

# Grass Blades from a Cinnamon Garden

Poems

by

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## GRASS BLADES FROM A CINNAMON GARDEN

In my garden of cinnamon trees

I found young grass had sprung from root and stone,

Marking the steps of song-enchanted spring;

And as I wandered there half sad, alone,

In this garden of cinnamon trees,

Softly I went from blade to gleaming blade,

Gathered them in a sheaf of tender jade,

Wrapped them in fragrance from the southern breeze,

Tied them with silken cord ! And now I bring

Them to you—you, who alone were not afraid

To teach me again, love, what it is to sing.

TO L. W. J.

My mind, a young and tender, growing thing,  
    Eager to push above earth's choking dust  
Into the flowering courtyards of the spring,  
    Sought often too impetuously the sun . . . .  
What time the sound of your brocaded skirt  
    Came softly down the walk: and, one by one,  
You pruned my faults with slender hands and white  
Until you saw them blossom in the light.

## OUR VIOLET PATH

There came an amber morning of delight  
When spring first tinged the trees with softest green,  
And perfumed all the air with her sweet breath;  
The blossoms of the plum trees on the hills  
Threw feathery shadows on the waking earth,  
And nightingales trilled in the dark green woods  
As we strolled through them on our violet path,  
As joyously we walked our violet path.

From time to time we stooped to pick the flowers  
That glowed in lavender on either side:  
A dear excuse for hand and hand to meet,  
A fair excuse to linger, and to smile  
Deep into each other's answering eyes;  
And all the beauty round us drew us close  
As we strolled down our sunlit violet path,  
As joyously we walked our violet path.

Both heart and soul cannot forget that day,  
Each hour brings fresh remembrance of its joy;  
Ah, surely, half myself is wandering there,  
Still wandering with you through the violets there . . . .  
And as dull time crawls by I sit and dream,  
And pray some other morning soon to come  
Will see us strolling down our violet path,  
Hand close in hand along our violet path !

## THE YOUNG RED APRIL MOON

See how green, errant spring has kissed this hill !  
The little teahouse nestling to its throat  
Has put away the wooden winter blinds;  
And blue-clad throngs of laughing pilgrims fill  
(On their long way to mountain shrines remote)  
The scarlet benches under blossoming trees,  
Their voices humming with the April bees . . . .

Shall we, too, happy-hearted, wander there,  
Down through the waving, gold-tipped mountain grass,  
And drink the amber tea, pale eastern tea,  
Served by some red-cheeked girl, with glistening hair,  
On a lacquer tray? We shall find a garden seat  
High, where the hills drop to eternity  
Below us, and a rushing murmur comes  
From a silver fall, and fragrant petals float  
Dreamily into our cups; and we shall eat  
Gossamer rice-cakes, and pink pickled plums,  
Smiling to think perhaps some drifting cloud,  
Rose-flushed at sunset, must have suddenly turned  
To bright, celestial food! Ah, we shall laugh and talk,  
Talk of the things for which we two have yearned,  
Of things we two alone can understand,  
Heart opened wide to heart . . . . till grey mists shroud  
The hills into a melting shadowland,  
And night comes slowly up the garden walk,  
A red moon-lantern glimmering in her hand.

## BRUSH PICTURES OF THE CELESTIAL MOUNTAIN

### 1. DAWN.

I saw shy Fuji of an early morn  
    Robed in an opalescent mist,  
Like some quaint maiden, delicate, highborn,  
    In pearl-grey kimono, cloud-kissed,  
Stolen away alone to greet the dawn,  
    Thinking to see no strangers by the sea;  
    And when I smiled and looked too eagerly,  
She hid her face behind a sleeve of fawn.

### 2. MORNING.

A dream-white Fuji high above the sea,  
    Hovering with outspread wings against a sky  
Blue-grey, the sea a turquoise in the sun—  
    While far below a white-sailed junk skims by.

### 3. NOON.

I looked to see a distant, soaring crest,  
    Gleaming like crystal in the noonday sun:  
But all the peaks I saw were only clouds  
    Hiding that other high, most perfect one.

### 4. AFTERNOON.

Then a bird called in sudden ecstasy:  
    "Surely," I thought, "that far and gracious form  
At last shines silver-etched upon the sky—"  
    But there rose only barrier-walls of storm.

### 5. EVENING.

The clouds rolled back in billowy silver waves  
    Until, against a fading coral sky  
Patterned by branches of a bending pine,  
    A dim grey shadow rose—then night walked by.



## THE CRESCENT MOON TO THE EVENING STAR

I am thy crescent moon,  
    Thou art my star,  
Swinging through heavens wide,  
    Sailing afar;  
What though the clouds sweep by,  
What though the winds roar high?  
I am thy crescent moon,  
    Thou art my star.

Now our long journey done  
    Sink we to rest,  
Rocked in the cradling trees  
    On the hill's crest;  
Gently we close our eyes  
As the green gloaming dies,  
Rocked in soft silver ease  
    Sink we to rest.

I am thy crescent moon,  
    Thou art my star,  
Ah, could there never be  
    Parting to mar !  
On must I take my way  
Over the hills of gray,  
I go—thy crescent moon,  
    Goodbye—dear star.

## IN SOME OLD NOBLE'S GARDEN

Give me your griefs, your hurts, your crimson scars,  
Give me the black, keen bitterness that mars  
The sunlight of your spirit, and I shall take  
Their brooding shadows to far orient lands  
Of jade and amber; there to lighten them  
With the dim, brocaded peace that stills each ache.

Some I shall mingle with the cobalt seas  
Girdled with creamy foam. Some I shall throw  
To the strong, free, sweeping winds that lift and blow  
Around the world in endless majesty.  
Others I'll leave in nodding peonies  
In some old noble's garden, or beyond  
The lacquered pillars of a temple shrine,  
Where they can float upon some lotus pond  
Beneath dark canopies of blue-green pine,  
Each like a somber butterfly apoise.

And when at last I gather them again  
To send them to you, you will find no pain,  
For all your old griefs will have turned to joys !

## RED GATES THAT HAVE CRUMBLLED INTO RED DUST

This dusk, as of old, I saw the crescent moon  
Glimmer in crystal through deep amethyst skies  
Behind the trees, those quiet poplar trees  
That dream along the western palace wall,  
Dreaming, perhaps, as I am, of the long ago . . . .

The old rare days are gone, I know, I know:  
The rank weeds crowd and stain our terraced courts,  
Even the great red gates are redder dust;  
Today the beggar wails for his poor alms,  
And the laden coolie walks with careless feet  
Where only peacock slippers, perfumed silks  
Once passed . . . .

And yet, and yet, love, in some other life,  
Some other world, those days may come again  
Bearing their flowers, the cuckoo in the grove,  
The cricket in the sweet grass, silver lakes  
Bordered with bright pavilions, lotus blooms,  
The amber west at dusk—all that we loved—  
The old, deep, mellow, cool tranquillity  
Breathed by a thousand centuries of calm . . . .  
And we shall stand beneath far lilac skies,  
And, breathless, watch the silver crescent rise !

## FROM A TEMPLE COURTYARD

As I walk through the temple grounds at cool of night,  
And hear rich, resonant tones of bronze strike out the hour,  
Through carven pillars I see altar candles flower  
To flickering blossoms, incense-fringed, of orange light;  
The temple drum for prayers rolls full, then dies away,  
And peace descending comes to brood with close of day.

Beneath dark, ancient, lacquered eaves the doves wing home,  
Pale, shaven priests in flowing silks drone deep in prayer;  
Through velvet dusk intangible the evening air  
Steals music from the temple fountain's purling foam;  
Gold lanterns flower dimly through the dreaming trees . . . .  
Ah, never, surely, will the western tides change these !

## DRAGON-MISTS

A vivid crimson flower drifting down,  
The sun falls low behind clear velvet slopes,  
While the flaming shadows in the silken lake  
Shimmer into blue-woven harmonies  
Of windless waters. Silently the mists,  
Creeping from luminous, faintly amber skies,  
Lean down upon the shoulders of the hills  
And glide into dim, waiting groves, the inner dusk  
Of pine-fringed valleys . . . .

  like a silver dragon,  
Coiled loosely round the blue-walled hills dreamwise,  
Guarding the lake's rare, slumbering loveliness  
In quiet-taloned vigil by its rim  
Through the serene silence of the summer night.

## TORWOOD BY THE SEA

(At Kamakura)

I love to think of you out on the dunes,  
Walking with eager stride to meet the wind  
That sweeps the sand along in driving sheets,  
Of little whirling pools skirting the rocks  
To lose itself in the deep, rustling grass . . . .  
Blue noons, green mornings, and gold afternoons  
Melt into one another there. The waves,  
Warm with white foam, seethe on the snowy beach  
And leave light, sparkling suds around the shells.  
The nets are drying in the sun. Behind,  
A thatched roof peers out from a bamboo grove,  
And hills and sea sleep on in sunny peace . . . .  
Then a far bell, deep-throated, rings the hour  
In a temple courtyard nestling on a slope,  
And I can see you leave the silver dunes  
And hurry home with cheeks like peonies,  
Along a path winding through storm-bent trees . . . .  
The storm-bent pines that run down to the sea,  
The little pines that bow so crookedly.

## THE LITTLE MAPLE TREE

Before your picture on a Chinese stand  
I have stood a tiny maple of soft green  
In a little emerald pot: and there it grows  
Happily, and puts out new, wee, tender leaves;  
I smile to see them, for it is as though  
Each tiny leaf were a new, sweet thought of you,—  
A new, sweet thought of you and how I love you !

## THE EVENING AFTER YOU HAD SAILED AWAY

Grey-pearled, the evening shimmered into night  
Above the harbor's quiet stretch of sea,  
Where shadowy ships of mauve at anchor lay  
Half-sleeping in the slowly darkening light,  
That evening after you had sailed away . . . .

All pearly grey and amethyst the sea,  
Except a shining path of silver bright  
Sweeping across into far misty depths  
Of purple distance. Grey and lavender  
The clouds, and silvery grey the sand,  
And magic stillness over sea and strand.

With wistful eyes I watched rose-tinted rays,  
Delicate as the lining of a shell  
Fade out and join the vanished other days,  
The shining throng, the gleaming, luminous band  
Of treasured hours we gathered through the years . . . .  
Wistful, since you were then far out at sea,  
Wistful, since I was left—alone—on land.

And when night came—to end those happy years—  
The silver in the harbor turned to grey  
(That evening after you had sailed away),  
The grey to lavender, and then to mauve,  
The darkening mauve . . . . to silent, hidden tears.



## DISSERTATION ON ROOFS

The Sea has a luminous sapphire roof  
Which sweeps up splendidly aloof;

The River's roof is ice and snow  
With crystal vaults to guard its flow;

The Pool lies under a massive dome  
Of bouldered rock all seamed with loam;

The Spring is roofed with moist white sand,  
Oozing therefrom with gurglings bland;

But *my* little roof—the best of all—  
Is of deep brown thatch by a bamboo wall,  
Where fat little sparrows love to call !

## JAPANESE ARTIST

With ten strokes he built a mountain,  
With two strokes a tree—  
And then with the most delightful smile  
He gazed through the lattice door awhile,  
And with *one* stroke brushed in the boundless sea !

## SAYONARA

Some go down by a bright blue sea  
To wave light farewell to their friends,  
And hail them Godspeed joyously.  
"So long, old man, I'll see you soon,"  
"Goodbye, my dear, be back in June,"-  
The gay, hard voices shout above  
The rush of wind, the crowds that shove,  
The vivid ribbons fluttering bright  
From deck to dock in the gold sunlight.  
Others have chores that bring them there,  
Banker, trader, merchant, rare  
Curio dealer, those who make  
The greater part of this port of call.  
But once I saw far more at stake—  
Two hearts that broke behind a wall  
Of outer, seeming carelessness:  
Saw at the last loud warning bell  
The passionate, clinging, last caress,  
Heart strained to heart in sad farewell.  
Then she came down and stood below  
Where he leaned, yearning, on the rail,  
And caught his streamer in high show  
Of fun,—yet how she gripped that frail  
Last bond between them ! Through the mass  
Of other blowing ribbons there  
She kept their own untorn and true:  
I saw the gallant streamer bear  
Their messages of dear adieu.  
And when the great ship moved away  
With din of blast and gong and shout,  
Gaily she guided through the fray  
Of wind-torn bands that one so stout,  
So steady to his hand . . . until  
At last her arms fell to her side,  
And the streamer—last of them to go—  
Fluttered out over the harbor's wide  
Grey mouth. *Must heaven be ended so?*

Far at the end of the dock she stood  
Like one turned stone. The ship sailed on  
Toward the south. Like stone she stood,  
Her straining eyes in sockets wan  
Striving to keep his slender form  
Clear of the others by the rail:  
But only a vast, grey, blurring storm  
Of misery rose in a veil.  
Tears in her eyes, tears on her cheek,  
Tears in her heart . . . and the hopeless, bleak,  
Black sense of *left behind*! She did not feel  
The crowds that pressed, marked not the zeal  
Of friends who saw her sadly stand  
Alone, and came with outstretched hand  
To offer help—till they caught sight  
Of her grief-taut face. She stood there, slight  
And bowed and trembling, with heart torn raw;  
She stood in gold sunlight, but all she saw  
Was a grey, blurred ship on a grey, blurred sea  
Melting to grey eternity.

## SHE WAS BORN WITH A BROOK IN HER THROAT

She was born with a brook in her throat,—  
    Cream of the foam in its whirl,  
Sun-threaded shallows where float  
    Ripples of amber and green  
Where summer winds nestle and curl.  
But, dearer than all, the cool swirl,  
    The lingering night-drifting serene,  
    With murmuring deeps by a screen  
Of poplars that furl and unfurl  
    Their silver-lined leaves to the moon:  
For then it flows langorously sweet,  
    Skimming deep pools with a croon,  
    As she sings some old magical rune,  
And I sit me close, close by her feet !

TO A. R. M.

(Nikko, 1921)

It's spring, and the willows blow along the palace moat,-  
The willows blow and fragile cherry petals float  
Down from the rose-white mists upon the trees.  
Borne here, borne there. But in my heart it still is fall,  
The scarlet maple trees still flame, the hills still call,  
Your name still haunts me from across far western seas.

## THE SCARLET SHUTTERS OF YOUR HEART

When the gods are asleep on their sacred lotus pillows,  
And the silver moon of spring has dropped behind  
The camelia trees that screen your lattice gate;  
When dreams are afloat on the amethyst wings of night,  
And the stars swing silver censers through still hours . . . .  
Beloved, I shall come to you ! Throw back your doors,  
The splendor of your doors, and open wide  
The gleaming scarlet shutters of your heart,—  
That I may proudly enter, with rare gifts  
Of gold and ivory in my eager hands,  
With reverence and worship in my soul.

This is my hour, beloved. This night you have said  
I could pick as a rose from the courtyards of the gods;  
This night you have said is mine for as long as the fall  
Of a petal dropping from an almond branch;  
Mine while one stick of incense burns and steals  
With heavy, misty perfume through the dark . . . .  
Yet mine, now, till the shining, sleepless eye  
Of the dragon of eternity grows dim !

## LITTLE SONGS FROM SEOUL

### THE THREE-FOOT BAMBOO PIPE

If you should smoke a three-foot bamboo pipe

    Would it increase,

Inch by sweet inch, and puff by long, slow puff,

The soft contentment of a smoke, rebuff

All care and worry, change them to a ripe

    And mellow peace?

If this is true, ah, then I understand

    Why in this wide, grey, wall-encircled land,

Wherever you may go and all the while,

    The old men smile and smile!



### THREE MINUTES: A KALEIDOSCOPE

Down the grey road

A black bull ambles underneath a load

Of young green pines;

His master is in white,

With vivid turquoise lines

Close-binding wrist and sock.

From a side-alley comes a slender maid

With swinging step, high on her head a crock

Dun-colored, and her skirt of palest jade.

Blue trousers dash across the light

On some gay lad; from out the doorway peeps

A cherry skirt; and lying just within,

Stretched on a sunny pile of yellow straw,

A baby in a purple jacket sleeps . . . .

All this my eyes in three short minutes saw !

## THE BEGGAR BY THE PALACE WALL

### SCENE 1.—Beside the Palace Wall

All day long  
In the sunniest spot he can find  
Beside the old grey palace wall,  
At the feet of the crowds that throng  
Far down the street, and file and wind  
Around him, the starving beggar sits . . . . and sits.  
His face is gaunt and haggard, and his eyes  
Two hard black beads that peer through narrow slits,  
And gleam with greedy longing when he spies  
A foreigner. All the day long he sits,  
In rags, and minus either lower limb,—  
A mere sad stump of a man.  
And your heart goes out in pity to his grim  
And sordid lot . . . . you feel you must do all you can . . . .  
And yet—

### SCENE 2.—Around the Corner

At six o'clock, firm-footed, straight and brown,  
He briskly walks away,  
The richest man, they say,  
That you can find in this wide, windy town !

## THE NINE DRAGON POOLS

(Diamond Mountains, Korea)

They say nine dragons bide in these nine pools,  
Have haunted them since immemorial years,  
Since first the lotus flower came to this land  
Brought by bold Buddhas from green southern climes

But rather will you find *one* dragon there,—  
One huge, grey, rock-ribbed beast with granite feet  
Stretched out across the land, its winding tail  
Still in the sea, in broken pine-clad isles.  
Its snout is thrust into cool, wooded depths,  
But the rigid, mighty, terrible jaw is bare,  
And ten, ten thousand ivory fangs leap high,  
Soaring in steep, fantastic pinnacles,  
In strange, slim, breathless forms against the skies . . . .

Upward, white granite rank on granite rank,  
Gleaming like silver in the noonday sun,  
Upward and ever upward, phantom-winged,  
Up, till the heart stands still, the breath comes short  
At their last, dizzy, shining, radiant height,  
Their uttermost, high, silver majesty  
Of countless peaks dreamborn . . . .

And these nine pools,  
That lie embedded in a gleaming chain,  
Are clear, green, dripping bubbles of sweet song,  
Soothing the dragon in his endless sleep,  
Stealing in limpid ripples through his dreams !

## LETTER TO A POET

When you take up your scarlet quill in hand  
And cull choice blossoms from the fields of song,  
Then send them, calling their rare fragrance mine  
(Mine ! who am so unworthy of it all),  
I cannot help but tremble; for I think  
Of that dark time when you will realize—  
Against your will perhaps—that she you call  
Your flaming goddess is but clay and dust  
And gray monotony, quite like the rest,  
The other people of this little world . . . .  
And yet, ah, after all I cannot be  
Ever like them again, since you have wrapped  
My heart in the flaming mantle of your love;  
And though there be few nightingales on earth  
And all too many sparrows, love, know this:--  
That I shall ever sit beneath the tree  
And wait for the enchantment of your song,  
And love . . . . and understand . . . . with all my heart !

The sleepy fire sinks low,  
And the tired shadows lay them down to rest  
As I sit dreamingly and pen these words.  
Outside the rain has ceased. And, dearest, hark !  
There is a little feathered songster in the court;  
But oh, I cannot listen now that I  
Have heard your voice. What is this golden link  
That binds me to you in its radiant hold?  
My lips can never seem to speak the thoughts  
That flash like scarlet arrows through my mind;  
A strange cold numbness seizes my poor tongue  
When I am with you, making me quite dumb  
Compared to *you*. But, love, do not forget  
That oft the humbler people of this world  
Say naught . . . . because their hearts are brimmed too full.

## KOREAN COUNTRY VIGNETTE

The west wind washes the tattered sky  
From grey to blue;  
Sweeps fog and fume from the crowded lanes  
Straggling from one close courtyard to another;  
Silvers the clouds; cuts with a keen, sharp knife  
The shadows, startling in their living black,  
And lays them in velvet patterns on the rocks.  
The ironing clubs click with a keener stroke,  
And the howl of the savage *wonk*,  
Savage in breed and temper, comes piercing up  
The valley. On the hills brown brush and pine  
Mingle with sturdy rustlings,  
And the first ice struggles with the restless stream.  
Three red persimmons cling  
To a gnarled old branch, and the magpies chatter long  
And loud of the coming snow.  
Down in the fields,  
The farmer hastens to thatch his roof afresh  
With yellow straw before the winter winds  
Come with their flails of ice;  
And in the busy courts  
The women are chopping peppers in great heaps  
For the pickled sauce that warms the coldest heart  
Through the long, grim siege of that cruel tiger,—winter.

## THE LITTLE NIGHT WIND

As the dim stars slowly thread the quiet heavens  
(Dim from the exceeding glory of the moon),  
And that glory lies like silver on the roofs,  
The grey-tiled roofs of slender, fragile houses  
With soft grey shadows on their paper doors,  
And the world sleeps—still pine, still leaf,  
And the rice-fields' hush, and the far and silent hills—  
All sleeping, only I awake,—  
Upon my balcony I sit and dream . . . .

Round me the moonlight falls,  
Floods of clear moonlight, shining and serene,  
Wrapping me in the mystic folds of peace,  
Drawing me close to the deep, calm breast of night,  
To the soft, silvery breast of white, unearthly beauty.  
And as I dream, a breath stirs through the stillness,  
As a little melting night wind of the sky  
Steals low from pine to pine, and down the lane,  
And so to me; and as it gently passes,  
Brushing with shy, dim touch my lifted face,  
A memory wakes . . . . a sudden memory stirs . . . .  
A haunting memory of another night,  
Of a light kiss falling softly on my cheek  
As fragrant, tender, oh, as fleeting-sweet  
As this little night wind melting through the dark  
Under a moon as round, as gleaming white,  
As that far, radiant moon of long ago.

## THE CATHEDRAL HEIGHTS OF MORNING

Some mornings are so beautiful and clear,  
So fresh and sweet, so deeply brimming over  
With light, that their wide glory strikes across  
The very dawn with a high, resistless surge,—  
Strikes across dawn and downs the doors of sleep:  
So that I, sleeping, stir within my dreams,  
Stretch, waken, start up to my eager feet,  
Roused by a keen and sweetly sudden sense  
That calls me with a ringing crystal voice ....  
Calls me to waken to the growing skies,  
The bamboo grass blades harboring pearls of dew,  
The sound of water sending down the gorge  
Its rushing chant; wild lilies on the hills,  
Bathed in the scarlet of the eastern skies,  
And thrushes singing in the woodland vales,—  
Until my heart in answer to this call,  
This pouring out in boundless overflow  
Of beauty and of loveliness, leaps up  
The morning's blue, catbedraled, gleaming heights  
And perches there, remembering your smile!

## THE YELLOW POT OF VIOLETS

Brave little yellow pot of violets,  
Spreading your purple faces though it snows  
With the heavy snow December only sends  
On the bare, whipped trees that tremble in long rows:  
Have you glimpsed into my heart, wee purple friend  
And now bloom forth to keep me company ?  
(There is no winter in my memory . . . . )



## THE SOUTHERN SLOPES OF SORROW

On the desolate northern slopes of an olden sorrow  
The snow spreads white its thick-encrusted mail,  
And immemorial winds roam wailing by,  
Keen as a tiger's fang . . . while the dim grey peaks  
Of the utmost northern pass stand thickly wrapped  
In blinding, bitter, endless misery . . . .

But on the southern slopes the snow has gone;  
Instead grow pale, sweet, quiet flowers there,  
And the sun pours down serenely warm and mild.  
Even the cold blue shadows of the past,  
Shadows of memories that still throb and ache,  
Melt to a strange, deep fragrance on the grass.  
I think of how I once could see the sky  
Only within the eyes of one I loved,  
Knew of sweet flowers only through his lips,  
And swore that heaven was in his arms alone . . . .

Thus through the long day-hours I wander, dreaming,  
On the sunny southern slopes of my olden sorrow,  
While the little winds run catching at my feet,  
The sunbeams at my heart . . . .

## AFTER A VISIT

Gracious, the treasured hours spent with you day to day,  
Broidered with thoughts of gold that cannot fade:  
Lady, I came to you all quiet-colored gray,—  
Leaving, I found my plainness rich brocade.

## SNOW-MORNING

Down the dim avenue of snow-clad pines  
The flakes drift deep, or flutteringly blow  
Through shadowy branches. Ladies on tall shoes  
Of lacquered wood go softly shuffling by,  
Their slender, dark kimonos blown aside  
In haunting glimpses of gay under-folds,  
Scarlet and amber, willow-green and blue.  
Each lady holds in her small ivory hands  
A gay umbrella turned against the wind,  
Brilliantly gleaming through the blow and whirl  
Of driving snowflakes, and each tip concealed  
Beneath quaint, rounded peaks of clinging snow . . . .  
They pass—and as they pass my dream-print fades,  
Fades to far, wistful grey, and slowly melts  
Down the dim avenue of bending pines.

## THE RICH RED PEONY OF MY HEART

The rich red peony of my heart

Once blossomed on a perfect day:

Love was the warm, enwrapping soil,

And love the nourishing ray.

The rich red peony of my heart

Once withered on a somber day:

The soil was dry, clouds hid the sun,

And love had gone away.

## A JAPANESE NOVEMBER

Lo, with a swift decaying pomp, November comes,  
Her scarlet tresses rippling along the trees,  
And all her robes in tapestry of bronze  
And gold. Across far fields of rice she comes,  
Stopping to peer into the sunny courts  
Of sleek thatched farmer cottages, where bright  
Persimmons hang their burnished fruit aloft  
On wrinkled boughs, like orange elfin lanterns  
Strung in brocaded patterns on the rich  
Blue-green of pines. Even the slim bamboos,  
Soft-whispering to the winds, wave gold-tipped plumes;  
And myriad leaves drop from their summer nests  
To crumble down beside old temple walls,  
Where, in a last imperial pageantry,  
Russet chrysanthemums flaunt to the end  
Their wine-tipped petals. Breathlessly, the world  
Waits for the golden bubble of autumn to fall,  
Burst by cold winter's ruthless, ice-tinged hand.

And lo, with a gaunt mysteriousness, November goes  
From hedge and maple grove to the high, lone hills:  
There, tiredly, to sink beneath the pines,  
Tall grey-winged pines, ghosts hauntingly half veiled  
In blowing mist, that stand and watch alone  
Between dim, shadowy voids unfathomable.  
Softly she lies, lulled by the murmuring rains  
That string the slender needles of the pines  
With crystal beads; and silently she sleeps,  
Under the pale dream mountains, half revealed,  
Half melting into mist; while over her  
The long, faint bamboo grasses whisper low  
With swaying leaves in rustling requiem,  
As she glides forth to grey eternity.

## VAGABONDS OF SUSONO

Across the river and by the sea  
Lightfoot we went, and laughing and free;  
Long step in step and with singing hearts,  
Where the roofs leave off and the woodland star

Five miles as the crow flies,  
Fifteen as the road lies,  
And pine woods where the wind sighs,  
On the way to Susuno.

Along the sea and over a hill,—  
The glimpse of a moss-sheathed wooden mill  
With red, red blossoms of plum and peach,  
And the sea lying green by an ivory beach.

Five miles as the crow flies,  
Fifteen as the road lies,  
And deep groves where the bee hies,  
On the way to Susuno.

Over a hill and down the glade,  
Down into luminous emerald shade,  
With a gold-brown temple beneath a cliff  
Where incense came in a sharp, sweet whiff.

Five miles as the crow flies,  
Fifteen as the road lies,  
And stone gods with their grey eyes,  
On the way to Susuno.

Along the glade and down to the sea,  
Where a quaint little point and an old gnarled tree  
Lean to the water, and sandalwood boats  
Drift where their quavering shadow floats.

Five miles as the crow flies,  
Fifteen as the road lies,

And brown nets that the sun dries,  
On the way to Susuno.

Then up from the sea, up old stone stairs,  
Worn by the humble who bring their prayers  
To the lofty shrine where the huge pines stand  
A dizzy height from the net-strewn sand.

Five miles as the crow flies,  
Fifteen as the road lies,  
And a bell's drone as the wind dies,  
On the way to Susuno.

Up a hundred steps and along the hill,  
To a hollow that clustering plum trees fill;  
To caves deep in the rocky walls,  
And cliffs lined white with waterfalls.

Five miles as the crow flies,  
Fifteen as the road lies,  
And lush haunts where the plums rise,  
On the way to Susuno.

Along the hill and again to the sea,  
Beneath a fragrant canopy  
Of bending pines—a turn—and lo,  
The brown thatched roofs of Susuno!

Five miles as the crow flies,  
Fifteen as the road lies,  
And a blue bay soft as June skies,  
On the way to Susuno.

O Susuno, on a silver beach,  
Bordered with blossoming plum and peach,  
A turquoise sea, and to the west  
A single, soaring, perfect crest.

Five miles as the crow flies,  
Fifteen as the road lies,

And a snow peak red with sunrise  
By the bay at Susuno !



## LANTERNS OF MEMORY

While the great white clouds blow through the summer heavens  
And the glittering lake lies blue to the vagrant wind,  
And day rides blinding-clear astride of the sun,  
Your name is but a dim whisper in my heart, a thin shadow,  
Blotted out in the dazzling glory of high noon.  
But when the sun seeks the red ending of its western trail,  
And the mists come down from the mountains and gather  
    along the river lands,  
When the wild duck wings from the sea, and evening dims  
    the edges of the dusk,  
And out through the twilight, under the stars, the yellow  
    lights shine slowly, one by one . . . .  
Then slowly, one by one, in my heart also come gleaming  
    memories of you,  
Memories of dear and radiant days never to drift up dawn again,  
Shining like yellow lanterns through an endless ebony night.

## THE LITTLE FOX SHRINE

Under the sweeping roof of a wayside shrine,  
Soft brown, deep-thatched, curved high in perfect line,  
Ridged with blue iris and with gracious moss,  
A rustic idyll 'neath a bending pine,  
A little mottled fox of stone is sitting.  
Below are heaped grey stones that people toss  
Within as they pass by, each stone a prayer  
To ward off evil; while with curious flitting  
The bats dart through the branches and the air  
Is blue with pleasant incense. Soft and dark  
The shadows lie, save where dull glintings mark  
The little altar, and a scarlet pair  
Of temple lanterns swings beneath the eaves.  
Small, sleepy sparrows twitter, bob and lurch  
About their nests, while from its high blue perch  
A crescent moon half peers between the leaves.  
The hills lie quietly toward the west,  
The breeze is balm and spring is at its best,  
Its sweetest height . . . but all the while, the while,  
The little fox sits with its firm, fixed smile !

## TEN THOUSAND DAWNS

*(To Fuji San)*

Ten thousand dawns have seen this luminous crest  
    Tinted to coral-red ten thousand times,  
Yet never have two mornings come alike,  
    And never does this winged, intangible peak  
Seem twice the same. Its moods are infinite:  
    Some flash with crystal fire on snowy days,  
Others are glimpsed enshrined in opal mist,  
    Still others dream at dusk with the tender stars,  
Lovely beyond all knowing. It seems as though  
    I could gaze a myriad mornings at its light  
And yet still catch my breath, still feel my heart  
    Stopped short for ecstasy, still feel my lips  
Murmur in low, awed syllables these words-

"High, gracious mountain, perfect ten thousand times,  
O rainbow mountain, matchless ten thousand times,  
Yet never perfect till this matchless hour!"

Snow dawn, green summer noon, rose eventide,  
A brooding presence by a mountain lake,  
Or grey and silver by the evening sea,—  
Ten thousand glimpses of the heart of heaven !

## RAIN-MUSIC

For weeks I had heard no sound of falling rain,  
No cool, wet cadences of pattering drops;  
Had half forgot, discovered now afresh,  
With sheer delight how subtly soft there lies  
A silver music in the slanting threads  
Of blowing mist—music so murmuring-sweet,  
That even an aching heart is soothed from hurt,  
Thinking it hears some favorite lullaby  
Loved lips alone can sing! O heart, my heart,  
Hear this soft drip again of rain-washed eaves,  
The limpid flowing of the garden stream  
Beyond the long, cool swish of blowing trees!  
And see the path gleam orange as it leads  
Into the lantern-lighted shadow-land  
At my reed door . . . .

How friendly rain-drops are !

They laugh and impudently wet your face,  
And hide among your locks, dash on your hands,—  
And yet how tender, too . . . . . a touch so soft  
Your heart almost stops short, half-fooled, half-glad  
With a glad, foolish hope, a wistful hope,  
That it might be a slim and tranquil hand-  
Not rain—that lingers with such cool caress  
Upon your cheek ! O rain, soft melting rain,  
Sing all your honeyed, silver songs tonight;  
Bring me a dream of courtyards in the sun  
Where fragrant plums blow petals on the pools  
(White, drifting stars on jade), and crown the hair  
(Soft, perfumed stars on ebony) of one  
Who should be sitting by their marble brim.  
Sing low and sweet and soft, oh, very soft,—  
Sing that my straining ears through these dark hours  
May hear steal faintly on your murmurous chant  
Her silver-throated voice, may catch its lilt  
In your soft fall from dim camelia flowers.

## MOON OF THE WILLOW MONTH

The moon in the ivory-grey east  
Is like a young athlete, handsome, slim  
And straight-flanked: his body gleamingly apoise  
In supple grace for a high celestial vault  
Over the trees that edge the world's deep rim,  
Into the cloud-turfed skies.

But the moon in the dull amber west  
Is like a young maiden, fragile, slight  
Cool-breasted, with silver throat and dreaming eyes:  
Her body, across the shy dusk, glimmering white  
In a slender curve, as drowsily she leans  
Against smooth, pillowing skies.

## A STRING OF CHINESE BEADS

Look, is it not lovely,  
    My bright chain?  
Each bead bears its memory,  
    Brings again,  
Gleaming with lost fire and lost delight,  
Dear rainbow-tinted hours long turned to night.

Here is polished ivory  
    (Like *her* throat),  
And tinted cowry  
    From remote  
Opalescent tides that drift and swing  
Up through gardens where strange blossoms cling.

Next, from that same ocean,  
    Borne in ships,  
See this coral notion  
    (Like *her* lips),  
Carved and tinted till the glowing ball  
Seems to breathe a warmth her lips let fall.

You will find red amber  
    (Like *her* hair:  
You may not remember,  
    But the flare  
Of copper tresses on her leapt and shone  
Until the sun and her bright head seemed one,)

Other beads in number  
    Grace my chain,  
Orange, green and umber,  
    Fine of grain,—  
But there's only one more that can stir  
Half-sleeping ghosts in my heart's sepulchre.

See this amethyst pendant  
    At the end,

Gleaming there resplendent?

Ah , my friend,

Those soft purple depths reveal her eyes,

Therein sealed for me to idolize.

Yes, is it not lovely,

My bright chain?

I can wear it proudly,

Though with pain,

Catch it up and press it to my cheek,

While my thoughts her star-roofed dwelling seek.

## A PRINCESS SINGS IN HER PAVILION AT DUSK

The charm of fragile cherry blooms, wistaria by a temple pool,  
    These caress the eager eye and dwell in splendor in the mind;  
Peonies blossoming to the dawn, and lotus white upon a lake  
    Send the heart in turquoise shoes dancing down the wind.

But all of heaven and all the gods have entered through my coral gate  
    When deep in phantom moonlit pines I hear a calling nightingale;  
Or when across the yellow dusk there melts a dreamy, wistful song  
    Floating from the palace walls that crown the japer vale.

Brocaded robes and peacock plumes, these are filling to the eye,  
    And blowing petals of the peach make lonely hermit-hearts rejoice;  
But oh, the soul's high ecstasy when from the winding palace wall  
    Drift a lute's cool silver song, a distant hidden voice.



## THE GOLDEN PHOENIXES OF DAWN

I have seen many and many a winter dawn,—  
They are gregarious, friendly fellows  
And come close to the life of man:  
As if in the bitter coldness of the year  
They crouched near us for warmth and company . . . .

But *summer* dawns !  
They are high and beautiful and set apart  
And you must be a merry-hearted pilgrim,  
A devotee,  
Rising at the last edge of darkness and hurrying out  
Amongst the dewy fields and sleeping woods,  
And up hill slopes, to glimpse their blinding glory:  
As if they were great golden birds of ancient myth,  
Spreading their scarlet wings and gleaming tails  
In sudden flight at the crunch of a human step . . . .

## CARAVANS OF SILVER

Long caravans of silver fill the night,  
    Wending their lordly way through limpid skies;  
With measured step across wide purple sands,  
    They march to where young, sleeping Morning lies.

And mid their gleaming hosts there goes a bride,  
    With round, smooth face and brightly glowing eyes;  
Flanked by long caravans of stars,  
    She goes to meet her lord where Morning lies.

## THE TEMPLE BELL

When like a great white dragon from the north  
The bitter wind of winter surges down  
    And hisses its snow about my garden gate,  
    Stinging and spitting and cold . . . . when through grey days  
And quivering nights it hurtles through the skies,  
Lashing the cringing world with icy tail,  
    Terrible in its mighty, sweeping wrath . . . .  
    My little dwelling trembles through each beam,  
And I sit cowering by a fainting flame  
Behind my closely shuttered lattice doors,  
    Hearing only the crashing gale outside,  
    Only the furious drumming of the rain.

But when at last soft days of balm come drifting,  
When the south wind blows from green, fresh-budding plains  
    And gentle hills, and winds a warm caress  
    About my wounded garden, bringing there  
A serene, golden peace like mellow wine . . . .  
Then as I sit, high on my balcony,  
    A dreamy resonance drifts upon my ears,  
    Blowing above the flowers and sunlit warmth,—  
The sound of a shaven priest in ivory robes  
As he strikes the hour upon an ancient bell  
    Hung in his quiet, maple-sheltered court  
    Far down my terraced valley.

  Full, at first,  
Its deep bronze voice floats brimming through the air,  
Rich and marvelously sweet; over and over  
    It pulses in resonant waves upon my ear,  
    With deep vibrations rounding out the breeze,  
Bringing the gladness of bright, perfumed flowers  
Into my worshipping heart. And then it ebbs,  
    Ebbs dreamily above the emerald fields,  
    Beat by slow beat, drawn out to a distant drone,—  
Lingering even then, lingering until  
It drops away like melting honey at last,

And dies of its very sweetness . . . while the faint,  
Far echo of its tone drifts down beyond  
The wind-stirred murmurings of green ranks of pines.

## THE CROCUS AND THE SONG

Today, though it snowed outside,  
A little yellow crocus bloomed and shone  
Like a golden star here in my humble room;  
And when I scanned the page beneath my pen,  
There, too, I found a blossom opening wide—  
A little golden song that gleamed and shone.

## POOR LITTLE BIRD

Sleep softly, poor little bird that was never born,  
Poor little bird lying dead on a gold-green morn—  
Dead before you knew what it was to live,  
Caught ere you wakened, fate's weak fugitive . . . .  
What evil thing was it that scorned to give  
Thought or sweet pity to your wee, soft form,  
But broke into your warm, protecting shell  
With careless strength, and watched you as you fell  
Battered and broken? Ah, I swear, no storm  
Of wrath could be too strong for such ! My heart  
Weeps for you, little bird, for your tiny eyes  
Not really yet your eyes; for your small, weak wings  
That will never beat through windswept summer skies;  
For the wide, sweet mouth forever shut, that will know  
Nothing of singing; for each tender part  
Of your unfeathered, bare, wee embryo . . . .  
See, little bird, I have made you a mossy nest,  
Not in the pine boughs high on the hilly crest,  
But deep and warm underneath where, row on row,  
The kindly roots will wrap you and cradle you low.  
See, little bird, I cover you soft and warm,  
Pledge you safe shelter from all further harm:  
Sleep in your nest, sleep well and softly so,  
Where the shadows flicker gently to and fro,  
Dappled with sunlight through long summer hours,  
Stirred with deep fragrance from the summer flowers ...  
Sleep softly, poor little bird, that was never born,  
Sleep, and my heart will pity you each gold morn,  
Will pity you, pray for you, each green-golden morn.

## TEN THOUSAND MILES

Ten thousand foaming miles away I have a friend who dwells  
    Within the luminous yellow shade of lordly dragon towers;  
Ten thousand miles my heart must fly to where bronze temple bells  
    Nearby his court ring loud, ring low the jasmine-scented hours.

Ah, when the autumn moon hangs low its burnished orange ball,  
    My friend will don his pilgrim's cloak and journey here to me;  
But till he comes how endlessly ten thousand hours must crawl,  
    How dark and long the waiting of ten thousand miles will be !

## PLUM BLOSSOM HOURS

Borne on the boisterous breeze of March

Came a wonderful day to me:

It came like a petal of purest white

Blown from a plum blossom tree.

It fluttered towards me in fragrant flight,

I caught it, and kissed it, and held it tight,

Mad with the magic, the fragrance, the light

That charmed its brief hours for me.



## MOONLIGHT SHADOWS

Shadows on my garden wall,—  
Nets of lucent ebony fall  
    Linked with labyrinths of light;  
In fragile curves, or slim and tall  
They waver, as the moonrays crawl  
    Down the amethyst slopes of night.

Here, crisp patterns half-ally  
With somber leaf-ghosts floating nigh;  
    There, a tender, soft-blurred mass  
Shows where blossoming petals lie  
Melting, as the moon slips high  
    Above the watch-towers on the pass.

The pines are mist, but a maple tree  
Stands where its feathery filigree  
    Is chiselled jet upon the white;  
While down a smooth stretch runs a sea  
Of tangled leaves and in their lea  
    Spring elfin phantoms of delight.

Shadows on my moonlight wall,  
Slender sprays or vines that sprawl  
    Luxuriantly along the height,—  
Bright silver spells around you fall  
And mysteries beyond my call  
    Tend you in lingering, magic flight.

Yours is a charm which cannot fade  
    From garden-wall, or silent glade,  
    Or sleeping court, or postern white:  
Darkness a thing of dreams is made,  
And nameless ecstasies are laid  
    On a lone heart watching through the night.

## AN AVENUE OF TREES

To me an avenue of trees  
Is one of Nature's sanctities.

I love the grandeur of their aisles  
Marching through far, mysterious miles.

An orange moon glimpsed through their ranks  
Stirs me to high, ecstatic thanks.

And where, majestic pair by pair,  
They guard dim shrines, I stand in prayer.

## TO A GILDED BUDDHA IN A CURIO STORE

Once . . . once you were incarnate God supreme.  
Hidden within the inmost holy shrine  
Of some great temple, where with dusky gleam  
You sat in majesty, your only dream  
(If dream you could) of lotus-bordered worlds  
High in some amber universe divine.  
Rich gilded doors kept your calm form aloof,  
Deep-shadowed peace was there . . . only the glow  
Of tall red candles flickered to and fro  
Upon the gleaming, polished ornaments  
Of brass beneath your ancient altar-place.  
The deep drums rolled in stirring resonance  
While, robed in rich brocade, each shaven priest  
Chanted the sing-song prayers dear to the East  
Before your gold-encrusted eminence.  
Long did you rule, on incense did you feast;  
And with each weighty prayer the beaten lobes  
Of your gilt, kindly ears did longer grow,  
As if you heard the sighs and hopes and tears  
Of reverent worshippers and wished to show  
A gracious interest as they clapped their hands,  
And rang your temple gongs, and bowed in prayer  
With that faith nigh sublime of orient lands.

Now . . . now you sit within a shoddy store  
Of idle curios, to catch the eye  
Of some loud-talking foreigner. No more  
Are you a God supreme, and yet no sigh.  
Comes from your rusted lips: with stoic mien  
You bear the abuse of those who scorn and scold;  
Dust-covered, but ineffably serene,  
You bear your Godhead bartered for mere gold . . .  
And though you must have suffered wrongs untold,  
Nirvana's peace you contemplate with calm  
Before a gaudy, worthless tourist screen !

Today some noisy strangers found you there

And laughed to see your distant, pensive air;  
I heard them say, "Look at his ugly head !"  
"Let's buy him for the billiard-room," they said.

## THE RED GOOSE OF KOREA

The red goose crosses with a steady wing  
Over gold rice-field and wide river plain  
To the infinite hills . . . .  
Strong and untiring,  
The red goose: straight and high  
He heads through the deep autumnal sky,  
Bright copper fire, sparked out by the sun,  
Flashing from his sleek feathers.  
Straight he flies,  
Knowing no pain, fatigue,  
While stretches of dun and reedy marshes  
Gleam and fade.  
Ahead the broad miles lie,  
Intimately measured to their farthest blade  
Of grass by his keen, glinting eye.  
Faster than wind he travels, resolute, fleet,  
Covering his level course between  
Far hill and river, river back to hill,  
With an unbroken beat  
Of tireless pinions:  
And how magnificently strong they sweep  
In white, broad-banded with glowing, burnished green !  
Straight for the south he flies, as an arrow flies,  
(And an arrow only may be matched to him),  
Following the river's winding silver thread,  
Or some lagoon's grey-silver, shining rim,  
Till he can glide  
Over the jagged edge of the long grey walls  
That the mountains build across the land in pride  
Of intrenched granite;  
Flies, till a distant speck, a far faint point,  
He merges in blue space . . . .  
While with him flies my restless, hungry heart,  
Bound in an eager, keen-winged, tireless race,—  
Bound for your southern, palm-girt dwelling place !

## ON THE FACE OF THE FOREST POOL

Two white arrows of light speeding toward each other

Across the dark, cool face of a forest pool,

With stillness all about . . . .

Two gliding silver arrows—the dim bronze waters,

The thrilling moment when the arrows merge

In a sparkling splash, a little blur of foam—

Two wild ducks meeting !

## IN MEMORIAM

To George H. Scidmore

Consul General of the United States of America

Died November, 1922

Is this all we have left to us of you,

A little pinch of ashes, puff of dust,

Covered with fragrant petals, white and red ?

Can it be this little casket hides that head

With the silver of its hair, the deep-set blue,

Keen, sensitive, of those most kindly eyes?

Can it be this soft, damp earth as red as rust

Will come between us and that genial smile?

Or that the man we knew, so gentle, wise,

Warm-hearted, steady, true, has finished now

Of his life's journey this, the last long mile?

One day we saw you full of hearty zest:

The next found us so truly unaware

Of your quick going that we thought it jest

When told that death had stooped to kiss your brow

When told that death had stroked your silver hair.

Now though we cannot help but sorely weep,

Yet we rejoice you trod no tortured path

But sank serene, into the arms of sleep,

And so into the ebon arms of death,

And so rose to the radiant arms of peace.

Here where the pleasant vines will gently creep,

And roses will give out their warm, sweet breath

And year by year guard you with soft increase

We lay your ashes facing to the west,

High on a hill, in their last sheltered rest

Beside her whom you ever loved the best,

One with her before birth, now one in death.

Below, the sea dreams rainbow dreams for you,

The distant hills will watch: one peerless crest,  
    Snow-gleaming, or a soft grey summer shadow,  
    Rising from russet wastes or emerald meadow,  
        Will guard you all the endless seasons through.

And we, your friends, will scatter past blue seas,  
    Leave this a foreign, though a friendly, land,  
Our voices fall on many a far, strange breeze,  
    But always, somehow, you will be there too,  
A silver thread run through our memories.

Here where chrysanthemum petals softly lie  
    Crushed by our sorrowful feet upon the stones,  
    We stand around your flower-hidden bier,  
    And with moist eyes, in hushed and reverent tones,  
Pledge you our hearts beneath the coral sky,  
    Pledge us to guard your name and hold it dear.  
And these few, humble, laboring words of praise,  
    Of tender praise, are but as lowly leaves  
Picked from the laurel of your honored days  
    Won by long service to an end immortal.  
    And though infinity divides, and my heart grieves,  
I would be glad if some day you should gaze  
    On this my song as on the least white petal  
        Dropped from these flowers that stand in crystal sheaves.



## SPRING IN A JAPANESE GARDEN

Spring has slipped over my winding wall's tiled rim,  
Warm with the melting, golden breath of April weather  
    How do I know?  
    The daphnes cluster fragrantly together,  
    The peach blooms red, and willow branches blow  
        Above my slender lacquer bridge.  
Near the long, silver-rippled lake  
    Purple wistaria vines awake,  
And soft-pronged chalices rise green and slim  
    From each dark, starry ring  
    Of azalea leaves in my azalea bower;  
And there in one this dappled noon, I found her—Spring—  
Soft-bathing in a sudden, slanting April shower !

## THE MORNING GLORY

From an upper window  
I leaned my elbows on my bamboo fence  
Of brown and gold, and gaily looked below:  
And saw there, gazing up to mine, a pale sweet face  
As of some stranger maiden passing by . . . .  
The white face of a swaying morning glory.

## UP THE HILL TO MEGURO

Up the hill to Meguro,  
Where the pleasant beeches grow,  
Where the pines long shadows throw,  
And the cherry petals blow  
Up the hill to Meguro.

On the hill at Meguro,  
A little cottage, dainty, low,  
With paper lattices that show  
Quaint silhouettes by lantern glow  
On the hill at Meguro.

And in the little cottage low  
Lips that whisper soft and slow,  
Eyes of midnight overflow,  
And ivory hands like ivory snow,  
On the hill at Meguro . . . .

O little hill of Meguro,  
The lanterns of your lanes, I know,  
Will follow me with crimson glow  
No matter where, how far, I go . . . .  
Dear little hill of Meguro !

## THE LITTLE GREEN KITTENS

I love to sit with busy spade  
On soft white sands where shells are laid  
In rainbow patterns by the sea,  
And salt winds blow their balm to me.  
There I can dig and pile and play,  
And build grey castles all the day,  
While the little waves romp up the shore  
To watch me work . . . . And more and more  
Like playful kittens do they seem  
From out some far, fantastic dream  
Of Tartar town or Mandarin bay,  
That somehow lost their distant way  
And now are tossed upon this beach  
Their quaint, perked ears half in my reach.  
Hush, here comes one with soft white paws  
And green cravat and ivory claws . . . .  
He's very shy, so don't look round:  
He'll steal up close, then with a bound  
Back to the sea he'll start to run,  
Kicking up pebbles just for fun.  
I like it best when, turned away,  
I seem intent upon my play  
And too engrossed to watch them steal  
Closer and closer; then I kneel  
And half-pretend to dig a gate,  
While they creep up and softly wait.  
And if I'm still and do not stir,  
I hear them give a soft, shy purr  
And feel them lick my toes with wet  
Cold tongues ! And *then* I turn and let  
Them think I'm going to chase them back—  
Away they go like cannon crack,  
With flying tails and spurting claws,  
Without a rest, without a pause !  
But when they're safely back at sea  
They turn quite brave and slap at me,  
And arch their backs and spit soft foam,

And try to scare me closer home !

## ECSTACY

Oh, it's a morning to sing on!  
Skies of an infinite, laughing blue,  
    Floating clouds of white petal-down,  
Diamond stars in the sparkling dew,  
Sweet flowers that let new fragrance fall;  
    Fresh, golden light on the glistening pines,  
    And on the green wistaria vines  
Clambering over the golden wall  
To gaze where sun-flushed mountains rise . . . .  
    Oh, it's a morning to sing on,  
    Dropped straight from paradise!

Oh, it's a morning to wing on,  
On, on to paradise!  
How my heart leaps up like a lark aflight,  
Soaring upward in love's sheer might,  
    Seeking ever to climb and climb  
    Through the gleaming blue to heights sublime,  
There, there, to see your face, Most Sweet,  
And to fold its wings of radiant light  
    In rapture at your feet !

## WIND IN THE MIDDAY PINES

Why should I miss the sea when I have these pines,—  
Blue, soaring pines upon a rounded hill  
Lush with cool grass and backed by deep bamboo?  
For I can lie all day, all day, and fill  
My ears with a singing sweeter than cool waves  
Caressing ivory slopes, as, rushing through  
The slim pine needles overhead, a breeze  
Blows strongly by. With a deep spring it comes  
From far blue river and low fields of rice,  
And sweeps upon my hill; each pine tree burns,  
Tense and ecstatic, while the grove behind  
Turns to wild tossing of green bamboo plumes.  
Oh, what a mighty sound, what a restless surge,  
There is to each windy wave as it hurries past !  
Close to the mossy roots of the pines I sit  
And fill my heart and soul with all the vast  
Wild songs it sings in crystal through the sky  
As it sweeps from infinity to the infinite !

Why should I miss the sea when on my high,  
Cool hill I have the wind, these blowing pines,—  
The wind in the brown boughs for deep-booming surf,  
The wind in the bamboo over velvet turf  
For the long smooth glide of a green wave slipping by?

## THE WHITE SANCTUARY

Here in a hushed, dim, quiet sanctuary,  
Laid on an altar-dais of purest white  
And covered with deep, cool folds of gleaming silk,  
You lie. And round you, cherry blossoms! Flowers  
So fair, so sweet, ethereal, feathery, soft,  
Leaning above you, that it almost seems  
As if your radiant ghost still hovered there,—  
As if your gracious, misty hands still touched  
These shimmering petals. But instead, you lie  
In silver peace, tall candles at your head,  
And I, the death-watch keeping, at your feet,—  
Afraid to press too near, you are so white  
And still and beautiful. At times I gaze  
Out through the night to where a clear star burns  
Beyond tall pines; at times I stand and yearn  
Towards the cold white star that is your face,  
(Your face so bright, but oh, so still, so cold),  
Thinking, but for this strangeness, sudden, sharp,  
This somber dignity, I could not keep  
From catching you in my arms ! And then . . . and then  
At other times in cold despair I hide  
My face deep in my sleeve, and sit long hours  
Unmoving, sad and numb, while my whirling thoughts  
See other cherry blossoms on a hill  
In soft, deep masses, blowing in the wind  
Across the green of quiet palace moats;  
See there, beneath the dim grey-lilac shade  
That dusk sends melting through their canopies,  
A slender figure standing—(standing then  
Where now it lies) —a slender form in mauve  
Reaching to break a spray of tinted buds . . . .  
I start . . . and find you here . . . I find you here—  
Still under cherry blooms, still tall, still fair,  
But sleeping in the silver halls of death . . . .  
O dream too blessed, O love too glad, too deep,  
O mounting joy that came too sweet, too sweet,  
Born with bright April, dead with April's end !



## WINTER

Winter is a tiger, old and white,  
Crouching above the pale, dead earth  
And spitting snow into her dumb, bruised face.

## THE LITTLE SHRINES

(To F.H.C.B.)

The little shrines in quiet lanes,—  
    I love them so;  
Through wintry winds or summer rains,  
By morning light or when dusk wanes  
    The pines trace patterns on their scarlet glow.

The little shrines in quiet courts,—  
    My heart is their's;  
Beneath cool eaves the wind disports,  
Bright cherry petals it assort  
    And their soft perfume past each gateway bears.

The little shrines in quiet trees  
    Stir my delight;  
I trace each worn and weathered frieze,  
The fragile, carven balconies,  
    And pause where incense steals in languorous flight.

The little shrines on quiet hills,—  
    I seek their peace;  
By high rock-bastioned mountain rills,  
By groves wherein the wild dove thrills  
    To his mate they stand, and lone guard never cease.

## CLEAR NIGHT, SNOW NIGHT

On a *clear* winter's night my garden seems  
Tense, wide-awake, alert. Each ebony twig  
Stands stiffly out and sharply pricks its ears.  
The bushes crackle and gossip, and the big  
Old pine by the gateway leans across the beams  
And gives dry answer. Over its shoulder peers  
The Northern Star—that, too, stands guard; and all  
Are wary and watchful from grey wall to wall.

But on nights after snow has fallen you can feel  
Each bush, each vine, each blade of grass asleep  
Under soft feathery masses. Cedar leaves  
Pull their white capes to the throat and try to keep  
Their elbows warmer. The muffled willows kneel;  
And in heavy boods the poplars droop to the eaves.  
Wrapped in an utter silence my garden lies  
And dreams with a shadowy quilt drawn to her eyes.

## PILGRIMAGE

The frost has gone and southern winds  
    Drift up the valley from the sea;  
The yellow grass is touched with green,  
    Loud hums the bee.

The earth exhales fresh fragrances  
    To scent the air, to thrill the heart,  
And from the borders by the road  
    Bright violets start.

Deep overhead the vivid sky  
    Is patterned with a thousand flowers,  
Where mingling branches cross and meet  
    In crisp, sweet bowers.

Before me, warm and white, the road  
    Leads up the valley from the sea;  
Plum blossoms scatter ivory spray  
    In fantasy

Around my head, across my path,  
    Upon my face, and at my feet . . . .  
O radiant flood of petals, bright  
    And luminous-sweet !

Fresh turn by turn the foot hills gleam  
    Nearer and clearer as I tread  
Each step of this glad pilgrimage,  
    And overspread

The mounting path, my mounting heart,  
    Are memories that drift and sway  
Of deep, cool groves, a temple court,  
    One golden day.

Before me, warm and white, the road  
    Shimmers through pines that curve and soar;

With every twist, at every turn  
I miss you more.

Dear heart, dear heart, the southern winds  
Come drifting past from distant skies;  
Ah, could they bring your kiss, one glance  
From your dark eyes . . . .

Then would the world burst into light,  
And spring's most dazzling noon-hour  
My heart, as through the clouds I pressed  
To your white feet !

But such bright tides are not to be—  
Alone and lonely I trudge on  
To where close by a mountain lake  
Blue violets shone

Once, once, around our lingering steps,  
And caught like stars in your dark hair . . . .  
And I shall rest, and rest, and dream  
That you are there.

The frost has gone and southern winds  
Drift up the valley from the sea,  
Drift up in longing, drive me on  
In ecstasy

To where beside cool cedar groves  
Blue violets scent the southern air . . . .  
And I can rest, and rest. and dream  
That you are there !

## A KOREAN PRINCESS

Her eyes are like black moons, if moons could ever be so velvet dark;  
The singing of her voice thrills with a lilt like a silver lark.  
There is a light about her lips, as if her smile came from celestial lands;  
Magnolias of the south, petaled and perfumed, are her slender hands . . . .

And oh, the fragrance of her passing is so great  
That butterflies haste after her for honey-freight !

### THREE LITTLE OLD LADIES OF JAPAN

Today I saw three ladies bent with years,  
Little and old and gnarled, with mincing gait  
Trudging along the road that skirts the great  
High temple. Snails, indeed, could travel faster  
Than their quaint clogs, and others would have sneers  
For their slow steps; but I, like some old master,  
Studied delightedly their soft dark robes,  
Scanned with close eye the deep, carved ivory  
Of their brown faces. Pattering gaily on,  
They tripped, a happy trio, past my eyes  
To where the lanterns bang like orange globes  
At the temple gate of Buddha, Mighty One.

And as they went, I fell in reverie:  
Wondered at first—then saw they held the prize  
Of lives well lived, and daily duties done;  
And now they can approach without a fear  
The last gate of them all, as each white year  
Brings them in simple peace nearer the end.  
Ah, you may tread far paths about this world,  
See many a curious thing, and faithfully wend  
Long eastern miles, but never will you find  
Three such old ladies, gentle, mild of mien,  
Such calm of heart, such smooth, still peace of mind,  
Such fragrant old age,—tranquil, sweet, serene !

## NOONTIME LULLABY

(After the Korean)

Flow, flow, flow, flow,  
Flow, little streams, from your crystal cages;  
Blow, blow, blow, blow,  
Blow, little winds, from the fans of the sages;  
Close and warm,  
Ah, close and warm,  
I fold my babe from every harm—  
Fold her from every harm.

Swing, swing, swing, swing,  
Swing, little leaves, on your airy perches;  
Fling, fling, fling, fling,  
Fling, little sunbeams, your golden torches;  
Sweet and near,  
Ah, sweet and near,  
I fold my babe from every fear—  
Fold her from every fear.

Gleam, gleam, gleam, gleam,  
Gleam, little clouds, with your snowy billows;  
Dream, dream, dream, dream,  
Dream, little hills, on your emerald pillows;  
Safe and still,  
Ah, safe and still,  
I fold my babe from every ill,  
Fold her from every ill.



## A BAMBOO DELL

The sun looks down  
With golden frown;

The hills take pride  
In thresholds wide;

The streams are Light  
Breathed into Flight:

But of all the loveliness tongue can tell,  
Of all the loveliness song can spell,  
There is nothing so bright, so fresh, so green  
As a bamboo dell.

The dawn-clouds shine  
In silver line;

The rain comes fleet  
On misty feet;

Dusk draws my heart  
Through gates apart:

But of all the loveliness tongue can tell,  
Of all the loveliness song can spell,  
Of all the loveliness tongue can tell,  
There is nothing so dim, so sweet, so cool  
As a bamboo dell.

## NIKKO

Nikko ! Thy very name is near my heart,—  
As near as thou thyself liest to thy hills,  
Near as thy rocks strain to thy foaming streams !  
Thy cryptomeria fragrance drifts and fills  
My nostrils as I write . . . the scarlet gleams  
Of thy lacquered shrines where tall pines stand apart  
To give green, solemn vistas,—how they rise,  
Dream-like, before me ! Through this dragon-gate  
My infant footsteps faltered; down this lane  
As a child I loitered; by this pond I sate  
Unnumbered hours to watch the flash and wane  
Of darting goldfish. By that drum-tower lies  
The grave of a dragon-fly I found one day,  
Dead yet still vivid crimson (even yet  
That crimson haunts me !) Near that moss-sheathed pine  
My childhood gods I gently ranged and set,  
Happy that all this temple court was mine.  
And always the bell, whether the dusk was gray  
Or dawn was golden, whether thy peaks were flushed  
With rosy mountain bloom or autumn's fire,  
Sent its sonorous song bright hour by hour,  
Sent its deep, resonant thunder higher, higher,  
Until the temples, each pagoda-tower,  
Stood deep in mists of music wrapt and hushed.  
Ah, Nikko, those dear days passed in thy groves  
Are still heart's treasure, even now I still  
Can sit entranced and hear the temple doves  
Call from thy mellow eaves. Nikko, of thee  
Am I a part forever, stream and hill,—  
Of me eternally art thou the whole,  
Mother of beauty, emerald vale and tree,  
Dear radiant sanctuary for the soul !

'  
**THE GOLDEN JUNK**

Over the soft blue stretches of the plain  
Where the crickets weave their wistful evensong,  
And the cool night-fragrance of the shadowed earth  
    Freshens the jaded breeze,—  
Lo, a crescent moon rides high with tilted prow,  
Like a gleaming golden junk against the dusk,  
Like a shining golden junk against the night,  
    Gliding through cobalt seas.

## MOUNTAIN WATERS

(Diamond Mountains, Korea)

In nimble silver the bubbles spin and blow  
    Where the Little Waters splash and tumble and surge  
High in the mountains. Mosses cling and grow  
    Emerald coats for the ledges, down the slope  
    Lie patterned browns and duns, and dwarf pines grope  
For foot-holds in the rocks. In May the flowers  
    Fling tinted garlands, and azaleas rise  
And scent the air and storm the granite towers  
    In waves of scarlet, till bewildered eyes  
Catch at green depths to earn a moment's rest.  
    Bright butterflies weave through the tender shade  
Thrown where the greater peaks rear polished crest  
    And pillared cliff to edge the melting jade  
Of those Little Waters, and to catch their song  
    And then distill that song, clear drop by drop,  
To crystal echoes ! Oh, it is a place  
Enchanted, with a spell so strong, so strong,  
    That when a cuckoo chances there to stop  
(Homeward flying at eve) and spills largesse  
    Of music through the dusk with throbbing throat—  
    Then vanishes—it seems as if each note  
Had swept the spirit up with high caress—  
    Swept it to heavens rainbow-born . . . . remote  
Heavens where crystal drops are prayers that bless.

## KOREAN LOVE SONG

Soft notes that lean to the ear,  
Sweet songs that flutter like jasmine leaves  
As the West lies lulled in dreams—  
As the West lies lost in dreams—  
And over the valleys of rice Dusk weaves  
Her curtains with silent sleeves.

Slim hands like pink cherry buds,  
Dark eyes that smile through their fringe of jet  
And gleam in the moon's bright ray—  
And flash in the moon's white ray—  
O poignant hours ere the pale stars set,  
O perfumed arms that have met !

White jade to pillow my cheek,  
Fresh peony petals to press my lips  
Till Night folds her screen in the East—  
Till Night draws her screen from the East—  
And through the courtyards the grey Dawn trips,  
Through the lattice the grey Dawn slips.

## A DAY AT HAYAMA

Oh, How I ache to be with you today,  
    Friend with the little garden by the sea !  
    The willows cast their shade enchantingly,  
The cherries shimmer white like sunlit spray,  
    The skies are a vivid, breathless blue—and we,  
Could we but wander slowly down the sands,  
    And linger where a temple nestles down  
Among tall pines !

    See, I would grasp your hands  
    And draw you to a hollow in the brown  
Wave-tempered rocks, where on a little ledge  
A calm, benign, gray image guards the edge  
    And smiles out over space. There we could sit  
And gaze with glad, full hearts across the sea,  
Gaze at one splendid crest from mist-spume free,  
    Peerless and unafraid. The marvel of it,—  
    White-spreading ivory queen throned on a peak  
Midst the blue halls of heaven! No homily,  
    No song, no mortal mouth could ever speak  
That beauty . . . .

    Through the long deep afternoon  
    We would hold converse of a myriad things,  
    Content, at utter peace. Oh, we would seek  
The farthest realms of mind, the farthest spark  
Of fire in a universe so huge, so dark,  
    That we seem feeble flickerings in a night  
    That never knew of dawn: and on brave wings  
We'd leap the silver columns of the moon,  
    Striving in glad exuberance to reach  
    The high, white, radiant place of Ultimate Light

    Look for a moment down there on the beach—  
    Isn't it lovely where that crimson peach  
Flames in a crescent by a bamboo gate?  
    And, see, across the bay, beyond the line

Of misty, lilac islands floats a sail  
Spotlessly white. Now turn a trifle—wait  
Until it skims the waves on its blue trail,  
And you can glimpse it through this bending pine !

And listen how the wind sweeps past above,  
Through the eager grove ! Was there ever such a song,  
Such a splendid, rushing, stirring ecstasy  
Of sound ? It dwarfs and puts to shame the sea  
With the deep singing of it ! And along  
The boughs come tremulous sighs that stir of dove  
Beneath dark temple eaves, or purl of fount  
Within white-blossomed courtyards scarce could breathe.

And from the bordered gardens by the shore  
Smell the sweet daphne fragrance! More and more,  
Our spirits, drunk with happiness, start and mount  
And drift out with the gleaming, luminous tide  
To islands hovering where the billows seethe  
In frosted pearl, and rainbow elfins ride,  
Messengers of the immortals who abide  
High in slim emerald towers by the sea . . . .

But now the dusk is falling, and the fine  
Crisp shadows of the trees merge into gray,  
And we must go. The peerless mountain soars,  
A violet symbol on the crimson doors  
Of sunset—O bright end of this fair day,  
This high day stolen from heaven!  
Then one last pause  
Just as we turn to leave the little shrine.  
Just as we turn to linger at the bridge,  
And we shall watch the wings of dusk droop down  
Across the bay; and stirred by immutable laws  
Of beauty that bestow a gleaming crown  
Upon the humblest wayside, poorest tree,  
The simplest court, the lowliest pine-walled ridge,  
The smallest flower, and gives to us the key,  
Crusted with gems, of everlasting light,  
We'll stand, heart close to heart, in the deepening night.

## MORNING IN A LITTLE JAPANESE HOUSE

A great red morning star through the western pines,  
As to the east the first white dawn-glow shines;  
The wooden shutters rumble loud and ride,  
Pushed back by yellow hands, till side by side  
They rest in their shallow closet. Comes the flick  
Of feather duster on frail doors, with quick  
Soft rat-tat-tat, and the swish of a bamboo broom,  
As it brushes the cream mats of my garden-room;  
Sharp spluttering of live charcoal as it flares  
To vivid red, and bare feet on the stairs,  
With a washing of smooth steps until they shine;  
Then a short silence, while before the shrine  
Of the household gods and Buddha, Lord of All,  
Food offerings are set and through the wall  
The smell of incense steals. Then comes a clink  
Of dish on dish, as with a vase of pink  
Azalea blossoms on a lacquer tray  
They send my morning meal upon its way,  
Of cinnamon cakes and smoking amber tea;  
A tap at the lattice, a morning bow for me,—  
A smile, soft words, a pat on the quilt's dull blue,—  
And "Honored good morning, your house is waiting for you !"



## BY THE SEA AT MITO

The little hills cluster obediently around at the call of the sea;

Quietly they sit and listen to her song.

They wear green capes and quaint dark green hoods:

Some of them have pushed back their hoods so you can see

their bare brown foreheads,

But all sit silently and listen to the song.

When the sea stops singing, and her waves have fallen placidly asleep,

The little hills do not move away,

But still sit dreamily on guard:

Sit dreamily and sing in their own turn

On lutes of wind-stirred bamboo and of pine.

## NIGHTS IN JAPAN

Nights in Japan—with what damp, heavy veils  
Of perfume they are wrapped ! From early dusk  
They waft strange fragrances, sweet spice and musk,  
Rich eastern scents, aromas from temple pales.

As I bend from my window to the midnight breeze,  
It is as if I leaned into the heart  
Of a great dim flower, with petals soft apart,  
Letting me breathe their inmost sanctities.

## O PALMS AND STARS OF SINGAPORE

O palms and stars of Singapore,  
    And ebony seas that swirl and plunge  
In foaming thunder on the shore—  
Beneath the palms of Singapore.

O palms and stars of Singapore,  
    Far winds that sway the silken fronds,  
Perfumes that rise in scented store—  
Beneath the stars of Singapore.

O palms and stars of Singapore,  
    Warm lips that press, soft bands that soothe,  
A heart caught close forevermore—  
Dear palms, dear stars, of Singapore !

## CHERRY BLOSSOMS OF TOKYO

Dawn rises red across the east

In Tokyo, in Tokyo:

The morning mists fade into light,

The cherries flush to rosy-white,

Clear songs thrill every feathered throat

When cherries blow,

And cherries glow

Along the winding palace moat

In Tokyo.

High noon comes crystal through the skies

In Tokyo, in Tokyo

And crowns each willowed April height,

The cherries gleam soft silver-white,

And reverent pilgrims throng to gaze

When cherries blow,

And cherries glow

Among far, quiet temple ways

In Tokyo.

Dusk steals in sandals softly grey

To Tokyo, to Tokyo:

Dim lanterns glimmer through the night,

The blossoms melt to somber-white,

Ethereal, fragile, tender, cool,

When cherries blow,

And cherries glow

Around pavilioned garden pool

In Tokyo.

## AT CHOANJI

(Diamond Mountains, Korea)

We have turned gentle Time to a bird of steel  
Clucking the moments in exacting tone;  
It holds us with rigid claws, we are never alone,  
Never serene. We spin, turn, spin, and feel  
Goaded relentlessly onwards. Were truth told,  
I fear it could be said that we have lost  
All sense of due proportion, and are tossed,  
Thin spinning bubbles, where hot fevers hold  
Their breathless, senseless sway.

Thank God that here  
The tranquil sweetness of silver crag and pine  
Rests still unbroken, as in mellow line  
Soft-footed days tread out a rounded year . . . .

And Time is a calm old priest who falls asleep  
As orioles call, or the morning shadows creep.

## THE BOOK OF POEMS

It is never I who stop to seek new songs,—

    Rather 't is *they* that come and leap at me,  
And tease at my thoughts, until I cradle them down  
    Into soft words. Then they doze happily,

And rest at last in peace, and nag no more

    At Memory, the tired nurse. She can stand and look  
At the strange little varied heads tucked side by side  
    And murmur fondly, "They do make quite a book !"