rim of thought, the form of words !
And yet from that enchantment of the spring
My spirit wandered, seeking a greater thing.
Mountains there were, I knew, veiled in the night,
And far-spread rice fields, rich with young, green blades,
Lotus buds folded yet in emerald shields,
And sprouting vines and miles of mulberry fields.

Life everywhere, beyond the curtain of night,
Lives pressing round me, beautiful, passionate,
And, under the still stars, the voice of these
Spoke to my soul from the deep silences—

The Voice of Earth

“ Now sleeps the sea, the child-moon on his breast,
The waves are scarcely breaking on the sand.
Peace walks in beauty over hill and plain,
What seeks thy soul that she desires in vain ? “

And I— “ Ah ! could I tell, could any soul
Of all that wander with the Caravan
Of Dreamers name the thing that lures them on,
Would they not seize it and bid dreams be gone ?
What calls me from behind all loveliness,
Beyond the sights that all day long disturb
The spirit with desire—The morning haze
And sampans moving up the harbour ways

Homeward at dawn with patched sails billowing
Before the waking winds that, salt with brine,
Through my round window every morning blow
A charcoal fire, fanned to a scarlet glow ;
The cry of vendors down a narrow street—
‘Green peppers, mushrooms, flowers or fish for sale ;’ —
Grey stones where iris blossom, yellow and blue ;
Water that drips from a pipe of green bamboo.

Dwells there enchantment in a silent room
One purple cushion on tatami thrown,
One spray of plum bloom in a shallow bowl,
One long, pale picture hung on a dark wall ?
Serrated roofs against a sunset sky,
Below them narrow streets where shadows blend
With figures that move like ghosts. There lanterns sway
On sleek canals where barges slide away.

Into the night, laden with strange dark lives,
They pass. Brown faces glimmer up from them,
Touched with the red hibachi's ruddy glow—
Babies, old women, wistful girls. They go
On through the dusk and, over the water's face,
Lanterns are floating and electric lights
With stars, all mixed and all a little dim.
Dark houses, huddling to the water's rim

Then, far behind the houses, fading hills,
Black in the last light of the setting sun—
Black hills against a blazing orange sky,
Calling the pilgrim heart to ecstasy.

Life everywhere—the spirit drenched in life
And light and shadow, yet desiring still
Beauty beyond the wonder of the spring.
Is this enchantment or a greater thing ?

Ah ! who shall tell ? We pass from dream to dream
Like shadows moving on the water's face,
Seeking at night a roof below the stars.
With hands, that would be wings, we beat the bars
Of those frail gates that always stand between
The loveliness of dreams that haunt the day
Or fill the night, and that far nameless thing
That lies beyond the wonder of the spring.”

The Voice of Earth

“ So seek all men their roof below the stars,
Where they draw nearer for a little while,
With groping hands and fettered soul maybe
To their conception of life's ecstasy.
There on all things beloved a radiance falls.
Freed from earth's troubling, there, the soul perceives
In Life a glimmer of Eternity,
God in the movements of Humanity.”

AFTER THE FESTIVAL

How still the garden is tonight, now all the revellers are gone !
The lanterns fade and, one by one,
Their candles flicker out. Their light
Dies down. The burning stars alone
Glimmer like lanterns through the night.

On the lake water foam is spread—reflected foam of laden trees
Where blossoms move below the breeze.
Upon the night their breath is shed—
The wine-sweet breath of cherry trees,
Below the stars of spring outspread.

Before tomorrow's dawn I know, the flowers will fall. Above the lake
Their rosy bloom will fade and break,
Tossed upon flat, grey stones below.
Tomorrow night the stars will wake
On scattered blossom, white as snow.

Pour forth white bloom thy fragrant breath, for there will be no other night
For thee and me of such delight.
Although the stars you bloom beneath
May shine again tomorrow night,
Rain comes at dawn to bring you death.

FUJI

Far out across the grey-green desolate spaces,
Veiled by the sunset in a mist of fire,
She dreams—the mountain of a thousand faces—
Goddess of unattainable desire.
We who have journeyed all day long beside her,
Watching her sunlit splendour come and go,
Watching the purple shadowlines bestride her,
What do we know of her ? What do we know ?

At dawn she caught and held us in her Passion—
Passion of copper cloud and amber light—
Has she enchanted us in some strange fashion,
That we are still as she is still, tonight ?
Behind us loom the silent pinewoods, dreaming.
Below us sleep the waters of the lake.
Across the twilight yellow lights are gleaming.
Over her summit scattered stars awake.

Pinewoods and water, scent of damp earth breathing
Far voices calling, measured splash of oars,
Wood smoke above the little village wreathing,
Wraithlike yet pungent on the misty shores.
Sweet now to sleep and let the forest fold us
To hear trees tell of peace men have not known.
But she who has enchanted us will hold us
Tonight and make her passionate dreams our own.

She stirs the hearts of men to restless fever.
She sends the souls of women wandering far,
Seeking some hidden loveliness forever,
Dreaming forever of a distant star.
She fades to darkness over the desolate spaces.
Swift night sweeps down across the lonely shore.
But we have looked upon her thousand faces
And she will haunt our hearts for evermore.

NUN SWEEPING AUTUMN LEAVES

Every autumn, year by year,
The brown leaves from the path I sweep.
The misty garden falls asleep.
How still it is ! No sound I hear

Except my little rice-straw broom
That whispers on the stony ground—
A gentle, sad, regretful sound,
Where the pale willow's ghostly loom

Of leafless stems a fabric weaves.
A month ago how gay they were !
And how the breezes loved to stir
The little green and silver leaves !

Now, piled upon the path, they lie.
I light their fire. The blue smoke breathes
Round my white robe in scented wreaths,
Soft as the blue autumnal sky.

Ah ! willow leaves, where are you now ?
A little fire and you are gone—
Grey ashes, one with earth and stone,
That were so fair a month ago

So shall I be, at last, who move
Through this quiet garden, day by day,
My body too will burn away,
One with the very things I love,

The trees I tend, the earth I till,
Grapes I have gathered from the vine.
I who, tonight, before the shrine,
Bend low, one night shall be as still

As willow leaves this autumn day.
Then may my spirit swiftly rise,
As this blue smoke, to those blue skies
And be as calm and pure as they.

PASTEL

Pale waters underneath a paler sky,
Half melted snow spattered on withered grass,
Two huddled women, walking wearily,
Kimonos flapping in the wind. They pass,
One with the shadows that, on land and sea,
Turn to a silver mist of driven rain,
Washing the white snow from the blackened tree,
Blotting the mountains out beyond the plain.
Through the gaunt bridge the river waters creep,
Slow, silent Tama, winding to the sea.
One lonely sampan—like a ship of sleep—
Rattles a sail that sways uncertainly.

Is there no color left in all the world ?
Nothing but withered grass and spattered snow,
Grey, faded sails that shiver, half unfurled,
One yellow lantern, swinging to and fro ?
No colour, only snow on withered grass,
Grey mists that hide the hills of dream afar,
Dim waters that below the gaunt bridge pass—

But high above the water wakes a star.

POEMS OF KOREA

THE ISLANDS OF CHEMULPO

You will remember these beloved islands,
The wild acacia thicket, silver green
After the rain ; the stone pines on the high lands ;
The swift brown currents swirling round between
The white sand beaches of the little islands.

You will remember—there is no forgetting—
Those orange sails against the dying day,
When, on the ebb tide, homeward junks are setting
Across the Yellow Sea to Wei Hai Wei,
With little winds between their wet ropes fretting.

And you will dream of the queer freights they carry—
Globe fish and seaweed, pigs, perhaps a maid—
Some lovely, slant-eyed child who sails to marry
Her destined lover, lonely and afraid,
Part of the cargo any junk will carry.

Swift is the dusk. Stars wake above the water.
Deep in the shadow of acacia trees
Pale lanterns move. The sound of women's laughter
Breaks through the whispered singing of the seas
Then dies. No sound is left but wind and water.

So shall you dream of these beloved islands—
Dusk and the stars above the Yellow Sea,
Wind in the wild acacias on the high lands.
Departing ship lights. Such a memory
Shall haunt your heart of these beloved islands.

KOREAN NIGHT

High o'er the twisted streets and huddled alleys
The white stars tremble and, with night, reveal
The hidden beauty of this Eastern city—
Dream things that daylight or the gods conceal—
Jealous, perhaps, to guard some old enchantment
That only starlight and the night reveal.

Out of the narrow lane below my garden
The sounds of night arise, confused and wild,
Swift throb of drums, a mourner wailing, wailing ;
Men quarelling ; the sobbing of a child ;
Or women beating clothes with wooden paddles
Or footsteps wandering, restless, weary, wild.

The white-robed forms move slowly, crowd together
About a chestnut stall. The brazier's glow
Lights up black eyes and hungry, narrow faces
Below the high-crowned hats. They come and go
Wandering, chattering in darkened alleys
Like ghosts of men forgotten long ago.

Clatter and cry—hoarse voice of vendors calling
Their wares. The markets open for the night,
Gay china, yellow oranges, green cabbage
Spread below smoky lamps' uncertain light,
Amid the ceaseless hum of surging chatter
That swells and falls upon the Eastern night.

Then—silence, for the market hours are ended,
Till the stray dogs begin, half starved and wild,
To fight for garbage. From some hidden hovel
Rises the wailing of a sickly child
And all night long across the Eastern city
Go footsteps wandering, restless, weary, wild.

THE WAY TO THE WELL

The way to the well—how beautiful it is
At twilight when the first pale stars appear
Above the garden and the quince tree seems
Heavy with hidden centuries of dreams ;
Haunted by footsteps that of old drew near
The well, before men made a garden here.

The quince tree by the well—so old, so old,
The black stem seems a thing of stone, cold, dead.
Yet the leaves murmur of forgotten hours
When women who were beautiful as flowers
Trode this same path, with bucket poised on head,
Down to the well where fallen quinces spread

Pale balls among the long, dew-scented grass,
And poppy petals scattered points of flame
Upon the path, the green moss overgrown ;
Or on the broken steps of rough, grey stone.
Did they too hear the quince tree, when they came,
Whisper to them some secret, haunting name?

The way to the well—how beautiful it is—
Haunted by wandering feet that cannot stay,
The red brick path by green moss overgrown,
The scarlet petals falling on grey stone,
The old, old quince tree, singing night and day,
Of women like white flowers who went away.

THE QUINCE TREE

The quinces are yellow lamps amid red leaves,
Gay festal lanterns that a faery hand
Hung there at twilight when the long leaves turned
From emerald to a mass of crimson flame,
Enchanted fire that through the dawn mist burned.
Beautiful is morning on the land
When quinces hang like lamps among red leaves.

And when the moon of autumn lights the hills
Silver green are the quinces in her light,
Like lamps among the leaves above the well
That mirrors them entangled with the stars.
See, there a red leaf on the water fell.
One by one they will fall through the autumn night.
Tomorrow at dawn the well will brim with leaves.

The quinces are yellow lamps amid red leaves.
Tomorrow, when they ripen, we will go
Gathering them. In baskets they will lie,
Pale yellow fruit, a little pitiful
And sad their bare tree set against the shy.
But we have seen and we will always know
Their light of festal lamps at autumn tide.

THE ROAD TO PEKING

Between the hills it winds away—the high road to Peking.
The bullock carts go down it in a long, unbroken string ;
The 'rickshas and the buses, a shabby palanquin,
An old man like a drowsy god nods wearily within,
Dreaming of days when men were proud to own a palanquin.
Now motor cars sweep by him and cover him with dust;
His gold-embroidered curtains are soiled with moth and rust
And no one asks his bearers who the rich man is they bring
Through crowds that throng at twilight the highway to Peking ;
For no one cares that once he was a courtier to a king.

Now the muleteers come slowly, riding on their heavy packs,
Small mules, half hidden by the loads, sweat streaming down their backs.
Ah ! the shouting and the straining and the pulling as they go,
Beaten when they move too quickly, beaten when they are too slow,
Like mules on the Peking highway three hundred years ago.
Beyond the city gateway, beyond the broken wall,
Where, from the shattered rampart, great blocks of stonework fall,
Into the purple mountains the long road winds away.
Do shadows from those ramparts lean to watch at close of day,
The lights that move and vanish along the great highway,

As once they watched and challenged the scout of Genghis Khan
Who rode through these same mountains down to the River Hahn,
Telling of greater countries and of a greater king,
Beyond the purple mountains and the roadway to Peking ?
Maybe that rampart echoed the song he came to sing.
Ah ! long, grey road you wind away below the saffron sky,
Luring beyond the city gate the dreams of such as I
To gateways at your other end where still the merchants bring
Their painted fans, their carven jade and many a silver ring
To market down the road of dreams—the high road to Peking.

LOVE MADE A LOTUS FLOWER

Love made a lotus flower with seed of stars
And set it in a garden far away.
I, passing by upon a summer's noon,
Gathered the flower and carried it away.

Cool in my hand the silken petals lay
And all night long, below the watchful moon,
I dreamed of love but, long before the dawn,
The petals faded with the setting moon.

HER FAN

This is her fan. It holds her perfume still ;
The frail, flower scent that lingered in this room
For such a little while.
And still, for me, it holds the strange, dim smile
That hovered on her lips and in her eyes ;
She who, in ways of love, was sadly wise—
She the adored, the unforgettable !

HAIRPINS OF JADE

Hairpins of jade and combs of gold !
Like stars they shine about thy face
Amid the lustre of thy hair,
And red pomegranate flowers are there
To hold the braids in proper place.

Hairpins of jade in silken coil
And combs of gold are very fair.
Yet I would toss them all away
To watch the wind and starlight play
A moment with thy loosened hair !

Ah ! pins of jade—where are they now ?
Tossed in the dust with none to care.
The silken braids are held in place
Upon my heart and there thy face
Shines like a star from clouds of hair.

THE GINGKO TREE

*“There are trees that love and dream, with
the souls of men or, it may be, of gods.”*

Dawn, and the garden wakes. The gingko tree
Stirs in a dream while mists of morning shed
Their pallid veil above the cloud of leaves.

Noontide and throbbing heat. The branches spread
On brown, burnt grass their cool, green canopy.

Deep in the Healing Well their shadows lie.
Sometimes the blue flash of a magpie's wing
Shines in the water or a green leaf drops
Onto the flat, grey rock above the spring.

Still dreams the tree in mists of memory.

Once to this carven altar women came,
Murmuring to the tree desires unknown,
Their green cloaks in the starlight glimmering.

And once, at moonrise, through the garden shone
The crimson light of sacrificial flame
That burned for dead men by the gingko tree,
While solemn chant of white-robed mourners fell,
Like wind among the branches, on the night,
Broken by beating drum or tremulous bell.

Still dreams the tree in mists of memory.
And these green boughs, like arms, below the sky
Outspreading, seek to fold the whole earth in,
One with the vision that their shadow veils ;
To gather up the lonely souls of men
Into a deeper soul's serenity.

For there are trees and this, ah ! this is one,
More passionate than men. They love, they know
The hunger in a heart that asks of life
Always too great a thing ; that seeks to go
Always too far and so must go alone.

They love, they know and peace for ever falls
From these great boughs that still perceive afar,
Beyond the changing sky, the swerving wind,
Beyond the sunset and the morning star

A golden city girt with ivory walls.

TO THE OLD LADY

(A Japanese Garden in Korea)

The violet veils of twilight fall.
 I resting on your hill,
Look down into your garden
 And hear the streams that fill
Your fountain pool, your lotus tank,
 Your lake so crystal still.
Their silver voices sing to me
 Who rest upon the hill.
I see your servant slowly wash
 The path of smooth-cut stone
And sweep the scattered cherry leaves
 That summer winds have strown.
How cool the water is that falls
 Over the smooth-cut stone,
Down in you garden beautiful
 At dusk for you alone.

I see you blue hibachi set
 Beside the open screen,
The polished, dark verandah floor,
 The yellow mats within,
Your teacup on the table,
 Your plate of sugared bean,
You on the silken cushion set
 Beside the open screen.
What do you dream of, all alone,
 Here in this alien place ?
Another garden, far away ?
 Some unforgotten face ?
You are so old to dwell alone,
 So full of gentle grace,
You and your garden beautiful
 Amid an alien race.

THE SEAWATER CARRIER

The legend of the Seawater Carrier has haunted me for years. It is full of the sound of sea-waves and of pine trees. It is a story of lasting love.

Matsukazé, a village girl, carried sea water every day to the castle of the great lord. Once, in a summer dawn, Yukihiro, the son of the house, came down to the seashore and saw her, with her wooden buckets slung upon her shoulder, standing where the tidal river fell into the sea and a great love awoke within his heart.

In the following songs I have striven to tell the thoughts of his mind and of hers as their destiny unfolded.

DAWN SONG

Matsukazé on the Shore—

Far in the mighty mountains dawn is waking
And stars are dying o'er a shadowed sea.
The dawn-pale waves on paler sands are breaking,
Relentless as a woman's destiny
Who watches love within her heart awaking.

The skies grow pale then flush to crimson splendour.
The sun sweeps up and spreads a golden way
Across the sea. What homage shall I render
To the great gods who grant another day
To me of life that holds such joy and splendour

Deep—deep and clear is the blue ocean's water,
Reflecting the blue morning of the sky.
Whiter than pearls are the small shells that scatter
The sand, how beautiful to such as I,
Whose love is deeper than the ocean's water

The waves flow in to meet the tidal river
That seaward speeds. So shall thy love and mine
Flow back and forth for ever and for ever
Where the gods weave my destiny and thine
With love at dawn beside the tidal river.

“ WILL HE COME DOWN—? ”

Salt water spilt from my bucket
Splashes from stone to stone.
Will he come down from the castle
In the blue dusk that deepens
When day is gone ?

My bare feet on the yellow sand,
What little prints they make—
Will he come down in the twilight
When the far hills are fading
And stars awake ?

The wooden yoke on my shoulder
Bruises my flesh today.
Will he come down when sampan lights
Glimmer and boatmen are singing
Out on the bay ?

He loves me. Ah ! so a pine tree
Might to a grass blade bend
And, with the dusk wind whisper,
“ Thou, who art almost nothing,
Shall be my friend.”

DAYDREAM OF YUKIHIRA

All through the burning noon I dream
Of your cool feet on the sands,
Your black hair held by a wooden comb,
Your little golden hands.

I see that still and lovely dawn
When first you came to me ;
With buckets on your shoulder slung,
Down to the quiet sea.

You stood alone beside the waves
And watched the soft foam wreath,
Folding the sand, How still you were
You scarcely seemed to breathe

Until you turned your eyes on me,
Your eyes of living flame ;
And, straight across the dawning world
Into my heart—love came.

THOUGHTS WHILE WAITING

Sometimes I think that these long hours of waiting
Are the most dear of all.
Before he comes stars sing above the water
And wandering nightwinds call
My spirit from my body into rapture,
Of stars and singing sea
And silent shore that listens for his footstep,
Coming again to me.

Moonbeam and shadow in my room are mingled.
Love needs no other light.
One virgin lily in the tall vase trembles.
Her perfume fills the night.
I warm the amber wine to give him pleasure
And set the small blue cups,
Touching each slender rim with gentle finger
For these will touch his lips.

And still I listen through the scented silence
To hear the step I love
Crushing the shingle, while I watch the shadows
To see his tall form move
Across the moonlit shore, a darker shadow,
The light of life for me,
And, while I wait, my heart grows faint. I tremble.
Waiting is ecstasy

Almost too great to bear when he is coming.
How can love reach so far,
Between a firefly, shining in a thicket,
And such a distant star ?
Across the moon the wheeling bat-wings flicker.
The boatmen sing at sea.
I hear the night wind and the pinewood murmur.
They sing of you and me

And of our love that dwells, so vast a wonder,
Within this tiny room,
Love that the gods will surely use to break us
When they weave out our doom.
Yet, while they weave, My Lord, I am not fearful.
I look not to the day.
Tonight our lives are one in bliss uncounted
And dawn is far away.

You come ! Within the shadow of the shoji
 You stoop. You speak my name.
I see your burning eyes and, swift to meet them,
 My heart leaps into flame.

MATSUKAZÉ TO HER LOVER

I love to lie and hear you tell,
In the still hour before the day
Comes up across the pallid sea,
Of things and places far away.

Of crowded streets where lanterns shine
And banners wave for festival,
Of all the splendours you have seen
Far in the mighty capital ;

Of battles won and wounded men
The sorrow and the pride of wars,
I love to lie and hear you tell
Of these below the fading stars.

Sometimes you speak, in gentler tone,
Of women whom you used to love,
Whose faces faded from your life
As stars fade from the sky above.

My heart grows sorrowful for them
And to the god of love I pray,
“ Let my face never fade for him
Because I love him more than they.”

LOVE SONG OF YUKIHIRA

I will touch thine eyes to make thee sleep
And dream of me long after I am gone.
Close thou thine eyes. They are too dark, too deep,
Like wells where stars are mirrored. Thoughts unknown
Even to me dwell there. Close them and sleep.

I will touch thy lips that they may say
Only my name when they awake at dawn.
I will touch thy breast that, through the day,
Thy heart may beat with mine and mine alone.
Now fall asleep, for dawn is far away.

The stars are clear tonight above the sea,
But what is writ in them we cannot know,
How many hours of joy for thee and me
The gods are holding yet, for us below.
It is enough, tonight, that I have thee.

“ NIGHT IS TOO SHORT ”

Linger a little while, day, in thy breaking.
Fade not, oh lantern, of the summer moon.
My lover sleeps. Ah ! hasten not his waking.
Stars on the summer sea, die not so soon.
Breath of the morning wind, through the wood sighing,
Stir the trees softly lest my lover hear.
O precious hours of night, delay thy dying
When morning breaks my heart grows faint with fear.

For what am I to hold so great a wonder,
As this—thy love, My Lord—how can it be ?
The stars stand still. The tempests stay their thunder,
To marvel that thine eyes should look on me.
Yet every hour I spend with thee grows sweeter,
Learning from thee more wondrous ways of love.
And every hour the feet of night grow fleeter
As grey dawn creeps into the skies above.

All day I only wait for the sun's setting.
All day I dream of what the night will bring.
Only the cold dawn holds this wild regretting
That night goes by upon so swift a wing.
For well I know such joy is not for ever.
One night will be the last for thee and me.
Ah ! gods that wait beyond the Hidden River,
When that night comes let dawn not break for me.

THE PLACES WHERE WE LOVE

(A Thought of Yuki-hara)

Is it not strange, the places where we love
Are just the same long after love is gone.
This little room, where now we speak and move,
Would be the same tomorrow though love fled
And you and I with the black earth were one.
The silken cushions where we sit today
The yellow sunlight on the matted floor
Will lie tomorrow in the selfsame way.
The room will be as still and beautiful
As it is now though we return no more.

Others will come here, even as thou and I—
Seeking for love a secret resting place—
And this still room will fold them silently.
It will not hold an echo of my voice ;
No faint reflection of thy golden face.
We who have lived a lifetime of delight
Within this room leave here no memory
For those who follow us, another night.
Is it not strange, the places where we love
Relinquish what we give, so easily.

“ LOVE CANNOT FADE—”

You think to charm an hour away, My Lord,
With love of me and, afterwards, forget
When you go forth into the world of men.
See, here I press my foot where sands are wet.
The print is deep but soon the hungry sea
Smooths it away and so your love for me
Will fade, you think, and soon you will forget.

Love cannot fade away so easily.
Always a scar that life will not remove
Is left in one heart or another heart.
The gods exact their toll for given love.
For me there waits no other, wider world,
Beyond the pinewoods and the misty sea.
My heart is held within the net she wove.

And it may be that, echoing through your heart,
Love's voice will call you as the echoing sea
Calls from the hollow of a fragile shell ;
And often in your dreams the thought of me
Will stir you to a sudden sad desire
For what you would forget, as haunting waves
Stir in a shell the passion of the sea.

THE TOYS OF DESTINY

Why do the great gods fashion men so strangely ?
Why did they set thy soul of living flame
Within thy lovely form yet make thee carry
The water for my house ? Why did they frame
My soul to love thee so and then condemn me
To rule and fight and bear an honoured name ?

So often fate, with mock delight, sits weaving
Her nets to snare the hungry hearts of men.
So often love walks hand in hand with sorrow
And hours of pleasure end in years of pain.
Why should the gods who give so great a treasure
As love, use love to break the hearts of men ?

RIDING AWAY

She did not say "Farewell."
I rode away nor turned to wave my hand,
Though well I knew it was the last, last time
That I should see her stand
There, in the dawn, to watch the morning tide
Creep up across the sand.

Last night she sang to me
And through her song tears fell. In the dim light
Her face, below my lips a gathered flower,
Was cold as death—and white.
Her eyes were sad as stars that after dawn
Fade from the morning light.

Too well she knew, too well,
Seeking at last within my weary eyes
A light that she will never see again.
Women are cruelly wise—
They always read the thing men cannot tell,
Love's death within their eyes

And, reading, turn away-
So did she turn away from me last night,
Hiding her bitter wound within her heart,
Lest it offend my sight ;
Folding her dream up like an outworn robe,
Her dream of lost delight.

Swift are my horse's feet.
They bear me onward from the murmuring sea
That sings to me of her. Yet well I know
How love and memory,
Far swifter than my horse's eager feet,
Will ride along with me.

For I can not forget.
A dream of her will haunt each lovely thing—
Mountains at dawn, sun on a sea bird's wing,
Starlight above the sea,
A lantern through the dusk, a wind-blown pine
Will sing of her to me.

And always in the dawn waves will be breaking
Within my heart, their haunting murmur waking
The light of eyes that, o'er a misty sea,

Watched for the daybreak once alone with me.

And always in the night stars will be dreaming
For me of starlight through a still room streaming
By windows looking eastward to the sea
Where now she waits alone, in vain, for me.

MATSUKAZÉ'S LAMENT

Sink not O golden sun into the sea !
Ah, little stars, wake not above the sand !
White moon, be pitiful, shine not on me.
Let darkness fold the land.

Be not so lovely in the fading light,
O twisted pine trees on the wooded hill.
Sing not, O dusk wind, as you sang last night,
O, bamboo grass be still !

Aj ! boatmen, hide your lanterns on the bay.
My Lord will come no more to hear you sing.
White lily, turn your scented head away.
O grey bat, fold your wing !

O, silence, fall not. Night be not so still.
How shall I bear to listen thus in vain
For steps that come not while the great gods fill
The silences with pain ?

THE SHELL

(Sung by Yukihiro in the Street of Lanterns)

If, in the Street of Lanterns, one should sell
Tonight a little, fragile silver shell,
From all the treasure such a merchant shows
 This would I choose, this would I choose.

For then, amid the merry, moving throng,
Above the beggar's flute, the mummers' song,
My heart would hear a murmur of the sea,
 Singing of thee, singing of thee.

I would live once again those golden hours
That in my heart are laid like gathered flowers,
Hearing, within an oken-haunted shell,
 The voice I love—the voice I love too well.

MATSUKAZÉ AT DUSK

Often at dusk, before the night comes down,
By the pomegranate tree upon the hill,
I stand to watch the lanterns of the town,
Through narrow alleys moving up and down,
And dream that thou art watching with me still.
The maidens from the bath-house come and go,
Fragrant the perfume of their loosened hair
And bright their eyes with love. Ah ! do they know
How soon love's brightest lanterns die and how
These come to haunt the twilight everywhere ?—

Sad ghosts of what has been, a song, a dance,
Glimmer of moonlight on the distant sea,
Strings touched at dusk, eyes giving glance for glance
And dream for dream, words whispered only once
Thus do love's lanterns haunt the dusk for me.
And thus the fragrance of the evening fire,
Breath of burnt charcoal, salt wind from the sea
Stir in my heart the ashes of desire,
Waking again at dusk that slumbering fire
Which burns my life away in love for thee.

Twilight is terribly sad. I see thee stand
There where the tidal river meets the sea—
A grey ghost on the waste of empty sand.
Should I draw near thee, seek to touch thy hand,
Too well I know thy form would fade from me.
Another night—the lantern lights burn down.
The stars awake and, mocking, seem to say

*‘ “ Love wakes by night but thou shalt dream alone
‘ “ And all alone thine eyes shall greet the dawn—
‘ “ Another night and love is far away.’ ”*

YUKIHIRA IN THE AFTER YEARS

There flows a tidal river in a far off land,
Where the sea waves sweep for ever across the yellow sand
To mingle with the river that flows into the sea.
There the water sings for ever of her love for me.

How small she was, how slender, how dark her shadowed eyes !
Yet, though her hands were tender, her lips were very wise.
She told me by the river a truth I did not know,
“ Our love will last for ever as the river currents flow.”

I thought such love and laughter could live for but a day,
That peace would follow after desire had burned away.
She knew that, as the river commingles with the sea,
Her life was blent for ever, one with the life in me.

She knew, with sad foreknowing, how love would haunt the years,
An endless river flowing ; on through a mist of tears.
She told me once, “ For ever my heart will follow thee,
Unwearied as the river flows onward to the sea.”

YOU WILL RETURN—

You will return at dawn when stars are fading
Into the mist above the morning sea.
E'er I with mist and stars am one for ever
 You will return to me.

Come, as the grey clouds fold their veils around me,
Draw near, bend low that I, at last, may see
Your eyes, like stars, when other stars are fading,
 Shining once more on me.

Then, if the gods give dreams in their long slumber,
May I remember nothing but your eyes,
Bidding farewell to me when stars are fading
 Out of the morning skies.

The End of
THE SEAWATER CARRIER

THE LANTERN IN THE WATER

Down by the rice field underneath the mountain
You wander, hidden in the cloak of night,
The croaking frogs grow silent at your coming
Because your yellow lantern's leaping light
Streams on the sleeping water of the rice field,
A golden gleam that leaps across the night,

A magic light that dances in the darkness,
A lonely form that moves where all is still
To me a faery lamp in faery water,
Down by the rice field underneath the hill,
A twisted faery lantern, wildly dancing,
In water that is black and very still.

Down by the rice field, underneath the mountain
Your lantern light departs. The driving rain
Calls to the frogs that scattered at your coming.
Their croaking breaks the silence once again
And I, who watched a faery lantern dancing,
Now listen to the hiss of driving rain.

“ ROKU-GATSU ”

(The Village called June)

Walking along the narrow road to June—
Village of brown thatched roofs and hollyhocks
And yellow lilies, that shimmer in the grass
Like moonbeams lingering long after dawn ;
Walking, entranced with colour and the cool,
Green shadows drawn across the morning hills,
I touched the spirit of eternal youth,
Eternal June, eternal happiness.

I

Then, moving with me down the village street,
I seemed to see you, gloriously young,
June in your heart and June within your eyes
You who with lilies of the moon are one,
And hollyhocks and mountains and the flight
Of birds above brown roofs ; who know as I
The passion that arises in the heart
Before such beauty and the wild desire
To tell—to tell this loveliness of life,
The magic of this village that is June.

THE MAPLE LANTERN

One walked alone beside the lake last night,
Bearing a yellow lantern in his hand,
Patterned with scarlet sprays of maple leaves,
A lantern shining through the night to me.
I, in my anchored boat, awoke and dreamed
That one was you—that beam of golden light,
Your love across the darkness seeking me.

TORII

From broken landscapes how they draw the gaze,
Back to the ways of peace and ordered prayer.
They lift the soul to some far silent space,
Beyond all thought.

I know not what is there.

I only know that, always, when I turn
From passionate and changeful loveliness
At nightfall, to a torii's perfect form,
Beauty, for me, is gathered up in these
Tall lines that sweep and curve against the moon.

There fail the senses. Words grow dim and cease
To beat for utterance, since my spirit knows
Words cannot tell the measure of such peace.

IN THE GARDEN OF SAN-KEI-EN

Last night I looked into the garden pool
And saw, reflected there, two perfect stars.

Tis thus I love them best, for in the sky
They are far, so unattainable.
Striving to follow one the eyes are lost,
The vision reels amid the myriad hosts.
They are like poems that I make in dreams
And, waking, lose amid a surge of words.

Stars in clear water—thus I love them best,
Counting them, tracing out each perfect form,
Approaching nearer to their mystery.

So, often, when thoughts rise within my mind
Of some far loveliness we two have known,—
Thoughts that like stars, glimmer and then are gone,
Lost with a myriad other surging thoughts,
Too soon for words to frame them ; suddenly
You voice them and I find within your heart
My thoughts, like stars, reflected in a pool.

TO ONE GOING HOME

Just to be home again ! Only to see
Your own folk round you and to hear a tongue
That is your own spoken in shop or street ;
To walk the ways you walked when you were young !
How often, yearning, have you spoken so,
 Yet—do you know ?

Just to see fields again with sorrel filled
And buttercups in June and cows knee-deep
In clover ; just, once more, to see
Heather in August or the cairns that keep
Watch from the hills you love and long for so,
 Yet do you know
That when you find them they will be the same,
Will fill your hungry heart in the old way ;
That you will be content with those quiet plains,
The miles of purple moor, the red and grey
Of rock and crag where dreamed of rivers flow ?
 You do not know.

For you have seen a cherry garden bloom
Below the moon of April. You have seen
Wistaria woven in a misty loom
 Of flowers festooned with green
Azalea blossoms drenched in morning dew—
Blossoms of flame and foam—crimson and white,
Purple and gold o'er canopied with blue
 In gardens of delight
Where yellow iris wave and peonies ;
Pomegranate flowers—red waxen blooms that shine
Like scarlet stars among the heavy trees
 Or fall like drops of wine.
And there are orange gardens in the south
Scent of green oranges, ripening in the sun
Touch of fresh oranges, warm upon your mouth.
 All of these you have known.

And it may be that, down some daisied lane,
Far, far away, a perfume-laden breeze
Will bring you dreams of Eastern things again
 Such lovely things as these.

Just to be home again—only to see
The old, beloved fields ! Glad be your homing!
May you find all things as they used to be
 E'er you went roaming !

And may the High Gods, weaving out your fate,
Be kind to you and spare you from the spell
They often cast on those who learn too late
 To love the East too well.

A CHERRY NIGHT IN KOREA

(To L.M.M. [Lilian May Miller])

*If you should paint a picture and I a song should make
For all our lives renewing
This time of cherry viewing
When under clustered blossoms the rosy lanterns wake,
Could we regain, I wonder,
This hour of faery splendour,
If you should paint a picture and I a song should make ?*

Ah ! would you paint the blue Korean dusk
Deepening to indigo above the trees ;
Red lanterns glimmering—a little pale
While daylight lingers—and the distances,
Already shadowed, of the avenue,
Tented by flowering branches and the blue
Of skies where stars are glimmering though the trees ?

Or would you paint that ancient, curving roof
Where small black devils leap ; the mass of bloom
Rising above the roof against the sky,
Breaking on deep, blue skies in tinted foam ?
Or would you see, from steps of carven stone,
Through parted clouds, the misty April moon
Floating above the mass of cherry bloom ?

And there were children playing on the grass
In scarlet silken skirts, jakets of green ;
Old men with long-stemmed pipes and other me
In dark kimono, saying they had seen
Far finer cherry flowers in olden days,
More graceful lanterns hung in better ways,
Or lovelier maidens walking on the green.

What would you paint ? What would I choose to tell ?
Of all that magic hour, that fragrant dream
Of branches interlaced from tree to tree,
Where, through the blossoms, crimson lanterns gleam
And skies are hidden by the clustered trees
on every side, clouding the distances
Of every road with flowers and life with dream ?

*If you should paint a picture and I should make a song,
Could we, with these, recapture
The beauty and the rapture*

*Of blossoms interwoven, with crimson lanterns hung ?
For other eyes renewing
This time of cherry viewing,
If you should paint a picture and I should make a song ?*

TOWARDS THE DAWN

Over the hill the hands of night
Are spread. The moon has hid her light.
The temple lanterns, one by one,
Die down and I am left alone
Before the secret shrine to wait
Until the dawn unlocks her gate
Of amber, ivory and rose.
What of that dawn ?

Ah ! no man knows.