

An English Translation of “A Deep-Water Dragon’s Tale” (Ryūtanda) by Izumi Kyōka⁽¹⁾

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Keywords

Japanese literature, Izumi Kyōka, English translation

「竜潭譚」の英訳、泉鏡花 作

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キーワード

日本文学, 泉鏡花, 英訳, 翻訳

躑躅か丘

日は午なり。あたら木^{つっじ}のたたら坂^{おか}に樹^きの蔭^{かげ}もなし。寺^{もん}の門^{もん}、植木屋^きの庭^{にわ}、花屋^{はな}の店^{みせ}など、坂下^{さしはさ}を挟^{くわ}みて町^{まち}の入口^{いりぐち}にはあたれど、のぼるに從^{したが}ひて、ただ畑^{はた}ばかりとなれり。番小屋^{ばんこや}めきたるもの小^{ちひ}だかき処^{ところ}に見^みゆ。谷^やには菜^なの花^{はな}残りたり。路^{みち}の右左^{みぎひだり}、躑躅^{つっじ}の花^{はな}の紅^{くれない}なるが、見渡^{みわた}す方^{かた}、見返^{みかへ}る方^{かた}、いまを盛^{さか}なりき。ありくにつれて汗^{あせ}少^{すく}しいでぬ。

Upon Azalea Knoll

It is noon, and the overhead sun beats down on a hillside speckled with shadowless yew trees. The base of the hill juts into town between a temple gate and a tree-grower’s garden. There is a florist there, as well, and some other shops, all of which, taken together, form a sort of entrance into the town. The climb beckons me, and I soon find myself surrounded by fields. Looking around, I can see what appears to be a small guard shack on a slightly elevated plot of ground. Down in the valley, the rapeseed blossoms cling to the end of the season. Before long, I find my path lined on both sides with crimson azaleas in full bloom. The blossoms continue ahead of me as far as the eye can see, and behind me as well. I keep walking uphill, starting to sweat a little.

空^{そら}よく晴^はれて一点^{いっしん}の雲^{うみ}もなく、風^{かぜ}あたたかに野^の面^{づら}を吹^ふけり。

The sky is crystal clear, without a spot of cloud; a warm breeze blows through the farmers’ fields.

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一人にては行くことなかれと、優しき姉上の
いひたりしを、背かで、しのびて来つ。おもし
ろきながめかな。山の上の方より一束の薪をか
つぎたる漢おり来れり。眉太く、眼の細きが、
向さまに顛巻したる、額のあたり汗になりて、
のしのしと近づきつつ、細き道をかたよけてわ
れを通せしが、ふりかへり、

「危ないぞ危ないぞ。」

といひずてに眦に皺を寄せてさつさつと行過
ぎぬ。

見返ればはやたらたらさがりに、その肩躑躅
の花にかくれて、髪結ひたる天窓のみ、やがて
山蔭に見えずなりぬ。草がくれの径遠く、小
川流るる谷間の畦道を、菅笠冠りたる婦人の、
跣足にて鋤をば肩にし、小さき女の児の手をひ
きて彼方にゆく背姿ありしが、それも杉の樹立
に入りたり。

行く方も躑躅なり。来し方も躑躅なり。山土
のいろもあかく見えた。あまりうつくしさに
恐しくなりて、家路に帰らむと思ふ時、わが
た一株の躑躅のなかより、羽音たかく、虫の
つと立ちて頬を掠めしが、かなたに飛びて、お
よそ五、六尺隔てたる処に礫のありたるそのわ
きにとどまりぬ。羽をふるふさまも見えたり。
手をあげて走りかかれれば、ぱつとまた立ちあが
りて、おなじ距離五、六尺ばかりのところにと
まりたり。そのまま小石を拾ひあげて狙ひうち
し、石はそれぬ。虫はくるりと一ツまはりて、
また旧のやうにぞをる。追ひかくれば迅くもま
た遁げぬ。遁ぐるが遠くには去らず、いつもお
なじほどのあはひを置きてはキラキラとささや

I snuck out of the house to be here, shrugging
off the warnings of my kind elder sister, who told
me never to come up the hill alone. But, oh, how the
view is worth it!

A man comes down the slope, carrying a bundle
of firewood on one shoulder. His eyebrows are thick
and his eyes narrow slits. He is wearing a bandana,
and beads of sweat dot his brow. He lumbers toward
me on the narrow path, and as he leans aside to let
me pass, I see the crinkles in the corners of his eyes.

“You shouldn’t be here, boy,” he cautions. “It’s
dangerous.”

As I look back at him, down the gentle slope, he
disappears into the azaleas, with only the topknot of
his hair showing above the flowers, and it too soon
vanishes in the shadow of the mountain.

In a valley far below, through which runs a small
stream, I see a barefoot woman wearing a woven
bamboo hat and carrying a hoe across one shoulder.
She is leading a small girl by the hand down an
overgrown footpath between the fields. They are
heading away from me and soon disappear into a
grove of cedar trees.

Before me, red azaleas. Behind me, red azaleas.
Even the earth on the hillside looks red. Their beauty
is overwhelming, even frightening. My thoughts
are starting to turn to home, when suddenly, from
a clump of azalea bushes beside the path, an insect
flies up, its wings fluttering loudly. It grazes my
cheek and comes to rest on a patch of gravel about
four or five feet away. I can see it vividly—its wings
tremble. I run toward it with my hands raised, and
again it flits up and lands the same distance away,
about four or five feet. While it is resting there, I
pick up a small stone and throw it, but miss. The
insect circles around once and comes back to rest in
the same spot. Whenever I try to catch it, it quickly

かなる^は羽ばたきして、鷹揚^{おうよう}にその二すぢの細^{ふた}き
髯^{ひげ}を上下^{うへした}にわづくりておし動か^{にく}すぞいと憎^{にく}さげ
なりける。

われは足踏^{あしふみ}して心^{こころ}いらてり。そのゐたるあと
を踏みにじりて、

「畜生、畜生。」

と眩^{つぶや}きさま、躍^{おど}りかかりてハタと打ちし、拳^{こぶし}
はいたづらに土によごれぬ。

渠^{かれ}は一足先^{ひとあし}なる方^{かた}に悠々^{ゆうゆう}と羽^はづくろひす。憎
しと思ふ心を籠^こめて瞻^{みまも}りたれば、虫は動か^はずなり
たり。つくづく見れば羽^は蟻^{あり}の形^{かたち}して、それよ
りもやや大^{おおい}なる、身はただ五彩^{ごさい}の色^{いろ}を帯^{おび}びて青^{かた}
みがちにかがやきたる、うつくしさいはむ方
なし。

色彩^{しよく}あり光沢^{こうたく}ある虫は毒^{どく}なりと、姉上^{あねさま}の教^{おしえ}へ
たるをふと思^{おも}ひ出^いでたれば、打置^{うちお}きてすごすご
と引返^{ひつかえ}せしが、足許^{あしもと}にさきの石^{いし}の二ツ^{ふた}に碎^{くだ}けて
落ちたるより俄^{にわか}に心動^{こころうご}き、拾^{ひろ}ひあげて取^とつて返^{かえ}
し、きと毒虫^{どくちゅう}をねらひたり。

このたびはあやまたず、したたかうつて殺^{ころ}し
ぬ。嬉^{うれ}しく走りつきて石^{いし}をあはせ、ひたと打^{うち}
しぎて蹴^け飛ばしたる、石^{いし}は躑^つ躑^つのなかをくぐり
て小砂利^{こじり}をさそひ、ばらばらと谷^や深くおちゆく
音^ねしき。

flies away. But it never goes far, always keeping
about the same safe distance, where it sits, beating
its tiny, glistening wings and flaunting its two fine
tentacles, which it thrusts detestably up and down
in circles.

Growing frustrated at its insolence, I stamp the
ground and try to crush it under foot, trampling in
its path and muttering curses at it. “Damned insect!”
I shout, lunging in a vain attempt to catch it and
coming up with nothing but a fist full of dirt.

The little devil manages to slip through my
fingers and is now sitting just out of reach, leisurely
preening its wings. I glare at it with a heart full of
hate, and it is unable to move. Observing it carefully,
I can see that it has the shape of a winged ant, though
somewhat larger. Its body takes on a spectrum of
colors and glistens with a touch of blue. Its beauty
is undeniable.

It reminds me of what my elder sister once told
me: the beautiful, glittery insects are the ones with
the poison. Taking her words to heart, I leave the
insect alone and withdraw sulkily. But, as I am
walking away, I happen to step on the stone that I
had thrown earlier, where it lay on the ground split
in two. Something in me snaps. I pick up one of
the pieces and turn around to face the venomous
creature, taking firm aim at it with my weapon.

This time I do not miss—with a splendid throw
I strike and mortally wound the vermin. Delighted
at my conquest, I run up to the dying insect and use
the stone once again to finish it off, before kicking
it under some azalea bushes. It falls into a ravine,
together with some small pieces of gravel, and I can
hear the sound of falling pebbles for a long while.

袂^{たもと}のちり^{うち}打はらひて空^{あお}を仰げば、日^ひ脚^{あし}や斜^{ななめ}になりぬ。ほかほかとかほあつき日向^{ひなた}に唇^{くちびる}かわきて、眼^{まなこ}のふちより頬^ほのあたりむず痒^{かゆ}きこと限りなかりき。

心^{こころ}着^つけば旧^{もと}来^{とき}し方^{かた}にはあらじと思^{おも}ふ坂^{さか}道の^{みち}こと異なる^{こと}方^{かた}にわれはいつかおろかけゐたり。丘^{かみ}ひとつ越^こえたりけむ、戻^{もど}る路^{みち}はまたさきとおなじのほりになりぬ。見^み渡^{わた}せば、見^みまはせば、赤^{あか}土^{つち}の道^{みち}幅^{はた}せまく、うねりうねり果^はしなきに、両^{ふた}側^{はた}つづきの躑^{つづ}躑^じの花^{はな}、遠^{とほ}き方^{かた}は前後^{ぜんご}を塞^{ふさ}ぎて、日^ひかげあかく咲^さ込^こめたる空^{そら}のいろの真^ま蒼^{あお}き下^{した}に、イ^いむはわれのみなり。

鎮^{ちん}守^{じゆ}の社^{やしろ}

坂^{さか}は急^{いそ}ならず長^{なが}くもあらねど、一つ^{ひとつ}尽^{つく}ればまたあらたに^{あらわ}顕^ある。起伏^{うねり}あたかも大^{おほ}波^{なみ}の如^{ごと}く打^{うち}続^{つづ}きて、いつ^{いつ}坦^{たん}ならむとも見^みえざりき。

あまり^{あまり}倦^うみたれば、一^{ひとつ}つおりの^おぼる坂^{さか}の窪^{くぼ}に^{くぼ}躑^{つづ}躑^じひし、手^てのあきたるま^ま何^{なに}ならむ指^{さし}もて土^{つち}にかきはじめぬ。さといふ字^じも出来^{でき}たり。くといふ字^じも書^かきたり。曲^まりたるもの、直^すなるもの、心^{こころ}の趣^{おもむ}くま^まに落^{らく}書^がしたり。しかなせるあひだにも、頬^ほのあたり先^{さき}刻^きに毒^{どく}虫^{ちゅう}の触^ふれたらむと覚^さゆるが、しきりにかゆければ、袖^{そで}もてひまなく擦^{こす}りぬ。擦^{こす}りてはまたもの書^かきなどせる、なかにもつかしき字^じのひとつ形^{かたち}よく出来^{でき}たるを、姉^{あね}に見^みせばやと思^{おも}ふに、俄^{にわか}にその顔^{かほ}の見た^みうぞなりたる。

立^{たち}あがりてゆくてを見^みれば、左^{ひだり}右^{みぎ}より小^こ枝^{えだ}を組^{くみ}みてあはひも透^すか^かで躑^{つづ}躑^じ咲^さきたり。日^ひ影^{かげ}ひと

Looking up as I dust off my sleeves, I notice the sun lowering in the western sky—its hot rays land on my face, drying my lips. My eyes and cheeks start to itch incessantly.

I soon find myself stumbling down a path, although not the one I came up on—a different path, it seems. I cross over a hill, only to find that the downhill road back to town has become, curiously, an uphill road. Looking out over the fields all around, I see nothing but azaleas sucking up sunlight in a profusion of red blossoms, spreading to the horizon on both sides of the undulating, red clay road, upon which I stand alone under an azure sky.

A Sheltering Shrine

The slopes are not steep, nor long, but as soon as I am over one hill, another comes into view, and then another. On and on these undulations continue like a series of huge waves, with no level ground in sight.

Growing weary and bewildered, I crouch in a hollow between the ups and downs and begin writing *hiragana* in the dirt. I have come empty-handed, but no matter—I just use my finger and start writing. I can write the characters for *sa* and *ku*. Curvy characters, straight characters—I scribble whimsically. As I scratch away, I remember the poisonous insect that earlier grazed my face. My cheek still feels itchy, and I keep rubbing it with the sleeve of my kimono. Rubbing and then writing, writing and then rubbing. Despite this, I manage to write one really well-formed character. I think to myself, "I have to show this to my sister." I feel a sudden urge to see her face.

I stand up and look down the road at the thick azalea bushes on both sides—the intertwining

しほ^{あこ}赤うなりまさりたるに、手を見たれば^{たなそこ}掌に照りそひぬ。

一文字にかけのぼりて、^と唯見ればおなじ躑躅のただらおりなり。走りおりて走りのぼりつ。いつまでかかくてあらむ、こたびこそと思ふに^{たが}違ひて、道はまた^{うわ}蜿れる坂なり。踏心地^{ふみごころ}柔かく^{やわら}小石ひとつあらずなりぬ。

いまだ家には遠しとみゆるに、忍びがたくも姉の顔なつかしく、しばらくも^え得堪へずなりたり。

再びかけのぼり、またかけりおりたる時、われしらず泣きてあつ。泣きながらひたばしりに走りたいど、なほ家ある^{ところ}処に至らず、坂も躑躅も少しもさきに異らずして、日の傾くぞ心細き。肩、背のあたり寒うなりぬ。ゆふ日あざやかに^{あかね}ばつと茜さして、眼もあやに躑躅の花、ただ^{くれない}紅の雪の降積めるかと疑はる。

われは涙の声தாகく、あるほど声^{しほ}を絞^{しぼ}りて姉をもとめぬ。一^{ひと}たび二^{ふた}たび三^みたびして、こたへやすくと耳を^{すま}澄せば、遙に^{はるか}滝の音聞えたり。どうどうと響くなかに、いと高く^き湧えたる声の^{かすか}幽に、

「もういいよ、もういいよ。」

branches leave little space for the flowers to bloom, but the light from the sun manages to reach them anyway and turn them bright red. Turning up the palms of my hands, I can see them glowing with the red light.

Running, I make a beeline to the top of the next hill, but when I get there and look around, with great anticipation, there is nothing but more azaleas. They appear to go on forever. I run down and then up, hill after hill, each time thinking, “This is it!” and each time being disappointed. The road winds on before me, over the gentle slopes and through the flowering azaleas. I continue running up and down the slopes until the gravel path gives way to soft ground beneath my feet.

When I realize how far I am from home, the passing urge to see my sister becomes an unbearable longing. I can wait no longer.

Crying, I start to run again, going up and down the slopes, oblivious to my tears. I run and run, and keep on running, but never arrive anywhere that seems familiar, never reach a place that looks like home—there are only the same undulating slopes and the unchanging azaleas.

“Oh no, the sun is setting!” I fret. I feel the cold on my back and shoulders. All of a sudden, the setting sun glows madder-red, and I am nearly blinded by the dazzling beauty of the crimson flowers. I wonder aloud, “Did it snow red?”

I raise my tearful cries, straining my voice to its utmost, calling for my sister—not once, but twice, and then a third time. I hear something like an answer and so listen carefully—it is the sound of a waterfall in the distance. In its thunderous roar are voices—high and clear—calling faintly, “You’re

と呼びたる聞えき。こはいとけなき我がなか
 までの隠れ遊びといふものするあひ図なることを
 認め得たる、^{ひとこえ}一声くりかへすと、ハヤきこえず
 なりしが、やうやう心たしかにその声したる
 方^{かた}にたどりて、また坂^みひとつおりて一つのぼ
 り、^{せうさ}こたかき所に立ちて^み瞰おろせば、あまり
 雑作なしや、堂^{かわらやね}の瓦屋根、杉^{こだち}の樹立のなかより
 見えぬ。かくてわれ^{ふみまよ}踏迷ひたる^{くれな}紅の雪のなかを
 ばのがれつ。背後^{うしろ}には^{つつじ}躑躅の花飛び飛びに咲き
 て、青き草まばらに、やがて堂のうらに達せし
 時^{ひとかぶ}は一株も花のあかきはなくて、たそがれの
 色、境内^{けいだい}の手洗水^{みたらし}のあたりを^こ籠めたり。柵^{さく}結ひ
 たる井戸ひとつ、^{いちよう}銀杏の古りたる樹あり、そが
 うしろに人の家^{とべい}の土塀あり。こなたは裏木戸の
 あき地にて、むかひに小^{いなり}さき稲荷の堂あり。石
 の鳥居^{とりい}あり。木の鳥居あり。この木の鳥居の左
 の柱には割れめありて太き鉄の輪を嵌めたるさ
 へ、心たしかに覚えある、ここよりはハヤ家に
 近しと思ふに、さきの恐しさは全く忘れ果て
 つ。ただひとへにゆふ日照りそひたるつつじの
 花の、わが^{たけ}丈よりも高き^{ところ}処、前後左右^{さきうず}を^{くれな}咲埋め
 たるあかき色のあかきがなかに、緑と、^{せいはく}紅と、^{はいろ}紫と、^え青白の光を羽色に帯びたる毒虫のキラキ
 ラと飛びたるさまの広き景色のみぞ、^え画の如く
 小さき胸に^え糸がかけける。

it! Come and find us!" They repeat themselves once more and then fall silent.

I eventually pull myself together and proceed in the direction of the voices I heard, going down a slope and up another, yet again, until I find myself on slightly higher ground, looking down—much to my relief—on the tiled roof of a shrine standing in a grove of cedar trees. Finally I am able to escape the crimson snow in which I was lost.

As I approach the shrine, the azaleas begin to thin out, and the spaces between the bushes gradually fill in with green grass. By the time I arrive at the back of the shrine, not a single bush remains and the red flowers are gone. The subdued colors of twilight enshroud the area around the water ablution pavilion. I can see a well surrounded by a fence and an old ginkgo tree. Behind these, there is a human dwelling with a mud-plastered garden wall. From where I stand on an empty plot of land near the wooden gate in the wall, I can see that there is also a small *inari* shrine on the other side of the house. There is a stone *torii*, and a wooden one as well. The left pillar of the wooden *torii* has a crack and is being held together by a large iron ring. I feel certain that I have seen it before. Thinking that home must be near, I completely forget the horror I felt only moments before.

Yet, I shall never forget the scene—it will be forever imprinted on my young heart, like a painting I carry in my breast. The rays of the setting sun shining just over my head. The hills covered in azaleas. The blossoms dyed deep red by the light of the dying sun. And, amidst this profusion of red, fly poisonous insects, hither and thither, their glittering wings clothed in green, red, and purple, and their bodies tinged in a blue-white light.

かくれあそび

さきにわれ泣きいだして救を姉にもとめしを、渠に認められしぞ幸なる。いふことを肯か一人いで来しを、弱りて泣きたりと知られむには、さもこそとて笑はれなむ。優しき人のなつかしけれど、顔をあはせていひまけむは口惜しきに。

嬉しく喜ばしき思ひ胸にみちては、また急に家に帰らむとはおもはず。ひとり境内にイみしに、わつといふ声、笑ふ声、木の蔭、井戸の裏、堂の奥、廻廊の下よりして、五ツより八ツまでなる児の五、六人前後に走り出でたり、こはかくれ遊びの一人が見いだされたるものぞとよ。二人三人走り来て、わが其処に立てるを見つ。皆瞳を集めしが、

「お遊びな、一所にお遊びな。」とせまりて勧めぬ。小家あちこち、このあたりに住むは、かたるといふものなりとぞ。風俗少しく異なれり。子どもが親たちの家富みたるも好き衣着たるはあらず、大抵跣足なり。三味線弾きておりおり折々わが門に来るもの、溝川に鱒を捕ふるもの、附木、草履など鬻ぎに来るものだちは、皆この児どもが母なり、父なり、祖母などなり。さるものとはともに遊ぶな、とわが友は常に戒めつ。さるに町方の者としいへば、かたるなる子どもと尊び敬ひて、頃刻もともに遊ばんことを希ふや、親しく、優しく勉めてすなれど、不断はこなたより遠ざかりしが、その時は先にあまり淋しくて、友欲しき念の堪へがたかりしその心のまだ失せざると、恐しかりしあとの楽しきとに、われは拒まずして頷きぬ。

A Game of Hide-and-Seek

Thank heavens that the waterfall answered my cries for help. The streaming waters were no doubt bemused to find a little lost boy there, appearing without warning, crying like a baby for his sister to come and save him. However, wanting your sister is one thing—facing a scolding is another.

With this happy, delightful thought filling my heart, I think again about going home so soon. As I stand alone on the shrine grounds, I hear shouting and laughing here and there: in the shadow of the trees, behind the well, at the back of the shrine, under the cloisters. They are the voices of children, who, one by one, come running out from their hiding places. They all look to be between the ages of five and eight. They were playing hide-and-peek, and one of them had just been found by the *oni*. Two or three run up when they see me standing there and beg me to join them.

I have heard that the people living in the tiny houses around here are poor country folk. Their dress and way of life are...well... a little different from us townspeople. Perhaps some do have a little money, but I do not see any of these kids wearing nice kimonos. Most are barefoot. Their families are the sort of people who occasionally show up at my house in town playing the *shamisen*, or selling loaches they have fished out of the ditches, or peddling matches and sandals and other trinkets. These kids are the progeny of these mothers, fathers, grandmothers. My friends have always cautioned me never to play with them. Yet, these poor kids look up to me—just because I live in town. They would always beg me so kindly to play with them. “Just for a little while,” they would say. However, I have always heeded the advice of my friends and kept a careful distance from them. Now, though, I

児どもはさざめき喜びたりき。さてまたかくれあそびを繰返すとて、拳^{けん}してさがすものを定めしに、われその任にあたりたり。面^{おもて}を蔽^{おお}えというままにしつ。ひっそとなりて、堂の裏^{がけ}崖^{がけ}をさかさに落つる滝の音^{こずえ}どうどうと松杉の梢^{こずえ}ゆう風に鳴り渡る。かすかに、
「もう可^いいよ、もう可^いいよ。」

と呼ぶ声^{こだま}、訝^{あや}に響^こけり。眼をあくればあたり静^{ひと}まり返^きりて、たそがれの色^{ひと}また一際^{ひと}襲^きひ来^{きた}れり。大なる樹^{おおい}のすくすくとならべるが朦朧^{もうろう}としてうすぐらきなかに隠^{かく}れむとす。

声^{かた}したる方^{かた}をと思^{おも}ふ処^{ところ}には誰^{たれ}もをらず。ここかしこさがしたれど人^{ひと}らしきものあらざりき。

また旧^{もと}の境内^{けいだい}の中央^{ちゆう}に立^たちて、もの淋^{しみ}しく躡^{みまわ}しぬ。山^{やま}の奥^{おく}にも響^こくべく凄^{しみ}じき音^ねして堂^{どう}の扉^{かど}を鎖^{とざ}す音^ねしつ、闕^{けき}としてものも聞^きえずなりぬ。

親^{おや}しき友^{とも}にはあらず。常^{つね}にうとましき児^こどもなれば、かか^かる機^{おり}会^{あひ}を得^えてわれをば苦^{くる}めむとや企^{たく}みけむ。身^みを隠^{かく}したるま^ま密^{ひそ}かに遁^にげ去^さりたらむには、探^{たづ}せばとて獲^とらるべき。益^{やく}もなきことをとふと思^{おも}ひうかぶに、うちすてて踵^{くびす}をかへしつ。さるにても万^も一^{いつ}わがみいだすを待^{まち}ちてあら

feel very lonesome and have an almost unbearable longing for some companionship. Besides, after my frightening ordeal, the prospect of some fun does appeal to me. And so, I mutely nod my assent.

The poor children clamor with joy. "Yeah! Let's play hide-and-peek again!" We all do rock-paper-scissors to decide who will be the *oni*, and I am it. They instruct me to cover my face with my hands, and as soon as I comply, quietness descends around me—I only hear the topsy-turvy roar of the waterfall echoing from the cliff behind the shrine and the whistle of the evening wind across the tops of the pine and cedar trees. Then, faintly, there are voices calling out, reverberating in the stillness: "You're it! Come and find us!"

When I open my eyes, all is silent once again, and the muted colors of twilight have faded noticeably. A line of tall, upright trees is half-hidden in the gray murkiness.

I look in the direction from which I heard the voices, but can see no one. I search all around, but there is nothing even remotely resembling another human.

I find myself standing alone in the ancient heart of the shrine grounds, feeling deserted, spinning around in all directions. Suddenly, the shrine door slams shut with a terrible bang, followed by complete silence.

These kids, I begin to realize, are not really my friends—I have always avoided them, after all. They may have planned this whole thing, taking advantage of my misfortune just to bully me. If they have snuck away, I will never be able to find them. I shrug, uttering decidedly, "There is no point in even

ばいつまでも出でくことを得ざるべし、それもまたはかりがたしと、心迷ひて、とつ、おいつ、徒に立ちて困ずる折しも、何処より来りしとも見えず、暗うなりたる境内の、うつくしく掃いたる土のひろびろと灰色なせるに際立ちて、顔の色白く、うつくしき人、いつかわが傍にゐて、うつむきざまにわれをば見き。

極めて丈高き女なりし、その手を懐にして肩を垂れたり。優しきこゑにて、
「こちらへおいで。こちら。」
といひて前に立ちて導きたり。見知りたる女にあらねど、うつくしき顔の笑をば含みたる、よき人と思ひたれば、怪しまで、隠れたる児のありかを教ふるとさとりたれば、いそいそと従ひぬ。

あふ魔が時

わが思ふ処に違はず、堂の前を左にめぐりて少しゆきたる突あたりに小さき稲荷の社あり。青き旗、白き旗、二、三本その前に立ちて、うしろはただちに山の裾なる雑樹斜めに生ひて、社の上を蔽ひたる、その下のをぐらき処、孔の如き空地なるをソとめくばせしき。瞳は水のしたたるばかり斜にわが顔を見て動けるほどに、あきらかにその心ぞ読まれたる。

さればいささかもためらはで、つかつかと社の裏をのぞき込む、鼻うつばかり冷たき風あり。落葉、朽葉堆く水くさき土のほひしたるのみ、人の氣勢もせで、頸もとの冷かなる

looking for them."

I decide to give up and go home, leaving them in their hiding spots. Then, feeling a pang of guilt, I stop and think, "What if they go on hiding forever, waiting for me to find them, and they never come out? I would feel so sorry for them." My heart feels torn. Should I leave or stay? As I stand there alone, wondering what to do, a beautiful figure appears out of the darkness of the shrine grounds, coming out of nowhere. Its white face contrasts sharply with the ashen dirt of the beautifully swept courtyard. Before I know it, it is at my side, looking down at me.

It is a woman. She is extraordinarily tall but stoops low for me, with one hand upon her chest, tucked inside her kimono. In a gentle voice, she says, "Come here. Come with me." She leads the way, and I follow. She is a stranger to me, but her beautiful face has a smile that makes me feel unafraid. I thought, "She probably just wants to show me where the children are hiding." I blithely follow her.

The Hour of the Twilight Creatures

Just as I thought, there is a small *inari* shrine to the left of the main sanctuary, set back against the foot of the hill, with several blue and white flags standing in front. Behind the shrine is a thicket of trees growing aslant, their branches hanging over the top of the little shrine. In that dimly lit place under the trees, in an open piece of ground that looks more like a hole, the beautiful woman stands, calling me with her eyes. Her eyes, like water drops, look down on my face and easily read the feelings in my heart.

"I will show her I am not afraid," I thought, and without hesitation, boldly approach the shrine. When I peer around the back, a cold wind strikes me square in the face. Decayed leaves lie thick upon the

に、と胸をつきて見返りたる、またたくまと思ふ彼の女はハヤ見えざりき。何方にか去りけむ、暗くなりたり。

身の毛よだちて、思はずと叫びぬ。

人顔のさだかならぬ時、暗き隅に行くべからず、たそがれの片隅には、怪しきものあて人を惑はすと、姉上の教へしことあり。

われは茫然として眼をりぬ。足ふるひたれば動きもならず、固くなりて立ちすくみたる、左手に坂あり。穴の如く、その底よりは風の吹き出づると思ふ黒闇々たる坂下より、もののほるやうなれば、ここにあらば捕へられむと恐しく、とかうの思慮もなさで社の裏の狭きなかににげ入りつ。眼を塞ぎ、呼吸をころしてひそみたるに、四足のものの歩むけはひして、社の前を横ざりたり。

われは人心地もあらで見られじとのみひたすら手足を縮めつ。さるにてもさきの女のうつくしかりし顔、優かりし眼を忘れず。ここをわれに教へしを、今にして思へばかくれたる児どものありかにあらで、何らか恐しきものわれを捕へむとするを、ここに潜め、助かるべしとて、導きしにはあらずやなど、はかなきことを考へぬ。しばらくして小提灯の火影あかき坂下より急ぎのほりて彼方に走るを見つ。ほどなく引返してわがひそみたる社の前に近づき

ground, and the air is heavy with the smell of damp soil, but not a living soul do I find there. A chill runs down my spine, and when I turn around, the woman is gone—she disappeared in an instant. "Where could she have gone?" I wonder. It has gotten very dark.

I feel the hair all over my body abruptly stand on end, and I let out a scream, unawares.

My sister always taught me never to go into dark places, where people's faces cannot be seen clearly. "In the twilight," she says, "strange things lurk in the shadowy nooks and corners—these demons will confound you and lead you astray."

My mind goes blank as I stare wide-eyed into the darkness. My legs tremble. Paralyzed with fear, I am unable to move from the spot where I stand. There appears to be a drop-off to my left that slopes down into a hole. I feel like something is coming up out of the blackness, like a wind blowing up from the depths of hell. I think fearfully to myself, "If I stay here, I will be caught by whatever it is." Without any thought of the consequences, I run and hide inside the little shrine. Once there, I cover my eyes and hold my breath. I feel the presence of something walking on four legs, crossing in front of the shrine.

The life goes out of me entirely—I can do nothing but curl up into a ball so as not to be discovered. All the while, I do not forget the woman I had seen—I recall her beautiful face, her gentle eyes. I finally realize that the reason she led me to the back of the shrine was not to show me where the other kids were hiding but to show *me* a hiding spot, a place where I would be safe from that terrible thing trying to catch me. When I reflect on what a narrow escape I had, I imagine her eyes seeming to say, "Hide here, be

し時は、一人ならず二人三人連立ちて来りし感あり。

あたかもその立留りし折から、別なる躑音、また坂をのぼりてさきのものと落合ひたり。

「おいおい分らないか。」

「ふしぎだな、なんでもこの辺で見たといふものがあるんだが。」

とあとよりいひたるはわが家につかひたる下男の声に似たるに、あはや出でむとせしが、恐しきもの然はたばかりて、おびき出すにやあらむと恐しさは一しほ増しぬ。

「もう一度念のためだ、田圃の方でも廻つて見よう、お前も頼む。」

「それでは。」といひて上下にばらばらと分れて行く。

再び寂としたれば、ソと身うごきして、足のべ、板めに手をかけて眼ばかりと思ふ顔少し差出だして、外の方をうかがふに、何ごともあらざりければ、やや落着きたり。怪しきものども、何とてやはわれをみいだし得む、愚なる、と冷かに笑ひしに、思ひがけず、誰ならむたまぎる声して、あわてふためき遁ぐるがありがき。驚きてまたひそみぬ。

quiet and you will be safe."

Shortly, I see the red firelight of a small lantern coming up the hill. Someone in a hurry is carrying it, and I watch as it passes by and then out of sight. When it eventually returns and comes to rest in front of the shrine, wherein I lie silent, I sense that there is not one person but several standing there.

Soon I hear other footsteps coming up the hill to join them.

"What? No sign of anything, you say?"

"That's strange. They said that this was the area to search."

The next voice I hear sounds like a manservant who works in my house. I was just about to reveal myself when I thought, "That is exactly how that thing would try and trick me to lure me out of hiding." This thought makes me even more frightened.

"Come on, let's have another look, just in case," the voice says. "Let's try around the rice fields. You there, keep looking!"

They all agree in unison, and then break up, going off in different directions.

It falls silent again, and I quietly move my body, stretching my legs and placing my hands on the wooden floor planks. I stick my face out slightly to peek around, thinking it would be okay to reveal only my eyes. I am relieved to see that there is no one there. "Ha!" I chuckle, "What fools! Those strange creatures will never find me." Then, unexpectedly, I hear the voice of someone shouting in panic and distress. Spooked, I retreat into my hiding place.

「ちさとや、ちさとや。」と坂下あたり、かなしげにわれを呼ぶは、姉上の声なりき。

おおぬま
大沼
わたし
「みないツて私あどうしよう、爺や。」
じい

「根ツからるさつしやらぬことはござりますまいが、日は暮れます。何せい、御心配なこんでござります。お前様遊びに出します時、帯の結めを丁とたたいてやらつしやれば好いに。」

「ああ、いつもはさうして出してやるのだけれど、けふはお前私にかくれてそつと出て行つたろうではないかねえ。」

「それはハヤ不念なこんだ。帯の結めさへ叩いときや、何がそれで姉様なり、母様なりの魂が入るもんで魔めはどうすることもしえないでござす。」

「さうねえ。」ともものかなしげに語らひつつ、社の前をよこぎりたまへり。

走りいですが、あまりおそかりき。

いかなればわれ姉上をまで怪みたる。

悔ゆれど及ばず、かなたなる境内の鳥居のあたりまで追ひかけたれど、早やその姿は見えざりき。

涙ぐみてイむ時、ふと見る銀杏の木のくらし夜の空に、大なる円き影して茂れる下に、女の

From the foot of the hill I hear my sister's voice calling for me sadly, "Chisato! Chisato! Where are you?"

The Big Swamp

"Old man," my sister cries, despairingly. "He isn't here! What are we going to do?"

"He must be around here somewhere," the manservant replies. "It is getting dark, and I am truly concerned, my lady. You should have given him a pat on the knot of his *obi* before sending him out to play."

"I know, I know. I usually do, but this time he must have snuck out somehow."

"That's just a lame excuse," he admonishes her. "Patting a child's *obi* allows the spirit of a protector—such as you, the big sister, or the mother—to enter the child. Then, my lady, evil spirits can do no harm."

"Yes, I know," she admits, regretfully, as they cross in front of my shrine.

I hurry out of my hiding place, but I am too late to catch them.

"Oh, why did I doubt it was my sister?" I mutter.

"There is no point in whining," I tell myself and quickly chase after her, towards the *torii* on the far side of the shrine grounds. But I soon lose sight of her.

Coming to a stop there, my eyes full of tears, I happen to notice the figure of a woman standing

うしろすがた
後 姿ありてわが^{まなこ さえぎ}眼を遮りたり。

あまりよく似たれば、姉上と呼ばむとせしが、よしなきものに声かけて、なまじひにわが^こ此処にあるを知られむは、拙^{つたな}きわざなればと思ひてやみぬ。

とばかりありて、その姿またかくれ去りつ。見えざなればなほなつかしく、たとへ恐しきものなればとて、かりにもわが^{やさ}優しき姉上の姿に^け化したる上は、われを捕へてむごからむや。さきなるはさもなくて、いま幻に見えたるがまことその人なりけむもわかざるを、何とて言^{ことば}はかけざりしと、打泣^{うちな}きしが、かひもあらず。

あはれさまがまのものの怪^{あや}しきは、すべてわが^{まなこ}眼のいかにかせし作用なるべし、さらずば涙にくもりしや、術^{すべ}こそありけれ、かなたなる^{みたらし}御手洗にて清めてみばやと寄りぬ。

すす ^{あんどう} 煤けたる行燈の横長きが一上にかかりて、ほととぎすの画と句など書いたり。灯をともしたるに、水はよく澄^すみて、青^{こけ}き苔むしたる石鉢^{いしばち}の底もあきらかなり。手に掬^{むす}ばむとしてうつむく時、思ひかけず見たるわが顔はそもそもいかなるものぞ。覚え^こず叫びしが心を籠めて、気^こを鎮^{しず}めて、両^{まなこ}の眼を拭^{ぬぐ}ひ拭^{ぬぐ}ひ、水^{のぞ}に臨む。

われにもあらでまたとは見るに忍びぬを、いかにわれかかるべき、必ず心の迷へるならむ、

with her back to me. She looms in the big round shadow of a leafy ginkgo tree beneath the dark night sky.

She looks so much like my sister that I am tempted to call out to her, but I stop myself, thinking that it would not be wise to make my whereabouts known to someone—or something—I did not recognize with certainty.

The figure lingers a moment and then vanishes. After it is gone, I yearn even more for my sister. “So what if it were a terrible monster!” I blurt out, defiantly. “At least, it was in the form of my sister and so would not have harmed me. On second thought, what if it really were my sister, and not the voice I just heard?” Balling my eyes out, I lament aloud, “Oh, why didn’t I call out to her?”

“All of these apparitions must be an effect of my eyes,” I muse, pulling myself together. “Or the blurriness caused by my tears.” Either way, I decide to go over to the water abluion pavilion to cleanse my eyes.

There is a single long, horizontal lantern hanging there, covered in soot and decorated with cuckoo birds, haiku and such. The water is perfectly clear in the light of the lamp—even the green moss on the bottom of the stone basin is clearly visible. When I bend over to scoop up some water in my hands, I happen to see my face reflected on the surface. “What in the world?” I cry, incredulously. “Whose face is that?” I wonder, struggling to hold back a scream. I compose myself, rub both eyes and peer again into the water.

“That can’t be me,” I reason, sneaking yet another peek. Fearfully, I look again and then again,

今こそ、今こそとわななきながら見直したる、
肩をとらへて声ふるはし、

「お、お、千里。ええも、お前は。」と姉上の
のたまふに、縋りつかまくみかへりたる、わが
顔を見たまひしが、

「あれ！」

といひて一足すざりて、

「違つてたよ、坊や。」とのみいひずてに衝と
馳せ去りたまへり。

怪しき神のさまざまのことしてなぶるわと、
あまりのことに腹立たしく、あしずりして泣き
に泣きつつ、ひたばしりに追いかけぬ。捕へて
何をかなさむとせし、そはわれ知らず。ひたす
らものの口惜しければ、とにかくもならばとて
なむ。

坂もおりたり、のぼりたり、大路と覚しき町
にも出でたり、暗き径も辿りたり、野もよこ
ぎりぬ。畦も越えぬ。あとをも見ずて駆けた
りし。

道いかばかりなりけむ、漫々たる水面やみの
なかに銀河の如く横はりて、黒き、恐しき森四
方をかこめる、大沼とも覚しきが、前途を塞ぐ
と覚ゆる蘆の葉の繁きがなかにわが身体倒れた
る、あととは知らず。

五位鷺

眼のふち清々しく、涼しき薫つよく薫ると心
着く、身は柔かき蒲団の上に臥したり。やや枕
をもたげて見る、竹縁の障子あけ放して、庭つ
づきに向ひなる山懐に、緑の草の、ぬれ色青く
生茂りつ。その半腹にかかりある巖角の苔のな

but there is no doubt—the strange face looking
back at me is my own. As I stand there thinking
that I must have been possessed by a demon, I feel
someone grab my shoulder.

“Chisato!” yells a voice, trembling with anger.
“You naughty boy! Where have you...?” It is my
sister. I immediately turn and hug her, but when she
sees my face, she takes a step back, startled.

“Oh!” she exclaims. “Sorry, boy! I mistook you
for someone else.” With these words, she is gone.

“Why are the gods playing tricks on me?” I
whine, letting go of my tears and stamping the
ground in a tantrum as I set out after her. I have no
idea what I will do or what will happen when I catch
up with her, but I am upset and just want to be with
my sister.

I chase her uphill and downhill; I chase her
along a big road that comes into what appears to be a
town; I chase her down dark alleys and across fields;
I chase her along the embankments between the rice
paddies. I chase her and never look back.

After a while, beginning to wonder how far I
have traveled, I find myself standing on the shore
of a vast body of water, shimmering like the Milky
Way in the black night. It is enclosed on all four
sides by a dark and terrible forest. It appears to be a
huge swamp lake, blocking my way. There, among
the thick leaves of the reeds, I collapse. That is the
last I remember.

A Night Heron

I awake fresh-eyed to a strong, cool scent and
find myself lying on a soft futon mattress. When I
raise my head up from the pillow and look through
the open *shoji* doors leading onto the bamboo
veranda, I can see a garden, and just beyond that, the

めらかなるに、一挺はだか蠟に灯ともしたる
灯影すずしく、笥の水むくむくと湧きて玉ちる
あたりに盥を据ゑて、うつくしく髪結うたる女
の、身に一条もかけで、むかうざまにひたりて
ゐたり。

笥の水はそのたらひに落ちて、溢れにあふれ
て、地の窪みに流るる音しつ。

蠟の灯は吹くとなき山おろしにあかくなり、
くらうなりて、ちらちらと眼に映ずる雪なす膚
白かりき。

わが寝返る音に、ふとこなたを見返り、それ
と頷く状にて、片手をふちにかけて片足を立
てて盥のそとにいだせる時、颯と音して、鳥よ
りは小さき鳥の真白さがひらひらと舞ひおり
て、うつくしき人の脛のあたりをかすめつ。そ
のままおそれげもなう翼を休めたるに、ざぶり
と水をあびせざま莞爾とあでやかに笑うてたち
ぬ。手早く衣もてその胸をば蔽へり。鳥はおど
ろきてはたはたと飛去りぬ。

夜の色は極めてくらし、蠟を取りたるうつく
しき人の姿さやかに、庭下駄重く引く音しつ。
ゆるやかに縁の端に腰をおろすとともに、手
つきそらして振向きざま、わがかほをば見つ。

「気分は癒つたかい、坊や。」

heart of the mountains, where the verdant grass and
the wet-green foliage of the forest grow luxuriantly.
Suspended somewhere between here and there, a
single bare candle burns, its cool firelight lighting
up the smooth moss growing on the boulders.
Frothy water bubbles up through a bamboo pipe
and splatters in drops into a washtub. A beautiful
woman, completely naked, is soaking in the tub with
her back toward me, gracefully tying up her hair.

The water from the pipe falls into the overflowing
tub and spills onto the ground, burbling as it trickles
down into a hollow.

The candle flame flickers in the wind that blows
down from the mountains, getting brighter and
fainter in turns. To my eye, the woman's white skin
appears to glitter like falling snow.

At the sound of my rolling over in bed, the
woman suddenly turns toward me and nods, as if
to say, "Oh, you're awake." With one hand on the
edge of the washtub, she lifts a leg to step out. Just
then, there is a *whoosh* as a white bird, smaller than
a raven, flutters down near the beautiful woman's
shin. Unafraid, the bird alights to rest its wings. With
a smile and a genteel laugh, the woman sprinkles
water over the feathered creature, and then nimbly
grabs a cloth to cover her breasts. The bird, startled,
flies away on beating wings.

In the extreme darkness of the night, the figure
of the beautiful woman, who has taken the candle in
hand, appears distinctly to float towards me across
the garden. With one hand on the veranda, she
slowly lowers herself to sit. Swiveling at the waist,
she turns to look me in the face.

"Are you feeling better, little one?" she asks, her

といひて頭を傾けぬ。ちかまさりせる面けだかく、眉あざやかに、瞳すずしく、鼻やや高く、唇の紅なる、額つき頬のあたりたけたり。こは予てわがよしと思ひ詰たる雛のおもかげによく似たれば貴き人ぞと見き。年は姉上よりたけたまへり。知人にはあらざれど、はじめて逢ひし方とは思はず、さりや、誰にかあるらむとつくづくみまもりぬ。

またほほゑみたまひて、
「お前あれは斑猫といつて大変な毒虫なの。もう可いね、まるでかはつたやうにうつくしくなつた、あれでは姉様が見違へるのも無理はないのだもの。」

われもさあらむと思はざりしにもあらざりき。いまはたしかにそれよと疑はずなりて、のたまふままに頷きつ。あたりのめづらしければ起きむとする夜着の肩、ながく柔かにおさへたまへり。

「ごつとしておいで、あんばいがわるいのだから、おちついて、ね、気をしづめるのだよ、可いかい。」

われはさからはで、ただ眼をもて答へぬ。

「どれ。」といひて立つたる折、のしのしと道芝を踏む音して、つづれをまとうたる老夫の、顔の色いと赤きが縁近く入り来つ。

head tilted to one side.

Up close, her face looks even more dignified: the fine lines of her eyebrows, the brightness of her eyes, the nobility of her high nose, and the redness of her lips. Her elegance and refinement are revealed likewise in her forehead and cheeks. I see in her aristocratic face a glimmer of the *hina* dolls that have always filled my thoughts with such admiration. She looks older than my sister. She is neither an acquaintance nor a complete stranger. I stare at her, wondering who she could be.

Smiling, she speaks again. “You know, that was a tiger beetle, a very poisonous insect. But, you’re okay now. Your face has completely healed—you look very handsome. Now you understand why your sister didn’t recognize you.”

I had been thinking the same thing. “There is no doubt about it,” I thought, nodding as I listen to her. Looking around the room, I see many unusual things, but when I try to get up, the woman gently places her hand on the shoulder of my pajamas and presses me back down on the futon.

“Stay where you are. You’re still not completely well. Relax. Get some rest. Do you understand?”

I do not resist and show my obedience with my eyes.

“Good boy,” she says, and then arises at the sound of footfalls coming along the grassy path. A red-faced old man, clad in rags, approaches the veranda.

「はい、これはお児さまがござらつせえたの、
可愛いお児じや、お前様も嬉しかる。ははは、
どりや、またいつものを頂きましょか。」

腰をななめにうつむきて、ひつたりとかの筧
に顔をあて、口をおしつけてごつごつごつとた
てつづけにのみたるが、ふつといきを吹きて空
を仰ぎぬ。

「やれやれ甘いことかな。はい、参ります。」
と踵を返すを、こなたより呼びたまひぬ。

「ぢいや、御苦労だが。また来ておくれ、こ
の児を返さねばならぬから。」

「あいあい。」
と答へて去る。山風颯とおろして、彼の白き
鳥また翔ちおりつ。黒き盥のふちに乗りにて羽づ
くろひして静まりぬ。

「もう、風邪を引かないやうに寝させてあげ
よう、どれそんなら私も。」とて静に雨戸をひ
きたまひき。

この こたま
九ツ符

やがて添臥したまひし、さきに水を浴びたま
ひし故にや、わが膚をりをり慄然たりしが何
の心もなうひしと取纏りまらせぬ。あとを
あとをとといふに、をさな物語二ツ三ツ聞かせ給
ひつ。やがて、
「一ツ符、坊や、二ツ符といへるかひ。」

「二ツ符。」

“So, this must be the boy! He sure is a cute one.
You must be happy, too, my lady.” The old man lets
out a laugh and then announces, “Well, I think I will
have the usual.”

He bends over and puts his face right up to the
bamboo water pipe. Placing his mouth directly on
the open end, he drinks—gulp, gulp, gulp—and
goes on drinking. He suddenly stops, takes a breath
and looks up at the sky.

“Oh my! That is good!” he exclaims. “Well, I
guess I’ll be on my way.” But, as he turns to leave,
the woman says, “Wait, old man! I called you here.”

“I am sorry to impose on you,” she says, “but I
will need you to come again—to return this boy.”

“Aye-aye,” he answers and is gone.

A soft breeze blows down from the mountains.
The white bird returns, swooping down to perch on
the edge of the black washtub. It sits there preening
its wings before settling down to roost.

“Back to bed, you,” she scolded in a loving,
motherly tone. “You mustn’t catch a cold. Let me
tuck you in.” She quietly slides the rain shutters
closed. “Since you are going to sleep, so will I.”

Nine Echoes

The woman comes to sleep by my side, still
cold from the bath water. Being close to her sends
shudders across my skin, but I do not care—I cling
to her tightly. I beg her to tell me a bedtime story, and
she tells me two or three. By and by, she whispers,
“Okay, my sweet, it’s time to go to sleep. One echo.
Two echoes. Can you repeat after me?”

“Two echoes.”

「三ッ筈、四ッ筈といつて御覧。」

“Three echoes, four echoes. You try to say it.”

「四ッ筈。」

“Four echoes.”

「五ッ筈。そのあとは。」

“Five echoes. What’s next?”

「六ッ筈。」

“Six echoes.”

「さうさう七ッ筈。」

“That’s right. Seven echoes.”

「八ッ筈。」

“Eight echoes.”

「九ッ筈——ここはね、九ッ筈といふ処なの。さあもうおとなにして寝るんです。」

“Nine echoes. You have arrived. That is the name of this place. Nine Echoes. Now be a good boy and go to sleep.”

背に手をかけ引寄せて、玉の如きその乳房をふくませたまひぬ。露に白き襟、肩のあたり鬢のおくれ毛はらはらとぞみだれたる、かかるさまは、わが姉上とは太く違へり。乳をのまむといふを姉上は許したまはず。

With these words, she places her hand on my back and pulls me close to suckle from her lovely breasts. The revealing white collar of her kimono, the locks of hair dangling from her temples down to her shoulders—the woman is so different from my sister, who would have never given me permission to feed from her breasts.

ふところをかいさぐれば常に叱りたまふなり。母上みまかりたまひてよりこのかた三年を経つ。乳の味は忘れざりしかど、いまふくめられたるはそれには似ざりき。垂玉の乳房ただ淡雪の如く含むと舌にきえて触るるものなく、すずしき唾のみぞあふれいでたる。

Whenever I fumble for my sister’s breast inside her kimono, she always scolds me and tells me to stop. It has been three years since the death of my mother, and I have not forgotten the taste of her milk. But it is nothing like the milk I suckle now. From the woman’s drooping orbs fall mere snowflakes, which quickly vanish on my tongue, leaving no sensation at all, except that of my own cold slobber, dribbling from my mouth.

軽く背をさすられて、われ現になる時、屋の棟、天井の上と覚し、凄まじき音してしばらくは鳴りも止まず。ここにつむじ風吹くと柱動く恐しさに、わななき取つくと抱きしめつつ、「あれ、お客があるんだから、もう今夜は

With her hand gently rubbing my back, I fall into a dream-like state, when suddenly I am awoken by a dreadful noise coming from somewhere above me—on the ridge of the roof, perhaps, or above the ceiling. The noise reverberates in my ears for

堪忍かんにんしてくれよ、いけません。」

とキとのたまへば、やがてぞ静まりける。

「恐こわくはないよ。鼠ねずみだもの。」

とある、さりげなきも、われはなほその響ひびきのうちにももの叫びたる声せしが耳に残りてふるへたり。

うつくしき人はなかばのりいでたまひて、とあるまさしもの手箱えのなかより、一口ひとふりの守まもり刀がたなを取出とりだしつつ鞘さやながら引ひきそばめ、雄々おしき声おにて、

「何が来てももう恐くはない。安心してお寝よ。」とのたまふ、たのもしき状さまよと思ひてひたとその胸にわが顔をつけたるが、ふと眼をさましぬ。残燈暗く床柱の黒うつややかにひかるあたり薄き紫いろこの色籠めて、香こうの薫かおり残りたり。枕をはずして顔をあげつ。顔に顔をもたせてゆるく閉たまひたる眼の睫毛まつげかぞふるばかり、すやすやと寝入りてゐたまひぬ。ものいはむとおもふ心おくれて、しばしみまも瞻さびりしが、淋さびしさにたへねばひそかにその唇に指さきをふれて見ぬ。指はそれて唇には届かでない、あまりよくねむりたまへり。鼻をやつまむ眼をやおさむとまたつくづくうちと打うまもりぬ。ふとその鼻頭はなさきをねらひて手をふれしに空くうを捻ひねりて、うつくしき人は雛ひなの如く顔すじの筋すじひとつゆるみもせざりき。またその眼のふちをおしたれど水晶のなかなるものの形を取らむとするやう、わが顔ちかちかはそのおくれげのはしに頬おもちをなでらるるまで近々とありながら、いかにしても指さきはその顔に届かざるに、はては心いれて、乳の下に面かすみをふせて、強く額ひたいもてお圧おしたるに、顔にはただあたたかき霞かすみのまとふとばかり、のどかにふはふはとさはりしが、薄葉うすよう一重ひとえの支ささふるなく着ひたいけたる額ひたいはつと

some time. Next, a strong wind comes whirling and shakes the wooden pillars of the house. I tremble uncontrollably, and the beautiful woman, sensing my fear, holds me tight as she shouts in a stern voice, “Can’t you see I have a guest? Not tonight! Leave us alone!” It soon falls silent.

“There’s nothing to be afraid of. It was just a mouse,” she says, nonchalantly. But my body still shakes from the terrible noise, and the scream of the whirlwind still resounds in my ears.

The beautiful woman sits up in the futon and reaches for a gold lacquer box where she keeps her personal things and takes out a dagger. She pulls it, sheath and all, close to her and says bravely, “Whatever happens, there is no need to be afraid. Relax and go to sleep.” Her bravery inspires my confidence, and I bury my face deep in her bosom. I feel safe enough to fall asleep, but awake suddenly in the middle of the night. In the fading lamplight, I can just make out the shiny black wood of the pillar beside the *tokonoma*, which is enveloped in an aura of pale purple light and the faint smell of incense. I lift my head from my pillow. The beautiful woman is sleeping peacefully, her face so close to mine that I can count the eyelashes on her lightly closed eyelids. I want to say something to her, but lose my nerve and just lie there, staring at her with wide-open eyes. I feel so lonely that I try reaching over and touching her lips, but the tip of my finger keeps missing its mark, and the beautiful woman continues to sleep soundly. I consider pinching her nose or poking her eyes, but I just keep on staring. Finally, I decide to try touching the tip of her nose, but when I reach out my hand, it just seems to grope the empty air. The beautiful woman does not move a muscle; she just lies there like a *hina* doll. With my face right next to hers, I try touching the corner of

下に落ち沈むを、心着けば、うつくしき人の胸は、もとの如く傍にあをむきあて、わが鼻は、いたづらにおのが膚にぬくまりたる、柔き蒲団に埋れて、をかし。

her eye and stroking the locks of her hair against her cheek, but it is like trying to touch an object inside a crystal. Whenever I reach out my finger, it never makes contact with her face. Finally, I decide to bury my head under her breasts and so press my forehead firmly against her body, but I only meet with a warm mist that seems to stick to my face. It feels peaceful and airy, but insubstantial, and my head just seems to sink down forever. Then, strangely, I realize that the woman is lying as before, on her back beside me. Meanwhile, I—like the victim of a cruel prank—have my nose buried deep in the warm, soft futon.

わたしぶね
渡船

The Ferryboat

夢幻ともわかぬに、心をしづめ、眼をさだめて見たる、片手はわれに枕させたまひし元のまま柔かに力なげに蒲団のうへに垂れたまへり。

I cannot tell if she is real or a vision in a dream. I compose myself and take a good, hard look. There she lies as before, soft and inert, stretched out on the futon, one arm extended for me to use as a pillow.

片手をば胸にあてて、いと白くたをやかなる五指をひらきて黄金の目貫キラキラとうつくしき鞘の塗の輝きたる小さき守刀をしかと持つともなく乳のあたりに落して据ゑたる、鼻たかき顔のあをむきたる、唇のものいふ如き、閉ぢたる眼のほほ笑む如き、髪のならさらしたる、枕にみだれかかりたる、それも違はぬに、胸に剣をさへのせたまひたれば、亡き母上のその時のさまに紛ふべくも見えずなむ、コハこの君もみまかりしよとおもふいまはしさに、はや取除けなむと、胸なるその守刀に手をかけて、つと引く、せつばゆるみて、青き光眼を射たるほどこそあれ、いかなるはずみにか血汐さとほとぼしりぬ。眼もくれたり。したしたとながれにじむをあなやと両の拳もてしかとおさへたれど、留まらで、たふたふと音するばかりぞ淋漓としてながれつたへる、血汐のくれなる衣をそめつ。うつくしき人は寂として石像の如く静なる鳩尾のしたよりしてやがて半身をひたし尽しぬ。おさへたるわが手には血の色つかぬに、燈にすか

Her other arm rests upon her chest with her five slender, white fingers wrapped loosely around the small dagger in its scabbard, the lacquered surface and gold fittings glittering beautifully in the dim light. She does not appear to be holding the weapon to her breast intentionally—it must have ended up there in her sleep. She is lying on her back with her prominent nose facing up, while her lips appear to have words on them. Her closed eyes seem the squint of a smiling face, and her sleek hair spills out across her pillow. “Everything seems so familiar,” I think. “Even the dagger she holds to her breast.” The scene before me is a picture of my mother’s death, and an awful thought suddenly occurs to me: “No, not you, too. Don’t leave me!” I immediately try to take the dagger away from her, grabbing the scabbard and pulling on it hard, when the hilt guard breaks loose and a blinding blue light pours out from the opening. At the same moment, blood starts gushing out, inexplicably. The sheer amount of

す指のなかの紅くれないなるは、人の血その染みたる色にはあらず、訝いぶかしく撫なで試こころむる掌たなのその血汐こにはぬれもこそせね、こころづきて見定むれば、かいやりし夜のものあらはになりて、すずしの絹ぬいをすきて見ゆるその膚はだにまとひたまひし紅くれないの色なりける。いまはわれにもあらで声高こわだかに、母上、母上と呼びたれど、叫びたれど、ゆり動かし、おしうごかししたりしが、効かいなくてなむ、ひた泣きに泣く泣くいつのまにか寝たりとおぼし。顔あたたかに胸をおさるる心地こころに眼覚めぬ。空青く晴れて日影まばゆく、木も草もてらてらと暑きほどなり。

われははやゆうべ見し顔のあかき老夫おじの背せなに負はれて、とある山路やまじを行くなりけり。うしろよりは彼のうつくしき人したがひ来ましぬ。

さてはあつらへたまひし如く家に送りましたまふならむと推おしはかるのみ、わが胸うちの中はすべて見すかすばかり知りましたまふやうなれば、わかれの惜おしきも、ことのいぶかしきも、取出とりいでていは

blood is dizzying, and it makes a gurgling sound as it flows down. I rush to press down on her chest with both fists, but to no avail. The sound becomes that of a smooth flowing torrent as the blood overflows onto her garments, staining them red. Despite all this, the beautiful woman just lies there, still and quiet as a statue. Soon, her body from the mid-torso down is soaked in blood. Then I happen to notice that my hands, which I am still using to try and stop the bleeding, are not stained with blood. Holding one hand up to the lamplight, which makes the fingers transparent, I can see that the color of my blood is not the same as hers—her blood is not the color of human blood. “That’s odd,” I thought. I try patting my hands in her blood once more, but the palms do not even feel wet. I try to calm down and get a better look. I fling off the covers to reveal the sleeping figure of the beautiful woman. She is wearing a see-through, sheer silk gown over a red under-garment. At that moment, I break down. “Mommy!” I scream in a high-pitched voice. “Mommy, wake up!” I try shaking her, but she will not open her eyes. I cry uncontrollably until eventually, I suppose, I just fall asleep.

I awake to a warm sensation on my face and a pressure against my chest. The sky is blue and clear; the sun is shining bright—so bright, in fact, that the grass and trees shimmer like a mirage.

I soon figure out that the red-faced old man, whom I had seen the night before, is carrying me piggyback. We are making our way down a mountain road while the beautiful woman follows along behind.

My best guess is that he is taking me home, at her request. I feel as if she can see into me—my sadness at the impending goodbye and my memories of the strange things that have happened since yesterday—

むは益なし。教ふべきことならむには、彼方より先んじてうちいでこそしたまふべけれ。

家に帰るべきわが運ならば、強ひて止まらむと乞ひたりとて何かせん、さるべきいはれあれはこそ、と大人しう、ものもいはでぞ行く。

断崖の左右に聳えて、点滴声する処ありき。雑草高き径ありき。松柏のなかを行く処もありき。きき知らぬ鳥うたへり。褐色なる獣ありて、をりをり叢に躍り入りたり。ふみわくる道ともあらざりしかど、去年の落葉道を埋みて、人多く通ふ所としも見えざりき。

をぢは一挺の斧を腰にしたり。れいによりてのしのとあゆみながら、茨など生ひしげりて、衣の袖をさへぎるにあへば、すかすかと切つて払ひて、うつくしき人を通し参らす。されば山路のなやみなく、高き塗下駄の見えがくれに長き裾さばきながら来たまひつ。

かくて大沼の岸に臨みたり。水は漫々として藍を湛へ、まばゆき日のかげも此処の森にはささで、水面をわたる風寒く、颯々として声あり。をぢはここに来てソとわれをおろす。はしり寄れば手を取りて立ちながら肩を抱きたまふ、衣の袖左右より長くわが肩にかかりぬ。

and so I do not feel it necessary to express my feelings in words. If there were something to be said, then she would speak first.

If it is my fate to be sent home, then there is no point in my begging to stay. "She has her reasons," I tell myself and remain silent as the old man carries me on his back.

We pass between vertical cliffs murmuring with dripping water, along roads overgrown with weeds, through pine forests and oak woods. I hear the songs of unfamiliar birds and see furry brown creatures dodging in and out of the shrubs and brush. The path is not so overgrown that we have to chop our way through, but it is covered with the previous year's fallen leaves and looks as if few travelers have passed this way.

The old man has an axe tucked into the waist of his pants. He plods along normally until he encounters thick brambles that might snag the sleeves of the beautiful woman's kimono, and then he takes out his axe and clears the way so that she can pass. In this way, the woman is able to make her way down the rough trail, her high wooden clogs poking out one by one from underneath the long hem of her kimono as she shuffles down the path.

Advancing in this manner, we finally arrive at the edge of the great swamp. The deep blue water stretches far and wide, seemingly without end, and is brimming to the banks. The bright sunlight barely penetrates the forest here, and a chilly wind whispers across the water. The old man comes to the end of the trail and lets me down. I run to the beautiful woman, who takes me by both hands and hugs me, the long sleeves of her kimono draping over both of my shoulders.

あし ま おふね ともづな おし
 蘆間の小舟の纜を解きて、老夫はわれをかか
 へて乗せたり。一緒ならではと、しばしむづか
 りたれど、めまひのすればとて乗りたまはず、
 さらばとのたまふはしに棹を立てぬ。船は出で
 つ。わつと泣きて立上りしがよろめきてしりゐ
 に倒れぬ。舟といふものにははじめて乗りに
 たり。水を切るごとに眼くるめくや、背後にゐた
 まへりとおもふ人の大なる環にまはりて前途な
 る汀にゐたまひき。いかにして渡し越したまひ
 つらむと思ふときハヤ左手なる汀に見えき。見
 る見る右手なる汀にまはりて、やがて旧のうし
 ろに立ちたまひつ。箕の形したる大なる沼は、
 汀の蘆と、松の木と、建札と、その傍なるうつ
 くしき人ともろともに緩き環を描いて廻転し、
 はじめは徐ろにまはりしが、あとあと急にな
 り、疾くなりつ、くるくるくと次第にこまか
 くまはるまはる、わが顔と一尺ばかりへだたり
 たる、まちかき処に松の木にすがりて見えたま
 へる、とばかりありて眼の前にうつくしき顔の
 たけたるが莞爾とあでやかに笑みたまひしが、
 そののちは見えざりき。蘆は繁く丈よりも高さ
 みに、船はとんとつきあたりぬ。

ふるさと

をぢはわれを扶けて船より出だしつ。またそ
 の背を向けたり。
 「泣くでねえ泣くでねえ。もうぢきに坊ツさ

Among the reeds along the bank is a ferryboat, tied to shore. The old man unties the stern line, picks me up and carries me aboard.

“You come with us!” I plead, reaching out to the woman.

“I get dizzy,” she answers simply, and remains where she is. “Farewell,” she says, as the old man picks up the setting pole and pushes away from shore.

Bawling like a baby, I stand up but soon lose my balance and fall back in my seat—it was my first time to ride in a boat. As we cut through the water, I start to feel dizzy. The woman, who should be standing on the shore behind us, has somehow appeared on the opposite shore. “Are we going in a circle?” I wonder. As I am pondering how she got across so quickly, she suddenly appears on the left bank, and while I am looking desperately, she has apparently gone around to the right bank. However, before long, she is back where we left her. The huge, half-moon-shaped swamp lake begins to spin around—the reeds along the bank, the pine trees, a signpost, and the woman standing beside the signpost—they are all revolving in a spiraling circle, slowly at first, but gradually getting faster. Around and around and around it spins, the circle getting tighter and tighter. I think I see the woman standing right beside a pine tree, holding on to it with one hand, looking at me. Then, suddenly, she is very near—her beautiful, solemn face right before my eyes, not more than a foot away, smiling gracefully. But, I lose sight of her, and the boat runs ashore with a thud in a spot where the reeds grow thick and tall, to heights above my head.

Going Home

The old man helps me out of the boat and then turns around, offering me his back to climb on.

“No tears, my boy. Don't cry. You'll be home

まの家ぢや。」と慰めぬ。かなしきはそれにはあらねど、いふもかひなくてただ泣きたりしが、しだいに身のつかれを感じて、手も足も綿の如くうちかけらるるやう肩に負はれて、顔を垂れてぞともなはれし。見覚えある板塀のあたりに来て、日のややくれかかる時、老夫はわれを抱き下して、溝のふちに立たせ、ほくほく打ゑみつゝ、慇懃に会釈したり。

「おとなにしさつしやりませ。はい。」

といひずてに何地ゆくらむ。別れはそれにも惜しかりしが、あと追ふべき力もなくて見おくり果てつ。指す方もあらでありくともなく歩をうつすに、頭ふらふらと足の重たくて行悩む、前に行くも、後ろに帰るも皆見知越のものなれど、誰も取りあはむとはせで往きつ来りつ。さるにてもなほものありげにわが顔をみつづくが、冷かに嘲るが如く憎さげなるぞ腹立しき。おもしろからぬ町ぞとばかり、足はわれ知らず向直りて、とほとほとまた山ある方にあるき出しぬ。

けたたましき聲音して驚搦に襟を掴むものあり。あなやと振返ればわが家の後見せる奈四郎といへる力遅ましき叔父の、凄まじき気色して、

「つままれめ、何処をほつづく。」と喚きざま、引立てたり。また庭に引出して水をやあびせられむかと、泣叫びてふりもぎるに、おさへ

soon.”

However, that is not why I am crying—in my childish innocence, the tears just come. Gradually, though, fatigue overcomes me; my legs dangle against the old man like limp gauze as I hang from his shoulders; I rest my head against his back. Together, we go into town. It is getting a little dark, but I recognize a wooden fence, and that is where he gently lets me down, standing me beside a ditch. Smiling warmly, he makes a modest but gracious bow.

“Now, you be a good boy, you hear?”

With this simple farewell, he disappears somewhere into the night.

I am sad to see him go, but I have no energy to run after him—I just stand there waving goodbye as he fades from view. Alone, with no one to tell me the way to go and no idea in which direction I am pointed, I simply try moving my legs, taking one step at a time. My head feels light and my limbs heavy, and each step is hard. People I know pass by me, coming and going, but no one recognizes me—they act like complete strangers. Nevertheless, I do find it curious how they stare me in the face as they pass. It is as if they are coldly mocking me, even despising me. It makes me mad. I begin muttering to myself over and over, “I hate this town,” when suddenly my legs turn and start tramping back toward the mountains.

I hear the clamor of footsteps coming up quickly behind me. Someone grabs me by the collar with two hands and hoists me high in the air. When I look back in surprise, I see it is Nashiro, my guardian uncle. He is a big man, a stout man, and he looks furious.

“Where have you been, boy?” he shouts. After

たる手をゆるはず、

「しつかりしろ。やい。」

とめくるめくばかり背を拍ちて宙につるしながら、走りて家に帰りつ。立騒ぐ召つかひどもを叱りつも細引を持って来さして、しかと両手をゆはへあへず奥まりたる三畳の暗き一室に引立てゆきてそのまま柱に縛めたり。近く寄れ、喰さきなむと思ふのみ、歯がみして睨まへたる、眼の色こそ怪しくなりたれ、逆つりたる臍は憑きもののわざよとて、寄りたかりて口々にのしるぞ無念なりける。

おもての方さざめきて、何処にか行きをれる姉上帰りましつと覚し、襖いくつかばたばたと音してハヤここに来たまひつ。叔父は室の外にさへぎり迎へて、

「ま、やつと取返したが、縄を解いてはならんぞ。もう眼が血走つてゐて、すきがあると駈け出すぢや。魔どのがそれしよびくでの。」

と戒めたり。いふことよくわが心を得たるよ、しかり、隙だにあらむにはいかでかここにとどまるべき。

eyeing me up and down, he proclaims, “Why, you’ve gone and gotten yourself possessed by an evil spirit!” He drags me down the street while I scream and try to shake loose, but he never loosens his grip. I am terrified that he is going to take me into the garden and douse me with water again, as he always does whenever I have been bad.

“Stop that, you little brat!” he yells and then slaps me on the back so hard I see stars. He picks me up in one arm and runs home, my legs dangling in mid-air.

The house servants make such a ruckus when they see me, scolding me as they bring out a thin rope to tie my hands together. They take me into a small, dark room at the back of the house and tie me to a pillar.

“You see the look on his face,” my uncle says. “He’s thinking, ‘Come near me and I’ll tear you limb from limb. I’ll devour you!’” My uncle points and jeers. “You see how he gnashes his teeth and glares like a ferocious beast.”

“Look at his eyes,” says one of the servants. “There is something wild in them—the color, the slant.” Another pipes in, “This is the work of some evil spirit!” It infuriates me to be hounded and hooted at in this fashion.

There is a commotion at the front of the house; it sounds like my sister coming home. Next, I hear her sliding open *fusuma* doors one by one as she makes her way through the rooms of the house to where I was being kept. When she gets to my room, my uncle stops her.

“We finally got him back,” he tells her, “but we have to keep him tied up. His eyes are shot through with blood, and he will make a run for it if he has a chance.” Then he adds, ominously, “He was abducted by some kind of demon.”

“Ha!” I chuckle. “You read my mind! You’re

「あ。」とばかりにいらへて姉上はまろび入りて、ひしと取^{とり}着きたまひぬ。ものはいはでさめざめとぞ泣きたまへる、おん情^{なさけて}手にこもりて抱かれたるわが胸^{しほ}絞らるるやうなりき。

姉上の膝に^ふ臥したるあひだに、医師^{きた}来りてわが脈をうかがひなどしつ。叔父は医師とともに^{あなた}彼方に去りぬ。

「ちさや、どうぞ気をたしかにもつておくれ。もう姉^{ねえさん}様はどうしようね。お前、私だよ。姉さんだよ。ね、わかるだらう、私だよ。」

といきつくづくちつとわが顔をみまもりたまふ、涙^{るいこん}痕したたるばかりなり。

その心の安んずるやう、強^しひて顔つくりてニツコと笑うて見せぬ。

「おお、薄^{うす}気^き味^みが悪いねえ。」
と傍^{かたわら}にありたる奈^な四^し郎^{ろう}の妻なる人^{つぶや}眩^{くら}きて身ぶるひしき。

やがてまた人々われを取^{とり}巻^まきてありしことも責むるが如くに問ひぬ。くはしく語^{うたが}りて疑^{がい}を解かむとおもふに、をさなき口の順序正しく語るを得むや、根^ね問^どひ、葉^は問^どひするに一^{いち}々^{いち}説^{せつ}明^{めい}かさむに、しかもわれあまりに疲れたり。うつつ心に何をかいひたる。

やうやくいましめはゆるされたれど、なほ心

absolutely right—if I have the chance to run away, I will. Why on earth would I stay here?”

“Oh, Chisato!” my sister cries as she barrels past my uncle and into the room, where she clutches me tight. Sobbing, she holds me in her arms without saying a word. I can feel her compassion through my hands as we embrace. My heart clenches in my breast.

While I am lying on my sister’s lap, a doctor comes in to take my pulse and examine me. After he finishes, he leaves the room with my uncle.

“Chisato,” my sister pleads, “you have to pull yourself together! Please! Oh, what am I going to do? Chisato! It’s me, your sister!” Looking me directly in the face, she asks, “Don’t you recognize me?” She declares with all her breath, “It’s me!” as she stares me in the eyes, tears streaking down her cheeks.

To ease her worry, I put on a strong face and give her my best smile. Nashiro’s wife, who is standing nearby, whispers with a shutter, “Oh, look at him now! How creepy!”

After a while, more people gather around, asking accusing questions. I wish I were able to tell my story and clear up any suspicion about my being possessed by a demon. But, how can someone so young be expected to explain things logically? I respond to their questioning the best I can, one question at a time. What else can I do? I eventually grow tired and my thinking fuzzy—I do not remember clearly what I said.

They eventually untie me; however, they still treat

の狂ひたるものとしてわれをあしらひぬ。いふこと信ぜられず、すること皆人の疑を増すをいかにせむ。ひしと取籠めて庭にも出さで日を過しぬ。血色わるくなりて瘦せもしつとて、姉上のきづかひたまひ、後見の叔父夫婦にはいとせめて秘しつつ、そとゆふぐれを忍びて、おもての景色見せたまひしに、門辺にありたる多くの子ども我が姿を見ると、一斉に、アレさらはれものの、気狂の、狐つきを見よやといふいふ、砂利、小砂利をつかみて投げつくるは不断親しかりし朋達なり。

姉上は袖もてわれを庇ひながら顔を赤うして遁げ入りたまひつ。人目なき処にわれを引据ゑつと見るまに取つて伏せて、打ちたまひぬ。

悲しくなりて泣出せしに、あわただしく背をばさすりて、
「堪忍しておくれよ、よ、こんなかはいさうなもの。」

といひかけて、
「私あもう気でも違ひたいよ。」としみじみと掻口説きたまひたり。いつのわれにはかはらじを、何とてさはあやまるや、世にただ一人なつかしき姉上までわが顔を見るごとに、気を確認に、心を鎮めよ、と涙ながらいはるるにぞ、さてはいかにしてか、心の狂ひしにはあらずやとわれとわが身を危ぶむやうそのたひになりまさりて、果はまことにものくるはしくもなりもてゆくなる。

me like a lunatic. I cannot make them believe me. Whatever I do or say, it only makes their suspicions grow. What is one to do? I am strictly forbidden to leave the house. I am not even allowed to go into the garden. I spend a number of days locked up in the house like a prisoner, and I eventually start to look thin and turn pale in the face. My sister notices my deteriorating condition and decides to sneak me outside for a change of scenery, without my guardian uncle or aunt finding out. Very discreetly and under the cover of twilight, we go outside the gate in front of the house. Some of my old friends are playing nearby, and when they see me, they all shout in unison, “There it is—the demon.” One of them screams, “He’s crazy!” Another teases, “No, he’s been possessed by a fox spirit!” These kids, who were my best friends, commence to pick up stones and pebbles and pelt me with them.

My sister, her face red with anger, shields me with the sleeves of her kimono as we flee back inside the house. Out of view of the others, she sits me down, pulls me sharply across her lap, and gives me a spanking.

When I start to cry, she instantly ceases her punishment and hurriedly begins to comfort me. She rubs my back and begs, “Forgive me, Chisato! You poor thing, how could I hit you?” She throws up her hands and cries, “Oh, I am losing my mind!” She cries repeatedly, “Let me be crazy, too!” I wonder, though, how *she*, of all people—my one and only sister in this world—could think that I am crazy? I am the same boy as always. Yet, every time she looks at me with such disgust, even with tears in her eyes, telling me to pull myself together or to calm down, I start to wonder if it is not true. Maybe I *am* crazy. My doubts begin to grow, as do my feelings of anxiety, until I finally conclude that I really have

たとへば怪しき糸の十重二十重にわが身をま
とふ心地しつ。しだいしだいに暗きなかに奥
深くおちいりてゆく思あり。それをば刈払ひ、
遁出でむとするにその術なく、すること、なす
こと、人見て必ず、眉を擧め、嘲り、笑ひ、卑
め、罵り、はた悲み憂ひなどするにぞ、気あ
がり、心激し、ただじれにじれて、すべてのも
の皆われをはらだたしむ。

口惜しく腹立たしきまま身の周囲はことごと
く敵ぞと思わる。町も、家も、樹も、鳥籠
も、はたそれ何らのものぞ、姉とてまことの姉
なりや、さきには一たびわれを見てその弟を忘
れしことあり。塵一つとしてわが眼に入るは、
すべてのものの化したるにて、恐しきあやしき神
のわれを悩まさむとて現じたるものならむ。さ
ればぞ姉がわが快復を祈る言もわれに心を狂は
すやう、わざとさはいふならむと、一たびお
もひては堪ふべからず、力あらば恣にともか
くもせばやせよかし、近づかば喰ひさきくれ
む、蹴飛ばしやらむ、搔むしらむ、透あらばと
びいでて、九ツ符とをしへたる、たうときうつ
くしきかのひとの許に遁げ去らむと、胸の湧き
たつほどこそあれ、ふたたび暗室にいましめら
れぬ。

gone insane.

In these moments of self-doubt, I feel a multitude of sinister threads entwining my whole body, slowly pulling me down into a deep, dark place. I try to cut myself loose, but no matter what I do, I cannot free myself. I imagine what people would think if they saw me in this condition: the scolding looks, the sneers, the laughs, the scorn, the insults. I feel the blood rushing to my head and my heart pounding in my chest. Of course, I have feelings of sadness and even despondency, but mostly I just feel provoked—everything and everyone makes me furiously angry.

In this vexed state, I feel surrounded by enemies: the town, the house, the trees, the birdcage. What do I know about any of them? Even my sister! Is she my real sister? Just yesterday, did she not look me straight in the face and fail to recognize me? What is real? Everything reflected in the human eye, even the tiniest mote of dust, could be an illusion, an object transformed by magic. Maybe, I wonder, some terrible and mysterious god is toying with me, showing me these things just to torture me. Then it dawns on me—the words that spill from my sister’s mouth—her damned prayers for my recovery—are really just wicked spells to steal my wits. The moment I realize this, I snap. “Once I am able, I am going to have things my way.” Then, after some thought, I correct myself, “No, I *will* have things my way!” Giving myself over to this newfound strength, I growl, “If anyone gets in my way, I will rip them apart and eat them whole. I will kick them. I will pull out their hair. As soon as I get the chance, I will fly from this prison and return to Nine Echoes and to the beautiful woman there.” My heart was boiling.

They put me back in the dark room, just to be safe.

せんじゆだらに
千呪陀羅尼

毒ありと疑へばものも食はず、薬もいかでか
飲まむ、うつくしき顔したりとて、優しきこと
をいひたりとて、いつはりの姉にはわれことば
もかけじ。眼にふれて見ゆるものとしいへば、
たけりくるひ、罵り叫びてあれたりしが、つひ
には声も出でず、身も動かず、われ人をわきま
へず心地死ぬべくなれりしを、うつらうつら昇
きあげられて高き石壇をのぼり、大なる門を入
りて、赤土の色きれいに掃きたる一条の道長
き、右左、石燈籠と石榴の樹の小さきと、お
なじほどの距離にかはるがはる続きたるを行き
て、香の薫しみつきたる太き円柱の際に寺の本
堂に据ゑられつ、ト思ふ耳のはたに竹を破る響
きこえて、僧ども五三人一斉に声を揃へ、高ら
かに誦する声耳を聳するばかり喧ましき堪ふべ
からず、禿顛ならびる木のはしの法師ばら、
何をかすると、拳をあげて一人の天窓をうたむ
とせしに、一幅の青き光颯と窓を射て、水晶の
念珠瞳をかすめ、ハツシと胸をうちたるに、ひ
るみて踞まる時、若僧円柱をいざり出でつつ、
ついりて、サラサラと金欄の帳を絞る、燦爛た
る御廚子のなかに尊き像こそ拝まれたれ。一段
高まる経の声、トタンにはたたがみ天地に鳴
りぬ。

A Sutra of a Thousand Charms and a Goddess
with a Thousand Arms

I suspect that they might try to poison me, so I refuse their offers of food and do what I can to avoid taking their medicine. I do not even speak to my phony sister, despite her loveliness and shows of kindness. Whenever anything, or anyone, comes into my field of view, it sets off in me a storm of wild fury—I shout abuses until I finally lose my voice. I become incapable of movement, and I can no longer distinguish one person from the next. I feel like I am going to die.

In this half-conscious state, I find myself being carried up a long stone stairway and through a magnificent gate. There are stone lanterns on my left and right, evenly spaced, and alternating with small pomegranate trees. I am carried along a long path of cleanly swept red dirt that leads to the main hall of a Buddhist temple. They take me inside and set me down near a huge, round, wooden pillar reeking of incense. Right next to my ear, I hear what sounds like bamboo being split asunder. When I look, I see that several monks have all started chanting a sutra in their shrill voices. Their earsplitting cacophony is unbearable. I go over to the priests, who are all lined up neatly in a row, kneeling like little bald shrubs. Not knowing what else to do, I go to hit one of the rascals on the head with my fist, but before I can manage it, a streak of blue light comes in through a window and flashes off the crystal prayer beads that they hold in their hands. The light whisks by the pupil of my eye and strikes me hard in the chest. I recoil from the blow and fall to my knees on the tatami mats. At that moment, a young priest comes forward from the other side of a round pillar, waddling across the tatami on his knees. He pulls back a gold brocade curtain to reveal a shimmering altar at the center of the main hall. The young monk bows to the noble figure contained therein.

His fellows raise the pitch of their chanting a notch while overhead a loud thunderclap resounds in the heavens.

端巖^{たんげん}微妙^{みみょう}のおんかほばせ、雲^{そで}の袖^{かすみ}、霞^{はかま}の袴^{はかま}ち
らちらと瓔珞^{ようらく}をかけたたまひたる、玉^{たま}なす胸^{むね}に
織手^{せんしゆ}を添^そへて、ひとと、をさなごを抱^{いだ}きたまへ
るが、仰^{あお}ぐ仰^{あお}ぐ瞳^{ひとみ}うごきて、ほほゑみたまふ
と、見たる時、やさしき手のさき肩^{かた}にかかり
て、姉上^{あねがみ}は念^{ねん}じたまへり。

It is the solemn and delicate figure of Kannon, Goddess of Mercy, clothed in mist, hemmed with clouds, and adorned with dazzling jewels. In her slender, womanly hands she cradles an infant tight against her breast—the sweetest bosom I have ever beheld. She quietly raises her dignified face, so full of motherly love, and then her eyes move. She smiles at me. With my gaze fixed on the goddess, I feel my sister's gentle hand on my shoulder as she begins to pray.

滝^{たき}やこの堂^{どう}にかかるかと、折^をしも雨^{あめ}の降^ふりし
きりつ。渦^{うず}いて寄^よする風^{かぜ}の音^ね、遠^{とほ}き方^{かた}より呻^{うな}り
来て、どつと満山^{まんざん}に打^{うち}あたる。

It starts to rain so hard that I am convinced a waterfall is falling on the building. In the distance, I can hear the roar of a twister, the sound of its strong, whirling winds growing louder and louder until it slams into the whole mountain.

本堂^{あおびかり}青光^{あおひかり}して、はたたがみ堂^{どう}の空^{そら}をまるびゆ
くに、たまぎりつつ、今は姉上^{あねがみ}を頼^{たの}までやは、
あなやと膝^{ひざ}にはひあがりて、ひしとその胸^{むね}を抱^{いだ}
きたれば、かかるものをふりすてむとはしたま
はで、あたたかき腕^{かひな}はわが背^{せな}にて組^{くみ}合^あはされた
り。さるにや気^きも心^{こころ}もよわよわとなりもてゆ
く、ものを見る^{あきら}明^{あきら}かに、耳^{みみ}の鳴^なるがやみて、恐^{おそ}
しき吹^ふき降^ふりのなかに陀羅尼^{だらに}を呪^{じゆ}する聖^{ひじり}の聲^{こえ}々^{ごえ}
さわやかに聞^ききとられつ。あはれに心^{こころ}細^{こま}くもの凄^{すご}
きに、身^みの置^{おき}処^{どころ}あらずなりぬ。からだひとつ消
えよかしと両手^{りやうて}を肩^{かた}に縋^{すが}りながら顔^{かほ}もてその胸^{むね}
を押しわけたれば、襟^{えり}をば掻^かきひらきたまひつ
つ、乳^{ちち}の下^{した}にわがつもり押^お入れて、両袖^{りやうそで}を打^{うち}
かねて深^{ふか}くわが背^{せな}を蔽^{おほ}ひ給^{たま}へり。御^み仏^{ほとけ}のそのを
さなごを抱^{いだ}きたまへるもかくこそと嬉^{うれ}しきに、
おちゐて、心地^{こころ}すがすがしく胸^{むね}のうち安^{やす}く平^{たい}
らになりぬ。やがてぞ呪^{じゆ}もはてたる。雷^{らい}の音^ねも遠^{とほ}
ざかる。わが背^せをしかと抱^{いだ}きたまへる姉上^{あねがみ}の腕^{うで}

The main hall of the temple fills with blue light and the sky above with raging lightning and rolling thunder. The fear rises in my throat and comes out a scream. "Ahh!" Realizing that my only refuge is my sister, I crawl up on her lap and cling to her bosom. Seeing me in this state, she cannot refuse. She enfolds me in her warm arms, where I feel my fear slowly subside and my beating heart relax. Objects around me start to come into focus, and the ringing in my ears fades away. Despite the terrible wind and rain, I am now able to hear the crisp, clear voices of the monks chanting their sutra. An overwhelming sense of torment sweeps over me, making me squirm. Not knowing what else to do, I decide simply to disappear. Hanging onto my sister's shoulders with both hands, I press my face between her breasts. She pulls open the front of her kimono and pushes my head down to her nipple. She hugs me

もゆるみたれば、ソとその懐より顔をいだして
 こはごはその顔をば見上げつ。うつくしさはそ
 れにもかはらでなむ、いたくもやつれたまへり
 けり。雨風のなほはげしく外をうかがふことだ
 にならざる、静まるを待てば夜もすがら暴通し
 つ。家に帰るべくもあらねば姉上は通夜したま
 ひぬ。その一夜の風雨にて、くるま山の山中、
 俗に九ツ筈といひたる谷、あけがたに柚のみい
 だしたるが、忽ち淵になりぬといふ。

with both arms, enveloping me with the long sleeves
 of her kimono. “Just like Kannon holding her small
 child,” I sigh, contentedly. My heart is quiet, and my
 feeling renewed. There in my sister’s bosom, peace
 and calm prevail. By and by, the chanting stops and
 the thunder becomes more distant. My sister’s arms
 begin to loosen from around my back. Slowly and
 timidly, I raise my head to look at her—her face is
 terribly haggard and gaunt, but her beauty has not
 faded. The storm is still too wild even to peep out of
 doors. We wait for it to subside, but it never does. We
 cannot possibly go home, so we stay in the temple
 and my sister prays for me all through the night.

Early the next day, I hear the story of a
 woodcutter who stood on a nearby mountain and
 gazed out over the valley known locally as Nine
 Echoes. He reported that the overnight rains around
 Mt. Kuruma had completely flooded the valley.

里の者、町の人皆挙りて見にゆく。日を経て
 われも姉上とともに来り見き。その日一天うら
 らかに空の色も水の色も青く澄みて、軟風おも
 むろに小波わたる淵の上には、塵一葉の浮べる
 あらで、白き鳥の翼広きがゆたかに藍碧なる水
 面を横ざりて舞へり。

People from the nearby villages and towns all
 got together to go have a look. A few days later, my
 sister and I go to see for ourselves. It is a glorious
 day—the sky and the water are both crystal clear,
 and a gentle wind is blowing tiny ripples across the
 face of the deep pool, unblemished by even a single
 floating leaf. A white bird, its wings spread wide,
 frolics in the air as it traverses the rich indigo of the
 water’s surface.

すさまじき暴風雨なりしかな。この谷もと
 葉研の如き形したりきとぞ。

It was a terrible storm, indeed. People say the
 valley used to have the nice, symmetrical shape of
 a druggist’s mortar—a long, thin vessel. Alas, no
 longer.

幾株となき松柏の根こそぎになりて谷間に
 吹倒されしに山腹の土落ちたまりて、底をなが
 るる谷川をせきとめたる、おのづからなる堤防
 をなして、凄まじき水をば湛へつ。一たびこの
 ところ決潰せむか、城の端の町は水底の都とな

The storm uprooted countless oak and pine trees
 and blew them into the valley. The soil on the slopes
 gave way and slid down, forming a natural dam that
 backed up the stream at the bottom of the valley. It
 filled up horrifyingly fast. The townspeople living

るべしと、人々の恐れまどひて、^{おこた}怠らず土を装^も
り石^{いし}を伏せて堅き堤防を築きしが、あたかも今
の関屋少将の夫人姉上十七の時なれば、年つも
りて、^{ふたば}嫩なりし常磐木も^{ときわぎ}ハヤ丈の^{たけ}びつ。草生^{くさお}
ひ、^{こけ}苔むして、いにしへよりかかりけむと思ひ
^{まが}紛ふばかりなり。

downstream near the castle feared that, if the barrier
ever broke, they would end up the residents of an
underwater metropolis. They hastily set about piling
up stones to fortify the crude embankment.

My sister, now Mrs. Sekiya, the wife of the major
general, was seventeen years old at the time. Many
years have passed, and the evergreen trees, once
tiny two-leafed sprouts, have grown to the height of
a man. Grass and moss cover the dam, and the deep
pool of water looks as if it has been there forever.

あはれ礫^{つひて}を投ずる事なかれ、うつくしき人^{しか}の
夢や驚かさむと、血気なる友のいたづらを叱^{しか}
り留^{とど}めつ。年若く^{おもてきよ}面清き海軍の少尉候補生は、
^{はくぼ}薄暮暗碧を^{あんぺき}湛へたる淵^{たた}に^{ふち}臨みて^{しゆくぜん}肅然とせり。

“Hey, you shouldn’t throw rocks in the water,”
I scold my impetuous friend. “You’ll wake the
beautiful woman from her dreams.” We stand there
on the dam—the young, fresh-faced naval officer
cadet and I—beneath the fading light of a twilight
sky, facing the deep blue abyss with quiet solemnity.

注

- (1) 底本：「鏡花短篇集」岩波書店（1987）第1刷発行底本の親本：「鏡花全集 第三卷」岩波書店 1941
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