

Poetry of the Classical Age

在原業平 *Ariwara no Narihira* (825-880)

KKS.53

Spring: On seeing cherry blossoms at Nagisa Villa

Ah, if in this world
there were no such thing
as cherry blossoms—
then perhaps in the springtime
our hearts could be at peace.

-----Carter

if this world had never
known the ephemeral charms
of cherry blossoms
then our hearts in spring might match
nature's deep tranquility

-----Rodd

If there were no such thing
as cherry blossoms
in this world,
in springtime how untroubled
our hearts would be!

-----Watson

If only this world
were without cherry blossoms
then would our hearts
be at ease
in springtime.

-----Shirane

なぎさの院にて
さくらを見てよめる
世中に
たえてさくらの
なかりせば
春の心は
のどけからまし

*yo no naka ni / taete sakura no / nakariseba /
haru no kokoro wa / nodokekaramashi*

KKS.349

*Felicitations: Composed when there was a fortieth-year celebration for
the Horikawa Chancellor at the Kujō Mansion*

Scatter at random,
O blossoms of the cherry,
and cloud the heavens,
that you may conceal the path
old age is said to follow

-----Carter

oh cherry blossoms
flutter down and cloud the path
where age it is said
approaches deceive him with
tumbling curtains of petals

-----Rodd

Cherry blossoms,
scatter and hide it,
that road they say
old age comes by—
make him lose his way!

-----Watson

Scatter at random,
O blossoms of the cherry,
and cloud the heavens,
that you may conceal the path
old age is said to follow.

-----McCullough

堀河のおほいまうちぎみの
四十賀、九条の家に
てしける時によめる
さくら花 ちりかひくもれ
おいらくの こむといふなる
道まがふがに

*sakurabana / chirikaikumore / oiraku no / komu
to iu naru / michi magau ga ni*

Love: Composed during a light rain and sent to a lady whom he had been wooing secretly since early in the third month.

Having passed the night
neither waking or sleeping,
I have spent the day
brooding and watching the rain—
the unending rain of spring.

-----Carter

I am one with spring
neither sleeping nor waking
till night turns to dawn
and each day passes in pensive
gazing endless as the long rains

-----Rodd

Neither waking or sleeping,
I saw the night out,
and now spend
all day in thought
staring at these long spring rains

-----Watson

I spent the night
neither awake
nor yet asleep
and the day gazing at the rain
thinking of spring

-----Shirane

恋 やよひのついたちよりしのびに
人にもらいひてのちに、雨のそ
ほふりけるによみてつかはしける
おきもせず ねもせでよるを
あかしては 春の物とて
ながめくらしつ

*oki mo sezu / ne mo sede yoru o / akashite
wa / haru no mono tote / nagameku-
rashitsu*

Love: When Naribira went to Ise Province, he met secretly with the woman who was serving as the Ise Virgin. The next morning, just as he was worried about finding someone to deliver her a message, he received this from the woman herself.

Did you come to me?
Was it I who went to you?
I am beyond knowing.
Was it dream or reality?
Was I sleeping or awake?

-----Carter

did you come to me
or did I go to you I
cannot now recall
was it in dream or reality
was I sleeping or awake

-----Rodd

Did you come here?
Did I go to you?
I don't even know—
Was it a dream? a reality?
Were we sleeping? Were we awake?

-----Watson

Did you come to me?
Did I go to you?
I cannot tell.
A dream, or reality?
Was I asleep, or awake?

-----Shirane

Did you come to me?
Did I go to you?
I cannot tell.
A dream, or reality?
Was I asleep, or awake?

-----Shirane

恋 業平朝臣の伊勢のくににまかりたりける
時、齋宮なりける人にいとみそかにあひて、
又のあしたに人やるすべなくて思ひをりける
あひだに女のもとよりおこせたりける
きみやこし 我や行きけむ
おもほえず 夢かうつつか
ねてかさめてか

*kimi ya koshi / ware ya yukikemu / omoezu /
yume ka utsutsu ka / nete ka samete ka*

The reply

I have wandered lost
in the gloomy darkness
that is my heart.
Whether dream or reality,
let someone else decide.
-----Carter

I am lost in the
total darkness of my heart—
people of this world
you decide for me if love
was dream or reality
-----Rodd

I lost my way
in a darkness
that blinds my heart—
dream or reality—
let the people of the world decide
-----Watson

I have wandered
in the darkness
of my heart.
Let us decide tonight:
dream or reality.
-----Shirane

返し
かきくらす 心のやみに
迷ひにき 夢うつつとは
世人さだめよ

*kakikurasu / kokoro no yami ni /
madoiniki / yume utsutsu to wa /
yohito sadame yo*

Love: Narihira once had a secret affair with a woman living in the western wing of the palace of the Gojō Empress. Without a word to him, this lady suddenly moved away after the tenth day of the first month. He heard where she had gone, but was unable even to send her a message. In the spring of the following year, Narihira went to the western wing on a night when the plum blossoms were in full bloom and the moon was at its loveliest. Recalling the past, he spent the night lying on the bare wooden floor. As the moon sank low in the sky, he composed:

恋 五条のきさいの宮のにしのたい
にすみける人にほいにはあらでもの
いひわたりけるを、む月のとをかあ
まりになむほかへかくれにける、あ
り所はききけれどえ物もいはで、又
のとしのはる、むめの花さかりに月
のおもしろかりける夜、こぞをこひ
てかのにしのたいにいきて、月のか
たぶくまであばらなるいたじきにふ
せりてよめる
月やあらぬ 春や昔の
春ならぬ わが身ひとつは
もとの身にして

tsuki ya aranu / haru ya mukashi no / haru naranu / waga mi hitotsu wa / moto no mi ni shite

Is this not the moon?
And is this not the springtime,
the springtime of old?
Only this body of mine
the same body as before...
-----Carter

is this not that moon
is this not that spring we
shared so long ago
it seems that I alone am
unaltered from what was then
-----Rodd

Surely this is the moon,
surely this spring
is the spring of years past—
or am I the only one
the same as before?
-----Watson

Is there no moon?
Is the spring
not the spring of the past?
I alone
am as I was...
-----Shirane

Lament: Composed when he was ill and growing weak

Upon this pathway,
I have long heard others say,
man sets forth at last—
yet I had not thought to go
so very soon as today.
-----Carter

although I've heard
there is a road we all must
travel never did
I think I might set out on
it yesterday or today
-----Rodd

I had heard
there is a path
that all must follow
but I didn't think yesterday
that I'd be going today
-----Shirane

I had long heard
of the path
we all must follow in the end
but yesterday I did not think
it would be today
-----Collins

In the end
that's the road I'll travel—
I've known that all along—
but I didn't think I'd have to start
this very day
-----Watson

やまひしてよわくなりける
時よめる
つひにゆく みちとはかねて
ききしかど きのふけふとは
おもはざりしを

*tsui ni yuku / michi to wa kanete / kikishi-
kado / kinō kyō to wa / omowazarishi o*

小野小町 *Ono no Komachi* (fl. ca. 850)*Spring*

The color of the flowers
has faded—in vain
I grow old in this world,
lost in thought
as the long rain falls.
-----Shirane

The beauty of the flowers faded—
no one cared—
and I watched myself
grow old in the world
as the long rains were falling.
-----Watson

the colors of the
blossoms have faded and passed
as heedlessly I
squandered my days in pensive
gazing and the long rains fell
-----Rodd

The flowers withered
Their color faded away,
While meaninglessly
I spent my days in brooding,
And the long rains were falling.
-----Keene

春
花の色は うつりにけりな
いたづらに わが身世にふる
ながめせしまに

*hana no iro wa / utsuri ni keru na
/ itazura ni / waga mi yo ni furu
/ nagame seshi ma ni*

Love: Topic unknown

Did you come to me
because I dropped off to sleep,
tormented by love?
If I had known I dreamed,
I would not have awakened.
-----Carter

in love-tormented
sleep I saw him beside me—
had I known my love's
visit was but a dream I
should never have awakened
-----Rodd

Because I fell asleep
thinking of him—
was that why he appeared?
If I'd known it was a dream
I'd have never woken up
-----Watson

Longing for him
I fell asleep—
is that why he appeared?
Had I known it was a dream
I would never have awakened.
-----Shirane

題しらず
思ひつつ
ぬればや人の
見えつらむ
夢としりせば
さめざらましを

omoitsutsu / nureba ya hito no / mietsuramu / yume to shiriseba / samezaramashi o

Love: Topic unknown

Since seeing in my sleep
the one whom I love,
it's these things
called dreams
I've learned to trust.
-----Shirane

since that brief sleep when
first I saw the one I love
it is those fleeting
dreams ephemera of the
night on which I now rely
-----Rodd

Ever since I dozed off
and met the one I long for,
I've begun to count on
these things called dreams.
-----Watson

Since encountering
my beloved as I dozed,
I have come to feel
that it is dreams, not real life,
on which I can pin my hopes.
-----McCullough

題しらず
うたたねに
恋しきひとを
見てしより
夢てふ物は
憑みそめてき

utatane ni / koishiki hito o / miteshi yori / yume chō mono wa / tanomi someteki

Love: Topic unknown

Autumn nights, it seems,
are long by repute alone:
scarcely had we met
when morning's first light appeared,
leaving everything unsaid.
-----Carter

the autumn night was
long in name only at last
we met but the blush
of dawn parted us before
the words of love were spoken
-----Rodd

Sheer fiction,
that autumn nights are longer—
we've hardly met
and before we know it
dawn's breaking through!
-----Watson

Autumn nights, long
only in name:
let's meet, we say,
yet dawn comes to part us
before we've begun.
-----Shirane

題しらず
秋の夜も
名のみなりけり
あふといへば
事ぞともなく
あけぬるものを

aki no yo mo / na nomi narikeri / au to ieba / koto zo to mo naku / akenuru mono o

Love: Topic unknown

Yielding to a love
that recognizes no bounds,
I will go by night—
for the world will not censure
one who treads the path of dreams.
-----Carter

guided by a love
that has no bounds I shall go
to him by darkness—
surely no one will question
one who treads the path of dreams
-----Rodd

My thoughts of you are endless,
and now that night has come
I'll visit you by dream paths—
they can't blame me for that
-----Watson

In boundless desire
lit by the fire of love
this night at least
may you tread the path of dreams
and no one blame us.
-----Shirane

題しらず
限なき
思ひのままに
よるもこむ
ゆめぢをさへに
人はとがめじ

kagiri naki / omoi no mama ni / yoru mo komu / yumeji o sae ni / hito wa togameji

Love: Topic unknown

Though I go to you
ceaselessly along dream paths,
the sum of those trysts
is less than a single glimpse
granted in the waking world.
-----Carter

though my feet never
cease running to him on the
byways of my dreams
such meetings do not equal
one waking glimpse of my love
-----Rodd

On the path of dreams
my feet never rest
as I run to see you,
though it's not worth a glimpse
of your waking self.
-----Shirane

Though my feet never rest
as I make my way
on the path of dreams,
it is hardly the same
as one waking glimpse
-----Collins

題しらず
夢ぢには
あしもやすめず
かよへども
うつつにひとめ
見しごとはあらず

yumeji ni wa / ashi mo yasumezu / kayoedomo / utsutsu ni hitome / mishi ga goto wa arazu

Love: Topic unknown

What is it that fades
without a change in color?
It is the flower
in the heart of those who love
in this world of ours
-----Carter

that which fades within
without changing its color
is the hidden bloom
of the heart of man in
this world of disillusion
-----Rodd

They change,
though you can't see it
in the color of their faces—
these blossoms that are the hearts
of the people of this world.
-----Watson

What fades away
its color unseen
is the flower
of the heart
of those of this world.
-----Shirane

題しらず
色見えて
うつろふ物は
世中の人の心の
花にぞ有りける

iro miede / utsurō mono wa / yo no naka no / hito no kokoro no / hana ni zo arikeru

紀貫之 *Ki no Tsurayuki* (872-945)

KKS.2

Spring: Composed on the first day of spring

Soaking my long sleeves,
I took up in my cupped hands
waters that later froze.
And today, as spring begins,
will they be melting in the wind?
-----Carter

today long-awaited
day when spring begins will
the breeze melt icebound
waters in which we once dipped
cupped hands drenching summer
robes
-----Rodd

Waters we dipped from,
wetting our sleeves,
are frozen now—
will the breezes of this
first day of spring unbind them?
-----Watson

Waters I cupped my
hands to drink, wetting
my sleeves, still frozen:
might this first day of
spring's wind thaw them?
-----Shirane

春 はるたちける日よめる
袖ひちて
むすびし水の
こほれるを
春立つけふの
風やとくらむ

*sode hichite / musubishi mizu no / kōreru o
/ haru tatsu kyō no / kaze ya tokuramu*

KKS.9

Spring: On a snowfall

When snow comes in spring—
fair season of layered haze
and burgeoning buds—
flowers fall in villages
where flowers have yet to bloom.
-----Carter

when the warm mists veil
all and buds swell while yet
spring snows drift downward
even in the hibernal
village crystal blossoms fall
-----Rodd

Mists rise, tree buds swell,
and when the spring snow falls,
even in villages with no blossoms
blossoms come whirling down.
-----Watson

When spring snow falls
upon tree buds
veiled in mist,
petals fall and scatter in villages
where they have yet to bloom.
-----Collins

春 ゆきのふりけるをよめる
霞たち
このめもはるの
雪ふれば
花なきさとも
花ぞちりける

*kasumi tachi / ko no me mo haru no /
yuki fureba / bana naki sato mo / bana zo
chirikeru*

Spring: Composed when visiting a mountain temple

On a spring hillside
I took lodging for the night;
and as I slept
the blossoms kept falling
even in the midst of my dreams.

-----Carter

last night while I slept
here in the vernal mountains
I found that in my
dreams as in my waking there
were fading falling petals

-----Rodd

I found lodging
on the spring mountainside
and slept the night—
and in my dreams, too,
blossoms were falling.

-----Watson

Even in my dreams
blossoms came fluttering down
on the night I spent
sleeping in borrowed quarters
on a hillside in spring.

-----McCullough

春 山でらに
まうでたりけるによめる
やどりして
春の山辺に
ねたる夜は
夢の内にも
花ぞちりける

yadori shite / haru no yamabe ni / netaru yo wa /
yume no uchi ni mo / hana zo chirikeru

Spring: After a long absence, a man spent the night at the home of a certain person in Hatsuse where he used to stay. When his host pointed out that the place has always been available for him to visit, the man broke off a nearby branch of plum blossoms and composed:

About the people
living on in this old place
I cannot be sure—
but the plum blossoms at least
have the scent of long ago.

-----Carter

the state of human hearts
I cannot know and yet
the blossoms of this
familiar village still greet
me with the scent of years past

-----Rodd

As for people—well,
I don't know how they feel,
but in my old home
these flowers still bloom
with the same scent as before.

-----Watson

I cannot know what feelings
people hold in their hearts,
but in the old village
the blossoms, at least,
still emit their familiar fragrance.

-----Collins

春 はつせにまうづるごとにやどりける人
の家に、ひさしくやどらで、ほどへてのち
にいたれりければ、かの家のあるじ、かく
さだかになむやどりはあるといひいだして
侍りければ、そこにたてりけるむめの花を
をりてよめる
人はいさ心もしらずふるさととは花ぞ昔の
かにほひける

hito wa isa / kokoro mo shirazu / furusato wa / hana
zo mukashi no / ka ni noikeru

Autumn: Composed on a visit to the northern hills to gather autumn leaves

Unseen by men's eyes,
the colored leaves have scattered
deep in the mountains:
truly we may say brocade
worn in the darkness of night!
-----Carter

The crimson leaves
that scatter
deep in the mountains
with no one to see them—
a brocade spread by night
-----Collins

deep in the mountains
they have fallen with no one
to see their splendor—
these autumn leaves are a rich
brocade spread in the dark of night
-----Rodd

春 北山に紅葉をらむとてまか
れりける時によめる
見る人も
なくてちりぬる
おく山の
紅葉は
よるのにしきなりけり

*miru hito mo / nakute chirinuru / oku yama no
momiji wa / yoru no nishiki nari keru*

Parting: Composed when parting from someone he spoke with at a rocky spring as he crossed a mountain in Shiga.

As when a traveler
seeks in vain to slake his thirst
at a hillside spring
soiled by drops from his cupped hands—
so, unsatisfied, I part from you.
-----Carter

my thirst still unslaked
droplets from my cupped palms cloud
the pure mountain spring—
still would I tarry with one
from whom I must now take leave
-----Rodd

I dip my hands
but drops muddy the mountain spring
before I've quenched my thirst—
still thirsty for your company
I must move on.
-----Watson

And so we must part, unsatisfied,
just as my thirst remains unquenched
by water from a mountain well
clouded by droplets
from cupped hands.
-----Collins

離別 しがの山ごえにて、
いしゐのもとにてものいひける
人のわかれけるをりによめる
むすぶての しづくににごる
山の井の あかでも人に
わかれぬるかな

*musubu te no / shizuku ni nigoru / yama no i
no / akade mo hito ni / wakarenuru kana*

Autumn: Composed during the Engi Era (901-23), when someone requested an autumn poem.

Ah, the autumn moon—
shining forth with such brilliance
that I can make out
the shapes of the crimson leaves
as they fall to earth.
-----Carter

The rays of the autumn moon
shine so clear,
you can even see
the shapes of
the red leaves as they fall
-----Watson

Autumn moonlight,
so pure and clear,
traces the very edges
of the crimson leaves
as they flutter down.
-----Collins

秋 延喜の御時秋の歌め
しありければ奉りける
秋の月 光さやけみ
紅葉ばの おつる影さへ
見えわたるかな

*aki no tsuki / hikari sayakemi / momi-
jiba no / otsuru kage sae / miewateru
kana*

Spring: A Poem from the Teiji-in Poetry Contest

The wind that scatters
cherry blossoms from their boughs
is not a cold wind—
and the sky has never known
snow flurries like these.
-----Carter

The wind beneath the trees
where cherry blossoms scatter
is not cold at all—
and yet the sky fills with snow
it has never known.
-----Collins

春 亭子院の歌合わせに
桜散る 木の下風は
寒からで 空に知らぬ
雪ぞ降りける

*sakura chiru / ko no shita kaze wa
/ samukarade / sora ni shiranu /
yuki zo furikeru*

❖ A Sequence from Book II of the Kokinshū, “Spring”

紀友則 *Ki no Tomonori* (late 9th c.)

KKS.84

On seeing falling cherry blossoms

On this springtime day
when the celestial orb
diffuses mild light,
why should the cherry blossoms
scatter with unquiet hearts?
-----McCullough

the air is still and
sun-warmed on this day of spring—
why then do cherry
blossoms cascade to earth
with such restless changeful hearts
-----Rodd

桜の花のちるをよめる
久方の
ひかりのどけき
春の日に
しづ心なく
花のちるらむ

*hisakata no / hikari nodokeki / haru no hi
ni / shizugokoro naku / hana no chirura-
mu*

藤原好風 *Fujiwara no Yoshikaze* (b.860)

KKS.85

Spring: On seeing falling cherry blossoms at the guard station of the crown prince.

You springtime breezes,
blow clear of the cherry tree's
blossoming flowers,
that I may test this question:
is it they who wish to fall?
-----McCullough

oh spring breeze please do
not draw near these petals as
you waft for I would
like to know whether it is
their own wish that they should fall
-----Rodd

春宮のたちはきのぢんにて
さくらの花のちるをよめる
春風は
花のあたりを
よきてふけ
心づからや
うつろふと見む

*harukaze wa / hana no atari o / yogite fuke / kokoro-
zukara ya / utsurou to mimu*

凡河内躬恒 *Ōshikōchi no Mitsune* (859?-925?)

KKS.86

Spring: On falling cherry blossoms

For cherry blossoms
to be descending
like snow
is sorrow enough.
How do the blowing breezes
propose that they scatter?
-----Carter

although I wish the
cherry blossoms would not scatter
not even gently
as the flakes of snow with what
turbulence the winds toss them
-----Rodd

さくらのちるをよめる
雪とのみ
ふるだにあるを
さくら花
いかにちれとか
風の吹くらむ

*yuki to nomi / furu dani aru o / sakura-
bana / ika ni chire to ka / kaze no fukura-
mu*

紀貫之 *Ki no Tsurayuki*

KKS.87

Spring: On returning from Mt. Hiei

No doubt the breezes
are wreaking their will with them—
those cherry blossoms
I could but glimpse on high peaks
as I made my way toward home.
-----Carter

high on mountain peaks
I gazed and longed to linger
admiring cherry
blossoms how the ceaseless winds
must be caressing them now
-----Rodd

ひえにのぼりてかへ
りまうできてよめる
山たかみ
みつつわがこし
さくら花
風は心に
まかすべらなり

*yama takami / mitsutsu waga koshi / sakurabana
/ kaze wa kokoro ni / makasubera nari*

大伴黒主 *Ōtomo no Kuronushi* (late 9th century)

KKS.88

Spring: Topic unknown

Everyone feels grief
when the cherry blossoms scatter.
Might they be tears—
those drops of moisture falling
in the gentle rains of spring?
-----Carter

the spring showers that
fall must surely be teardrops—
even among men
there is none but feels regret
when cherry petals scatter
-----Rodd

題しらず
春雨の
ふるは涙か
さくら花
ちるををしまぬ
人しなければ

*harusame no / furu wa namida ka /
sakurabana / chiru o oshimanu / hito shi
nakereba*

紀貫之 *Ki no Tsurayuki*

KKS.89

Spring: From the poetry contest at Teiji Villa

In the lingering wake
of the breeze that has scattered
the cherry tree's bloom,
petal wavelets ripple out
into the waterless sky.
-----Carter

the lovely petals
stripped from all the branches still
undulate in the
sky waterless waves cross the
heavens keepsakes of the wind
-----Rodd

亭子院哥合哥
さくら花
ちりぬる風の
なごりには
水なきそらに
浪ぞたちける

*sakurabana / chirinuru kaze no / nago-
ri ni wa / mizu naki sora ni / nami zo
tachikeru*

奈良の帝 *The Nara Emperor (Heizei)* (774-824)

KKS.90

Even at Nara—
the ancient royal city
now a former home—
the flowers have come into bloom
in the colors of the past.

-----Carter

Nara the ancient
capital now deserted
by the throngs of old
only the blossoms visit
their loveliness unchanged

-----Rodd

ふるさとと
なりにしならの
みやこにも
色はかはらず
花はさきけり

*furusato to / narinishi nara no /
miyako ni mo / iro wa kawarazu /
hana wa sakikeri*

良岑宗貞 [遍昭] *Yoshimine no Munesade [Henjō]* (816-890)

KKS.91

Spring: Composed as a spring poem

We cannot behold
the beauty of the blossoms
enshrouded in haze—
yet steal us their scent, at least,
spring breeze blowing from the hills.

-----Carter

beautiful blossoms
enshrouded by the jealous
mists so warm and dense
oh springtime breezes of the
heights steal for us their fragrance

-----Rodd

春のうたとてよめる
花の色は
かすみにこめて
見せずとも
かをだにぬすめ
春の山かぜ

*hana no iro wa / kasumi ni komete / mi-
sezu to mo / ka o dani nusume / haru no
yamakaze*

素性 *Sosei* (late 9th century)

KKS.92

Spring: From the Imperial Consort's poetry contest during the Kōmyō era.

I shall dig no more
flowering trees to be planted,
for when springtime comes
human affections copy
the blossoms' inconsistency.

-----Carter

never again will
I plant a blossoming tree
in my garden for
in spring petals fade and fall
and teach men their faithlessness

-----Rodd

寛平御時きさいの宮
の哥合のうた
はなの木も
今はほりうゑじ
春たてば
うつろふ色に
人ならひけり

*hana no ki mo / ima wa hōriueji / haru tateba /
utsurou iro ni / hito naraikeri*

よみ人しらず *Anonymous*

KKS.93

Spring: Topic unknown

It is not as though
springtime came to some villages
and not to others.
Why then may we see flowers
blooming and failing to bloom?
-----Carter

spring does not decide
whether to appear in a
village here or there—
yet we see flowers on one
tree but not another
-----Rodd

題しらず
春の色の
いたりいたらぬ
さとはあらし
さけるさかざる
花の見ゆらむ

haru no iro no / itari itaranu / sato wa
araji / sakeru sakazaru / hana no miyura-
mu

紀貫之 *Ki no Tsurayuki*

KKS.94

Spring: Composed as a spring poem

Observe how the haze
of spring spreads its gauzy mantle
on Miwa Mountain:
might flowers be blooming there
of which men have no knowledge?
-----Carter

oh mists of spring must
you hide even famous Mount
Miwa for surely
in that holy place must bloom
flowers unknown to mankind
-----Rodd

春のうたとてよめる
みわ山を
しかもかくすか
春霞
人にしられぬ
花やさくらむ

miwayama o / shika mo kakusu ka /
harugasumi / hito ni shiranu / hana ya
sakuramu

素性 *Sosei* (late 9th century)

KKS.95

Spring: Sent to the Urin-in Prince (Tsuneyasu) when the poet went to view the blossoms in the northern hills

Today I will press
deep into the hills of spring.
If twilight descends,
can it be that I will find
no lodging under the blossoms?
-----Carter

come then just today
let us wander deep into
hills of spring should the
sun set might we not shelter
beneath the fragile blossoms
-----Rodd

うりむゐんのみこのもとに、
花見にきた山のほとりにま
かれりける時によめる
いざけふは
春の山辺に
まじりなむ
くれなばなげの
花のかげかは

iza kyō wa / haru no yamabe ni / majirinamu / kuren-
aba nage no / hana no kage ka wa

Spring: Composed as a spring poem

How long might my heart
wander from this place to that
across meadows?
Forever and forever,
unless the blossoms scatter.
-----Carter

how long might my heart
enraptured linger here in
the meadows of spring—
if the blossoms never fell
I would stay a thousand years
-----Rodd

春のうたととてよめる
いつまでか
野辺に心の
あくがれむ
花しちらずは
千世もへぬべし

*itsu made ka / nobe ni kokoro no / akug-
aremu / hana shi chirazu wa / chiyo mo
henubeshi*

よみ人しらず *Anonymous**Spring: Topic unknown*

There will always be flowers
bursting into glorious bloom
whenever spring comes,
but whether I shall see them
rests with my allotted span.
-----Carter

each spring the blossoms
reach their brilliance once again
but seeing them so
we are reminded that to
watch them fall is our lot
-----Rodd

題しらず
春ごとに
花のさかりは
ありなめど
あひ見む事は
いのちなりけり

*haru goto ni / hana no sakari wa / ari-
namedo / aimimu koto wa / inochi narik-
eri*

Spring: Topic unknown

If all in this world
resembled flowers in bloom,
then those bygone days
now forever in the past
would also come back again.
-----Carter

if the world of man
were as unchanging as these
blooms renewed each year
then the time which I have lived
would return to me once more
-----Rodd

花のごと
世のつねならば
すぐしてし
昔は又も
かへりきなまし

*hana no goto / yo no tsune naraba
/ sugushiteshi / mukashi wa mata
mo / kaerinikinamashi*

Spring: Topic unknown

Could I give commands
to breezes as might blow,
I would say to them
“There is here a single tree
from which you must stay away.”
-----Carter

if these swift-blowing
breezes were to submit to
my will how quickly
would I order them to stay
their force and spare this one tree
-----Rodd

吹く風に
あつらへつくる
物ならば
このひともとは
よぎよといはまし

*fuku kaze ni / atsuraetsukuru /
mono naraba / kono hitomoto wa
/ yogi yo to iwamashi*

KKS.100

Spring: Topic unknown

Though he does not come—
the one whose call I await—
I have broken off
a branch of the flowering tree
the warbler begged me to spare.
-----Carter

awaiting my love
he who never came I plucked
the spray of blossoms
over which the mountain thrust
had wept tears and sadly sung
-----Rodd

まつ人も
こぬものゆゑに
うぐひすの
なきつる花を
をりてけるかな

*matsu hito mo / konu mono no
yue ni / uguisu no / nakitsuru
hana o / oritekeru kana*

藤原興風 *Fujiwara no Okikaze* (early 10th century)

KKS.101

Spring: From the Imperial Consort's poetry contest during the Kamyō era.

Of the flowers that bloom
in endless variety,
all are inconstant—
yet which of us cherishes
grievances against springtime?
-----Carter

innumerable
the blooms yet each must fade and
fall quickly changing—
still who can rightly think
ill thoughts of gentle spring
-----Rodd

寛平御時きさいの宮
のうたあはせのうた
さく花は
千くさながらに
あだなれど
たれかははるを
うらみはてたる

*saku hana wa / chikusa nagara ni / ada naredo /
tare ka wa haru o / uramihatetaru*

Spring: [same as 101]

That the springtime haze
should have seemed many-colored
was simply because
it reflected the blossoms
on the mountain where it trailed.
-----Carter

the spring mists displayed
a thousand colors was their
glory merely a
reflection of the blossoms
enveloping the mountains
-----Rodd

春霞
色のちくさに
見えつるは
たなびく山の
花のかげかも

harugasumi / iro no chikusa ni /
mietsuru wa / tanabiku yama no
/ hana no kage ka mo

在原元方 *Ariwara no Motokata* (early 10th century)*Spring: [same as 101]*

Distant though they be—
those springtime mountains rising
where the haze fills the sky—
the fragrance of flowers in bloom
drifts in with the blowing breeze.
-----Carter

the vernal mountains
where mists rise with the spring are
far away yet from them
come soft breezes laden with
the fragrance of flowers
-----Rodd

霞立つ
春の山べは
とほけれど
吹きくる風は
花のかぞする

kasumi tatsu / haru no yamabe
wa / tokeredo / fukikuru kaze wa
/ hana no ka zo suru

凡河内躬恒 *Ōshikōchi no Mitsune**Spring: On seeing fading blossoms*

The sight of the flowers
has worked a change in my heart,
but I will take care
to show nothing in my face—
lest someone should find it out.
-----Carter

seeing the flowers
wither and fall my heart too
changes its colors
but I shall not display them—
others shall not know my weakness
-----Rodd

うつろへる花を見てよ
める
花見れば
心さへにぞ
うつりける
いろにはいでじ
人もこそしれ

hana mireba / kokoro sae ni zo / utsurikeru / iro
ni wa ideji / hito mo koso shire

よみ人しらず *Anonymous*

KKS.105

Spring: Topic unknown

Whenever the sound
of a warbler's plaintive call
draws me to a field,
I find the breezes blowing
through blossoms of faded hue.

-----Carter

the lament of the
mountain thrush fills each meadow—
and as I draw near
I discover the faded
blossoms tossed upon the wind

-----Rodd

題しらず
鶯の
なくのべごとに
きて見れば
うつろふ花に
風ぞふきける

uguisu no / naku nobe goto ni / kite mireba /
utsurou hana ni / kaze zo fukikeru

*Poetry of the Classical Age (Continued)*曾根良忠 *Sone no Yoshitada* (fl. ca. 980-1000)

GSIS.271

Autumn: Topic Unknown

Cry then out loud—
you cricket in your tangle
of mugwort-timber!
The passing of autumn
is indeed so sad a time.

-----Carter

Weep, yes, weep your fill,
Crickets under the stand
Of wormwood plants:
Autumn drawing to a close
Is enough to break one's heart.

-----Keene

秋 題知らず
なげやなげ
よもぎが杣の
蟋蟀
過ぎゆく秋は
げにぞ悲しき

nake ya nake / yomogi ga soma no / kiri-
girisu / sugiyuku aki wa / ge ni zo kana-
shiki

SIS.1111

The End of Autumn: from a group of 360 poems

O autumn wind,
Do not blow and destroy
The spider webs
That hide the gaping cracks
Of my derelict hut.

-----Keene

Autumn wind
do not disturb them,
for they hide the cracks
in the walls of my dilapidated house—
those spider webs.

-----Collins

離秋 三百六十首のな
かに
秋風は
吹きな破りそ
我宿の
あばらかくせる
蛛の巣がきを

akikaze wa / fuki na yaburiso / waga yado no /
abara kakuseru / kumo no sugaki o

Summer: End of the Sixth Month

This woman of mine,
waking up with tangled hair
matted down with sweat—
at noon on a summer day
can I think I don't love her?

-----Carter

Summer afternoons—
when her hair is drenched in sweat
and disheveled from the bed—
how could I see them
as disagreeable?

-----Collins

わぎもこが
汗にそぼつる
寝たわ髪
夏のひるまは
うとしとや見る

wagimoko ga / ase ni sobotsuru /
netawagami / natsu no hiruma
wa / utoshi to ya miru

和泉式部 *Izumi Shikibu* (fl. ca. 970-1030)*Spring: Topic unknown*

Of no use at all—
these cherry blossoms blooming
around my house.
For it's the tree's owner
people really come to see.

-----Carter

The cherry trees
around my house
are useless—
It's the owner
people come to see.

-----Collins

春 題知らず
我宿の
桜はかひも
なかりけり
主人からこそ
人も見にくれ

waga yado no / sakura wa kai mo / na-
karikeri / aruji kara koso / hito mo mi ni
kure

The cherry tree
In my garden has blossomed,
But it does no good:
The woman, and not the tree,
Is what draws the visitors.

-----Keene

Winter: Topic unknown

What am I to do
if the man I have waited for
should come to me now—
not wanting footsteps to disturb
the snow of my garden court?

-----Carter

If the one I've waited for
should come now,
I wouldn't know what to do.
How sad to have someone tread upon
the snow in my garden.

-----Collins

冬 題知らず
待つ人の
今も来たらば
いかがせむ
踏ままく惜しき
庭の雪かな

matsu hito no / ima mo kitaraba / ikaga
semu / fumamaku oshiki / niwa no yuki
kana

Love

With not a thought
for my black hair's disarray,
I lay myself down—
soon longing for the one whose hands
have so often brushed it smooth.
-----Carter

As I lie prostrate
Indifferent that my black hair
Is all disheveled,
I recall with yearning how
He always combed and stroked it.
-----Keene

Unaware of my black hair in disorder, I lay face down till he first lifted it—
it's him I miss
-----Watson

恋
黒髪の
乱れも志らず
打臥せば
まづかきやりし
人ぞ恋しき

kurokami no / midare mo shirazu /
uchifuseba / mazu kakiyarishi / hito zo
koishiki

Love: Topic unknown

In this world,
there's no color called "love."
And yet
there is something
that has seeped deeply into my body.
-----Collins

There's no color called love in this world, yet how thoroughly it has dyed my
heart!
-----Watson

恋題知らず
世中に
恋てふ色は
なけれども
深く身にしむ
物にぞありける

yo no naka ni / koi chō iro wa / nakere-
domo / fukaku mi ni shimu / mono ni zo
arikeru

Buddhism: Sent to His Holiness Shōku

From one darkness
into another darkness
I must soon go.
Light the long way before me,
moon on the mountain rim!
-----Carter

Coming from darkness
I shall enter on a path
Of Greater darkness.
Shine on me from the distance,
Moon on the edge of the mount.
-----Keene

From darkness into the path of darkness I'm bound to enter. Shine on me in
the distance, moon at the rim of the hill.
-----Watson

性空上人のもとに
よみて遣はしける
暗きより
暗き道にぞ
入りぬべき
はるかに照せ
山の端の月

kuraki yori / kuraki michi ni zo / irinubeki /
haruka ni terase / yama no ha no tsuki

Shinto: Written upon seeing fireflies at a purification stream when on a visit to Kibune Shrine after being abandoned by a man

So forlorn am I
that when I see a firefly
out in the marshes,
it looks like my soul rising
from longing from my body.
-----Carter

Lost in thought—even the firefly from the marsh seems
rise out of my body, like my soul
-----Watson

In my longing,
the fireflies of the marsh
look to me like my very spirit
driven from my body
by desire.
-----Collins

のういんほうし

能因法師 *Nōin* (988-1050?)

神祇 男に忘られて侍りけ
る頃貴ふねにまゐりてみた
らし川に螢のとび侍りける
を見て詠める
物思へば
澤の螢も
我身より
あくがれ出づる
玉かとぞみる

*mono omoeba / sawa no hotaru o / waga mi yori / akugarei-
zuru / tama ka to zo miru*

Travel: Written at the Shirakawa Barrier when he was going down to Michinoku.

At the capital
it was with the spreading haze
that I took to the road.
Now the autumn wind is blowing
at Shirakawa Barrier.
-----Carter

I left the capital
Together with the rising
Mists of spring, but
Autumn winds are blowing now
At Shirakawa Barrier
-----Keene

羈旅 陸奥国にまいり
下りけるに、白河の関
にてよみ侍りける
都をば
霞とともに
立ちしかど
秋風ぞ吹く
白河の関

*miyako o ba / kasumi to tomo ni / tachishikado / akika-
ze zo fuku / Shirakawa no seki*

Spring: Written when he was in a mountain village.

To a mountain village
at nightfall on a spring day
I came and saw this:
blossoms scattering on echoes
from the vesper bells.
-----Carter

At evening in spring
In a mountain village—
Just as I arrived,
To the sound of a vesper bell,
Cherry blossoms were falling.
-----Keene

春 山里にまかり
て侍りける
山里の
春の夕暮れ
来てみれば
入相の鐘に
花ぞ散りける

yamazato no / haru no yūgure / kite mireba /
iriai no kane ni / hana zo chirikeru

源俊頼 *Minamoto no Toshiyori [Shunrai]* (1055 - 1129)

KYS.145

Summer: Written on the topic “wind on the water in the cool of the evening.”

When a breeze blows by,
drops of water come across
the lotus leaves,
cooling me down at evening
along with the crickets' cries.
-----Carter

When the wind blows,
jewel-like droplets
cross the floating lotus leaves
and there's pleasant chill
in the sound of the crickets.
-----Collins

夏 水風暮涼といへ
るところをよめる
風吹けば
蓮の浮き葉に
玉こえて
涼しくなりぬ
ひぐらしの声

kaze fukeba / basu no ukiha ni / tama koete /
suzushiku narinu / higurashi no koe

KYS.239

Autumn: Written when given the topic “Miscanthus” for a contest in “searching topics” held by retired emperor Horikawa.

Quails are crying out
on the banks of Mano Cove
as winds from the shore
raise waves in the miscanthus
on an evening in autumn.
-----Carter

Quails cry
at Mano Cove
and the breeze from the shore
stirs waves among the pluming miscanthus—
autumn dusk.
-----Collins

秋 堀河院の御時御前に
ておのおの題をさぐりて
歌つかうまつりけるに薄
をとりてつかうまつれる
うづらなく
真野の入江の
浜風に尾花なみよる
秋の夕ぐれ

uzura naku / mano no irie no / hamakaze ni / obana
nami yoru / aki no yūgure

❁ CHALLENGE

Try to translate the following poem by *Nōin*:

GSIS.366

GLOSSARY

| | |
|--------|---------------------------|
| 【嵐】 | (n.) storm |
| 【吹く】 | (v.) to blow |
| 【三室】 | (n.) place name |
| 【山】 | (n.) mountain |
| 【もみぢ葉】 | (n.) colored leaves |
| 【龍田】 | (n.) Tatsuta = place name |
| 【川】 | (n.) river |
| 【錦】 | (n.) brocade |

嵐あらし吹ふく
の山やまの
もみぢ葉ば
龍田たつたの川かわ
錦にしきなりけり
三室みむろ

