Unforgotten Dreams

Poems by the

Zen Monk Shōtetsu

Steven D. Carter

The Zen monk Shōtetsu (1381-1459) suffered several rather serious misfortunes in his life: h lost all the poems of his first thirty years—more than 30,000 of them—in a fire; his estate rev enues were confiscated by an angry shogun; and rivals refused to allow his work to appear i the only imperially commissioned poetry anthology of his time. Undeterred by these obsta cles, he still managed to make a living from his poetry and won recognition as a true maste widely considered to be the last great poet of the classical *uta*, or *waka*, tradition. Shōtets viewed his poetry as both a professional and religious calling, and his extraordinarily prolif corpus comprised more than 11,000 poems—the single largest body of work in the Japane canon.

The first major collection of Shōtetsu's work in English, *Unforgotten Dreams* presen beautifully rendered translations of more than two hundred poems. The book opens wi Steven Carter's generous introduction on Shōtetsu's life and work and his significance Japanese literature, and includes a glossary of important names and places and a list of sourc of the poems. Revealing as never before the enduring creative spirit of one of Japan's greate poets, this fine collection fills a major gap in the English translations of medieval Japanese li erature.

STEVEN D. CARTER is Professor of Japanese Literature and Chair of the Department of East Asi Languages and Literatures at the University of California, Irvine. He has written, edited, a translated numerous books and articles on Japanese literature, including *Waiting for the Wi Thirty-six Poets of Japan's Late Medieval Age* (Columbia) and *Regent Redux: A Life of t Statesman-Scholar Ichijo Kaneyoshi*.

"The work of Shōtetsu is the great undiscovered country of medieval *waka*. Rich in fantasy, by turns earthly and pitilessly stark, it takes its inspiration from the romantic and experimental aspects of Fujiwara Teika (1162-1241), Shōtetsu's most admired master. In Steven Carter it has found a modern master whose own experimental technique sets the standard for contemporary translation."
–Edwin A. Cranston, Harvard University

"Carter has made a very intelligent selection of poems from Shōtetsu's vast oeuvre, and he renders them ingeniously, in what amounts to a bold and effective experiment in form. These translations, along with Carter's earlier contributions to our understanding of Shōtetsu, should lead other scholars and students to further intensive study of this great poet's work."
–Edward Kamens, Yale University

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POEMS BY

THE ZEN MONK

SHŌTETSU

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY

Steven D. Carter

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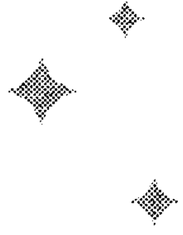

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Unforgotten Dreams

INTRODUCTION

The annals of Japanese literary history abound with stories of suffering literati. First among these, of course, is the case of Sugawara no Michizane (845–903), the famous court minister who after being slandered by competitors was exiled to Dazaifu, where legend says he quite literally died of grief. Then there is the story of the early eleventh-century poet Fujiwara no Nagatō, who responded to the criticism of a powerful contemporary by withdrawing to his house and starving himself to death. Lastly, one recalls the tale of the medieval poet Keiun (fl. 1340–1370), an unhappy man who became so distressed at his failure to find praise as a poet that just before death he destroyed all of his poems in an attempt to deny posterity the opportunity to gloat.

None of these, however, seems to have borne more grief than the Zen monk Shōtetsu (1381–1459), the author of the poems translated in this book. For Shōtetsu was not once but thrice stricken: first, by the loss of all of the poems of his first thirty years—more than 30,000 of them—in a fire that destroyed his residence in 1432, at the age of fifty-two; second, by the confiscation of his estate revenues by an angry shogun at around the same time; and lastly by the refusal of his rivals to allow him any representation whatsoever in the only imperially commissioned poetic anthology of his time, the *Shin shokukokinshū* of 1439.

But a closer look at the record of Shōtetsu's life reveals that his misfortunes did not defeat him. Indeed, by all standards save the one of representation in an imperial anthology, he was a successful poet, which is to say not only that he was able to make a living from his literary practice but that in the process of doing so he won recognition from some quarters as a true master of his art and left behind a large

body of work. By his time, the Way of the classical *uta*—the name given to the thirty-one syllable form that was Shōtetsu's chosen genre—was already more than seven centuries old and seemingly beyond its prime. Nonetheless, the form was still the most prestigious of genres, and still occupied a central place in the the literary culture of the noble houses and the military aristocracy, both in the capital city of Kyoto and in the numerous "little" Kyotos of the provinces. Notwithstanding the many literary histories that refer to the time as the age of linked verse (*renga*), it was the *uta* and its aesthetic traditions that dominated literary discourse.

It was into this literary situation that Shōtetsu was born in 1381. Although no historical record says anything about his childhood, remarks he made to disciples in later years reveal that he began his walk on the Way quite conventionally when his father, a samurai of middling rank named Komatsu Yasukiyo, brought him and the rest of the family to Kyoto in the 1390s. Evidently to discourage the teenager, formally named Masakiyo but known casually as Sonmyōmaru at the time, from pursuing a literary career, his father put him in a temple in Nara soon thereafter. Since temples were centers of learning that often provided entrance into various artistic professions for talented commoners, however, the plan backfired: for it was evidently while pursuing the Way of Buddha that Shōtetsu chose to travel the Way of Poetry—two paths that were not seen by all as incompatible, or, more accurately, as no more incompatible than many others. When his father died, he therefore moved back to the capital, where he continued his religious studies but also his plans to become a professional poet. It comes as no surprise, then, to learn that in 1414 the young poet took vows as a Zen monk named variously Shōtetsu and/or Shōgetsu, serving for a time thereafter as a scribe at Tōfukuji, a large temple located on the southeastern fringes of Kyoto. All of his life he would consider himself a monk, although one for whom poetry was both profession and religious avocation.

Since the late thirteenth century, any commoner hoping to enter

practice as a professional poet—by which I mean a poet who made his living primarily from his artistic activities—had been obliged to study under a recognized master who could claim authority through some affiliation with the heirs of the so-called "father" of medieval poetry, Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241). This Shōtetsu did, under Teika's heir-by-blood the courtier Reizei Tamemasa (1361–1417) and also the warrior literatus Imagawa Ryōshun (1326–1417), two bastions of the more liberal of the poetic factions at court who catechized their promising pupil in the esoteric teachings of their "sect" and supervised his *keiko*, or composition practice. What connections brought Shōtetsu to his teachers is not known, but meeting them was perhaps the most fortunate event of his life, enough, one might even say, to compensate for the disasters that would befall him later. For Tamemasa was a man of rare talent and genuine artistic commitment who, had he not died in 1417, just when he had gained the political power necessary for success at court, might have had a salutary effect on the composition of poetry even in that most conservative of venues; and Ryōshun, although a less-talented poet, was a teacher who stressed creativity and inspired in Shōtetsu the confidence to challenge prevailing conventions.

With such men as supporters and his own native talent, the young man progressed rapidly, making a name for himself in Kyoto by around 1415. Even after his teachers died, he continued to draw on the "symbolic capital" of his affiliation with them and remained on good terms with their heirs. Living first in one cottage in the Rokkaku area of the capital and then in another in Imakumano, he was now a master of the art himself, with a growing number of students. Records make it clear that by this time he was participating frequently in poetic gatherings in the military houses, which constituted the most available market for one of his social status. Specifically, he served as a kind of master at monthly poetry meetings (*tsukinamikai*), poem contests, and votive sequences—three of the most basic forms of communal composition at the time. Such events were in a real sense com-

petitions in which poets tested their competence in a group setting, composing poems on prescribed *dai*, or topics, according to ancient standards and conventions.[1] Here Shōtetsu showed himself a true master, attracting praise and securing an income over and above the estate revenues he seems to have received as a stipend from his family. In this way he was able to rub shoulders with not only some of the most politically mighty men in the capital, but also with other potential students and patrons among their vassals.

However, as a commoner with no hope of gaining formal status in the court hierarchy, Shōtetsu had to leave continuation of the liberal tradition among the nobility to Reizei Tamemasa's heirs by birth. These were not easy times for the Reizei family at court, where their conservative rivals, particularly those in the Asukai family, had the support of the shogun, Ashikaga Yoshinori (1394–1441). It was in fact in this political context that Shōtetsu suffered the loss of his estate revenues and was denied representation in the imperial anthology of 1439—things that might not have happened had Tamemasa still been alive. By this time, however, Shōtetsu was nearly sixty and had suffered enough hardships to be able to maintain hope even under extreme duress. His dedication to the Way of Poetry never wavered; nor were the criticisms of rivals enough to keep him from its practice. And after the death in 1441 of Ashikaga Yoshinori, he was able to gain some prominence even in the salons of the high nobility, particularly the Reizei family and the Regent-literatus Ichijō Kaneyoshi (1402–1481).

Shōtetsu's last fifteen years were therefore prosperous ones, during which he served as master in monthly and other gatherings at the homes of prominent members of the warrior classes and at a number of different temples. During the year 1451, for example, his personal anthology reveals that in addition to participating in poetic activities with courtiers such as Asukai Masachika (1417–1490) and Reizei Mochitame (1401–1454) and fellow professionals such as Gyōkō (1391–1455) and Ninzei (fl. ca. 1440–50), he performed as a master in

monthly meetings for the prominent warriors Hatakeyama Yoshitada (d. 1463; also known by his monkish name Kenryō) fifteen times, for Hosokawa Katsumoto (1430–1473) ten times, for Yamana Noriyuki (d. 1473) eight times, and less frequently for Isshiki Norichika (d. 1451), Hosokawa Dōken (d. 1468), Ogasawara Mochinaga (fl. ca. 1430–40), and numerous others—and this in a year when he spent a full two months in Nara during the spring, where he of course participated in numerous other such events while enjoying the seasonal delights at various shrines and temples. In such esteem was he held by Hatakeyama Yoshitada that the warrior even came to visit the poet at his hut when the latter was bedridden with asthma in the Eighth Month, an honor to which Shōtetsu replied by producing thirty poems "while reclining." For that entire year Shōtetsu records in his personal anthology 558 of his poems, composed for at least 108 different events, which judging from internal evidence we may estimate to be only a fraction of the work he actually produced during that same period. Needless to say, he must have been paid for his services, the offering of which demanded not only knowledge and technical virtuosity but also social skills.

Despite his popularity, the effects of Shōtetsu's earlier troubles remained apparent in the boldness with which he stated his dissatisfaction with the petty squabbles of his contemporaries in the noble houses, liberal and conservative alike. For both, according to him, had strayed from the way of the forementioned founder of the late medieval poetic tradition, Teika, for whom Shōtetsu avowed an allegiance verging on worship. "I will be a member of the Teika sect," he told friends, "until I die."[2] Elsewhere he is less cryptic:

> It is my opinion that a person should pay no attention whatever to these schools. Instead, he ought to cherish the style and spirit of Teika and strive to emulate him even though he may never succeed. Some will say that this is the path of perfection to which the ordinary mind cannot hope to aspire, and that instead a person should take as his stan-

> dard the poetic styles of Teika's descendants. However, as the saying goes, 'Emulate the highest art to achieve the mediocre.' So, even if a person cannot attain to it, he should still emulate the highest artistic standard, for then even in failure he may still achieve something of reasonable quality.[3]

To praise Teika was of course nothing revolutionary. All poets of the day, of every lineage and persuasion, recognized Teika as the ultimate authority in poetic matters. But to Shōtetsu their picture of Teika was like a portrait whose original colors and contours had been obscured by the dust of many generations. What he seems to have wanted was the vivid image underneath the dusky pall—a naive wish, one may say, but one that has provided the motivation for many artists before and since.

Shōtetsu's poetic practice, of course, could not be like that of Teika, who had been not a commoner but a courtier living in an age when the court was still a prosperous institution—a situation not at all similar to that of a low-ranking Zen monk who spent most of his time in his own cottage with students or in the meeting halls of warrior patrons. But Shōtetsu believed that poetry was a transcendent medium, and that in his own poetry he could emulate Teika as well as anyone. Thus he set out, particularly in his last years, to produce a body of work worthy at least of comparison with that of his mentor, with the following note of caution as his guide:

> . . . to speak of emulating the style of the Master and then merely to imitate his diction and cadences would be deplorable. Instead, one should constantly emulate his style and spirit and cast of mind.[4]

Whether or not Shōtetsu succeeded in his aims is a matter for readers to decide; but the evidence of his personal anthology, *Sōkonshū* ("Grass Roots"), is enough to prove that he was at least valiant in the

attempt. Containing just over 11,000 poems, it is the single largest personal anthology in the classical canon—more than twice as large as Teika's own. As might be expected, not all of the poems are up to his mentor's standards. And since the work as we have it today was put in its final form by disciples after his death, we may even surmise that some of them he would not have wanted anyone else to see. But the great quantity of his work shows us two things: first, that for him composing poetry was, as Marvin Bell says of a modern poet, "sometimes . . . like practice" or something "written as an exercise"[5] and, second, that he sought to be a master of all the styles of the tradition, from the style of "intense feeling" (*ushin*) favored by the conservatives of his own day, to the more demanding styles of "mystery and depth" (*yūgen*) and "objective realism" (*ari no mama*) of the Reizei school. In this scholars note the continuing influence of his Reizei teachers, who stressed the importance of discipline and held to the belief that "to tend toward only one style was to constrict the Way."[6] No doubt Shōtetsu himself would claim Teika and not any later poet as his inspiration.

Whatever the case, the important fact for readers is that in *Sōkonshū* one finds poems as dissimilar as these, the first bold in its metaphoric treatment of the confused mental state of one who clings to hope for a lover's note that may mean, figuratively, either life or death, the second—an example of straightforward description—bold only in its simplicity. Here, as in the rest of the translations in this book, I give the prescribed topic (*dai*) of the poem in quotation marks before the poem itself, as a way to emphasize that the topic is not a "title" attached after the fact but rather the "question" to which the poet has been asked to provide an appropriate answer. In the first case, the poem was composed for a hundred-poem sequence for which the topics had been chosen beforehand, and probably not by the poet himself; a similar situation may also have held for the second poem, although it carries no headnote specifying the circumstances of its composition.

"The Unbearable Wait for Love"

Past and
gone now
is the time I awaited,
leaving me
clinging—
anxious for wind
from the pines,
like dewdrops
at break of day.[7]

"An Animal, in Spring"

The gloom of dusk.
An ox
from out
in the fields
comes walking my way;
and along
the hazy road
I encounter
no one.[8]

Both these poems are conventional in the broad sense of adhering to courtly standards of diction, prosody, and so on. Beyond that, they are so different that one might assume they are by different poets—or perhaps by Teika, whose works reveal a similar range of style.

But there is another major influence at work in Shōtetsu's poems, and it is one that sets him slightly apart from his mentor. That influence is Buddhism, particularly Zen Buddhism. He was a Zen monk by training, after all, who was often refered to by contemporaries as Shōtetsu *zenshi*, or Zen Master; and he says quite explicitly that he hears the Law even in silent things:

"Buddhism: Blossoms"

With every
new spring
the blossoms
speak not a word,
yet expound
the Law—
knowing
what is at its heart
from the scattering
storm winds.[9]

One may of course choose to see such poems as no more than conventional statements of the doctrine of mutability (*mujō*), which is so

central to the entire medieval poetic tradition. And because his poems tended to be composed in secular settings on preestablished courtly themes rather than in his own chambers as an explicit part of his religious devotions, they are seldom as dogmatic as those of who may be called true "Zen" poets, such as Musō Soseki (1275–1351) or Shōtetsu's own contemporary, Ikkyū Sōjun (1394–1481). But no one reading through *Sōkonshū* can help but be struck by the frequency with which Zen conceptions appear as themes or subthemes in Shōtetsu's poems, regardless of their overt subject matter. In particular, one finds an attitude that rejoices in the quotidian, a tendency to problematize fundamental cognitive categories such as time and consciousness, and an awareness of not just the mutability but also of the transmutability of all things—in the way in time one thing becomes another, merges with another, supplements another, in an endless procession for which the poet acts as a kind of artistic amanuensis:

"Love—Bell"

As I listen,
bells
tolling over Hatsu River
fade off,
one by one—
falling onto
my sleeves,
becoming
the capital.[10]

Clearly, this poem evokes an earlier love poem by Teika, written from the perspective of one who after years of praying has all but given up hope of ever meeting the one yearned for:

> The years
> have gone by,
> with my prayers
> still unanswered—
> as Hase's bell
> signals evening
> from its peak,
> sounding somehow
> far away.[11]

Teika's poem, however, is "realistic" when compared to Shōtetsu's, and contains no trace of the Buddhist idea of bell sounds "becoming" first the tears of the lonely speaker and then the very capital itself. In this, Shōtetsu shows himself to be a true cohort of a whole host of other Buddhist artists of his own century, including most conspicuously Zeami (1363–1443), Zenchiku (1405–1468?), and Sesshū (1420–1506), as well as of the Gozan poets who are generally not compared to him only because they wrote their poems in Chinese rather than in Japanese.

However much he may have wanted to transcend it, Shōtetsu was thus in some ways a man of his own time and place. Although more liberal than many of his contemporaries in his views on some matters, he was still a master in the conventional sense, and was certainly no revolutionary out to create a new Way. Rather, he sought to turn the way back toward its founders, whom he judged to be more appropriate models than the court poets of his own epoch. In this political project he failed. Happily, though, his political failure did not deter him

from writing poems that do transcend time in the sense that they still resonate for us now, in a time when, as Theodor Adorno succinctly puts it, "absolute contingency . . . is itself the essential."[12]

Shōtetsu died in 1459, before the degradations of the Onin War (1467–77) and other events brought an end to the court society that had been the ultimate provider of both ideological foundation and social sustenance for his genre. Like many other *uta* poets of his day, he was forgotten. Not being represented in any of the imperial anthologies meant that even the restorationist scholars of the Edo period found him easy to overlook. That his name survived at all in narrative histories of Japanese literature was because several of his disciples became major figures in the development of linked-verse, or *renga*, a form for which he seems to have had little sympathy. Thanks to the work of several scholars,[13] however, he has gained a good deal of attention in Japan over the last several decades. My hope is that the translations offered here will serve to encourage more interest in him among English readers, who will then find in his work a mastery that goes beyond the mastery of convention—indeed, to borrow the words of Donald Justice and Robert Mezey describing the neglected poet Henri Coulette, "a sense of utter freedom demonstrated within the severest limits."[14]

A Note on the Translations

As readers of traditional Japanese poetry know, the *uta* form "unfolds" not via patterns of meter or rhyme, but instead according to number of syllables per line (or phrase), each poem consisting of five units coordinated according to the pattern 5–7–5–7–7. In the past different translators have created (or adopted) different English formats in order to suggest the forms of the originals, the most common of which may be represented by the following fine translation of one of Shōtetsu's poems by Robert Brower.

Hesitant to cross,
Even the clouds feel their way along,
Searching the dusk—
Where the steep path over the peaks
Lies beneath the trackless snow.[15]

In my translations I have chosen not to use this or any other established format for the simple reason that I want to use the "natural resources" of English to better suggest the variety of pauses and stops in the original *uta* form, which is something that it seems to me a uniform format cannot do. The result for me has been a more elastic vehicle—inspired partly by formats used by Octavio Paz and others—that retains the five-line structure of the original poems while at the same time, I hope, revealing at least partially their various stops and starts, patterns of subordination and apposition, and so forth, via punctuation, capitalization, spacing, and a "jogging" of lines that attempts to show where sentences or phrases begin and end. Thus Shōtetsu's poem in my version reads:

Still hanging back,
the clouds, too,
this evening
seem to hesitate—
before
the untrodden snow
of the plank bridge
on the peak.

Another decision I have made is to try, whenever possible, to stick to the syllable count of the originals. This choice may seem more dif-

ficult to understand, but the reasons behind it are simply put: I feel the need of limitations to work within, or against, in order to create rhythm and tension. Other means could of course serve the same purpose—say, rhyme, or the use of some established English meter. But since one of my goals is to translate Japanese poems in such a way as to make it clear to English readers that they are somehow different from English poems, I believe using the 5–7–5–7–7 pattern might help make the point. Another virtue of using that pattern or any other that employs relatively short lines is that it discourages the temptation to "pad" the translations with interpretive material.

Finally, I have also decided in matters of syntax and word order to try to follow the patterns of the originals, generally if not in every specific case. Most other translators do the same, and for the same reasons, I assume, namely, that they recognize that many *uta*—which are written in what linguists call a left-branching language—literally syntactically "unfold" as they proceed, with what, for lack of a better term, I call a "punch-line" at the end.

So, I have developed a format and a way of reflecting prosody that I think yields interesting results. I hasten to add, however, that although I do believe mine is a rational format the basic principles of which can be learned and put to use, I am not so vain as to suggest that it should be adopted by anyone else. As I said at the beginning, I developed it in order to allow for a more accurate representation of the various structural patterns of the originals. If other translators adopt other measures in order to do the same thing, I support them in their attempts. We need more translations of classical Japanese poetry, not fewer.

In selecting poems for translation I have tried to represent the full range of Shōtetsu's stylistic achievement, taking examples from all available sources and all periods of his career for which we have records. Because it contains more headnotes than other texts, I have used the text of *Sōkonshu* contained in the *Shikashū taisei* series (for bibliographical information on this and other texts, see p. 000), in which the poems are arranged in rough chronological order. My hope

is that the headnotes will be of interest to those who want to understand more about the concrete features of poetic practice in Shōtetsu's day, since what the headnotes reveal is that his aesthetic creations emerged almost always from a specific social context—that he was, in this sense, no other-worldly hermit but a man of the world.

Endnotes

1. Topics were sometimes given out in advance, sometimes on the spot (*tōza*). For Shōtetsu's attitude toward them, see his comments in *Shōtetsu monogatari*. Robert H. Brower and Steven D. Carter, *Conversations with Shōtetsu* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, 1992).

2. Quoted in *Tōyashū kikigaki*, the memoir of his sometime student Tō no Tsuneyori (1402–84). See vol. 5 of Sasaki Nobutsuna et al., eds., *Nihon kagaku taikei* (Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 1977), p. 336.

3. See *Conversations with Shōtetsu*, p. 62.

4. Ibid.

5. Bell is paraphrasing the poet William Stafford. See Marvin Bell, *Old Snow Just Melting: Essays and Interviews* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983), p. 250.

6. *Conversations with Shōtetsu*, p. 10.

7. *Sōkonshū* 9774; poem 185 below. For bibliographical information on Sōkonshū, see p. 209.

8. Sōkonshū 2915; poem 59 below.

9. Sōkonshū 5140; poem 101 below.

10. Sōkonshū 8014; poem 152 below.

11. Poem no. 1142 in *Shin kokinshū*, eighth of the imperially commissioned anthologies of *uta*. For the original, see vol. 1 of Taniyama Shigeru et al., eds., *Shimpen kokka taikan* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1983). The translation is taken from my *Traditional Japanese Poetry: An Anthology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 198.

12. Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, tr. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 1974), p. 113.

13. In particular, Inoue Muneo and Inada Toshinori. The latter's *Shōtetsu no kenkyū* (Kasama Shoin, 1978) is now generally accepted as the standard introduction to the poet's life and work.

14. From the Introduction to *The Collected Poems of Henri Coulette* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1991), p. xv.

15. *Conversations with Shōtetsu*, p. 71.

THE POEMS

"Blossoms at Their Height"

Moss
in the garden
and the blue
of the sky—
both becoming one;
blossoms
opening to rise
into white clouds
of spring.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

niwa no koke / sora no midori mo / hitotsu nite /
hana sakinoboru / haru no shirakumo

2

At dusk I was crossing toward Ōharano when the sky over my path clouded up. Soon lightning flashed, thunder rumbled noisily, wind blew down from the mountains, followed by rain like a summer shower, falling in torrents. Shortly the skies cleared and the evening sun shone brightly, making the cherry blossoms sparkle as if they were so many dewdrops. And all around the evergreens, too, were covered with snowy blossoms that as we walked beneath the trees produced an indescribable effect I had never before seen.

A withering wind
suddenly
becomes
a rain shower
and then thunder—
echoes accompanying
blossoms
as they scatter
and fall.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

fukishioru / arashi mo ame ni / narukami no /
hibiki o soete / chiru sakura kana

On the inkwell stand of the Senior Assistant of the Central Affairs Ministry was this scene: a place where plum blossoms floated on a stream, above which a man stood on top of a bridge, with mountains in the distance and half of the moon visible on the mountain rim. Next to the plum trees Reverend Ishō had inscribed this Chinese poem:

Walking stick in hand, a man stands on the bridge;
no wind, yet a scent floats on the dark waters.
Waves move away, as if resenting something;
only that lonely shadow refuses to go along.

Above the waves
of life
in the floating
world,
the moon hesitates
—coming
up,
or going
down?—
on the rough shore
of the mountain rim.

✦✦✦✦✦

sumigataki / ukiyo o nami no / araiso ni /
izuru ka iru ka / yama no ha no tsuki

4 *"Waterbirds on Pools"*

From afar,
I see
how peacefully
the birds float
on calm waters—
while I am here
on thin ice
above
perilous pools.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

ukitori no / nodoka ni sumu o / yoso ni mite /
ayauki fuchi no / usukōri kana

"Brazier Fire"

If in this world
there were deeds
mine alone to do—
then I might resent
my name
being hidden
away:
one small coal
in a box fire.*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

sashite yo ni / nasu kotowaza no / araba koso /
na o uzumibi no / mi to mo uramime

**Uzumibi,* a small coal fire in a brazier.

6

At the shrine in Ninnaji, after the blossoms had already faded and there were few people about, some monks and a lot of other people came and set to drinking beneath the trees. Thoroughly drunk, they took big stones and knocked down all the remaining blossoms, had a good laugh about it, and proceeded to break off some of the lower branches. Since there was no one there to chastise them, I could only look on in dismay. Then I began to wonder what they would think of me and hurried home.

What right
do they have
to scatter all the blossoms,
stealing whole branches?
Like white waves
they pass by—
wanting to be called
breakers?*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

hana o nado / uchichirashite wa / taoruran /
shiranami no na o / tachi ya kasanemu

* The word *shiranami,* "whitecaps" or "breakers," was used metaphorically to refer to thieves.

An old carriage
with its legs near to collapse
stops for a rest—
worn out from traveling far
on
the way
of love.

✦✦✦✦✦

furihateshi / ashiyowaguruma / yasurai ni /
yukitsukarenuru / koi no michi kana

8

Visiting the rooms where Murasaki Shikibu is said to have conceived *The Tale of Genji,* I thought of how only part of that story has come down to us.*

Here
at the place
from which all
once issued forth,
I draw
a few drops—
thinking
how that distant source
came
at last
to such an end.

✦✦✦✦✦

kore yori mo / nagareshi mizu no / minamoto o /
wazuka ni kumeru / sue o shi zo omou

* Medieval legend had it that it was while visiting Ishiyama Temple that Murasaki Shikibu received the initial inspiration for her famous tale. Like most medieval readers, Shōtetsu believed that the work as it existed in his day was missing a final chapter.

"Cicadas on a Late Summer Night"

Off in
the distance,
the voice
of a droning
cicada passes;
in the branches,
all is still
as daylight fades,
in summer.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

ochikata ni / nakitatsu semi no / koe sugite /
kozue shizuka ni / kururu natsu kana

12 *"Travelers Crossing a Bridge"*

For a few moments
the travelers
stop speaking
what's on
their minds:
so narrow
is the way
across
an unfamiliar bridge.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

omou koto / shibashi zo iwanu / tabibito no /
watarinarawanu / hashi hosoku shite

After awaking,
I forgot
for a moment
I was
on the road—
still feeling comfortable
in the wake
of my dream.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

samete dani / shibashi tabine o / wasururu ya /
minareshi yume no / nagori naruran

14 *"The Sound of a Waterfall in the Mountains"*

As if
to conceal
within the folds
of her robe
a dear wife's tears—
so in the mountain's bosom
descends
a waterfall.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

wagimoko ga / koromo ni kakusu / namida to ya /
yamafutokoro ni / taki no otsuran

Along the pathway,
the wind
of evening
raises
its voice.
In the market—
no one,
only the dust
piling up.

✦✦✦✦✦

michinobe ya / yūbe no kaze no / koe su nari /
ichi ni hito naki / chiri wa tsumorite

16 *"Sunset Over a Woodcutter's Path"*

Down
from the peak
came a bundle
of firewood,
where
for a moment
I saw light
from the evening sun—
hauled down
on a woodsman's back.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

mine kudaru / takigi no ue ni / shibashi mishi /
yūhi no kage o / orosu yamabito

Within
my shelter,
still droplets like jewels
strike
my soundless sleeves.
Through the rough thatch
of my eaves—
passing showers
of moonlight.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

kage nagara / oto naki sode ni / tama zo chiru /
kaya ga nokiba no / tsuki no murasame

18 *"The Gods"*

Besides
myself
there is
no other god!
For the gods
themselves
know that it is
in men's hearts
that their own gods
may be found.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

ware naranu / kami koso nakere / kami ya mata /
hito no kokoro o / kami to shiruran

[From a sixty-poem votive sequence commissioned by Hosokawa Dōkan for presentation to Tonshōji in 1414].

A jeweled missive—
ink darker here,
fainter there,
scrawled across the page.
As now
both far and near
wild geese fly off,
going home.

✦✦✦✦✦

tamazusa no / kozumi usuzumi / kakitsurane /
ima ochikochi ni / kaeru karigane

20 *"Fireflies on an Inlet"*

[From a fifty-poem sequence composed in 1416.]

In the dark
waves
of an inlet,
in the reeds,
they hide themselves;
Are they there?
or are they not—
in the shafts of
firefly light.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

nami kuraki / irie no ashi ni / migakurete /
aru ka naki ka no / hotarubi no kage

[From a hundred-poem sequence composed as a votive offering to Kitano Shrine in 1420].

Beneath the cliff,
the water dripping
onto moss
is hidden by trees—
but still
its sound
clears the heart
of one taking
lodging there.

✦✦✦✦✦

iwagane no / koke no shizuku mo / kogakurete /
oto ni kokoro o / sumasu yado kana

22 *"Planted Trees"*

[From a hundred-poem sequence composed in one day in 1429].

Never knowing
they would
remind me
of him,
he planted
the trees
in those days
of his
old age—
thinking only of blossoms.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

katami to mo / mimu to mo shirazu / oi ga yo ni /
tada hana nareba / uetekeru kana

[From a single-day hundred-poem sequence composed as a votive offering to the Gion Shrine on the seventh day of the Sixth Month of 1438].

After a long day
among
seedlings
in countless fields,
they are planted out—
young maidens
resting on paths
between
mountain paddies.

✦✦✦✦✦

nagaki hi no / chimachi no sanae / uetsukare /
yamada no kuro ni / yasumu saotome

24 *"Living in Seclusion"*

[From a hundred-poem sequence presented as a votive offering to Sumiyoshi Shrine in 1440].

Since
no one
visits,
I have nobody to chat with—
making
my house
seem
the kind of place
where lives
a person
with no cares.

✦✦✦✦✦

kataru beki / hito shi towaneba / omou koto /
naki ni mo nitaru / sumika narikeri

[From a hundred-poem sequence presented as a votive offering to Sumiyoshi Shrine in 1440].

Those rice plants
I saw
in the gate paddies
last autumn—
were they all
a dream?
Now in the hut
made of reeds
there is no one
to spend
the night.*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

aki ni mishi / kadota no inaba / yume nare ya /
ashi no maroya wa / nuru hito mo nashi

* Before the harvest, a paddy guard would have been there to protect the crop. An allusive variation on *Shin kokinshū* 625, by Saigyō (1118–90): That spring long ago / at Naniwa in Tsu— / was it all a dream? / Now only dead leaves on the reeds / rustle in the passing wind. (*tsu no kuni no / naniwa no haru wa / yume nare ya / ashi no kareha ni / kaze wataru nari*)

26 *"Lament"*

[From a hundred-poem sequence presented as a votive offering to Sumiyoshi Shrine in 1449].

In this
world of ours,
what good
does it do
for you
to have
the praise
of men?
For blossoms,
the winds of spring;
for the moon,
floating clouds.*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

kono yo ni wa / homare aru na mo / nani ka sen /
hana ni harukaze / tsuki ni ukigumo

* Even the fame of things most highly praised, such as blossoms and the moon, can be easily obscured.

[From a hundred-poem sequence composed at Kasuga Shrine during the Fourth Month of 1451].

Where the mountain folk
have all vanished
from the peak
and its plank bridge,*
now stars
passing through the night
and fireflies
make their way.

✦✦✦✦✦

yamabito wa / taenuru mine no / kakehashi ni /
yowataru hoshi to / hotaru to zo yuku

*A rope and plank bridge suspended over a mountain gorge.

28 *"Dream Disturbed by Reeds"*

[From a hundred-poem sequence composed at Kasuga Shrine during the Fourth Month of 1451].

How cruel
the voice
that bars me
from traveling
the way of dreams.
Not a man,
but still a gate guard
is that wind
in the reeds.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

kayoiyuku / yumeji tōsanu / koe mo ushi /
hito naranu ogi no / kaze no sekimori

[From a hundred-poem sequence composed at Hasedera during the Fourth Month of 1451].

Resenting
the moon
on the rim
of the mountains,
my hut has grown old—
while I
waited for it to rise,
and
lamented when it set.

✦✦✦✦✦

yama no ha no / tsuki o uramite / io furinu /
izuru o matsu to / iru o oshimu to

30 *"Bamboo"*

[From a hundred-poem sequence composed at Hasedera Shrine during the Fourth Month of 1451].

Even for one
alone
the world
is a place
of trials;
with what
feeling, then,
must the parent bamboos watch
their young shoots
as they grow!

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

hitori dani / yo wa uki mono o / oyatake no /
ko no oitatsu o / aware to ya miru

[From a fifty-poem sequence composed at Hasedera in 1451].

All these images
from
a world
of long ago —
of what good are they?
Pine winds, come—
please blow away
these unforgotten
dreams.*

✦✦✦✦✦

omokage ni / mishi yo no arite / nani ka sen /
wasurenu yume o / harae matsukaze

*An allusive variation on *Shin kokinshū* 1564, by Minamoto Michiteru: Lost in the weeds, / my sleeves rot beneath harsh tears / become autumn frost— / as storm winds blow away / my unforgotten dreams. (asajifu ya / sode ni kuchinishi / aki no shimo / wasurenu yume o / fuku arashi kana)

32 *"Dream"*

[From a hundred-poem sequence composed at Hie Shrine during the Third Month of 1459].

Even in
one's sleep,
it is
dreams of this world
one sees,
and of
no other;
just as there is
no dawning here
that brings
true awakening.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

nuru ga uchi mo / kono yo no yume no / hoka narade /
makoto ni samuru / akatsuki mo nashi

From among fifty poems composed extemporaneously at the house of the Governor of Awa [during the Third Month of 1429].

So clear
is the moon
that the waterless
winter sky
is locked up tight.
And sweeping
over
the ice—
the withering
midnight wind.*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

tsuki sumeba / fuyu no mizu naki / sora tojite /
kōri o harau / yowa no kogarashi

*An allusive variation on *Kokinshū* 89 (Spring), by Ki no Tsurayuki: The cherry blossoms / have scattered on the wind / that leaves in its wake / waves that rise and crest / in a waterless sky. (sakurabana / chirinuru kaze no / nagori ni wa / mizu naki sora ni / nami zo tachikeru)

34 *"Blossoms Falling in a Garden at Dawn"*

From among the poems composed at the Bureau of Poetry on the twentieth day [of the Third Month of 1429].

The moon
comes to visit
a garden
of stormy winds
that scatter
blossoms—
its lodging there
as fleeting
as dew glistening
at dawn.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

tsuki zo tou / niwa no arashi ni / chiru hana no /
yadori munashiki / akatsuki no tsuyu

Among three poems composed for the monthly poetry meeting at the house of Director of the Imperial Stables of the Right Mochizumi on the twelfth day [of the First Month of 1430].

Learn it well,
then:
for of the deeds established
in the Age
of Gods,
only
this Way
still remains—
The Way of
Words of Yamato.*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

manabe tada / kami no yo yori no / kotowaza wa /
kono michi nomi no / yamato koto no ha

* Yamato was the ancient name of Japan.

36 *"Dawn Love"*

From among three poems composed for the monthly poetry meeting at his cottage on the thirteenth day [of the intercalary Eleventh Month of 1431].

Think of it
as cruel—
but still
it brings back memories:
that glaring moon
that had
such a distant look
at the moment
of dawn.*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

uki mono to / nasu mo katami zo / ariake no /
tsurenaku mieshi / to bakari no tsuki

*An allusive variation on *Kokinshū* 625 (Love), by Mibu no Tadamine: Since that parting / when I saw that distant look / in the late moon's glare, / nothing seems more to cruel to me / than the hours before dawn. (ariake no / tsurenaku mieshi / wakare yori / akatsuki bakari / ukimono wa nashi)

From the poems of a sequence composed at the home of the Governor of Awa.

Neither tip
nor base
of the bow
of spindlewood*
does my body know—
as on love's
paths still untried
my heart is
drawn along.

✦✦✦✦✦

ukimi ni wa / azusa no mayumi / moto sue mo /
shiranu koiji ni / hiku kokoro kana

*An erotic image suggestive of smooth skin.

38 *"Dream"*

From the poems of a sequence composed at the home of the Governor of Awa.

If one may not think
of what one sees
in one's sleep
as reality
then what use
could there be
in dreams
when one is awake?

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

nuru ga uchi ni / miru o utsutsu to / omowazu wa /
samete no yume no / kai ya nakaran

Requested by the Ōhira Oki Lay Monk from Tosa when he came to my cottage on the eighteenth day [of the Fourth Month of 1432].

So deep
the night!
Who is there
for me to ask—
about the dream
I awakened from
too soon,
my taper still
far from burned down?

✦✦✦✦✦

yo ya fukashi / tare ni towamashi / tomoshibi no /
nokori ōku mo / samuru yume kana

40 *"Cuckoo Before the Moon"*

Written for the monthly poetry meeting at the Kai'inji [held by Archbishop Kōkyō] on the 25th day [of the Fifth Month of 1432].

Was that the moon
calling?
I wonder, following as far
as its
cloudy path—
to where,
close by the light,
I hear the voice
of a cuckoo.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

kumoji yuku / tsuki no koe ka to / tadoru made /
hikari ni chikaki / hototogisu kana

From the monthly poetry meeting at my cottage on the third day of the Second Month [of 1443].

To one
who wanders
in the gloom
of this world
even
a pine torch
held aloft
by a peasant's hand
is a
happy sight.

✦✦✦✦✦

kuraki yo wa / matsu furitatete / yuku shizu no /
hikari ni au mo / sazo na ureshiki

42 *"Fireflies Flying Over a River"*

From a three-poem set for debate held at the house of the Director of the Imperial Stables of the Right on the third day of the Fifth Month [of 1433], for which I made final judgments.*

On Taki River
waves shatter
into pieces;
and
from
the rocks,
fire
seems to come bursting forth—
scattering
fireflies.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

takigawa ya / nami mo kudakete / ishi no hi no /
idekeru mono to / chiru hotaru kana

**Shūgihan*. A poem contest during which poems composed on set topics were discussed and voted upon. In this case, it appears that final judgment was left to Shōtetsu as the "master."

From the monthly poetry meeting held at my cottage on the 25th day [of the Sixth Month of 1433].

Withering all
in its roar
across the fields
comes an evening storm—
and above,
carried on its winds:
You clouds!
You driven leaves!

✦✦✦✦✦

fukishiori / nowaki o narasu / yūdachi no /
kaze no ue naru / kumo yo konoha yo

44 *"Love, Related to 'Smoke'"*

From the first monthly poetry meeting at the home of the Senior Assistant of the Central Affairs Ministry, held on the 27th day [of the Eighth Month of 1433].

How I envy them!
For it is not smoke
rising
from
fires of passion
that surrounds
those villagers
meeting
at break of day.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

urayamashi / omoi yori tatsu / kemuri ni mo /
aranu asake ni / majiru satobito

Written on the tenth day of the Tenth Month [of 1433] when Mochitoyo, Assistant in the Board of Censors, and others came for the first meeting after the new cottage of Sōzei had been completed.

Truly a cottage
where
the leaves
on the grasses
have
blossomed as words—
a place, too,
blessed abundantly
by the work
of rain and dew.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

koto no ha no / hana saku kusa no / iori kana /
sazo ametsuyu mo / megumiokiken

46 *"Passing Like a Dream"*

Written [during the Tenth Month of 1433] when I accompanied the Former Governor of Awa and Director of the Imperial Stables of the Right to a temple called Hōshōji.

In
the space
of one
night
I seem to forget
so much!
How is it,
then,
that my dreams
of the past
remain to me
so clear?

✦✦✦✦✦

yo no ma ni mo / wasururu mono o / inishie no /
yume wa sadaka ni / nado nokoruran

From the monthly poetry meeting at the home of the Assistant in the Board of Censors on the sixteenth day [of the Eleventh Month of 1435].

In shadows
deep
stand pines
that through
countless ages
dropped needles
numberless,
leaving a courtyard
thick with dust
I pray
the wind
not to sweep away.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

kage fukaki / matsu no furu ha ni / chiyo no kazu /
tsumoreru niwa no / chiri na harai so

48 *"First Love in Old Age"*

Written for the monthly poetry meeting at his cottage on the twelfth day of the Twelfth Month [of 1435].

It started to burn,
but the firewood
of my passion
has rotted through.
Now I wait
in the dying dusk
for the smoke
to fade away.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

takisomuru / omoi no takigi / kuchihatete /
kiemu yūbe no / keburi o zo matsu

Written at a residence in Yokawa on the fifteenth day [of the Fourth Month of 1442, while on a circuit of the Three Compounds on Mount Hiei].

Out of
the stillness
of my own breast
emerges
the rising moon;
and when I turn to look at it—
the moon
in clumps of cloud.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

shizuka naru / waga mune wakete / izuru tsuki /
furisakemireba / murakumo no tsuki

50 *"Reminiscing"*

From the monthly poetry meeting of the Isshiki Master of the Left Capital [on the 23d day of the First Month of 1447].

No one
remains now
for me to spend my time with—
I who
in the past
was known to spurn
the company
of those who had grown old.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

majirowamu / hito koso nakere / oinuru o /
mukashi itoishi / kokoro narai ni

Presented after receiving a topic from Lord Ichijō for a poem to be included in a hundred-poem votive sequence [during the Third Month of 1447].

First comes
a sound;
then before
the showers begin
the pattern
of clouds
and birds* is torn
in tatters
among trees
blown by mountain winds.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

oto wa shite / furikonu saki ni / yūdachi no /
kumotori sawagu / kigi no yamakaze

**Kumotori,* here referring to both actual clouds and birds and to a decorative pattern involving images of the same used to adorn court robes.

52 *"One Call from a Cuckoo"*

From the monthly poetry meeting at my cottage [on the twentieth day of the Fourth Month of 1447].

As if to say—
"Isn't it true
for men, as well:
that the more the words,
the less
they are of value?"—
the cuckoo does not call again.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

hototogisu / hito mo kotoba no / ōkaru wa /
shina sukunashi to / mata ya koe senu

From the monthly poetry meeting of the Master of the Left Capital on the 23d day of the Fifth Month [of 1447].

When I
look upon
the rich sheen
of summer hairs
in my new brush,*
I am saddened
by a deer
drawn
at night
to a hunter's torch.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

atarashiki / natsuke irokoki / fude o mite /
tomoshi no shika no / yoru zo kanashiki

*A writing brush made of deer hair.

54 *"Not Knowing Whether Love Has Come to an End"*

From the monthly poetry meeting at the home of the Director of the Imperial Stables of the Right on the 24th day [of the Eighth Month of 1447].

The one
who promised
now has gone off
who knows where,
a bird flying off
at morning,
into the sky,
leaving me
in evening's wake.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

chigiritsuru / hito no yukue wa / sora tobishi /
asa no tori no / yūgure no ato

From the monthly poetry meeting at the home of the Director of the Imperial Stables of the Right on the 24th day [of the Eighth Month of 1447].

And what
more than this
should I ever have to lament:
that
I must live
now,
when I can meet no Buddha—
not of the past,
or yet to come.

✦✦✦✦✦

nanigoto o / sara ni nagekamu / nochi saki no /
hotoke ni awanu / yo ni sumu mi wa

56 *"The Remaining Moon"*

When the Bizen Lay Monk Jōgan held his first monthly poetry meeting on the 27th day [of the Eighth Month of 1447].

In the moon
at dawn
I see
one example
at last—
of how
even
in this world,
there are times
when grieving
can make things stay.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

akuru ma no / tsuki ni zo mitsuru / kono yo ni mo /
oshimeba nokoru / narai ari to wa

At Takasago,
the glow
from pines on the peak
is wisteria,
there where evening
is suspended
from the voice
of the bell.*

✦✦✦✦✦

takasago no / onoe ni niou / matsu no fuji /
yūbe zo kane no / koe ni kakareru

*The vespers bell that calls the temple community to prayer.

58 *"A Warbler Announcing Spring at Morning"*

How does he
know
that spring
has come to the world?
From
within
the cage
where he wakes
from sleep
at daybreak—
the sound
of a warbler's call.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

yo wa haru to / ikade shiruramu / ko no uchi ni /
nete no asake no / uguisu no koe

The gloom of dusk.
An ox
from out
in the fields
comes walking my way;
and along
the hazy road
I encounter
no one.

✦✦✦✦✦

yūmagure / nogai no ushi wa / ayumikite /
kasumeru michi ni / au hito mo nashi

60 *"Animal, Related to 'Blossoms' "*

Even from
blossoms
I learn
what it is
that I am:
no more than a beast,
devoid of
proper feeling,
howling away
at the clouds.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

hana nite mo / mi wa kokoro naki / kedamono no /
kumo ni hoeken / tameshi o zo shiru

"Lark in the Clouds"

A calling
lark
stays aloft
up in the sky,
while its field
is turned
under
by the plow—
leaving no bed
in the grass below.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

naku hibari / sora ni aru ma ni / sukikaesu /
tazura no kusa mo / toko wa naku shite

62 *"Falling Blossoms"*

Blossoms opened,
then fell
in the space
of just
one night,
as if
in a dream—
no more
to be mistaken
for white clouds
on the peak.*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

sakeba chiru / yo no ma no hana no / yume no uchi ni /
yagate magirenu / mine no shirakumo

*An allusion to a scene in the "Lavender" chapter of *The Tale of Genji* in which a disappointed Genji wishes he could disappear and his existence be mistaken for a dream.

"Fan in Bed"

Here
in my bedchamber
my folding fan,
shining white,
is set aglow—
by the heat
of my passion,
alight
with swarming
fireflies.

✦✦✦✦✦

neya no uchi no / shiroki ōgi ya / kogasuran /
sudaku hotaru no / moyuru omoi ni

64 *"Short Summer Night"*

While I swatted
at
the sound of
mosquitoes
getting through
the cloth
of my thin summer robes—
suddenly
the day had dawned.

✦✦✦✦✦

natsugoromo / tamoto ni tōru / ka no koe o /
uchiharau ma ni / akuru yowa kana

"Summer Moon"

How cool
is the breeze
that moves
the trees
up high
on the mountain ridge—
as the fan
of the rising moon
is raised
into the night.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

yama no ha no / ki o ugokaseru / kaze suzushi /
ōgi o agete / izuru tsukiyo ni

66 *"Fireflies"*

So bereft
was she,
lost in grief for her lost child—
that her
dead spirit
may now be
one of those fireflies,
in night's gloom,
burning on.*

✦✦✦✦✦

sanomi ko o / omoishi hito no / naki tama ya /
hotaru to narite / yami ni moyuran

*An allusion to *Goshūishū* 1162 (Miscellaneous), by Izumi Shikibu: So forlorn am I / that when I see a firefly / out on the marshes, / it looks like my soul rising / from my body in longing. (mono omoeba / sawa no hotaru o / waga mi yori / akugareizuru / tama ka to zo miru). The original poem expresses grief after losing a lover, but Shōtetsu's poem has in mind the death of her daughter, Koshikibu no Naishi, which left Izumi Shikibu wandering in the "gloom" of her heart—a conventional metaphor for the love of a parent for a child.

This is coolness—
the wind
burnishing the sky
as it
blows clouds
that break
like waves
scattering
'round the white jewel
of the moon.

✦✦✦✦✦

suzushisa wa / sora o migakite / fuku kaze ni /
kumo no nami chiru / tsuki no shiratama

68 *"By a Spring at Dusk"*

This day
that I spent
by a spring
till it got dark,
never tiring—
I must not forget it later,
sitting by
a small coal fire.

✦✦✦✦✦

kururu made / akazu izumi ni / mukau hi wa /
omoiwasurenu / uzumibi no moto

Ah, the feel
on my skin
of a summer robe,
still damp
in the morning!
Wait, then,
don't dry it
yet—
you wind blowing
low in the trees!

✦✦✦✦✦

natsugoromo / mi ni tsuku hodo no / asajimeri /
hosu na yo shibashi / kigi no shitakaze

70 *"Early Autumn"*

A single leaf
falls,
a single flower
blossoms,
both
proclaiming spring,
and
announcing autumn—
now that autumn
has arrived.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

hitoha chiru / hitohana sakite / haru o tsuge /
aki o shiraseshi / aki wa kinikeri

If only
they knew
that tonight
the clouds make a path
for the stars
to meet—
then dogs
would not bark at them,
no matter
how late the hour.*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

hoshiai no / michi to shi shiraba / kedamono no /
kumo ni wa hoeji / sayo fukenu to mo

*Ancient Chinese legend had it that the Herdboy (Altair) and the Weaver Maiden (Vega)—lovers kept apart by the King of Heaven—were allowed to meet once a year, on the night of the seventh day of the seventh month, known as *Tanabata*.

72 *"Miscanthus* in Early Autumn"*

Beneath
a boulder—
miscanthus in disarray.
It seems
not to know
some things
will not be moved,
this first wind
of autumn.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

fukimidasu / iwamoto susuki / ugokinaki /
tokoro mo shiranu / aki no hatsukaze

*A plant resembling pampas grass, with long stalks topped with white plumes each autumn.

As my heart ascends
into
the clear,
I gaze upon
the clearing
moon within—
forgetting
the other moon
midway through
an autumn night.

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

suminoboru / kokoro ni sumeru / tsuki o mite /
tsuki o wasururu / aki no sayonaka

74 *"Autumn Coming to a Remote Hut"*

Even the mountain wind
seems
nothing like
yesterday's.
And here
I had thought
not even autumn
would know
of my house
hidden in the trees.

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

yamakaze mo / kinō ni zo ninu / aki ni dani /
shirareji to omou / kogakure no yado

Worse
than
the heartache
of the blossoms
in spring—
the moon
going down,
with the autumn wind
failing
to scatter abroad
its light.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

haru no hana / uki ni zo masaru / iru tsuki no /
hikari chirasade / okuru akikaze

76 *"Mist"*

Is the hour so late?
In the moonlight,
the sound
of the storm
has ceased;
in the mist,
all is quiet now,
at midnight
below the mountain.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

fukenuru ka / tsuki ni arashi no / koe taete /
kiri ni shizumaru / yowa no yamamoto

Mountain paddies—
where after
the harvests
the rice stocks decay:
tufts of snow
lined up in rows
above
the water's sheen.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

oyamada ya / karishi inakuki / kuchinagara /
yuki o naraburu / mizu no ue kana

78 *"Winter Birds"*

How is one
to sleep?
On a frosty night
in winter
the sky
is clear;
passing through
the storm winds—
calls from
a flock of birds.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

ikaga nemu / fuyu no shimoyo no / sora saete /
arashi ni wataru / muratori no koe

Still hanging back,
the clouds, too,
this evening
seem to hesitate
before
the untrodden snow
of the plank bridge*
on the peak.

✦✦✦✦✦

watarikane / kumo mo yūbe o / nao tadoru /
ato naki yuki no / mine no kakehashi

**Kakehashi,* a rope and plank bridge spanning a mountain gorge.

80 *"Hail in the Brushwood"*

What looked
like rice
left behind
by foresters
taking a break
from gathering
brushwood—
turned out instead
to be hail.

✦✦✦✦✦

yamagatsu no / shii no karishiba / karemeshi no /
nokoru to miru wa / arare narikeri

81

*"Fishing Weirs"**

How carefree they are—
the spirits
of those
fish
frolicking
in leaves
borne along by river waves,
not far
from wooden weirs.

✦✦✦✦✦

hakanashi ya / ajiro ni chikaki / kawanami no /
ko no ha ni asobu / hio no kokoro wa

**Ajiro*, wooden stakes placed in a river to catch fish on their way downstream.

82 *"Frost on Cold Grass"*

In the withered
grass
of a flower garden
of frost
in a winter field,
even now butterflies play—
flakes of
swirling snow.

✦✦✦✦✦

kusa karuru / fuyuno no shimo no / hanazono ni /
ima mo kochō no / asobu yuki kana

Trodding on
moss,
trodding on
tufts of grass,
I trample
about
where not a footprint
marks the way
of a mountain
path
in the snow.

✦✦✦✦✦

koke o fumi / odoro o fumite / ato mo naki /
yuki ni yamaji no / atari o zo yuku

84 *"Hail Again at Dawn"*

At break of day,
on the leaves
of my garden court—
jewels of hail:
just one,
and then another
falling,
in forlorn silence.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

ariake no / niwa no konoha ni / tamaarare /
hitotsu futatsu / ochite sabishiki

Not
a single hue,
not a tree
or blade of grass
but reminds me
of you—
when we part
and I steal off
on a path
faint with dawn light.*

✦✦✦✦✦

kusa mo ki mo / omokage naranu / iro zo naki /
uki kinuginu no / shinonome no michi

*An allusive variation on *Fūgashū* 1214 (Love), by Emperor Fushimi: In the midst of love / I see one thing in everything / within my gaze: / not a tree, not a blade of grass / but is a vision of you. (koishisa ni / naritatsu naka no / nagame ni wa / omokage naranu / kusa mo ki mo nashi.

86 *"Love in Spring"*

In evening's gloom,
I thought
I saw
the dim form
of the one I love,
there now
as a memento
in the haze
'round the dawn moon.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

yūmagure / sore ka to mieshi / omokage mo /
kasumu zo katami / ariake no tsuki

To her house
I come,
in vain, it seems,
and turn to go,
when I hear
a sound
that makes
me, too, fall silent,
just standing there,
wondering.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

yado toeba / yagate yametsuru / mono no ne ni /
ware mo oto sede / tachi zo yasurau

88 *"Love, Related to 'the Moon'"*

Unforgettable
is the image
that from my eyes
descends in tears—
showering onto
my sleeves
with moonlight
at break of day.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

wasurarenu / namida no uchi no / omokage mo /
sode ni koboruru / ariake no tsuki

"Love, Related to 'Grasses' "

If for
even
one night
the grasses
of my passion
were cut and gathered,
ah, what
a pile
they would make—
a mountain reaching
the clouds.

◆◆◆◆◆

yo no ma ni mo / waga koigusa o / karitsumite /
yama to shi nasaba / kumo ya kakaramu

90 *"Birds Lodging in Evening Groves"*

Below the mountain,
in the rain
of evening,
doves are calling—
all in a row
on branches
darkened by engulfing clouds.

✦✦✦✦✦

yamamoto no / yūbe no ame ni / naku hato no /
narabu kozue zo / kumogakureyuku

Ah, loneliness:
I need only abandon it
to
    the pine wind
from the mountains
                by my eaves,
and it seems
                not to blow at all.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

sabishisa o / nokiba no yama no / matsukaze ni /
makasehatsureba / fuku to shi mo nashi

92 *"Travel"*

The gloom of dusk.
A boat here
all tethered up,
with no one
around.
It will be
along this riverbank
that I rest
from travel tonight.

✦✦✦✦✦

yūmagure / fune wa tsunagite / hito mo nashi /
kono kawara ni ya / tabimakura sen

There it
remains,
as if to recall memories
of that midnight
dream
that parted
from the mountain peak
where now
a cloud trails away.

✦✦✦✦✦

kaerimiru / katami zo nokoru / yowa no yume /
wakareshi mine ni / kakaru yokogumo

94 *"Travel"*

Horses whinny,
cocks crow,
as travelers
rise and go away—
the village
overflowing
with the sound
of their voices.

✦✦✦✦✦

uma ibai / niwatori nakite / tabibito no /
idetatsu koe zo / sato ni amareru

"Boat on an Inlet"

The world
of men:
among grasses
floating free
in an inlet,
an untethered boat
tossed about
by waves
that bring it
to shore.*

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

hito no yo wa / ne o hanaretaru / kusa ga e ni /
tsunaganu fune no / kishi ni yoru nami

* A vague allusion to *Kokinshū* 1030 (Miscellaneous), by Ono no Komachi: In my forlorn state / I feel like a floating reed / ready to break free / at the roots and drift away— / if there were waters to tempt me. (wabinureba / mi o ukikusa no / ne o taete / sasou mizu araba / inamu to zo omou) and perhaps also to *Man'yōshū* 354, by Sami Mansei: Our life in this world: / to what shall I compare it? / It is like a boat / rowing out at break of day, / leaving not a trace behind. (yo no naka o / nani ni tatoemu / asabiraki / kogiinishi fune no / ato naki ga goto)

96 *"Bridge in the Rain"*

From
the river's edge,
stretching
off
to the mountain ridge,
stands a rainbow—
a bridge
that makes no sound
when crossed
by passing rain.

◆◆◆◆◆

kawabe yori / yama no ha kakete / tatsu niji no /
oto senu hashi o / wataru ame kana

97 *"Lament"*

Make haste,
people!
No matter
which of the Ways
you choose
to learn,
in old age
your heart
gives out,
making
every effort vain.

✦✦✦✦✦

isoge hito / izure no michi o / manabu to mo /
oi wa kokoro no / tsukite kai nashi

98 *"Reminiscing"*

So far
to go yet
on the long Way of Poetry—
when the daylight
ends.

How I wish
I had
the body
I had
back when I began!

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

shikishima no / michi tōku shite / hi wa kurenu /
koshikata hodo no / waga mi to mogana

"Rain at the Window"

In the dark
of night
my heart
sinks
into the rain
striking
the window—
then floating back up
with things
that happened
long, long ago.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

kuraki yo no / mado utsu ame ni / waga kokoro /
shizumeba ukabu / yoyo no furugoto

100 *"Monkey"*

Such a world
is ours—
where all must
submit themselves
to courtyard teachings,*
even a monkey
bound to learn
from the one who holds his chain.

✦✦✦✦✦

tsunagaruru / tegai no saru no / manabi dani /
niwa no oshie wa / aru yo narazu ya

**Niwa no oshie*, the teachings of one's parents, so called in reference to a scene in the life of Confucius when he stops his son in the courtyard to instruct him.

"Buddhism, Related to 'Blossoms'"

With every
new spring
the blossoms
speak not a word,
yet expound
the law—
knowing
what is at its heart
from the scattering
storm winds.

✦✦✦✦✦

haru goto ni / hana mono iwade / toku nori no /
kokoro shirarete / chiru arashi kana

102 *"Visitors Are Rare at a Mountain Home"*

A reply
will come
as an echo
in the mountains,
so it would seem;
but if one says
nothing first,
there will be
no answer
to hear.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

kotau beki / sazo yamabiko mo / aruramedo /
mono iwazareba / kiku koto mo nashi

By a field-hut,
a longbow
is left standing—
with no one
about.
No doubt he'll
be coming back
to watch
over the fields
tonight.*

◆◆◆◆◆

kariio ni / yumi tateokite / hito mo nashi /
yamada moru o ya / yoru kaerikomu

*A paddy guard employed to keep deer and other animals from destroying crops.

104 *"Feelings Distant Before the Moon"*

Closing
my eyes,
I need only
to ponder
and I see it all—
the moon shining
brightly
over Yamato
and Cathay.*

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

me o tojite / omoeba itodo / mukaimiru /
tsuki zo sayakeki / yamato morokoshi

*Morokoshi, a name for China.

Written for a poem sequence at a certain place on the sixteenth day [of the First Month of 1449].

The mountains—
not hazy
yet, with the snow too
unable
to begin falling;
above the winds
of a storm—
racks of cloud,
frozen.

✦✦✦✦✦

yama wa mada / kasumanu yuki mo / furikanete /
arashi no ue ni / kōru kumo kana

106 *"Bell at an Old Temple"*

From a poem sequence composed when Fujiwara Toshinaga and more than ten others came to my cottage on the 26th day [of the First Month of 1449].

Close by
the eaves,
where amidst
shinobu ferns*
the pines
grow old—
moss
has covered
the bell,
muffling the sound
of its voice.

✦✦✦✦✦

nokiba naru / shinobu ni majiru / matsu furite /
kane ni koke musu / koe mumoru nari

* *Shinobu[gusa]*, a fern whose name is a partial homophone with the verb *shinobu*, "to think fondly of the past."

Written for a poem sequence at the home of the Tō Lay-Monk of Shimōsa, Sokin, on the fourth day of the Second Month [of 1449].

Ah, if only
the sight
of blossoms
at close of day
would
stay with me!
Then though asleep,
I would not part
from
my dream
of a spring night.

✦✦✦✦✦

kururu ma no / hana no omokage / mi ni sowaba /
nete mo wakareji / haru no yo no yume

108 *"Cedars in Front of a Shrine"*

From among poems composed for a poem sequence composed when I visited the quarters of Nihō Shōnin of the Myōkōji on the sixth day [of the Second Month of 1449].

Surely
a sign
that the world
is in order,
the nation subdued—
by the shrine
of the gods,
halberd cedars*
standing tall.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

yo o osame / kuni o shizumuru / shirushi mo ya /
kami no yashiro ni / hokosugi tatsuran

**Hokosugi,* a variety of cryptomeria, a cedarlike evergreen with long straight trunks with branches only toward the top.

From a poem sequence composed when I visited the quarters of the Miidera monk Chōsan at Butsuchi'in on the seventh day [of the Second Month of 1449].

As darkness
comes on
still I will think
fondly of it—
the dream
of the night
from which
the sound of this bell
awakened me
at break of day.

✦✦✦✦✦

kururu ma mo / mata zo koishiki / kono kane no /
akatsuki no koe ni / sameshi yo no yume

110 *"River"*

From the monthly poetry meeting at the quarters of Chōsan on the tenth day [of the Second Month of 1449].

How can
the number
of people
in this world
change?
As the river
flows,
the water
is never
the same,
nor does it end.*

✦✦✦✦✦

yo no hito no / kazu ya wa kawaru / yuku kawa mo /
moto no mizu ni wa / arade taeseji

*An allusion to the first sentence of Kamo no Chōmei's famous *Hōjōki* ("The Ten-Foot Square Hut"): "On and on flows the river, but the water is never the same."

From a poem sequence composed when I first visited the Isshiki Master of the Left Capital Norichika after the construction of the latter's Meeting Hall and garden on the second day [of the Third Month 1449].

On
the roadside,
beneath a crag—
azaleas.
Who can it have been,
to take off
her crimson skirt,
leave it here,
and go away?

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

michinobe no / iwamoto tsutsuji / kurenai no /
akamo nugisute / tare ka inikemu

112 *"Seeing a Few Blossoms Fall"*

From the monthly poetry meeting at the quarters of Chōsan on the sixteenth day [of the Third Month of 1449].

Blossoms, indeed,
are these:
from leaves of green
trails the net
of a spider's web,
where
from a thread dangles
a single tuft
of snow.

✦✦✦✦✦

hana ya kore / aoba ni sugaku / sasagani no /
ito ni kakareru / yuki no hitomura

From the monthly poetry meeting at the quarters of the Butsuchi'in Bishop Chōsan on the sixteenth [of the Third Month of 1449].

I try to hide it,
but still my love
burns within—
grasses of springtime
whose colors
show the more
clearly
for a layer
of snow.

◆◆◆◆◆

uzumedomo / shitamoe masaru / omoigusa /
yukima sadaka ni / iro ya miyuran

114 *"Reminiscing"*

From among the poems of a hundred-poem sequence sponsored by a certain person as a votive offering to the myriad gods on the eighth day [of the Fourth Month of 1449].

From
long ago
I have been
coming along,
never arriving.
Even the old
have far to go:
for that is the way
with this Way.

✦✦✦✦✦

mukashi yori / kite mo sakai ni / irazariki /
oite mo tōki / michi wa kono michi

From among the poems of a hundred-poem sequence sponsored by a certain person as a votive offering to the myriad gods on the eleventh day [of the Fourth Month of 1449].

In
the falling rain
at the bottom
of my heart
are my friends—
all there
but only
as images
dark in the gloom
of the past.

✦✦✦✦✦

furu ame no / soko no kokoro ni / tomo wa mina /
aru mo mukashi no / kuraki omokage

116 *"Evening Bell"*

From a poem sequence composed as a votive offering by a certain person, at a place called Eisen'an, on the eighth day [of the Fifth Month of 1449].

Falling
on the robes
of those
who live in the clear,*
they deepen
a color
already black as ink—
those bells
ringing in the dusk.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

sumu hito no / koromo ni ochite / sumizome no /
iro o fukamuru / yūgure no kane

**Sumu hito,* a double entendre referring to clerics wearing dark robes who live (*sumu*) "in the clear" (*sumu*) light of Buddhist truth.

From the monthly poetry meeting at the home of the Master of the Palace Table Office held on the eighteenth day [of the Seventh Month of 1449].

Ah, solitude—
no fragrance
from the blossoms,
no birds
about;
in moss,
an aging orchard
and
the autumn wind.*

✦✦✦✦✦

sabishisa wa / hana mo niowazu / tori mo izu /
koke ni furitaru / sono no akikaze

*An allusion to *Shin kokinshū* 361, by Monk Jakuren (1139?–1202): Ah, solitude— / it is not the sort of thing / that has a color. / Mountains lined with black pine / on an evening in autumn. (sabishisa wa / sono iro to shi mo / nakarikeri / maki tatsu yama no / aki no yūgure)

118 *"Bells at Evening on a Mountain"*

From a poem sequence at the home of the Master of Palace Repairs on the nineteenth day [of the Seventh Month of 1449].

What a noise
they make!
In the groves
up on the peak
in the gloom of dusk,
the bells toll,
and chiming in—
the birds, too,
and the storm winds.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

sawagu nari / mine no hayashi no / yūmagure /
tsukiidasu kane ni / tori mo arashi mo

From a poem sequence at the home of the Bizen Lay Monk Jōgan on the eiththday [of the Tenth Month of 1449].

The image I saw
remains there
in the lamplight.
Waking
from a dream,
I see
something
looking like
the spirit
of one grown old.

✦✦✦✦✦

omokage no / nokoru tomoshibi / yume samete /
furinishi hito no / tama ka to zo miru

120 *"Boat on an Inlet"*

From the monthly poetry meeting at the home of the Senior Assistant in the Punishments Ministry on the ninth day [of the Tenth Month of 1449].

Owner
unknown:
at evening,
by an inlet,
with no one
around—
just
a raincloak
and a pole
left alone there
in a skiff.

✦✦✦✦✦

nushi shiranu / irie no yūbe / hito nakute /
mino to sao to no / fune ni nokoreru

From the monthly poetry meeting at the home of the Master of the Left Capital on the 23d day [of the Tenth Month of 1449].

In a sky
filled
with frost
on a chilly night,
a goose calls,
falling
into
paddies,
where cedars
stand
in dawn moonlight.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

sora ni mitsu / shimoyo no kari mo / nakiochite /
tanaka no sugi yo / ariake no tsuki

122 *"Old Love, in Winter"*

From a poem sequence at the home of the Bizen Lay Monk Jōgan on the 23d day [of the Eleventh Month of 1449].

Ah, let me forget!
For now my thoughts are as thick
as once
was my hair—
black then, but
now frosty
as Isonokami's sands.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

wasurenamu / shimo furu iso no / kamisuji mo /
kurokarishi yo zo / omoimidareshi

From the monthly poetry meeting at Ontoku'in on the twentieth day [of the Twelfth Month of 1449].

Every shrub,
every tree,
if one has not forgotten
where each
was planted,
retains beneath
all covering snow
a vestige
of its form.

✦✦✦✦✦

kusa mo ki mo / ueshi tokoro o / wasureneba
ato naki yuki ni / nokoru omokage

124 *"Fisherman Visiting an Island"*

From a poem sequence at Myōkōji on the fifteenth day [of the Third Month of 1450].

Here
I am,
then,
away from
the cruel world
on an
island—
trusting
the string
of my life
to a line
without a hook!

✦✦✦✦✦

ukiyo o ba / hanarekojima ni / mi wa aredo /
hari naki tsuri ni / kakeshi tama no o

5 *"Seeking Love"*

From the monthly poetry meeting at Ontoku'in on the 27th day [of the Fourth Month of 1450].

With what harshness
they come blowing
toward me—
the mountain winds
from deep
within
the heart
of one who asks
no lodging.

✦✦✦✦✦

hageshiku mo / fukimukau kana / yado towanu /
hito no kokoro no / oku no yamakaze

126 *"Thunder Storm at Sea"*

From the monthly poetry meeting at Jōrakuji on the eighteenth day of the Fifth Month [of 1450].

Just like the spray
of a whale
rising for air
in
the salt breeze—
in the offing,
one clump of clouds
dropping
an evening shower.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

ushio fuku / kujira no iki to / mienu beshi /
oki ni hitomura / kudaru yūdachi

From among the poems requested by the Tsukinowa Consultant-Lay Monk Seishō on the 25th day [of the Fifth Month of 1450].

What is yet
to come,
the past,
and the present, too—
all are
no more
than the light
of a lightning flash.
Such is life
in this world!

✦✦✦✦✦

yukusue mo / mukashi mo ima mo / inazuma no /
hikari ni suginu / aware yo no naka

128 *"Dawn"*

From among poems from a sequence composed at a certain place on the 23d day [of the Sixth Month of 1450].

The moon—
clouded over;
homes
for a thousand leagues—still,
making not
a sound;
at the edge
of a new day,
the people, too,
still dozing.

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

tsuki kumori / chisato shizuka ni / oto mo sezu /
akuru sakai ya / hito mo madoromu

From a poem sequence at the home of the Master of the Left Capital on the nineteenth day [of the Tenth Month of 1450].

On the roadside,
in the light
shining all around,
he looks upward—
a traveler
standing there,
while somewhere
waits a friend.

✦✦✦✦✦

michinobe ya / meguru hikage o / augimite /
tateru tabibito / tomo ga matsuran

130 *"Traveler's Inn"*

From among the poems of a fifty-poem sequence composed on the 22d day [of the Second Month of 1451] for the Buddhist services on the first anniversary of the death of a man named Shinkū, a disciple of Master of Discipline Shinkei of the Jūjūshin'in, located in the area around Kiyomizu:

Ah, the world
of men:
at morning,
someone is born
while
at evening
another life
is at stake—
as at Mushiake Straits.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

hito no yo wa / ashita mumare / yūgure ni /
inochi kaketaru / mushiake no seto

From among the poems of a seventy-poem sequence at the home of the Master of Palace Repairs on the seventh day [of the Seventh Month of 1451].

How naturally
they meet
each other in time:
water
not thinking,
"Come now,
take your lodging here!"
the moon
not asking for an inn.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

onozukara / aeru toki kana / yadore to wa /
mizu mo omowazu / tsuki mo tazunezu

132 *"Dawn Mountains"*

From a poem sequence at the home of the Master of Palace Repairs on the 23d day [of the Seventh Month of 1451].

Blow then,
you storm winds!
—as in the first
light of dawn
the stars shine
brightly,
in the clear
above a peak
and its
one and only pine.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

fuke arashi / akatsuki izuru / hoshi kiyoku /
haretaru mine no / matsu no hitomoto

From a poem sequence at the home of the Master of Palace Repairs on the fifth day [of the Eighth Month of 1451].

Even in its glow
my heart
remains as ever—
still
in the gloom;
it's for
someone
other than me—
this lightning
in the night.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

terashite mo / kokoro wa yami no / mama nareba /
waga mi no yoso ni / sayo no inazuma

134 *"The Moon Already Gone Down"*

From a poem sequence composed when people came to his cottage [on the fifteenth day of the Eighth Month of 1451].

A thousand leagues
away,
they will
be waiting for it—
people in autumn
on the far side
of the mountain,
where the moon
just went down.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

chisato made / machi ya izuramu / tsuki irishi /
yama no anata no / aki no morobito

At the home of the Senior Assistant in the Punishments Ministry on the 27th day [of the Ninth Month of 1451].

A rowed-in boat,
run
aground
on a sandspit,
oarless
and alone—
like me,
weakened
by the blows
of the buffeting
bay winds.

✦✦✦✦✦

kogareteshi / fune mo su ni iru / kaji o tae /
mi o urakaze mo / fuki zo yowareru

136 *"Box Fire"*

From the monthly poetry meeting at the home of the Master of Palace Repairs on the 24th day [of the Tenth Month of 1451].

Into my box fire*
I mix
        fresh chunks of coal;
then
        in the light
of my tranquil
                chamber
I wait
        for
                the day to dawn.

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

uzumibi ni / sumi sashisoete / shizuka naru /
neya no hikari ni / akuru o zo matsu

* *Uzumibi,* a small coal brazier used for warmth in the winter.

From the monthly poetry meeting at the home of the Master of Palace Repairs on the fifth day [of the Twelfth Month of 1451].

Despite the depth
of the snow
on Yodo Moor,
there is still
a path—
where a cart
sent off at dawn
has left
its tracks behind.

✦✦✦✦✦

uzumedomo / yodono no yuki ni / michi zo aru /
akatsuki yarishi / oguruma no ato

138 *"First Autumn Wind"*

From the monthly poetry meeting at the home of the Master of Palace Repairs on the fifth day [of the Twelfth Month of 1451].

Ah, how I wish
that I could feel
as I will later
as winter's captive!
It seems
too chilly, now—
this first wind
of autumn.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

nochi ni komu / fuyu no kokoro no / isogeba ya /
amari suzushiki / aki no hatsukaze

From the monthly poetry meeting at the home of the Assistant Governor of Kazusa on the sixth day [of the Third Month of 1452].

The scattering
of blossoms
in the wind
lasts only a day—
while we lament
the moon's
descent
night
after night.

✦✦✦✦✦

kaze ni chiru / hana o ichinichi ni / kagirikeru /
oshimarete iru / tsuki wa yona yona

140 *"Blossoms at Dawn"*

Written extemporaneously* at the monthly poetry meeting at Myōeiji on the fourteenth day [of the Third Month of 1452].

Not like
the voices
of birds
in the normal
world,
those chirpings;
but, then,
neither of this world
is this dawn
of cherry blossoms.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

yo no tsune no / tori no saezuru / koe narazu /
kono yo ni mo ninu / hana no akebono

*In other words, composed on topics handed out "on the spot" rather than beforehand.

From the monthly meeting at the home of the Master of the Right Capital on the sixteenth day [of the Fifth Month of 1452].

Onto the surface
of the hard ore
of the earth
white clouds
of heaven
must have scattered
their seeds—
now become blossoms
at their height.

✦✦✦✦✦

arakane no / tsuchi ni mo amatsu / shirakumo no /
tane wa arikeru / hanazakari kana

142 *"Buddhism, Related to 'the Moon'"*

From a sequence composed at the home of the Assistant Commander of the Military Guards of the Right on the seventeenth day [of the Seventh Month of 1452].

"Look up!"
someone says,
pointing into
empty sky
with one finger—
but no one
bothers to obey
and get
a look
at the moon.

✦✦✦✦✦

aoge tote / munashiki sora ni / sasu yubi o /
mamorite tsuki o / miru hito mo nashi

Written at the home of the Assistant Commander of the Military Guards of the Right on the eighteenth day [of the Eighth Month of 1452].

Growing old,
one
can forget completely
the recent
past—
although
remembering still
things from when
one was a child.

✦✦✦✦✦

oinureba / chikaki mukashi zo / wasuraruru /
itokenakarishi / koto wa oboete

144 *"Bridge in the Mist"*

Written while ill in bed when I did not want to postpone the monthly meeting at my cottage, on the twentieth day [of the Eighth Month of 1452].

Who can make it
over
the bridge
on the mountain peak?
Even the morning mist
struggles
to get across
in the wind
below the clouds.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

tare koemu / mine no kakehashi / asagiri mo /
watariwazurau / kumo no shitakaze

From the monthly poetry meeting at my cottage on the twentieth day [of the Ninth Month of 1452].

Deep into
autumn,
I hear
no mountain wind;
in moonlight
spilling
down
through gaps
in the trees—
the sound
of acorns
hitting frost.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

aki fukaki / yamakaze kikade / ko no ma moru /
tsuki ni ochishii no / shimo o utsu koe

146 *"Feeling Far Away, in the Snow"*

A poem written on pocket paper* when there was a service held before a portrait of Teika at the home of the Master of Palace Repairs on the 29th day [of the Eleventh Month of 1452].

On
Poetry Way
I stop
the pony
of my heart
for a brief
rest—
thinking back
on that snow
on the fields
'round Sano Ford.†

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

yamatouta no / michi no kokoro no / koma tomete /
sano no watari no / yuki o shi zo omou

* *Kaishi,* the paper upon which poems were written for gatherings and contests. The name derives from the custom of carrying the paper inside the breast pocket of one's robe.
† An allusive variation on *Shin kokinshū* 671, by Fujiwara no Teika (Travel): No shelter in sight / to give my pony a rest / and brush off my sleeves— / in the fields around Sano Ford / on a snowy evening. (koma tomete / sode uchiharau / kage mo nashi / sano no watari no / yuki no yūgure)

Written when people were composing poems at Ōmiya Jōkō'in on the sixth day of the Twelfth Month [of 1452].

I will not dry them—
for might it not be
that someone
from long ago
has become
one
of these tears,
now fallen
onto my sleeves?

✦✦✦✦✦

makihosaji / mukashi no hito ya / namida to mo /
narite tamoto ni / ima kakaruran

148 *"Hut of Grass"*

From the monthly poetry meeting at the home of the Master of Palace Repairs on the eighteenth day [of the Twelfth Month of 1452].

And when
my body
ends its brief stay
and decays—
then the moss
will age,
the grass
of my rustic hut
becoming
a memorial mound.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

kari ni sumu / mi mo kuchihateba / koke furite /
iori ya kusa no / tsuka to naramashi

From a poem sequence at the home of the Assistant Commander of the Military Guards of the Right on the 25th day [of the Twelfth Month of 1452].

Frozen in channels
among
rock crevasses,
it must stay the night:
for water, too,
a traveler's inn
is a cold
place to sleep.

✦✦✦✦✦

kōriiru / iwama ni koyoi / todomarite /
mizu mo tabine no / yado ya samukeki

150 *"Pines on a Peak"*

From when the Ogasawara Bizen Lay-Monk Jōgan sponsored a monthly poetry meeting at a place called Myōeiji on the fourteenth day [of the First Month of 1453].

Ah,
for the words
to make
of that peak above
overhung
with clouds
a pine
at the mountain's base!
The Way of Poetry.

✦✦✦✦✦

kumo kakaru / mine o fumoto no / matsu to nasu /
koto no ha mogana / shikishima no uta

Written for a votive sequence requested by a certain person on the 25th day [of the Second Month of 1453].

Even
the clouds
in the empty sky
follow the wind.
Who, then,
in this world
avoids
submitting
to the Man?

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

sora ni dani / kaze no mama naru / kumo zo aru /
hito ni shitagau / yo o ba somukaji

152 *"Love, Related to 'Bells'"*

From a poem sequence at the home of the Bizen Lay-Monk Jōgan at the end of the Third Month [of 1453].

As I listen,
bells
tolling over Hatsu River
fade off,
one by one—
falling onto
my sleeves,
becoming
the capital.*

✦✦✦✦✦

kiku kane mo / koegoe taete / hatsusegawa /
sode ni ochikuru / miyako to zo naru

*An allusion to *Shin kokinshū* 1142 (Love), by Fujiwara no Teika: The years have gone by / with my prayers still unanswered— / as Hase's bell / signals evening from its peak, / sounding somehow far away. (*toshi mo henu / inoru chigiri wa / hatsuseyama / onoe no kane no / yoso no yugure*)

From the monthly poetry meeting at the home of the Master of Palace Repairs on the thirteenth day [of the Fourth Month of 1453].

Yes,
the gods above
have given us
treasured truths
we should obey,
but it is
the lies of men
that stand out
in the world.

✦✦✦✦✦

mamoru beki / kami no makoto wa / arinagara /
hito no itsuwaru / yo zo shirushi naki

154 *"Willow on an Inlet"*

Composed extemporaneously for the monthly poetry meeting at my cottage on the twentieth day [of the Fifth Month of 1453].

This
        willow tree
on the banks of the inlet—
when
        did it wither,
leaving only
                the pine trees
as markers
of spring?

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

kawakishi no / ōe no yanagi / itsu kuchite /
matsu bakari naru / haru no shirushi zo

Written for the monthly poetry meeting at Myōeiji on the fourteenth day [of the Sixth Month of 1453].

High up
on the peaks,
those blotches
of black ink stuck
to the sky's
deep blue—
ah, they were only pine trees!
On mountains,
in the evening.

✦✦✦✦✦

mine takaki / midori no sora ni / tsuku sumi wa /
matsu narikeri na / yūgure no yama

156 *"Mountain Home"*

From a seventy-poem sequence at the home of the Master of Palace Repairs on the seventh day [of the Seventh Month of 1453].

Were I to emerge
from the mountains
of Yoshino
when my world
was gone,
who then
would not mistake me
for a man from China?

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

sumu yo hete / yoshino no yama o / kari ni ideba /
morokoshibito / to tare ka mizaran

From a hundred-poem sequence written extemporaneously for presentation as a votive offering for the Kitano Shrine made by Master of the Right Capital Haga Mototame on the twelfth day [of the Seventh Month of 1453].

Away
they scattered
to gather up
the fallen leaves—
village
urchins.
But for shelter
from showers
they are back
beneath the evergreens.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

yoso ni shite / ochiba kakitoru / sato no ko mo /
shigure ni tanomu / tokiwagi no kage

158 *"Love, Related to 'Monkey'"*

From the monthly poetry meeting at Myōeiji on the nineteenth day [of the Eighth Month of 1453].

The one
I glimpsed
is just so
hard to catch—
like
those monkeys
vainly
stretching out
their hands
for the moon
in a valley pool.*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

mishi hito mo / kaku zo egataki / tani no saru /
te ni mo torarenu / mizu no tsukikage

*A reference to an old Buddhist cautionary tale in which monkeys reach out for the image of the moon in a pool, fall in, and drown—symbolizing the fate that awaits all who are caught in the world of illusion.

From the monthly poetry meeting at my cottage on the twentieth day [of the Ninth Month of 1453].

And if the rope
does not reach
down
far enough
into my heart,
who will fathom
the thoughts
at the bottom
of the well?

✦✦✦✦✦

tsurubenawa / kokoro fukai ni / oyobazu wa /
tare kumishiran / omou minasoko

160 *"Bell at a Traveler's Inn"*

From the monthly poetry meeting at Daikōmyōji on the twelfth day [of the Tenth Month of 1453].

Listening,
I learn
that even
the night
is not like
what
I know at home;
even the bell
seems remote,
speaking with
a different voice.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

kiku mama ni / waga sato nareshi / yowa mo nizu /
kane sae hina no / koe zo kawareru

From the monthly poetry meeting of Enshū at Byōdōbō on the 25th day [of the Eleventh Month of 1453].

Across
a winter stream
he fords,
as evening comes—
going straight in
to the fire tender's place,
without even
asking
his name.

✦✦✦✦✦

fuyukawa o / yūwatari suru / hitakiya ni /
taga yado towade / mazu zo tachiiru

162 *"Evening Hail"*

From among the poems of a votive hundred-poem sequence composed at the home of the Assistant Commander of the Military Guards of the Right, as a prayer for my recovery from illness, on the fourth day of the Third Month [of 1454].

Storm clouds
clear away;
then come blasts
of icy wind,
scattering
hailstones—
looking
as if
the evening stars
were
descending
from the sky.

✦✦✦✦✦

sora harete / sayuru arashi ni / tama zo chiru /
yūbe no hoshi no / kudaru to ya min

From the monthly poetry meeting at the home of the Master of Palace Repairs on the fifth day of the Fifth Month [of 1454].

To house
after house
the woodcutter takes
bundles
of wood
for burning,
and then
turns for home
at dusk
as the village
throbs
with sound.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

ieie ni / shiba mochiirite / yamabito no /
kaeru yūbe no / sato doyomu nari

164 *"Rain at Night in One's Home Town"*

From a poem sequence at the home of the Bizen Lay-Monk Jōgan on the 21st day [of the Sixth Month of 1454].

All through the night
rain
delivers
the voices
of generations
that have now become
these clouds
spilling showers
on my hometown.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

yomosugara / koe o zo hakobu / yoyo no hito /
kumo to narinishi / furusato no ame

From a poem sequence at the home of the Assistant Commander of the Military Guards of the Right on the 27th day [of the Twelfth Month of 1454].

Darkness has fallen.
With my boat
making no progress
on Waka Bay,*
I end this year
as others,
tossed on
the waves
of old age.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

kurenikeri / waka no urabune / kogi sarazu /
kotoshi mo oi no / nami ni ukabete

*Referring to a famous bay in Kii Province, but also to the "harbor" of Japanese Poetry (*waka*).

166 *"Beginning of Spring"*

On the night of the second day of the First Month of 1450, I had a dream in which there was a votive sequence for the gods at the home of Kamobe Yukimoto for which I was asked to produce the first poem, on the topic "Beginning of Spring," which I composed and then woke up. Bemused by the episode, I quickly wrote the poem down on a scrap of paper but said nothing about it to anyone. Then, in a dream on the 28th day of the Twelfth Month of 1454, Yukimoto summoned me for a votive sequence and said that the first poem, on the beginning of spring, should be just the one I had composed! So fascinated was I that the poems were identical that when I presented a votive sequence I used this "dream poem" as the first poem.

At house after house
they seem to be
awaiting
the coming
of spring.
In the garden,
late at night—
doing
the morning cleaning.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

ieie ni / irikuru haru o / matsurame ya /
yofukaki niwa no / asakiyome shite

[From a votive sequence dating from 1455].

The days
pile up,
and I get used to them,
until
with
my eyes open
or with
my eyes closed,
still
the blossoms
appear.

✦✦✦✦✦

hi o kasane / narenishi nochi wa / me o hiraki /
me o tozuredomo / hana zo miekeru

168 *"Cooling Off Near a Well"*

From a poem sequence composed when some people came to his home on the eighth day [of the Intercalary Fourth Month of 1455].

Has the water frozen?
From a wellrope
                hauled up
from far below
in
    the depths
                of summer—
a cascade
of white jewels.

✦✦✦✦✦

kōreru ka / natsu mo fukai no / tsurubenawa /
kuriaguru mizu ni / otsuru shiratama

From a poem sequence composed when some people came to my cottage on the eighth day [of the Intercalary Fourth Month of 1455].

Ignoring its voice,
how many
generations
of men
have grown old?
Always the same
temple bells
in the mountains
of the capital.

✦✦✦✦✦

kikisutete / iku yo no hito no / furinikemu /
onaji miyako no / yamadera no kane

170 *"Losing at Love"*

From the monthly poetry meeting at my cottage on the twentieth day [of the Sixth Month of 1455].

Too weary
is my heart
to advance
any further
on the way of love—
a horse
not up
to the race,
slowly being left
behind.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

koiji ni mo / susumu kokoro zo / yowariyuku /
kisoi no uma no / ato no ashinami

From among the poems of an extemporaneous hundred-poem sequence composed at my cottage on 23d last, in celebration of the completion of the discussions of *The Tale of Genji* that I had been leading at the home of the Shogun for the past four years.

Within
that
body
whose lack of
enlightenment
I blamed for my grief,
behold now
how the flower
of the law
has blossomed!

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

satorienu / nageki no moto to / omoikoshi /
waga mi ni nori no / hana sakinikeri

172 *"Remaining Snow"*

From a meeting at the home of the Reizei Gentleman-in-Waiting Masatame on the 21st day [of the First Month of 1456].

Fine flakes of snow
melt
into
the empty sky—
falling then
as dew,
descending then
as drizzle,
onto
a frozen garden.

✦✦✦✦✦

awayuki no / sora yori kiete / tsuyu to furi /
shizuku to ochite / kōru niwa kana

From the monthly poetry meeting of Enshū at Byōdōbō on the 28th day [of the First Month of 1456].

For those grown old
both reality
and dreams
are
within a dream
that provides us
some diversion
as we live on,
dawn to dusk.

✦✦✦✦✦

oinureba / utsutsu mo yume mo / yume no uchi ni /
magirete akashi / kurasu bakari zo

174 *"Forgotten Love"*

From a poem sequence at the home of the Director of the Imperial Stables of the Right when the cherry blossoms in his garden were in full bloom, on the 24th day [of the Second Month of 1456].

I had forgotten—
as I
kept on forgetting
to remind
myself
that those who vow to forget
are the ones who can't forget.*

✦✦✦✦✦

wasurekeri / wasuremu to omou / kokoro araba /
wasureji mono o / wasurehatetsutsu

*An allusive variation on *Shūi gusō* (no. 268), the personal anthology of Fujiwara no Teika: You've forgotten, you say? / All right, then, I too will forget / that when we parted / I said I would convince myself / it was nothing but a dream. (wasurenu ya / sa wa wasurekeri / waga kokoro / yume ni nase to zo / iite wakareshi)

From the monthly poetry meeting of Enshō at Byōdōbō on the 26th day [of the Third Month of 1456].

Out ahead
of me
I allow the same distance
I have come
thus far,
then
beneath the straight-up sun
have my meal
of parched rice.

✦✦✦✦✦

koshi hodo no / michi o ba sue ni / nokoshiokite
katabukanu hi ni / mukau karemeshi

176 *"Geese Outside the Clouds"*

From among the poems of a votive hundred-poem sequence at the home of the Assistant Commander of the Military Guards of the Right on the ninth day [of the Fourth Month of 1456]

With so vast
an array
of different robes
of cloud,
how can they manage?
Those geese flying
in a row
make only
a single sash.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

kazu shiranu / kumo no koromo ni / ikaga sen /
tsuranaru kari no / hitosuji no obi

From the monthly poetry meeting at my cottage on the twentieth day [of the Fifth Month of 1456].

The hue
of my heart
as I lose myself in thought
each evening
recedes
farther
into the distance.
With the mountain
not moving.

✦✦✦✦✦

omoiiru / kokoro no iro mo / kuregoto ni /
tōzakaru nari / yama wa ugokade

178 *"Insects at Night"*

From the monthly poetry meeting of Enshū at Byōdōbō on the 24th day [of the Eighth Month of 1456].

Before
it came out,
the leaves
on the grasses
were thick
with calling
insects
that are sparsely
scattered now—
chilled, it would seem,
by the moon.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

idenu ma wa / kusaba ni shigeku / naku mushi no /
mabara ni narinu / tsuki ya sayuran

From the monthly poetry meeting of Enshū at Byōdōbō on the 24th day [of the Eighth Month of 1456].

Even
the mountains
all take
for themselves
the form
of
the first Buddha;
and how ceaselessly
the law
is expounded
by storm winds.

✦✦✦✦✦

yama mo mina / moto no hotoke no / sugata nite
taezu minori o / toku arashi kana

180 *"Famous Market Town"*

Written while on my sickbed* for the monthly poetry meeting at my cottage on the twentieth day [of the Ninth Month of 1456].

They accumulate,
but there
is no one
to buy them—
these leaves
of words
piling up
like wares
for sale
beneath
the Sumiyoshi Pine.†

✦✦✦✦✦

tsumoredomo / kau hito ya naki / sumiyoshi no /
hamabe no ichi no / matsu no koto no ha

*He had been down since early in the month with his chronic ailment.
†Sumiyoshi was the site of a Shinto shrine in Settsu Province that was sacred to poets.

From the monthly poetry meeting at my cottage on the twentieth day [of the Eleventh Month of 1456].

Just
grasses, trees?
Every living thing
in life
must borrow
its form
from the myriad
of things
a Buddha
can become.

✦✦✦✦✦

kusaki ka wa / iki to shi ikeru / mono wa mina /
hotoke no nareru / sugata o zo karu

182 *"Bridge"*

Written when there was a monthly poetry meeting to produce a votive sequence to the god at the request of Tachibana Toyofumi, chief priest of Takamatsu Daijingu, on the tenth day of the Second Month [of 1457].

On
a long night,
there is no guard
to bar the way
on the bridge
of dreams;
but those
who have grown old
still labor to get across.

◆◆◆◆◆

nagaki yo no / yume no ukihashi / moru hito no /
naki ni mo oi zo / watariwazurau

On the morning of the fourteenth day [of the Second Month of 1457] my chronic ailment flared up, and by the 17th it looked like it might be the end. I wasn't even aware of the people who came to visit, but then, who knows why, I began to recover, little by little . . . and by the end of the Third Month I was somewhat better, when I received a message from the Master of Palace Repairs saying that there were still some blossoms left in his garden, that it would be a shame if I didn't see any at all this spring, and that I really should get outdoors, and so forth. So kind were his remonstrances, that I went . . . and looked at the blossoms. This was written for a fifty-poem sequence.

This year
for springtime
I stay
in the capital,
but with my blinds down—
blossoms deep in the mountains
taking form
within my mind.

✦✦✦✦✦

kono haru wa / miyako nagara ni / tarekomete /
miyamazakura zo / omokage ni tatsu

184 *"Love, Related to 'Animal'"*

From an extemporaneous poetry meeting on the eighth day [of the Fourth Month of 1457], when Hōshun of the Myōkōji received an invitation from the Master of Palace Repairs.

Now that
at last
the dogs
that once barked at you
are
used to your touch,
don't
stay
away from the house
they linger around
every night.

✦✦✦✦✦

togametsuru / inu mo tegai no / naru bakari /
yogoro tatazumu / yado na itoi so

From a votive poem contest at Takamatsu Daijingu on the tenth day [of the Fifth Month of 1457].

Past and
gone now
is the time I awaited,
leaving me
clinging—
anxious for wind
from the pines,
like dewdrops
at break of day.

✦✦✦✦✦

tanomeshi wa / koro mo suginu o / matsukaze ni/
inochi kaketaru / akatsuki no tsuyu

186 *"Passing Like a Dream"*

From a poem sequence sponsored by the Ogasawara Bizen Lay-monk Jōgan at Myōeiji on the 29th day [of the Fifth Month of 1457].

Whatever
one sees
in the midst
of one's sleep
ends
with waking;
but the dreams
one has while awake
sleeping
won't make you forget.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

nuru ga uchi ni / miru wa samuru o / kagiri nite /
samete no yume ni / nete mo wasurenu

From a poem sequence at the home of the Master of the Right Capital on the 21st day [of the Eight Month of 1457].

All I'm asking
for
is someone
living in these hills,
wise about
the past.
In
this same world,
after all,
the moon—if awaited—
does appear.

✦✦✦✦✦

yama ni sumu / mukashi kashikoki / hito mogana /
matarete izuru / tsuki mo aru yo ni

188 *"Dew in Autumn Paddies"*

From a monthly poetry meeting convened by Hinoshita Toshikage on the 25th day [of the Eighth Month of 1457].

Breaking
a new field,
laboring peasants
work up
a sweat
—adding
to the numbers
of dewdrops
on
the heads
of grain.

✦✦✦✦✦

arata yori / tami no kurushimu / ase ya nao /
kazu masaruran / ho no ue no tsuyu

From a poem contest at the Ontoku'in on the 23d day [of the Ninth Month of 1457].

Hoisting
the sun
after its light
had set—
a ship's
white sail;
and how bright
the hauling ropes
of boatmen
in the offing.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

nokoru to mo / mienu irihi o / ho ni agete /
tsunade sayakeki / okitsu funabito

190 *"A Little Stream in the Fields"*

From the monthly poetry meeting at the home of the Master of Palace Repairs on the fifth day of the Eleventh Month [of 1457].

It is
not a man,
this stream
thinning to a trickle
in the meadow;
yet I
see wrinkles
of old age
in the ripples
made by wind.

✦✦✦✦✦

hito naranu /nonaka no mizu no / yaseyuku ni /
oi no shiwa miru / kaze no sazanami

From the monthly poetry meeting at my cottage on the twentieth day [of the Eleventh Month of 1457].

Moving on,
I go.
In the makeshift
market stalls—
everyone
has left;
an evening crow
calls out above
my pathway
beneath the trees.

✦✦✦✦✦

ware zo yuku / ichiba no kariya / hito taete /
yūgarasu naku / mori no shitamichi

192 *"Cold Trees"*

From the monthly poetry meeting at the home of the Master of Palace Repairs on the fifth day [of the Twelfth Month of 1457].

Those blossoms,
those leaves
that will scatter
later on,
in the coming
year—
all are
here now,
in the branches
on every
winter-bound tree.

✦✦✦✦✦

kon toshi ni / chiru beki hodo no / hana mo ha mo /
ki goto no eda ni / komoru fuyu kana

From a votive hundred-poem sequence composed at the home of the Master of Palace Repairs on the sixteenth day [of the Twelfth Month of 1457].

One may
break a bough
and adorn one's head with blossoms,
but they cannot conceal
that a flower
is a flower
and old age
is old age.

✦✦✦✦✦

yamazakura / orikazashite mo / hana wa hana /
oi wa oi to ya / kakure nakaran

194 *"Pledge of Love, in Autumn"*

From a seventy-poem sequence at the home of the Master of Palace Repairs on the seventh day [of the Seventh Month of 1458].

Our pledge
of love—
is as the dew
of evening
hanging on grasses
withered
by the winds
blowing
at the far edge
of autumn fields.

✦✦✦✦✦

uki naka no / chigiri wa aki no / suenokaze /
karuru kusaba nni / kakaru yūtsuyu

From the monthly poetry meeting of the Junior Assistant of the War Ministry on the seventeenth day [of the Seventh Month of 1458].

The bellsounds
have ceased;
the wind, too,
makes
not a sound.
For lodging, then,
it will be
in evening's heart
that my heart
takes refuge.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

kane mo tae / kaze mo oto senu / yūgure no /
kokoro ni yado o / karu kokoro kana

196 *"Love, Related to 'Stars'"*

From the monthly poetry meeting at my cottage on the twentieth day [of the Seventh Month of 1458].

For one
who doesn't come
I wait on,
wasting my time—
although
every night
the light of the stars,
at least,
visits
my bedchamber.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

konu hito o / matsu wa munashiku / akahoshi no /
kage wa yogoto ni / neya o toedomo

From a poem sequence composed the first time I went to the cottage of Chōdō'an Sōryū on the sixth day of the Eighth Month [of 1458].

Has the new day dawned?
On the beach
of the inlet
a horse
moves forward;
a boat
pushes out, gets afloat—
setting the village
athrob.

✦✦✦✦✦

akenuru ka / irie no iso ni / uma susumi /
fune ideukabu / sato doyomu made

198 *"Birds Lodging in Evening Groves"*

From a poem sequence composed at the home of the Master of Palace Repairs on the eighth day [of the Eighth Month of 1458].

How moving
it is
that birds
should quiet down
in the groves
of trees,
while still the village pulses
in expectation
of night.

✦✦✦✦✦

aware ni mo / tori no shizumaru / hayashi kana /
yūtodoroki no / sato wa nokorite

With a hat
of snow
and for a staff,
an icicle—
an aging pine,
leaning with the weight
of years
standing in
a garden.

✦✦✦✦✦

kasa no yuki / tsurara no tsue o / tsuku matsu no /
oikatabukite / tateru niwa kana

200 *"A Boat Moving Away, Beyond the Haze"*

And
on a day
when the whitecaps
in the wake
of a departing
boat
are obscured
by spreading haze—
to what
does one compare
our world?*

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

yuku fune no / ato no shiranami / kasumu hi wa /
kono yo no naka o / nani ni tatoemu

*An allusion to *Man'yōshū* 354, by Sami Mansei. See note on p. 97.

There is
no place
it really comes from,
no place
it returns to;
what can we be thinking,
then,
to welcome spring,
bid it farewell?

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

kuru kata mo / kaeru tokoro mo / naki haru o /
okurimukau to / nani omouran

202 *"Lightning"*

In the dark
of night,
with whom am I to share
the thoughts
of my heart?
Suddenly
the clouds blink—
a flash
of autumn lightning.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

kuraki yo no / tare ni kokoro o / awasuran /
kumo zo matataku / aki no inazuma

On leaves
fallen
around the bases
of the trees,
rainfall taps, asking,
"Where,
since
only yesterday,
can Autumn
have gone off to?"

✦✦✦✦✦

ko no moto no / ochiba ga ue ni / otozurete /
kinō no aki o / tou shigure kana

204 *"Night Snow"*

The wind of night
for
the space
of a stride
grows suddenly calm:
from afar,
I hear the sound
of branches
breaking under snow.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

sayokaze wa / tada hitoashi ni / shizumarite /
ochikata kikeba / yukiore no koe

Like lance and shield
set to fend off
arrows shot
from a spindle-wood bow—
that is how ready
my heart is
to pursue
the way of love.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

azusayumi / yasaki o fusegu / tatehoko to /
kokoro takaku mo / tanomu koi kana

206 *"Buddhism"*

Think of it
not
as a place
either perilous
or without peril—
this bridge
across the expanse
Buddha extends
for us
to cross.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

ayauku mo / ayaukarazu mo / omou na yo /
watasu hotoke no / mama no tsugihashi

"A Thin Trail of Smoke Over a Mountain Dwelling"

The smoke
rising
from a hut
high on the peak—
I would see it
as a fishing line
descending
from
the River of Heaven.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

mine no io ni / tatsuru kemuri o / ama no kawa /
tsuri suru ito o / orosu to ya min

208 *"Buddhism"*

Seek though one may,
can one
ever hope
to meet him?
No,
not even
where the Master
of the Law*
hid himself
on Vulture Peak.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

tazunete mo / aimimu mono ka / nori no shi no /
kakureshi washi no / yama ni ari tomo

*Referring to Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha.

GLOSSARY OF IMPORTANT NAMES AND PLACES

Akamatsu Norisada. Precise dates unknown. Constable (*shugo*) of Tajima Province. (poems 120, 135)

Archbishop Kōkyō, d. 1433. Chief priest of Kai'inji. (poem 40)

Asakura Takakage, 1421–1481. Deputy to the Shiba family, constables of Echizen Province. (poem 188)

Ashikaga Yoshimasa, 1435–1490. Eighth of the Ashikaga shoguns and major patron of the arts. (poem 171)

Assistant Commander of the Military Guards of the Right—Shibukawa Yoshikane

Assistant Governor (*suke*) of Kazusa—Hosokawa Ujihisa

Assistant in the Board of Censors—Yamana Mochitoyo

Bishop Shinkei, 1406–1475. One of Shōtetsu's disciples; major linked verse poet. Head priest of the Jūjūshin'in. (poem 130)

Bizen Lay Monk Jōgan—Ogasawara Mochinaga

Bureau of Poetry. A government office where compilers of imperial anthologies and other documents stored materials and did their work. Located in the home of Reizei Tameyuki during Shōtetsu's time.

Butsuchi'in. A temple within the Miidera (formally known as Onjōji) complex on the southwestern shore of Lake Biwa.

Byōdōbō. A hermitage within the Kiyomizu Temple complex in the Eastern Hills of Kyoto.

Chōdō'an Sōryū. Identity unknown. (poem 197).

Chōsan. Precise dates unknown. Priest of Butsuchi'in. Judging from the regularity that his name appears in *Sōkonshū*, one of Shōtetsu's closest friends. (poems 109, 110, 112, 113)

Daikōmyōji. Family temple of the Fushimi imperial line, located in Fushimi.

Director of the Imperial Stables of the Right Mochizumi—Hatakeyama Mochizumi, Hosokawa Mochikata

Eisen'an. Location unknown.

Emperor Fushimi. 1265–1317. Major poet in his own right and patron of the arts. (poem 85)

Enshū. A monk associated with the Byōdōbō. (poems 161, 173, 175, 178, 179)

Fujiwara no Teika, 1162–1241. Founder of the medieval poetic tradition at court; worshiped by Shōtetsu as the one true god of poetry. (poem 146, 152, 174)

Fujiwara Toshinaga—Saitō Toshinaga

Gion Shrine. One of the most prominent of Shinto shrines. Located at the eastern end of Fourth Avenue in Kyoto. (poem 23)

Governor of Awa—Hatakeyama Yoshitada

Haga Mototame. Identity unknown. (poem 157)

Hasedera. Temple dedicated to the bodhisattva Kannon located in Yamato Province.

Hatakeyama Mochizumi, fl. ca. 1429–48. Also known by his Buddhist name Senku. Governor of Awa. One of Shōtetsu's most important patrons. (poems 35, 42, 46, 54, 55)

Hatakeyama Yoshitada, d. 1468. Also known by his Buddhist name, Kenryō. Governor of Awa Province; later Master of the Palace Repairs Office. One of Shōtetsu's primary patrons. (poems 33, 37, 38, 118, 131, 132, 133, 136, 137, 138, 146, 148, 153, 156, 163, 183, 184, 190, 192, 193, 194, 198)

Hatsusegawa. River with headwaters north of Hasedera that flows around the foot of Mount Miwa and across the Hira Plain near what is now Sakurai City.

Hie (also read Hiyoshi) Shrines. General name for a group of shrines located on the eastern slope of Mount Hiei, just northeast of the capital.

Hinoshita Toshikage—Asakura Takakage

Hōshōji. One of the six temples in the six-temple complex in the Shirakawa area. Founded by Emperor Shirakawa in 1077. (poem 46)

Hōshun. Priest of Myōkōji. (poem 184)

Hosokawa Dōkan—Hosokawa Mitsumoto

Hosokawa Katsumoto, 1430–1473. Grandson of Mitsumoto. Head of the Hosokawa clan and Shogunal Deputy three times, from 1445 to 1449, from 1452 to 64, and from 1468 until his death in 73. Became a formal student of Shōtetsu in 1450. (poems 141, 187)

Hosokawa Mitsumoto, 1378–1426. Also known as Gansei'in. Head of the

Hosokawa clan after his father's death in 1397. Shogunal Constable of Settsu, Tamba, Sanuki, and Tosa; Shogunal Deputy from 1412 to 1421. (poem 19)

Hosokawa Mochikata, 1403–1468. Also known as Dōken. Son of Mitsumoto. (poem 174)

Hosokawa Ujihisa. Son of Yorishige; official in War Ministry. (poem 139)

Ichijō Kaneyoshi, 1402–1481. Statesman-scholar who served three times as imperial regent. Major patron of the Reizei family, Shōtetsu, and many other poets. Author of the preface to *Sōkonshū*, Shōtetsu's personal anthology. (poem 51)

Ishiyama. Temple located near the southern tip of Lake Biwa.

Isonokami. Site of an old capital in Nara Prefecture.

Isshiki Norichika. d. 1451. Master of the Left Capital; Constable (*shugo*) of Ise and Tango provinces. (poems 50, 53, 111, 121, 129)

Ishō Tokugan. 1360–1437. Zen monk. (poem 3)

Izumi Shikibu, fl. ca. 970–1030. Lady-in-waiting to Empress Akiko and major poet. (poem 66)

Jōrakuji. Located in northern Kyoto, between First and Second Avenues on Aburakōji. Evidently site of monthly poetry meetings sponsored by Yamana Noriyuki.

Jūjūshin'in. A temple located south of Kiyomizudera in the Eastern Hills.

Junior Assistant of the War Ministry—Yamana Masakiyo

Kai'inji. A temple located in Nishioka.

Kamobe Yukimoto—Kogamo Yukimoto

Kasuga Shrine. Chief tutelary shrine of the Fujiwara family located just east of the old capital at Nara.

Kitano Shrine. Shrine dedicated to the memory of the Heian statesman-literatus Sugwara Michizane, located on the western outskirts of Kyoto.

Kiyomizudera. Large temple complex located on the southeastern outskirts of Kyoto.

Kogamo Yukimoto. A warrior in the service of Yamana Noriyuki (d. 1473). (poem 166)

Lord Ichijō—Ichijō Kaneyoshi

Master of Discipline Shinkei—Bishop Shinkei

Master of the Left Capital—Isshiki Norichika

Master of Palace Repairs—Hatakeyama Yoshitada
Master of the Palace Table Office—Takeda Nobukata
Master of the Right Capital—Hosokawa Mitsumoto, Hosokawa Katsumoto
Master of the Right Capital Haga Mototame—Haga Mototame
Minamoto no Michiteru. 1187–1248. Statesman-poet of the early thirteenth century.
Mochitoyo—Yamana Mochitoyo
Monk Jakuren, d. 1202. Major poet of the *Shin kokin* period.
Mount Hiei. Site of the Enryakuji temple complex, located in the mountains to the northeast of the capital. Headquarters of the Tendai sect of Buddhism.
Murasaki Shikibu. Lady-in-waiting to Empress Akiko and author of *The Tale of Genji*. (poem 8)
Mushiake Straits. Located in the Inland Sea, off the coast of Bizen.
Myōeiji. Precise location unknown.
Myōkōji. Precise location unknown.
Nihō Shōnin. Chief priest of Myōkōji.
Ninnaji. A temple of the Shingon sect located northwest of Kyoto.
Ogasawara Mochinaga. A shogunal officer who taught weaponry and horsemanship during the 1430s and 1440s. (poems 56, 119, 122, 150, 152, 164, 186)
Ōharano. A broad plain located on the western outskirts of Kyoto.
Ōhira Oki Lay Monk. Ōhira Sochin, from Tosa. (poem 39)
Ōmiya Jōkō'in. Location unknown. (poem 147)
Ono no Komachi, fl. ca. 850. Famous poet of the early classical period (poem 95)
Ontoku'in. Location unknown.
Reizei Gentleman-in-Waiting—Reizei Masatame
Reizei Masatame, 1445–1523. Son of Mochitame, grandson of Shōtetsu's teacher Tamemasa. (poem 172)
Reizei Tameyuki, d. 1439. Son of Shōtetsu's teacher, Reizei Tamemasa. (poem 34)
Reverend Ishō—Ishō Tokugan
Saitō Toshinaga, d. 1465. Chieftain of a powerful warrior clan in Mino Province.

Sami Mansei, early eighth century. (poem 200)
Sano Ford. An area beside the Ki River, southeast of Miwa Point, in Kii Province.
Senior Assistant in the Punishments Ministry—Akamatsu Norisada
Senior Assistant of the Central Affairs Ministry—Yamana Hirotaka
Shibukawa Yoshikane. Head of prominent warrior family. (poems 142, 143, 149, 162, 165, 176)
Shogun—Ashikaga Yoshimasa
Sōzei—Takayama Sōzei
Sumiyoshi Shrine. Located on Naniwa Bay in Settsu Province. Shrine to Sumiyoshi Myōjin, a patron god of poets.
Tachibana Toyofumi. Identity unknown. (poem 182)
Takamatsu Daijingu. Located in Kyoto near the intersection of Sanjō and Nishinotō′in.
Takasago. Coastal area in Harima Province noted for the beauty of its pines. Site of a famous Shinto Shrine.
Takayama Sōzei, d. 1455. A retainer of the Yamana clan who was one of Shōtetsu's poetic disciples; also an important linked verse poet. (poem 45)
Takeda Nobukata, 1420–1471. A prominent military leader; constable of Wakasa Province. (poem 117)
Tale of Genji, The. The most important of all classical tales, written in the early years of the eleventh century by Murasaki Shikibu. (poems 8, 171)
Tō Lay Monk of Shimōsa, Sokin—Tō no Ujikazu
Teika—Fujiwara no Teika
Tō no Ujikazu, d. 1471. A brother of the more famous Tsuneyori who was a disciple of Shōtetsu for a while. (poem 107)
Tonshōji. Temple located in Sanuki Province.
Tsukinowa Consultant Lay Monk Seishō—Tsukinowa Tadakata
Tsukinowa Tadakata. Middle Captain of the Left. (poem 127)
Vulture Peak. Gradhavakuta, the mountain in northern India where the historical Buddha expounded the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra*.
Waka Bay. Located at the mouth of the Ki River, in Kii Province.
Yamana Hirotaka, d. 1441. A member of the powerful Yamana clan and of one Shōtetsu's most prominent patrons. Murdered with the shogun Ashikaga Yoshinori in 1441. (poems 3, 44)

Yamana Masakiyo. Son of Norikiyo. Constable of Mimasaka and Iwami. (poem 195)

Yamana Mochitoyo, 1404–1473. Also known as Sōzen. One of the most powerful of fifteenth-century *daimyō*. (poems 45, 47)

Yodo Moor. The area around the confluence of the Uji, Kizu, and Katsura rivers.

Yoshino. Mountainous region in central and southern Yamato Province known for its rugged peaks, swift streams, cherry blossoms, and fall leaves. (poem 156)

SOURCES OF POEMS

Original texts of all the poems translated in this book can be found in volume 5 of *Shikashū taisei*, ed. Wakashū Kenkyūkai (Meiji Shoin, 1974). The numbers below correspond to the poems as numbered in that edition. Another version of *Sōkonshū*, in which the poems are organized strictly by topic rather than chronologically, is available in volume 8 of *Shimpen Kokka taikan* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1990).

Abbreviations:

E-5 *Eikyō gonen Shōtetsu eisō* (alternative title: *Shōgetsu Shōtetsu eisō*)
E-9 *Eikyō kunen Shōtetsu eisō*
TSU *Tsukikusa*
SO *Sōkonshū*

1. E-5: 11
2. E-5: 79
3. E-5: 98
4. E-5: 184
5. E-9: 45
6. E-9: 64
7. E-9: 90
8. E-9: 111
9. TSU: 30
10. TSU: 69
11. TSU: 77
12. TSU: 111
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