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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

BEYOND SHASEI, BEYOND NATURE:  
IDEALISM AND ALLUSION IN THE POETRY OF  
SHIMAZAKI TŌSON, DOI BANSUI, AND YOSANO AKIKO

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BY  
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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the early poetry of Shimazaki Tōson (1872-1943), Doi Bansui (1871-1952), and Yosano Akiko (1878-1942), three writers who took Japanese Romantic poetry to its height in the late 1890s and early 1900s. Instead of following the realistic trend of *shasei* (sketching from life), each of these poets pursued a lyricism that sought ideals of nature and mined poetic allusions from classical Japanese, classical Chinese, and European Romantic predecessors. Their conceptual and intertextual commitments thus go beyond *shasei* and beyond nature.

The introduction analyzes the discursive context surrounding concepts of nature and Romanticism, the traditional use of citation and allusion in Japanese poetics, and the development of *shintaiishi* (new-style poetry) alongside tanka in the Meiji period (1868-1912).

Chapter one investigates poems from Shimazaki Tōson's *Seedlings* (Wakanashū, 1897) that concern the poetic speaker's absorption in and alienation from wild nature. The nature of Tōson's poems, however, is always an idealized landscape viewed through a traditional cultural prism, mediated by poetic allusion, and described in refined diction; indeed, that is why nature can be a source of happiness and completeness.

Chapter two takes up poetic meditations on the ideal role of the poet in relation to nature in Doi Bansui's *Nature Has Feelings* (Tenchi ujō, 1899). In the ironic stance of non-poets, Bansui's poetic speakers curate the insights of a global gallery of poetic predecessors. These poets' mystifications of nature in the end are hopeless, but the remaining palimpsest of lost ideals is itself an inspiring mix of shadows and echoes. The

poems thus suggest that the ideal aim of the poet is neither realism nor idealism, but a course that charts and preserves the fissures between the two.

Chapter three examines how the tanka in Yosano Akiko's *Tangled Hair* (Midaregami, 1901) use supernatural symbolism to entangle the modern discourse of love (*ren'ai*) as a spiritual ideal with classical poetic tropes. Deities, sin, and other supernatural and religious elements are prominent in Akiko's poetry, but they have largely been overlooked by scholars who seek biographical explanations for her verses. By invoking multiple, often contradictory ideals of the natural and the supernatural, Akiko made the wavering possibility of liberation from traditional sexual mores seem dangerous and exciting, while her allusive yet passionate diction brought about a revolution within the tanka form.

A brief concluding chapter ties together the poetic strategies of Tōson, Bansui, and Akiko through the meditations on nature and art by the narrator of Natsume Sōseki's (1867-1916) novel *Pillow of Grass* (Kusamakura, 1906), then considers how Romantic lyric poetry gave way to Symbolism and Naturalism. An appendix presents English translations of *shintaiishi* from Tōson's *Seedlings* and Bansui's *Nature Has Feelings*, most of which have never been published in translation.



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## INTRODUCTION

Let us begin our investigation into the scope of Romantic poetry of the Meiji period (1868-1912) with the following poem by Doi Bansui (土井晩翠, 1871-1952), from his collection *Nature Has Feelings* (天地有情: *Tenchi ujō*, 1899). What would Japanese readers have made of it in 1899? What do we make of it now?

### A Spray of Flowers

### 花一枝

Following the poet who picked flowers  
On the banks beside the Rhine  
To give to a distant friend,  
I pick for you a spray of evening's cherries.

ラインの岸に花摘みて  
別れし友に贈りけむ  
詩人を學びわれもまた  
君に一枝の夕ざくら。

The morrow's willows sobered by dew  
And evening's cherries drunk on the breeze—  
Embody just a little longer  
The capital's display of spring.

あしたの柳露にさめ  
ゆふべの櫻風に酔ふ  
都の春の面影を  
せめては忍べとばかりに。

The coursing railroad's end is far,  
City's spring is village winter—  
Will you wilt, o flowers, before  
You reach her precious hands?

通ふ鐵路も末遠く  
都の春は里の冬  
玉なす御手に觸れん前  
萎み果てむかあゝ花よ。

Though you would hollowly discard  
The spray of wilted flowers, instead  
Dye them the color of your heart  
And place them by your chamber window.<sup>1</sup>

萎み果てなむ一枝を  
空しく棄てむ君ならじ  
心の色に染めなして  
寢覺の窓にゑましめよ。

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<sup>1</sup> Except where noted, all translations into English in this dissertation are mine. For full texts of poems by Shimazaki Tōson and Doi Bansui, please see the Appendix.

First, it is a poem in four quatrains, and each line has twelve syllables with a caesura after the seventh syllable. We may not give much thought to the regular structure of what seems to be a short poem. But this was still a new enough device in 1899, especially relative to the long history of other poetic forms, that it was not yet anachronistic to call it a “new-style poem” (新体詩: *shintaiishi*).<sup>2</sup>

Second, the poem adopts an exotic, not to say abstruse, tone from the very first word, “Rhine” (ライン). The mention of the Rhine, along with the “coursing railroad,” would have lent a Romantic, and even modern, flavor to the poem, but would readers have had any idea who this poet was who picked flowers on the Rhine? Even today the allusion must escape those not armed with an annotated edition of the poem. Bansui did not explain the allusion in an endnote, though he did explain other obscure references that way. Must readers know or be told the reference in order to appreciate the poem? Kubo Tadao helpfully points to George Gordon Byron’s (1788-1824) *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* (1812-18), in which the narrator picks lilies by the Rhine to send to

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<sup>2</sup> For convenience, in this work I shall use the Japanese *shintaiishi* to refer to new-style poems. The oldest poetic forms include *tanka* (短歌: short poem), also called *waka* (和歌: Japanese poem); *chōka* (長歌: long poem); and *kanshi* (漢詩: Chinese poem). The late Heian period (795-1185) saw the rise of linked verse (連歌: *renga*); and by the early Tokugawa period (1600-1867), the opening verse (発句: *hokku*) of a *renga* sequence became viable as a stand-alone form, which we now call *haiku* (俳句: light verse). For more on the development of poetic forms in the Meiji period, see the section “Poems in a New Style for a New Age” below.

his love far away, although he knows that they will surely wilt before she receives them.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, the up-to-date exoticism is accentuated by these words' juxtaposition with tropes more familiar to readers of traditional Japanese poetry: the delayed arrival of spring in the mountains, and the association of willows and cherries with Kyoto's "display of spring." Kubo again points us to a useful precursor, the poet Sosei (素性, dates unknown) from the *Collection of Waka Old and New* (古今和歌集:

*Kokinwakashū*, compiled ca. 905; hereafter abbreviated to *Kokinshū*):<sup>4</sup>

<i>Kokinshū</i>	Looking out over	見わたせば
56	the willows and cherries	柳桜を
	twining together	こきまぜて
	into a brocade—	都ぞ春の
	springtime in the capital	錦なりける

Bansui's poem is at once a brocade of familiar tropes—picking flowers by the Rhine, willows and cherries in the capital, spring coming sooner to the capital than to the mountains—and an original contribution that mixes the Rhine with Kyoto, distance from a lover with rail travel. If the poem is a synthesis of Byron and Sosei, what is Bansui's original contribution? Do we read the poem above as if no one had ever expressed its particular sentiments or crystallized the same observations into words? Or do we read it as if nothing articulated in it had not been seen, thought, and spoken in

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<sup>3</sup> Kubo Tadao, Matsumura Midori, and Ishimaru Hisashi, eds., *Doi Bansui, Susukida Kyūkin, Kanbara Ariake shū*, vol. 18 of *Nihon kindai bungaku taikei* (Japanese modern literature set) (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1972), 90. Bansui published his translation of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* in 1924. Doi Bansui Kenshōkai (Association for honoring Doi Bansui), *Doi Bansui: Eikō to sono shōgai* (Doi Bansui: Glory and life) (Sendai: Hōbundō, 1984), 267.

<sup>4</sup> Kubo, *Doi Bansui*, 91.

some way? By asking these questions—and by noting how difficult it is to *avoid* asking them—we recognize that we may have a bias for poems that seem to say something new, and to say what they say in new ways.

More fundamentally, I ask these questions of Bansui's poem above as a way to begin a discussion about how we read poems—especially poems that do not readily offer their secrets up to us. I do not intend to place the blame on readers if a poem fails to speak to them, or to celebrate poems simply because they have become impenetrable over time. I do, however, want to rekindle an interest in a branch of poetic experiments that thrived on complexity of thought, diction, and form—precisely the kind that flourished in the heady literary climate of the Meiji period, among reader-poets who eagerly but cautiously expanded the frontiers of poetic ideals.

The success in the late 1890s of young Japanese poets like Doi Bansui, Shimazaki Tōson (島崎藤村, 1872-1943), and Yosano Akiko (与謝野晶子, 1878-1942) can be tied to readers' and critics' endorsements of their calculated breaking with conventions. The corollary of this is that their perpetuation to varying degrees of traditional rhythms and diction can be seen, if not as concessions to wary readers, then as a way of anchoring their works in a certain level of familiarity and decorum. Another way of putting it might be that, as Raymond Williams remarks of the Renaissance and Romantic movements, "there was a strong appeal to *revival*: the art and learning, the life of the past, were sources, stimuli of a new creativity, against an exhausted or deformed current order."<sup>5</sup> That familiarity was especially useful in the context of the wave of literary

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<sup>5</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (New York: Verso, 1989), 52. Emphasis in original.

translations and adaptations from poems in European languages. For, as I shall discuss below, translation and adaptation into Japanese were a major catalyst for stylistic changes that swept through the literary world in the mid-Meiji period.

These three poets, and especially their respective first collections of poetry, constitute a high point in Romantic poetry and a turning point in Japanese poetry in general. Their combined use of classical Japanese and Chinese imagery and diction with modern sensibilities and concerns should not be seen as mere weakness or inconsistency. Rather, it reflects their concern with balancing execution (tradition) with (individual) expression, and it proves their ability to synthesize diverse aesthetic, philosophical, and moral elements into unique poetry that is both of its time and of enduring value.

More fancifully, we might say that new poetic styles evolve and move into new territories, where they seek to find new niches in the literary ecosystem. In doing so, they change that very ecosystem. Species of poems, like species of organisms, obviously do not intentionally seek such ecological niches.<sup>6</sup> Rather, it was poets, such as those in this study, who did so—by choosing which texts, symbols, diction, and cultural values to perpetuate, and which invasive literary species to introduce.

This dissertation is, above all, a celebration of literature and what it can do; not in its eloquent elaboration of injustice, though it may sometimes do that, nor in the ideologies it betrays (in either sense of the word “betrays”). For I do not pretend that

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<sup>6</sup> Still, I embrace the analogy of the two, in part because they reflect processes that call to mind the Japanese etymology of *shizen* (自然), the word most often used to translate the English “nature,” as a “self-becoming.”



poetry is free of ideology or of the circumstances of its production. Indeed, poetry is very much part of the superstructure of society. But I do not believe a socially “engaged” scholarship will help solve the world’s problems any better than a “naive” one, and in fact a greater intimacy with literature on other terms may do more for our struggling civilization. As Herbert Marcuse has argued, art can be much more thoroughly revolutionary in indirect ways than it can in direct ways.<sup>7</sup> Likewise with criticism?

My method, then, includes what someone said about reading many works to have more texts to “bounce off” each other.<sup>8</sup> Lyric poetry is *about* things—love, death, parting, landscapes—and we must find a balance between focusing on *how* it says those things (as if those things were always the same), and ignoring the how to focus on the things themselves. Poetry is also and especially a method where the how is glorified, and so, much more so than with prose, the how is not to be discarded lightly. Moreover, the how is itself part of the what. Michael Riffaterre wrote that poetry says by indirection.<sup>9</sup> How it says, and how it does not say, what it says and does not say, can become fertile areas for study. Naturally, a poem does not say an infinite range of things, but its ambiguity in what it *may* say is contestable. The poetry of the late Meiji period benefits from an increase in ambiguity and contestable meanings. Specifically, I am concerned with the poetry of the powerful tide of what we may call Romanticism, and the contestable meanings of what we may call nature.

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<sup>7</sup> See Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: A Critique of Marxists Aesthetics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978).

<sup>8</sup> It is my misfortune that I cannot remember how this idea, not my own, bounced to me.

<sup>9</sup> See Michael Riffaterre, *The Semiotics of Poetry* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1978).

## Nature and Romanticism in Meiji Literature

The literary moment of Japan in the 1890s, against a backdrop of greater ambivalence towards Westernization, saw a proliferation of literary journals, continuing influx of literature from abroad, and ongoing struggles over language reform. Amid all this discursive upheaval, the Meiji period was also an era in which many discourses of nature collided, including neo-Confucian, nativist, various scientific, Western, and Romantic. Among these, we find a range of meanings associated with nature, from analogue of human culture to all-encompassing universe, from conservative morality to progress, from evolution to stagnation, from freedom to corporeal imprisonment, from universally applicable to locally unique laws and values. Ideological debates over nation-building, natural rights, and Herbert Spencer's (1820-1903) social theory were infused with complex, shifting discourses of nature, as Julia Adeney Thomas has demonstrated. For Thomas, "nature" is different things at different times, but it is always seen as an "unchallengeable standard outside the exigencies of the moment." Its ideological power derives precisely from "the belief in the permanency and unchangeability of an idea, particularly a relatively unmarked, unexamined idea like nature."<sup>10</sup> Thomas summarizes what she sees as the three main stages of thought about nature since the Tokugawa period. First, there was the idea that "the static, hierarchical

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<sup>10</sup> Julia Adeney Thomas, *Reconfiguring Modernity: Concepts of Nature in Japanese Political Ideology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 80, 8. See also Morozumi Katsuo, "Tōzai shizen-kan no hikakuteki kōsatsu: Shizen, kono shirarezaru mono" (A comparative inquiry into Eastern and Western views of nature: Nature, this unknowable thing), in *Kindai shisō, bungaku no dentō to kakushin* (Tradition and revolution in modern thinking and literature), ed. Itō Kazuo (Tokyo: Meiji shoin, 1986), 117-132.

pattern of the physical cosmos promised universal social harmony if social forms accorded with the model provided by the external world.”<sup>11</sup> This is based on Zhu Xi Confucian philosophy, in which nature is *tenri* (天理), the “order of the universe.”<sup>12</sup> It thus encompasses both heavenly and human principles. According to this view, “nature and culture are not opposing realms, not even analogous realms, but the same realm because the same metaphysical essence inheres in both the physical world and human society, giving order to each despite different superficial manifestations.”<sup>13</sup> Second, by the 1870s, Thomas sees that “nature was everywhere in flux, driving toward social Darwinism’s progressive future with the natural hierarchy produced by fierce competition rather than by harmoniously arranged orders of being.”<sup>14</sup> Katō Hiroyuki (加藤弘之, 1836-1916) followed Spencer’s notion of the survival of the fittest in society, before Charles Darwin’s (1809-1882) theory of natural selection had reached Japan. Spencer’s ideas, Thomas reminds us, fueled both politically progressive and reactionary arguments. Finally, by the 1930s, Thomas says, “the changeover to a nationalized nature, no longer progressive or even universal, was complete. . . .Japan existed in a coalescent intimacy with a nature known to itself alone.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, the three stages leading up to the Second World War are “nature as place, nature as time, and nature as

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas, 30.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas, 316.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas, 316.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas, 30.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas, 30.

nation.”<sup>16</sup>

Meiji-era discourses of nature infected literary theory and practice, as well. Takahashi Masako points to the years around 1900 as a time when “‘nature’ [自然: *shizen*] was of the highest concern in modern Japanese literature.”<sup>17</sup> On the one hand, realists led by Masaoka Shiki (正岡子規, 1867-1902) adopted a painterly concern with “sketching from life” (写生: *shasei*), an ideal of copying nature exactly as it appears. Others such as Shimazaki Tōson instilled nature with Romantic values.

To use the word “Romantic” in the Japanese case is problematic, first, because of Meiji Japan’s distance in space, time, and discourse from its European antecedents. In the European case, to speak broadly, Romanticism has been described as a reaction against Enlightenment science, and at the same time as a product of the American and French revolutions. Takahashi observes that

modern European society had developed a contradictory understanding of nature, one that controlled and demolished nature for the sake of material civilization, on the one hand, while seeking to extend fulfillment through a sense of all nature (including humans) as the body of life, on the other hand, having discarded the Christian view of life as springing from God.<sup>18</sup>

It would appear that Japan’s case had nothing philosophically in common with the West. Then again, Japanese culture in the 1890s was beginning to see the first waves of reaction against the earlier embrace of rationalistic science and technology, and the

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<sup>16</sup> Thomas, 30.

<sup>17</sup> Takahashi Masako, *Shimazaki Tōson: Tōi manazashi* (Shimazaki Tōson: Distant views) (Osaka: Izumi shoin, 1994), 236.

<sup>18</sup> Takahashi, 236.

People's Rights Movement (自由民権運動: *jiyū minken undō*) had culminated by the end of the 1880s in the Meiji Constitution and the creation of the first Diet. Those political conditions and discourse may have contributed to the adoption of Romantic approaches. As Yoshida Seiichi points out, "The Romantic spirit [of the Meiji period] first appeared as a political thing, and then it shifted into a literary thing."<sup>19</sup> As in the West, Yoshida argues, Japanese Romanticism was "less a product of a pure Romantic mentality, and more the fruits of an Enlightenment mentality."<sup>20</sup>

The Romantic poetry here explored is, moreover, a celebration of the power of imagination over reason, against the deterministic undercurrents of "objective description," whose symbolic power in resorting to "nature" leaves the speaking subject in a prison of fatalism and insignificance. Finally, and most pertinently for our concerns, Romanticism in Japan blossomed primarily as a result of contact with European literary Romanticism. Works of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), William Wordsworth (1770-1850), Byron, and others were translated into Japanese, and many of the greatest practitioners in Japan, such as Mori Ōgai (森鷗外, 1862-1922), studied the works in their original languages. It was Ōgai, incidentally, who coined the term *romanchikku* (羅曼底格) in 1898, when, in his literary magazine *Grasses of Awakening* (めさまし草: *Mesamashi-gusa*), he described Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829) as a "poet of the Romantic school" (羅曼底格派詩人: *romanchikku ha*

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<sup>19</sup> Yoshida Seiichi, *Kindai Nihon romanshugi kenkyū* (Modern Japanese romanticism studies) (Tokyo: Shūbunkan, 1943), 15.

<sup>20</sup> Yoshida, 16.

*shijin*).<sup>21</sup>

In the mid-Meiji period, meanwhile, the cultural elements that gave birth to Romanticism overlapped with the advocates for women's education and enlightenment. In the Japanese case, nationalistic goals colored the early advocacy of these priorities, and Christian activists went on to establish important educational institutions and publishing outlets. The national utility of educating women was evident in the shift of catchphrases from "respect men, denigrate women" (男尊女卑: *danson jōhi*) towards one of "good wives, wise mothers" (良妻賢母: *ryōsai kenbo*). The shift was pioneered, according to Michael C. Brownstein, by members of the Meiji Six Society (明六社: *Meirokeisha*) such as Fukuzawa Yukichi (福沢諭吉, 1835-1901) and Mori Arinori (森有礼, 1847-1889).<sup>22</sup> Brownstein also points out that the reformer Iwamoto Yoshiharu (巖本善治, 1863-1942), who established *Women's Learning Magazine* (女学雑誌: *Jogaku zasshi*) in 1885, promoted women's writing and reading of literature. "Literature that illustrated this principle" of society's evolution towards moral perfection, Brownstein writes, "would lead civilization to its moral destiny; literature that did not, however well

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<sup>21</sup> *Grasses of Awakening* was edited by Ōgai, Kōda Rohan (幸田露伴, 1867-1947), and Saitō Ryokū (斎藤緑雨, 1867-1904), and it ran from 1896 to 1902. See Sasabuchi Tomoichi, *Rōmanshugi bungaku no tanjō: "Bungakkai" o shōten to suru rōman shugi bungaku no kenkyū* (The birth of Romantic literature: "Literary world" as the focus of Romantic literature studies) (Tokyo: Meiji shoin, 1958), 5.

<sup>22</sup> Michael C. Brownstein, "Jogaku Zasshi and the Founding of Bungakukai," *Monumenta Nipponica* 35:3 (1980), 320.

written, should be condemned as both immoral and unrealistic.”<sup>23</sup> To be fair, Iwamoto’s moralistic prescription for literature applied equally to women and men. Moreover, *Women’s Learning Magazine* attracted readers and writers of both genders. For that reason we may surmise that, in spite of still-pervasive sexist opinions on the different intellectual and emotional faculties of men and women, there was not a very clear privileging of men’s literature over women’s literature. Rather, the high-low distinction in literature seems to have applied more to the difference between the low *gesaku* (戯作: light fiction), which dates back to the Tokugawa period (1600-1867), and the high novel.<sup>24</sup>

Fortunately, Japanese poetry scholars have generally been catholic in their characterizations of literary movements. Even when their particular scholarship may lie more narrowly in a certain form, such as tanka, or a movement, such as Romanticism, they will conscientiously acknowledge the broader literary milieu in which their subjects reside. Ōta Seikyū, for example, examines the shift in poetic standards across both *shintaiishi* and tanka, and he finds a particularly strong intersection of the two in the influence of Tōson on Akiko.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Brownstein, 324. For Iwamoto’s inconsistent support of women’s rights, see Marnie S. Anderson, *A Place in Public: Women’s Rights in Meiji Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 117-18, 176-77.

<sup>24</sup> We may ignore, for the moment, that the term adopted for “novel,” *shōsetsu* (小説), means “small discourse” and repurposes the pejorative term in Chinese (*xiaoshuo*) for stories as opposed to higher poetry.

<sup>25</sup> Ōta Seikyū, “Shintaiishi no shigeki to waka kakushin” (The stimulus of *shintaiishi* and tanka reform), in *Meiji tanka no bungaku chōryū* (Literary currents of Meiji tanka), compiled by Meiji Jingū (Tokyo: Tanka shinbunsha, 1996), 54, 58-59.

## Tōson and Bansui with Akiko

Shimazaki Tōson's journeys into intersubjective landscapes, Doi Bansui's investigations into the ideal role of the poet, and Yosano Akiko's borrowed religious formulae are all ways of pointing beyond putatively authentic expression and objective description as possible goals of a poem.<sup>26</sup> They are also ways of pointing beyond reified understandings of nature. Although the poets are not consistent or direct in their treatment of nature, we may posit the following types of nature in their poetry: Tōson's nature is an ideal that is emotionally accessible through allusive lyricality; Bansui's nature is a composite shadow of an intertextual ideal, valuable in its absence thanks to the intervention of perspicacious poets; and Akiko's nature is a tangled aesthetic and moral order, invoked in an often ironic tension with the use of supernatural symbolism. For all three, then, nature is a source of passion.

The pairing of *shintaiishi* by Shimazaki Tōson and Doi Bansui is perhaps unremarkable, but the addition of Yosano Akiko's tanka to the mixture may appear illogical. It is therefore important to address the strategy of including Yosano Akiko's tanka in this study. Had *shintaiishi* and tanka reform developed independently of each other in the middle Meiji period, there would still be good reason to compare them thematically, stylistically, rhetorically, and otherwise. At the same time, a study that explicitly questioned the effect of formal differences between *shintaiishi* and tanka could easily displace the questions central to this study. In light of the prominent roles that

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<sup>26</sup> They also point beyond Tōson's parroted formula of Wordsworth's "emotions recollected in tranquillity," to which we shall return in the following chapter. Indeed, we readers must be on our guard to avoid reading the poems as straightforward biographical insights, and to avoid taking the poets' explanations at face value.



poets like Yosano Tekkan (与謝野鉄幹, 1873-1935) and magazines like *Morning Star* and *Literary World* played in reforming both *shintaiishi* and tanka, then, it is even more suitable to consider them in a more fluid, broadly envisioned literary environment.

Furthermore, I hope that by examining Akiko's tanka we may remind ourselves of the dangers of an unself-consciously male historical bias in narrating and judging the cultural climate. By comparison, speaking of what is happening in Europe at the same time as our Japanese poets were making their debuts, Andreas Huyssen observes that "the political, psychological, and aesthetic discourse around the turn of the century consistently and obsessively genders mass culture and the masses as feminine, while high culture, whether traditional or modern, clearly remains the privileged realm of male activities."<sup>27</sup> What Huyssen might have gone on to stress was that the discourse skews the reality of production and consumption of works of "high" or "mass" culture. Anne K. Mellor finds exactly such skewed narratives in the study of British Romantic literature. She notes that the later canonization of six male poets—William Blake (1757-1827), Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), Byron, John Keats (1795-1821), and Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)—erases the fact that women not only consumed but produced the majority of both novels and poems published in Britain in the period from 1780 to 1830.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, in Meiji literature, the attempt to restore parity to the canon would do well to proceed from the fact that a variety of works by

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<sup>27</sup> Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), 47.

<sup>28</sup> Anne K. Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 7, 209.

women were indeed celebrated.<sup>29</sup>

A final reason to focus on these three collections is that *Seedlings*, *Nature Has Feelings*, and *Tangled Hair* are three of the most significant poetry achievements of the 1890s and early 1900s. Other important poetry successes of the time are Yosano Tekkan's first four poetry collections and Masaoka Shiki's poetry. The former might have been included had time permitted, while the latter represents the antithesis of what the poets in this study set out to do. Shiki is an exemplar of the "sketching from life" approach to poetics, especially in the haiku form. His success was, as Donald Keene writes, in "the direct depiction of nature, by way of reaction to the stale conceits and repetitions of conventional phraseology."<sup>30</sup> To simplify the distinction between Shiki and the Romantic poets here discussed, we might say that where he used understatement, they embellished, and where he stripped his poems bare, they invoked poetic tradition.

### Citation in Traditional Japanese Poetics

Traditional Japanese poetry, and especially waka, had long been fundamentally

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<sup>29</sup> As Michael Bourdaghs has pointed out to me, Rebecca L. Copeland's study of Meiji women writers almost completely overlooks Yosano Akiko, a canonized writer, as it raises the objection that the only Meiji-era woman writer usually mentioned in literary histories is Higuchi Ichiyō (樋口一葉, 1872-96). "Why," Copeland asks, "has Ichiyō's canonization required the erasure of all the others?" Rebecca L. Copeland, *Lost Leaves: Women Writers of Meiji Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 228. Copeland's own erasure of Akiko seems to be founded on a common prejudice of a different sort: that "literature" means prose fiction alone, and not poetry.

<sup>30</sup> Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era: Poetry, Drama, Criticism* (vol. 4 of *A History of Japanese Literature*) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 110.

citational, particularly after the interventions of Fujiwara no Teika (藤原定家, 1162-1241) in his *New Collection of Poems Old and New* (新古今和歌集: Shinkokinwakashū, compiled in 1205). Haruo Shirane compares twentieth-century discourse on intertextuality, inaugurated by figures such as Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes, to the Heian period's (794-1185) own self-consciously intertextual literary practices. "Though the historical setting and the critical terminology are radically different," he writes, "a similar awareness of the intertextual nature and function of literary texts emerges at the end of the Heian period, particularly in the poetry and writings of Fujiwara no Shunzei."<sup>31</sup> Fujiwara no Shunzei (藤原俊成, 1114-1204), Shirane observes, "has a profound awareness of poetry both as a highly codified object and as an intertextual construct—an awareness that was to deepen with his son and great successor, Fujiwara no Teika."<sup>32</sup> Indeed, it is not so much the intertextuality itself as the system of rules for exploiting it that distinguishes late Heian poetic practice. Shirane goes on to argue:

Japanese classical poetry and its generic cousins, the vernacular romance (*monogatari*), the literary diary (*nikki*), and the essay (*zuihitsu*), have often been characterized as lyrical, subjective, personal, and emotive—attitudes closely associated with nineteenth-century romanticist views of literature, which tend to regard the primary value of "lyrical expression" as creative or individual invention. Like many other Japanese literary forms, however, late Heian *waka* was also a genre that functioned within an elaborate fabric of rules, conventions, and literary associations, within a highly codified, intertextual context. . . in which the primary stress was not on individual invention but on allusive citation and on subtle, imitative

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<sup>31</sup> Haruo Shirane, "Lyricism and Intertextuality: An Approach to Shunzei's Poetics," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 50:1 (June, 1990), 72.

<sup>32</sup> Shirane, 82.

variation of pretexts and traditional literary associations.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time, we must not rehearse the familiar, erroneous, East-West dichotomous thinking that dismisses other traditions as lacking a spirit of innovation. Edward Kamens reflects on the simultaneous productivity and an anxiety of influence in traditional citational *waka* practice:

[I]n a sense all *waka* poems are devotional: they pay homage to all others and to the practices of *waka*-making and reading themselves. But is this incessant paying of homage always an affirmative and productive act of reverence, awe, and emulation? Might it be not only a sign of a triumph of continuity, survival, and successful transmission but at least sometimes the mark of a defeat, of a resigned acceptance of collective confinement in a constantly echoing sepulcher crammed full of words?<sup>34</sup>

What makes intertextuality problematic for Meiji Romantic writers is that, in trying to establish a new national poetry tradition, they had to negotiate different relationships with their intertexts. How did Japanese poets who embraced such “romanticist views of literature” synthesize long-established tropes while at the same time revolutionizing poetic practice? They did it in at least three ways: first, by incorporating Western intertexts alongside Japanese and Chinese ones;<sup>35</sup> second, by foregrounding the putative privileged relationship of the poet to nature as a source of

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<sup>33</sup> Shirane, 85.

<sup>34</sup> Edward Kamens, “Waking the Dead: Fujiwara no Teika’s *Sotoba kuyō* Poems,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 28: 2 (Summer 2002), 383.

<sup>35</sup> Chinese texts were just beginning to be considered as foreign as Western texts. Kazuki Sato notes, “From the 1890s onwards, the ambivalent attitudes towards China began to spread, and nationalistic sentiment gained adherents. Things Chinese came to be repositioned alongside things Western, as both were identified as foreign in nature.” Kazuki Sato, “‘Same Language, Same Race’: The Dilemma of *Kanbun* in Modern Japan,” in *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan*, ed. Frank Dikötter (London: Hurst & Co., 1997), 119.

poetic inspiration (although this notion is out of step with the intertextual tactic); third, by overhauling the form and diction of poetry (although, as we shall see in the case of Yosano Akiko, a revolution in form was not strictly necessary to achieve poetic reform).

### **Poems in a New Style for a New Age**

*Shintaishi* (新体詩: new-style poems) are poems that formally combine flexibility and regularity. With respect to flexibility, *shintaishi* may extend to any number of lines, and their stanzas may or may not be of uniform size. But in terms of their regularity, the length of each line in a poem and the placement of the caesura within that line are exceedingly regular. Nearly all *shintaishi* have lines of twelve syllables, with a caesura after the fifth or seventh syllable. Some early poems of this style double the lines to twenty-four syllables, thus incorporating three caesurae in a line. A few examples have fourteen syllables, with a caesura after the sixth or eighth syllable. Such is also the meter commonly used in the Meiji period to translate Christian hymns into Japanese.

It is largely owing to this combination—the flexibility to translate sonnets and soliloquies from European languages, but the regularity that Charles Baudelaire famously chalked up to the human need for monotony—that *shintaishi* served so admirably well in the rapidly changing poetic landscape of the late Meiji period. That regularity is also one reason *shintaishi* soon ceded its place to the ascendancy of free verse. In considering “What is poetry?” in notes for a preface to his poetry collection, Baudelaire offered “that rhythm and rhyme respond to humans’ undying need for

monotony, symmetry, and surprise.”<sup>36</sup> Like Tōson’s 1904 preface to his *Tōson’s Collected Poems* (藤村詩集: Tōson shishū) and Wordsworth’s preface to the 1800 edition of his and Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s *Lyrical Ballads*, both discussed in the following chapter, Baudelaire’s notes towards a preface of his own were intended for later editions of his poetry collection. These poets recognized in retrospect that their pivotal publications had changed poetic practice and poetic readership. Perhaps they withheld more forceful claims from the original publications because they recognized that their efforts and those of their poetry circles were part of processes that were still unfolding.

The *shintaiishi*’s units of seven and five syllables make use of the building blocks of the more familiar tanka and haiku (俳句: light verse). The *shintaiishi* form dates back only fifteen years before Tōson’s *Seedlings*, to 1882 and the publication of the *Selection of New-Style Poems* (新体詩抄: Shintaishishō). That collection, by the scholars Toyama Masakazu (外山正一, 1848-1900), Yatabe Ryōkichi (矢田部良吉, 1851-1899), and Inoue Tetsujirō (井上哲次郎, 1855-1944), comprised fourteen translations of poems in English by such writers as Shakespeare, Tennyson, and Longfellow, along with five original

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<sup>36</sup> Charles Baudelaire, “Préface des *Fleurs*” (Preface to *Flowers*), in *Les Fleurs du mal* (Flowers of evil), ed. Jacques Dupont (Paris: Flammarion, 1991), 254. We should note that most Japanese poets stayed away from rhyme, whose unsuitability to Japanese was demonstrated by a few notoriously bad examples, such as Yatabe Ryōkichi’s “Four Seasons” (春夏秋冬: Shunkashūtō), in Toyama Masakazu, Yatabe Ryōkichi, and Inoue Tetsujirō, *Shintaishishō* (Selection of new-style poems, 1882; reprint: Tokyo: Nihon kindai bungakukan, 1972), 41-42. For an English translation of that poem, see Robert E. Morrell’s “A Selection of New Style Verse (*Shintaishisho*, 1882)” in *Toward a Modern Japanese Poetry*, ed. Tamie Kamiyama et al., special issue of *Literature East & West* 19:1-4 (1975), 22-23.

poems by the compilers themselves. All histories of modern Japanese poetry begin with this important collection; while artistically mediocre, it introduced a new poetic form alongside the 31-syllable tanka, the 17-syllable haiku, and the *kanshi* (漢詩: Chinese poem). Its immediate reason for being was the obvious inability to translate something like a sonnet into Japanese using one of the established short poetic forms. More than that, however, the poets who brought out *Shintaishishō* believed Japan to be lacking in poetic, even philosophical, development for not having its own tradition of extended, complex poetic treatment of themes. Suga Hidemi, in his literary history of modern Japanese literature, notes that short poetic forms were thought “unable to express complex feelings and thoughts.”<sup>37</sup> Or, as Dean Brink puts it, “Meiji poets were captivated by the idea of *sustained thought itself*, finding novelty in the very idea of logocentrism and cultural production that worked with ideas in a spatially engaged constructive mode that accrues and orders moments (rather than intertextually diffuses them in a poetics of allusion that characterizes *waka*).”<sup>38</sup> Poets of the time longed to go beyond what was possible in the restrictive tanka tradition, and *shintaishi* appealed as a way to do that formally. On the content side, the translation of foreign-language poems into *shintaishi* helped establish *shintaishi* as less restrictive than tanka. But even tanka proved to be resilient, once its rules were broken by Yosano Tekkan and Yosano Akiko.

The idea that Japan in the beginning of the Meiji period lacked poetic forms to

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<sup>37</sup> Suga Hidemi, *Nihon kindai bungaku no tanjō: Genbun itchi undō to nashonarizumu* (The birth of modern Japanese literature: The movement to unify speech and writing and nationalism) (Tokyo: Ōta shuppan, 1995), 250.

<sup>38</sup> Dean Brink, “Intertexts for a National Poetry: The Ideological Origins of *Shintaishi*” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2003), 216. Emphasis in original.

translate Western poetry is an inaccurate simplification, of course. In addition to the robust tradition of writing poetry of any length in Chinese, Japan had its own long form of poetry, *chōka* (長歌: long poem), which goes back to the earliest writings in Japanese. The decline of *chōka* explains why the term *waka* (和歌: Japanese poem), which originally referred to both *tanka* and *chōka*, came to refer to *tanka* alone. The *chōka*, like the *shintaiishi*, alternates between units of five and seven syllables. The difference is that *chōka* as a rule begin with five syllables instead of seven, and then conclude with two sevens in a row, while *shintaiishi* are more flexible.

It is rather a mystery why, if the *Shintaishishō* poets chose to hew to a seven-five pattern, they did not resuscitate the *chōka* from its centuries of neglect; or, if they felt the need to create a new form, why they then adhered so closely to conventional Japanese prosody. It was not that their poems were not long, but instead that they were not poems of the *uta/ka* (歌) variety. What we call “poetry” in Japan is now called *shiika* (詩歌). Its two halves are *shi* (詩), a term that traditionally referred only to *kanshi* until *shintaiishi* appeared; and *ka/uta* (歌), a term that was restricted to *waka* and songs (*uta*). They were more akin, if only because of their exoticism, to *kanshi* (if we may call exotic a poetic practice that survived in Japan for over a millennium, though in somewhat limited circles).<sup>39</sup> The *Shintaishishō* poets therefore installed *shintaiishi* on the side of *kanshi* instead of *uta* in the Japanese language.

At the same time, the compilers lamented the lack of a common touch in

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<sup>39</sup> It would needlessly complicate matters to point out that *shi* traditionally referred to only one of several forms of poetry in Chinese.



contemporary Japanese poetry. Yatabe's preface to the collection states, "It is regrettable that our countrymen seldom compose poems using the language of the common people. We have worked out a kind of new-style poetry (*shintai no shi*) on the European pattern."<sup>40</sup> Inoue's preface—each of the three compilers contributed a preface—remarks that "these Western poems change with the times, so that current poems employ current idioms and their comprehensiveness and elaborateness insure that their readers will not become bored."<sup>41</sup> In effect, these men were saying, Japanese poetry of the day was to be condemned for lacking both intellectual sophistication and the common touch of ordinary language.

Propping up the arguments for poetry of both sophistication and ordinariness, as we can clearly see in the prefatory statements above, is the call for a *national* poetic revolution. The *Shintaishishō* poets underlined the nationalistic aims with some of the red-blooded poems they chose to translate (such as Thomas Campbell's "Ye Mariners of England, A Naval Ode," and, perhaps missing an irony that undermines national authority in it, Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade"), along with original poems of their own, such as "Brigade With Swords Drawn," by Toyama, excerpted here:

我ハ官軍我敵ハ 天地容れざる朝敵ぞ  
敵の大將たる者ハ 古今無双の英雄で  
之に従ふ兵ハ 共に慄悍決死の士  
鬼神に恥ぬ勇あるも 天の許さぬ叛逆を  
起しゝ者ハ昔より 栄えし例あらざるぞ  
敵の亡ぶる夫迄ハ 進めや進め諸共に

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<sup>40</sup> As translated by Robert E. Morrell, 16.

<sup>41</sup> Also translated in Morrell, 13.

玉ちる劔抜き連れて 死ぬる覚悟で進むべし<sup>42</sup>

We are the government army, our foes are the foes of the court and forbidden!  
The enemy general may be a hero unrivaled from time immemorial,  
And the soldiers who follow him stouthearted samurai ready to die at his side,  
With bravery unbowed by demons or gods—but rebellion unpardoned by heaven  
Has never brought glory to men who have raised up resistance in all our long  
history!  
Until the last man of the enemy dies, then, charge forth, men! Charge forth, one  
and all!  
Unsheathing our jewel-bedecked swords at our sides, we must all charge forth  
ready to die!

After *Shintaishishō*, the next major advance for *shintaiishi* was 1889's *Vestiges* (於母影: Omokage), a selection of translations from German, English, and Chinese, by members of the New Voice Society (新声社: *Shinseisha*), led by Mori Ōgai, who went on to become an eminent novelist. The members of this group had what Miyoshi Yukio calls “the audacity to try to import the entire essence of Western culture into Japan.”<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, their collection of translations is usually overlooked, because it was neither as groundbreaking as the *Shintaishishō* nor as brilliant in its lyrical execution as Ueda Bin's (上田敏, 1874-1916) later *Sound of the Tide* (海潮音: Kaichōon, 1905), a masterwork of translations from English, French, and German.<sup>44</sup> (As an

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<sup>42</sup> Inoue, *Shintaishishō*, 19.

<sup>43</sup> Miyoshi Yukio, *Kindai no jojō* (Modern lyric) (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1990), 30.

<sup>44</sup> While Donald Keene celebrates Bin's inspired, free translations of poems that lent themselves to Japanese in the first place, Miyoshi credits “a certain contempt in Bin's work for Japanese as a poetic language.” Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West*, 226-228; Miyoshi, 30.

acknowledgment of his debt to *Vestiges*, Bin dedicated his collection to Ōgai.)<sup>45</sup> It should also be noted that the target language of the poems of *Vestiges* was not always Japanese; four of the nineteen selections were rendered as Chinese poems.

Increasing poetic experimentation followed *Vestiges*. One reason for this was the proliferation of literary magazines in the 1890s. The most important of these for this study are *Literary World* (文学界: Bungakkai), an offshoot of *Women's Learning Magazine* founded by Kitamura Tōkoku (1868-1894), which ran from 1893 to 1898; *Imperial Literature* (帝国文学: Teikoku bungaku), a literary organ of Tokyo Imperial University that was published from 1895 to 1920; and *Morning Star* (明星: Myōjō), the magazine of Yosano Tekkan's Tokyo New Poetry Society (東京新詩社: Tōkyō Shinshisha), which ran from 1900 to 1908.<sup>46</sup> *Literary World* was the main venue for Shimazaki Tōson's works for as long as the magazine lasted, *Imperial Literature* served as the outlet for many of Doi Bansui's poems and translations, and *Morning Star* carried Yosano Akiko's poems.

Such magazines not only provided congenial fora in which coterie writers could publish poetry, literary and social criticism, drama, and other forms, but also offered

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<sup>45</sup> Ueda Bin. *Kaichōon* (Sound of the tide) (Tosho geppo, 1905; Reprint: Tokyo: Nihon kindai bungakukan, 1968), n.p.

<sup>46</sup> For the history of the founding of *Literary World*, see Yano Hōjin, "*Bungakkai*" to *seiyō bungaku* ("Literary world" and western literature) (Tokyo: Gakuyūsha, 1970), 2-13; also Michael Brownstein, "*Jogaku Zasshi* and the Founding of Bungakukai," *Monumenta Nipponica* 35:3 (1980): 319-36. For the influence of *Morning Star* on Yosano Akiko's *Tangled Hair*, see Odagiri Hideo, "Myōjō-ha no 'seikincho' to Yosano Akiko *Midaregami*" (The Morning Star group's "stars and violets style" and Yosano Akiko's *Tangled Hair*), in *Nihon gendaishi taikei: Bungakushi* (Compendium of modern Japanese history: Literary history) (Tōyō keizai shinpōsha, 1961).

these writers continued publicity—both before and after their stand-alone collections were published—and good reviews from their friends. Indeed, one might get an inflated sense of the importance of a given poet’s talents if one read only the notices from that poet’s associated magazine. And to be sure, many contemporary readers—though it is hard to estimate their numbers, given the still spotty record of print runs and circulation in the Meiji period—would have been swayed by such notices, and by the trends nurtured by the close-knit editorial boards. It is largely on account of such refereed reception that many difficult works succeeded—especially in the case of Bansui’s poetry, as I discuss below. If anything, rather than insulating writers from harsh criticism, these coterie publications enabled them to develop stylistically and intellectually. (I contend, too, that the subsequent canonization of these works speaks to their abiding literary value.) Favorable reviews by writers outside the coterie in other journals then legitimated internal coterie reviews as they extended the poet’s name and works to a wider audience.

But even the coterie journals themselves could be hard to please, and they were among the first to recognize when practices were becoming stale. A January 1899 editorial in *Imperial Literature*, for example, summed up the shortcomings of recent *shintaiishi*. While the trend towards cultivating new ideas was perhaps to be lauded, “It has become increasingly clear in the last year that the seven-five form is not appropriate for long works.”<sup>47</sup> Like the forms it was meant to replace, *shintaiishi* now seemed to be hampered in its development by its own form, if not as much in its content. Indeed,

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<sup>47</sup> *Teikoku bungaku* (Imperial literature) (Jan. 1899), 115.

within the next decade, *shintaiishi* would be made obsolete as meter and then refined language gave way to vernacular free verse.

Still, it was in the middle to late 1890s, with the rise of change-oriented literary coteries and the magazines they published, that the most fruitful poetic experimentation took place. The magazines were the springboards, you might say, and the bound volumes of poetry were the capstones of the poets' achievements of their visions. Whether we emphasize a poem's first publication in a magazine or its later appearance in a book of poetry, however, the most important unit of analysis here remains the poem. Thus, rather than pushing a unity on the works under scrutiny here, one that would be false anyhow, I have chosen to illuminate three different—and yet crucial—tactics these poets used to expand the realms of poetic investigation and output.

### **Shimazaki Tōson's *Seedlings***

In such an atmosphere, the true success of *shintaiishi* finally came with the publication of Shimazaki Tōson's poetry, collected in four volumes between 1897 and 1901. Tōson is justly celebrated as a pioneer of both Romantic modern lyric poetry and the Naturalist modern novel. His works include early experiments with drama, a brief but fruitful period of lyric poetry (the late 1890s to the early 1900s), a series of novels, some autobiographical in subject matter, and numerous pieces of criticism and sketches. *Seedlings* (若菜集: Wakanashū, 1897), the first of his four poetry collections and the subject of chapter one, represented a revolution in poetic voice, romantic affect, prosody, and narrative style. Tōson's passion and lyricism finally made *shintaiishi* seem

uncontrived instead of a clunky or exotic experiment, even as he repudiated the move towards colloquial language advocated by earlier *shintaiishi* proponents.<sup>48</sup>

The title of Tōson's first poetry collection, here translated as *Seedlings*, literally means "collection of young greens."<sup>49</sup> As do other poetry collections going back to the eighth-century *Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves* (万葉集: Man'yōshū), the name evokes words as leaves. One term for language itself, *kotoba* (言葉; from *koto no ha*), literally means "leaves of words." The most famous expression of the metaphor comes from the twin prefaces to the *Kokinshū*. Ki no Tsurayuki's (紀貫之, ca. 870 to ca. 945) preface begins, "Japanese poetry has its seeds in the human heart, which become myriad leaves of words [言の葉: *koto no ha*]." <sup>50</sup> Ki no Yoshimochi's (紀淑望, d. 919) Chinese preface to the same collection uses a similar formula: "Waka's roots are in feelings, and its flowers bring forth forests of words [詞林: *cilin* (J: *shirin*)]." <sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Donald Keene notes that the "modern-language movement led by Toyama and Inoue" was "halfhearted in its modernization," but that it "failed, less because of its own inadequacy than because of the appearance in 1897 of [*Seedlings*]; the extraordinary success of this volume written almost entirely in the traditional 'elegant language' . . . inevitably inhibited serious discussion of more modern poetic language and forms. Tōson believed poetry had to be written in a special, elevated language, in accordance with recognized Japanese metrics." Keene, *Dawn to the West*, 204.

<sup>49</sup> The title *Wakanashū* has been translated as *Fresh Greens* or *Young Herbs* (by William E. Naff), as *Collection of Young Shoots* (by Janet A. Walker), and as *Fresh Greens* (by Stephen Dodd). Edward Seidensticker's translation of *The Tale of Genji* renders the *Wakana* chapters as "New Herbs."

<sup>50</sup> *Kokin wakashū* (Collection of waka old and new), volume 7 of *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* (Complete Japanese classical literature), edited by Ozawa Masao (Shōgakukan, 1971), 49.

<sup>51</sup> *Kokin wakashū*, 413.

According to Naff, the title is also borrowed from the title of a poetic anthology compiled by Matsuo Bashō's (松尾芭蕉, 1644-94) disciple Hattori Ransetsu (服部嵐雪, 1654-1707).<sup>52</sup> The associations with spring, freshness, and youth make the title apt enough, but it has a special zing from the context of leaves of words: these seedlings may yet be immature, but they will eventually grow up to replace last season's leaves of language.

Tōson's poetry, and this collection in particular, has been widely acclaimed as the birth of modern Japanese poetry. As a typical example of such a confident evaluation, taken from a special issue on modern poetry of *Japanese Literature: Interpretation and Appreciation* (Kokubungaku: Kaishaku to kanshō), Itō Shinkichi writes, "*Seedlings* (Aug. 1897) was Shimazaki Tōson's first poetry collection. At the same time, it can be called the first collection of lyric poetry out of the modern poetry in our country."<sup>53</sup> In making such a claim, Itō explicitly passes over a collection titled *Lyric Poetry* (抒情詩:

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<sup>52</sup> Naff, 171-172.

<sup>53</sup> Itō's claim is implicitly endorsed by the contents of the journal issue itself: after an overview by Yoshida Seiichi of "modern and contemporary poetry" (近代詩と現代詩: *kindaishi to gendaishi*), Itō's essay on *Seedlings* comes first in a series of essays on poetry collections. Itō Shinkichi, "*Wakanashū (Shimazaki Tōson)*" (Seedlings [Shimazaki Tōson]), *Kokubungaku: Kaishaku to kanshō* (Japanese literature: Interpretation and Appreciation) 31:1 (Jan. 1966), 15. In addition, Chen Dewen writes that the publication of *Seedlings* was of epoch-making significance in ushering in a new period of Japanese poetry. Chen, "Daoqi Tengcun de *Nencai*ji" (Shimazaki Tōson's *Seedlings*), *Aichi bunkyō daigaku ronsō* 3 (Nov. 15, 2000), 251. James R. Morita, who has translated several of Tōson's poems and strung them together with commentary, judges that many of Tōson's poems have "deficiencies in poetic techniques and imagination." Yet Morita concludes that Tōson's "contribution to the development of modern Japanese poetry was also substantial," and that he "brought his 'romantic spirit' to maturity, creating a solid foundation of both content and style on which other poets based their works." Morita, "Shimazaki Tōson's Four Collections of Poems," *Monumenta Nipponica* 25:3-4 (1970), 340, 369.

Jojōshi, 1897) published only four months before Tōson's.<sup>54</sup> His judgment also accurately characterizes the reception of *Seedlings* at the time. Uno Kōji (宇野浩二, 1891-1961), looking back at his youth in 1949, writes, "When *Seedlings* came out, I was still young, so I did not read it, but Yoshie Kogan (Takamatsu) [吉江喬松 (孤雁), 1880-1940], who did read it at the time, said, 'Around Meiji 30 [1897], we who were upperclassmen in secondary school were totally fascinated by [*Seedlings*], and we got absorbed in reading it. Because of *Seedlings*, for the first time a youthful poetry infected us with joy, and not just us, but probably all students about that age in Japan at that time, who were carried away by its charm.'" <sup>55</sup>

Masaoka Shiki's review of *Seedlings* is worth a brief mention here, as well. Writing in the *Japan Weekly Supplement* (日本附録週報: *Nihon furoku shūhō*) in September 1897, Shiki grants that Tōson writes serious, poetical, imaginative *shintashi*, but he complains that Tōson's vision is limited and his vocabulary repetitive.<sup>56</sup>

It is not necessary to defend *Seedlings*' revolutionary qualities, because those

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<sup>54</sup> *Lyric Poetry* (Tokyo: Min'yūsha, 1897) was the joint effort of six writers, some of whom achieved greater fame for writing other than poetry: Kunikida Doppo (国木田独歩, 1871-1908), Matsuoka Kunio (松岡国男, 1875-1962; better known for folklore studies under the name Yanagita [柳田] Kunio), Tayama Katai (田山花袋, 1872-1930), Ōta Gyokumei (太田玉茗, 1871-1927), Yazaki Saganoya (矢崎嵯峨の屋, 1863-1947), and Miyazaki Koshoshi (宮崎湖処子, 1864-1922).

<sup>55</sup> Uno Kōji, "Wakanashū to Rakubaishū" (*Seedlings and Fallen Plum Blossoms*), in *Tenbō* (Lookout), no. 37 (Jan. 1949), 36.

<sup>56</sup> Masaoka Shiki, "Wakanashū no shi to ga" (The poetry and pictures of *Seedlings*), *Nihon furoku shūhō* (Japan weekly supplement) (Sept. 27, 1897); reprinted in *Shiki zenshū* (Complete works of Shiki), vol. 14 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1976), 199-201.



have never been in doubt over the last 115 years. (That is not to say that recent critics have not felt it necessary to excuse what today may sound trite by explaining how refreshing the poems were in 1897.) Meanwhile, grand declarations of *Seedlings*' broad impact are useful only to a point. And there remains uncharted territory. While many favorite poems—"First Love" (初恋: *Hatsukoi*), "Song of the Autumn Wind" (秋風の歌: *Aki kaze no uta*), and the "Six Maidens" (六人の処女: *Rokunin no otome*) poems—receive critics' praise, many poems are largely ignored. To be sure, not every poem deserves equal weight, and certain poems are weaker or less groundbreaking than others. But some, like "Pillow of Grass" (草枕: *Kusamakura*), have suffered unjust abuse—particularly among anglophone scholars. Naff, for example, calls the latter "heavy, obscure, mannered, pretentious, and lifeless, a virtual inventory of Tōson's early shortcomings."<sup>57</sup> Critics are generally quick to point out that Tōson's successes in both poetry and fiction owe as much to his embrace of traditional diction, imagery, and allusion as they do to revolutionary technique, form, and vision.

How did Tōson's poetry succeed, and what exactly did it do? One thing that set it apart from contemporary *shintaiishi* (and even *tanka*) was the sheer delight it gave readers: delight in the freshness of emotion, even when that was melancholy or despair, and delight in a rhythmic delivery that propelled the lyrics forward and sustained interest in them. For where *shintaiishi* up to that point had failed most was in attending to readers as listeners. Before Tōson, Yosano Tekkan had pioneered poetry reform, and his early works such as *North, South, East, and West* (東西南北: *Tōzai nanboku*, 1896)

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<sup>57</sup> Naff, 167.

brought both newness and variety, but without much rhythmic appeal. His tanka, too, chop themselves up with excessive punctuation. The overall effect is exhilarating but jarring, and there seems to be no invitation to become intimate with any one poem. It may seem, then, that Tōson's poetic genius was that he finally made *shintaiishi* sound gentle to the ear, while still relying on standard rhythms and overused imagery. Tōson's poems are not too daring in their subjects and language. Their success is like Wordsworth's: both take their time filling out the lines, never compressing too much, sometimes even repetitive; both use diction not too rarefied. And this may explain why Tōson's newness is harder to appreciate today. In the end, perhaps he is surpassed by Bansui and Akiko, while still being important to their subsequent efforts—both as inspiration to them directly and in preparing their readership to be receptive.

Tōson's nearest rival in rhythmic beauty may have been Ueda Bin, who published translations of Verlaine and other European authors in *Sound of the Tide*. Indeed, Bin and others of the Morning Star Group took up Tōson's baton after he stopped writing poetry—a baton that can be said to have passed through Akiko's hands on its way. Akiko, after all, joined Tekkan's Tokyo New Poetry Society in 1900, out of which the literary magazine *Morning Star* was born.

But what was Tōson's lasting contribution to modern poetry? If *shintaiishi* as a form survived only for a few short decades, what sort of lasting impact did Tōson really have? Even if his genre of poetry gave way to vernacular free verse shortly after he himself gave it up, was his contribution nonetheless a necessary step along the way? In asking these questions, are we not also too devoted to the present? We hope to see, first, that the poet's work is still read today, and, second, that even today's poets are

influenced by the work of that earlier poet. (If this is a problem for the likes of Tōson, how much greater does its merciless judgment condemn Doi Bansui, who is said to be forgotten and bereft of literary progeny.) Yet it is an article of faith that the arrival of *shintaiishi* and the concurrent overthrowing of stultifying tradition in tanka represented great advances. I do not quibble with those judgments. But have we not also been keen to accept vernacular free verse as the next (perhaps the final?) logical step towards poetic *freedom*? And in doing so, in holding that the greatest freedom enables the greatest creativity and personal expression, which in turn produces the most worthwhile poems, have we not shelved on dusty bookcases so much of the wealth of poems: the willingness to use rarefied language; an intimacy with great literature, history, and ideas; and the structure that makes a poem, once finished, seem inconceivable any other way?

The freedom of free verse may be freedom from formal constraints, but it brings with it freedom from cultural resonance. I borrow the term “cultural resonance” from an essay by Stephen Greenblatt, in which he addresses the mediation of museums, whose placement of artifacts teaches us how to contextualize them. The evacuation of cultural resonance in poetry is actually the opposite problem to what Greenblatt calls the “triumph of resonance over wonder,” but the analogy to Japanese poetic tradition, especially waka tradition, is that no single waka can be taken as spontaneous or unallusive.<sup>58</sup> Instead, successive renovations of poetic practice towards vernacular free

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<sup>58</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, “Resonance and Wonder,” in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, edited by Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 54.

verse follow a path towards the triumph of purportedly unmediated wonder over cultural resonance. The ideal of unmediated wonder assigns greater authenticity, and thus greater value, to a poet's observations of the world transcribed realistically. If nature is understood as a realm without culture, then nature is that which most fervently demands artless, unmediated transcription if it is to be authentic. The enthymeme in this formulation is that there can be authentic and unmediated but still meaningful access to nature. Tōson's *shintaiishi*, and in particular those studied here, occupy a critical transitional place. They aspire in varying degrees both to realism and to the depiction of idealized, allusive landscapes—what Haruo Shirane calls “secondary natures.”<sup>59</sup> They thus oscillate between what Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) calls the “naive” happiness and the “sentimental” completeness to be found in “nature.”<sup>60</sup>

Yet much of the scholarship on Tōson relies—if for practical reasons more than theoretical—on a too tidy narrative of his career as Romantic poet and *then* Naturalist novelist. Itō Sei, for example, characterizes a shift in Tōson's career thus:

After Tōson had established a method of expressing himself to the fullest extent possible in verse, that is, in accord with the old order, he turned to prose. That was *Chikuma River Sketches* [千曲川のスケッチ:

Chikumagawa no suketchi, 1912], begun in Meiji 33 [1900], at age 29. Around then he read Darwin. He wrote *Fallen Plum Blossoms* [落梅集:

Rakubaishū, 1901] and that was the end of poetry for him. *Chikuma River Sketches* is realistic and fairly rational, clear writing, and it makes a direct impression. Around this time, he made himself into a writer of realism, and his style is about the same as in *Broken Commandment* [破戒: Hakai],

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<sup>59</sup> Haruo Shirane, *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons: Nature, Literature, and the Arts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 26.

<sup>60</sup> See Friedrich Schiller, “On Naive and Sentimental Poetry,” translated by Daniel O. Dahlstrom, in Schiller, *Essays*, edited by Walter Hinderer and Daniel O. Dahlstrom (New York: Continuum, 1993).

which he started in 1904. . . .After that, his style gradually changed, with *Spring* [春: Haru] in 1908 and *The Family* [家: Ie] in 1910. By the time of *The Family*, at age 39, his style was fairly fixed, and it did not change much after that.<sup>61</sup>

In fact, Tōson's career included prose and drama experiments from the beginning, and even his poetry collections included more and more prose over time.<sup>62</sup> The only clear shift is that Tōson stopped publishing new poetry after the last of his four poetry collections appeared in 1901. Scholars attribute this shift first to the extended Shimazaki family's financial exigencies, then to the notion that Tōson's limited poetic creativity had dried up quickly (thankfully, this is not a widely shared view), and last to the idea that he increasingly brought narration and description into his writing, elements that lent themselves to the Naturalist prose with which he was supposedly more comfortable.<sup>63</sup> I do not dispute the first or the third assertion; I leave the second one to readers to evaluate for themselves.

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<sup>61</sup> Itō Sei, "Tōson no kangaekata" (Tōson's way of thinking), in *Shimazaki Tōson*, vol. 6 of *Kindai bungaku kanshō kōza* (Lectures on modern literature appreciation), ed. Senuma Shigeki (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1958), 306.

<sup>62</sup> In November 1897, shortly after the publication of *Seedlings*, Tōson published his story "The Nap" (うたたね: *Utatane*), in *The New Novel* (新小説: *Shinshōsetsu*). The critical failure of this story temporarily discouraged him from pursuing prose projects. See Shinbo Kunihiro, "Futae utsushi no 'fūkei,' soshite 'jitsu no sekai' e: 'Shibunshū' to iu seido kara" ("Landscape" of a two-layered copy, then towards "the real world": From the organization of "Collected Poetry and Prose"), in *Shimazaki Tōson: Bunmei hihiyō to shi to shōsetsu to* (Shimazaki Tōson: Cultural criticism, poetry, and novels), ed. Hiraoka Toshio and Kenmochi Takehiko (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1996), 84-86.

<sup>63</sup> William E. Naff explains that Tōson alluded to his shift towards prose in a prefatory anecdote attached to "The Nap." In that anecdote, a master portrait painter warns his young student not to look at the Rhine when traveling through Europe, but the student does so anyway and consequently gives up portraiture for landscape painting. Here, the operating analogy is of portraiture to lyric poetry and landscape painting to descriptive prose. See Naff, 174.

Instead, my goal is to capture an extended moment, not only in Tōson's own development, but in the development of poetry that has both Naturalist and Romantic elements, that is both descriptive and lyrical. I hope to contribute to our understanding of how Tōson found great resonance in combining the portrait and the landscape, in inserting a modern, alienated subject into intertextual, "secondary natures."

### **Doi Bansui's *Nature Has Feelings***

Doi Bansui's poetry could have been overshadowed by the success of Tōson's, but instead he seems to have benefited from being associated with Tōson. Bansui received early critical affirmation in *The Sun* (太陽: Taiyō) from his friend Takayama Chogyū (高山樗牛, 1871-1902), who had helped found *Imperial Literature* in 1895 and was then also the editor of *The Sun*.<sup>64</sup> *The Sun* had a broader audience than *Imperial Literature*, which was after all the literary organ of Tokyo Imperial University. It was also published by Hakubunkan, the company that would later publish *Nature Has Feelings* (天地有情: Tenchi ujō) in 1899. In the December 1897 edition of *The Sun*, Chogyū famously formulated the differences between Bansui and other poets:

I would take Tōson's rhythm [調: *shirabe* or *chō*], but not his diction [辭: *ji*] or thought [想: *omoi* or *sō*], his diction being limp and his thought indistinct. I would take Hagoromo's diction, but not his thought or his rhythm, his thought being shallow and his rhythm flat. But for purity of thought and sincerity of feeling [情: *nasake* or *jō*], there is indeed another poet of our generation. I mean not to disparage these two men's names, but only to ask, Why does no one speak of Doi Bansui? . . . His rhythm does

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<sup>64</sup> Senzaki Akinaka, *Takayama Chogyū: bi to nashonarizumu* (Takayama Chogyū: Beauty and nationalism) (Tokyo: Ronsōsha, 2010), 69.

not measure up to Tōson's, and his diction is after all inferior to Hagoromo's, . . .but the loftiness of his thought and the purity of his feeling far surpass those of these two men.<sup>65</sup>

Bansui's reputation must have benefited not only from the memorable comparison to the likes of Tōson and Takeshima Hagoromo (武島羽衣, 1872-1967), but also from the appearance of fairness that such a qualified endorsement brought. We should also reflect on the fact that Chogyū here measures poetry by three criteria: rhythm, diction, and thought. Each poet excels at one of the three; when Bansui comes up, his strength—thought—expands to become thought *and* feeling. Indeed, for all the intellectual sophistication of Bansui the scholar-poet, we must not overlook the considerable emotional depth of his poems, as well.<sup>66</sup> That feeling is, after all, in the title *Nature Has Feelings* (though one could understandably charge that Bansui wrote intellectually about nature's feelings).

In January 1898, *Imperial Literature* ran an editorial on *shintaiishi* of 1897, and the magazine reflected on the boom in *shintaiishi*, both in magazines and in volumes of collected poems. The review singled out lyric poetry's growing popularity: "Special attention should be given to how the popularity of lyric poetry, and particularly love

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<sup>65</sup> Takayama Chogyū, "Bansui no shi" (Bansui's poems), *Taiyō* (Dec. 1897); reprinted in Takayama Chogyū, *Chogyū zenshū* (Complete works of Chogyū), vol. 2, edited by Anesaki Masaharu and Sasakawa Taneo (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1926), 576.

<sup>66</sup> Some scholars even foreground this aspect of Bansui's poetry. See, for example, Ishii Masamitsu, *Jōnetsu no shijin Doi Bansui: Sono hito to sakuhin* (Poet of passion Doi Bansui: His life and work) (Sendai: Tōhoku shuppan, 1953).

poetry, in the latter half of the year gave rise to a new era.”<sup>67</sup>

The two most important achievements in *shintaiishi* in 1897, according to the editorial, were Shimazaki Tōson’s *Seedlings*, which appeared in the fall of that year, and Bansui’s poetry. The editorial says, “We believe the two people who created a new era in the world of poetry last year were Tōson and Bansui.” Yet while it rejoices at the two poets’ use of content, the editorial cites the room for development beyond the old meters of 7-5 and 5-7. “At this moment, there is no one worthy of being called a poet, and therefore there is no one who has the technique to succeed using a form other than the old 7-5 and 5-7.”<sup>68</sup> Thus, even Tōson and Bansui fail to live up to the high hopes of the editors of *Imperial Literature*.

The March 1898 issue of *Imperial Literature* carried an editorial that complained of the failings of Bansui’s contemporaries—but not Bansui’s own. The title of the piece was “Bansui and Reputation” (晩翠と世評: *Bansui to sehyō*). It began by criticizing

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<sup>67</sup> In its “Miscellaneous Notes” section (雑報: *Zappō*), the magazine ran its customary unsigned editorials on topics such as “The World of Thought” (思想界: *Shisō-kai*), “The World of Novels” (小説界: *Shōsetsu-kai*), “The *Shintaishi* Scene” (新体詩壇: *Shintaishi-dan*), “The Translation Scene” (翻譯壇: *Hon’yaku-dan*), “The World of Drama” (劇界: *Geki-kai*), “The World of Japanese” (國文界: *Kokubun-kai*), “The Tanka Scene” (短歌壇: *Tanka-dan*), “The World of Chinese Studies” (漢學界: *Kangaku-kai*), “The Chinese Poetry Scene” (漢詩壇: *Kanshi-dan*), “The Haiku Scene” (俳壇: *Hai-dan*), and “The World of History and Biography” (史伝界: *Shiden-kai*). The presence of *shintaiishi* as a regularly included category alongside the others helped give legitimacy to the style. The January 1898 issue surveyed the previous year, Meiji 30, and gathered its commentaries under the heading “A General Commentary on the Arts of the Year Meiji 30” (明治卅年の文藝界概評: *Meiji sanjūnen no bungei gaihyō*). *Teikoku bungaku* (Jan. 1898), 124.

<sup>68</sup> *Teikoku bungaku* (Jan. 1898), 125.



Takeshima Hagoromo, Ōmachi Keigetsu (大町桂月, 1869-1925), and Shioi Ukō (塩井雨江, 1869-1913) for being old-fashioned, in spite of their graceful styles. Hidai Tenrai (比田井天来, 1872-1939) and Yosano Tekkan were praised for their passion but faulted for not being graceful enough. Even Tōson, who was singled out for his grace, skill, and enthusiasm, failed to live up to their standards of originality. “Tōson, too, is in the end not a new poet,” the editorial judged.<sup>69</sup> Instead, the mantle of new poet—a poet with “fine tuning and grand, noble thoughts” (勁健なる調律と崇高雄大なる落想: *keiken naru chōritsu to sūkō yūdai naru rakusō*)—belonged to Bansui. It was unfortunate, the article stated, that he was not receiving adequate attention from other magazines.<sup>70</sup>

Exactly one year after elevating Bansui to the level of Shimazaki Tōson, in January 1899, *Imperial Literature*’s editorial on *shintaiishi* took stock of the previous two years of *shintaiishi*. These two years were important for the development of the form, according to the editorial, thanks to Tōson and Bansui and the pressure they exerted on other poets.<sup>71</sup> By this point, Tōson had published three poetry collections, of which the third, *Summer Grass* (夏草: Natsukusa), was reviewed in the same issue. *Seedlings* was the most successful. *One Boat* (一葉舟: Hitohabune) was more a prose collection, the editorial said, and *Summer Grass* was not as thoughtful or original as *Seedlings*.

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<sup>69</sup> *Teikoku bungaku* (March 1898), 108.

<sup>70</sup> *Teikoku bungaku* (March 1898), 108.

<sup>71</sup> Tōson and Bansui continued to be paired as one unit (藤村晩翠: Tōson Bansui), often with a double circle by each character for emphasis.

Bansui, on the other hand, was praised for making progress with each new poem—in spite of the occasional “tedious monotony” (単調の弊: *tanchō no hei*) in some of “declarations of rather deep ideals” (稍淵深なる理想を謳ひ: *yaya enshin naru risō wo utai*).<sup>72</sup> The editorial singled out “The Universe and the Poet” (萬有と詩人: *Ban’yū to shijin*), which had been published in January 1898, as well as three poems—“Stars and Flowers” (星と花: *Hoshi to hana*), “The Eagle” (鷲: *Washi*), and “Evening Bell” (暮鐘: *Boshō*)—that had been published together in the April issue. Then, with his “Dream Before the Horse” (馬前の夢: *Bazen no yume*), one of six poems by Bansui published in *Hansei zasshi* in August, Bansui made a name for himself as an epic poet. He followed this with his major epic poem “Fallen Star in the Autumn Wind on Wuzhang Plain” (星落秋風五丈原: *Hoshiotsu shūfū gojōgen*), which represented a step forward in language—though unfortunately also contained too many undomesticated *kanji*. The editorial that month—January 1899—continued by bestowing a mixed review on Bansui’s work as a whole:

Bansui’s lyric poetry has no blood, and it has no tears. In fact, his ideals in the pure, distant air have their own kind of luster that looks askance at other writers. His epic poetry, too, does not lack for conquerors, but really we should not even allow any comparisons with him on this point. To tell the truth, “Fallen Star in the Autumn Wind on Wuzhang Plain” both shows Bansui’s strengths and fails to conceal his weaknesses.<sup>73</sup>

Three months later, in April 1899, *Nature Has Feelings*, Bansui’s first collection of poems, was published in Tokyo by the major publisher Hakubunkan. *Imperial*

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<sup>72</sup> *Teikoku bungaku* (Jan. 1899), 114.

<sup>73</sup> *Teikoku bungaku* (Jan. 1899), 114.

*Literature*'s review of the work appeared two months later, in the June issue. Again, the article begins by naming Bansui and Tōson as the two new poets of the age. While Tōson has released three collections by this point—*Seedlings*, *One Boat*, and *Summer Grass*—readers are sure to have been waiting long for Bansui's first collection. The article provides extensive excerpts of several poems, especially “Evening Thoughts” (夕の思ひ: *Yūbe no omoi*) and “Light” (光: *Hikari*). It also draws heavily on excerpts of treatises about poetry that Bansui had translated and attached to the collection,<sup>74</sup> and it highlights Bansui's own poetic treatment of poetry in his poems “Poet” (詩人: *Shijin*) and “The Universe and the Poet” (萬有と詩人: *Ban'yū to shijin*). Chapter two will address these poems in greater detail. Here it is worth noting the article's observation that Bansui “certainly does not stop at merely depicting natural scenery [自然の景物: *shizen no keibutsu*]. . . .What he seeks is in the lofty mystery [高遠幽: *kōen yū*] of meaningful poetry [意詩: *ishi*], and in the pursuit of ideals.”<sup>75</sup> He cries with humans' anguish and grieves with their fate, the review states, and yet “the poems themselves assume a calm tone [冷静の調を帯ぶ: *reisei no chō wo obu*]. It is because of this that critics remark on Bansui's scarcity of passion. . . .But just as a warrior in armor looks

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<sup>74</sup> The translations are from Thomas Carlyle's (1795-1881) “The Hero as Poet,” from Shelley's “Defence of Poetry,” from George Sand's (1804-76) *Letters of a Traveler* (*Lettres d'un voyageur*), from Ralph Waldo Emerson's (1803-82) essay “The Poet,” and from Victor Hugo's (1802-85) preface to *Rays and Shadows* (*Les Rayons et les Ombres*).

<sup>75</sup> *Teikoku bungaku* (June 1899), 120-121. Italicized text in my translation corresponds to the use of emphasis marks in the original.

like a bitter mountain thistle, which produces only one drop of dew when squeezed, though the number of tears be few, there must be countless hidden tears within the heart.”<sup>76</sup> Bansui thus earns spirited approbation for having composed poems that go beyond sketching from life, even if his poems in turn require in-depth probing to discover their passion.

More recently, Bansui has been nearly forgotten, or when remembered then relegated to the status of a regional poet associated with his hometown of Sendai. Yet Bansui’s reputation has suffered more injustice than mere neglect. The circulation of simplistic characterizations of his work has reduced him to a token in histories of Meiji poetry. Paradoxically, the linking of Bansui’s work with Tōson’s seems to have become a dichotomous, hierarchical judgment that favored Tōson: namely, that Bansui’s poetry is the “masculine, intellectual” counterpart to Tōson’s “feminine, lyrical” poetry. Suga Hidemi, for example, argues that Bansui’s poems have more Chinese compounds (漢語: *kango*), which he associates with the male literati, while Tōson’s have more “Japanese” words (和語: *wago*), which evoke classical literary traditions that are marked as relatively feminine.<sup>77</sup> Also, Tōson wrote several poems from the point of view of maidens, while Bansui wrote a number of epic poems about male heroes. Meanwhile, the label “intellectual” becomes a pejorative tag and not an invitation into the remarkable depth of Bansui’s poems, no doubt as a result of the lingering myth that

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<sup>76</sup> *Teikoku bungaku* (June 1899), 121.

<sup>77</sup> Suga Hidemi, 243. On the construction of masculine and feminine in literary histories, see also Tomiko Yoda, *Gender and National Literature: Heian Texts in the Constructions of Japanese Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

poems should be spontaneous and not contrived. Yet Bansui wrote a number of “lyrical” pieces; indeed, Sasabuchi Tomoichi has neatly sorted them into three categories: lyric, conceptual, and epic.<sup>78</sup> And yet this also becomes a simplification that inhibits understanding.

Moreover, the accident seems to be Bansui’s unlikely success in the first place. Perhaps his poetry would have remained more obscure had he not been on the editorial board of *Imperial Literature*, where he published about half of the poems that would be included in *Nature Has Feelings*, and had he not benefited from well-timed reviews of his poetry and arm-twisting of the publisher by his friend and colleague Takayama Chogyū. Because of that, the indifference to Bansui’s poetry is understandable.

Finally, we must also recognize that *shintaiishi* as a form in general has suffered neglect with the passage of time. The *Imperial Literature* editorial from January 1899, appearing before *Nature Has Feelings* had even been published, predicted the inevitable decline of *shintaiishi*. If the form once was more “modern” or “revolutionary” than haiku, it has nevertheless not survived in wide practice to the present, with the odd result that the waka and haiku of Masaoka Shiki seem now fresher—or at least more readily accessible to the reader. Second, it is clear that the main barrier to lasting acclaim for Bansui’s poetry in particular is the difficulty for the reader: first, in diction that resembles *kanshi* more than waka, and, second, in diverse literary allusions that must have been as impenetrable to readers at the time as they are now.

In investigating Bansui’s *shintaiishi*, I hope not simply to revive an accident, nor

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<sup>78</sup> Sasabuchi Tomoichi, “*Bungakkai*” to sono jidai (“Literary world” and its age), vol. 2 (Meiji shoin, 1961), 1564.

simply to help explain what is difficult in the poems, but to explore through his sophisticated, reflective works how poetry can summon great literary and philosophical works from diverse traditions to say something beautiful about both nature and human ideals, even as they both continue to elude us.

### **Yosano Akiko's *Tangled Hair***

Yosano Akiko began writing poetry in the late 1890s, partly under the inspiration of *Bungakkai* and especially Shimazaki Tōson's early poetry therein. Her early success with poetry, however, was with tanka instead of *shintaiishi*, and she became famous with the enormously successful all-tanka collection *Tangled Hair* (みだれ髪: Midaregami) in August 1901. This is partly attributable to her falling in love with Yosano Tekkan, a major tanka poet and the founder of the Tokyo New Poetry Society. Most of the influence between the two, however, was hers on him, as she infected his style with the romantic ardor of her poetry. Akiko's tanka were sensuous and rebellious, while maintaining the style, conventions, and literary references of the form.

The publication of Yosano Akiko's *Tangled Hair* proved that neither the literary public nor its institutional spokespersons on editorial boards had grown tired of deploying superlatives in lauding poets for breaking with convention. An anonymous review (understood to be by Ueda Bin) in the October 5, 1901, issue of *Morning Star* set the tone for critical reception of *Tangled Hair*, establishing a pattern of appreciation for

the work's innovation, passion, and depth of thought.<sup>79</sup> It is not surprising that a review in Tekkan's magazine, site of so many of Akiko's poems, would be laudatory. Even so, such a review, by a leading exponent of modern poetry and prominently taking up the first four pages of the issue, no doubt underscored the serious regard the mostly male literary establishment gave to a female author writing in a traditional poetic form.<sup>80</sup>

First, the review comments on the collection's new voice and original thought, with criticism of the general opinion that it is filled only with lovesickness. The review goes on to describe what the reviewer does not like about tanka and *shintaiishi* of the moment: their lack of life and heart, their inauthenticity and pretentiousness. The *shintaiishi* are crude and vague, and the tanka field is full of writers who are satisfied with mediocre thought. Its landscapes are limited to the painterly, and its human sentiments to the faultless aristocratic and filial.<sup>81</sup>

The review characterizes *Tangled Hair*, by contrast, as pioneering a passionate, revolutionary kind of poetry. If perhaps it lacks a calmer range of emotions, it is nevertheless sharp in its rhythms and startling in its liberated thoughts. As a work by a woman, the review states, the collection is especially to be welcomed, and anyone who

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<sup>79</sup> Bin's review in October was not the first published review of *Tangled Hair*. Short reviews appeared in the September 1, 1901, issues of *Book Collection* (文庫: Bunko), *New Arts* (新文藝: Shin bungei), *Flowers of the Heart* (こころのはな: Kokoro no hana), *New Literary Arts* (新文藝: Shin bungei), and *Imperial Literature*.

<sup>80</sup> It may have helped that the tanka form was regarded as a relatively feminine poetic form, in part because of its traditional use of ostensibly pure Japanese language in the "woman's hand" (that is, *hiragana*), and as the counterpart to supposedly more masculine poetry written in Chinese.

<sup>81</sup> *Myōjō*, no. 16 (Oct. 5, 1901), 1.

deprecates it is “no friend to art.”<sup>82</sup>

More specifically, *Tangled Hair* has also been welcomed as the successor to Tōson’s *Seedlings*. In his recent biography of Tōson, for example, Naff writes, “Yosano Akiko’s *Tangled Hair*, which is virtually a sequel to [*Seedlings*], is a close second [to it], but it was inevitable that after her, the power of mere novelty, however brilliantly informed and executed, would rapidly attenuate.”<sup>83</sup> Akiko, Naff argues, is the “poet most influenced by Tōson and the one who stands as his only direct heir in poetry. . . . Tōson’s achievement established the necessary preconditions for Akiko’s career in much the same way that Kitamura Tōkoku’s work had established the preconditions for his.”<sup>84</sup>

Akiko herself later claimed that she never sought to “reform poetry.”<sup>85</sup> But her statement should not be taken at face value: humility and the intervening years, along with a reputation that afforded her the luxury of self-deprecation, would have colored her characterization of her early work, which she always sought to outgrow. Furthermore, the unmistakable *effect* of her poetry was a poetic reform, both in the tanka whose diction she helped expand, and in free verse which she helped pioneer. Makoto Ueda, for example, presents her lessons on tanka as course corrections to stop

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<sup>82</sup> *Myōjō*, no. 16 (Oct. 5, 1901), 4.

<sup>83</sup> Naff, 171.

<sup>84</sup> Naff, 165-166.

<sup>85</sup> Makoto Ueda, *Modern Japanese Poets and the Nature of Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983), 53; citing *Teihon Yosano Akiko zenshū* (Authoritative complete works of Yosano Akiko), vol. 12, 476.



the spread of *shasei*.<sup>86</sup>

## Outline of Chapters

Each of the three body chapters of this dissertation takes up a small number of poems and critical writings to examine how each poet pursued a lyricism that sought ideals and mined poetic allusions to go beyond *shasei* and beyond “nature.”

Chapter one examines Shimazaki Tōson’s early concern with the poet’s descriptions of and journeys into nature. In two early essays, “The Shade of the Grape Plant” (葡萄の樹の蔭: *Budō no ki no kage*) and “On Poetry” (韻文に就て: *Inbun ni tsuite*), Tōson emphasizes the importance of the poet’s imagination and passion in seeing into nature. He does not address the cultural prism through which the poet sees nature; yet that cultural prism informs his early poems, of which I examine three from his collection *Seedlings*. The poem “Song of the Autumn Wind” (秋風の歌: *Aki kaze no uta*) is an ode, seemingly modeled on Shelley’s “Ode to the West Wind,” but to the transience of human life in the face of nature’s indifferent and ineluctable entropy. The spring that cannot “be far behind” in Shelley’s poem is deferred, but it reappears in “Pillow of Grass” (草枕: *Kusamakura*). In that poem, the lonely poetic speaker is able to metabolize his melancholy in a bleak seaside landscape that nonetheless resounds with conventional significance, and this prepares him to reenter society. In “Rambling Through the Deep Woods” (深林の逍遙: *Shinrin no shōyō*), the speaker begins in a

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<sup>86</sup> Makoto Ueda, *Modern Japanese Poets and the Nature of Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983), 53.

conventionally significant forest filled with a classical catalogue of flora. But over the course of the poem, urged on by spirits of the mountain and trees, the speaker goes where there is no path and melts into the scenery. In other words, Tōson has detailed a poetic evolution towards description that is both more fantastic and more realistic. By the end of Tōson's poetic career in 1901, when he wrote the essay "Refined Language and Poetry" (雅言と詩歌: *Gagen to shiika*), he had become skeptical of what he saw as the prosodic and expressive limitations of the Japanese language. His skepticism coincided with, and seems partially to have motivated, his move towards realist prose. But in giving up on seeing ideals in the prisms of culturally constructed meanings of natural phenomena, Tōson was also turning his back on an affective intimacy with this construct. Nevertheless, when his collected poems were published in 1904, he proudly proclaimed the arrival of a new age of poetry to Japan, and his own role in bringing it.

Chapter two takes up Doi Bansui's recursively poetic investigations into the role of the poet in interpreting the universe and the ideals other poets have invested in it. Beginning with discussions of Bansui's preface to his collection *Nature Has Feelings* and the translations on poetry from Western writers that he appended to it, I show how Bansui was keen to insert himself and his readers into a global poetic tradition. In two poems from the collection, "Poet" (詩人: *Shijin*) and "The Universe and the Poet" (萬有と詩人: *Ban'yū to shijin*), he then takes the ironic stance of a non-poet and asks his poetic interlocutor—his muse, really—to reveal the secrets of nature to him. In doing so, Bansui seeks ideals in nature and ideals in the poet. In "Evening Thoughts" (夕の思ひ: *Yūbe no omoi*) and "Evening Bell" (暮鐘: *Boshō*), however, his poetic speakers lament

the transience and bitterness of lofty ideals. Yet neither is entirely pessimistic. In “Evening Thoughts,” the speaker carves a niche between the hope of ideals and the despair of reality. In “Evening Bell,” he sees the progressive erosion of humanity’s ideals, which echo in the sound of a temple bell, as the very stuff of reality. The two poems thus suggest that the aim of the poet is neither realism nor idealism, but a course that charts and preserves the fissures between the two.

Chapter three focuses on Yosano Akiko’s multifaceted and even contradictory use of supernatural symbols to strike out in iconoclastic ways against the strictures of sexual mores and traditional poetic practice. Of the 399 tanka in *Tangled Hair*, over one-fourth have references to deities, religious sites and texts, sin, priests, devils, and so forth. The poetic speakers of these poems are sometimes devout, sometimes defiant, and often ambivalent in the face of religious standards. While many of the references might be dismissed simply as metaphors for the divinity of love or lust, particularly as they do not reflect any devout beliefs of the poet herself, such a dismissal overlooks the rhetorical suppleness that such inventions impart to the brief tanka. Akiko mixes supernatural symbolism with traditional tanka diction and allusions, and the resulting layers of meaning are all the more outrageous for this combination. They not only appeal to—and sometimes upend—religious ideals, but also invoke ideals of nature as normative with or against such religious ideals. In this light, even the moments of realistic description are fraught with moral significance. Akiko thus constructs a poetic cosmos always teeming with intermingled deities and humans, both exalted and both coarsened by passion. The prominent but contestable status of the supernatural in the poems both extends beyond the natural and undermines the reliability of the natural.

A brief conclusion ties together the poetic strategies of Tōson, Bansui, and Akiko through the prism of Natsume Sōseki's novel *Pillow of Grass* (草枕: Kusamakura, 1906). The narrator of the novel charms us with his tangled meditations on the dynamics among artist, nature, and intertexts, even as his own attempts at poetry and painting fall flat. The tension between the fumbling, idealistic narrator and Sōseki the skillful author opens up reflexive questions about the poet's mediated relationship to nature, and about the allusive and idealistic power of intertexts.

Finally, an appendix presents English translations of a number of *shintaiishi* from Tōson's *Seedlings* and Bansui's *Nature Has Feelings*, most of which have never been published in translation.

## CHAPTER ONE: MELTING INTO SHIMAZAKI TŌSON'S POETIC LANDSCAPES

To investigate nature is the poet's lifelong burden, and also the poet's desire.

—Shimazaki Tōson, “The Shade of the Grape Plant”<sup>1</sup>

To grasp mental freedom, as if to dance into a new nature.

—Shimazaki Tōson, “On Poetry”<sup>2</sup>

This chapter will focus on three descriptive yet lyrical poems from Shimazaki Tōson's (島崎藤村, 1872-1943) first poetry collection, *Seedlings* (若菜集: Wakanashū, 1897), as a way of delineating a range of new tools that Tōson made available for describing and interacting poetically with nature. In the famous “Song of the Autumn Wind” (秋風の歌: *Aki kaze no uta*), the poetic speaker sings an ode to the personified autumn wind.<sup>3</sup> It is an ode that sounds a familiar note of humans' impermanence in the face of natural cycles. The speaker remains detached from the scene, however, while the autumn wind acts upon the temporal world. Then, in the poems “Pillow of Grass” (草枕:

*Kusamakura*) and “Rambling Through the Deep Woods” (森林の逍遙: *Shinrin no shōyō*), Tōson's poetic speakers increasingly explore emotional and ecological niches in order to find comfort and stabilize their moral identities. In “Pillow of Grass,” the moral

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<sup>1</sup> “Budō no ki no kage,” *Bungakkai* (Literary world), no. 32 (August 1895), 2. (It should not be confused with Tōson's poem of the same name, which appeared in *Seedlings*.)

<sup>2</sup> “Inbun ni tsuite,” *Taiyō* (The sun), Dec. 1895; reprinted in *Shimazaki Tōson zenshū* (The complete works of Shimazaki Tōson), vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1950), 228.

<sup>3</sup> For full translations of the poems discussed in this chapter, see Appendix A.

speaker overcomes his social and emotional alienation by applying cultural convention to—and thus escaping the paradoxical limitations of—a boundless landscape. The traveling speaker thus purifies his moral identity in an abundance of mediated solitude, and this allows him to contemplate returning to civilization. In “Rambling Through the Deep Woods,” the sensual speaker finds plenitude, becomes part of the plenitude, within the forest’s limits. These poems dance between absorption in and alienation from nature, in a process of continual metabolism of self with that nature.

But nature is not an unproblematic external reality; rather, it is what Haruo Shirane calls a “secondary nature,” mediated by intertexts and allusions.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the happiness or completeness to be found never completely escapes the social setting, the literary ecosystem, even when the poetic speaker is most alone, as in the poems discussed here. Specifically, the innovation of Tōson’s poems is not to describe scenery as it *appears* to an observer positioned in the landscape, stripped of any conventional symbolic meaning or what Karatani Kōjin calls “transcendent,” painterly writing.<sup>5</sup> For if anything, to describe nature *faithfully* for Tōson would be to describe with the *faith* that nature is invested with moral meaning. In discussing Tōson’s faith in nature’s moral meaning, his religious background would seem to be relevant. He had been baptized a Christian and took part in literary circles with influential Christian writers, notably his friend Kitamura Tōkoku (北村透谷, 1868-94) and Iwamoto Yoshiharu (巖本善治,

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<sup>4</sup> Haruo Shirane, *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons: Nature, Literature, and the Arts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 26.

<sup>5</sup> Karatani Kōjin, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, trans. ed. Brett de Bary (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 21.

1863-1942), the founder of *Women's Learning Magazine* (女学雑誌: Jogaku zasshi, 1885-1904). Yet by the time of *Seedlings*, Tōkoku had died and Tōson's religious belief had lapsed, so it is difficult to trace any direct influence on the poems. Compare the Christian influence on the views of nature of a contemporaneous writer, Uchimura Kanzō (内村鑑三, 1861-1930). Karatani holds that Uchimura's Christian, Cartesian view allowed him to "discover landscape" in literature, and to see nature as "simply nature," which "exists only by virtue of the existence of the spirit or of an inner world."<sup>6</sup> Kamei Hideo argues against Karatani that Uchimura's own descriptions of nature are imbued with biblical references.<sup>7</sup> Although I have found no similarly obvious biblical references in Tōson's poetry, Kamei's point should remind us that Tōson's poetic refuge in nature is constantly mediated by, perhaps we should say intersubjective with, the conventional sensibilities produced by these secondary natures.

Given that the poems were first published in the short time between November 1896 and March 1897, my goal is not to delineate a developmental arc of Tōson's descriptive poetry. Rather, my aim is to show how these early nature poems developed ideas of beauty and goodness that invested nature with both moral agency and an intertextual texture that weaves together conventional symbolism. I hope that the narrow focus of this chapter may provide readers with another part of the literary landscape, a landscape that has too often separated Tōson's career simply into lyrical

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<sup>6</sup> Karatani, 88.

<sup>7</sup> See Kamei Hideo, *Transformations of Sensibility: The Phenomenology of Meiji Literature*, trans. ed. Michael Bourdaghs (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 2002), 238-43.

love poetry followed by naturalist prose.<sup>8</sup>

That literary landscape is also belied by Tōson's own critical essays on poetry, which misstate the work his own poems do. This chapter will first examine two of Tōson's early essays on poetry, then jump ahead to compare them with the rhetoric of Tōson's preface to the 1904 collection of *Tōson's Collected Poems* (藤村詩集: Tōson shishū), and, after analyzing the three poems, conclude with an analysis of three nature poems from *Seedlings*.

### **Nature and the Poet: Two Essays on Poetry Before *Seedlings***

The essays “The Shade of the Grape Plant” (葡萄の樹の蔭: *Budō no ki no kage*) and “On Poetry” (韻文に就て: *Inbun ni tsuite*), quoted in the epigraphs above, reveal Tōson's early critical concern with putting descriptions of “nature” (自然: *shizen*) into poetic language. Published in the August and November 1895 issues of *Literary World* and *The Sun*, respectively, the essays come roughly a year before he composed the poems to be included in *Seedlings*. Tōson's poetic output up to this point had been in the form of verse dramas; it was not until July 1896 that he published a set of short lyrical poems entitled “Summer of This Year” (ことしの夏: *Kotoshi no natsu*) in

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<sup>8</sup> Credit must be given to James R. Morita, however skeptical he remains of Tōson's poetic capabilities, for seeing that “Tōson was not merely a romantic poet who sang only in the spring, much less the ordinary naturalistic novelist he is sometimes remembered as. Behind his autobiographical novels lay the above poems, which contained elements that developed into his novels. It was the rare blend of these poetic qualities that distinguished his prose works from those of other novelists who lacked it.” Morita, “Shimazaki Tōson's Four Collections of Poems,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 25:3-4 (1970), 369.



*Literary World*. My exclusion of Tōson's dramas from this study should be understood neither as rejecting their status as poetry, nor as discrediting their quality; and indeed, the generic difference between his verse dramas and his dialogic poems is not very great. The main difference is in the diction: the former come across as old-fashioned *jōruri* (chanting that accompanies puppet theater).<sup>9</sup> What is more important for our purposes, the verse dramas do not capture the lyric subjectivity of a subject interacting with nature. As Togawa Shinsuke reminds us, “the real feeling [実感: *jikkan*] behind [dramatic verse (劇詩: *gekishi*)] is relatively lacking compared with [lyric poems (抒情詩: *jojōshi*)].”<sup>10</sup> We may not agree that lyric poems, especially those of Tōson, have such unproblematic distinctions; perhaps we should even avoid using the term “lyric” to refer to those poems whose speaking subjects have emotional worlds of their own apart from the writer. But it is dangerous to be drawn into distinctions between expressive and mimetic arts, distinctions that have proved tricky even going back to Plato and Aristotle.<sup>11</sup>

In the first of these two essays, “The Shade of the Grape Plant,” Tōson flies into

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<sup>9</sup> On this characterization, see Takahashi Masako, *Shimazaki Tōson: Tōi manazashi* (Shimazaki Tōson: Distant views) (Osaka: Izumi shoin, 1994), 25.

<sup>10</sup> Togawa Shinsuke, “*Wakanashū* to kinsei kayō: ‘Junsui naru Nihon sō’ o megutte” (*Seedlings and modern ballads: Towards a ‘pure Japanese thought’*), *Nihon bungaku* (Japanese literature) 30:1 (Jan. 1981), special issue: Kotoba to no deai: Meiji ni, sanjū nendai (Meeting with language: The Meiji twenties and thirties): 32.

<sup>11</sup> Plato stumbles at the outset by taking language unproblematically as a “natural sign.” See also Murray Krieger’s discussion of Plato’s argument in *The Sophist*, in which Plato limits his charge against poetry to dramatic poetry because of its representational quality. Krieger, *Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), especially 67-75.

fanciful rhetoric to describe the activity of the poet. He recognizes the multivalent meanings of a word like “nature” (自然: *shizen*), and he problematizes the role of the poet in interacting with whatever that “nature” is:

The word nature already has multiple meanings, from the broad sense of that which is outside of humans, to the deep sense of all creation (造化萬有: *zōka ban'yū*). There have therefore been multiple ways to investigate nature, so that each poet in old times followed a different path with respect to nature, and all poets had their own natures. Thus, in the beginning nature was inexhaustible, or you could say it had a certain significance. There are those who see ecstasy [燥狂: *sōkyō*] and reach clarity [静澄: *seichō*]. Or, in a crazed haste [性急疴癖: *seikyū kanpeki*], they flash like lightning into the bosom of nature, and bring back water scooped up from a clear spring. . . .Or, fearing the competitive world of the survival of the fittest [弱肉強食: *jakuniku kyōshoku*], they hurl themselves into dark nature's raging billows [怒濤: *dotō*]. There are those who, having once cast nature aside, are then shocked to have to gather up nature. . . .Then there are those who, like losing generals in the real world, stand hidden in the fortress of nature, and as if still in the real world they wave their frightening swords around and try to fight against nature. If the imagination is not rich, then the interest [趣味: *shumi*] will not be deep; if the interest is not deep, then the insight will not be brilliant; if the insight is not brilliant, then the passion will not be pure; and if the passion is not pure, then one cannot hear the inmost voice [最深なる聲: *saishin naru koe*] of nature. Again, the investigation of nature is difficult, is it not?<sup>12</sup>

Two properties stand out in this passage. First, Tōson recognizes the problematic but necessary task of the poet to penetrate into the mysteries of the universe—a task explored in greater detail by Doi Bansui in his poems and translations of Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) and Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82).<sup>13</sup> Tōson's formula of

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<sup>12</sup> Shimazaki, “Budō no ki no kage,” *Bungakkai* (Literary world), no. 32 (August 1895), 2.

<sup>13</sup> See chapter two.

progress from poet to nature goes as follows: rich imagination, deep interest, brilliant insight, pure passion, access to nature's inmost voice. I might have placed insight next to access to nature, and moved passion somewhere near imagination. Though twisted, it is still a characteristically Romantic chain, calling on intellectual and emotional faculties in the active search for nature's secrets. It may remind us of the Wanderer in William Wordsworth's (1770-1850) *The Excursion*, who recognizes, as Jonathan Bate writes, "Everything is linked to everything else, and, most importantly, the human mind must be linked to the natural environment."<sup>14</sup>

Second, in the use of the term "the survival of the fittest," Tōson betrays a timely awareness of late nineteenth-century discourses on science and nature. The phrase "survival of the fittest," though popularly attributed to Charles Darwin's (1809-82) theory of evolution by natural selection, was in fact coined by social theorist Herbert Spencer (1820-1903).<sup>15</sup> The intertwining of Darwin and Spencer should remind us that biology and sociology were not discrete bodies of knowledge or sources of discourse. Tōson's reference to the survival of the fittest, in an essay about poets' recourse to the riches of nature, reminds us how fundamentally the stakes and ideals of writing poetry can be affected not only by swift social change, but by scientific discovery and its

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<sup>14</sup> Jonathan Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 66; citing H. W. Piper, *The Active Universe: Pantheism and the Concept of the Imagination in the English Romantic Poets* (London, 1962), 122.

<sup>15</sup> According to Julia Adeney Thomas, Spencer was by far the more influential thinker in nineteenth-century Japan: Darwin's "science was deemed secondary to Spencer's social theory"; and Spencer was "preeminent among all European political thinkers translated into Japanese." Thomas, *Reconfiguring Modernity: Concepts of Nature in Japanese Political Ideology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 104, 117.

cascading discourses. As Takahashi Masako points out, “What we must not overlook about the formation of nature-centered literature in the Meiji thirties [1897-1906] is the way it was able to see the invisible parts of ‘nature’ thanks to the acquisition of scientific knowledge.”<sup>16</sup>

Tōson proceeds in the next paragraph to describe Wordsworth and George Gordon Byron (1788-1824), with references to Wordsworth’s sonnet on Westminster Bridge and his Rydal Mount home.<sup>17</sup> The mention of the sonnet, whose full title is “Composed on Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802,” is telling, as it sings of a harmonious beauty of wild and cultivated together, not of some distinct non-human “nature.” Wordsworth suggests that the city is the passive recipient of nature’s beauty: “The City now doth, like a garment, wear / The beauty of the morning”; but it is a beauty that outdoes the beauty of wilderness: “Never did sun more beautifully steep / In his first splendor, valley, rock, or hill.”<sup>18</sup> In other words, the Wordsworth to whom Tōson and others looked provided a model of order and harmony, in which the wild and

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<sup>16</sup> Takahashi Masako, 240. This insight is also at the heart of Gregory Golley’s study of literary modernism in the early twentieth century, during which time scientific discoveries gave writers new tools for knowing reality beyond direct sensual perception. See Golley, *When Our Eyes No Longer See: Realism, Science, and Ecology in Japanese Literary Modernism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Wordsworth was of great importance to the members of the *Literary World* group, and especially to Tōson. They all would have been familiar with references to Westminster Bridge and Rydal Mount. See Yano Hōjin, “*Bungakkai*” to *seiyō bungaku* (“Literary world” and western literature) (revised edition; Tokyo: Gakuyūsha, 1970), 66-67.

<sup>18</sup> Wordsworth, “Composed Upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802,” lines 4-5 and 9-10.

cultivated were brought together by some centripetal force.<sup>19</sup>

Does the poet simply transcribe this harmony? Is the poet's role, like the City's, simply to reflect nature's glory? Wordsworth, Tōson writes, "recited nature with his mouth, regarded nature with his eyes, listened to nature with his ears."<sup>20</sup> Such a statement appears to simplify one possible ideal of poetry as direct transcription of sensory input, or, in terms familiar to Tōson's time, "sketching from real life" (写生: *shasei*). But Tōson implicitly rejects such simplicity, as when he notes that Robert Burns (1759-96) "made nature his friend" while Wordsworth "made nature his god."<sup>21</sup> In such a way, a great poet must invest the subject with subjectivity, and lose some poetic objectivity. How else can a poet say anything new? Tōson posits: "Though nature has voices, if they are not new, then they will not teach us anything of deep significance. Though nature has colors, if they are not new, then they will not hold great charm for us."<sup>22</sup> The burden is on nature to provide new notes and new tones, but by extension it is also on the poet to hear and see those tones.

Tōson underlines the poet's need to see and hear nature in his essay "On Poetry." We may even be excused for thinking that access to knowledge of nature is what the essay is about, for it begins with the proclamation, "What we must know is nature" (知る

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<sup>19</sup> We might have expected Tōson then to link Byron with disorder and centrifugal forces, but he does not go into any great detail about Byron in this essay.

<sup>20</sup> "Budō no ki no kage," 2.

<sup>21</sup> "Budō no ki no kage," 3.

<sup>22</sup> "Budō no ki no kage," 3.

べからざるものは自然なり: *shiru bekarazaru mono wa shizen nari*),<sup>23</sup> and it ends with the rhetorical question, “For how long will the Meiji poetry circles be able to put up with outdated nature [舊自然: *kyū shizen*]?”<sup>24</sup> In between these bookends, Tōson refers to the familiar figure of the poet as an aeolian harp upon which nature plays its tune.<sup>25</sup>

Yet the bulk of the essay is actually devoted to castigating what he sees as the stale diction and meter of Japanese. That is, once Tōson comes down from his abstract perch to discuss what can be improved in contemporary poetry, he arrives at the need not to attend to nature but to overhaul poetic language. Nevertheless, as William E. Naff has pointed out, Tōson’s own poetry did not depart very far from “a 7-5 meter and a large measure of classical poetic diction even while doing some revolutionary things with usage and with stance.”<sup>26</sup>

This kind of “poetic” language is doubly outdated when it is used to represent the spoken language of characters in Tōson’s verse dramas of the time: for if realistic depiction is the ideal, then the characters’ speech ought to sound like the speech of ordinary people, who would not speak in meter. Though heavily influenced by Wordsworth, Tōson seems not to have been swayed by Wordsworth’s (somewhat

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<sup>23</sup> Shimazaki, “Inbun ni tsuite,” *Taiyō* (The sun), Dec. 1895; reprinted in *Shimazaki Tōson zenshū* (The complete works of Shimazaki Tōson), vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1950), 227.

<sup>24</sup> “Inbun ni tsuite,” 232.

<sup>25</sup> See also chapter two, which discusses Doi Bansui’s translation of, and debt to, Shelley’s *Defence of Poetry*.

<sup>26</sup> Naff, *The Kiso Road: The Life and Times of Shimazaki Tōson*, ed. J. Thomas Rimer (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2011), 153.

disingenuous) statement in his 1800 preface to *Lyrical Ballads*: “I propose to myself to imitate, and, as far as possible, to adopt the very language of men.”<sup>27</sup> For Tōson, neither “the very language of men” nor realistic dialogue is yet on the horizon. The same holds true for poets in general, as poetry seems to play no part in the “unification of speech and writing” (言文一致: *genbun itchi*) movement, at least not in its 1890s state.<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, Tōson does share Wordsworth’s admiration for the “low and rustic life.” Again, in Wordsworth’s preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, we read:

Low and rustic life was generally chosen [for poetic topics] because in that situation the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that situation our elementary feelings exist in a state of greater simplicity and consequently may be more accurately contemplated and more forcibly communicated; . . . and lastly, because in that situation the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.<sup>29</sup>

Tōson could very well have had this passage in mind when he was crafting the formula in “The Shade of the Grape Plant” discussed above. Both he and Wordsworth seek the harmony of human passions and nature: Wordsworth’s “simplicity” of “feelings” echoes in Tōson’s “purity” of “passions.” And Tōson sought the “low and rustic life” when he went to Sendai, where he wrote most or all of the poems in *Seedlings*, and to Komoro,

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<sup>27</sup> William Wordsworth, “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads*, in Anne K. Mellor and Richard E. Matlak, *British Literature 1780-1830* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1996), 576.

<sup>28</sup> Compare Wordsworth’s statement on language in his 1802 “What is a Poet?” addition to the preface to *Lyrical Ballads*: “Unless therefore we are advocates for that admiration which depends upon ignorance, and that pleasure which arises from hearing what we do not understand, the Poet must descend from this supposed height, and, in order to excite rational sympathy, he must express himself as other men express themselves.” Wordsworth, in Mellor and Matlak, 579.

<sup>29</sup> Wordsworth, in Mellor and Matlak, 574-75.

where he wrote later poems and *Chikuma River Sketches* (千曲川のスケッチ:

Chikumagawa no suketchi, 1912). Indeed, many treatments of Shimazaki Tōson's poetry make much of the fact that he wrote most of the poems of *Seedlings* while he was living in Sendai.<sup>30</sup> But did the location affect his compositions? Did the remoteness from Tokyo hone his concentration? Sendai was neither metropolis nor native place for Tōson. Was it then a site that prompted Tōson to write poems of travel?

Of course, in traveling to Sendai, Tōson was also tracing the footsteps of earlier peripatetic poets, notably Saigyō (西行, 1118-90) and Matsuo Bashō (松尾芭蕉, 1644-1694). Kawabata Toshifusa sees Tōson's journey to Sendai as a poetic pilgrimage in the footsteps of Saigyō and Bashō, in the same way that Tōson's 1893 voyage to Kansai was that of a wandering truth-seeker hoping for guidance from earlier poets. As Kawabata writes, "His yearning for the ancients was a desire to connect with the spirit of predecessors who had lived on the road [旅に生きた: *tabi ni ikita*], and we might say the journey that he was impelled to follow stemmed from his truth-seeking character [求道の性格: *gudōteki seikaku*] as one who aimed at the life a pilgrim [人生の巡礼者を目指した: *jinsei no junreisha wo mezashita*]." <sup>31</sup> This may be so, but Tōson does not follow

Bashō by frequently, and explicitly, alluding to the importance to literary history of the

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<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Fuji Kazuya's *Shimazaki Tōson no Sendai jidai: "Wakanashū" o megutte* (Shimazaki Tōson's time in Sendai: A look at "Seedlings") (Sendai: Man'yōdō, 1977); and *Shimazaki Tōson "Wakanashū" no sekai* (The world of Shimazaki Tōson's "Seedlings") (Sendai: Man'yōdō, 1981).

<sup>31</sup> Kawabata Toshifusa, *Shimazaki Tōson no ningenkan* (Shimazaki Tōson's view of humanity) (Tokyo: Shin Nihon shuppansha, 2006), 42.



places he visits. Instead, he submerges his poetic debts in subtlety. In other words, the poetic travels undertaken in *Seedlings* evince not a truth-seeking character so much as a synthesis of secondary nature.

Nevertheless, Kawabata is right to attach great importance to travel in Tōson's poems and prose. He follows Seki Ryōichi in writing that Tōson's travel poems are representative of his poetry as a whole. To support this assessment, he furnishes such examples as "Pillow of Grass" from *Seedlings*, "A Spring Evening's Parting" (晩春の別離: *Banshun no betsurī*) from *Summer Grass* (夏草: Natsukusa, 1898), and, from *Fallen Plum Blossoms* (落梅集: Rakubaishū, 1901), "Beside the Old Castle at Komoro" (小諸なる古城のほとり: *Komoro naru kojō no hotori*), "Song of Travel on the Chikuma River" (千曲川旅情の歌: *Chikumagawa ryojō no uta*), and "Fruit of the Coconut" (椰子の実: *Yashi no mi*).<sup>32</sup> Nor was Sendai central to his outlook and nature-sketching in the way that Komoro would be for his later *Chikuma River Sketches*. Komoro had the advantage of being in the same region as Tōson's hometown of Magome, which made it resonate more as a "native place." Tōson also spent six years there, from 1899 to 1905, as opposed to less than a year in Sendai. Stephen Dodd writes that "the emergence of furusato [故郷: native place] literature as a means to articulate the perceived shortcomings of city life turned out to be at least as important in [affecting] the direction

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<sup>32</sup> Seki Ryōichi, *Kōshō to shiron: Shimazaki Tōson* (Historical investigation and essay: Shimazaki Tōson) (Tokyo: Kyōiku shuppan sentā, 1984), 403.

of [Tōson's] work.”<sup>33</sup> The blooming ideal of the *furusato* may have affected Tōson's writing, but we have already seen how Wordsworth's appeal to “rustic life” could have inspired Tōson's own poetic journeys to remote places; and it seems more likely that the *furusato* ideal did not affect Tōson's early poetry. A further confusing factor in the reception of Tōson's work is that although *Chikuma River Sketches* was not published until 1912, its genesis goes back to experiences in Komoro as early as 1899 or 1900.<sup>34</sup> The scenery of Mt. Asama and the Chikuma River not only inspired some of the poems from Tōson's fourth poetry collection, *Fallen Plum Blossoms*; but around the same time, as Seki argues, Tōson began to incorporate “objective descriptions of nature as it really was” in the manner of Western painting and realism.<sup>35</sup>

These later works helped confer on Tōson a reputation for straightforward descriptions of nature, and in turn harmonized with judgments of his naturalist novels, beginning with *Broken Commandment* (破戒: *Hakai*), which was published in 1906.

But that does not mean that anyone has claimed that Tōson's poetry partook in the “realistic” sketching techniques he later adopted. Dodd, for one, does acknowledge that Tōson's “shift to prose was not instantaneous but part of a lengthy process during which prose and poetic elements continued to inform each other. The narrative elements detectable in [*Seedlings*] became increasingly noticeable in his other three volumes of

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<sup>33</sup> Stephen Dodd, *Writing Home: Representations of the Native Place in Modern Japanese Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 81.

<sup>34</sup> See Shimazaki Tōson, *Tōson shishū* (Tōson poetry collection), vol. 15 of *Nihon kindai bungaku taikei* (Compilation of modern Japanese literature), ed. Yamamura Shizuka, Seki Ryōichi, and Kenmochi Takehiko (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1971), 657.

<sup>35</sup> Seki, 427.

poetry.”<sup>36</sup> In fact, however, Tōson experimented with narrative techniques in his poetry even in his earliest works. Poems such as “Rambling Through the Deep Woods” trouble our dichotomous classifications of realistic and fantastic by incorporating strains of both. This is, in fact, part of their stirring power.

### **The 1904 Preface to *Tōson’s Collected Poems***

It is common to point to Tōson’s introduction to the first printing of *Tōson’s Collected Poems* of 1904 as a milestone in giving the movement(s) to modernize poetry their boldest articulation in romantic, exhortatory terms. But the preface was written seven years after *Seedlings* first appeared. As with Doi Bansui’s preface to *Nature Has Feelings* (天地有情: Tenchi ujō, 1899), Tōson’s poetic preface was written after most or all of the individual poems had been published, read, and commented on. In the case of Bansui’s preface, though, the fact that it appeared in the first edition of his first poetry collection gives the reader a stronger sense of the unity of purpose the preface might share with the poems. To complicate matters of Tōson’s purpose in writing the preface in 1904, as Fuji Kazuya has pointed out, Tōson had already completed his shift from writing poetry to writing novels. Fuji also speculates that if Ueda Bin’s *Sound of the Tide* (海潮音: Kaichōon, 1905) had been published before *Tōson’s Collected Poems*, the state of Japanese poetry that Tōson’s preface described would have been much

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<sup>36</sup> Dodd, 90.

different.<sup>37</sup> Even Tōson's own output is misrepresented by the four "poetry" collections published between 1897 and 1901, which increasingly mix in prose elements. These collections' canonization of only certain works erases the trace of the early experiments, and the subsequent excising of prose from *Tōson's Collected Poems* in 1904 further distills Tōson's output of its various elements.

What purpose, then, does Tōson's belated preface serve? Many readers will have been presumed to be familiar with the poetry already. The preface therefore tells them less how to read what is fresh and unfamiliar, and more how to judge a historical moment in retrospect. That historical moment, according to Tōson, seems to be a resurrection of a golden age. The preface begins by reflecting on that moment:

Finally, the time of a new poetry had come.  
It was like a beautiful dawn. Some cried out like the ancient prophets, and some called out like poets of the West, but all of them seemed drunk on brilliance and new voices and fantasy.  
Their childlike imagination awoke from its long sleep and adorned the words of the people.  
Legends were resurrected. Nature wrapped itself in new colors once more.

Towards the end of the preface, Tōson emphasizes the importance of newness:

I, too, forgot how worthless I was and harmonized with the voices of the new poets.

Tōson's preface also regurgitates Wordsworth's well-known statement that poetry should express "emotion recollected in tranquillity." Tōson's version of that goes as follows: "Poetry is emotion [感動: *kandō*] recollected [思ひ起したる: *omoi-okoshitaru*]

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<sup>37</sup> Fuji Kazuya, "Tōson no shi ni okeru dentōsei to kakushinsei" (Tradition and revolution in Tōson's poetry), in *Kindai shisō: bungaku no dentō to kakushin* (Modern thought: tradition and revolution in literature), edited by Itō Kazuo (Meiji shoin, 1986), 363-364.

in a quiet place [静かなるところにて: *shizuka naru tokoro ni te*].”<sup>38</sup>

### Tōson’s Poems Enter the Landscape

Oddly, the superiority of *Seedlings* may be indexed by its very lack of a pretentious preface. Other collections of poetry typically displayed the grandiose aspirations of the poets and their champions (sometimes compilers, sometimes literati acting as cheerleaders) in prefaces—sometimes several for one collection, in fact. Tōson himself wrote misleading essays about both his own poems and contemporary poetry in general, as we have seen.<sup>39</sup> In 1897, however, the closest thing to a preface to the collection was a short, untitled epigraphic poem Tōson wrote entirely in *hiragana*. The phonetic syllabary forces readers to slow down and subvocalize when reading, to attend to the rhythms and homophones. Suga Hidemi notes that Tōson’s heavy use of *hiragana* in poems such as “The Sound of the Tide” (潮音: Chōon) “forces readers to

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<sup>38</sup> Wordsworth himself issued his formulation on tranquil recollection (along with the equally famous but contradictory ideal of poetry as “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings”) in a preface to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, published in 1800. He then lengthened that preface for the 1802 edition. In this way, Wordsworth, too, went to considerable lengths to justify and frame the reception of his poems after they had already been published. Perhaps he should have written instead, “A poetic *preface* takes its origin from emotion reflected in tranquillity,” or, “To *read* a poem is to recollect emotions in tranquillity.” On Wordsworth’s different versions of his preface, see Anne K. Mellor and Richard E. Matlak, *British Literature 1780-1830* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1996), 573-581.

<sup>39</sup> Nor was Tōson the only writer to do so. As discussed in the introductory chapter, poets like Wordsworth and Baudelaire used the opportunity of reprintings of their poetry collections to stake retroactive and sometimes dubious claims.

concentrate on the form of the language.”<sup>40</sup> All but one of the poems in this collection use 7-5 meter; “Mirage” (逃げ水: *Nigemizu*) uses 8-6 meter in what commentators call a deliberate parody of the meter adopted in translating Christian hymns.<sup>41</sup>

The exclusive use of *hiragana* in the epigraph may have signaled a more feminine, more folksy affect in the group of poems, as well. Indeed, *Seedlings* is famous for its love poetry, especially “Six Maidens” (六人の処女: *Rokunin no otome*), a series of poems about young women who threw off the chains of sexual repression. These poems, along with lyrics such as “First Love” (初恋: *Hatsukoi*), have become synonymous for many readers with Tōson’s achievement in *Seedlings*. The “Six Maidens” were so popular among the poems of *Seedlings* that they were moved up to the front of Tōson’s *Collected Poems* of 1904.

But that is not to say that Tōson was as confidently direct about proclaiming sexual freedom as Yosano Akiko was to be (see chapter 3). Throughout his long literary career, even as it shifted from verse drama to lyric poetry, and then to naturalist fiction, Tōson’s work rehearses conflicts over sexual mores and the metaphysical sources of morality. Saburō Satō claims,

One conspicuous motif threading through all phases of Tōson’s evolution is the emotional and at the same time metaphysical anguish arising from

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<sup>40</sup> Suga Hidemi, *Nihon kindai bungaku no tanjō: Genbun itchi undō to nashonarizumu* (The birth of modern Japanese literature: The movement to unify speech and writing and nationalism) (Tokyo: Ōta shuppan, 1995), 241.

<sup>41</sup> Sasabuchi Tomoichi argues that the hymn-like meter in that poem is both “heretical” and a way of “elevating feelings of love to the level of religious feeling.” Sasabuchi, “*Bungakkai*” to sono jidai (“Literary world” and its age), vol. 2 (Tokyo: Meiji shoin, 1960), 994.

an ambivalent view of sex, or a traumatic conflict between the yearning for love, a newly redefined concept, and the guilt over lust that plagued the Meiji youth.<sup>42</sup>

As Satō notes, in Tōson's early verse drama "Summer Grass" (夏草: *Natsukusa*, 1892),

"Venus is a goddess, but her heart sways to the earthly senses, while Adonis the man transcends them to ride the heavenly current."<sup>43</sup> Against this nod to piety, Satō

describes Tōson's identification with the lusty stallion in his later work, "Yosaku's

Horse" (与作の馬: *Yosaku no uma*, 1895), as "his apotheosis of romanticism, which had

just taught the Japanese intellectuals why and how the modern individual should

liberate his body and soul from the long-imposed yokes of feudal ethics and mores."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Satō finds the first literary traces of this ambivalence in Tōson's 1892 adaptation of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, whose Japanese title was "Summer Grass" (*Natsukusa*). In his foreword, Tōson stresses the superiority of spiritual love over carnal desire. In Tōson's estimation, Venus is a goddess with earthly desires, while Adonis represents a mortal with transcendent emotions. Where Shakespeare's work reveals Venus's love for Adonis but shows nothing of Adonis's love for anything but the hunt, Tōson's adaptation exalts Adonis as an idealist who seeks a loftier love. Saburō Satō, "Venus and Adonis' in Shimazaki Tōson's Literary Evolution," *Comparative Literature Studies* 28:3, East-West Issue (1991), 284.

<sup>43</sup> Quoted in and translated by Satō, 285. Shakespeare himself had, of course, adapted *Venus and Adonis* from Book X of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. But Tōson probably would not have had access to it, either in the Latin (which he could not read) or in English translation.

<sup>44</sup> Satō, 288. Our account here does not even come close to addressing the scandalous mixture of love and carnal desire that overcame the widower Tōson after his twenty-year-old niece Komako went to live with him in 1912. Having become pregnant, Komako then put the child up for adoption; Tōson himself fled to France for three years to escape the scandal, but later he published the autobiographical novel *New Life* (新生: *Shinsei*, 1919) about the affair. See Takasaka Kaoru, *Shimazaki Tōson no sekai: Ai to kokuhaku no kiseki* (Shimazaki Tōson's world: The tracks of love and confession) (Osaka: Izumi shoin, 1987), 149-153; also William E. Naff, *The Kiso Road: The Life and Times of Shimazaki Tōson* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 336-338, 621-23.

These two extreme inclinations seem hardly to qualify as the “pure passion” and “brilliant insight” that Tōson exalted in “The Shade of the Grape Plant.” Should his poems (or plays) about love be held to standards of insight that are different from his nature poems? Perhaps, but the “metaphysical anguish arising from an ambivalent view of sex,” in Satō’s words, and the conflict between love and lust can be channelled into, can inform what on the surface appear to be simply nature poems. The use of elaborate conceits, to say nothing of escapist fantasies, is hardly unusual. Wada Shigejirō writes, “The Tōson who could not freely carry love to fruition in real life sought a self that was free to love through his poetry.”<sup>45</sup> That may be partly true, but he also sought a self, or at least portrayed a self, that was free to do other things, even to dissolve or metabolize that self, in nature.

In other words, Tōson sought the refuge of both poetry and prose as domains in which he could attend to moral ambiguity and ambivalence, as open-ended explorations whose very processes allowed the setting aside of self (in “Song of the Autumn Wind”), the reaffirmation of a purified self (in “Pillow of Grass”), or the dissolving of self (in “Rambling Through the Deep Woods”).

These poetic descriptions of nature are a way to metabolize the poetic speaker’s—and perhaps the reader’s—misgivings and purify himself, to metabolize himself in nature. He momentarily becomes part of the landscape. This transformation through

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<sup>45</sup> Wada also contrasts this use of poetry with Tōson’s autobiographical novel *Spring* (春: Haru, 1908), which narrates Tōson’s real-life frustrations around the time of his friendship with Kitamura Tōkoku and his early poetry. Wada Shigejirō, *Kindai bungaku no chishikijinzō* (Portraits of the intellectuals of modern literature) (Kyoto: Mineruva shobō, 1985), 70.



the poetic speaker's intersubjectivity with nature resituates an emotional insecurity that may stem from unstated social or sexual guilt, or perhaps existential angst. In any case, it is not necessary for Tōson's speaker (or Tōson himself) to make an outright confession or address the direct causes of his melancholy.

### **Tōson: Naive or Sentimental?**

In "On Naive and Sentimental Poetry," Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) categorizes two kinds of "longing for nature": there is the longing for its happiness, and the longing for its completeness. The "sensual" individual longs for, and mourns the loss of, the happiness to be found in nature. The "moral" individual mourns the loss of nature's "completeness."<sup>46</sup>

But if you can take consolation in the loss of natural *happiness*, then let its *completeness* serve as the model for your heart. . . .[T]ake nature up into yourself and strive to wed its unlimited advantages to your own endless prerogatives, and from the marriage of both strive to give birth to something divine. Let nature surround you like a lovely *idyll*, in which again and again you find the way back to yourself from the aberrations of art and gather the courage and new confidence about the course of life, so that the flame of the *ideal*, so easily extinguished in life's storms, is rekindled in your heart.<sup>47</sup>

If we depend on the poet's role in discovering the idyllic in nature, and in passing it on to the moral reader, we also depend on the premise that the poet has some sort of privileged access to nature. Indeed, that putative privileged access is often invoked as

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<sup>46</sup> Friedrich Schiller, "On Naive and Sentimental Poetry," translated by Daniel O. Dahlstrom, in Schiller, *Essays*, edited by Walter Hinderer and Daniel O. Dahlstrom (New York: Continuum, 1993), 192.

<sup>47</sup> Schiller, "On Naive and Sentimental Poetry," 193. Emphasis in original.

the definition of a poet.<sup>48</sup> But we should note here that in Japan the tradition of rhetorically elevating poets' sensibilities follows a different path: instead of having privileged access to nature, skilled poets were those who adeptly fitted the secondary nature into sophisticated, culturally sensitive metaphors.

But privileged access is also a reminder of an original separation or estrangement, as Schiller's essay demonstrates. M. H. Abrams writes of this, Schiller's "second major and immensely influential essay on aesthetics":

Schiller's emphasis is on the primary split in the mind's unity with itself which converts unself-consciousness into self-consciousness—the awareness of the self as a subject distinct from the object it perceives, and the intervention of reflection and choice between instinct and action. . . .The sentimental, or characteristically modern, poet. . .is self-divided because self-conscious, and so composes in an awareness of multiple alternatives, and characteristically represents not the object in itself, but the object in the subject.<sup>49</sup>

The "completeness" Schiller describes may be similar to what eco-critic Karl Kroeber means when he writes that William Wordsworth found "plenitude" in Grasmere Vale. "This plenitude," he claims, "is a function—paradoxically—of the Vale's limitedness. By dwelling within its 'self-sufficing' wholeness the poet discovers total integration of psychic and physical being."<sup>50</sup> Kroeber continues:

To evoke in us a sense of the nurturing ecosystemic wholeness, the poet must continuously present overlapping or superimposed relationships and

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<sup>48</sup> For a more thorough treatment of such defenses of poets in the Japanese context, see my discussion of Bansui's translations from Shelley's *Defence of Poetry* and Emerson's "The Poet" in chapter two.

<sup>49</sup> M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 213-14.

<sup>50</sup> Karl Kroeber, *Ecological Literary Criticism: Romantic Imagining and the Biology of Mind* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 54.

patterns of relationship. The superimpositions are especially necessary because any ecosystem's wholeness is temporal as well as spatial. An ecosystem is a constantly self-transforming continuity.<sup>51</sup>

Kroeber shows us the intersection of an “ecological” critical perspective with “Romantic” thinking and literature. For Kroeber, there are

profound implications, cultural as well as ideological, of this Wordsworthian simplicity without simplification. . . . Romantic individuality is a singleness incompatible with isolation. Essential to this perspective is the recognition of each specific element of the whole, not as equal to every other but as equally necessary in its special fashion to the integrity of the entire system.<sup>52</sup>

Yet when we follow Tōson's poetic speaker's search for happiness or completeness in the enfolding arms of nature, are we not seeking what Terry Giffords calls the “pejorative” sense of the “pastoral”? The pejorative sense of the pastoral, in Giffords's usage, is the idealization of an unproblematic, “comfortably complacent” vision of a natural antidote to urban society.<sup>53</sup> Perhaps to some degree. In “Rambling Through the Deep Woods,” the narrator moves tranquilly—or we might simply say objectively—through space, with no emotions to speak of; his emotional reactions are deferred. Once we have entered spring at the beginning of the poem, all signs of time's passing, such as moving clouds and running water, are stable and unending. Even the traveler's physical interactions with his surroundings are told impassively:

Each step tramples an orchid flower,  
Wild plum petals land on my sleeves,  
And mountain ivy wraps around my hems;

あゆめば蘭の花を踏み  
ゆけば楊梅袖に散り  
袂にまとふ山葛の

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<sup>51</sup> Kroeber, 54-55.

<sup>52</sup> Kroeber, 56.

<sup>53</sup> Terry Giffords, *Pastoral* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 2.

Turning over an ivy leaf, I find  
In the shade of a fern a mountain strawberry  
Has dropped its colorful fruit;

葛のうら葉をかへしては  
女蘿の蔭のやまいちご  
色よき実こそ落ちにけれ

Only at the end of the poem, as we move from atemporal description to the progress of a sunset, do we become aware again of the passage—the tranquil passage—of time, through the changing colors on an otherwise stable scene. While the “deep woods” might thus bestow “plenitude” and “self-sufficing wholeness,” the fraught seascape in “Pillow of Grass” withholds the emotional tranquillity and completeness the speaker has come to seek out. The happiness he finds at the end of the poem comes not from tranquillity, not from completeness, but from the exuberant promise of nature’s spring renovation, and his own metaphorical renovation.

But in Tōson’s “Pillow of Grass,” even though the speaker eventually finds the antidote, we might instead note echoes of what Giffords sees in Coleridge as a “preoccupation with the darker presences of his mind, knowing that they had their reality in external nature, [which] prevented him from being a pastoralist in the pejorative sense.”<sup>54</sup> But if Coleridge manages to avoid the pejoratively complacent vision of pastoral, he instead falls into the trap of locating those “darker presences of his mind” in “external nature,” that is, of reifying “nature” as something closer to “untamed wilderness,” when he should have located nature in his mind. Tōson’s traveler finds no pastoral, pejorative or otherwise, in the scene:

As the white waves that wash over the reeds  
Stream and jet from among the rocks,

蘆葉を洗ふ白波の  
流れて巖を出づること

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<sup>54</sup> Giffords, 71-72.

My thoughts spill over this pillow of grass;  
How many pillows have there now been?

思ひあまりて草枕  
まくらのかずの今いくつ

How sorrowful is the plight of a man,  
Desperately seeking abiding comfort,  
Cutting through the pathless woods,  
Seeking a path that is not there.

かなしいかなや人の身の  
なきなぐさめを尋ね侘び  
道なき森に分け入りて  
などなき道をもとむらん

We return, then, to the question posed above: if Tōson's poetic speakers seem to recognize that "external nature" is a construct, as they address it as "secondary nature" through explicit intertexts and conventional allusions (such as the eponymous pillow of grass), then are they seeking its completeness naively or its happiness sentimentally?

### **"Song of the Autumn Wind": An Ode to Entropy**

It was the publication of "Song of the Autumn Wind" that put Tōson on the map as a poet when the poem was published in November 1896.<sup>55</sup> It is impossible for scholars not to compare this poem with Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," and it is unfortunate that such a comparison can only show Tōson's poem in a dim light.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, when undertaken from the perspective that Shelley's poem is the original and a

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<sup>55</sup> So says Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era: Poetry, Drama, Criticism*, vol. 4 of *A History of Japanese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 205.

<sup>56</sup> I have not seen any scholars compare this ode to John Keats's ode "To Autumn" or to Shelley's "Ozymandias," though. The former, with its cascade of autumn's riches, strikes a completely different tone from Tōson's; the latter, though not a seasonal poem, stresses the erosive effects of time on human artifacts. On Keats's influence on Tōson, Itō Kazuo writes that Tōson was struck by the former's emphasis on the contrast between the brevity of life and the endurance of art, while also moved by his tendency to connect sensual passions with deeper spiritual states. Itō, *Shimazaki Tōson jiten* (Shimazaki Tōson dictionary) (Tokyo: Meiji shoin, 1972), 96.

masterpiece, of course Tōson's poem fails to the extent that it deviates from Shelley's vision. Donald Keene points out the superiority of Shelley's opening apostrophe to the West Wind:<sup>57</sup>

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being—  
Thou from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,  
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,  
Pestilence-stricken multitudes!

Tōson's "Song of the Autumn Wind" opens more humbly with this tanka and first quatrain:

Unrelieved loneliness in my mountain home, さびしさはいつともわかぬ山里に  
tousling the pampas grass the autumn wind blows 尾花みだれて秋かぜぞふく

Silently the autumn wind comes	しづかにきたる秋風の
Rising from the western sea;	西の海より吹き起り
Dancing, lifting, romping white clouds fly,	舞ひたちさわぐ白雲の
Their course is clear to see.	飛びて行くへも見ゆるかな

The humans who populate the poem retreat and are absorbed into the landscape.<sup>58</sup> Even the high priests are no more than autumn leaves, reversing the simile of Shelley's ode, and depersonifying the humans instead of personifying the leaves:

As the Brahmins who teach the Way	道を伝ふる婆羅門の
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<sup>57</sup> Keene writes that Tōson's poem "by no means matches Shelley's in scale, richness of imagination, or intensity, but it is nevertheless of great importance to modern Japanese literature, both historically and intrinsically." Keene, 205-206.

<sup>58</sup> This observation is similar to Karatani's characterization of Kunikida Doppo's (国木田独步, 1871-1908) nearly contemporary novel *Unforgettable People* (忘れえぬ人々: Wasureenu hitobito, 1898): "the man on Doppo's island is not so much a 'person' as a 'landscape'; and Karatani quotes the narrator who remembers "these people standing in the midst of scenes in which I discovered them." Karatani, 24.

Scatter to the east and west,  
Wafted on the autumn wind  
The leaves in the trees flutter away.

西に東に散るごとく  
吹き漂蕩す秋風に  
飄り行く木の葉かな

Where Shelley allows the wind to “Drive my dead thoughts over the universe, / Like wither’d leaves to quicken a new birth,” Tōson’s poem finds not rebirth but futility in the transience of human lives. His attitude towards autumn as a wistful sign of impermanence is a well-worn topos in Japanese poetry. Thus, while Shelley’s speaker hears a prophecy of rebirth in the wind and is able to ask, “If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?” Tōson’s speaker sees a significance beyond seasonal cycles.

Though men may wave their swords about,  
Their waving must come to an end;  
And tongues that curse the present age  
Have voices that are soon snuffed out.

人は利剣を振へども  
げにかぞふればかぎりあり  
舌は時世をのゝしるも  
声はたちまち滅ぶめり

High and fierce, O autumn wind,  
You confound the breath of hills and fields;  
Until you wither and dry the world out,  
There shall be no end to your blowing.

高くも烈し野も山も  
息吹まどはす秋風よ  
世をかれがれとなすまでは  
吹きも休むべきけはひなし

How lonesome is the autumn sun  
Within the bowl of heaven and earth;  
Who knows where the wind is headed,  
Flying with the fallen leaves?

あゝうらさびし天地の  
壺の中なる秋の日や  
落葉と共に飄る  
風の行衛を誰か知る

Where Shelley’s ode reminds the reader here of seasonal cycles and their comforting analogical power, Tōson sounds more like the Shelley of “Ozymandias,” in which, apart from the statue’s legs and inscription, “Nothing beside remains. Round the decay / Of

that colossal wreck, boundless and bare / The lone and level sands stretch far away.”<sup>59</sup>

Is Tōson merely combining the two Shelley poems into one, then? Shelley’s “king of kings” is forgotten because of the inevitable downfall of his dynasty; the irony of Ozymandias’s inscription is arguably the primary greatness of Shelley’s poem. Tōson’s speaker, on the other hand, ascribes agency to the entropic powers of the autumn wind, described variously as “silent,” “chill,” “clever,” and “high and fierce.” Nature, embodied in the autumn wind, has become an animated figure, and the humans are absorbed into it. The allusions and personifications that populate the poem and culturally anchor the poem provide no camaraderie to the speaker,<sup>60</sup> though they surely engage readers. The same attitude towards the bleak workings of nature comes back in “Pillow of Grass,” though in that case the buffeting of the subject by wind, sun, and hail bring him “joy” when he is “rattled and feverish.”

### **“Pillow of Grass”: Metonymic Metabolism of Figure and Landscape**

“Pillow of Grass” was first published in the February 1897 issue of *Literary World*. It is a poem about a solitary traveler who overcomes his sorrow and loneliness by finding restored hope in the first signs of spring to arrive in a forlorn landscape. The titular pillow of grass is a conventional poetic way to describe a traveler’s lot. The poem’s thirty quatrains then go on to repeat certain terms and images frequently, the first and most obvious being the theme of the lonely seashore. Seki argues that the

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<sup>59</sup> Lines 12-14.

<sup>60</sup> Compare Doi Bansui’s poems in chapter two, in which the mediation of other texts provides solace.



nature imagery in “Pillow of Grass,” as in his other poems, is not really the concrete flora, fauna, and landscape of the northeast, but just a “general nature” (自然一般: *shizen ippan*). The late arrival of spring there is not a description of reality, according to Seki, but rather a way of symbolizing Tōson’s recovery of his own inner youth. The poem is a poem about ideas, and nature provides metaphors for the human condition.<sup>61</sup> Seki acknowledges Tōson’s innovative use of desolate sand and seashore, but he notes that these are layered on more traditional images of warblers, snow, and the scent of plum blossoms, all prominent in the *Kokinshū*.<sup>62</sup>

What makes Tōson’s use of conventional imagery innovative in this poem, however, is the metonymic progression that pulls readers along from one image to the next. The most fundamental metonymy, which underwrites the entire poem, is that of the journey and the sojourner. The melancholy speaker yearns to find a path—and himself—in a forlorn landscape. As the respective associations of figure and landscape then ramify in their respective directions, the metonymic associations between them attenuate and come to be metaphors. But it is the metonymy more than the metaphor, the cascading imagery more than the transformation of images, that both holds the poem together structurally (for it is not otherwise very unified) and makes it emotionally effective. For the poetic speaker does not himself move through the space. We might even say the metonymy, like a stream of consciousness, makes the poem seem more authentic, or at least more insightful.

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<sup>61</sup> Seki Ryōichi, *Kōshō to shiron: Shimazaki Tōson* (Historical investigation and essay: Shimazaki Tōson) (Kyōiku shuppan sentā, 1984), 420-421.

<sup>62</sup> Seki, 421. Seki gives some credit to Kitamura Tōkoku’s poetry, as well.

Beginning with the declaration that he is alien to his surroundings (specifically, that he is not a plover, but by extension, not at home on a barren seashore), the speaker proceeds to weave the natural phenomena around him into metaphors of his interior struggles. The clunky contrastive analogy of the traveler to a plover soon gives way to the waves of emotion:

The waves at dusk are dark, and the plover cries;	夕波くらく啼く千鳥
And though I am not a plover,	われは千鳥にあらねども
If I flapped the wings of my heart	心の羽をうちふりて
I might fly that lonely way.	さみしきかたに飛べるかな

The entirety of this young heart, forlorn,	若き心の一筋に
Given to inconsolable lament,	なぐさめもなくなげきわび
Frozen into ice inside my breast,	胸の氷のむすぼれて
Has melted and turned to tears.	とけて涙となりにけり

As the white waves that wash over the reeds	蘆葉を洗ふ白波の
Stream and jet from among the rocks,	流れて巖を出づること
My thoughts spill over this pillow of grass;	思ひあまりて草枕
How many pillows have there now been?	まくらのかずの今いくつ

The implied rhythm of the waves is echoed by the flapping wings of the speaker's heart. The waves also alternate with tears, both of which spill onto his pillow. The continued deferral of one image to the next is enhanced by the liquid nature of those images, emphasizing a capacity to overflow. Yet immediately the metonymy moves on—evaporates the water—and associates the traveler's pillow of grass with the backwoods.

How sorrowful is the plight of a man	かなしいかなや人の身の
Desperately seeking abiding comfort,	なきなぐさめを尋ね侘び
Cutting through the pathless woods,	道なき森に分け入りて

Seeking a path that is not there.

などなき道をもとむらん

How full of worry am I, too;  
In the backwoods, hills, or valley shadows,  
At dawn or dusk, no good in looking,  
For the light is gone and autumn over.

われもそれかやうれひかや  
野末に山に谷蔭に  
見るよしもなき朝夕の  
光もなくて秋暮れぬ

In contrast to the unemotional description of scenery in “Rambling Through the Deep Woods,” the speaker in “Pillow of Grass” actively seeks a path in the transcendent landscape, and thus a transcendent purpose:

With no path now for me to follow,  
Longing for the pathless fields,  
Distracted by cares, I have come wandering  
To the Miyagi Plains of the north country.

道なき今の身なればか  
われは道なき野を慕ひ  
思ひ乱れてみちのくの  
宮城野にまで迷ひきぬ

Miyagi Plains, my heart’s shelter!  
When I am rattled and feverish,  
The sun’s weak rays, the withered grasses,  
Even the wild fields have brought me joy.

心の宿の宮城野よ  
乱れて熱き吾身には  
日影も薄く草枯れて  
荒れたる野こそうれしけれ

Alone my melancholy ears  
Hear a lute when the north wind blows;  
In depths of sadness my eyes  
See flowers in the colorless rocks.

ひとりさみしき吾耳は  
吹く北風を琴と聴き  
悲み深き吾目には  
色彩なき石も花と見き

Ah, this pang of loneliness  
Felt by a man of profound taste;  
To whom might I relate the scene  
Of the bleak field this winter’s day?

あゝ孤独の悲痛を  
味ひ知れる人ならで  
誰にかたらん冬の日の  
かくもわびしき野のけしき

He is alone in his transcendence, wondering to whom he can relate the scene, as if famous poetic predecessors like Saigyō and Bashō had not been there before him. The

paradox here is that traveling poets had long relied on the unproblematic consumption of their works, secondary though they may have been. We begin to sense the breakdown of the ability of the “man of profound taste” to relate his experience. But it is not because his descriptions of nature fail; rather, it is because the feelings that brought him here in the first place overflow in unexpected ways upon his arrival. The weak rays of the sun and the withered grasses can bring him joy. In his ears, the wind sounds like a lute; through his tears, flowers seem to sprout from the rocks. The effect is markedly different from the experience of the traveler in the unknown, pathless woods of “Rambling Through the Deep Woods,” for whom “Each step tramples an orchid flower, / Wild plum petals land on my sleeves, / And mountain ivy wraps around my hems.”<sup>63</sup> The traveler in “Pillow of Grass,” however, underlines his loneliness by repeating that he is treading where there is no path, and he only tramples the withered grasses:

Unable to bear the loneliness of the journey,	野のさみしさに堪へかねて
Treading a path where no path is there,	霜と霜との枯草の
On the frost on the withered grasses;	道なき道をふみわけて
When I arrive, how cold the winter seas.	きたれば寒し冬の海

And unlike the traveler in the deep woods, who will be bathed in the warm glow of sunset, here the traveler watches “As the sun sets and the light dies / On this winter’s day that freezes tears.”<sup>64</sup> Six stanzas later, as the next quoted passage shows, time has passed and the traveler’s tears no longer freeze:

At sunset on the lonely rocky shore,	暮はさみしき荒磯の
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<sup>63</sup> あゆめば蘭の花を踏み／ゆけば楊梅袖に散り／袂にまとふ山葛の。

<sup>64</sup> 涙も凍る冬の日／光もなく暮れ行けば。

I lie in sand stained by the tide  
And gaze towards where the sun goes down,  
But all that springs to view are my tears.

潮を染めし砂に伏し  
日の入るかたをながむれど  
湧きくるものは涙のみ

Today's readers of the above stanza may think of Ishikawa Takuboku's unrelieved seaside tears in so many tanka from *A Handful of Sand* (Ichiaku no suna, 1910).<sup>65</sup> But unlike Takuboku's crying soul, Tōson's speaker does indeed find his heart's shelter on the bleak seashore. He finds solace in a bush warbler's song, an utterly conventional sign that spring has arrived. The bird seems to cause a cascade of spring and to release a wave of enthusiasm:

To my lonely ears, accustomed  
To the faraway sound of the surging sea,  
An indistinct call issues  
From a bird of the field, still so young.

遠く湧きくる海の音  
慣れてさみしき吾耳に  
怪しやもるゝものの音は  
まだうらわかき野路の鳥

Oh, how rare that melody!  
To what does it address its song?  
Its green wings are still weak—  
Is it the first bush warbler of spring?

嗚呼めづらしのしらべぞと  
声のゆくへをたづぬれば  
緑の羽もまだ弱き  
それも初音か鶯の

Spring has come! Spring! It is spring!  
Though the white snow still piles high,  
The seedlings sprout into green,

春きにけらし春よ春  
まだ白雪の積れども  
若菜の萌えて色青き

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<sup>65</sup> As one example, the very first poem:  
On the white sand of a little island's rocky  
shore in the eastern sea,  
drenched with tears,  
I toy with a crab

東海の小島の磯の白砂に  
われ泣きぬれて  
蟹とたはむる

(My translation follows Ishikawa's own idiosyncratic lineation.) Ishikawa Takuboku, *Takuboku kashū* (Takuboku tanka collection) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1993), 18.

And my mood skims over the sand.

こゝちこそすれ砂の上に

Spring has come! Spring! It is spring  
Happily delivered on the winds;  
It seems that spring has really come—  
The scent of plums perfumes the shore.

春きにけらし春よ春  
うれしや風に送られて  
きたるらしと思へばか  
梅が香ぞする海の辺に

I climb a giant rock on the shore  
And from up high I look around;  
In the dawn clouds spring has arrived,  
And far away the sound of the tide at daybreak.

磯辺に高き大巖の  
うへにのぼりてながむれば  
春やきぬらん東雲の  
潮の音遠き朝ぼらけ

The poetic speaker has thus been called away from civilization by the plover, and then called back to civilization by the bush warbler, a bird that, in conventional literary depictions, would spend the off-season in the hills—the wild—and then visit the valleys—society, or proximate to it—at the beginning of spring. His roundabout route has metabolized his melancholy, allowing him to return to society and his fullness as a human being. Throughout, the wilderness of nature reverberates with conventional connotations, each metonymically connected to the others in an intertextual and intersubjective web. These conventional connotations, these secondary natures, are the intersubjective source of his rehabilitation.

### **“Rambling Through the Deep Woods”: Melting into Landscape**

“Rambling Through the Deep Woods” is a hybrid. The form of the poem is unique, with a narrating speaker entering the deep woods, interspersed with the alternating chants of a mountain spirit and a tree spirit. First the narrator paints a transcendental picture. Then that narrator heeds the invitation of the two spirit voices

and explores the forest. The narrator's voice does not explicitly locate himself in the woods until, near the end of the poem, he sighs, "Ah, here I am alone at sunset."<sup>66</sup> It is clear that there must be some person there who sees, hears, steps, and experiences solitude—human solitude, but not loneliness, surrounded as he is by sentient, sympathetic nature—while rambling in the woods, but that person only reveals himself slowly, both in terms of the language and in the action of the poem. The emotions of the explorer, then, are also held in check during the painting of the landscape. At the conclusion of the poem, we arrive at the wanderer's emotional repose, which, like everything he sees, is dyed by the sunset.

In the first of the four narrative passages, there is only detached description; the presence of anything like a person is only hinted at through the personification of winter as a hatchet-wielding carpenter and spring as painting leaves with a green brush. It proceeds with a catalogue of evergreen trees, which the poet Kanbara Ariake (蒲原有明, 1875-1952) thinks could have come straight from Sei Shōnagon's (清少納言, born ca. 965) *Pillow Book* (枕草子: *Makura no sōshi*, ca. 1000).<sup>67</sup> Indeed, the names of the trees—red camphor, cypress, cedar, five-needled pine, chinquapin, white evergreen oak, chinaberry, and maple—are conspicuously similar. That they could populate a poem set in the northeast as easily as they could a commentary written in the capital suggests an

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<sup>66</sup> あゝゆふまぐれわれひとり。

<sup>67</sup> Kanbara Ariake, "Kaisetsu" (Explanatory notes), in *Tōson zenshishū* (Tōson's complete poetry) (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1951); cited in Mizumoto Seiichirō, *Shimazaki Tōson kenkyū: Shi no sekai* (Shimazaki Tōson studies: The world of poetry) (Tokyo: Kindai bungeisha, 2010), 155.

idealized, not specific, landscape. Like Sei Shōnagon, who almost certainly never set foot in a forest and whose knowledge of trees was for their domestic uses and poetic associations, Tōson's poetic traveler has not explicitly arrived in this forest at the end of winter when the evergreens are at their most conspicuous:

When the echo of the carpenter's	力を刻む木匠の
Life-stealing hatchet dies away,	うちふる斧のあとを絶え
And the chisel that carves up spring's grasses	春の草花彫刻の
And flowers has ceased ringing,	鑿の韻もとゞめじな
Of the many-colored spring leaves	いろさまざまの春の葉に
Not one green brushstroke remains;	青一筆の痕もなく
The red camphor tree of a thousand branches	千枝にわかるゝ赤樟も
Is in its natural state,	おのづからなるすがたのみ
The cypress is wild, the cedar straight,	檜は荒し杉直し
The five-needled pine is black, and the chinquapin	五葉は黒し椎の木の
Branches cross with the white evergreen oak,	枝をまじゆる白樫や
The chinaberry stalks fan out,	栲は茎をよこたえて
And the gentle young maple	枝と枝とにもゆる火の
Has a flame on every twig.	なかにやさしき若楓

Between the first and second narrative passages of "Rambling Through the Deep Woods," the mountain spirit and the tree spirit sing of the forest's secrets and the coming spring. The tree spirit then invites the narrator:

Tree Spirit	木精
Cast aside	ふるきころもを
Those winter robes,	ぬぎすてゝ
And attire yourself	はるのかすみを
In the mists of spring.	まとへかし
 Drawn out by the song	 なくうぐひすの



Of the bush warbler,  
Sing  
In the deep woods.

ねにいでて  
ふかきはやしに  
うたへかし

Each of the two song-like exchanges that follow, as well, ends with the tree spirit's pressing the traveler on. It is worth noting that the rhythms of these spirit voices are exaggerated by the line breaks, and by the almost exclusive use of *hiragana* to transcribe their words.

Bury the old  
Fallen leaves  
In the shade  
Of the soft green leaves.

ふるきおちばを  
やはらかき  
青葉のかげに  
葬れよ

Wake up from  
Your winter's dream  
And come  
To the spring forest.

ふゆのゆめぢを  
さめいでゝ  
はるのはやしに  
きたれかし

.....

Now the sun's rays  
And the spring mists,  
Now the clouds during blossom time  
And the spring rains.

いまひのひかり  
はるがすみ  
いまはなぐもり  
はるのあめ

Ah, ah, spellbound  
By the flowers' dew—  
Sing of this  
In the deep woods.

あゝあゝはなの  
つゆに酔ひ  
ふかきはやしに  
うたへかし

The narrator enters this landscape. As in many Japanese and Chinese poems, the

omission of a grammatical subject leaves vague who the narrator could be.<sup>68</sup> I have translated that person as “I,” although I would have preferred a way to express the action without shutting off possibilities. Unfortunately, the only way to do that would be to introduce dangling participial clauses. In any case, the traveler is intruding on the scene by trampling and inspecting its secrets close up.

Each step tramples an orchid flower,	あゆめば蘭の花を踏み
Wild plum petals land on my sleeves,	ゆけば楊梅袖に散り
And mountain ivy wraps around my hems;	袂にまとふ山葛の
Turning over an ivy leaf, I find	葛のうら葉をかへしては
In the shade of a fern a mountain strawberry	女蘿の蔭のやまいちご
Has dropped its colorful fruit;	色よき実こそ落ちにけれ
Each corner of the hillscape	岡やまつゞき隅々も
Slopes gently into the distance,	いとなだらかに行き延びて
And through the deep woods of the valley	ふかきはやしの谷あひに
The scent of asters spreads;	乱れてにほふふじばかま
In the valley flowers bloom, in the valley they scatter,	谷に花さき谷にちり
And unknown to men they decay;	人にしられず朽つるめり
As I approach from the dark ravine I find	せまりて暗き峽より
The trees of the deep mountains open into a clearing,	やゝひらけたる深山木の

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<sup>68</sup> Compare, for example, Li Bai's (李白, 701-62) famous quatrain “Sitting Alone on Jingting Hill” (獨坐敬亭山: *Du zuo Jingting shan*):

A flock of birds flies high away,	眾鳥高飛盡
A stray cloud goes off alone;	孤雲獨去閑
Gazing at each other, neither tires—	相看兩不厭
There is only Jingting Hill.	只有敬亭山

Once the many birds and the one cloud have disappeared, only the solitary hill-sitter implied in the title is left to exchange gazes with the hill. But then the poem ends by erasing that sitting and gazing person, too—unless we translate 只有 (*zhi you*) as “[I] only have.”

And spring shows forth in the tree branches.  
Scraping past the dense leaf-tips  
Of overgrown wide-leaf bamboo grass,  
I come to the far edge of the valley to look;  
Say, waterfall, where do you lead?  
A brocade of white with a lonely voice  
Falls on the green rocks;  
At least for the young monkeys,  
The sound never lets up.

春は小枝のたゝずまひ  
しげりて広き熊笹の  
葉末をふかくかきわけて  
谷のかなたにきて見れば  
いづくに行くか滝川よ  
声もさびしや白糸の  
青き巖に流れ落ち  
若き猿のためにだに  
音をとゝむる時ぞなき

Curiosity leads the narrator on through pathless woods whose beauties do not exist for the sake of humans. Instead, they seem to exist for the pleasure of the disembodied mountain and tree spirits. Emotion plays no part in the narrator's journey, until, as we shall see, he physically comes to rest and allows the scene to encompass him.

“Rambling Through the Deep Woods” thus begins with the kind of naming function that goes back to Sei Shōnagon, but we might say that by the end of the poem Tōson has traded in classical Japanese echoes for modern English shadows in his description of the clouds. Specifically, we see why John Ruskin's (1819-1900) famous discussion of clouds in his *Modern Painters* is frequently cited as a significant influence on Tōson's nature writing.<sup>69</sup> While the impact may be more apparent in the prose descriptions of the *Chikuma River Sketches*, it would be difficult to imagine that an influence as deep as Ruskin's had lain dormant during Tōson's poetry career. Takahashi stresses this point, as well: “Although the influence of *Modern Painters* [on Tōson] is typically said to begin with ‘Clouds’ from *Fallen Plum Blossoms*, it can already be seen

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<sup>69</sup> See for example, Takahashi, 225-26.

in *Seedlings*, in which he adopts a realistic method [リアリズムの方法: *riarizumu no hōhō*] that undercuts the poetry, a forced clumsiness that imparts a sense of youthful tension to *Seedlings*.<sup>70</sup> That realism, which Takahashi calls forced clumsiness, is also a shift towards a focus on affect, and it accompanies the surfacing of the experiencing subject in the final section of the poem. The traveler who has maintained a stance of detached observation now is flooded with color:

I gaze at the clouds and count on my fingers	ゆびをりくればいつたびも
How many times they have changed colors;	かはれる雲をながむるに
White becomes yellow, and now I am unsure	白きは黄なりなにをかも
In what color I would dip my brush;	もつ筆にせむ色彩の
Before long everything wears a pale brown tint,	いつしか淡く茶を帯びて
And now the clouds have turned to crimson;	雲くれなゐとかはりけり
Ah, here I am alone at sunset,	あゝゆふまぐれわれひとり
The woods I track open up to me,	たどる林もひらけきて
And in the sheer silence on the banks	いと静かなる湖の
Of the lake azaleas bloom;	岸辺にさける花躑躅
As the drifting clouds pass I see their shadows,	うき雲ゆけばかげ見えて
While the spring sun sinks into the water	水に沈める春の日や
And dyes it a shade of crimson;	それ紅の色染めて
The clouds now are bathed in violet,	雲紫となりぬれば
And the waterfowl's shadows are red;	かげさへあかき水鳥の
The lake in spring, the grass on the banks,	春のみづうみ岸の草

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<sup>70</sup> Takahashi Masako, 225. Meanwhile, in 1896 Tōson himself translated part of Ruskin's essay "Of Classical Landscape" from *Modern Painters*, vol. 3 (in *The Complete Works of John Ruskin*, ed. Cook and Wedderburn [London, 1904], 5:221-247). See "Ōshū kodai no sansuiga o ronzu" (On European classical landscape painting), *Tōhoku bungaku* (Northeast literature), no. 19 (1896); reprinted in a "translated works" section of *Shimazaki Tōson zenshū* (Shimazaki Tōson's complete works), vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1950). Naff notes that Tōson "gave special attention during his first months at Sendai to Ruskin's *Modern Painters* and English translations of Goethe [1749-1832] and Heine [1797-1856]" (Naff, 155).

The deep woods, and the azalea blossoms,  
Even the solitary body of this lost man,  
In deep purples and crimsons  
All are cast by the sunset.

深き林や花つゝじ  
迷ふひとりのわがみだに  
深紫の紅の  
彩にうつろふ夕まぐれ

Where “Pillow of Grass” ends with an energetic new dawn and a new season, both literally and metaphorically, “Rambling Through the Deep Woods” ends in repose at dusk. As Mizumoto Seiichirō says, the solitary traveler “melts into the scene” (その光景に溶けこみ: *sono kōkei ni tokekomi*).<sup>71</sup> Sasabuchi calls this poem an example of the kind of “pantheistic vision of nature” (汎神論的自然観: *hanshinronteki shizen-kan*) that Tōson will display later in *Fallen Plum Blossoms*.<sup>72</sup> The poetic speaker has succeeded, if perhaps only temporarily, in following Schiller’s advice for the moral individual, allowing nature to surround him “like a lovely idyll,” and rekindling the “flame of the ideal.” He, with Schiller, seeks to *undiscover* landscape as landscape and to melt into it, relinquishing his position in relation to it.

In that bath of evening sunlight, the poem ends more bountifully than if it had retreated behind a narrative framework of recollection from afar. Compare the final stanza of Wordsworth’s “I wandered lonely as a cloud,” in which the vision of daffodils beside a bay is a source of emotional strength long after the poetic speaker has left the scene:

For oft when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,

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<sup>71</sup> Mizumoto, 159-60.

<sup>72</sup> Sasabuchi, “*Bungakkai*” to *sono jidai* (“Literary world” and its age), vol. 2 (Tokyo: Meiji shoin, 1960), 1169.

They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude,  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the Daffodils.<sup>73</sup>

Wordsworth's poem stresses the poignancy and emotional sustenance of a nature that the poetic speaker can keep with him anywhere. He has, in effect, surrounded himself in his own vision of nature, satisfying himself with what Schiller would call nature's happiness, *not* its completeness. Or, to apply Kroeber's more perspicacious description of the poetic subject's imaginative incorporation into the plenitude of a paradoxically limited ecosystemic whole, Wordsworth's poetic speaker is able to enjoy the iterative bounties that conjure temporal and spatial wholeness even from his couch at home. That limitedness is portable for Wordsworth's poem, but the drawn out process of "Rambling Through the Deep Woods" leaves us with the speaker in the woods at sunset. The wholeness is more profound because it is open-ended.

To help see how distinctive "Rambling Through the Deep Woods" is, we can contrast it with Masaoka Shiki's (1867-1902) thematically and structurally similar "Flood" (洪水: *Kōzui*), a relatively obscure *shintaiishi* that was published five months earlier in *The Japanese People* (日本人: *Nihonjin*). Shiki's poem has a cast of three *kami*—deities of a river, forest, and rain—who bewail the incursions of human industry into their domains. The poem begins thus:

Where the cedars were deep and the water was clear,	杉深く水清きところ、
Two <i>kami</i> met.	二人の神はいであひぬ。
The thousand-year-old tree was half decayed,	千歳の老木半ば朽ち、

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<sup>73</sup> Composed in 1804 and first published in *Poems in Two Volumes*, 1807.

And above its roots where the steamy moss lay deep,  
The *kami* of the woods sat himself down.  
“I have not seen you in so very long.  
How have you gotten along lately?  
The body that lives in the mountains is too rough  
For the world, even when one tries to open up to it.  
Except for the sound of the train that passes by the  
Foot of the mountain, and the castles visible far off,  
I see or hear nothing of it.  
Along the great river once again  
You pass near the city,  
And are you not full of joy?  
Cheer me up in my idleness  
With rare tales of the world.”  
Leaning against a boulder  
Where water gushed out,  
The *kami* of the river smiled a bit  
And wrung his hands, saying, “Nothing to tell.  
In the city where so many folks live  
There is nothing interesting going on.  
The steamboats churn up the waves,  
And soot lies upon the water’s surface.  
If without thinking I should step where  
A new stream has been built near the riverbank,  
How terrifying that would be! For here, too,  
Factories depend on the flow  
To power their great big waterwheels,  
And I would get caught in the middle of a whirlpool  
And swallowed up inside it.  
From time to time I play there,  
But when I see the shadows of the chimneys

苔厚く蒸す根の上に  
腰打ちかけし森の神  
「絶えて久しく逢はざりき。  
此頃いかにおはすらん。  
山に住む身は世に疎く、  
開けゆくてふ有様も、  
はるかに見ゆる高殿と  
麓を過ぐる汽車の音の  
外には見聞く事もなし。  
大川づたひ君はまた  
都に近く往来して  
樂き事ぞ多からん。  
もの珍しき世語りに  
わがつれづれを慰めよ。」  
落ちくる水の迸る  
巖に半ば身を寄せて、  
少しほほゑむ川の神  
手を打ふりて「さないひそ。  
人多く住む都邊に  
何面白き事あらん。  
汽船は波をひるがへし、  
水の面に煤満てり。  
思はぬ岸に新しき  
小川出来ぬと蹈み入れば、  
あら恐しや。こゝも亦  
流をたのむ工場の  
大水車しかけつゝ、  
渦巻く中へわれらをば  
落し入れんとするものぞ。  
たまたまそこに遊ぶとも、  
煙突の影、鐵橋の

And the shadows the steel bridges cast,  
That awful feeling returns.”

影のうつるを見る時は  
引つ返し来るうたてさよ。」

Shiki goes on to introduce the *kami* of the rain, and they discuss the encroachments of human civilization into their realms. The poem suggests that the *kami* had once overseen what Giffords calls the pejorative, “comfortably complacent” pastoral harmony, but in its specific charges against chimney soot and waterwheel eddies, it also reads as an early environmentalist protest against industry. It is, further, a protest lodged from the point of view not of humans but of *kami*, and this limits its environmentalism to an ecology that excludes humans. In Toson’s poem, however, the poetic process of interacting with landscape undermines the binary separation of subject and object, lending it a deeper ecological potential.

### **Postlude: Towards Chikuma River**

The prevailing narrative is that *Seedlings*, which represented intoxication by love, gave way to the more somber descriptive poems and prose of *Fallen Plum Blossoms*.<sup>74</sup> These judgments only serve to reinforce the narrative of Tōson’s broader and ineluctable shift from love lyrics towards naturalist prose. Further, they contribute to a portrayal of love poetry as the province of the young and lustful. Tōson himself participated in this revisionist history as he looked back on his poetry.

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<sup>74</sup> Takahashi Masako notes that the reputation of *Seedlings* is as a commentary on a “world of light and dark,” in which “paeans to love are layered with the fear of the sensual.” Takahashi, 218. Donald Keene, comparing the first and last collection, writes that *Fallen Plum Blossoms* “represented a further step away from the lyricism that had brought [Tōson] fame only three years before,” and that certain lines of “Song of Travel on the Chikuma River” strike a “note of acceptance, so foreign to the turbulent romanticism of Tōson’s early poetry.” Keene, *Dawn to the West*, 213-14.



One final oddity in Tōson's look back on his poetry is "Refined Language and Poetry" (雅言と詩歌: *Gagen to shiika*), which appeared at the end of *Fallen Plum Blossoms* in 1901. Naff calls this Tōson's "final and most sophisticated essay on the problem of Japanese poetry and poetic technique," with "a maturity not present before Komoro."<sup>75</sup> But while its rational argument displays a familiarity both with prosody and with a range of figures from Li Bai to Goethe, it is also less applicable to our study precisely because it mystifies less. It is, moreover, imbued with skepticism about Japanese poetic and linguistic potential, to the point where it is hard to believe the same person not only chose to end his final collection of new poems with it, but also went on to write a much more sanguine preface to the collected edition of his poetry three years later.

The essay carefully enumerates six failures of Japanese poetry, three of which are limitations of prosody (韻律: *inritsu*) and three of which are limitations of expression (表情: *hyōjō*). The prosodic limitations boil down to the limited number of vowels and accents and the lack of individuation of words.<sup>76</sup> The limitations of expression, constituting a more severe charge, are that "the words lack precise meanings" (語義の精密ならざる: *gogi no seimitsu narazaru*), "the vocabulary is impoverished" (語彙に豊かなりざる: *goi ni yutaka narazaru*), and "the range of refined language is cramped" (雅

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<sup>75</sup> Naff, 215.

<sup>76</sup> Shimazaki Tōson, "Gagen to shiika" (Refined language and poetry), in *Shimazaki Tōson zenshū* (Complete works of Shimazaki Tōson), vol. 2 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1949), 384-387.

言の音域広闊ならざる: *gagen no on'iki kōkatsu narazaru*).<sup>77</sup> It is hardly surprising that, having leveled such charges, Tōson then gave up writing poetry and fled instead into the arms of Naturalist prose.

Another way of looking at this is to say that Tōson stopped seeing ideals in nature through the prisms of allusive “secondary natures” that invested natural phenomena with conventional meanings. Indeed, the conventional meanings had long since become stale. Yet what makes Tōson’s Romantic nature poems enduringly distinctive is the way he summoned multiple sources of allusive natures to help him explore the boundaries between the real and the ideal. Tōson’s late friend and mentor Kitamura Tōkoku had written, in his influential essay “World-Weary Poets and Women” (厭世詩家と女性: *Ensei shika to josei*, 1892), that the (implicitly male) poet flees his innocent “ideal world” (想世界: *sōsekai*) in order to seek love in the degraded “real world” (実世界: *jissekai*).<sup>78</sup> This essay certainly would have haunted Tōson later when he tried to quell his forbidden love first for a student and then for his own niece. We may even choose to see in Tōson’s descriptive nature poems an attempt to flee from what Satō called the “metaphysical anguish” over sexual mores. In “Rambling Through the Deep Woods” and “Pillow of Grass,” rather than fleeing the ideal world to enter the real world for the sake of love, Tōson’s poetic subjects fly into the embrace of an idealized nature free of public morality.

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<sup>77</sup> Shimazaki Tōson, “Gagen to shiika,” 387, 390.

<sup>78</sup> Kitamura Tōkoku, “Ensei shika to josei” (World-weary poets and women), *Tōkoku zenshū* (Tōkoku’s complete works), vol. 1 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1950), 254-264.

Thus, Tōson's earlier descriptive nature poems, such as those examined here, thrive especially in the way they mine the secondary nature to cast about for moral meaning, for happiness or completeness. Kamei Hideo has pointed to Tōson's literary participation in the "idea that the description of natural scenes could restore and elevate one's humanity," a "prominent theme in this era."<sup>79</sup> Describing Tōson's writing process for his later *Chikuma River Sketches*, Kamei posits a process of "visual intentionality" (視向性: *shikōsei*), by which "Tōson consciously chose a method of description based on the idea of sharing nature with some other person."<sup>80</sup> In *Broken Commandment*, it is in the "descriptions of nature that cannot be shared with anyone else" when the protagonist "lacks any reciprocal relationship with other people that he first encounters. . . 'solitary nature,'" and this is when "he is in danger of being bewitched by a transcendental nature."<sup>81</sup> But what of the solitary subjects of "Pillow of Grass" and "Rambling Through the Deep Woods"? Do these figures face solitary nature? Do the implied readers not share these scenes? The poems' secondary natures can be intersubjectively experienced through shared sensibilities in the literary ecosystem. Tōson finds completeness there by metabolizing his alienated individuality in the transcendental poetic nature.

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<sup>79</sup> Kamei, 233.

<sup>80</sup> Kamei, 232. See also Michael Bourdaghs's explanation of Kamei's use of "visual intentionality" in his Editor's Introduction to the translated text, in Kamei, xv-xvi.

<sup>81</sup> Kamei, 233-34.

## CHAPTER TWO: DOI BANSUI'S REFLECTION OF AN ABSENT IDEAL

E'en gods must yield—religions take their turn:  
'Twas Jove's—'tis Mahomet's; and other creeds  
Will rise with other years, till man shall learn  
Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds;  
Poor child of Doubt and Death, whose hope is built on reeds.  
—George Gordon Byron<sup>1</sup>

Those ideals are vanished  
That once swelled my intemperate heart.  
—Friedrich Schiller<sup>2</sup>

Wandering in a vale of tears,	涙の谷にさまよひて
Roused from a sleepless night's dream;	ねぬ夜の夢に驚けば
Here weeps Byron over blood,	こゝにバイロン血に泣きて
Whence comes the "child of Doubt and Death";	「死と疑の子」となのり
And here does Schiller raise his voice	こゝにシルレル聲あげて
To cry, "Those ideals are vanished!"	「理想は消ゆ」と叫ぶなり。
	—Doi Bansui <sup>3</sup>

Doi Bansui (土井晩翠, 1871–1952) wrote both poems that emphasize the mystifying role of the poet, and poems that express the poignancy of no longer viable mystifications. He sang expansively of a sublime natural order, but also of the loss of that order. In that sense, Bansui may be among the most Romantic of the Meiji-era (1868-1912) poets. Yet he also incorporated into his poems a wealth of allusions to other poets' lost

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<sup>1</sup> *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, canto 2, stanza 3, lines 5-9.

<sup>2</sup> Die Ideale sind zerronnen, / Die einst das trunkne Herz geschwellt. "Die Ideale" (The ideals), stanza 2, lines 3-4, in *Gedichte von Friedrich von Schiller* (Poems of Friedrich Schiller) (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1859), 209.

<sup>3</sup> "Yūbe no omoi" (Evening thoughts), stanza 8, lines 1-6.

mystifications. He found the deposed gods and “vanished ideals” of European Romantic poets a particularly rich source of pathos. The invocation of other poets is un-Romantic in the sense that it downplays the putative immediacy of Bansui’s own subjective experience. Bansui’s poetry, however, makes no claim to be direct observation or unmediated emotion. It is thoroughly idealistic and builds on allusions to history and other great poets as the basis for intersubjective experience. His vision of poetry is not simply to cobble together the best of the past from its diverse sources; instead, his work speaks passionately to the agglomerative role of each new poet in illuminating the human condition. Poems contain the traces of earlier poets’ insights, and these insights—not love, not deities that are themselves to be discovered only in poetic creations—are the sole abiding tapestry of humanity’s ideals.

Bansui was careful to incorporate the old even as he worked towards a new idiom. His use of allusion might be thought of as expanding the traditional Japanese poetic practice of “drawing on a base poem” (本歌取り: *honkadori*).<sup>4</sup> In broadening his range of poetic sources, he offered an expanded vision of what it meant to be literate in modern Japanese poetry. References to Chinese classics, which educated Japanese of Bansui’s generation would have recognized, are mixed with allusions to Lucretius (ca. 94 to ca. 55 BCE), John Milton (1608-74), Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), and Victor Hugo (1802-85). This combination is foreshadowed

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<sup>4</sup> *Honkadori*, which Earl Miner translates as “allusive variation” and describes as “echoing and alluding to older poems. . . in such a way that the older meaning is added to, or harmonized with, one’s own surface meaning,” became common at the end of the Heian period (794-1185). Earl Miner, *An Introduction to Japanese Court Poetry* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), 24.

even in the title of Bansui's first collection, *Nature Has Feelings* (天地有情: *Tenchi ujō*, 1899), which expresses a Wordsworthian sentiment in Chinese syntax.<sup>5</sup> Further, Bansui's citations are often to passages that are themselves full of multiple references. Indeed, Bansui demonstrates that a conscientious reader or writer cannot dip into Shelley without immersing oneself in Milton and Lucretius, as well. The polyglot Bansui draws on sources as diverse as the "heap of broken images" T. S. Eliot will assemble in *The Waste Land* a generation later—but with highly regular prosodic and thematic structure.<sup>6</sup> Like *The Waste Land*, *Nature Has Feelings* deserves to be celebrated for its complex originality, its elevation of ideas over observations, and its ironic recursiveness.

Bansui's invocation of both Chinese and European canonical predecessors in his poems, even as he embraces poetic reform, allows him to engage with and update what we might call "universal" or "eternal" themes in poetry. The highest payoff in reading Bansui is to read him *with* Shelley, Schiller, Hugo, and Lucretius: to consider his poems not as discrete units (nor even his published collections as such) but as intertextual nodes joining other texts, that is, as maps of reading (and misreading) between

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<sup>5</sup> Bansui later remarked that words of Chinese origin were an important way to strengthen the phrasing of his poems, in the same way that Hugo and Petrarch used Latin elements in their poems. Doi Bansui, "Tenchi ujō no koro" (Around the time of *Nature Has Feelings*), interview with Yoshida Seiichi, *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 11:8 (1934), 147.

<sup>6</sup> Although Bansui added endnotes to identify some references in his poems, his explanations have nowhere near the detail of Eliot's.

languages, voices, times, spaces.<sup>7</sup> In doing so, we enact his ideal—a process, not a product—of reading poetry.

As the following discussion will show, Bansui's idealistic, allusive poems foreground his and other poets' roles as interpreters of phenomena and ideals, both of which remain out of reach. In doing so, he encourages readers to triangulate between text and intertexts, to burrow into the phenomenological uncertainty between and among poems, to look for what is absent. Bansui's poems reflect on the mediation of his own and others' language in their preoccupation with literal and metaphorical shadows, reflections, and images—each of which is a partial translation for the pregnant but fittingly empty term *kage* (usually written 影). The allusive absences and deferrals in Bansui's poetry can, indeed, be summed up in the word *kage*, a term that, in a self-referential way, is a shadow of its own meaning. *Kage* becomes a theme throughout his poems. As Bansui writes self-referentially about his vision of the idealized poet, his poems then become *kage* of other poems, while he becomes a *kage* of other poets. His ideal readers, those who would follow the intertextual trail with him, are *kage*, as well.

Unfortunately, Bansui's poetry has fallen into the obscurity of the shadows. The rise of vernacular free verse in the first decade of the twentieth century quickly displaced the regular twelve-syllable lines of “new-style poetry” (新体詩: *shintaiishi*) that Bansui had executed to outstanding effect in his early poems. In addition, his poetry both

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<sup>7</sup> Harold Bloom's “map of misreading” might seem useful here, but in fact it is limited by Bloom's concern with pairs of poets who write in the same language. It assumes, moreover, that the “anxiety of influence” is a universal psychological condition among poets. But traditional Japanese poetry does not invite such ascriptions of anxiety. See Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973) and *A Map of Misreading* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

invokes a traditional canon, including Chinese classics, which was soon to disappear from the curriculum, and also signals his ambitions to outline and incorporate a sophisticated Western literary canon. The ideal readers of his poetry, then, no longer exist; perhaps they never did.

*Nature Has Feelings* is thus an experiment that engages with the glorious but flawed ideals of poetry. Indeed, Bansui discovers the utmost poetic poignancy precisely in the vulnerabilities of idealistic poets. Like Emily Dickinson, he “dwell[s] in Possibility — / A fairer House than Prose.” This study addresses the possibility of poetry, through an examination of the poignancy of unachieved ideals. Specifically, through my reading of Bansui’s key poems on the art, origins, and ideal readings of poetry, I not only hope to resuscitate his works, but also aim at the broader goal of revising our historical understanding and readerly expectations of Meiji poetry. In his most famous poem, “Moon on the Castle Ruins” (荒城の月: *Kōjō no tsuki*),<sup>8</sup> Bansui asks:

Where now is the light of long ago	春高樓の花の宴
That broke through branches of the ancient pines,	めぐる盃影さして
Twinkling on the wine cups going round	千代の松が枝わけ出でし
Spring’s blossom-viewing banquet at the palace?	むかしの光いまいづこ。

Where now is the light of long ago	秋陣營の霜の色
That glinted on the swords stuck in the ground,	鳴き行く雁の數見せて

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<sup>8</sup> This poem was not originally part of *Nature Has Feelings*. Composed in 1898, it was first published as a song, with music by Taki Rentarō (滝廉太郎, 1879-1903), in a songbook by the Tokyo School of Music in 1901. It has since become standard to include in editions of *Nature Has Feelings*. Kubo Tadao, Matsumura Midori, and Ishimaru Hisashi, eds., *Doi Bansui, Susukida Kyūkin, Kanbara Ariake shū*, vol. 18 of *Nihon kindai bungaku taikei* (Modern Japanese literature set) (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1972), 463.



Showing the many squawking geese flying over,  
The color of frost at the fall encampment?

植うるつるぎに照りそひし  
むかしの光今いづこ。

For whom now shines the unchanging light  
Of the midnight moon on the castle ruins?  
All that remains in the hedge is the vine,  
All that sings in the pines is the wind.

いま荒城のよはの月  
變らぬ光たがためぞ  
垣に残るはただかつら  
松に歌ふはただあらし。

Though heaven's image does not change,  
Does not the figure of the passing ages  
Of glory and decay reflect even now?  
Ah, the midnight moon on the castle ruins!

天上影は變らねど  
榮枯は移る世の姿  
寫さんとてか今もなほ  
あゝ荒城の夜半の月。

The same light as of long ago shines on the lingering absence of classical court blossom-viewing banquets and medieval encampments. But we might ask as well, where is the light that once shone on Bansui the poet and his ideals? The source of that poetic light, reflected indirectly off Bansui's poetry just as the light in the poem reflects off the castle ruins, the wine cups, and even the luminous moon itself, may be impossible to track to its source. But the pensive observer—of the castle ruins or of the poem—might yet see the traces of past poetic grandeur, and content oneself that such a response is itself a poetic insight.

### **Doi Bansui's Background**

Doi Bansui was born Tsuchii Rinkichi (土井林吉) in Sendai in 1871. As the son of a well-to-do merchant, Bansui received a good education. In addition to Chinese

classics such as *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*,<sup>9</sup> Bansui learned English and came to admire the poetry of Shelley. He went on to study French, German, Italian, Latin, and Greek on his own. He first used the sobriquet “Bansui” (晩翠: late green) in 1893, when one of his poems appeared in a student literary journal of the Second Higher School in his hometown of Sendai.<sup>10</sup> Late in his career, Bansui specified that he preferred the alternate pronunciation “Doi” for the characters in his surname.<sup>11</sup>

At Tokyo Imperial University, Bansui studied English literature with the writer Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904). He began publishing the poems that would appear in *Nature Has Feelings* as early as 1896, while a student of English literature at Tokyo Imperial University. Nineteen of the forty-one poems that would appear in *Nature Has Feelings* were first published in *Imperial Literature* (帝国文学: Teikoku bungaku), the literary journal where Bansui was on the editorial staff. Another nine poems were first published in *Reflections Magazine* (反省雑誌: Hansei zasshi) in January, June, and August of 1898.<sup>12</sup> The full collection was published by the leading publisher

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<sup>9</sup> *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (三国志演義: *Sangokushi engi* [Ch.: 三国演义: *Sanguo yanyi*]) was written in the fourteenth century. It became very popular in Japan as well, both in the original Chinese and later in vernacular Japanese translations for wider consumption.

<sup>10</sup> Kubo Tadao, “*Tenchi ujō ron: Bansui yōshiki no seiritsu o megutte*” (On *Nature Has Feelings*: Concerning the formation of Bansui’s style), *Tōhoku gakuin daigaku ronshū: Ippan kyōiku*, no. 34 (December 1958), 2.

<sup>11</sup> Doi Bansui, *Ame no furu hi wa tenki ga warui* (The weather is bad on rainy days) (Tokyo: Daiyūkaku, 1934); quoted in Kubo, *Doi Bansui*, 449.

<sup>12</sup> *Reflections Magazine* was later to become the important *Central Review* (中央公論: Chūō kōron).

Hakubunkan in April 1899, but only after the intervention of Bansui's colleague at *Imperial Literature*, Takayama Chogyū (高山樗牛, 1871-1902).<sup>13</sup> Chogyū, a graduate of Sendai's Second Higher School like Bansui, had written positive unsigned reviews of Bansui's poetry both in *Imperial Literature* and in *The Sun* (太陽: Taiyō), where he was also an editor. The collection went through dozens of printings in the first few years, and, thanks to sustained popularity, had had seventy-four printings by 1923, the year of the Great Kantō Earthquake.<sup>14</sup>

The poems in *Nature Has Feelings* are all highly regular *shintaiishi*: all the poems are written in lines of twelve syllables each with a caesura after the seventh, and most poems contain stanzas of uniform length.<sup>15</sup> Within these structures, Bansui sets up opposing or complementary pairs and thematic sets, executed with considerable precision. As a rhetorical device, the carefully regulated structure prevents any sense of overflowing emotion, making it antithetical to Yosano Akiko's "tangled" (乱れ: *midare*) poetry. It also contrasts with Masaoka Shiki's "sketching from life" (写生: *shasei*):

Bansui's poetry makes no claim to be direct observation or unmediated emotion.

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<sup>13</sup> Chogyū's intervention to get *Nature Has Feelings* published is widely cited; Bansui himself mentions this in *Bansui hōdan: nanajūnananen o kataru* (A chat with Bansui: Seventy-seven years) (Sendai: Kahoku shinposha, 1948); quoted in Kubo, *Doi Bansui*, 448.

<sup>14</sup> Kubo Tadao, "Zuisō *Tenchi ujō*" (Random thoughts on *Nature Has Feelings*), in Doi Bansui, *Tenchi ujō* (Nature has feelings) (Sendai: Sendai bungakukan, 2005), 192. For further discussion of the reception of Bansui's work, see also the introductory chapter.

<sup>15</sup> This is not to say Bansui never wrote other kinds of poems. From his early years he also composed waka, and later he published works with much longer lines, though typically still in units of five and seven syllables.

Appended to the volume were Bansui's translations of excerpts from Thomas Carlyle's (1795-1881) "The Hero as Poet," from Shelley's "Defence of Poetry," from George Sand's (1804-76) *Letters of a Traveler* (Lettres d'un voyageur), from Ralph Waldo Emerson's (1803-82) essay "The Poet," and from Victor Hugo's preface to *Rays and Shadows* (Les Rayons et les Ombres).

After publishing *Nature Has Feelings*, Bansui returned to Sendai to teach at the Second Higher School. While there he published a second volume of poetry, *Morning Bell* (曉鐘: Gyōshō, 1901). Although *Morning Bell* also contained many acclaimed poems, its popularity did not reach that of *Nature Has Feelings*, partly because of having been published in Sendai rather than Tokyo, and also because it was a fancier product that sold for forty *sen* instead of twenty-five.<sup>16</sup> Shortly after the publication of *Morning Bell*, Bansui embarked on a study trip to England, France, Germany, and Italy. Unlike many contemporary writers and scholars who were sent to Europe with Japanese government support, Bansui financed his own journey. He returned in 1904, resumed his post at the Second Higher School, and taught there until his retirement in 1934.

The fortunes of Romantic poetry in Japan were already beginning to wane when Bansui returned to Japan. By the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century, Shimazaki Tōson had become a novelist (out of financial necessity), and Bansui's style had lost to the innovations of the Japanese Symbolists. By the end of that decade, free verse had begun to rise up. Bansui tried his hand at this, too, but without the same

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<sup>16</sup> Still, the collection went through a dozen reprintings (with some changes to poems included, publishers, and prices) in a dozen years, and it remains highly regarded. Noda Utarō, "Doi Bansui shū kaisetsu" (Commentary on Doi Bansui collections), in Kubo, *Doi Bansui*, 18-19.

success. Instead, his reputation rested on his earliest poetry, his lyrics to countless school anthems, his dedicated teaching at the Second Higher School in his hometown of Sendai, and his monumental translations of Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* in the 1940s.<sup>17</sup>

Since his death in 1952, Bansui's poetry has been forgotten by more recent generations of readers, who seem only to remember his classic, "The Moon on the Castle Ruins," and to have done so on the basis of its serendipitous pairing with Taki Rentarō's simple yet memorable tune.<sup>18</sup>

### **Bansui's Ideal Poet**

In his poems, as well as in his preface and appended translations to *Nature Has Feelings*, Bansui addresses the European Romantic concept that the poet has a rare gift of vision. His preface and author's note, composed last (we must assume) but set at the head of the collection, draw on this concept while striking a new note of national purpose for Bansui's poetic project:

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<sup>17</sup> Bansui's translation of *The Iliad* was published in 1940, and *The Odyssey* in 1943, both by Fuzanbō.

<sup>18</sup> It is worth noting that any *shintashi* of four-line stanzas would fit the melody, if not the mood, of Taki's song. With equal value for each note and no melismas, each melodic line fills out the 4/4 meter nicely by adding a quarter rest for the caesura after beat 7 and three quarter rests at the end of each line (for a total of four measures per line).

“To raise man up to heaven and to bring heaven down to this earth”<sup>19</sup>—that is the ideal of poetry. Poetry is not the delirious utterances of men of leisure, nor is it the frivolous engraving of insect figures.<sup>20</sup> But I shall not say anything of the many hundred years’ history of our nation’s poetry. When you consider that the world of so-called new-style poetry is just a little more than ten years old, it is only natural now to laugh at its childishness. Yet we cannot leave it to the future for literary progress to solve its deficiencies. Poetry is the essence of the people, and there has never been a great people without its great book of poetry. As there are high hopes for our country’s future, so must there be high hopes for our country’s world of poetry.

Tsuchii Rinkichi  
Tokyo

#### Author’s Note

Most of the pieces collected in this volume have been published in *Imperial Literature* or *Reflections Magazine*, and I thank both the Imperial Literature Society and the Reflections Magazine Company for permission to reprint them here.

Since old times, poetry has customarily been seen as recreation, as inconsequential words, as the frivolous engraving of insect figures. Unless

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<sup>19</sup> This quotation is Bansui’s paraphrasing of the third line from Schiller’s “Die Sänger der Vorwelt” (The bards of old). I have translated Bansui’s Japanese. The original German of the first four lines is below:

Sagt, wo sind die Vortrefflichen hin, wo find’ ich die Sänger,  
Die mit dem lebenden Wort horchende Völker entzückt,  
Die vom Himmel den Gott, zum Himmel den Menschen gesungen,  
Und getragen den Geist hoch auf den Flügeln des Lieds?

[Say, where have the splendid ones gone, where might I find the bards  
Who with the living word delight the listening peoples,  
Who have sung God down from heaven and the people up to heaven,  
And carried the spirit high on the wings of song?]

Friedrich Schiller, *Gedichte von Friedrich von Schiller*, 353.

<sup>20</sup> Frivolous engraving of insect figures: 彫虫篆刻の末技: *chōchū tenkoku no matsugi*.

This phrase is meant to call to mind Yang Xiong (揚雄, 53 BCE-18 CE), a philosopher who gave up writing rhapsodic verse (賦: *fu*) because he deemed it as frivolous as carving insects. See Fusheng Wu, *The Poetics of Decadence: Chinese Poetry of the Southern Dynasties and Late Tang Periods* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 17.

this idea is shattered, true poetry<sup>21</sup> will never arise. I believe that reforming general readers' fundamental ideas about poetry is one element in the present development of our nation's poetry. Attached are arguments on poetry and poets by great Western writers. For ease of reading, these are abridged translations, thus while they do not capture the spirit or line of reasoning, they should be of some use to today's world of poetry. I dare hope they will be read widely and thoroughly.

The most striking characteristic of Bansui's preface, and what sets it apart from both his appended translations of Western writers and his own poetry—at least on the surface—is his desire to foster a new *national* poetry tradition. He dismisses the long tradition of *waka* as inconsequential to his project, but without explanation. That dismissal is underlined by his referring not to *shiika* (詩歌), a term that encompasses all kinds of what we in English would call poetry, but to *shi* (詩).<sup>22</sup> *Shi* is a category of poetry that traditionally meant only Chinese poetry, *kanshi*, but by Bansui's time also included Western poetry and new-style poetry. We can only assume that the *waka* tradition is not suited to, or able to develop along with, the modern era. Here the argument of the poets who composed the epoch-making *Selection of New-Style Poems* (*Shintaishishō*, 1882) is taken for granted: that, in Dean Brink's words, “the thirty-one syllables of a *waka* are only able to grasp a level of thought limited to ‘shooting stars,’” while “a poet accrues length to poems so as to engage the contemporary world in extended meditations.”<sup>23</sup> If this is significant for the development of a great nation,

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<sup>21</sup> True poetry: 真詩 *shinshi*.

<sup>22</sup> *Shiika* (詩歌): The characters in this compound are *shi* (comprising *kanshi* and *shintaiishi*) and *uta/ka* (*waka/tanka* and *haiku*).

<sup>23</sup> Dean Brink, “Intertexts for a National Poetry: The Ideological Origins of *Shintaishi*” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2003), 153.

then we must conclude that a nation without extended meditations in poetry is a nation deficient in philosophical and moral development.

Bansui's poetry engages in such "extended meditations," though arguably not with the "contemporary world," and certainly not with the world before his own eyes. Instead, it engages with a timeless, ideal world with no borders. That fact is emphasized by the mediation of other poems, and the nature depicted therein, from distant times and places within his own poems. His national poetry tradition must become part of a global poetry tradition, and his nature must become part of a global nature, instead of distinguishing a nature unique to Japan.

Bansui must therefore reconcile his nationalistic aim with the universalistic conceptions of the poets and poetry in the translations appended to *Nature Has Feelings*. Nationalism is, in fact, nowhere to be seen on the surface of Bansui's own poems in *Nature Has Feelings*. Rather, the preface adds a nationalistic claim after the fact of Bansui's writing the individual poems, almost as if to undo the universalism implied by statements on poetry by Emerson, Carlyle, and Shelley. It would have been ironic of Bansui to infuse nationalism into these poems, as many of them so thoroughly incorporate allusions to Chinese and Western literature. That does not mean it would have been impossible, however. To assimilate other nations' cultural treasures in a nationalistic way would anticipate Okakura Kakuzō's (岡倉覚三, 1862-1913) *The Ideals of the East*, in which Japan is presented as the storehouse of Asia's treasures.<sup>24</sup> If storing up cultural treasures is what Bansui is doing on a global scale, then he finds

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<sup>24</sup> Kakuzo Okakura, *The Ideals of the East, With Special Reference to the Art of Japan* (Rutland, VT: C. E. Tuttle, 1903).



himself an agent in a process that is just beginning, in which Japan has not yet reached the poetic pinnacle.

One may be tempted to speculate that Takayama Chogyū, Bansui's friend and fellow editor at *Imperial Literature*, encouraged Bansui to express national aims in his preface. Chogyū, after all, was around this time beginning to write in a nationalistic vein.<sup>25</sup> Hakubunkan, the publishing company he persuaded to print *Nature Has Feelings*, was in the meantime committing itself to several publications with nationalist aims. In addition to *The Sun*, it also published *Arts Club* (文藝倶楽部: Bungei kurabu) and *The Youth's World* (少年世界: Shōnen sekai); after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War it also published *Records of the Sino-Japanese War* (日清戦争実記: *Nisshin sensō jikki*).<sup>26</sup> In spite of this, I have found no evidence to shed light on what influenced Bansui's writing of his preface.

What Bansui cannot bring himself to say directly in his preface—that he himself is a poet with a privileged vision beyond the sensual to an ideal—he does say indirectly in an appendix of translations by Carlyle, Emerson, Hugo, Shelley, and George Sand. Thus, along with his preface, he uses the translations in the appendix to exhort his fellow poets to join in the creation of a new poetic tradition. In a 1934 interview with

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<sup>25</sup> According to Senzaki Akinaka, after Chogyū returned to the Tokyo literary scene, he “reflected the Japanese mood of the time like a mirror.” The mood in Tokyo, the capital of the empire that had recently won the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, reflected its rising importance on the international stage. Senzaki Akinaka, *Takayama Chogyū: Bi to nashonarizumu* (Takayama Chogyū: Beauty and nationalism) (Tokyo: Ronsōsha, 2010), 102.

<sup>26</sup> Senzaki, 103-104.

Yoshida Seiichi, Bansui says that the translations he added to the collection reveal his poetic aspirations: “If you look at those, I think you will understand my aspirations.”<sup>27</sup> Those poets whom Bansui admires, he tells Yoshida—“poets like Hugo, Byron, and Shelley, as well as Schiller and Du Fu—they all had a longing to create something idealistic [アイデアリスティック: *aidearisutikku*]. I think that was rather different from the poems of others.”<sup>28</sup>

The arguments about poetry and poets in Bansui’s poems echo Emerson’s argument in “The Poet,” in which he writes, “Nature enhances her beauty, to the eye of loving men, from their belief that the poet is beholding her shows at the same time.” Non-poets are “minors” or “mutes, who cannot report the conversation they have had with nature.” Emerson continues:

For poetry was written before time was, and whenever we are so finely organized that we can penetrate into that region where the air is music, we hear those primal warblings, and attempt to write them down, but we lose ever and anon a word, or a verse, and substitute something of our own, and thus miswrite the poem.<sup>29</sup>

The impression Emerson gives is of a poet transcribing nature’s music, albeit

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<sup>27</sup> Doi Bansui, “Tenchi ujō no koro,” 143.

<sup>28</sup> Doi Bansui, “Tenchi ujō no koro,” 142-143.

<sup>29</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Selected Writings of Emerson*, ed. Donald McQuade (New York: Random House, 1981), 304-6.

imperfectly.<sup>30</sup> The poet must “penetrate into that region” to hear this music, and somehow music becomes “warblings” and those warblings are transcribed as words. The poet must transcribe the words as faithfully as possible so as not to “miswrite the

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<sup>30</sup> The musical analogy is also in the portion of Carlyle that Bansui translated: “All deep things are song” (which Bansui renders thus: 一切の幽深の物は皆歌なり), and poetry is “musical thought. . . . See deep enough, and you see musically; the heart of Nature *being* everywhere music, if you can only reach it” (詩を呼んで音楽的思想と曰はん. . . . 観ること深からば即音楽的ならん萬有の中心に達するを得ば音楽到る處に在らん). Thomas Carlyle, “The Hero as Poet,” in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 83-84.

poem.”<sup>31</sup> The transcription of nature’s music into words is achieved because, in Emerson’s words, “Nature offers all her creatures to [the poet] as a picture-language,” and “nature is a symbol, in the whole, and in every part.”<sup>32</sup> That is, nature comprises symbols, for which words are (or at least were when those words were new) adequate vessels. Thus, no matter how great the poet may be, even in Emerson’s estimation,

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<sup>31</sup> Bansui may share Carlyle’s and Emerson’s anxiety not to “miswrite the poem” of nature, but I have not seen him address any anxiety he may have had about miswriting poems or other works when translating from other languages into Japanese. His own translations are a bit loose and elide certain parts of the original works. For comparison, here is where Bansui begins his translation of Emerson: 哲人は日常觸目の事物中に神秘の意を觀ずオルヒアス、エムペドクルス、ヘラクリタス、プラトン、プルターク、ダンテ、スエーデンボルグ及彫刻、繪畫、詩歌の名工皆然り、人間は單に形骸に非ず、また神靈を内に有するものに非ずして直に靈の兒なり靈より成れり。斯の如く時劫及び時劫の産物の本源は玄妙なり美麗なり、之を思ふて吾人は夫の詩人即「美の人」の本性と本分とを究めんとす。

My translation of Bansui’s translation, with an eye to the Emerson: “Philosophers are those who look for the mysterious meaning within the ordinary objects of sight, such as Orpheus, Empedocles, Heraclitus, Plato, Plutarch, Dante, Swedenborg, and the masters of sculpture, painting, and poetry. Humans are not simply skeletons, nor do they have the spirit within them, but are rather the direct descendants of the spirit and come from the spirit. Thus, the origins of time and time’s creations are abstruse and beautiful. On considering this, we resolve to study the nature and functions of the poet as a “person of beauty.”

Emerson’s original: “But the highest minds of the world have never ceased to explore the double meaning, or, shall I say, the quadruple, or the centuple, or much more manifold meaning, of every sensuous fact: Orpheus, Empedocles, Heraclitus, Plato, Plutarch, Dante, Swedenborg, and the masters of sculpture, picture, and poetry. For we are not pans and barrows, nor even porters of the fire and torch-bearers, but children of the fire, made of it, and only the same divinity transmuted, and at two or three removes, when we know least about it. And this hidden truth, that the fountains whence all this river of Time, and its creatures, floweth, are intrinsically ideal and beautiful, draws us to the consideration of the nature and functions of the Poet, or the man of Beauty, to the means and materials he uses, and to the general aspect of the art in the present time.” Emerson, 304.

<sup>32</sup> Emerson, 309.

nature remains the unattainable pinnacle of what the poet can reach. And this is due to the poet's inadequate expression.

As we shall see in "The Universe and the Poet," Bansui's poetic speaker asks the poet to "penetrate into that region." The poem ends, moreover, by implicitly reproducing Emerson's triad, also translated in Bansui's appendix, of Knower, Doer, and Sayer: "These," says Emerson, "stand respectively for the love of truth, for the love of good, and for the love of beauty. . . . The poet is the sayer, the namer, and represents beauty."<sup>33</sup>

Bansui's translation from Shelley's *Defence of Poetry* speaks as well to the poet's inadequate expression:

The mind in creation is as a fading coal which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness: this power arises from within like the colour of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our nature are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure.<sup>34</sup>

For Shelley, then, poetic inspiration is something that cannot be summoned or "penetrated to," but must be allowed to flow with as little delay or encumbrance as possible:

When composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet.<sup>35</sup>

To take it one step further, the poet is able to see (or is it to create?) the symbols

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<sup>33</sup> Emerson, 305.

<sup>34</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Percy Bysshe Shelley: The Major Works*, ed. Zachary Leader and Michael O'Neill (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 696-697.

<sup>35</sup> Shelley, 697.

and metaphors in the universe, to produce harmonies where there were only melodies, to plumb the meaning beyond what our senses can grasp. Such a construction, with nature producing the melodies in a receptive poet who then produces harmonies to it, also comes from Shelley's *A Defence of Poetry*, albeit not in the passage Bansui translated from that text:

Man is an instrument over which a series of external and internal impressions are driven, like the alternations of an ever-changing wind over an Æolian lyre, which move it, by their motion, to ever-changing melody. But there is a principle within the human being, and perhaps within all sentient beings, which acts otherwise than in a lyre, and produces not melody alone, but harmony, by an internal adjustment of the sounds and motions thus excited to the impressions which excite them.<sup>36</sup>

In Bansui's poems about poets, he provides access to other texts in a gesture towards the mediation of poetry. He imports poetic visions in a way that does not metabolize them for Japanese readers. Instead, he invites his readers to share his perspective as a reader himself of great poetry. The marked access to other texts points to the intertextual recursion of writing and reading. By placing other works between himself and his readers, he acknowledges and even broadcasts that fact. Yet the stance of Emerson, Carlyle, and Hugo is that the poet has privileged access to "nature." Bansui bypasses his own problematic access to nature to open a proven channel through other great writers. He does not use their words fully—short quotations (translated by him, of course) or even references to them by places associated with them, which resembles classical poetry's *utamakura* (歌枕: literally, "poem pillow"). But this is not a channeling of their poetry in a way that could defer to their "genius"—or, not in a way

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<sup>36</sup> Shelley, 675.

that would allow readers to appreciate that genius or understand their poetry without doing outside work.

One problem in Bansui's use of allusion is thus that the "emotional" impact of the exotic texts is deferred and must be accessed deliberately rather than spontaneously. The result is the reader's greater uncertainty of intuition: there is something beyond comprehension *within* the poem, something that requires a critical operation in the midst of, or perhaps after, reading the poem. The exoticism presents the more immediate response: the *fact* of exotic content, and subsequently the recognition of the *source* of that content, bring preconceptions (of, say, Shakespeare or Dante or the West in general) that may initiate a preliminary wave of mystification. That mystification can hardly be overshadowed by the reader's subsequent grasp of the attenuated *substance* of the exotic content.

Compare this to the Greek myths invoked in Wordsworth's "The World Is Too Much With Us." "Proteus rising from the sea" and "Old Triton blow[ing] his wreathed horn" are more intuitively accessible to us than Grasmere would be to Bansui's readers a century ago. And this is in a poem mourning the vanishing of a former mode of access to the wonders of nature, reality, or the sensible world. That is, it mourns a *mystifying* culture with an iconic reference to past mythological figures. In so doing, it presumes a more intimate appreciation of nature, through a (poetic) *misunderstanding* of that very nature. That intimate appreciation of the putative loss of appreciation for nature in Wordsworth is effectively communicated to the reader, because of the reader's more or less equivalent alienation at the mention of antique figures. Yet Wordsworth was writing in a time when mythology and ekphrasis were more common to poetry. His

allusions were thus even more conventional in his time than they are to readers today. Bansui's allusions, on the other hand, introduce many conventions to his readers for the first time. Poems with such allusions then seem to ask readers to invest the poet with an idealized role that not only mourns lost ideals but conjures them, or at least acts as a conduit for them. Nor is Bansui alone in crafting such poems: as we shall see in the following chapter, Yosano Akiko also conjures diverse mystifications, though hers are not for the sake of being "awaken[ed] to transitory brightness" of poetic insight, but rather for the sake of exulting in dangerous pleasures.

There are two poems in *Nature Has Feelings* that invoke an idealized conception of a poet. The first is "Poet" (詩人: *Shijin*).<sup>37</sup> In this poem, Bansui apostrophizes such a poet, comparing him or her to a succession of figures. The repetition accentuates the structure of the poem as a poem. The first two stanzas compare the poet to two human types that seem as far as possible from Carlyle's heroic poet: a maiden drunk on love and an innocent child. Yet both figures have the poetic insight to hear, see, and speak of what cannot be sensually observed. In the final three stanzas, the poet is granted an ascending succession of scenic forms, from the waves of the sea to a mountain to the moonlight. The speaker of the poem, seeking intersubjectivity with the poet through feats of imagination, demonstrates a poetic faculty himself.

O poet, should I describe you

詩人よ君を譬ふれば

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<sup>37</sup> "Poet" was published relatively early among Bansui's poems, in the April 1897 issue of *Imperial Literature*. In *Nature Has Feelings*, it appears tenth. A *shijin* is specifically a poet of *shi*, not of *waka* or *haiku*. (The term for a *waka* poet is *kajin*, and for a *haiku* poet, *haijin*.) Following the discussion of Bansui's referring to *shi* alone and not *shiika* in his preface, are we meant to take the *shijin* as a poet in such a limited sense? I would say not, since there was not a convenient term to refer to poets of multiple genres.



As a maiden drunk on love?  
For you hear music in the storm,  
And you see flowers in wild fields.

戀に酔ひぬるをとめごか  
あらしのうちに樂を聞き  
あら野のうちに花を見る。

O poet, should I describe you  
As a child blind to the world's sins?  
For a divine voice sounds from your lips,  
And a dream of heaven is in your eyes.

詩人よ君を譬ふれば  
世の罪しらぬをさなごか  
口には神の聲ひゞき  
目にはみそらの夢やどる。

O poet, should I describe you  
As the waves of the open sea?  
On the surface a raging storm,  
And hidden in the depths a pearl.

詩人よ君を譬ふれば  
八重の汐路の海原か  
おもてにあるゝあらしあり  
底にひそめるまたまあり。

O poet, should I describe you  
As a volcano rising into the clouds?  
Stars sparkle from your brow,  
Waves of fire gush in your breast.

詩人よ君を譬ふれば  
雲に聳ゆる火の山か  
星は額にかゞやきて  
焰の波ぞ胸に湧く。

O poet, should I describe you  
As the cool light of the evening moon?  
Your body is held in the heavens,  
And your reflection in the dust of the world below.

詩人よ君を譬ふれば  
光すゞしき夕月か  
身を天上にとめ置きて  
影を下界の塵に寄す。

The poem's final two lines separate the poet's ideal "body" from the this-worldly "reflection" of that body. The moon itself is out of reach, but it lowers itself in the form of its reflection to the world of dust below. Likewise, Bansui's ideal poet is the mediator between the ideal (the moon held high in the heavens) and its reflection in poetry.

Here, as in many of Bansui's poems, the word for "reflection" or "shadow" (影: *kage*) highlights the phenomenological uncertainty, or at least mediation, of the visual

image. The image of the moon reflected in the world below is not real, but rather an ideal that travels along with humanity. The real moon is always out of reach, like the poet whom he serenades.

### Through the Immeasurable All

“The Universe and the Poet” (萬有と詩人: *Ban'yū to shijin*) is the most thorough and direct treatment of the role of the poet in *Nature Has Feelings*.<sup>38</sup> The poem is concerned with the role of the poet in representing, even bringing life and meaning to, the universe. As in “Poet,” the speaker betrays his own poetic vision in the very awareness of moving beauty from which he pretends to be alienated. This irony effectively heightens the reader’s appreciation that there is something more than what mimetic description can convey. Thus, the poetic speaker gestures towards both an ideal of the poetic act and an ideal beyond the sensory.

The poem presents its first tangle in the word *ban'yū* in the title. The characters for *ban'yū* mean “myriad” and “exist,” thus denoting “all things.” The term *ban'yū* stands in place of more common words for the universe or nature, such as *banbutsu* (万物: myriad things), *uchū* (宇宙: universe), or, as used in the title of Bansui’s poetry collection, *tenchi* (天地: heaven and earth). Bansui himself uses *ban'yū* as a translation for “Nature” in his translation of Carlyle’s “The Hero as Poet,” but he also uses *ban'yū shizen* (萬有自然: myriad things of nature) to speak of “nature” in his translation of

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<sup>38</sup> “The Universe and the Poet” first appeared in the January 1898 edition of *Imperial Literature*. It is the fifth poem in *Nature Has Feelings*.

Emerson. The second element in the title is *shijin*, poet. Again, Bansui condemns *waka* and *haiku* by omission. I have thus been tempted to translate *Ban'yū to shijin* as “Nature and the Poet,” to echo Wordsworth’s poem of the same name. In Wordsworth’s poem, the speaker interacts with a natural scene through the mediation of a painting. The painter stands for a poet and the painting for a poem. Wordsworth even ironically imagines what he would have done

if mine had been the painter’s hand  
To express what then I saw, and add the gleam,  
The light that never was on sea or land,  
The consecration, and the Poet’s dream.

In a similar fashion, Bansui imagines what the poet might make of nature’s wonders. But where Wordsworth would take Peel Castle out of the storm and set it in fair weather, Bansui embraces the chaos and the storms of the universe, along with everything else in it. Also, Wordsworth’s would-be painter stands outside the painting, outside the “nature” of the poem. Thus, I have chosen to avoid, in this instance, the overlaid word “nature” and favor “the universe” instead.

More relevant than Wordsworth’s “Nature and the Poet” may be his “Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood,” because it reflects on the speaker’s loss of appreciation for the wonders of nature as he ages:

Whither is fled the visionary gleam?  
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

That is precisely what Bansui asks of the poet in “The Universe and the Poet”:

My heart is not stirred by the rainbow,  
My heart is dull to the waves—  
It begs of you one thing: your song.

虹にも酔はぬわがこゝろ  
波にもにぶきわがこゝろ  
たのむは獨り君が歌。

Both Bansui and Wordsworth betray their own poetic vision, though, in the very awareness of moving beauty from which they pretend to be alienated. Yet this is effective in the way that their irony heightens the reader's appreciation of their observations beyond the descriptions on the page. But there is not just more to "nature" (or whatever you like)—there is also more to that poet, who can present himself as a shadow of something even greater. The poet gestures towards both an ideal of his subject and an ideal of himself.

"The Universe and the Poet" opens with an epigraph from Lucretius's *On the Nature of Things* (*De rerum natura*): "And he has traveled through the immeasurable all in mind and spirit."<sup>39</sup> Bansui's choice of this elliptical, understated line raises several questions. First, vanishingly few of Bansui's readers would understand Latin. Yet the name of Lucretius may have given them a clue to the philosophical context, even for those who would not know that the unidentified subject was Epicurus, the hero of the opening to the poem.

Second, the epigraph did not appear when the poem was first published in January 1898, but was added when the poem was published in *Nature Has Feelings* the following year. The fact that Bansui added the epigraph to the poem for publication in the full volume suggests that the line of Latin may have been chosen as felicitous after

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<sup>39</sup> Atque omne immensum peragravit mente animoque. Lucretius, *De rerum natura* (On the nature of things), with trans. W. H. D. Rouse, rev. Martin Ferguson Smith (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 8 (Book I, line 74). In the title *De rerum natura*, the word *natura* by itself can mean simply natural disposition or character. *Rerum natura* is a set phrase meaning nature, the natural world, or the universe. Hence, the otherwise unexceptional, genitive "of things" does the heavy lifting to make nature *Nature*, and in my view it emphasizes the multiplicity of things, phenomena, matter(s) in the universe.

its composition, instead of serving as the catalyst for the poem. While that may be true, as I show below, the content of the poem reveals that *On the Nature of Things* exerted a significant influence on the composition of the poem.<sup>40</sup>

Third, Bansui also omits the line's revealing context. Epicurus was the brave Greek who stood up to religion, who, as Lucretius writes, "desired to be the first to break open the firm bolts of the doors of nature."<sup>41</sup> Why choose a vague line over some more pertinent passage that might have better elucidated Lucretius's poetic philosophy?<sup>42</sup> More important than the precise context of the line from Lucretius appears to be the inclusion of the words "travel," "all," "mind," and "spirit." In other words, the epigraph foregrounds the equivalence of physical space (travel) and mental imagination. Epicurus, like any great poet, possessed a mind equal to the great mysteries of the universe. The epigraph thus highlights the poet's function of reporting on mental

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<sup>40</sup> Compare "Light" (光: *Hikari*), another long poem from *Nature Has Feelings*, which carried an epigraph from Milton's *Paradise Lost*. "Light" is heavily influenced throughout by Book III of *Paradise Lost*, and yet its epigraph of the first two lines ("Hail, holy Light, offspring of Heaven, First-born! / Or of the Eternal coeternal beam") did not appear in the poem's first publication in *Reflections Magazine* in January 1898.

<sup>41</sup> *Effringere ut arta / naturae primus portarum claustra cupiret*. Lucretius, 8 (Book I, lines 70-71).

<sup>42</sup> For example, Lucretius's Proem to Book IV compares the use of poetry for articulating philosophy to a physician's use of honey on the brim of a cup of wormwood medicine. In doing so, Lucretius even admits the bitterness of his concepts: "I have wanted to expound our reasoning to you in pleasing Pierian song, and to touch it as if with a muse's sweet honey; if by chance I could hold your mind with such reasoning in our lines, until you perceive the entire nature of things and understand their usefulness." (*Volui tibi suaviloquenti / carmine Pierio rationem exponere nostram / et quasi musaeo dulci contingere melle; / si tibi forte animum tali ratione tenere / versibus in nostris possem, dum percipis omnem / naturam rerum ac persentis utilitatem.*) Lucretius, 276, 278 (Book IV, lines 20-25).

adventures.<sup>43</sup> Bansui uses poetic predecessors as mediators, as Dante did, except that he takes their language as a souvenir of their travels, not as the product of his imagined companionship with them on those travels.

Even in Lucretius's materialistic conception of the universe, there is an idealized understanding of the poet's phenomenological and descriptive capabilities. His atomistic view of the universe offers answers to questions of phenomena (such as thunder) that cannot easily be explained by observation alone. Accordingly, Lucretius devotes his treatise in poetry to explanations of phenomena that go beyond what we can perceive with our senses. The balance between materialist and spiritual was also to become a central struggle in Romantic literature, especially that of Shelley. As Monika H. Lee explains, "The contrast between these two sets of beliefs and the way this conflict plays itself out in terms of language is a central aspect of Romanticism—one that Shelley contended with throughout his literary career. He is adept at conflating and

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<sup>43</sup> Bansui repeats this formula of invoking a powerful peripatetic poetic predecessor in his poem "Evening Thoughts" (夕の思ひ: *Yūbe no omoi*), in which he notes Dante's poetic return from Paradise with his own report:

As bees gathering nectar up	花より花にむれとびて
Dart from flower to flower,	蜜を集むる蜂のごと
I watched the soul flying	星より星に光をと
From star to star for light—	飛行く魂を眺めけむ
As someone bringing back home	詩人のくしまぼろしを
The poet's ethereal vision.	たれかうつゝに返すらむ。

Bansui gives the following endnote to identify "the poet": "See *Paradiso* from Dante's *Divine Comedy*." Note that Lucretius reports on Epicurus's travels, and Dante reports on travels with Virgil and later Beatrice. Therefore, the poet is not able to travel on the spiritual journey alone, but requires the mediation of another—in these cases, a philosopher, another poet, and a past love.

synchronizing philosophical quandaries and poetic strategies that seem to be at odds with one another. . . .Shelley uses reason and imagination to critique each other.”<sup>44</sup> Seen in this light, Bansui’s epigraph comes to seem like anything but a casual choice, for, no matter how we judge Bansui’s adeptness, he also aimed at synchronizing seemingly incompatible philosophical quandaries and poetic strategies.

To stand back and take in a spatial and temporal perspective far broader than what humans can directly perceive requires the exercise of reason and imagination together. It also requires poetic language that goes beyond mimetic representation. Bansui celebrates the philosopher’s non-empirical insights into the materialist workings of the universe. He explicitly subscribes to this view in “The Universe and the Poet,” as he addresses a poet whose capabilities surpass those of ordinary human beings. The poem begins:

O poet, have you sung,	「渾沌」よさし窮りて
And played the zither in the light	時「永劫」のふところを
Of the morning star that sparkles in your hairpins,	出でしわが世のあさぼらけ
Of the dawn of our world,	かざしににほふ明星の
When at the brink of Chaos	光に琴を震はして
Time came forth from the bosom of Eternity?	詩人よ君は歌ひしか。

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<sup>44</sup> Monika H. Lee, “‘Nature’s Silent Eloquence’: Disembodied Organic Language in Shelley’s *Queen Mab*,” *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 48:2 (Sept. 1993), 170. Shelley takes after Lucretius in blending materialist and spiritual views—and in confusing readers about which of the two views he espouses. Paul Turner notes that this similarity is no accident, for Shelley was a great admirer of Lucretius. Along with themes such as looking down on the turmoil of life from serene heights and the poet’s defamiliarizing of the world, Turner points in particular to *Queen Mab* as a poem that is consciously modeled on *On the Nature of Things*: “both are anti-religious sermons on ethics, supported by quasi-scientific accounts of the physical universe and surveys of human evolution.” Paul Turner, “Shelley and Lucretius,” in *The Review of English Studies*, new series, 10:39 (Aug. 1959), 270, 273, 276.

This “poet” takes the place of the muse addressed in Milton’s *Paradise Lost* or Venus addressed in Lucretius’s *On the Nature of Things*. The poet here, playing a zither (琴: *koto*) and wearing hairpins, is thus both gendered feminine and linked with music—hints of Erato, the muse of love poetry. His poet, like Epicurus from the epigraph to *On the Nature of Things*, travels through, or mentally communicates with, the “immeasurable all” (*omne immensum*) of the universe. Bansui, however, speaks ironically to a poet whose talents and vision he envies but cannot equal, even while he invokes poetic conceptions in poetic language. It is the same approach he used in “Poet” above. In stanzas 3 through 5, Bansui repeatedly invokes a “muse,”<sup>45</sup> though not as his own poetic benefactor, as he himself is not a poet, but rather as the inspiration for this apostrophized poet:

Lo, the whitecaps frothing up  
 Are to me like flying silver snakes;  
 I raise my eyes to see a rainbow aloft in the sky—  
 My heart is not stirred by rainbows,  
 My heart is dull to the waves—  
 It begs of you one thing: your song.

あゝわだつみの波の花  
 銀蛇の飛ぶに似たるかな  
 仰げば空に虹高し  
 虹にも酔はぬわがこゝろ  
 波にもにぶきわがこゝろ  
 たのむは獨り君が歌。

A baptism of living fire burns  
 And sweeps away this worldly dust,  
 Summoning the wind to stir the clouds,  
 Attending light and darkness,  
 And racing hither from the far skies—  
 Do you hear the muse’s song?

生ける焰のバプテズマ  
 浮世の塵を焼き掃ひ  
 雲を震はせ風に呼び  
 光に暗に伴ひて  
 大空遠く翔けりくる  
 詩神の歌を君聞くや。

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<sup>45</sup> In the first publication, the Japanese was *myuuzu* (ミュウズ: muse), but subsequently Bansui changed it to *shishin* (詩神: divinity of poetry). I would translate both as “muse.”



Morning sunlight and evening glow  
With such skill in different colors  
Dye the pale and flowery robes  
Of the clouds—and pulling at  
The crimson of their trailing hems,  
Do you see the muse's image?

あさ日の光りゆふ光り  
かれとこれとの染め替ふる  
たくみもよしや天雲の  
輕羅のころも花ごろも  
曳くやもすその紅に  
詩神の影を君見るや。

We see the speaker of the poem using a simile: the whitecaps are like flying silver snakes (to say nothing of the fact that he is communicating in verse); but he denies that a poetic faculty dwells within himself. He requires the intervention of a poet to bring him joy in his experience of the universe.

Bansui suggests all time and all space by invoking the four seasons, as below, along with their references to places in Japan, Europe, China, and the northern seas. This sequence of imagery then yields to the end of time and the end of heaven and earth, before returning to the present, transient moment:

In spring—the faint dawn light in Yoshino,<sup>46</sup>  
The crimson of the pressing mist,  
The ridge of bursting flowers far off;  
In summer—twilight on the Rhine,  
The water flowing far and pure  
Reflects the deep green of the banks.

春は吉野のあさぼらけ  
こむる霞のくれなゐも  
遠目は紛ふ花の峯  
夏はラインの夕まぐれ  
流は遠く水清く  
映るも岸の深みどり

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<sup>46</sup> Yoshino (吉野): An ancient place name in what is now southern Nara Prefecture, where there was a detached palace and hills famous for cherry blossoms.

The rippling pools of the Miluo River<sup>47</sup>  
And the clouds on Wu Shan<sup>48</sup> disappear,  
And then again the scattering voice of autumn;<sup>49</sup>  
Is the crimson casting light on boulders  
Glazed with ice from the north sea waves  
The unsinking light of the midnight sun?<sup>50</sup>

汨羅の淵のさゝれなみ  
巫山の雲は消えぬれど  
猶揺落の秋の聲  
潮も氷る北洋の  
巖を照らすくれなゐは  
光しづまぬ夜半の日か。

Do you see a vision here  
Of the end of time<sup>51</sup> when all is snuffed out,  
And the rotting bones of the broken down  
Caravan crumble into dust in the road,  
And even the grief of the wailing soul  
Swirls into the storm of the great desert?

路に斃れしカラバンの  
枯骨碎けて塵となり  
魂啾々の恨さへ  
あらしにまじる大砂漠  
もの皆滅ぶ空劫の  
面影君はこゝに見む。

Do you see a vision here  
Of the chaos of indistinct heaven and earth,

黒雲高くおほ空の  
照る日の影を呑みけして

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<sup>47</sup> Miluo River (汨羅, J: *Bekira*): A river in northeast Hunan Province. It is the river in which the statesman and poet Qu Yuan (屈原, J: Kutsugen, circa 343-277 BCE) drowned himself.

<sup>48</sup> Wu Shan (巫山, J: *Fuzan*): A famous mountain between Sichuan and Hebei provinces. Its clouds and rain were thought to exemplify the passions of men and women. It is not far from the Miluo River.

<sup>49</sup> Scattering voice of autumn (揺落の秋の声: *yōraku no aki no koe*): Kubo Tadao provides a quotation of a Du Fu poem that links this phrase with Wu Shan. Kubo, *Doi Bansui*, 451.

<sup>50</sup> Midnight sun (夜半の日: *yowa no hi*): The image of midnight sun is problematic here. It is unclear where Bansui learned of it. Stanzas eight and nine can be broken into three-line sections dealing with each of the four seasons in turn. The midnight sun on the frozen north seas evokes wintry cold, but of course it is a summer phenomenon.

<sup>51</sup> End of time (空劫: *kūkō*): The fourth of four phases of the universe. This is the time between the end of one world and the beginning of the next world.

Of black clouds rising in the sky  
To swallow up the shining sun,  
Of fierce flames of Red Lotus Hell,<sup>52</sup>  
A great volcano melting boulders?

紅蓮の焰すさまじく  
巖も熔くる火のみ山  
あめつちわかぬ渾沌の  
おもかげ君はこゝに見む。

Weary from chasing illusions,  
Temporary lodgings<sup>53</sup> at the field's edge,  
What kind of dreams do you weave?  
On waking to see reddened palms,  
Are those sweet roses next to you  
That smile and perfume the breeze?

まぼろし追うてくたびれて  
しばし野末の假のやど  
結ぶや君よ何の夢  
さむれば赤したなごゝろ  
あたりの風を匂はして  
笑むはやさしの花ばらか。

The speaker continues to address the poet, and “you” the poet now seems to be a composite of William Wordsworth and D. G. Rossetti. Bansui gives endnotes to let the reader know he is referring to these two in the following stanza:

In paths through meadows you've heard flowers  
Singing thoughts that brim with tears;  
In empty shells on rocky shores  
So many people without voices;  
You've heard the ocean's melody  
Somewhere deep inside your heart.

涙にあまる思とは  
歌ふをきゝぬ野路の花、  
荒磯蔭のうつせ貝  
聲なきものを何人か  
海のしらべをこゝろねを  
其一片に聞きにけむ。

The first two lines echo Wordsworth's “Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood”:

To me the meanest flower can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

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<sup>52</sup> Red Lotus Hell (紅蓮: *guren*): The seventh of eight Buddhist hells, in which the cold causes skin to turn blood red and fall off.

<sup>53</sup> Temporary lodgings (仮のやど: *kari no yado*): This mortal coil, a common phrase in Japanese poetry.

The reader must know, or must discover, that the context of Wordsworth's poem laments the loss of his childlike wonder at a universe pregnant with emotion, whose phenomena are emanations of its ideal forms. Wordsworth credits the child, not Bansui's poet or Lucretius's philosopher, as the *ideal* apprehender of the universe.

The allusion to Rossetti is "The Sea-Limits," a poem that goes beyond Wordsworth's meditation on the feelings *caused* by nature to express the feelings *shared* by "the thronging voices of Earth, Sea, and Man," which all ebb and flow together, as heard through a seashell:

Gather a shell from the strown beach  
And listen at its lips: they sigh  
The same desire and mystery,  
The echo of the whole sea's speech  
And all mankind is thus at heart  
Not anything but what thou art:  
And Earth, Sea, Man, are all in each.

Perhaps more than any other reference in Bansui's work, this captures the sentiment expressed in the title of the volume, *Nature Has Feelings*.

Bansui continues to invoke poets from various traditions in a way that gestures towards a comprehensive, global canon of poetry. His poetic speaker asks the poet:

Whither go the stars that flow	心の窓も押しあけて
Into the sky you gaze out on,	眺むる空に流れくる
Opening the very window of your heart—	星の行衛はいづくぞや
To the banks of the clear Avon,	清きアボンの岸のへか
To the blooming Tuscan fields,	咲くタスカンの花の野か
To the wooded shade of Weimar?	それワイマアの森蔭か。

In endnotes to the poem, Bansui explains that Avon, Tuscany, and Weimar stand for

Shakespeare, Dante, and Goethe. These in turn stand in for all great poetry, a comprehensiveness of the literary record that matches the comprehensiveness of the poet's capabilities of insight. By the end of the poem, however, Bansui has left behind poetic comprehensiveness. He looks instead to the stars, and specifically the North Star, for his ideal, before turning explicitly to Platonic philosophers:

The North Star is far, its light is high—  
Its rays of hope and color of love  
Stand out up there; and in Orion,  
Shining up there across his belt  
(Symbols of truth, good, and beauty)  
—The three stars are aligned just so.

北斗は遠し影高し  
望の光り愛の色  
かれにもしるき参宿の  
もなかにひかりかゞやきて  
(かたどる影は眞善美)  
三の星こそ並ぶなれ。

If we could peer straight through the earth,  
As though looking up instead,  
And gaze at the ten million  
Constellations that shine below,  
We'd know "the world down here"<sup>54</sup> means naught  
And that our world is glorious.

坤輿一球透き通り  
仰ぎて上に見るがごと  
下にも光る千萬の  
星の宿りを眺め得ば  
下界の名さへ空しくて  
我世いみじと知るべきを。

The light of truth and beauty of truth  
Are shrouded behind a thin mist;  
Hovering in the dark, my heart  
Begs of you one thing: your song—  
Let your song bloom for the sake  
Of orchid's scent and lily's hue.

まことの光りまことの美  
狭霧に蔽はれとざされて  
暗にさまよふわがこゝろ  
たのむは獨り君が歌  
紫蘭の薫り百合花の色  
爲めに咲かなん君が歌。

Strumming your bejeweled harp,  
Softening the raging storm,

しらべも高くねも高く  
あらきあらしを和げて

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<sup>54</sup> The world down here (下界: *gekai*): Literally, "the world below." Bansui commonly uses this phrase to refer to the real world in contrast to an ideal world or heaven.

To tender music you convert  
Its loud and high-pitched din;  
Smiling in the midst of tears,  
Shining even in the dark—

微妙の樂に替ふるてふ  
君が玉琴かきならし  
涙のうちにほゝゑみて  
暗のうちにもかゝやきて—

As Orpheus did, unbind your soul  
From its tie to the underworld;  
As Pythagoras professed,  
Listen to the celestial music;  
As Plato beheld, be overwhelmed  
By a dream of high ideals!

かのオルヒスのなすところ  
陰府に繋がる魂を解き  
かのピタゴルの説くところ  
御空に星の樂を聞き  
かのプラトンの見るところ  
高き理想の夢に酔へ。

As a trinity, it is no accident that the Greeks above correspond to the Beautiful, the True, and the Good mentioned four stanzas earlier. Orpheus the artist and poet represents the Beautiful, Pythagoras the scientist represents the True, and Plato the philosopher represents the Good. Returning to Emerson, then, Bansui's ideal poet is not merely the Sayer of the Beautiful, but also the Knower of Truth and the Doer (or at least dreamer) of Good at the same time.<sup>55</sup> Such an ideal (in spite of Plato's expulsion of poets from his Republic) finally gives a reason for Bansui's claim in his preface, that "poetry is the essence of the people, and there has never been a great people without its great book of poetry."

### ***Kage: The Reflection of Nature***

Bansui's *kage*, like Yosano Akiko's *kami* (神: deity) in the following chapter, means so many things—or nothing. Both of these terms are ciphers, standing at the

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<sup>55</sup> See "The Poet," in *Selected Writings of Emerson*, 305.

limit for an excess that cannot be described, for links that cannot be confidently traced, for traces of what is always just out of sight.

Bansui's poems are as conspicuously populated with the term *kage* as Victor Hugo's poems are with the word for shadow, *ombre*. Hugo uses phrases like "shadow that passes" (*ombre qui passe*)<sup>56</sup> to describe human existence, therefore making the *ombre* highlight the insubstantiality of mortal lives. These two terms deserve careful consideration of how they overlap and differ. Both can mean "shadow," but *kage* can also mean "figure" or "image." The Japanese word *kage* has more varied, and thus problematic, senses attached to it, ranging from "shadow" to "light," from "image" to "reflection." An English-language reader might even think some of these senses were antonyms of each other. In a passage of "Evening Thoughts" discussed below, for example, I have translated *hoshi no kage* (星の影) as "shining star," but the *kage* of a star could be its light, its image, or its reflection. In an even more perplexing example later in the same poem, the speaker gazes up at the *omokage* (面影) of eternity. That *omokage* can be the traces, vestiges, image, or even illusion.

Thus, the word carries a stronger indication of phenomenological uncertainty in the visual image, while implying a separation of image from truth or image from ideal. Indeed, there is an idealism in Bansui's *kage*, something beyond the *kage*. Yet it can also seem as if nothing were beyond the *kage*, because at times *kage* is often used as a mere metrical placeholder—nothing more than a shadow of meaning. Or its meaning is

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<sup>56</sup> From "Où est donc le bonheur?" (Where then is happiness?), in Victor Hugo, *Les Feuilles d'automne, Les Chants du crépuscule* (Autumn leaves, Songs of twilight) (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1970), 75.

so shifty that it can stand for whatever it shadows. Is this just a problem for translators whose target language has no suitably broad equivalent? What are all the meanings of this word?

We must first confront the orthographic problem. *Kage* can be written with one of several characters: 陰, 蔭, 翳, 景, or 影. The first three are roughly interchangeable, and their meaning is more restricted to the sense of “shadow.” The fourth character is rarely used in this sense, instead being reserved mostly for its separate sense of “condition” or “view” of things, as in “scenery” (風景: *fūkei*) or “description” (叙景: *jokei*). It is thus the fifth character, 影, that causes the most difficulty. Indeed, this is the character Bansui uses most often for *kage*. When he does not use this character, he writes the character in *kana* (phonetic characters), as かげ, leaving all the senses of the word available to the reader.

Shōgakukan’s *Great Dictionary of the Japanese Language* gives the following senses of *kage* (影 or 景):

1. The light [光: *hikari*] of the sun, the moon, a star, a lamp, an electric light, etc.
2. The figure [姿: *sugata*] of an object made visible by the reflection of light off it.
  - a. The figure or shape [形: *katachi*] of a real thing reflected in the eye.
  - b. The visible reflection of an object’s shape and color in a mirror, the surface of the water, etc.
  - c. The figure of a person not present but pictured in the mind. A vestige [おもかげ: *omokage*].
3. The outline [輪郭: *rinkaku*] of an object as shown by its absorption of light. Also, something regarded as a duplicate of the real thing.
  - a. The dark shape of an object produced on the side opposite to light by that object’s obstruction of light. A projection. A shadow [影法師: *kagebōshi*].



- b. Something that always accompanies and is not separated from something else.
- c. In *waka*, linked verse, *Nō*, etc., the connotations or deeper meaning of a work.
- d. A thin, narrow figure. A gaunt figure. Morning light [朝蔭: *asakage*].
- e. Something without substance seen palely and dimly.
- f. A dead person's soul. A spirit.
- g. Something created or drawn that looks like the real thing. An imitation. A portrait.
- h. The expression on the face of a psychological or inner state, etc. [This dates only to 1948.]
- i. Something without substance pictured in the mind according to fancy. [This dates to Futabatei Shimei's novel *Ukigumo* [浮雲: Floating clouds, 1887-88.]
- j. Something seen or felt because of previous experience of it. [This dates to 1900.]<sup>57</sup>

A crucial attribute of the term *kage*, then, is that it is the *effect* of the action of light/*hikari/rayon*. We might then posit *kage* as the image, the phenomenon, not the substance or *ideal*.

Now let us return to “Evening Thoughts” (夕の思ひ: *Yūbe no omoi*), with which this chapter began. It is the most explicitly idealistic poem in *Nature Has Feelings*, and also perhaps the most tied up with the aforementioned notion of *kage*. The second of its two epigraphs is from Tennyson's *In Memoriam A. H. H.*, in which Tennyson's speaker searches for faith beyond what can be verified by the senses and exclaims:

O life as futile, then, as frail!  
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!

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<sup>57</sup> *Nihon kokugo daijiten* (Great dictionary of the Japanese language), Select edition, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2006), 1025. All senses under numbers 1 and 2 are attested as far back as the late eighth century *Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves* (万葉集:

Man'yōshū). The first seven senses (a through g) of number 3 also date back five hundred to a thousand years. The dictionary's examples of usage are omitted here. A fourth category of two narrow senses (including an Edo-period rank for prostitutes) has also been omitted.

What hope of answer, or redress?  
Behind the veil! behind the veil!<sup>58</sup>

Bansui again invokes the reflection on the water's surface as a way to highlight the insubstantiality of images, but this time he plumbs the depths below the surface, as well. No matter how high the moon rises above, it cannot bring light or joy to the depths:

Though in the quiet flowing Avon	アボンの流しづかにて
Coolly swells the moon aloft,	すゞしく月を宿せども
The waters at the invisible bottom sob;	見えぬそこひに波むせび
And on the surface of Grasmere, too,	グラスメヤアの水面にも
Seeing this world's images reflected,	うつる此世の影見れば
I only long for the sea gods <sup>59</sup> there.	たゞ海神のなつかしや。

“This world's images reflected” in the water “move us not,” to use Wordsworth's phrase from the famous sonnet to which Bansui points the reader in his footnote. Wordsworth sees that “we are out of tune” with the wonders of nature:

Great God! I'd rather be  
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;  
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;  
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;  
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.”<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Alfred Tennyson, *In Memoriam A. H. H.*, verse 56, stanza 7, lines 1-4. This is the same verse in which Tennyson famously speaks of “Nature, red in tooth and claw” (stanza 4, line 3). See *Tennyson's Poetry*, 2d ed., ed. Robert W. Hill, Jr. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), 238-9.

<sup>59</sup> Sea gods (海神: *kaijin*): Bansui gives this note: “Namely, Proteus and Triton. See the famous poem ‘The World Is Too Much With Us.’” (Bansui gives the poem's title in English.)

<sup>60</sup> William Wordsworth, “The World Is Too Much With Us,” lines 9-14.

Since Bansui combines Shakespeare and Wordsworth in one stanza, referring to a specific poem by the latter, one might hope to find a parallel Shakespeare reference to deep waters that sob. That would balance the first and second halves of the stanza, as Bansui frequently does. But no particular reference to Shakespeare stands out among moon or watery sobs. Instead, in the sea gods Bansui identifies as Wordsworth's Proteus and Triton, one may hear echoes of the sea-nymphs of *The Tempest*. The whole stanza, then, flows towards the lost sea gods. Bansui has, unwittingly perhaps, used Wordsworth to negate Ferdinand's father's "sea-change / Into something rich and strange."<sup>61</sup>

"Evening Thoughts" does not end as pessimistically as one might expect, in spite of Byron's "child of Doubt and Death" and Schiller's vanished ideals. First, it equivocates:

In the human world where only ruin prevails,	荒れのみまさる人の世に
At least the flower of love smells sweet.	せめては匂ふ戀の花

But eventually Bansui compares the onset of reality to the waking of a child:

The infant's sleep lasts but a spell;	稚子の眠りもひとゝきや
And soon enough the worldly storms approach,	やがて寄来ん世のあらし
The bitter storms to which the child awakes.	つらきあらしのさますらむ。

Note that several of Bansui's precursors use a similar trope of childhood as carefree and wondrous, followed by a worrisome and dispiriting adulthood of cheerless

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<sup>61</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1.2.403-4.

understanding.<sup>62</sup> The fourth and final section then reveals a speaker overcome with emotion, earthbound as he is, at the kind of images that once failed to stir Wordsworth.

Darkened solitary thoughts,  
My stopping shadow and pressing cloud  
Vanish in the lonely dusk;  
Is it the gracious watch of God?—  
In the sky when green fades out  
O how the stars begin to shine!

ひとり思にかきくれて  
たゝずむ影もゐる雲も  
消えてむなしき夕まぐれ  
神の慈愛のまなじりか  
みどり澄みゆく大空に  
はやてりそむる星のかげ。

O shining stars, how dear to me,  
In this passing dream, this human world,  
Showing traces of Eternity;  
As in long ago, when separated  
Into heaven and earth, forever  
Redolent with youthful starlight.

あゝなつかしの星の影  
夢と過行く人の世に  
猶「永劫」のあとを見せて  
あめとつちとの割れけむ  
むかしのまゝにとこしへに  
わかき光に匂ふかな。

Lifting my eyes to that eternity  
I am overcome by tears,  
Gasping after traces of Hope,  
Whose image rests beyond the sky,  
Lofty, noble, without bounds,  
Fanned by the breath of the soul.

其永劫の面影を  
仰げば我に涙あり  
高くたふとく限りなき  
靈のいぶきに扇がれて  
空のあなたにかげとむる  
「望」のあとに喘ぎつゝ。

In heaven light, in earth darkness,  
And my thoughts hovering between;  
Gathering sorrows of the floating world,  
The tempests cried, “Despair!”

天には光地には暗  
あひにさまよふ我思ひ  
浮世の憂を吹寄せて  
あらし叫びぬ「悩よ」と

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<sup>62</sup> Just among poets already discussed, the trope of lost wonder with lost childhood appears in Schiller’s “Die Ideale” (The ideals), Wordsworth’s “Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood,” Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, Hugo’s “Où est donc le bonheur?” (Where then is happiness?), and Tennyson’s *In Memoriam A. H. H.*

Revealing faintly the glory of God,  
The stars whispered, “Hope!”

神の光榮をほのみせて  
星さゝやきぬ「望よ」と。

The poem thus ends by placing thoughts *between* an ideal heaven and the real world of dust down here. The linguistic traces—the tempests’ “Despair!” and the stars’ “Hope!”—reach the speaker’s thoughts between the real and the ideal.

### Echo as *Kage*

In “Evening Bell” (暮鐘: *Boshō*),<sup>63</sup> the echo of the bell takes over the role played by *kage* in many of Bansui’s other poems. The traces of phenomena are auditory echoes, not visual reflections—Echo, not Narcissus. It begins with an epigraph taken from Hugo’s “To Louis B.” (*À Louis B.*) in *Songs of Twilight* (*Les Chants du crépuscule*).<sup>64</sup> The epigraph establishes sound as the primary sense:

The bell! Echo of the sky set close to the earth!  
Rumbling voice that speaks beside the thunder,  
One made for the city, the other for the sea!  
Vase full of murmurs that empties itself in the air!  
Hugo: *Songs of Twilight*<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> “Evening Bell” first appeared in the April 1898 issue of *Imperial Literature*, along with “Stars and Flowers” (星と花: *Hoshi to hana*) and “The Eagle” (鷲: *Washi*), grouped under the title “O Echo of the Flute” (羌笛餘韻: *Aa fue yoin*). Note that both flute and bell are played by humans yet transmit an otherworldly sound. In *Nature Has Feelings*, “Evening Bell” is the last poem.

<sup>64</sup> See Victor Hugo, *Les Feuilles d’automne, Les Chants du crépuscule* (Autumn leaves, Songs of twilight) (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1970), 226.

<sup>65</sup> The stanza is given in French at the head of Bansui’s poem:  
La cloche! écho du ciel placé près de la terre!  
Voix grondante qui parle à côté du tonnerre,  
Faites pour la cité comme lui pour la mer!  
Vase plein de rumeur qui se vide dans l’air!

The overlap between sound and sight is not quite synesthesia; rather, sound complements vision as the ideal complements the real. Hugo's "echo of the sky set close to the earth" hints at the complementarity. The four lines extracted from Hugo introduce the theme of the sound of the bell, a sound that seems to spill either from an ideal world into the real world or from the real world into an ideal world.

To be more specific, the sound of the bell is like a voice, whether of a person or of a god. In the lines following Bansui's excerpt, Hugo remarks on "this bronze animated by God himself" (*cet airain par Dieu même animé*). The thunder speaks to the sea as the bell speaks to the city. Yet if the bell is the echo of the sky, then it is not the original sound. "Evening Bell" addresses this directly in the third stanza: "Echo of heaven, cry of earth" (天の返響地の叫び). The sound of the bell may come as an echo from another world, but it also serves as an auditory, temporal accompaniment—not a visual, spatial guide—to those who listen (back?) to that other world, or on into infinity. Hugo's poem adds a layer of irony to the bronze bell: the bronze stands for a statuesque ideal of heroism that cannot be achieved. One climbs the bell tower, the "holy tower where thought is mixed into granite, / Where man lays his soul, where the bird makes its nest!"<sup>66</sup> But each traveler in turn profanes the bell:

Everywhere impure words engraved in the metal  
Interrupt the inscription it was christened with.  
One can make out also, on its chiseled top,  
A ring of jabs by a mutilated knife.  
Each, on this bronze animated by God himself,

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<sup>66</sup> "Tour sainte où la pensée est mêlée au granit,  
Où l'homme met son âme, où l'oiseau fait son nid!"

Has dug a furrow where nothing sprouted!<sup>67</sup>

The bell itself then *becomes* the human soul, according to Pierre Albouy: “In a word, the bell is no longer the symbol of the soul; it is the soul itself, the bell-soul.”<sup>68</sup>

It is tempting to define “To Louis B.” as the “base poem” (本歌: *honka*) on which Bansui builds his own poetic meditation, in the same sense that a poem from the *Shinkokinshū* (新古今和歌集, compiled 1205) era might build on a *Kokinshū* (古今和歌集, compiled ca. 905) poem. Indeed, the historical endorsement of the practice must be considered when interpreting the intertextual tactics of *shintaiishi* poets. Poets like Bansui and Tōson who sought inspiration in modern poetry from the West were not really breaking with Japanese tradition; rather, they were expanding what it meant to be literate in poetry by seeking cultural currency on a new international exchange. Yet a long poem like “Evening Bell” cannot have the same effect on the reader by incorporating a long *honka* like “To Louis B.” First, in the waka tradition, the brevity of both the *honka* and the new poem leaves the intertextual relation more potent and suggestive. Second, few readers of “Evening Bell” would have been able to recognize or understand the significance of the original. Thus, instead of extending the shared patrimony of literati, the poem only displays the poet’s mastery, to the detriment of the

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<sup>67</sup> Partout des mots impurs creusés dans le métal  
Rompaient l'inscription du baptême natal.  
On distinguait encore, au sommet ciselée,  
Une couronne à coups de couteau mutilée.  
Chacun, sur cet airain par Dieu même animé,  
Avait fait son sillon où rien n'avait germé!

<sup>68</sup> Albouy also reminds us that Hugo wrote often of church bells. Pierre Albouy, in Victor Hugo, *Œuvres poétiques*, 1453-1454.

reader. The appearance of such a display was the price a poet like Bansui had to pay to take poetry in a new direction.<sup>69</sup>

“Evening Bell” opens with a series of images that demonstrate the reach of the sound of the bell:

The bird in evening’s forest roost,	森のねぐらに夕鳥を
The traveler in the foothill village,	麓の里に旅人を
The body in the silent grave,	静けき墓になきがらを
The spirits <sup>70</sup> in the dark of dream paths—	夢路の暗にあめつちを
Ring and deliver them, evening bell!	送りて響け暮の鐘。

The bell tolls to mark not only the end of day, but also the end of deeper time, generations or ages:

Spring’s hillside petal showers it beckons,	春千山の花ふゞき
And pattering rain on autumn leaves;	秋落葉の雨の音
In concert with the winds of hell <sup>71</sup>	誘ふて世々の夕まぐれ
It tolls the twilight of the ages.	劫風ともに鳴りやまず。

Bansui then echoes the first line of the epigraph from Hugo above. Bansui’s line implies a copula—the echo of heaven is the cry of the earth, while Hugo’s more explicitly shows the spatial relationship of heaven and earth. With its symbolic representation of the passage of time, the bell summons varying emotions relating to past and future:

Echo of heaven, cry of earth,	天の返響地の叫び
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<sup>69</sup> At the same time, it is the reward for sophisticated readers who recognize or hunt down those meanings.

<sup>70</sup> Spirits (あめつち: *ametsuchi*): literally, “heaven and earth,” that is, the universe, but also shorthand for “the spirits of heaven and earth.”

<sup>71</sup> Winds of hell (劫風: *gōfū*): a Buddhist term.



Sound of spite or sound of comfort,  
Sorrow for the pain of what has passed,  
Or joy that beckons what may come,  
Warning of impermanence,  
Or chanting voice proclaiming hope?

恨の聲か慰めか  
過ぐるを傷む悲みか  
來るを招く喜びか  
無常をさとすいましめか  
望を告ぐる法音か。

When at parting sleeves are heavy  
At the gate of friendship's palace,  
When reminiscences lie thick  
In bleak dew midst the castle ruins,  
When thinking of the formless sky  
The saint<sup>72</sup> is silent at the window—  
Raising its voice to the sky  
Now sounds the evening bell.

友高樓のおばしに  
別れの袂重きとき  
露荒涼の城あとに  
懷古の思しげきとき  
聖者静けき窓の戸に  
無象の天を思ふとき  
大空高く聲あげて  
今はと叫ぶ暮の鐘。

Bansui then catalogues the changing places and moods over which the bell resounds. Here his poem resembles Hugo's "To Louis B." The language is full of repetitions and paired words. The repetitions echo as if imitating the tolling of the bell. The paired words range from clear opposites ("sadness, tears, and suffering" are opposed to "laughter, pleasure, and delight") to more provocative juxtapositions. "Grief" and "death" are paired with "poetry" and "music" (written with the character for "joy"). Poetry and music are meant to be heard. The flowers of city boulevards are echoed in the foam of the rocky shore. The most poignant pairing is of sound with silence: the "innocent ears of children" with "mute beds of mounded earth." Whatever wisdom the dead under mounds of earth might have to pass to the innocent children, it

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<sup>72</sup> Saint (聖者: *shōja*): Though the term is also used for Buddhist and Christian saints, Kubo believes this refers to Plato. Kubo, *Doi Bansui*, 177.

is left to the bell to deliver. These mounds become the vessels in which the evening bell echoes, and their emptiness pronounces the death of their inhabitants. Hugo's "vase full of murmurs" thus "empties itself" not only "in the air" but in the soil.

Where people dwell and where they go,	人住むところ行くところ
Where there is grief and there is death,	嘆と死とのあるところ
Where there is poetry and music,	歌と樂とのあるところ
Where sadness, tears, and suffering,	涙、悲み、憂きなやみ
Laughter, pleasure, and delight	笑、喜び、たのしみと
Pass from one on to the next.	互に移りゆくところ、
On city boulevards with flowers,	都大路の花のかげ
In villages beneath thick clouds,	白雲深き鄙の里
On rocky shores beset with foam;	白波寄する荒磯邊、
In the innocent ears of children,	無心の穉子の耳にしも
And on mute beds of mounded earth,	無聲の塚の床にしも
The evening bell resounds alike.	等しく響く暮の鐘。

Returning from the extended pursuit of all the places the bell's sound reaches, the poem then retreats into a pair of short, contemplative stanzas, each of which resembles a classical *tanka* in its content: an opening observation of a moment, followed by the reflection of internal moods related to that observation.

On a hill, recalling to mind <sup>73</sup>	雲飄揚の身はひとり
The lone flank of a wafting cloud	五城樓下の春遠く
That wandered over the city skies	都の空にさすらへつ

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<sup>73</sup> On a hill, recalling to mind (思しのぶが岡の上: *omoi shinobu ga oka no ue*): This is a wordplay combining *omoi shinobu* ("recall to mind") and Shinobugaoka (the hill on which Tokyo's Ueno Park stands). Kubo, *Doi Bansui*, 178.

Far from the springtime in the castle town,<sup>74</sup>  
I, too, hear the evening bell.

思しのぶが岡の上  
われも夕の鐘を聞く。

As crows gather in yonder woods  
Amid the setting sun's soft light,  
At the tolling of the bell  
My thoughts rise up  
And flock together restlessly.

鐘の響きに夕がらす  
入日名残の影薄き  
あなたの森にみるがごと  
むらがりたちて淀みなく  
そゞろに起るわが思ひ。

In a mood reminiscent of the conclusion to “Evening Thoughts” above, the speaker engages in a dialogue with the phenomenal world. Once the din of the world fades away, the bell will carry the sound of a noble, ideal spirit.

Reverberations shake again  
The waves of the once hushed sky  
And resound from cloud to cloud,  
To die out faintly, far away  
From the ears of the floating world;  
Yet know outside the formless heavens,  
Hearing this world's babbling dreams  
In the echoes of the bell,  
A high and noble spirit exists.

静まり返る大ぞらの  
波をふたゝびゆるがして  
雲より雲にどよみゆく  
餘韻かすかに程遠く  
浮世の耳に絶ゆるとも  
しるや無象の天の外  
下界の夢のうはごとを  
名残の鐘にきゝとらん  
高き、尊き靈ありと。

The speaker then tries to converse with the bell and interpret its message. He thinks he hears an earthly soul calling out to him, yet this does not resolve his confusion of hope and despair.

Do you climb an *eternal* throne,  
Weaving through a crowd of angels?

天使の群をかきわけて  
昇りも行くか「無限」の座

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<sup>74</sup> Castle town (五城楼下: *gojōrōka*): literally, “the watchtower of the five castles,” that is, Sendai. Kubo gives a Tang poem as the source of this epithet for Sendai. Kubo, *Doi Bansui*, 128-129.

O bell, what is it you cry out  
Through the gates of light?<sup>75</sup>  
That darkness of this world is deep,  
And sorrows of saints never cease—  
That flowers of this world are fragile,  
And tears of poets never dry?

A long, faint, and distant sound  
Even now keeps calling out—  
Does some voice of an earthly soul  
Cry out from the eternal depth?—  
“I, too, have floated on a boat  
Tossed by tempests of this world,  
And with the port of spring so distant  
I sank halfway along the voyage.”

Do not bemoan the world’s bleak fate.  
Pulling the infinite future behind me  
And seeing the infinite past ahead,  
I am doubtful here and now,  
I am hopeful here and now.  
Laughter, pleasure, suffering,  
Light and darkness weave together;  
And so the evening bell might chime  
A melody of this floating world.  
Thus the thoughts of foregone souls  
Blend with thoughts of souls to come,

鐘よ、光の門の戸に  
何とかなれの叫ぶらむ、  
下界の暗は厚うして  
聖者の憂絶えずとか  
浮世の花は脆うして  
詩人の涙涸れずとか。

長く、かすけく、また遠く  
今はたつゞく一ひゞき  
呼ぶか閻浮の魂の聲  
かの永劫の深みより、  
「われも浮世のあらし吹く  
波間にうきし一葉舟  
入江の春は遠くして  
舟路半ばに沈みぬ」と。

恨みなはてぞ世の運命、  
無限の未來後にひき  
無限の過去を前に見て  
我いまこゝに惑あり  
はたいまこゝに望あり、  
笑、たのしみ、うきなやみ  
暗と光と織りなして  
歌ふ浮世の一ふしも  
いざ響かせむ暮の鐘、  
先だつ魂に、來ん魂に  
かくて思をかはしつゝ

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<sup>75</sup> Gates of light (光の門の戸: hikari no mon no to): Kubo cites the beginning of Book III of *Paradise Lost*, the relevant part of which follows: “till morn, / Waked by the circling hours, with rosy hand / Unbarred the gates of light” (lines 2-4). In spite of the tenuous contextual connection, the imagery of heaven’s “gates of light” could indeed come from this passage. Kubo, *Doi Bansui*, 179.

Connecting wellspring to the sea  
In one great flowing river.

流一筋大川の  
泉と海とつなぐごと。

The storm at dusk blows from the east,  
The waves of western clouds approach;  
Often gathering in this hollow  
They say nothing to each other;  
When the two part once again,  
Perhaps the storm will cry out, "Secret!"

吹くや東の夕あらし  
寄するや西の雲の波  
かの中空に集りて  
しばしは共に言もなし  
ふたつ再び別るとき  
「秘密」と彼も叫ぶらむ。

How often have I laughed to think  
That human lives, ideals, and secrets  
Are the poet's dreams and fancies!  
As the wishing star vanishes  
In the radiant midday light,  
The floating world is cloaked in dust—  
I know not what is sin or filth.

人生、理想、はた秘密  
詩人の夢よ、迷よと  
我笑ひしも幾たびか、  
まひるの光りかゞやきて  
望の星の消ゆるごと  
浮世の塵にまみれては  
罪か濁世かわれ知らず。

Ringling out at every nightfall  
Through the dust-deep world of men,  
The evening bell tolls of a world  
Of infinite, eternal gods;  
Can it summon tears of passion  
As it gives its wordless sermon  
To a world awash in filth  
And distant from its headwaters?

其塵深き人の世の  
夕暮ごとに聲あげて  
無限永劫神の世を  
警しめ告ぐる鐘の音、  
源流すでに遠くして  
濁波を揚ぐる末の世に  
無言の教宣りつゝも  
有情の涙誘へるか。

Bansui geographically synthesizes East and West while religiously synthesizing Buddhism and Christianity. First, he cites an early example of the symbolism of a temple bell: the Gion temple bell in India, which is famous in Japan for tolling the impermanence of all things in the opening lines of *The Tale of the Heike* (平家物語:

Heike monogatari).<sup>76</sup> The Gion temple is then paired with the tower of Saint Sophia, which could be one of any number of churches in eastern Europe but may refer to the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. The evening bell is neither of these, but instead an ideal bell not to be found anywhere in particular. After all, it is not the bell itself that catches attention, but the sound coming from it that permeates the world. (Compare this to Hugo's "To Louis B.," in which the bell is the voyager's destination, and thus described in detail.) The religious traditions are then practically united in the phrase "Vulture Peak and the Mount of Olives" (霊鷲橄欖: *ryōjukanran*). Vulture Peak, in central India, is said to be where Gautama Buddha preached the Heart Sutra and the Lotus Sutra to his disciples. The Mount of Olives, in Jerusalem, is said to be where Jesus Christ taught his disciples and later ascended to heaven.

The eaves of Gion Temple rot,  
Where only liquor's stench wafts up;  
The tower of Saint Sophia crumbles,  
While gospels flatter vulgar folk.  
Listen! Within the evening bell  
The great and venerable way  
Of Vulture Peak and the Mount of Olives!

祇園精舎の檐朽ちて  
葷酒の香のみ高くとも  
セント、ソヒヤの塔荒れて  
福音俗に媚ぶるとも  
聞けや夕の鐘のうち  
霊鷲橄欖いにしへの  
高き、尊き法の聲。

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<sup>76</sup> *The Tale of the Heike* begins, "In the tolling of the Gion Temple bell, there are echoes of the impermanence of all things" (祇園精舎の鐘の声、諸行無常の響きあり: *Gion shōja no kane no koe, shogyō mujō no hibiki ari*). The opening paragraphs of *The Tale of the Heike* also synthesize the known geography of the time as lessons from Buddhism and Confucianism: first the temple bell in India, then the fall of Chinese rulers, and finally the introduction of Taira no Kiyomori's (平清盛, 1118-81) rule.

At twilight, rife with *nature's feelings*,<sup>77</sup>  
No traces of the phoenix tower  
When I wake from dreams of glory;  
The flower, its scent, the evening moon—  
How fragile is this springtime world!  
The mists atop the mountain lift,  
And though the sleeves of fairies' robes  
Are left embittered by the storm,  
A musical sound faintly rings  
And stirs the bosom of Nature—  
That one sound is here at hand.

天地有情の夕まぐれ  
わが驂鸞の夢さめて  
鳳樓いつか跡もなく  
花もにほひも夕月も  
うつゝは脆き春の世や  
岑上の霞たちきりて  
縫へる仙女の綾ごろも  
袖にあらしはつらくとも  
「自然」の胸をゆるがして  
響く微妙の樂の聲  
その一音はこゝにあり。

As in “The Universe and the Poet,” Bansui ends with the direct invocation of ideals. But rather than being “overwhelmed”—also translatable as “intoxicated”—“By a dream of high ideals,” here the bell has a sobering effect on those too moved by flowers and stars:

Heaven's majesty, earth's beauty,  
Flowers fragrant, stars atwinkle—  
The skill of Nature changes not,  
But troubles are constant in this world.  
When dreams of ideals disappear,  
Ring evermore, unceasingly,  
Uniting earth's and heaven's sounds,  
Voice of the bell at sunset!

天の莊嚴地の美麗  
花かんばしく星てりて  
「自然」のたくみ替らねど  
わづらひ世々に絶えずして  
理想の夢の消ゆるまは  
たえずも響けとこしへに  
地籟天籟身に兼ねる  
ゆふ入相の鐘の聲。

As in “Evening Thoughts,” the poet seeks a balance between the real and the ideal,

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<sup>77</sup> Nature's feelings (天地有情: *Tenchi ujō*): This is the proximate source of the title of Bansui's poetry collection. Bansui's own source for this phrase is unclear, although it appears in a poem from Mori Ōgai's (森鷗外, 1861-1922) 1889 collection *Vestiges* (於母影: *Omokage*). The four characters of this phrase have emphasis marks next to them in the original; I have underlined them here.

though here the real is understood to be a process of changing ideals. The bell is the symbol that unites the two, even though it is just an echo of both.

Finally, to incorporate our discussion of *kage* into the idealistic use of structure, there is a “shadow” in the title *Tenchi ujō*. That shadow takes the formless form of a missing complement. “Heaven” and “earth” complement each other, but in the predicate “feelings” stands alone. One possible complement of “feelings” (or “passion”) is “reason” (理: *ri*). Reason stands as a counterbalance to passion. Moreover, the shadowy reason absent from the title recommends itself in the term *tenri* (天理: literally, heaven’s reason or law), a term current in the Meiji period that refers to “nature” in its sense of “the order of the universe.” Does the absence of “reason” in the title suggest that heaven and earth do *not* have reason? It is not that *tenchi ujō* implies a denial of a natural order of things, but that an informed reading of that phrase ought to interpret the significance of “nature’s feelings” in part by appreciating the contrast with “nature’s reason.” At least, that is what we might expect of the *ideal reader*, a shadowy figure who has receded into the past with Bansui.

### **Conclusion: Idealized Nature, Not Naturalism**

Gregory Golley writes, in his book on Japanese literary modernism, “Within a generation, written language had come to be understood, above all, as a tool for *expressing* interior states or for *representing* external reality.”<sup>78</sup> Bansui emphatically

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<sup>78</sup> Gregory Golley, *When Our Eyes No Longer See: Realism, Science, and Ecology in Japanese Literary Modernism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center: 2008), 55; emphasis in original.



does not go in this direction, and instead he embraces idealized language for transcendental experience. His poems are thoroughly idealistic and build on allusions to history and other great poets. Bansui uses general or universal archetypes, such as a grave, darkness, or storms. The descriptions are rarely precise or uniquely defining. When he does point to specific places, they are usually famous, such as Kunlun or the Rhine. They remain vague enough in their material description that their literary force must do the work. The misty hills of Yoshino are not portrayed with enough specificity to overcome or overpower the intertextual force. Not only does he continue to idealize “nature,” but he expands and layers his descriptions with historical and literary allusions.

In doing so, Bansui tries to take long flights “through the immeasurable all.” But in “The Universe and the Poet,” he ironically distances himself from the direct poetic experience, instead calling on the insights of other poets, the way Lucretius calls on Epicurus for his insights. Bansui populates his poems with portions of other texts, or even just allusions to other texts. He also uses direct and indirect references to the poets themselves in his own poems. Perhaps, then, we should say that Bansui has traveled through the immensity of *poetic artifact*, not nature. These poetic artifacts are poetic *ideals* for Bansui. By leaving traces of other poets’ works in his own poems, Bansui invites his Japanese readers at the end of the nineteenth century to venture through the immensity of poetic artifact themselves—an immensity expanded beyond anything they had had access to before. But his vision of poetry is not simply to cobble together the best of the past from its diverse sources; instead, his work speaks passionately to the agglomerative role of each new poet in illuminating the human condition.

The effect is that tropes and allusions become twice removed from naturalistic description: first as idealized vision, then as idealization of poetic perception and description of phenomena. Based on this, we might say that Bansui was unusually self-conscious of the irony of the medium and his practice of it. The irony here involves the *not* saying, the *absent*, and even intertextual *allusions* (as those allusions are capacious carriers of irony and contradiction). Irony, like absence, increases with structural assistance. That structural assistance can be in the poem's form, or in the rhetorical canopy provided by the content (such as intertextual allusions). The form and the content (should we feel obliged to list them separately) cooperate to give us miscommunication, paradox, contradictions, lacunae, multiplicity, and heteroglossia. We are therefore left with a palimpsest of styles of varying provenance. In such variation itself there is irony, all the more so in the case of poetry that is exalted as direct transcription of observation or of unmediated emotion.

Bansui thus uses allusion in the service of idealism. Allusion to other texts or experiences evinces the primacy of idea over observation, as the poet recalls similar circumstances or the same place. Even the famous "Moon Over the Castle Ruins" has this as its main feature: the castle is not what it was, it *lacks* something it had long ago. The text supplies a presence for what is *absent*, a presence of absence. *Kage* and echoes, Bansui's quintessential visual and auditory textual markers of absence, are especially powerful rhetorical tools for portraying the mediation of nature by texts, intertexts, and ideals.

The mediation of other poets' words, other poets' inspiration and imagination, brings to the fore the use of language itself in its structural sense of difference. So much

for some putative “privileged access to nature” of the poet. Nature is itself a mere *kage*. Ironically, then, it is language itself, the mediating tool between subject and object, between textual artifact and reader, signifying anything but full of only difference itself, that Bansui exalts as the *universal*, lasting treasure of humanity in the floating world. By invoking other poets, Bansui takes the role of an ideal reader, not an ideal poet, reflecting what light he can for fellow readers in the shadows.

CHAPTER THREE: TANGLED KAMI: YOSANO AKIKO'S  
SUPERNATURAL SYMBOLISM<sup>1</sup>

Virtue, on the contrary, is *artificial* and supernatural, since gods and prophets were necessary in every epoch and every nation, to teach virtue to bestial humanity, and man *alone* would have been powerless to discover it. Evil is done effortlessly, and *naturally*, by fate; the good is always the product of some art.

—Charles Baudelaire, “In Praise of Make-Up”<sup>2</sup>

Of good and evil	よしあしは
ask the person	後の岸の
on the farther shore—	人にとへ
As for me, I ride	われは颶風に
and frolic on the stormy wind	のりて遊べり

—Yosano Akiko, *Waves of the Blue Sea*<sup>3</sup>

My goal in this chapter is to contribute to our understanding of how Yosano Akiko's (与謝野晶子, 1878-1942) first poetry collection, *Tangled Hair* (みだれ髪: Midaregami, 1901), stimulated and confused readers, by focusing on one of the most significant, and largely overlooked, patterns in *Tangled Hair*: the presence of supernatural figures,

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<sup>1</sup> *Midaregami*, the title of Yosano Akiko's first poetry collection, means “tangled hair,” but by replacing the character for “hair” (髪: *kami*) with the character for “god/divinity” (神: *kami*), we get a homophone meaning “tangled gods.”

<sup>2</sup> “Eloge du maquillage,” in *Flowers of Evil and Other Works / Les Fleurs du mal et œuvres choisies: A Bantam Dual-Language Book*, translated and edited by Wallace Fowlie (NY: Bantam Books, 1964), 201. Emphasis in original.

<sup>3</sup> 青海波: *Seigaiha*, 1912.

symbols, and concepts. Approximately one-fourth of the 399 tanka contain references to divinities, sin, shrines, priests, or religious texts; those references may be Buddhist, Shinto, or Christian—it is not always clear which. At the same time, the religion remains abstract: sutras stand for traditional values and wisdom, but nothing more specific; sensuality is sinful, but the reasons for this are unexpressed. The references to religious sources of morality and wisdom stand out even more in the collection because their newness, ambiguity, and sometimes even obscurity resist easy interpretation. They are a large part of what is new, and therefore what is difficult, about *Tangled Hair*. Thus, any thorough examination of the poems must account for, or at least acknowledge, the presence of these stumbling blocks.

Of course, sex and the supernatural are a fraught combination. It is not just the sex in Akiko's poems, although they certainly are more explicit than their precursors; it is particularly the investment of supernatural, religious, and moral meanings in matters of sex that causes the spark to ignite in the reception of these poems. The poems stand *both* sexual and religious mores on their heads. Carnal desire is more than just physical; it is spiritual, and it is augmented by the multiple, tangled religious associations to which the individual tanka of *Tangled Hair* commit to different degrees. Religious practice, meanwhile, does not ignore the physical component; if ascetic practice can be spiritually enlightening, then how much more enlightening can sexual awakening be!

Poetic conjurings of the supernatural provide a valuable window onto poetic ideals of nature. The supernatural is not simply that which is above or beyond nature; rather, it is a means of establishing the normative boundaries of nature as a discursive category. Nature, meanwhile, is a category that can be summoned as evidence of a

metaphysical order. Therefore, when Akiko tests the limits of traditional mores and traditional poetic practice with her multifaceted, ambiguous, and contradictory use of supernatural symbols, she undermines both nature and the supernatural, and this introduces an ironic critique of those categories.

Akiko expands the scope of what her tanka can do by creating friction between her religious metaphors and her sensuous descriptions, but this is not to say that her poems, even those poems loaded with religious terms and ideas, are what we might call religious poems. For this reason, it seems wise to distinguish them as supernatural rather than religious, though of course there is often overlap.<sup>4</sup> Consider T. S. Eliot's distinction on religion in literature: "For the great majority of people who love poetry," he writes, "'religious poetry' is a variety of *minor* poetry: the religious poet is not a poet who is treating the whole subject matter of poetry in a religious spirit, but a poet who is dealing with a confined part of this subject matter: who is leaving out what men consider their major passions, and thereby confessing his ignorance of them."<sup>5</sup> For Akiko, religious poetry might have seemed an impossible categorical distinction, outside

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<sup>4</sup> The English "supernatural" is not meant to translate the Japanese 超自然的 (*chōshizenteki*) or any other word, but simply serves as a more malleable term for the metaphysical, religious, or fantastic.

<sup>5</sup> T. S. Eliot, "Religion and Literature," in *Selected Essays*, new edition (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1932); reprinted in *Religion and Modern Literature: Essays in Theory and Criticism*, edited by G. B. Tennyson and Edward E. Ericson, Jr. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1975), 22-23. Emphasis in original.

the genre of freshly translated lyrics to Christian hymns.<sup>6</sup> Akiko's poems do not confine themselves to religious themes, but rather use a variety of religious tropes, from a variety of religious traditions, to aim directly at men's and women's major passions. By far the most common of the many signs is *kami* (神: deity or spirit): the term appears in nearly half of the *Tangled Hair* poems with supernatural symbolism, and this chapter examines her problematic use of the term. To preserve the ambiguity of the term *kami*, I have left it untranslated. The other terms highlighted in this study are *risō* (理想: ideal) and *tsumi* (罪: sin). Together, the diverse spiritual interlocutors, intangible ideals, and actions and passions marked as sinful pull the reader in multiple metaphysical and intertextual directions. Like Shimazaki Tōson and Doi Bansui, then, Akiko enriches her poetry with anti-realist, allusive verses. Unlike their poems, however, Akiko's brief tanka ecstatically contradict each other and leave readers with riddles unanswered.

### Supernatural Obstacles and Outlets

The *Tangled Hair* poems achieve extra resonance by creating linguistic and interpretative obstacles while dismissing the traditional and moral obstacles. They force

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<sup>6</sup> As Kiyomi Morioka reminds us, it was only in 1900—the same year in which the *Tangled Hair* poems began appearing—that Anesaki Masaharu (姉崎正治, 1873-1949) first used the term “sociology of religion” in Japan. The sociology of religion indicates a more scientific approach that tries to distance itself from its object of study. To lack this self-consciousness is in fact to allow supernatural power to flow through the poems. It may also account for why the supernatural aspects of the poems have so far been mostly overlooked. Kiyomi Morioka, *Religion in Changing Japanese Society* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1975), 171.

readers, then, to share in the enjoyment and anxieties of the poetic subject's moral transgression. The building up and breaking down of obstacles, which the speaker and the readers must then transgress in their different capacities, contribute to a tangled effect. But the distinction must be made that the resulting confusion (phenomenological uncertainty, moral judgment) primarily rests with the reader, and not with the speaker, much less with the biographical author, Akiko herself. The complete poetry collection, meanwhile, presents an appearance of unity that is itself an obstacle to understanding the disunity of the poems. I shall therefore address in the present chapter both the obstacles to interpretation that biographical criticism presents and the obstacles of coherence that the poetry collection as a whole creates.<sup>7</sup>

From a utilitarian perspective, meanwhile, the prevalence of religious and supernatural symbols plays an important role in giving depth to verses of limited syllables. If stale tropes and allusions are to be jettisoned—along with the classical education readers once needed to appreciate them—then tanka must either inject new figurative language or be stripped down to pithy models of understatement. The latter is what Masaoka Shiki (正岡子規, 1867-1902) embraced in his “sketching from life” (写生: *shasei*) method, by which he removed traditional obstacles without erecting new ones. For this reason, I have found that his poems require far less intervention for today's American readers.

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<sup>7</sup> Single-author poetry collections, which began to enjoy a boom in publishing in the late 1890s, replacing the multiple-author works of the previous two decades, foregrounded their authors and gave the collections an impression of unity of conception inseparable from the individual poems. This is in spite of the fact that all of the major works contained poems that had previously been published, either singly or in groups, in magazines and newspapers.



Scholars have mostly passed over *Tangled Hair*'s supernatural references, apparently because Akiko herself was not religious, and biographical explanations would not be able to account for them.<sup>8</sup> In addressing this paradox, I shall also draw on facts and circumstances of Akiko's life, facts that it would be foolish of me to renounce in a narrow adherence to the death of the author. Yet while my analysis stems from the seeming contradictions of Akiko's biography and poetry—or, more accurately, from the gap left by scholars who avoid addressing the contradiction—the analysis itself does not depend on these facts and circumstances.

Surrounding the facts and circumstances of Akiko's life, and important to our treatment of the supernatural symbols in her poetry, is the swelling influence of Christianity, especially among writers and educators in the Meiji period (1868-1912). Women's rights and education were pushed to the foreground in significant measure by Christian reformers like Iwamoto Yoshiharu (巖本善治, 1863-1942), who helped found *Women's Learning Magazine* (女学雑誌: Jogaku zasshi) in 1885. The *Literary World* (文学界: Bungakkai) group that split off from it in 1893 was also largely Christian, including members such as Kitamura Tōkoku (北村透谷, 1868-94) Shimazaki Tōson (島崎藤村, 1872-1943), and Hirata Tokuboku (平田秃木, 1873-1943). In debates over how Japan ought to modernize and how gender roles ought to change, Christianity was seen to "safely" circumscribe the roles of women in a modernizing society. As Rebecca L.

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<sup>8</sup> Akiko had an interest in the Bible and Christian hymns when she was fourteen or fifteen, and her mother was a devout Buddhist. She herself never shared any of these beliefs. Itsumi Kumi, *Midaregami zenshaku* (Complete interpretation of *Tangled Hair*) (Ōfūsha, 1978), 189.

Copeland maintains, the conversion and Christian education of women was considered crucial to combatting “what these missionaries perceived as the nation’s immorality, namely sexual promiscuity, prostitution, and concubinage.”<sup>9</sup> At the same time, Christianity played a progressive role by championing some limited emancipation for women, and this is in large measure related to the idealized discourse of love.

### ***Ren’ai***

Love as a discursive construct underwent significant changes in the Meiji period. I resist the notion that because the phrase *ren’ai* (恋愛: love) only came into common usage in the Meiji period, no such feeling or concept existed in Japan until then. What is worth noting is that when the discourse—and vocabulary—on love did begin to fluctuate in the early Meiji period, religious ideals played a significant role, especially the moral and metaphysical attributes of love linked to Buddhist and Christian beliefs. Before Christianity arrived, however, as Janet A. Walker writes,

In Japan it was Buddhism that attempted to civilize and in a sense defuse the demonic power of love, by characterizing it as a dangerous “darkness of the heart” (*kokoro no yami*). . . .Heian poets, however, often seemed to hold an opposing view: that the experience of love, by its very intensity, causes the lover to reject the Buddhist designation of enlightenment as positive “reality” and love as negative “attachment” or “appearance,” and to posit the dreamlike, blissful experience of love as the highest, indeed the only, reality.<sup>10</sup>

With the Meiji Restoration of 1868 came increased enthusiasm for translations of

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<sup>9</sup> Rebecca L. Copeland, *Lost Leaves: Women Writers of Meiji Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2000), 11.

<sup>10</sup> Janet A. Walker, “Conventions of Love Poetry in Japan and the West,” *The Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* 14:1 (April 1979): 31-32.

Western works, but, as Yanabu Akira points out, love was not a prominent theme in early translated works. In that “masculine era” of the late-Tokugawa and early-Meiji periods, when men were mostly concerned with building a nation, as Yanabu describes it, the few novels that were introduced were adventure novels like *Robinson Crusoe* and political novels.<sup>11</sup>

“For many Japanese writers,” though, as Indra Levy writes, “the discourse of love was one of the most radical and exciting aspects of modern Western literature.”<sup>12</sup> That discourse extended to “religious, ethical, and literary ideas embedded in the Western sign of *love*”—translated as *ren'ai*—that could not be conveyed with the terms *iro* (色) or *koi* (恋), which according to Levy “do not assume a division between body and soul.”

Eventually *iro* came to be associated with physical desire, and *koi* came to be a synonym for *ren'ai*.<sup>13</sup>

Yanabu traces the word *ren'ai* to foreign-language dictionaries such as an English-Chinese character dictionary of 1847-48, but he finds its first use as a translation word by Nakamura Masanao (中村正直, 1832-91), in his 1870-71 translation of Samuel Smiles’s (1812-1904) 1859 work *Self-Help*.<sup>14</sup> The use of the word *ren'ai* did not become widespread, however, until Iwamoto’s 1890 review of a translation of

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<sup>11</sup> Yanabu Akira, *Hon'yakugo seiritsu jijō* (How words have come to be translated) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1982), 96.

<sup>12</sup> Indra Levy, *Sirens of the Western Shore: The Westernesque Femme Fatale, Translation, and Vernacular Style in Modern Japanese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 134.

<sup>13</sup> Levy, 134.

<sup>14</sup> Yanabu, 90-91.

Honoré de Balzac's (1799-1850) *The Lily of the Valley* (Le Lys dans la vallée, 1835).

Iwamoto's review helped confer on *ren'ai* the sense "to love from deep within the soul" (深く魂 [ソウル] より愛する: *fukaku souru yori ai suru*), appropriately chosen instead of a "common Japanese word full of impure associations" (不潔の連関 [アッソシエーション] に富める日本通俗の文字: *fuketsu no assoshieeshon ni tomeru Nihon tsūzoku no moji*).<sup>15</sup> Levy concurs that the "spiritual aspect [of the term *love*] was given primary emphasis in the process of translation into Japanese."<sup>16</sup> From then on, Christian ideals of spiritual love became prominent. The Christian writers Iwamoto and Yamaji Aizan (山路愛山, 1865-1917) engaged in a debate over the proper place of romantic love. Aizan appealed to *ren'ai* in "The Philosophy of Love" (恋愛の哲学: *Ren'ai no tetsugaku*), an essay published in *Women's Learning Magazine* in 1890: "Ah, love, that causes a revolution in people's spirits [心霊: *shinrei*] and bodies!" and, folding that love into the discourse of the family-state: "Love, that binds the family and solidifies the state!"<sup>17</sup> In a subsequent essay called "Anti-love" (非恋愛: *Hi-ren'ai*), however, Aizan claimed that love was incompatible with great achievement.<sup>18</sup> Iwamoto, on the other

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<sup>15</sup> Yanabu, 95-96.

<sup>16</sup> Levy, 134.

<sup>17</sup> Yamaji Aizan, "Ren'ai no tetsugaku" (The philosophy of love), *Jogaku zasshi* (Women's learning magazine), no. 240 (Nov. 20, 1890); quoted in Kōno Kensuke, "Joshi kyōiku to *Wakanashū*: Ren'ai no seijigaku" (Girls' education and *Seedlings*: The political science of love), *Nenkan Nihon no bungaku* (Studies in Japanese literature), vol. 2 (Dec. 1993), 29.

<sup>18</sup> Yamaji, quoted in Kōno, 29.

hand, defended love as something “sacred” (神聖: *shinsei*) based on mutual respect between equal partners.<sup>19</sup>

These debates provide the necessary context to Kitamura Tōkoku’s epoch-making essay “Pessimistic Poets and Women” (厭世詩家と女性: *Ensei shika to josei*), which was published in two issues of *Women’s Learning Magazine* in February 1892.<sup>20</sup> Tōkoku argues in that essay that love is a beacon for the idealist, but that in embracing love the idealist finds himself (for it seems that to Tōkoku that idealist, a poet, is always male, while his object of love is always female) imprisoned by duty and inevitably drawn to despair. Francis Mathy judges that this article is full of contradictions that Tōkoku does not try to reconcile. Mathy writes, “Love is praised as that which gives entry into humanity, which leads to knowledge of self, of nature, of society, and—implied at least—of something beyond. Yet by the time he finishes his essay, love has emerged as a villain at the service of an iniquitous reality.”<sup>21</sup> Even the more idealistic kind of spiritual or mental love, therefore, is not an unqualified good beside its sullied carnal counterpart.

Such contradictory incarnations of love provided expanses for literary exploration. Levy notes that the centrality of romantic love

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<sup>19</sup> Iwamoto, quoted in Kōno, 29. But as Rebecca L. Copeland points out, Iwamoto was not consistent in calling for women’s equality. While he sometimes exalted women’s virtues and powers of observation, which were assets to a writer, at other times he criticized their meddling in public affairs. See Copeland, *Lost Leaves: Women Writers of Meiji Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2000), esp. 31-42.

<sup>20</sup> Kitamura Tōkoku, “Ensei shika to josei” (Pessimistic poets and women), reprinted in *Tōkoku zenshū* (Tōkoku’s complete works), vol. 1 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1950), 254-264.

<sup>21</sup> Francis Mathy, “Kitamura Tōkoku: The Early Years,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 18:1 (1963), 42.

virtually necessitated the presence of the Westernesque woman in works written by self-consciously modern male writers. . . .To be more than a distant object of passive contemplation. . .such a woman would have to be conversant in the semiforeign language of love; hence, she would have to be either Christian or familiar with modern literary and intellectual discourse or both.<sup>22</sup>

But what of the actual women writers and readers who loved? Mara Patessio describes the danger thought to exist for impressionable young women who might read romantic novels. In this view, “even those that were considered good novels were really not good at all,” Patessio writes, “for girl readers could not comprehend the beauty of a literary work and what remained in their brains after reading them was only the concept of ‘love.’”<sup>23</sup> It is unfortunate that Patessio’s analysis does not explicitly include romantic poetry; that might have helped tease out different effects of plot and character development that tanka lack. She does, however, quote a remembrance by a woman of the Meiji generation who said that Alfred Tennyson’s (1809-92) *Enoch Arden* was a “hero” to her and her classmates.<sup>24</sup> The hero of the long narrative poem “*Enoch Arden*” is as nearly antithetical to the Byronic hero as can be; both Enoch and his wife Annie are models of piety, devotion, and reserve. It is precisely these qualities that make the poem so sentimental, though.

Around the time that Akiko’s tanka began appearing in print—in the same

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<sup>22</sup> Levy, 141-42.

<sup>23</sup> Mara Patessio, “Readers and Writers: Japanese Women and Magazines in the Late Nineteenth Century,” in *The Female as Subject: Reading and Writing in Early Modern Japan*, edited by P. F. Kornicki, Mara Patessio, and G. G. Rowley (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2010), 200.

<sup>24</sup> “*Enoch Arden*” was translated into Japanese by Wakamatsu Shizuko (若松賤子, 1864-96) and serialized in *Women’s Learning Magazine* in 1890. Patessio, 201.

magazine, in fact—another source of sexual controversy tinged with foreign themes stirred up readers: the publication of nude drawings in *Morning Star*. Jay Rubin asserts, “The November 1900 issue of the literary magazine *Myōjō* was banned—not for the hot-blooded poems of Yosano (then Tōtori) Akiko, as might have been expected, but for two nude line drawings taken from French originals.”<sup>25</sup> The drawings in that banned issue had appeared with a commentary by Yosano Tekkan (与謝野鉄幹, 1873-1935) and Ueda Bin (上田敏, 1874-1916) on an art exhibition, in which Bin remarked that artists were now trying to go beyond classical studies of form to capture the “inner spirit” of their subjects, and that “Japanese society is simply not ready for that sort of thing.”<sup>26</sup> Then, in the next month’s installment of *Morning Star*, Tekkan responded to the ban with the argument that more exposure to Western art would help the Japanese public refine their taste and come to accept the kind of art printed in the magazine.<sup>27</sup> In other words, the sort of Western culture on display in its nudes was one whose nudity and spiritedness would not place viewers in danger of falling into uncontrolled sensuality. Such an argument, while not effective at preventing the banning of the issue, stands on a prejudice: not that the West’s Christianity preserved the chastity and virtue of its figures, clothed or not; but that the embrace of Western art corresponded to highbrow, refined tastes. Somehow, then, it seems that the higher-class importation of Christianity allowed a pass on transgression and the emancipatory rhetoric associated

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<sup>25</sup> Jay Rubin, *Injurious to Public Morals: Writers and the Meiji State* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984), 43.

<sup>26</sup> Rubin, 43-44.

<sup>27</sup> Rubin, 44-45, citing Dec. 1900 special issue of *Myōjō*.

with Christian reformers. Yet an ambivalence persisted, partly because of Christianity's own problem with sensuality and gender equality. Akiko pried her poems into those ambivalent spaces, and in doing so criticized the moralistic atmosphere of the time.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile, the place of religion itself in tanka was called into question. Ōnishi Hajime (大西祝, 1864-1900), himself a Christian, called for more religion in poetry, to complement a greater engagement with spirituality and interiority that he called for in philosophy and psychology. As Michael F. Marra states, Ōnishi thought poetry “should express ‘religious thought’—a characteristic he thought was lacking in traditional *waka*. . . .Aesthetics was called to the task of promoting a ‘sense of beauty’ in order to deepen the spiritual life of the Japanese people.”<sup>29</sup>

The ambivalence of religious significance in Akiko's poems could hardly be avoided in such a discursive climate. For not only was there the dissonance between different religious traditions' symbols, there was also the ambivalence of the status of the various religious traditions themselves in Meiji Japan. (It may be too much to venture that there were paradoxes or contradictions in the messages *within* each single religious tradition. It is certainly beyond the scope of this study.)

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<sup>28</sup> Takayama Chogyū (高山樗牛, 1871-1902) also criticized the denigration of love as a result of popular morality. Watanabe Kazuyasu writes of this, “Even in 1898 we can see Chogyū's criticism against a ‘tasteless society’ where everybody has ‘one face, one voice,’ and where ‘people who repress their feelings and are not moved by love are revered as great.’” Watanabe Kazuyasu, “The Aesthetician Takayama Chogyū,” in *A History of Modern Japanese Aesthetics*, translated and edited by Michael F. Marra (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 126; the quotation of Chogyū is from Takayama Rinjirō [Chogyū], *Chogyū zenshū*, vol. 5. (Hakubunkan, 1914), 606-607.

<sup>29</sup> Michael F. Marra, “Introduction,” in *A History of Modern Japanese Aesthetics*, translated and edited by Michael F. Marra (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 11.



The importance of supernatural symbolism in *Tangled Hair* is difficult to overstate, because it is precisely this that makes the touted passion of the poems different from its predecessors. Indeed, passionate love is not new to tanka in 1900. The difference is the positive, playful light in which it is cast. Consider the contrast in this verse by Kōkamon'in no Bettō (皇嘉門院別当, dates unknown), from the collection *One Hundred Poets, One Verse Each* (百人一首: *Hyakunin isschu*):

<i>Hyakunin</i>	On account of one night	難波江の
88	spent among the reeds	あしのかりねの
	by the Naniwa River	ひとよゆゑ
	I offered up myself—	みをつくしてや
	should love endure	戀ひわたるべき

The passionate love here, which is not atypical of tanka going back to the Heian period, is undeniable. Passion, therefore, does not begin to explain the remarkable reception of Akiko's poetry. But for the speaker of this poem, love is ultimately a source of despair. It is unrequited in the end.

The *Kokinshū* devotes five of its twenty volumes (360 poems out of 1,111) to love (though, of course, love is present in many of the others, as well). The name for these poems is *koiuta* (恋歌), and the compound uses the term *koi*, later a synonym for *ren'ai*. In grouping these 360 poems by their place in the course of love from discovery to dejection, the compilers provide a context to each, a setting of the verses in a universal narrative—if one with variations—of love. They thus ensure that no single poem can hold out hope for a happy end.

Below is one poem from the *Kokinshū* that could almost have been written by

Akiko herself:

<i>Kokinshū</i>	If you love me	戀しくば
652	keep your feelings underneath—	下にを思へ
	do not let show	紫の
	the color of that robe	根摺の衣
	dyed with the purple gromwell	色に出づなゆめ

The difference is that Akiko's verses undermine the fatalism of love poetry and its tendency to harbor a sense of resignation that love affairs must always end in disappointment. Even traditional tanka that celebrate love (most of these being the anticipation of love, before regret, disappointment, and reality have had time to dampen one's sentiments) have so often been inserted into anthologies that, following the *Kokinshū*, bring love to an unhappy end.<sup>30</sup> *Tangled Hair* as a collection does not do that. In lacking an arc to love affairs, or even a sense of the passage of time across poems, it evades coherent messages. The collection thus delights in a kind of jouissance that escapes the constraints that the passage of time and cause and effect inflict.

The constraints on love that *Tangled Hair* escapes affect the moral message of the poems. Akiko's poem from the epigraph to this chapter (though from a later collection) implicitly rebuffs readers' quests to find the moral message in her poetry (or anywhere). As we shall see in the section on sin, what sets Akiko's poetry apart is that she invokes morals in order to forswear them.

For the poems in *Tangled Hair*, love is both divine—hence, the references to

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<sup>30</sup> Students of Japanese literature and film have remarked that the stories they read and watch too often end in heartbreak and loss. But rather than see Japanese literature as singularly pessimistic, we might rather see our own culture's devotion to happy endings as the anomaly.

*kami*—and transgressive—hence, the references to her own sin. Transgression is divine. Transgression metaphorically moves her to a divine realm. The first poem of *Tangled Hair*, while perhaps seeming unrelated to the supernatural, announces this:

1	From the world of stars	夜の帳に
	come whispers through	ささめき尽きし
	the screen of night,	星の今を
	tangling the sidelocks	下界の人の
	of someone in the world below	鬢のほつれよ

The mundane and the supernatural are expertly interwoven—or perhaps one should say tangled—so that the stars come down to the profane world (下界: *gekai*) while the woman's hair is engulfed in star-whispers.

Not surprisingly, Akiko's treatment of supernatural symbols is often ambiguous or self-contradictory. Her tangled descriptions tend to preclude a singular ideal. They deconstruct themselves. This should be seen not as a flaw, however, but as contributing to the *tangled* effect of the poems. After all, she is not replacing existing mores with a monolithic natural order of her own. *Tangled Hair's* confrontation with, not to say trivialization of, religious imagery is part of the thrill of transgression, the thrill of awakened love, and, perhaps, a certain nihilistic thrill.

The metaphors go both ways, too: a lamb can be a symbol of the son of God, but a god can be the personification of love, or even the specific lover. Symbols thus connect the natural and supernatural, making them both one and not one. There is here a danger of upsetting the hierarchy of divine and human. Akiko does precisely this. Her poems simultaneously elevate her lover to divine status, replace traditional values with

hedonism, and make a mockery of religious piety.

It is perhaps artificial to separate what appear to be explicitly religious words and symbols for special consideration. What is religious is a not necessarily contiguous subset of a whole constellation of philosophical and moral values and beliefs. As such, there are many terms and figures that migrate easily between secular and religious metaphor. Within *Tangled Hair*, in particular, there are poems that could hardly be said to express religious sentiment. It is understandable to classify the following, for example, in the category of “Tekkan as Akiko’s god”:

358	Unexpectedly, after that	ふとそれより
	spring came	花に色なき
	with no color in the flowers—	春となりぬ
	doubtful <i>kami</i> ,	疑ひの神
	misleading <i>kami</i>	まどはしの神

But simply to identify the *kami* as reflecting Akiko’s worshipful attitude towards Tekkan is to miss the force of the metaphor. Godlike, he is capable of bringing color to the flowers of spring. Withholding his love causes the flowers to bloom with no color. He cannot stop the spring from coming, though. Akiko’s speaker asks what spring would be without color, which is to say what would youth be without love, and that makes her doubt the *kami*. To ask what kind of *kami* would withhold the colors of spring makes the deity or lover seem to have a wicked streak. But of course the answer is that spring came after all, and it is in her perception alone that the flowers have no color. The *kami* himself could not pull off such a trick. The supernatural propels the poem but in the end is empty.

A writer like Akiko can succeed by exploiting the force and range of religious metaphors without believing in them—and without needing readers to believe. We have to be able to look at the Christian imagery in the same way that we do Greek mythological imagery from European poetry—that is, as a poetic resource.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, myths and legends along a spectrum from outright fabrication to quasi-historical play a role in others' poetry, too, notably Doi Bansui's. The difference is not that Bansui believes in all the myths he invokes, but that Akiko uses them so playfully.

Yamakawa Tomiko (山川富美子, 1879-1909), Akiko's rival for Tekkan's affections and a fellow member of the Morning Star school, also wrote poetry with religious references. But Tomiko, who was educated at a Christian school, took them more seriously, and it is thought that she earned her nickname "White Lily" (白百合:

*Shirayuri*) from serious religious poems like the following:

Know you not?	知るや君
The evening breeze	百合の露ふく
that breathes dew on the lily	夕風は
has imparted the voice of God	神の御聲を

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<sup>31</sup> European poets also exploited this ambiguity, of course. The speaker in William Wordsworth's "The World Is Too Much With Us" (1806) laments the loss of metaphysical feeling while ironically summoning that feeling:

Great God! I'd rather be  
 A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;  
 So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
 Have glimpses that might make me less forlorn;  
 Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,  
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

Personifying natural phenomena also imparts a quasi-divine status; consider Percy Bysshe Shelley's "To Night" (1821), which makes Night the brother of Death and the parent of Sleep.

The exploitation of religious terminology and symbolism allows the speaker of the poem to wrestle with received values. Current attitudes, whether lingering traditional values of pre-Meiji Japan or the fashionable new tenets ascribed to Western societies, are also ripe sources of tension between the speaker's internalized values and those imposed from outside. In her romantic struggle against external morality, Akiko exploits the availability of diverse literary and discursive precursors, much as Doi Bansui does in *Nature Has Feelings* (天地有情: Tenchi ujō, 1899). In Akiko's case, the poems construct a textual background of restraint and decorum as if of Heian courtiers who must couch their courtship in coded private allusions.<sup>33</sup> The poems then throw off those moral directives in the foreground.

Akiko's success with the tanka form—a success that lasted long past the early poems—helped prove that the abbreviated form was not inadequate for expression of complex thought and emotion. The brevity, in fact, allows contradictory imagery and ellipsis to remain unresolved and therefore admit multiple readings of its suggestive absences. *Tangled Hair* succeeds precisely because it embraces the tradition of allusion while simultaneously expanding the range of references and registers.

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<sup>32</sup> “Yamakawa Tomiko hen,” in *Yosano Tekkan, Yosano Akiko shū, tsuki Myōjō-ha bungaku shū* (Yosano Tekkan, Yosano Akiko collection, with Morning Star school literature appended) (*Meiji bungaku zenshū* [Complete Meiji literature] 51, Chikuma shobō, 1968), 318.

<sup>33</sup> Shinma Shin'ichi, for example, describes a process by which Akiko makes the voice of her poems into a character from the Heian court. Shinma, “Midaregami o keisei shita mono” (What *Tangled Hair* created), in *Gunzō Nihon no sakka 6: Yosano Akiko* (Gunzō Japan's writers 6: Yosano Akiko) (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1992), 80.

One of those registers is that of playful irony. Generations of scholars, mining *Tangled Hair* for its meanings and allusions, tend to take Akiko's writing so seriously; even the liberation of her sensuality is a serious and sincere topic. Instead, we can find a fair dose of irony in many of these poems. Akiko's poems span a wide range from playful to serious, sometimes with mixtures of the two extremes in the same poem. Indeed, some of her most striking tanka are the most playful, as in this famous example:

362	I, who was created	罪おほき
	to teach a lesson	男こらせと
	to a man of many sins,	肌きよく
	with my skin so pure	黒髪ながく
	and black hair so long	つくられし我れ

Four things make this poem especially striking: the invocation of her lover's sinfulness (or crime; see my discussion of *tsumi* below); the corresponding purity of the woman's body; the fact that she was created for a purpose (implying a creator); and the fact that the entire poem modifies the pronoun "I" [我れ: *ware*], making the whole poem a noun phrase culminating in the speaker's glorious self. The man (or men) has many sins, no doubt involving his taste for women with pure skin and long, black hair. The speaker here sees her anatomical gifts as evidence of a command to punish (*korase*) men, specifically by teasing but withholding her affection. How far she will go to tempt this man is unclear. The poem suggests that she will show some skin and let down her long hair. But even if she indulges like this, the temptress's skin will remain pure and her hair long and black; it is his purity and not hers that is at risk. Then again, *korase* could conceivably be 凝らせ (concentrate on) instead of 懲らせ (punish). The use of kana

leaves open both possibilities and accentuates the playful possibilities of the poem: to be fixated on her hair is to suffer punishment. In that interpretation, the imperative would be directed at the man or men. Hence:

Fix your eyes on this,  
you sinful man,  
say I, fashioned from  
pure skin and  
long, black hair

Here we see the inversion of the sacred (which is lowered) and the profane (which is elevated). The speaker's black hair, *kuro kami*, becomes a dark deity (even if the kanji for *kami* superficially forecloses on the divine nature of her hair), a provocation to lust. Readers in 1901 may have been shocked at the simultaneity, the tangled coexistence of sacred and profane. Such an inversion is, on the surface, a crisis of traditional morality, but it is a powerful rhetorical statement as well. Meanwhile, *Tangled Hair's* traditional diction and textual allusions legitimate the sentimental and erotic by showing the language to be very much in keeping with traditional poetry. In the example above, Akiko's famed use of hair imagery mingles with the mostly overlooked reference to sin. The poems thus avoid being vulgar or comical. It is perhaps surprising how few writers of the Meiji period marshaled such pregnant language for rhetorical effect as Akiko did. Many were simply too earnest (and sometimes devout) to produce such delicious irony.

### **The Trouble with Biographical Explanations for Akiko's Poems**

Hō Akiko became a literary sensation in 1901 when she defied conventions of poetic style and morals to celebrate her sexual liberation in the 399 tanka of *Tangled*



*Hair*.<sup>34</sup> Her transformation into a goddess of poetry—and the key to understanding so many of her perplexing poems—was incubated by her rivalry with Yamakawa Tomiko for the love of Yosano Tekkan, founder of the Tokyo New Poetry Society (東京新詩社: *Tōkyō shinshisha*).<sup>35</sup> Akiko married Tekkan shortly after *Tangled Hair* was published, and she soon outshone her husband as a poet. In her distinguished and productive career, she also made major contributions as a feminist social critic and as a scholar of classical literature—all while raising eleven children.

Those are the familiar contours of a story that is repeated in the many biographical studies, annotated anthologies of poetry, and histories of modern Japanese literature. Yet *Tangled Hair*, arguably the single most celebrated poetry collection since

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<sup>34</sup> Akiko's family name, 鳳, can be pronounced either Hō or Ōtori. Her given name was Shō, usually written 志やう but sometimes 晶 or other variants. When written 晶 and given the common name ending -ko, it can be pronounced Akiko. The name printed on the first edition of *Tangled Hair* was Hō Akiko (鳳晶子). Akiko herself used several variations of characters to write her name. See *Yosano Hiroshi Akiko shokan shūsei* (Collection of Yosano Hiroshi and Akiko's correspondence), 4 vols., edited by Itsumi Kumi (Tokyo: Yagi shoten, 2001); see also Janine Beichman, *Embracing the Firebird: Yosano Akiko and the Birth of the Female Voice in Modern Japanese Poetry* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 285 n. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Yosano Tekkan, whose given name was Hiroshi (寛), founded the Tokyo New Poetry Society in 1899. The group began publishing its literary magazine, *Morning Star* (明星: Myōjō), in April 1900, and they later came to be known as the Morning Star Group.

the Meiji Restoration, is still undervalued and misunderstood.<sup>36</sup> The reason for this is that criticism of Akiko's work tends to do two things: it foregrounds Akiko's biography as a way of explaining the context and motivation of the poems, and it gets buried in paraphrasing and explaining abstruse diction in individual poems. Such biographical explanations reduce the multivalent possibilities (dare we say *Tangled Hair's* split ends?) of interpretation. The characteristic celebration of the putative immediacy and passion of Akiko's tanka has precluded any analysis of their range, conceptual sophistication, and idealism. Yet they very much belong with Shimazaki Tōson and Doi Bansui (土井晩翠, 1871-1952) in their celebration of the visionary yet intertextual role of the poet in describing romantic and unrealistic natures.

Why should critics, after all, reduce the achievement of the young Akiko's tanka to the newness and shock value of their passion? Her evocations of ill-fated, transgressive love are not new to the literature. The love-suicide plot, for example, was one of the most popular story lines in Edo-period literature, and their popularity

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<sup>36</sup> Akiko's later poetry, which includes as many as 50,000 tanka as well as free verse, deserves more attention, too. Akiko herself saw *Tangled Hair* as less mature and accomplished than her later works. In addition to *Tangled Hair*, much has been written on Akiko's most famous single poem, "Brother, Thou Must Not Die" (君死にたまふことなかれ: *Kimi shini tamō koto nakare*), a poem she wrote against the Russo-Japanese War shortly after the war began in 1904. "The Day the Mountains Move Has Come" (山の動く日きたる: *Yama no ugoku hi kitaru*), an excerpted stanza from the poem "Trifling Words" (そぞろごと: *Sozoro-goto*), famously appeared on the first page of the feminist magazine *Bluestockings* (青鞥: *Seitō*) in 1912. Otherwise, most of Akiko's poetry has been neglected.

continued into the Meiji period.<sup>37</sup> Love-suicides are both passionate and transgressive. Akiko's tanka are different from those because, the poems are in the first person from a woman's point of view, and there are no suicides. More important is that, whereas love-suicide plots invoke a fatalistic recognition that there can be no happy ending to their transgression, Akiko's verses mix acceptance and defiance of moral values. They do not operate entirely outside society's morals, but neither do they submit completely to society's dictates. As we shall see, Akiko's ironic invocation of sin, both Buddhist and Christian, along with addressing her lover as a *kami* or a priest, adds a note of play to the seriousness.

The question remains why Akiko embraced the tanka form as the vehicle for her shocking verses. As discussed in the introductory chapter, her rediscovery of tanka as a form with revolutionary potential owes a great deal to Tekkan's tanka. But it was also a shrewd stylistic and intertextual move. Before the reforms pioneered by Tekkan, the tanka form had become encumbered with, not to say benumbed by, convention to the point that even transgression was safely circumscribed. It came equipped with metaphors and standardized backdrops so that references to lovers' improper meetings and partings were more indirect. Passions and the furtive meetings they prompted were thus staples of court poetry, as they were of otherwise rigid court lifestyles, without

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<sup>37</sup> Kamei Hideo sees a change in the love-suicide plot's literary significance after Shimazaki Tōson's *Spring* (春: *Haru*, 1908). But this was nearly a decade after Akiko's poems began appearing. See Kamei Hideo, *Transformations of Sensibility: The Phenomenology of Meiji Literature*, trans. ed. Michael Bourdaghs (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 2002), 137.

transgressing the limits of what could politely be said.<sup>38</sup> Yet it also has a rich history of combining references to passion with negative judgments of (usually one's own) spiritual fitness. In a classical example from *The Tales of Ise* (伊勢物語: Ise monogatari, tenth century), Ariwara no Narihira (在原業平, 825-880) sends this poem to a priestess at the Ise Shrine:

Ise 69	In the darkening gloom of my heart I have become lost— whether it is a dream or reality tonight shall tell.	かきくらす 心の闇に まどひにき 夢うつつとは こよひさだめよ <sup>39</sup>
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As Edwin A. Cranston explains, Narihira's passion is expressed as a “going astray” or “losing the path”: “the Buddhist concept of the ‘darkness of the heart’ [心の闇: *kokoro no yami*], the error of human entanglement in all forms of desire and attachment, lies in the background of such passages.”<sup>40</sup> Akiko's poems similarly burrow into liminal spaces of longing and illusion, and in so doing they reach into the uncertain depths of readers' emotions and values. By retaining classical diction, open-ended syntax, and visionary imagery, meanwhile, the poems both formally and substantively reject the movement

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<sup>38</sup> Sometimes, though, the passions followed the prompting, as in several instances of rape in Murasaki Shikibu's (紫式部, ca. 974 to ca. 1014) *The Tale of Genji* (源氏物語: *Genji monogatari*, ca. 1000).

<sup>39</sup> This version is poem 69 in *The Tales of Ise*; it also appears with a slight variation as poem 646 in the *Collection of Poems Old and New* (古今和歌集: *Kokin wakashū*, compiled ca. 905; hereafter abbreviated to *Kokinshū*).

<sup>40</sup> Edwin A. Cranston, “The Dark Path: Images of Longing in Japanese Love Poetry,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 35 (1975), 61.

towards realistic description in vernacular language. In this, they occupy a position, similar to Tōson's and Bansui's poems examined in this study, of tension between the real and the ideal. But where Tōson's poetic speakers explore ways to describe and interact with some idealized incarnation of landscape, and Bansui reflects on the poet's mystifying role in chasing the shadows of ideals cast by other poets, Akiko's verses expose the potential of what Baudelaire calls in this chapter's epigraph the "artificial and supernatural" character of virtue. Akiko does not simply reject the hypocrisies of artificial and supernatural dogmata in order to pursue moral and sensual freedom; instead, her poems play ironically with the artificiality of religious, supernatural, and moral dangers.

Yet the appeal to biography is particularly tempting, not only because Akiko faced such moral dangers (though perhaps did not enjoy such sensual freedoms) in her life, but also because Akiko wrote her poems in a diaristic way.<sup>41</sup> It is too easy to try to supply episodes from Akiko's biography in the same way that poems attributed to Ariwara no Narihira were strung together with narrative in *The Tales of Ise*. But I would argue that, even in Akiko's case, knowledge of her biography is unnecessary. That robs the poems of the lives they can lead when taken out of their original context. As Neil Fraistat notes, a poem (in English, anyhow) is a discrete unit that can, by definition, be taken out of context. In addition, smaller units of long poems can take on semi-

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<sup>41</sup> Sanford Goldstein and Seishi Shinoda note that Ishikawa Takuboku (1886-1912), a disciple of Tekkan, took Akiko's lead in writing tanka as a diary, "with its stark emphasis on breakdown, mental, physical, and moral." Akiko Yosano, *Tangled Hair: Selected Tanka from Midaregami*, translated by Sanford Goldstein and Seishi Shinoda (Lafayette: Purdue University Studies, 1971), 20.

independent lives, as is the case with Shakespeare monologues and portions of Milton.<sup>42</sup> Tanka are especially portable because of their length; once memorized, readers can apply them to new contexts—as long as the poems are not unduly weighed down by an identification with a famous writer’s scandalous love life. Reading the poems of *Tangled Hair* from start to finish is only one step, and not necessarily a step most readers take, in making the poems their own.

At the same time, in the classical tradition of tanka compilations, a poem is not a purely independent entity, but serves a function and has value as part of the “association and progression” of the sequence in which it is placed.<sup>43</sup> Such a standard further removes individual tanka from the occasion of their creation. As I discuss below in the section on the difficulties of *Tangled Hair* as a collection, the compilation is another act of creation, albeit in this case by the writer of the poems herself. As the verses are taken out of chronological, hence biographical, order to be placed in the anthology, they perform with each other in ways that resist biographical explanation. When we invoke biography, first we limit the wide array of resonances and depths. We search for simple, unitary explanations for what are in fact complex thoughts. Such explanations began

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<sup>42</sup> Neil Fraistat, *The Poem and the Book: Interpreting Collections of Romantic Poetry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 10. William Waters, meanwhile, asserts, “What we call lyric poetry is literature, something whose detachment from context is, in a manner of speaking, its foundation.” William Waters, *Poetry’s Touch: On Lyric Address* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 9. Susan Stewart argues for the “specificity” of poems’ “use and occasion.” Susan Stewart, *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 22, quoted in Waters, 10.

<sup>43</sup> See Konishi Jin’ichi, “Association and Progression: Principles of Integration in Anthologies and Sequences of Japanese Court Poetry, A.D. 900-1350,” translated and adapted by Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 21 (Dec. 1958), 67-127.

with the earliest criticism in *Morning Star* and other journals. Second, we run into contradictions when the biographical background of the poet does not line up with the expressions. Most notable in Akiko's case is her invocation of religious imagery. Akiko was never religious, so there must be some other way to approach the references to Buddhist, Shinto, and Christian symbols. To take an extreme example, what should we make of the following poem's seemingly sincere evocation of ambivalence towards Christianity, a sentiment Akiko appears never to have experienced?

215	The Bible I tossed into the deep water I pulled out again, and looking up at the sky I cried— I am a lost child	淵の水に なげし聖書を 又もひろひ 空仰ぎ泣く われまどひの子
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Such a poem is more moving if we envision a vulnerable, conflicted persona—in other words, not Akiko. The most we should say about Akiko based on this poem is that she seems to have found such religious doubt a useful poetic resource.

The biographical context, which Janine Beichman argues is necessary in order to understand many of the poems,<sup>44</sup> is not part of the poems proper; or, we might say, it only illuminates one corner of the many significations and interpretations of the poems. Even occasional poems written under the most constrained circumstances, as so many of the classical tradition have been, are worth reading a hundred or a thousand years later because they transcend those circumstances. To say otherwise, to look for biographical clues, is indeed to *limit* the poems. All the background of the occasion on

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<sup>44</sup> Beichman, 227.

which a given poem was written may be revealing, but the poem cannot be only that. If it is to be read by thousands of readers, and not just by Tekkan or Tomiko, it must be read as if meant to widen beyond its immediate context, to address some universal or general understanding, emotion, or reflection. Moments, emotions, and meetings are abstracted and idealized; readers are implicitly encouraged to supply their own biographical contexts and find distinct resonances.

Nor is the biographical context a hint to how the poems were read at the time. Outside the Morning Star circle of writers, readers would not have known the details of Akiko's life. The biographical correctives of later years should not have been trusted, as the explanations she and Tekkan gave for their poems were often misleading.<sup>45</sup>

Indeed, Akiko's poems—and the tanka form by its very nature—leave such details out. Akiko even altered certain poems to allow readers to supply their own context. In the following poem, which was first sent to Tekkan in a private letter, Akiko changed the place from the specific “Awata” to the famous “Fuzan” (Ch.: Wushan), and the factual “two nights” to the typical “one night,” before publication in *Tangled Hair*.

[letter]	Goodbye, my love— this wife of two nights of a spring in Awata— until the next world, forget me!	君さらば 栗田の春の ふた夜妻 またの世までは 忘れゐたまへ
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<sup>45</sup> See Yosano Akiko, “Kōbai nikki” (Red plum diary) (Koshijin 1, Feb. 1902); *Uta o tsukuriyō* (How I write poems) (Dec. 1915); and *Akiko kawa* (Akiko discusses poetry) (Ten'yūsha, 1919). Also see Tekkan's series “Tekkan kawa” (Tekkan discusses poetry), especially no. 2 (*Myōjō*, Sept. 1901), no. 3 (*Myōjō*, Oct. 1901), and no. 5 (*Myōjō*, Feb. 1902).



Goodbye, my love—  
 this wife of one night  
 of a spring in Fuzan—  
 until the next world,  
 forget me!

君さらば  
 巫山の春の  
 ひと夜妻  
 またの世までは  
 忘れゐたまへ<sup>46</sup>

Clearly, the second version does not raise questions about the significance or specificity of the place and time. It does not invite inquiry into the speaker's particular frame of mind and conflicting emotions, but rather seems to tap into a conventionally imagined impossible love. But by the same token, the first version may be superior in forcing the reader to imagine a new scenario. The truth of Akiko's stay in Awata with Tekkan is not required—and indeed, knowing the details would diminish the imaginative freedom given to the reader. Once again, the obstacle to easy understanding is simultaneously the burden and expectation for the reader to do more for and get more from a poem.

The recourse to Akiko's biography is illuminating not for the facts and contexts it provides, but for the evidence it provides of the historical priority given to authorial genius. A focus on Akiko's biography, then, though not negating the intertextual associations in the poetry, nevertheless betrays a shift to a primary emphasis on the individual expression of the artistic genius's solitary mind. To be sure, this key difference in literary criticism seems suited to the Romantic style of poetry Akiko wrote: as the focus on individual, unique experience sharpens, so does the criticism of the work seek to explain the work's genesis and significance through the author's intertextual and extratextual experiences. But to insist on the biographical relevance of the tanka, to

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<sup>46</sup> Itsumi, 84-85; see also Beichman, 185.

keep the tanka always tethered to the writer, is to deprive them of room to play, to tamp down ambiguities. It also deprives the reader of the freedom to appropriate the poem, to reimagine it.

The early tanka anthologies split the difference. Many poems come with headings that supply the occasion, along with authorial credit when known. But the themes are generally limited to conventionally accepted expressions of conventional feelings and conventional landscapes. Or, at least, we have been taught to read them that way. That is, the *how* of poetic execution has typically received more attention than any particular biographical inspiration. There are a few exceptions in the early collections, however, such as Ono no Komachi (小野小町, dates unknown), whose reputation as a passionate lover colored the reception of her poetry. Although Ono no Komachi was canonized as one of the “six poetic geniuses” of the early Heian period, Ki no Yoshimochi’s Chinese preface to the *Kokinshū* describes her poetry as “seductive and spiritless. This is like a sick woman wearing cosmetics.”<sup>47</sup> Ki no Tsurayuki’s Japanese preface to the *Kokinshū* likewise praises Ono no Komachi with faint damnation, you might say: “She is full of sentiment but weak. Her poetry is like a noble lady who is suffering from a sickness, but the weakness is natural to a woman’s poetry.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Grzanka qualifies this passage with a footnote: “The statement that she ‘lacks power,’ while not the highest of praise, may be taken as an expression of admiration in a culture in which helplessness and fragility exhibited in a framework of sensuality were appreciated.” Ki no Yoshimochi, “Manajo: The Chinese Preface,” translated by Leonard Grzanka, in *Kokinshū: A Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern*, translated and annotated by Laurel Rasplica Rodd with Mary Catherine Henkenius (Boston: Cheng and Tsui, 1996), 383.

<sup>48</sup> Ki no Tsurayuki, “Kanajo: The Japanese Preface,” in *Kokinshū: A Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern*, 45.

Needless to say, such judgments are unfair, as one can see from the following poem by Ono no Komachi:

<i>Kokinshū</i>	At night I shall come to him	限りなき
657	with a love that has	思ひのまに
	no limits—	夜も来ん
	no one can judge me	夢路をさへに
	for following the path of dreams	人は咎めじ

A better fit for such a judgment might be the following poem by the male poet Ariwara no Narihira, written on behalf of a woman in his household in response to a poem by Fujiwara no Toshiyuki (藤原敏行, died 901 or 907):

<i>Kokinshū</i>	My sleeves might be drenched	浅みこそ
618	even in shallow waters	袖はひずらめ
	if I heard	涙側
	that you had floated away	身さへ流ると
	on a river of tears	聞かばとのまん

This arguably fragile and sentimental poem was clearly an imitation (not to say caricature) of womanly feeling and diction. But that did not make it any less celebrated. Male poets not infrequently wrote in drag, as a way of expanding the range of setting and sensibility in their tanka.<sup>49</sup> Seen in the reflected light of predecessors shunted into the category of women poets, Akiko's reputation is almost predictable. What is remarkable is that, instead of being called weak and sentimental, Akiko is deemed strong and passionate.

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<sup>49</sup> Women, meanwhile, seem to write tanka in the persona of men less often. One rich source of examples are the many poems Murasaki Shikibu caused to come from the mouths and writing brushes of Genji and other male courtiers in *The Tale of Genji*.

Another frequently invoked source of contextual clues to Akiko's poetry are the art nouveau-inspired woodblock prints by Fujishima Takeji, which were published with the poems in the August 1901 full collection. Fujishima also designed the layout of the book. The striking prints are valuable to the identity of the collection, whose cover image was of a woman's profile inside a heart pierced with an arrow, from which drops of blood formed the title. In Beichman's words, "The visual extravagance of the cover foretold what lay within: a passionate hymn to love, poetry, and youth."<sup>50</sup> Here we must distinguish, however, between the collection as a whole and the individual poems. Yes, the cover art *suggested* what may have lain within, but it also instructed the reader what to look for—and what not to look for. James Wright recalls Robert Frost's opinion "that if there are twenty-five poems in a book, the book itself ought to be the twenty-sixth poem."<sup>51</sup> Fujishima's visual art constitutes part of the four hundredth poem of *Tangled Hair*, we might then say, a poem whose authorship is collaborative.<sup>52</sup> But the art should not be taken as intertwined with individual poems in the same way that an illuminated poem-artwork by William Blake might be. Rather, it should add to the verses, and not subtract from or limit our investigation of the verses.

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<sup>50</sup> Beichman, 175.

<sup>51</sup> James Wright, quoted in Fraistat, 3.

<sup>52</sup> For treatment of the dialogue between poems and prints in *Tangled Hair* and other Meiji literature, see Kimata Satoshi, *Gabun kyōmei: "Midaregami" kara "Tsuki ni hoeru" e* (Words and pictures singing together: From *Tangled Hair* to *Howling at the Moon*) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2008).

## Entangled Tanka in *Tangled Hair*

The artistic project of making the collection puts the poems in (ordered) conversation with each other. The themes that predominate rise to the surface, and the structure—a structure that exceeds the brief bounds of a tanka, but also a structure built entirely of one poet's tanka (plus one artist's woodcuts)—creates its own effect. Yet the semi-discrete individual poems resist any final unity and remain tangled. Akiko herself was, of course, the first to tangle up the verses when she produced the collection. In creating an entirely new sequence of poems, she disrupted the “association and progression” of poem sequences as previously published. In editing the collection for publication, she—possibly with Tekkan's help, but the process is not known—also disrupted their chronological order and further weakened the connection to her biography.

The following four poems, for example, appeared consecutively in *Tangled Hair* for the first time. The first two first appeared in the March 1901 issue of *Morning Star*, while the second were appearing in print for the first time.

258	Today's poem in offering to the <i>kami</i> of love— when will the god of destiny receive it?	戀の神に むくいまつりし 今日の歌 ゑにしの神は いつ受けまさむ
259	Do you still yearn for the true, the good, and the beautiful? The flower in my hand is crimson, my darling!	かくてなほ あくがれますか 眞善美 わが手の花は くれなゐよ君

260	Black hair, a thousand strands of hair, tangled hair, and tangled feelings, too, tangled feelings!	くろ髪の 千すぢの髪 みだれ髪 かつおもひみだれ おもひみだるる
261	Perhaps because I myself am weak at feeling those ideals, I was so envious of her among the spiderwort that morning!	そよ理想 おもひにうすぎ 身なればか 朝の露草 人ねたかりし

The offering poem of number 258 is echoed by the offering of the flower in 259. The *kami* of destiny (or of marriage, if you like) and the trinity of ideals (truth, goodness, beauty) in these two poems then give way to the repeated tangling of hair and feelings in 260. Readers who read the poems in this order will be struck by 260 in a different way, having come along this path. Perhaps they will see the substitution of eros in a crimson flower in 259 for the marital ideals in 258 as preparing the way for the further physical and emotional entanglements of 260. Then the perspective shifts substantially in number 261; but the tangled feelings linger, and they seem to be further defined to include envy—if we take them to be the outpouring of the same poetic speaker. The mention again of ideals helps to echo the ideals of love, truth, goodness, and beauty in poems 258 and 259, while causing the spasm of tangled hair and feelings in 260 to stand out even more—and to tangle the strands of tanka. (This effect is better visualized in the Japanese original, with each poem flowing vertically in two lines.)

Unlike imperial poetry anthologies, however, whose compilers arranged the

poems by themes,<sup>53</sup> or the records of linked poetry gatherings, which preserved the sequence of poems' composition (and thus the rules of recurrence of words and themes),<sup>54</sup> Akiko's collection appears to follow no such rules. That is not to say, however, that there are no recurring themes. An early, anonymous review in *Morning Star* attempted roughly to distinguish the predominant themes in each of the six "chapters," and, as rough as these distinctions are, they have been repeated in later commentaries. In the first chapter, for example, "Carmine-purple" (燕脂紫: *Enji murasaki*), rich, beautiful colors predominate.<sup>55</sup> The second chapter, "Boat of Lotus Blossoms" (蓮の花船: *Hasu no hanabune*), is like a series of photographs of the poet's adolescence. The third chapter, "White Lily" (白百合: *Shirayuri*), has poems that deal with Tomiko. The fourth chapter, "Twenty-year-old Wife" (はたち妻: *Hatachi tsuma*), refers to Akiko's trip to Tokyo to be with Tekkan. "Dancing Girl" (舞姫: *Maihime*; not to be confused with a separate poetry collection Akiko published in 1906) focuses on Kyoto

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<sup>53</sup> The precedent was set with the first imperially commissioned anthology of waka, the tenth-century *Kokinshū*, whose 1,111 poems were grouped under headings such as love (within which there is a progression from first stirrings of interest to the sadness of faded love) and the four seasons (each of which shows internal progression). But it is worth noting that these imperial anthologies were themselves created by taking poems out of their original contexts and giving them new significance by their placement among similar poems. See Konishi Jin'ichi, "Association and Progression."

<sup>54</sup> See also Esperanza Ramirez-Christensen, "Essential Parameters of Linked Poetry: An Account with Translations of Renga and Haikai Sequences by Earl Miner," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 41:2 (Dec. 1981), 555-595, which discusses the rules governing the recurrence of words and themes in linked verse.

<sup>55</sup> For the translation "carmine-purple" (and translations of the 98 poems in the chapter), see Edwin A. Cranston, "Carmine-Purple: A Translation of 'Enji-Murasaki,' the first Ninety-Eight Poems of Yosano Akiko's *Midaregami*," *Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* 25:1 (April 1991), 90-111.

dancing girls. “Spring Thoughts” (春思: *Shunshi* or *Haru omoi*) has some of the richest symbolism but is difficult to characterize.<sup>56</sup>

Bearing in mind, however, that the poems of *Tangled Hair* were taken out of chronological order and arranged only according to loose thematic links, these characterizations are fairly tenuous. The chapter titles seem primarily to serve as convenient breaks. Still, there may be tighter thematic links and more consistency at the beginning of each chapter, which then quickly dissipate. But it is worth noting that poems with religious themes tend to be clustered, as well.

Nevertheless, as I mentioned earlier in this chapter, there is no arc to hint at the development and decay of a love affair, let alone seasons or other associations and progressions common to tanka collections. With no strong sense of progression in the 399 poems of *Tangled Hair*, whether thematically, chronologically, or otherwise, the effect of reading instead is to emphasize repeated images and moods. Yes, those moods were often passionate, but they also appear against a background of traditional morality and supernatural symbols. That makes it all the more striking that no serious study of the supernatural themes seems to have been mounted.

Perhaps the apparent lack of structure in the collection explains why so many commentators and translators have been so unconcerned with presenting the complete

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<sup>56</sup> *Myōjō* 2:1 (Jan. 1902), 1-4; Shinma Shin'ichi, “Midaregami: Yosano Akiko” (*Tangled Hair*: Yosano Akiko), *Kokubungaku* 8:12, special issue (Sept. 20, 1963), 36; Claire Dodane, *Yosano Akiko: Poète de la passion et figure de proue du féminisme japonais* (Yosano Akiko: poet of passion and figure at the forefront of Japanese feminism) (Aurillac, Cantal: Publications Orientalistes de France, 2000), 79-80.



work in order.<sup>57</sup> (One might expect that they would then choose to include in their analyses the roughly equal number of poems not included in *Tangled Hair* that Akiko published in the same period.)<sup>58</sup> The benefits of selecting and arranging poems from the collection include the opportunity to create some sort of coherency.<sup>59</sup> As a result, they

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<sup>57</sup> There are two notable exceptions: the first is Satō Akio's *Midaregami kō* (Thoughts on tangled hair) (Tokyo: Shūdōsha, 1956), which also prints in chronological order those poems that did not appear in the collection; the second is Satake Kazuhiko, *Zenshaku Midaregami kenkyū* (Complete interpretation of *Tangled Hair*) (Tokyo: Yūhōdō, 1957). But then Itsumi Kumi's *Midaregami zenshaku* (Complete interpretation of *Tangled Hair*) (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1978) rearranges the poems by order of first publication, dismantling the structure of the collection. Meanwhile, I have found no complete translations of *Tangled Hair* into any other language.

<sup>58</sup> Satake, for example, distinguishes three periods in Akiko's tanka style leading up to the publication of *Tangled Hair*: before she meets Tekkan in person in August 1900; the period from that first meeting until she believed she would be able to marry him (early spring 1901); and from then until the completion of the collection in August 1901. Satake then distributes the 399 poems from *Tangled Hair* into those three periods: 14, 85, and 300; poems not included in the collection are ignored. If his goal was to examine the change in Akiko's style as her relationship with Tekkan developed, then limiting his analysis to the *Tangled Hair* poems was arbitrary. Satake, "Midaregami no sakusha no jiga keisei" (The formation of self of the author of *Tangled Hair*) (Kyoto University Japanese Language and Literature Department: *Kokugo kokubun* 25:3 [March 15, 1956], 17-18.

<sup>59</sup> One translator, James O'Brien, even celebrates the teacher's or translator's role in selecting and rearranging poems: "I have found that the best way to pique student interest in *Tangled Hair* is to rearrange the order of the poems slightly in order to convey the sense of a love affair progressing from the beginning stages to the breakup and recovery." Note how O'Brien is thus following the practices of the *Kokinshū* compilers. James O'Brien, "A Few Strands of Tangled Hair," *Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* 25:1 (April 1991), 113.

obscure part of the collection's identity, namely, its relative lack of coherency.<sup>60</sup> I, too, cannot avoid falling into this trap.

## Ideals

My point is not to deny that Akiko's early poems were "a passionate hymn to love, poetry, and youth," but to insist that there was far more to them than what can be found in her biography. While many poems rejoice in irreverent thoughts, others are the outcome of deep contemplation, and these tend to be more melancholic or even phlegmatic (surely not a trait typically associated with *Tangled Hair*). Four of the poems in *Tangled Hair* use the term "ideal" (理想: *risō*, but sometimes glossed as *omoi*, "thought," which has connotations of "love" dating back to classical poetry). The term

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<sup>60</sup> An alternative is to group the poems in such a way that the themes multiply beyond control. Satō Haruo's *Midaregami o yomu* (Reading *Tangled Hair*) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1959) is a compilation of short commentaries that stay close to small themes and individual poems. Satō untangles verses and tangles them up in new configurations, with the only attempt at coherency being in suggestive subheadings (such as "Akiko's Romanticism and Aestheticism" and "Symbolist works"). The essays first appeared in serial form in *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kanshō* (Japanese literature: Interpretation and appreciation) in 1957. Katharina May seems to give order to *Tangled Hair* by methodically moving through themes and patterns in Akiko's poetry (including color symbolism and antitheses), but she does this so briefly and in such quick succession that no sustained critique can be mounted. See Katharina May, *Die Erneuerung der Tanka-Poesie in der Meiji-Zeit (1868-1912) und die Lyrik Yosano Akikos* (The renovation of tanka poetry in the Meiji period [1868-1912] and the lyric poetry of Yosano Akiko) (Wiesbaden: East Asian Institute of Ruhr University, 1975).

seems to be new to tanka at that time.<sup>61</sup> If not strictly religious, there at least seems a whiff of the metaphysical in it. “Ideals” have a flavor of seriousness and high intention.

Consider this poem:

67	The purple clouds of ideals scatter and disperse— up in the sky where I gaze they have all disappeared	紫の 理想の雲は ちぎれちぎれ 仰ぐわが空 それはた消えぬ
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According to Itsumi Kumi, the purple clouds symbolize the speaker’s ideal of love.<sup>62</sup> Yet such a reading, instinctive as it may feel, is in fact forced and partial, deriving as it does from assumptions about the topics of Akiko’s poems and the habit of reading them primarily as confessions of love or passion. The color purple may symbolize love, but it may also (especially if we render *murasaki* as “violet”) be the color of clouds dyed by the rising or setting sun.<sup>63</sup> Had this been a poem by Bansui, who, as we saw in the previous chapter, often wrote of ideals and clouds, we probably would not have found any trace of

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<sup>61</sup> It was included in the *Philosophical Dictionary* (Tetsugaku jii), edited by Inoue Tetsujirō and Aruga Nagao (Tokyo: Tōyōkan, 1881). That dictionary of philosophical terms was the first of its kind in Japan. Bansui’s *shintaiishi* use the term frequently. In the Shinchō edition of *Tangled Hair* in 1919, the word “ideals” in poem 67 was changed to “yesterday” (昨日: *kinō*). For poem 208 below, in the Kaizō edition of *Tangled Hair* in 1933, “ideals” was changed to “heart” (心: *kokoro*). Poem 46 below keeps the term 理想, but it always maintains the gloss *omoi*, thus allowing it to straddle the three concepts of “ideals,” “thoughts,” and “love.” See Itsumi, 101, 145, 94.

<sup>62</sup> Itsumi Kumi, *Midaregami zenshaku* (Complete interpretation of *Tangled Hair*) (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1978), 101.

<sup>63</sup> Or, according to Sanford and Goldstein, the Buddha arrives on a purple cloud to take devout followers when they die. Sanford and Goldstein, 129-130.

a lonely lover. Instead, we might have found in the poem a more philosophical dejection lamenting the passing of time or the dreams of youth. We would probably read it as sunset, whereas Akiko's hand makes it read like the sighed words of one whose lover has just left at sunrise. Such a reading is the conventional significance of dawn in traditional tanka. As with the other colors in *Tangled Hair*, the color purple has symbolic, abstract significance to reinforce the idealism expressed in the poem.

To entertain slightly more far-fetched speculation, we might also read "murasaki" not as the color purple but as the name of Genji's great love (or even the author of *The Tale of Genji*).<sup>64</sup> In that case, the clouds above Murasaki's head would have dispersed long ago, and the speaker of the words of Akiko's poem would be left in a state where even Murasaki's frustrated ideals, perhaps involving devoted attention from Genji, were hopelessly outdated. The poem would then read thus:

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<sup>64</sup> For Akiko's use of *Genji* in her poetry, see Ichikawa Chihiro, *Yosano Akiko to Genji monogatari* (Yosano Akiko and The Tale of Genji) (Tokyo: Kokken shuppan, 1998). For Akiko's early grounding in, and later scholarly exposition of, the Heian classics, see G. G. Rowley, *Yosano Akiko and The Tale of Genji* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2000). Building on the work of Ichikawa, Rowley argues that Akiko's scholarship on *Genji* and other classics deserves greater appreciation. Akiko translated *The Tale of Genji* into modern Japanese twice: the first version (which was also the work's first translation into modern Japanese) was published in four volumes in 1912-13, and the second in six volumes in 1938-39 (Rowley, 52-53, 152-153). This does not include an intermediate translation in progress that was destroyed in the fires caused by the Great Kantō Earthquake of Sept. 1, 1923. Besides *Genji*, Akiko translated into modern Japanese the eleventh-century *Tales of Flowering Fortune* (栄華物語: Eiga monogatari), *The Diary of Murasaki Shikibu* (紫式部日記: *Murasaki Shikibu nikki*), *The Diary of Izumi Shikibu* (和泉式部日記: *Izumi Shikibu nikki*), and Yoshida Kenkō's (吉田兼好, ca. 1283-ca. 1352) *Essays in Idleness* (徒然草: *Tsurezuregusa*, ca. 1330-31). All of these were published between 1912 and 1916 (Rowley, 89). Akiko's original scholarship, the product of her individual study under no master's tutelage, corrected misinterpretations that had built up over centuries of derivative commentaries.

Murasaki's  
ideal clouds  
scatter and disperse—  
up in the sky where I gaze  
they have all disappeared

The second poem with the term “ideal” follows:

208	Before the devil your ideal is crushed— do not point your finger at the weak child and your night together	魔のまへに 理想くだきし (理想: <i>omoi</i> ) よわき子と 友のゆふべを ゆびさしますな
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Itsumi reads the “ideal” of the poem above as an ideal of self-liberation shared by the Morning Star poets, against the evil restrictions of a feudal society.<sup>65</sup> More specifically, it is an ideal of freedom to love as one chooses, and thus appears to feed all too easily into the criticism that Akiko sings merely of a selfish ideal of love, and nothing more profound. Yet the ideal invoked here is not the speaker’s own, nor is it made explicit. Instead, the speaker of the poem refers to the ideal sardonically. Itsumi notes here that the poem refers to the recent marriage of Akiko’s rival for Tekkan’s affections, Yamakawa Tomiko.<sup>66</sup> The fate of an “ideal” at the hands of a “devil” suggests a metaphysical dimension.

The third poem invokes ideals in a good-humored way:

46	Do not repent, though	悔いますな
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<sup>65</sup> Itsumi, 145. Commentators tend to refer to this traditional morality as feudal (封建的: *hōkenteki*), but that term, especially translated into English, is not very useful. The “feudal” values that Akiko’s poems reject are those of chastity, obedience, diligent study, and religious observance.

<sup>66</sup> Itsumi, 145.

your sword broke	おさへし袖に	
when I clutched your sleeve—	折れし剣	
there are at last no thorns	つひの理想の	(理想: <i>omoi</i> )
on the flower of ideals	花に刺あらじ	

Tekkan had earned the nickname “Tiger and Sword Tekkan” for elements that epitomized the “masculinity” in his early collections.<sup>67</sup> But even though Akiko had once vowed to write like Tekkan, her poems do not, in the end, share anything of the “tiger and sword” style. This poem from *Tangled Hair* even subtly refers to the way she has conquered him—and perhaps his tiger and sword style, too. (Yet to stop at the personal level of the poems is to forgo consideration of the significance of thornless ideal flowers.) What place has *defensiveness*, cautious self-protection in love—or in poetry?

The fourth poem with the compound “ideals,” which I discussed above as part of a tangled poetic sequence, returns to the gloss *risō*:

261	Perhaps because	そよ理想
	I myself am weak	おもひにうすき
	at feeling those ideals,	身なればか
	I was so envious of her	朝の露草
	among the spiderwort that morning!	人ねたかりし

Taken out of the context of poems 258 to 260, this poem no longer gives any clues to what the ideal or ideals could be, except that envy runs counter to them. The sign is more powerful because it is more abstract, in contrast to the speaker’s weak self.

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<sup>67</sup> This characterization applies especially to Tekkan’s early collections, *North, South, East, and West* (東西南北: Tōzai nanboku, 1896) and *Heaven and Earth, Dark and Bright* (天地玄黄: Tenchi genkō, 1897). By the time of his collection *Purple* (紫: Murasaki, April 1901), his style had already begun to change under Akiko’s influence. Itsumi, 94-95.

## *Kami*

The term *kami* (神: god or spirit) appears in no fewer than forty-seven of the poems in *Tangled Hair*. As noted above, I have chosen to keep the term *kami* in most cases, rather than to arbitrarily assign a religion or number (though a verb often specifies singularity or plurality) by substituting the English god, God, gods, etc.<sup>68</sup> If one conception of *kami* were said to predominate, it would be that of an epithet for the love object of the poems. Other invocations of *kami* include the *kami* of night, the *kami* of love, the *kami* of autumn, and the *kami* of spring.<sup>69</sup> Even these *kami*, however, can sometimes be read as her lover. This is especially applicable to the *kami* of night, although in some cases she implores the *kami* of night to protect her secret or prevent her lover from leaving. Akiko exhibits a menagerie of *kami*, including Greek, Shinto, and Buddhist, along with other terms associated with specific religions, such as monks (僧: *sō*), sutras (経: *kyō*), the Bible (聖書: *seisho*), hymns (聖歌: *seika*), temples (堂: *dō*; 院: *in*; or 寺: *tera*), shrines (宮: *miya*), King David, and demons (魔: *ma*; or 鬼: *oni*).<sup>70</sup>

Given the association with natural law and the order of the universe, gods, *kami*,

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<sup>68</sup> Akashi Toshiyo writes that Akiko obviously does not adopt a single, clear definition of *kami*. Akashi, “*Midaregami to shūkyōteki hyōgen*” (*Tangled Hair* and its religious expressions), *Joshi-dai bungaku* 35 (Mar. 30, 1984), 64.

<sup>69</sup> Please consult the following poem numbers for examples of these kinds of *kami*: night: 14, 16, 17, 24, 49, 62; love: 258; autumn: 19; spring: 8.

<sup>70</sup> Examples of these *kami* are found in the following poems: Greek: 322; Shinto: 48 (for a god of the Kamo River—but the general use of the term *kami* makes it hard to attribute Shinto flavor to poems); Buddhist: 20 (a bodhisattva), 36, 150. Poems containing the other terms: monks: 99, 159, 229; sutras: 7, 20, 121, 123, 150, 159, 229, 393; the Bible: 215, 216; hymns: 213; temples: 7, 20, 112, 142, 285, 343; shrines: 38; David: 368; demons: 190, 191, 208, 209, 353, 365.

and other religious symbols signal the possibility of an exaltation or contestation of moral values. The question of morality has different answers depending on whether a *kami* is read as the speaker's lover or as some higher power.<sup>71</sup> Often, however, the *kami* are personifications of impersonal fate, as in the following poem.

70	Molting heart of morning, one of the biwa's four strings <i>kami</i> has forever cut and thrown away	とや心 朝の小琴の 四つの緒の ひとつを永久に 神きりすてし
----	--	--

*Toya* (鳥屋) is a birdhouse, and from its use in falconry it has also come to mean a hawk's molting at the end of summer.<sup>72</sup> The shedding of feathers or hair gives a visual image of her pained heart's falling to pieces, and the broken biwa (small koto) string echoes her internal twangs and pangs.<sup>73</sup> In contrast, the sense of *toya* as a kabuki green room, emphasizing the enclosure of a spirited singing creature waiting to escape, suggests anticipation and effervescence. While such a sentiment is in tune with many poems from *Tangled Hair*, and accurately reflects Akiko's own cloistered youth, in this case it works against the poem's thrust. Instead, *toyagokoro* points to the heart's end of summer, a time thrown away forever with the springtime of youth. The biwa's four strings are the seasons of life, one of which has been cut.

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<sup>71</sup> See also the discussion of poem 207 below in the section on sin.

<sup>72</sup> In addition, it can be used to describe the loss and thinning of hair by syphilitic courtesans, or the green room near the *hanamichi* for kabuki actors.

<sup>73</sup> Among the various stringed instruments that can be called koto, the biwa is a small, four-stringed instrument similar to a lute. See William P. Malm, *Japanese Music and Musical Instruments* (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle, 1959), 94.



The final line has a homophone for hair-cutting, 髪切り (*kamikiri*). Women who took Buddhist vows, often because they had been widowed or deserted, would have their hair ceremonially cut. Thus, *kamikiri suteshi* is a metonym for a discarded lover. A woman whose heart is molting after missing her season of love might feel like a discarded lover. The cutting of a biwa string resembles the cutting of her hair. But because the poem writes the word *kami* with the character for deity (神) instead of hair, the sense of hair-cutting is tangled with the sense of being discarded by (or possibly discarding) a divine lover. The word play of deity and hair is especially satisfying because the religious import of abandonment by a deity contrasts with the cleansing act of taking Buddhist vows. As written, the *kami* rules coldly over the fatalistic passage of time, without a clear connection to any judgment on the character's actions. The irony, then, is that a divine figure is made the scapegoat for the transient seasons of human life, even as the speaker purifies her passions in symbolically moving beyond the season of lust embodied in her flowing hair.

The poem below is a more climactic encounter with *kami* and koto:

97	The rule of the <i>kami</i> , the peal of a life, the end of my world— listen to the sound of ax striking koto	神のさだめ 命のひびき 終の我世 琴に斧うつ 音ききたまへ
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It is unclear whether it is the speaker or the *kami* who strikes the koto. As in the previous poem, the koto represents her life. Both are injured and ring out. Here, her life is not forsaken to go slowly out of tune, warp, and crack with age; rather, she is dealt

a decisive blow that makes her cry out against the hand of destiny. The ax is no mere broken string, no passing of a season of life, but something more acute, complete, and immediate: the loss of love. To whom, though, does she plead to “listen to the sound”? Is it the *kami*, or her former lover? Again, if we see the *kami* as her lover, and his rule as his decision, then she appeals to him as if he were a god. Such a futile appeal makes the poem sound especially tragic (or perhaps it is the destruction of a musical instrument that is so painful to contemplate).

Akiko’s pleas to divine assistance in love seem to have found attentive ears and a vocal response in the following poem:

52	A beautiful life, it would be a pity, the <i>kami</i> said, and my wish has now been granted	うつくしき 命を惜しと 神のいひぬ 願ひのそれは 果してし今
----	--	--

Yet the *kami*’s benevolence is simply to let mortal humans live; falling in love is business they can take care of on their own.<sup>74</sup> Nor does the poem articulate a specific action of the *kami*. We infer, and Cranston’s translation specifies, that the pity would be for the *kami* to take such a beautiful life away, although it could be simply a matter of the life’s going to waste without love.<sup>75</sup> The wish—alternatively, prayer—that is granted is likewise left to the reader’s imagination. It is a poem less about divine intervention than

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<sup>74</sup> Itsumi writes in her analysis of the poem, “Akiko’s humanistic opinion was that supreme love cannot be achieved through divine power.” Itsumi, 96.

<sup>75</sup> Cranston’s version is as follows: “So beautiful— / A life I should regret to take, The god says now, / Though the bargain that we made / He has kept at last.” Cranston, “Carmine-Purple,” 102.

about divine non-intervention. The ending *ima* (now) punctuates the poem with an insistence on her present and a refusal to countenance the transience that stalks the poem.

If the *kami* is her lover, however, we can read the poem quite differently. What the *kami* says could be the *negai* (wish), which she grants, while the reflection on pity at the beginning could be the speaker's. Hence:

A beautiful  
life, it would be a pity (I thought),  
and that wish  
the *kami* spoke  
I have now granted

The beautiful life to be pitied could be either hers or his, and the pity is for the prospect of life's failure to find or consummate love.

Akiko's supernatural poems seem to stage and then blur the tensions between physical beauty and a spiritual sublime. The poetic speaker's feminine physical beauty does not simply have a counterpart in a masculine spiritual sublime, in spite of her frequent appeals to a *kami* lover.<sup>76</sup> Susan Napier's study of the fantastic in modern Japanese literature offers valuable insights into the potential for sublimity in the intersection of women and the supernatural. Although she passes over poetry entirely, Napier taps into the special power of "avenging women":

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<sup>76</sup> Ban Wang shows that the sublime is traditionally interpreted as a "masculine mode" in Western aesthetics, but then argues that theorists such as Liang Zongdai have shown the potential for the feminine to be sublime as well. I agree, although I do not see the need for recourse to theories of *yin* and *yang* or the Nietzschean dichotomy between Apollinian and Dionysian. Ban Wang, *The Sublime Figure of History: Aesthetics and Politics in Twentieth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 101-122.

The association of women with ghosts and metamorphosis is also an important part of Japanese tradition, encompassing everything from the Nō and kabuki theaters to the woodblock prints of the early nineteenth century and even the post-Restoration era. . . .After the Restoration, however, such melodramatic depictions of women and the supernatural were increasingly regarded as old-fashioned or vulgar, although the depiction of demonic women remained a favorite subject of popular artists and journals.<sup>77</sup>

Note here the negative class marking that attaches to demonic women, who come to be seen as “melodramatic” and “vulgar” figures even as they remain “popular” (here used in a class-based way). Also note that vulgar is associated with “old-fashioned.” In other words, the trope of feminine, supernatural, avenging power loses status at the same time that it comes to seem out of date. This happens also to be when newer tropes are coming into fashion from contact with the West.

Napier also points to a second character that develops in the Meiji and Taishō eras, the “oasis woman.” The oasis woman is “linked to a space outside of the real which offers comfort and revitalization to the weary male.”<sup>78</sup> Such a character is not limited to fantastic literature, but appears in realistic works, too. Yet note the female character’s subordinate position as object in the male subject’s desire for an alternative to reality. While often that alternative can be exotic and future-oriented, as in Tanizaki Jun’ichirō’s (谷崎潤一郎, 1886-1965) portrayal of the vaguely “Eurasian” modern girl Naomi in *A Fool’s Love* (痴人の愛: Chijin no ai, 1924), the oasis woman can be non-modern, as well. For she is “linked not only to an alternative to consensus reality but

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<sup>77</sup> Susan J. Napier, *The Fantastic in Modern Japanese Literature: The Subversion of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 23.

<sup>78</sup> Napier, 23.

also to an alternative which frequently embraces traditional Japan.”<sup>79</sup> Female characters in literature are well suited to their role as “symbols of cultural retrenchment.”<sup>80</sup> This ideological burden on women is part of a gendered dichotomy between material and spiritual, similar to what Partha Chatterjee describes in postcolonial societies, that casts women as the sheltered, spiritual embodiment of indigenous tradition, in contrast to the public, materialist male role.<sup>81</sup> Such an ideological distinction would have added extra weight to the invocation of spirituality and religion poetry by a woman (as author or speaking voice); in Akiko’s case, the significance is further emphasized by the transgression of religious boundaries as well as her use of both indigenized Buddhist and Shinto symbols and the still somewhat exotic—and therefore decidedly anti-traditional—Christian symbolism.

Is there a link between the gendered oasis Napier describes and the metaphysical elements of Akiko’s verses? In the case of *Tangled Hair*, the figures do not tend to be anti-realist or “fantastic” in the sense Napier means by the term. But as shown above, even realist works can employ this trope. So, while the personae are hard to read as ghostlike or fantastic, the more salient difference is that the agency belongs to women. The women of the verses (for why say it is just one woman throughout?) are not there just to stoke or allay men’s anxiety, even if they have such effects on male readers. Rather, they look to multiple sources to snag the fabric of reality, and these sources are

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<sup>79</sup> Napier, 23.

<sup>80</sup> Napier, 23, quoting Nina Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 73.

<sup>81</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 121.

found in male lovers whom they name as gods, in themselves or parts of themselves (such as their hair), or in other religious symbols that evade simple explanation. The following example illustrates this well:

40	A tangled feeling,	みだれごこち
	a lost feeling—	まどいごこちぞ
	for the <i>kami</i> who so frequently	頻なる
	tramples the lily,	百合ふむ神に
	I cannot even cover up my breasts	乳おほひあへず

On the other hand, consonant with Napier’s judgment that fantastic works have a “creative energy that allows for more narrative creativity and excitement than in many realistic texts” afforded by women beyond the pale,<sup>82</sup> Akiko’s religious symbolism opens up poetic creativity.

Ghostlike figures in Nō and other literature, often female, portray excessive attachment to the world. At the same time, they offer their interlocutors, often male, a means of escape from that world. The figures in *Tangled Hair* are not ghosts, and their connection to “earthly passions” is not suffused with a Buddhist notion of attachment. Instead, their means of escape from the world is in passion itself, passion that has been exalted to a metaphysical standing and allows them to consort with the supernatural.

### ***Tsumi: I’ve Got You Under My Sin***

Many of Akiko’s best-loved poems face the moral judgments that condemn female sexuality as sinful or transgressive, but they do this in various ways. Some

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<sup>82</sup> Napier, 24.

poems question the judgment of sin altogether; others accept that judgment, either gladly or repentantly. But we must first consider the concept of sin as used in the poems, because sin is a powerful concept that invokes ideals and norms that tie human action to divine law and the natural to the supernatural.

The word “sin” in English refers primarily to a transgression against religious law.<sup>83</sup> The Japanese *tsumi* (罪), meanwhile, can mean the breaking of a religious taboo or law, but it can also mean social offense, crime, guilt, blameworthy point, consciousness of evil, or censure. According to *The Great Dictionary of the Japanese Language* (日本国語大辞典: *Nihon kokugo daijiten*), both religious and secular meanings of the term date back to *The Record of Ancient Matters* (古事記: *Kojiki*, 712 CE), establishing the use of the term long before contact with Christianity.<sup>84</sup> The dictionary lists an adverbial form of *tsumi*, as well: “in a way that causes others sadness, suffering, or confusion; mercilessly.” Citations for this usage include Natsume Sōseki’s (夏目漱石, 1867-1916) *I Am a Cat* (吾輩は猫である: *Wagahai wa neko de aru*, 1905-06) and Mori Ōgai’s (森鷗外, 1862-1922) *Wild Geese* (雁: *Gan*, 1911-13). Also of note is the entry on *tsumi ga nai* (罪がない): the first sense is “having no blameworthy points;

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<sup>83</sup> When used otherwise, it is usually humorous hyperbole to emphasize how bad (such as a sin against fashion) or good (sinfully delicious chocolate) something is. Yet while sin can be a useful metaphor in any language, what concerns us in the case of *Tangled Hair* is how the discourse of sin is *not* placed at a metaphorical distance from its subject. (Metaphor is, after all, a device that depends on the literal non-identity of tenor and vehicle.)

<sup>84</sup> *Nihon kokugo daijiten* (Great dictionary of the Japanese language), Select edition, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2006), 1584.

without faults; free of blemishes.” *The Tale of Genji* is cited twice for this sense. The second sense is “innocent [無邪気である: *mujaki de aru*].” Examples of this usage come from Futabatei Shimei’s (二葉亭四迷, 1864-1909) *Floating Clouds* (浮雲: *Ukigumo*, 1887-89), Ōgai’s *Impromptu Poet* (即興詩人: *Sokkyō shijin*, 1901; a translation of Hans Christian Andersen’s [1805-75] *Improvisatoren*), and Sōseki’s *I Am a Cat*.

From the citations given above, we gain a sense of the currency of *tsumi* in literature of the turn of the century. One more example, a noteworthy application of *tsumi* to a love poem by a contemporary of Akiko, is the poem “Sin” by none other than Shimazaki Tōson.<sup>85</sup> In this poem, the speaker enumerates various ends to which sin leads lovers. The sin here is clearly biblical, with its references to the expulsion of lovers from a garden and punishment after death.

Akiko would have been more familiar with the *Genji* than the Buddhist classics, but it would be foolish to speculatively distinguish her exposure to, or employment of, different lines of descent of the concept of *tsumi*. More inviting is the prospect of interpreting how concepts like *tsumi* changed or were challenged with the increased cultural exchanges of the Meiji period. Akiko’s poetry antedates the New Woman debates by a decade, but it also trails behind discussions of natural law in the early Meiji

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<sup>85</sup> “Sin” (罪: *Tsumi*) first appeared as “Because of Sin the Pathos” (罪なれば物のあはれを: *Tsumi nareba mono no aware o*), the first of a series of poems under the general title “From Heart to Heart” (胸より胸へ: *Mune yori mune e*), in the May 1900 issue of *The New Novel* (新小説: *Shinshōsetsu*), and then was titled simply “Sin” when it was published in *Fallen Plum Blossoms* the following year. Shimazaki Tōson, *Rakubaishū* (Fallen plum blossoms) (Tokyo: Shun’yōdō, 1901), 80-81.



period and the translation of the Bible into Japanese in the 1880s.

In the traditional Buddhist context suggested by certain poems of *tsumi*, the burden of avoiding transgression seems to fall more on the men. Dating back to the medieval period, as Reginald R. Jackson notes, the misogyny of Buddhist monastic societies led them more to “contempt” than “compassion” for women.<sup>86</sup> Women may threaten the precarious order of marginal groups of ascetic monks, but to them is attributed neither moral agency nor the purity to begin with. Thus, as Jackson writes of the exclusion of women from a temple ceremony in the Nō play *Dōjōji* (道成寺), “since women’s subversion is contingent upon male desire and transgression, the real threat to the male religious community’s cohesion is posed by the men themselves.”<sup>87</sup> In poems involving the mutual transgression of monk and maiden, then, Akiko’s poetic speaker trespasses like the female dancer in *Dōjōji*, and her danger is felt by her monk-lover, as in the following:

121	At the sound of the flute	笛の音に
	he stopped the hand	法華經うつす
	that copied the Lotus Sutra	手をとどめ
	and knit his brow—	ひそめし眉よ
	still so young	まだうらわかき

The word *tsumi* appears in eight *Tangled Hair* poems, including two of the first five as numbered in the printed volume. This helps to set a certain tone for the series.

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<sup>86</sup> Reginald R. Jackson, “*Midare* Performance and the Aesthetics of Decomposition” (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2007), 225.

<sup>87</sup> Jackson points out that the transgression in the play is even more complicated, because the woman both is marked as a “performer” more than as a “woman” and adopts a shifting gender identity. Jackson, 232.

2	Heed this song:	歌にきけな
	who dislikes the red	誰れ野の花に
	of the flowers in a field?	紅き否む
	such charm has the child	おもむきあるかな
	who bears the sin of spring	春罪もつ子

The attitude towards sin in this poem is dismissive of it as a very category. Here, the speaker of the poem asks the undisclosed audience to listen to a particular song or poem, or perhaps to song or poetry in general, or even—as the translation here reflects—to the very poem she is reciting. The “red of the flowers in a field” could be red flowers among others, or it could be specifically the color red. The fourth and fifth lines describe a child (*ko*, which implies but is not necessarily a girl) who bears the sins of spring, or possibly a child who bears sin in spring.

These multiple possible readings enhance the poem’s effect, forcing the reader to make interpretative judgments. First, why should a red flower be judged more negatively than any other flower? Red is lustful, but the color of a flower is in its nature, so one should not denounce or deny the lustfulness that is in one’s nature. *Tsumi motsu ko* implies the original sin of all humans, who are *tsumi no ko* (children of sin; see also poem 228 below) as children of Adam and Eve. But not all flowers in the field are red, so to posit original sin as the cause of the red misses the biblical universality of human sin. It is as if to say, if some individuals are especially amorous, why should we judge them? The field itself is relevant to this question, though. 野 (*no*) is wild space.

Anything that grows there is suspect as untamed, but also as untainted.

Second, how does the child come to carry “the sin of spring”? Has she simply

picked red flowers? Or is she a red flower waiting to be either picked or rejected? Akiko triumphs in equating passion with innocence, juxtaposing two different common associations of flowers. The natural innocence of the flowers calls to mind the epigraph to this chapter by Baudelaire: “Evil is done effortlessly, and *naturally*, by fate.” The implied passion of the flowers’ red is passive, while the child actively bears sin. The flower cannot help having its color, but the child is expected to overcome its predilection for sin.

If we assume the child is a girl, it may be for our prejudicial association of both flowers and the sin of lust with femininity. Or, more charitably, perhaps we assume that poets who would dare to think of calling lust a sin are the type to pin it on women and girls. The implicit femininity of the child, *ko*, allows the judgment of lust as sinful to attach itself insidiously to women and not men. But Akiko’s poems challenge such a gendered assignment of sin, either by directly defying such judgment or by pinning it on both men and women—often ironically. Below is a poem in which both the woman and her lover are sinful:

228	Clear water of my breast	むねの清水
	flooding, and at last	あふれてつひに
	it has clouded—	濁りけり
	you a child of sin	君も罪の子
	and I a child of sin	我も罪の子

This poem suggests that too much purity can cloud one’s judgment. But by associating sin with clear water *and* children, is the speaker not undermining the very judgment of sin itself? The great unspoken message of the poem is that the speaker is overflowing

with emotion and resolute in embracing her fate. In spite of what she says, then, her judgment is not clouded at all.

In the following poem, however, it remains ambiguous whether the “child of sin” refers to the speaker or to her lover:

293	Take no pity on me, my lord— rather tell me the child of sin has seen the extremes of insanity.	そのなさけ かけますな君 罪の子が 狂ひのはてを 見むと云ひたまへ
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Itsumi takes the child of sin to be the speaker, and she points to Akiko’s need to confess to Tekkan, who was still married to another woman.<sup>88</sup> But there is no reason it cannot be the man (especially if he is married), particularly in light of her use of “child of sin” to refer to a man in poem 228 above. Is she to be pitied because she is sinful, or because she must put up with his sinfulness?

Likewise, the following poem rejects the assignment of sin to the woman for what the man does:

143	Is it a sin to offer a mere man my arm? The <i>kami</i> must grant how white it is	人の子に かせしは罪か わがかひな 白きは神に などゆづるべき
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In a usage note, the dictionary distinguishes *tsumi* from *toga* (咎: fault), noting that *tsumi* refers to conscious violations while *toga* refers to unconscious violations or

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<sup>88</sup> Itsumi, 126.

faults. In the Heian period, *tsumi* came to predominate and even took on some of the meaning of *toga*, but since the medieval period *toga* has been used more frequently, especially in colloquial language. Akiko uses the word *toga* three times in *Tangled Hair*, and here she uses it together with *kami* in the following poem, suggesting a religious connotation to *toga*:

207	With crimson	山蓼の
	deeper than that	それよりふかき
	of the mountain nettle,	くれなゐは
	restrain yourself, plum,	梅よはばかれ
	you'll pay the <i>kami</i> for your wickedness	神にとがおはむ

Itsumi interprets poem 207 based on biographical evidence that Akiko, Tekkan, and Tomiko had gone together to view nettles the previous autumn, and that Tekkan associated Tomiko with nettles.<sup>89</sup> Now with just the two of them, Akiko fears getting carried away by her passion. Here, Tekkan is not the *kami*, but rather the plum (which was his nickname).

Akiko's poetry is full of consciousness of guilt, but it is never explicit what the cause is, leaving it instead suggestive and metaphorical. In tandem with the guilt is the rebellion of one who tries to reject the guilt imposed by society. Both are expressed in the language of a gallimaufry of inauthentic religious symbolism, as if to avoid letting any negative judgment stick.

Sin, wickedness, and transgression can be implied more subtly, without naming

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<sup>89</sup> This is in addition to Tomiko's better known nickname, White Lily, which appears frequently in *Tangled Hair*. Akiko is associated with white bush clover. Itsumi, 257, 315.

them. One trope Akiko uses is that of the “stray sheep,” which came to Japan with Christianity in the sixteenth century and became a popular phrase in the Meiji and Taishō periods.<sup>90</sup> The next poem also portrays the speaker as both innocent and cursed:

38	In the spring rain wandering lost out of the shrine at evening, a lamb looking for you, cursed am I	春雨に ゆうべの宮を まよひ出でし 小羊君を のろはしの我れ
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The lamb has wandered out of what appears to be a Shinto shrine, however. The rain makes the mood somber and downplays her hope that, in being found, she will be going even further astray.<sup>91</sup> The poem achieves its effect by gaining sympathy for the lamb’s ambivalence towards being lost and at the same time full of longing.

The same trope of a wandering sheep or lamb works in the following poem, too:

24	<i>Kami</i> of night, won’t you take the sheep that returns home at morning and hide it under a small pillow	夜の神の 朝のり帰る 羊とらへ ちさき枕の したにかくさむ
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<sup>90</sup> Goldstein and Shinoda, 128. Akiko describes a lost lamb six poems later in poem 44, too, and sheep appear in three more poems (numbers 24, 266, 391).

<sup>91</sup> Ichikawa believes the lamb, which need not be a Christian symbol, is a stand-in for Ukifune from *The Tale of Genji*. She bases this on the evidence that Ukifune considers herself like a sheep about to be taken to the slaughterhouse. Ichikawa Chihiro, “Yosano Akiko to Genji monogatari: *Midaregami* to ‘Ukifune’ o megutte” (Yosano Akiko and The Tale of Genji: the case of *Tangled Hair* and “Ukifune”), *Heian-chō bungaku kenkyū* 1:2 (Oct. 1983), 103-104.

## Conclusion: Beyond Feminine Poetic Heritage and True Feelings

Akiko's poetry is both a reaction against the realism of contemporaries like Masaoka Shiki, and, like European Romantic poetry, a reaction against what we might call enlightenment values of the Meiji period. But for Akiko, or for any writer of the tanka form, its brevity limits the kinds of confession or revelation that can be transmitted to readers. That brevity makes it more difficult to express unfamiliar points of view or beliefs. Yet she does not simply succumb and write only the more familiar sentiments—although she naturally also includes plenty of those, in such poems as this:

321	Spring is short,	春みじかし
	and what has eternal life?	何に不滅の
	I said,	命ぞと
	and guided his hand	ちからある乳を
	to my potent breast	手にさぐらせぬ

But even here, she proceeds from the familiar association of spring with short youth to a shocking physical gesture of bringing her lover's hand to her breast. Is her innovation that her irreverent poetry celebrates transgression? Does she embrace the evil of her nature, as Baudelaire would have it in the epigraph to this chapter; does she reject the judgment of evil altogether? Although Akiko the person championed social causes and was a devoted wife and mother, her poetry does seem to cast off traditional morality:

352	Not speaking of the Way,	道を云はず
	not thinking of the hereafter,	後を思はず
	not in quest of fame,	名を問はず
	here I look at you	ここに戀ひ戀ふ
	loving me loving you	君と我と見る

Or is Akiko's passionate turmoil, embodied in her tangled hair, little more than a marker of "feminine poetic heritage"? Sarah M. Strong, for example, argues that Akiko "is mining ancient feminine ore" in her "use of tangled hair as a metaphor for the confusion and turmoil of feminine erotic emotion."<sup>92</sup> Strong makes a good point that Akiko's works are part of "an unquestioned feminine literary heritage" unexampled in the West, albeit a heritage that is often regarded as "second-tier" in relation to men's literature.<sup>93</sup> But Akiko's poetic speakers are not simply the victims of their gender's timeless fate, and to the tangled hair and other conventional symbols must be added less familiar imagery and references to Christianity along with those from Buddhism and Shinto. Such exotic and irreconcilable symbols are a source of intrigue, a new way of stimulating curiosity and emotion in readers. When we leave aside biographical explanations, we are further freed to explore the possible extensions of the poems.

Akiko herself claimed to reject the borrowing of "ancient feminine ore" in poetry. As she wrote later about her writing process, poems should be "the outcome of the overflowing of the powerful emotion of the author, whether in response to the world, to experiences in the past, or to dreams."<sup>94</sup> This emotion she labels "true feelings" (実感: *jikken*) and specifies as follows: "[True feelings] are emotions I have actually

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<sup>92</sup> Sarah M. Strong, "Passion and Patience: Aspects of Feminine Poetic Heritage in Yosano Akiko's *Midaregami* and Tawara Machi's *Sarada Kinenbi*," *Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* 25:2 (Nov. 1991), 181.

<sup>93</sup> Strong, 190.

<sup>94</sup> Laurel Rasplica Rodd, "Yosano Akiko on Poetic Inspiration," in *The Distant Isle: Studies and Translations of Japanese Literature in Honor of Robert H. Brower*, edited by Thomas Hare, Robert Borgen, and Sharalyn Orbaugh (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1996), 414.



experienced; they may be active or passive; they may act on me from outside or impel me to action, and sometimes they interact within me and produce a new feeling.”<sup>95</sup> For Akiko, true feelings have five characteristics: truth (真実: *shinjitsu*), specificity (特殊: *tokushu*), freshness (清新: *seishin*), excellence (優秀: *yūshū*), and beauty (美: *bi*).<sup>96</sup> There seems to be no room for supernatural fancies (which are disloyal to truth) or borrowed sentiments from her precursors (which lack freshness).

Nevertheless, the diction and allusion in the poems of *Tangled Hair* powerfully resist the move towards realistic description by summoning multiple, contradictory, and abstract supernatural figures and symbols from the canon and beyond. By exploiting these various supernatural figures and images, Akiko’s poems tangle with a more traditional morality, and they make that entanglement, and the possibility of liberation from it, seem more dangerous, exciting, and vivid than her “true feelings” ever could.

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<sup>95</sup> Rodd, 415, citing *Teihon Yosano Akiko zenshū* (Authoritative complete works of Yosano Akiko), vol. 13, 272.

<sup>96</sup> Rodd, 416, citing *Teihon Yosano Akiko zenshū*, vol. 13, 47.

## CONCLUSION

Natsume Sōseki (夏目漱石, 1867-1916) beautifully expresses one ideal of the poet and the painter, through the narrator of his novel *Pillow of Grass* (草枕: Kusamakura, 1906):

Only thanks to the existence of the poet and the painter are we able to imbibe the essence of this dualistic world, to taste the purity of its very bones and marrow. The artist feasts on mists, he sips the dew, appraising this hue and assessing that, and he does not lament the moment of death. The delight of artists lies not in attachment to objects but in taking the object into the self, becoming one with it. Once he has become the object, no space can be found on this vast earth of ours where he might stand firmly as himself. He has cast off the dust of the sullied self and become a traveler clad in tattered robes, drinking down the infinities of pure mountain winds.<sup>1</sup>

I begin the conclusion with this passage not because the title of the work is the same as Shimazaki Tōson's "Pillow of Grass" from chapter one, although both fittingly reflect a concern with artistic meditations on travel, but because Sōseki's narrator so eloquently captures the broader artistic ideals and struggles of poets like those in this study. He invokes a "dualistic world" made up of our daily economic lives, on the one hand, and something ineffable, on the other.

The irony of *Pillow of Grass* is that the narrator himself is an unskilled would-be poet and painter whose attempts at composing poems and paintings during his sojourn at a mountain spa are mostly abortive. Yet this narrator's expansive and often contradictory musings on artistic ideals are infused with a moving poetic beauty and

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<sup>1</sup> Natsume Sōseki, *Kusamakura*, translated by Meredith McKinney (New York: Penguin Books, 2008), 65.

picturesque composition. His visions are inspired as much by his communion with great works of art and criticism, from John Everett Millais's (1829-96) painting of Ophelia (1852) to Gotthold Lessing's (1729-81) *Laocoon* (Laokoön, 1766), as by his direct experience of the purportedly natural wonders of the place he is visiting. It is this synthesis of intertexts with natural scenery that inspires the narrator, who decides that to be a great artist one does not necessarily have to create great—or any—art.<sup>2</sup>

What better way is there, in fact, for this poet to go beyond natural description, beyond *shasei*, than to lay down his brush? Instead of forcing a poem to come to him, instead of forcing nature to speak *through* him, he lets nature speak *to* him. Like Tōson's traveler in "Rambling Through the Deep Woods," he seems to be happy to melt into the poetic landscape. Yet if, as Emerson writes in "The Poet," he has "penetrat[e] into that region where the air is music, [where he can] hear those primal warblings," then he has learned not to "attempt to write them down. . .and substitute something of [his] own, and thus miswrite the poem." Instead, he seems to have taken to heart Emerson's subsequent axiom, "Words are also actions, and actions are a kind of words."<sup>3</sup> And if, as in the Lucretius epigraph to Bansui's "The Universe and the Poet," he "has traveled through the immeasurable all in mind and spirit," then none would ever

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<sup>2</sup> Natsume, 124-25. Kamei Hideo puts the narrator of *Pillow of Grass* in a category with Kunikida Doppo's (国木田独步, 1871-1908) protagonist in "Musashi Plain" (武蔵野: *Musashino*, 1901), among others, of characters who style themselves artists because they are aesthetes who criticize society from the standpoint of a search for beauty. Kamei Hideo, *Meiji bungaku shi* (History of Meiji literature) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2000), 176.

<sup>3</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Selected Writings of Emerson*, ed. Donald McQuade (New York: Random House, 1981), 306.

know.<sup>4</sup>

But we do know, of course, because Sōseki the author did write the novel. The narrator, unable to complete a painting, is Sōseki's artwork, and his actions are his words. The narrator tries to "become one with the object," so that there is nowhere "on this vast earth of ours where he might stand firmly as himself." If the narrator has finally learned to live as a true artist, then we readers should now be able to "imbibe the essence of this dualistic world [and] taste the purity of its very bones and marrow," not through his poems and paintings but through him directly. He is like the antique ink stone that belongs to the abbot of the nearby temple: originally designed to be a tool for art, but too precious an artwork itself actually to be used.

Sōseki, who around the same time was developing his ambitious *Theory of Literature* (文学論: *Bungakuron*, 1907),<sup>5</sup> succeeds brilliantly in this fictional work at activating conventional tropes of artists traveling through nature to find both poignancy and detached humor. Unlike a unified, robust theory of literature in a straightforward critical work, the theories of a novel's protagonist—let alone the novel's other characters—can be partial, insupportable, and contradictory. They can also be more enjoyable when they are freed from the constraints of criticism's earnest author-reader transmission. Like Yosano Akiko's poetic speakers, Sōseki's narrator can contradict

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<sup>4</sup> Lucretius, *De rerum natura* (On the nature of things), with trans. W. H. D. Rouse, rev. Martin Ferguson Smith (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 8 (Book I, line 74).

<sup>5</sup> See also Natsume Sōseki, *Theory of Literature and Other Critical Writings*, ed. Michael K. Bourdaghs, Atsuko Ueda, and Joseph A. Murphy (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

himself. He can deny the use of emotion in one moment, saying, “You must forget the pain of your own broken heart and simply visualize in objective terms the tender moments,” and then in the next moment say that a “greater artist, however, will impart his own feelings as he depicts the phenomena and bring them to vivid life on the canvas.”<sup>6</sup> He can whip up theories of the importance of artistic “nonemotion” (非人情: *hininjō*) when he is alone in his hotel room, and then find himself ridiculed for suggesting that he would like to fall in love “nonemotionally”—which is not the same thing, he insists, as “unemotionally” [不人情: *funinjō*].<sup>7</sup> His grand ideas, like the novels he reads, do not have to be followed in any particular order.<sup>8</sup> The contradictory, nonlinear thoughts and feelings of a flawed artist are like Akiko’s contradictory, nonlinear verses in *Tangled Hair*.

Sōseki thus has it both ways, by writing a realist work about a narrator given to fantasy.<sup>9</sup> Sōseki’s narrator sounds like Tōson’s subjects in “Pillow of Grass” and “Rambling Through the Deep Woods” when he writes:

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<sup>6</sup> Natsume, *Kusamakura*, 31, 67.

<sup>7</sup> Natsume, *Kusamakura*, 43, 97; for the Japanese, see Natsume Sōseki, *Kusamakura* (Pillow of grass) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1972), 44, 108.

<sup>8</sup> The narrator seems to be poking Sōseki the scholar in the eye here: Sōseki’s theory of literature is founded on the stream of consciousness, but the narrator likes to read novels in random order, thus disturbing the flow. He wants to know “why should it matter whether you read it from the beginning, or from the end, or just dip into it in a desultory way?” Natsume, 96.

<sup>9</sup> Sōseki referred to *Pillow of Grass* as a “haiku-like novel,” in contrast to the “*senryū*-like novels” of the past. (*Senryū* [川柳] are humorous seventeen-syllable poems.)

Natsume Sōseki, “Yoga ‘Kusamakura’” (My “Pillow of grass”), in *Bunshō sekai* (World of letters) 1:9 (Nov. 1906); quoted in Komiya Toyotaka, “Kaisetsu” (Explanation), in Natsume Sōseki, *Kusamakura* (Pillow of grass) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1972), 170.

There is no avoiding suffering, rage, flailing, and weeping in the world of humankind. . . .I find it exhausting to be forced to experience these same tired stimuli yet again through a play or novel. The poetry I long for is not the kind that provokes this type of vulgar emotion. It is poetry that turns its back on earthly desires and draws one's feelings for a time into a world remote from the mundane. . . .Happily, in the poetry of the Orient there are works that transcend such a state.<sup>10</sup>

The narrator hopes to stand back and observe “from a lofty and transcendent perspective. . .to prevent any spark of human feeling from springing up.”<sup>11</sup> In doing so, he seems to invoke what Terry Giffords calls the pejorative “pastoral”: the idealization of an unproblematic, “comfortably complacent” vision of a natural antidote to urban society.<sup>12</sup> Yet the genius of Sōseki's novel is that his narrator can invoke the pastoral—just as Akiko's speakers invoke religious sin—without the author's subscribing to the same naive ideal. If anything, readers are led to be somewhat dismissive of the need, and certainly of the efficacy, to travel into the mountains.

Then again, the novel ends with an entourage traveling downstream to a nearby city to see off young Kyūichi, who is going to fight in the Russo-Japanese War. The train that comes to carry him away is “the serpent of civilization.” The sense of ominousness about the urban, industrial, militarized future cannot but lend a pastoral quality to the world upstream, inhabited by people such as a fisherman who will “likely go on sitting there, gazing at [his fishing line], until the Russian War is over.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Natsume, *Kusamakura*, 9. The poems that the narrator then adduces to make his point are classical Chinese poems.

<sup>11</sup> Natsume, *Kusamakura*, 12.

<sup>12</sup> Terry Giffords, *Pastoral* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 2. See also chapter one.

<sup>13</sup> Natsume, *Kusamakura*, 145, 140.

Although Sōseki is associated with the realism of his close friend Masaoka Shiki (正岡子規, 1867-1902) more than with the poetry of Tōson, Bansui, and Akiko,<sup>14</sup> his narrator is concerned with the poet's mediated relationship with nature and with the ideals that lie beyond realism. The narrator's contradictory statements echo both sides of arguments made in the Meiji period about the relationship of nature and literature. Kamei Hideo characterizes the ideological status of nature for Meiji-era writers as follows:

According to writers of modern Japan, while “nature” was an important object for practices of expression that sought to revive reality, it was also a standard. The naturalist literary movement of the latter half of the Meiji 30s [1902-1906] and the sketching [写生文: *shaseibun*] movement of Masaoka Shiki display this well.

Why was “nature” a standard? According to them, it was because nature was “beauty,” but that was not all. We are engulfed in the movements of a social totality that surpasses what humans can conceive and what individuals' strength can match. Also, they were tormented by feelings and sentiments that they could not control. In such a time, and against the backdrop of—or in the midst of—the inevitability of things, they felt an appreciation for the will of “nature,” which they made out to be absolute and transcendent. Because of this, when it came to writing about nature, society, or human beings, they thought it would not do to twist and embellish on their subject according to their own wishes, and they made it their ideal to write on subjects with an impartial attitude. To make an ideal is also to make a personal standard. Nature has no private feelings. Therefore, to confront it one must be impartial. That which is expressible by this method they called “truth.” In their meaning, “nature” was the source of “beauty” and “truth.”

This may be hard to understand for people who think of “nature” as the opposite of “culture,” but according to them respecting “nature” as it was was the very best “cultural” attitude.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Wada Toshio, *Shiki to Sōseki* (Shiki and Sōseki) (Tokyo: Merukumaarusha, 1976), 140.

<sup>15</sup> Kamei Hideo, *Meiji bungaku shi* (History of Meiji literature) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2000), 81.

Iwamoto Yoshiharu's (巖本善治, 1863-1942) ideal of artistic description, for example, depends on the inherent value of nature. "The greatest literature," he writes in 1889, "is that which reproduces nature just the way nature is. The most beautiful art never accompanies immorality."<sup>16</sup> Note how he equates beauty with morality on the basis of an implied truthfulness, while also implying that morality is merely the absence of immorality.

Mori Ōgai (森鷗外, 1862-1922), arguing against Iwamoto, sees artistic inspiration as artificial:

Self-aware thought is "mind" [精神: *seishin*]. Unself-aware "thought" is "nature." "Beauty" sleeps in "nature" and awakens in "mind." The "beauty" that is proclaimed within "mind" is called "fantasy" [空想: usually *kūsō*, but here glossed phonetically as *fantajii*]. The "beauty" that "fantasy" achieves is from "nature." But "nature" is not reproduced in its "natural" state within the mind. The fire of "thought" kindles some quantity of dust that supplements "nature," creating "beauty."<sup>17</sup>

Ōgai thus acknowledges nature as the source of beauty, but he argues that it requires some transformation in the mind of the artist to be manifested as beauty. That beauty is separated from truth, and it has no necessary connection with goodness.

What both Iwamoto and Ōgai seem to miss, but what Kitamura Tōkoku (北村透谷, 1868-94) recognizes, is the importance of the connection of nature not only to beauty but also to passion. In his 1892 essay "World-Weary Poets and Women" (厭世詩家と女

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<sup>16</sup> Iwamoto Yoshiharu, "Bungaku to shizen" (Literature and nature), *Jogaku zasshi* (Women's learning magazine), no. 159 (April 1889); quoted in Kamei, 167.

<sup>17</sup> Mori Ōgai, "Bungaku to shizen" (Literature and nature), *Kokumin no tomo* (Friend of the people), no. 50 (May 1889); quoted in Kamei, 168.



性: *Ensei shika to josei*), he writes that “when love is clear, it penetrates beauty and truth.”<sup>18</sup> In 1894, Tōkoku proclaims, “At the root of realism there must be passion; without passion it is hard for there to be anything more than description for the sake of description.”<sup>19</sup> Tōkoku injects the idea of the divine into individual passion and introduces that passion into literary representation. This is the dawn of Romanticism in Japanese literature, and Tōkoku has a direct influence on Tōson’s writing through their joint participation in *Literary World* (文学界: Bungakkai).

By 1906, when Sōseki’s *Pillow of Grass* was published, the Japanese Symbolist movement (象徴派: *shōchōha*) was beginning to flourish. Ueda Bin’s (上田敏, 1874-1916) appealing translations of French poetry (which included Parnassians as well as Symbolists) came out in 1905 and were collected in *Sound of the Tide* (海潮音: Kaichōon, 1905). In the same year, Kanbara Ariake (蒲原有明, 1875-1952) published *Birds of Spring* (春鳥集: Shunchōshū, 1905), a breakthrough work in the Symbolist mode. “Symbolist poetry,” Earl Jackson, Jr., argues, “requires the tension produced by contradictory movements of transcendence and reflexivity, the former toward an extra-semantic level of meaning, the latter toward the sign-system of the poetic language itself. The transcendent impulse posits an exterior focus in the signifying process that the

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<sup>18</sup> Kitamura Tōkoku, “Ensei shika to josei” (World-weary poets and women), in *Tōkoku zenshū* (Tōkoku’s complete works), vol. 1 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1950), 255.

<sup>19</sup> Kitamura Tōkoku, “Jōnetsu” (Passion), in *Kitamura Tōkoku shū* (Kitamura Tōkoku collection), in *Meiji bungaku zenshū* (Complete works of Meiji literature), vol. 29 (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1976), 156; quoted in Karatani Kōjin, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, trans. ed. Brett de Bary (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 29-30.

reflexive function subverts.”<sup>20</sup> Both the transcendent impulse and the reflexive function undermine the individual passion that Tōkoku had proclaimed.

At the same time, however, the first so-called Naturalist works of fiction began to appear, beginning with Tōson’s *Broken Commandment* (破戒: Hakai, 1906) and Tayama Katai’s (田山花袋, 1871-1930) *Futon* (蒲団, 1907). William F. Sibley credits the Naturalist movement, riddled with “egocentricity” though its output may have been, with “the emancipation of post-Restoration literature from an unproductive dependence on extraneous models, both Western and Japanese.”<sup>21</sup> The more successful works may indeed have what Edward Sapir calls “the illusion of absolute freedom” we find in “great art.”<sup>22</sup> But as Sapir also reminds us, “Language is itself the collective art of expression, a summary of thousands upon thousands of individual intuitions. The individual goes lost in the collective creation, but his personal expression has left some trace in a certain give and flexibility that are inherent in all collective works of the human spirit.”<sup>23</sup>

Writers cannot stand outside of literary history, and they cannot entirely hide in either nature or language. Instead, as Tōson, Bansui, and Akiko have done, they can make the best of secondary natures, allusive language, and reflection on poetic ideals themselves.

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<sup>20</sup> Earl Jackson, Jr., “The Heresy of Meaning: Japanese Symbolist Poetry,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 51:2 (Dec. 1991), 573.

<sup>21</sup> William F. Sibley, “Naturalism in Japanese Literature,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 28 (1968), 160, 169.

<sup>22</sup> Edward Sapir, *Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1921), 236.

<sup>23</sup> Sapir, 246.

## APPENDIX: ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF SELECTED POEMS

### A. From Shimazaki Tōson's *Seedlings* (若菜集: Wakanashū, 1897)

#### 1. Song of the Autumn Wind (秋風の歌: *Aki kaze no uta*)

Unrelieved loneliness in my mountain home,  
tousling the pampas grass the autumn wind blows

さびしさはいつともわかぬ山里に  
尾花みだれて秋かぜぞふく

Silently the autumn wind comes  
Rising from the western sea;  
Dancing, lifting, romping white clouds fly,  
Their course is clear to see.

しづかにきたる秋風の  
西の海より吹き起り  
舞ひたちさわぐ白雲の  
飛びて行くへも見ゆるかな

Upon hearing the sound of the koto  
On the tips of the golden foxglove,  
Autumn with its long evening shadows  
Knows the wind has arrived.

暮影高く秋は黄の  
桐の梢の琴の音に  
そのおとなひを聞くときは  
風のきたると知られけり

At evening the west wind blows,  
At morning autumn leaves come in the window;  
At morning the autumn wind blows,  
At evening the quail hides in its nest.

ゆふべ西風吹き落ちて  
あさ秋の葉の窓に入り  
あさ秋風の吹きよせて  
ゆふべの鶉巢に隠る

Crane to see the green mountains,  
They have been dyed by maples;  
The frosty leaves brought on the autumn wind  
Are revealed in the mirror of the sky.

ふりさけ見れば青山も  
色はもみちに染めかへて  
霜葉をかへす秋風の  
空の明鏡にあらはれぬ

How chill is the west wind  
When it first blows the autumn leaves;  
How cruel is the autumn wind  
When it reaches those maple leaves.

清しいかなや西風の  
まづ秋の葉を吹けるとき  
さびしいかなや秋風の  
かのもみち葉にきたるとき

As the Brahmans who teach the Way  
Scatter to the east and west,  
Wafted on the autumn wind  
The leaves in the trees flutter away.

道を伝ふる婆羅門の  
西に東に散るごとく  
吹き漂蕩す秋風に  
飄り行く木の葉かな

As the hawks' and eagles' wings  
Flap away each day from dawn to dusk,  
How hard the autumn wind blows them,  
Its own wings have voices and they have power.

朝羽うちふる鷲鷹の  
明闇天をゆくごとく  
いたくも吹ける秋風の  
羽に声あり力あり

See how clever the west wind  
Sweeps the leaves of the mountain trees;  
How doleful is the autumn wind  
When it casts down the countless autumn leaves.

見ればかしこし西風の  
山の木の葉をはらふとき  
悲しいかなや秋風の  
秋の百葉を落すとき

Though men may wave their swords about,  
Their waving must come to an end;  
And tongues that curse the present age  
Have voices that are soon snuffed out.

人は利剣を振へども  
げにかぞふればかぎりあり  
舌は時世をのゝしるも  
声はたちまち滅ぶめり

High and fierce, O autumn wind,  
You confound the breath of hills and fields;  
Until you wither and dry the world out,  
There shall be no end to your blowing.

高くも烈し野も山も  
息吹まどはす秋風よ  
世をかれがれとなすまでは  
吹きも休むべきけはひなし

How lonesome is the autumn sun  
Within the bowl of heaven and earth;  
Who knows where the wind is headed,  
Flying with the fallen leaves?

あゝうらさびし天地の  
壺の中なる秋の日や  
落葉と共に飄る  
風の行衛を誰か知る

## 2. Rambling Through the Deep Woods (深林の逍遙: *Shinrin no shōyō*)

When the echo of the carpenter's  
Life-stealing hatchet dies away,  
And the chisel that carves up spring's grasses  
And flowers has ceased ringing,  
Of the many-colored spring leaves  
Not one green brushstroke remains;  
The red camphor tree of a thousand branches  
Is in its natural state,  
The cypress is wild, the cedar straight,  
The five-needled pine is black, and the chinquapin  
Branches cross with the white evergreen oak,  
The chinaberry stalks fan out,  
And the gentle young maple  
Has a flame on every twig.

力を刻む木匠の  
うちふる斧のあとを絶え  
春の草花彫刻の  
鑿の韻もとゞめじな  
いろさまざまの春の葉に  
青一筆の痕もなく  
千枝にわかるゝ赤樟も  
おのづからなるすがたのみ  
檜は荒し杉直し  
五葉は黒し椎の木の  
枝をまじゆる白樫や  
樗は茎をよこたえて  
枝と枝とにもゆる火の  
なかにやさしき若楓

### Mountain Spirit

Someone knows  
The deep forest  
And its joys  
Unknown to men.

Someone knows  
The misty depths  
And its spring days  
Unknown to men.

### Tree Spirit

The violet of the flowers,  
The green of the leaves,  
The threads of young grasses  
By the meadow's edge:

### 山精

ひとにしられぬ  
たのしみの  
ふかきはやしを  
たれかする

ひとにしられぬ  
はるのひの  
かすみのおくを  
たれかする

### 木精

はなのむらさき  
はのみどり  
うらわかぐさの  
のべのいと

With fullness of skill  
A grand design  
Has come to weave  
The forest brocade.

たくみをつくす  
大機の  
梭のはやしに  
きたれかし

Mountain Spirit  
Treading on these grasses  
Flaming up,  
Drinking of the waters  
Bubbling forth,

山精  
かのもえいづる  
くさをふみ  
かのわきいづる  
みづをのみ

Spellbound by these flowers  
Newly budding—  
These fond spring thoughts  
Shall never fade.

かのあたらしき  
はなにゑひ  
はるのおもひの  
なからずや

Tree Spirit  
Cast aside  
Those winter robes,  
And attire yourself  
In the mists of spring.

木精  
ふるきころもを  
ぬぎすてゝ  
はるのかすみを  
まとへかし

Drawn out by the song  
Of the bush warbler,  
Sing  
In the deep woods.

なくうぐひすの  
ねにいでて  
ふかきはやしに  
うたへかし

Each step tramples an orchid flower,  
Wild plum petals land on my sleeves,  
And mountain ivy wraps around my hems;  
Turning over an ivy leaf, I find  
In the shade of a fern a mountain strawberry

あゆめば蘭の花を踏み  
ゆけば楊梅袖に散り  
袂にまとふ山葛の  
葛のうら葉をかへしては  
女蘿の蔭のやまいちご

Has dropped its colorful fruit;  
 Each corner of the hillscape  
 Slopes gently into the distance,  
 And through the deep woods of the valley  
 The scent of asters spreads;  
 In the valley flowers bloom, in the valley they scatter,  
 And unknown to men they decay;  
 As I approach from the dark ravine I find  
 The trees of the deep mountains open into a clearing,  
 And spring shows forth in the tree branches.  
 Scraping past the dense leaf-tips  
 Of overgrown wide-leaf bamboo grass,  
 I come to the far edge of the valley to look;  
 Where does the waterfall lead?  
 A brocade of white with a lonely voice  
 Falls on the green rocks;  
 At least for the young monkeys,  
 The sound never lets up.

#### Mountain Spirit

Someone knows  
 The love in the breast  
 Of the traveller  
 Making his way at dusk.

Someone knows  
 The heart of spring  
 In the mountain stream  
 That has no companion.

#### Tree Spirit

A sorrow

色よき実こそ落ちにけれ  
 岡やまつゞき隅々も  
 いとなだらかに行き延びて  
 ふかきはやしの谷あひに  
 乱れてにほふふじばかま  
 谷に花さき谷にちり  
 人にしられず朽つるめり  
 せまりて暗き峡より  
 やゝひらけたる深山木の  
 春は小枝のたゝずまひ  
 しげりて広き熊笹の  
 葉末をふかくかきわけて  
 谷のかなたにきて見れば  
 いづくに行くか滝川よ  
 声もさびしや白糸の  
 青き巖に流れ落ち  
 若き猿のためにだに  
 音をとゞむる時ぞなき

#### 山精

ゆふぐれかよふ  
 たびゝとの  
 むねのおもひを  
 たれかする

友にもあらぬ  
 やまかはの  
 はるのこゝろを  
 たれかする

#### 木精

夜をなきあかす

That weeps the night away  
Leaves tears  
On its pillow.

かなしみの  
まくらにつたふ  
なみだこそ

To the bottom  
Of the deep woods'  
Valley shadows  
The droplets flow.

ふかきはやしの  
たにかげの  
そこにながるゝ  
しづくなれ

Mountain Spirit

When the buck  
Founders,  
His thoughts return  
To the mate he loves.

山精

鹿はたほるゝ  
たびごとに  
妻こふこひに  
かへるなり

When the fields  
And hills wither,  
They return  
To an eternal spring.

のやまは枯るゝ  
たびごとに  
ちとせのはるに  
かへるなり

Tree Spirit

Bury  
The old fallen leaves  
In the shade  
Of the soft green leaves.

木精

ふるきおちばを  
やはらかき  
青葉のかげに  
葬れよ

Wake up from  
Your winter's dream  
And come  
To the spring forest.

ふゆのゆめちを  
さめいでゝ  
はるのはやしに  
きたれかし

Even now the wind sweeps the deep mountain,  
And spring blows quietly through;

今しもわたる深山かぜ  
春はしづかに吹きかよふ



As I listen to the lonely sounds of the forest,  
Drawn in by the melody of the wind,  
Not put off, though seeing the white cloth of clouds  
Whose feathered sleeves alight on then lift away from  
A thousand branches deep in the mountain forest,  
Seeming to dance as they depart;  
The clouds that pass over the trees  
Are seen momentarily but leave no trace,  
Beckoned by a lofty destination,  
Rounding the thousand-fold rocky shadows,  
Lost among the flowers and leaning on the stones.  
As I listen to the sound of running water,  
In the mountain's treacherous rock fissures  
Cutting through the green crags,  
The water breaks and plunges down to pools  
Whose waves gush through the rapids;  
The spring sun's showy rays  
Sparkle in the watery spray;  
A lone patch of moss scales a rock  
On which I tread gingerly.  
As I wait for the drifting clouds,  
The thundering waterfalls below  
And rock-splashing waves leave no calm pools,  
But where does the falling water flow?

#### Mountain Spirit

Why does the purple  
Spring mist  
In the deep woods  
Waver?

There is something loving

林の簫の音をきけば  
風のしらべにさそはれて  
みれどもあかぬ白妙の  
雲の羽袖の深山木の  
千枝にかゝりたちはなれ  
わかれ舞ひゆくすがたかな  
樹々をわたりて行く雲の  
しばしと見ればあともなき  
高き行衛にいざなはれ  
千々にめぐれる巖影の  
花にも迷ひ石に寄り  
流るゝ水の音をきけば  
山は危ふく石わかれ  
削りてなせる青巖に  
砕けて落つる飛潭の  
湧きくる波の瀬を早み  
花やかにさす春の日の  
光爛てりそふ水けふり  
独り苔むす岩を攀ぢ  
ふるふあゆみをふみしめて  
浮べる雲をうかゞへば  
下にとゞろく飛潭の  
澄むいとまなき岩波は  
落ちていづくに下るらん

#### 山精

なにをいざよふ  
むらさきの  
ふかきはやしの  
はるがすみ

なにかこひしき

In the stream  
That flows from a spring  
Out of the rocky shadows.

いはかげを  
ながれていづる  
いづみがは

Tree Spirit  
Do you hear  
The voice with no voice  
Of the fields and hills  
That sings in hiding?

木精  
かくれてうたふ  
野の山の  
こゑなきこゑを  
きくやきみ

Do you recognize  
The melody of the water  
Enveloped  
In the flowers' shadows?

つゝむにあまる  
はなかげの  
水のしらべを  
しるやきみ

Mountain Spirit  
Ah, how it flows,  
How it yearns,  
How it transforms,  
How it moves!

山精  
あゝながれつゝ  
こがれつゝ  
うつりゆきつゝ  
うごきつゝ

Ah, how it circles,  
How it returns,  
How it chuckles,  
How it sobs!

あゝめぐりつゝ  
かへりつゝ  
うちわらひつゝ  
むせびつゝ

Tree Spirit  
Now the sun's rays  
And the spring mists,  
Now the clouds during blossom time  
And the spring rains.

木精  
いまひのひかり  
はるがすみ  
いまはなぐもり  
はるのあめ

Ah, ah, spellbound

あゝあゝはなの

By the flowers' dew—  
Sing of this  
In the deep woods.

つゆに酔ひ  
ふかきはやしに  
うたへかし

I gaze at the clouds and count on my fingers  
How many times they have changed colors;  
White becomes yellow, and now I am unsure  
In what color I would dip my brush;  
Before long everything wears a pale brown tint,  
And now the clouds have turned to crimson;  
Ah, here I am alone at sunset,  
The woods I track open up to me,  
And in the sheer silence on the banks  
Of the lake azaleas bloom;  
As the drifting clouds pass I see their shadows,  
While the spring sun sinks into the water  
And dyes it a shade of crimson;  
The clouds now are bathed in violet,  
And the waterfowl's shadows are red;  
The lake in spring, the grass on the banks,  
The deep woods, and the azalea blossoms,  
Even the solitary body of this lost man,  
In deep purples and crimsons  
All are cast by the sunset.

ゆびをりくればいつたびも  
かはれる雲をながむるに  
白きは黄なりなにをかも  
もつ筆にせむ色彩の  
いつしか淡く茶を帯びて  
雲くれなみとかはりけり  
あゝゆふまぐれわれひとり  
たどる林もひらけきて  
いと静かなる湖の  
岸辺にさける花躑躅  
うき雲ゆけばかげ見えて  
水に沈める春の日や  
それ紅の色染めて  
雲紫となりぬれば  
かげさへあかき水鳥の  
春のみづうみ岸の草  
深き林や花つゝじ  
迷ふひとりのわがみだに  
深紫の紅の  
彩にうつろふ夕まぐれ

### 3. Pillow of Grass (草枕: *Kusamakura*)

Dark are the waves at dusk and the plover's cry;  
And though I am not a plover,  
If I flapped the wings of my heart  
I might fly that lonely way.

夕波くらく啼く千鳥  
われは千鳥にあらねども  
心の羽をうちふりて  
さみしきかたに飛べるかな

The entirety of this young heart, forlorn,  
Given to inconsolable lament,  
Frozen into ice inside my breast,  
Has melted and turned to tears.

As the white waves that wash over the reeds  
Stream and jet from among the rocks,  
My thoughts spill over this pillow of grass;  
How many pillows have there now been?

How sorrowful is the plight of a man,  
Desperately seeking abiding comfort,  
Cutting through the pathless woods,  
Seeking a path that is not there.

How full of worry am I, too;  
In the backwoods, hills, or valley shadows,  
At dawn or dusk, no good in looking,  
For the light is gone and autumn over.

Weak of mind, somber of body,  
Looking at the last remaining flowers of autumn,  
Ignorant of their fate, I shed tears  
Into the water that carries them off.

If my body were the morning clouds,  
By evening it would turn to clouds of rain;  
And if my body were the evening rain,  
By morning it would turn to rainy winds.

And if my body were a fallen leaf,  
Blown by the wind and fluttering,

若き心の一筋に  
なぐさめもなくなげきわび  
胸の氷のむすぼれて  
とけて涙となりけり

蘆葉を洗ふ白波の  
流れて巖を出づること  
思ひあまりて草枕  
まくらのかずの今いくつ

かなしいかなや人の身の  
なきなぐさめを尋ね侘び  
道なき森に分け入りて  
などなき道をもとむらん

われもそれかやうれひかや  
野末に山に谷蔭に  
見るよしもなき朝夕の  
光もなくて秋暮れぬ

想も薄く身も暗く  
残れる秋の花を見て  
行くへもしらず流れ行く  
水に涙の落つるかな

身を朝雲にたとふれば  
ゆふべの雲の雨となり  
身を夕雨にたとふれば  
あしたの雨の風となる

されば落葉と身をなして  
風に吹かれて飄り

Attended by morning's golden clouds,  
At evening it would cross the Shirakawa Pass.

With no path now for me to follow,  
Longing for the pathless fields,  
Distracted by cares, I have come wandering  
To the Miyagi Plains of the north country.

Miyagi Plains, my heart's shelter!  
When I am rattled and feverish,  
The sun's weak rays, the withered grasses,  
Even the wild fields have brought me joy.

Alone my melancholy ears  
Hear a lute when the north wind blows;  
In depths of sadness my eyes  
See flowers in the colorless rocks.

Ah, this pang of loneliness  
Felt only by a man of profound taste;  
To whom might I relate the scene  
Of the bleak field this winter's day?

The view of the city from here  
Is a sky covered in winter clouds;  
The hailstones that fall on me  
Have bound my sleeves with ice.

The wind mixed with sleet is fierce,  
A thin layer of ice lies on the stream;  
Is what I hear below the ice  
The sound of water flowing to the sea?

朝の黄雲にともなはれ  
夜白河を越えてけり

道なき今の身なればか  
われは道なき野を慕ひ  
思ひ乱れてみちのくの  
宮城野にまで迷ひきぬ

心の宿の宮城野よ  
乱れて熱き吾身には  
日影も薄く草枯れて  
荒れたる野こそうれしけれ

ひとりさみしき吾耳は  
吹く北風を琴と聴き  
悲み深き吾目には  
色彩なき石も花と見き

あゝ孤独の悲痛を  
味ひ知れる人ならで  
誰にかたらん冬の日の  
かくもわびしき野のけしき

都のかたをながむれば  
空冬雲に覆はれて  
身にふりかゝる玉霰  
袖の氷と閉ぢあへり

みぞれまじりの風勁く  
小川の水の薄氷  
氷のしたに音するは  
流れて海に行く水か

Magpies hidden in the clouds,  
Cawing and devotedly stirring the winds,  
In the weak light of the frozen sky  
You have blanketed the wild field.

As the sun sets and the light dies  
On this winter's day that freezes tears,  
Deserted of people, on grasses withered,  
Here I wander alone.

How sad is the drunken man going along,  
His footsteps crushing the columns of frost;  
What does he cry for? Through those stifled sobs  
His song has a poignant timbre.

How sorrowful the tune you play  
Along the field's edge, my child;  
The hand that plays the melody freezes—  
What good is it to be a corner busker?

How lovely when you are so young in years,  
Untroubled by the first stirrings of love;  
Take my hand in yours, traveller,  
What are you hiding there?

Unable to bear the loneliness of the journey,  
Treading a path where no path is there,  
On the frost on the withered grasses;  
When I arrive, how cold the winter seas.

In the morning on a rock by the shore,  
I sit down and gaze in the direction  
Of the city that was my home,

啼いて羽風もたのもしく  
雲に隠るゝかさゝぎよ  
光もうすき寒空の  
汝も荒れたる野にむせぶ

涙も凍る冬の日  
光もなくて暮れ行けば  
人めも草も枯れはてて  
ひとりさまよふ吾身かな

かなしや酔ふて行く人の  
踏めばくづるゝ霜柱  
なにを酔ひ泣く忍び音に  
声もあはれのその歌は

うれしや物の音を弾きて  
野末をかよふ人の子よ  
声調ひく手も凍りはて  
なに門づけの身の果ぞ

やさしや年もうら若く  
まだ初恋のまじりなく  
手に手をとって行く人よ  
なにを隠るゝその姿

野のさみしさに堪へかねて  
霜と霜との枯草の  
道なき道をふみわけて  
きたれば寒し冬の海

朝は海辺の石の上に  
こしうちかけてふるさとの  
都のかたを望めども

But all I can make out are the waves.

おとなふものは濤ばかり

At sunset on the lonely rocky shore,  
I lie in sand stained by the tide  
And gaze towards where the sun goes down,  
But all that springs to view are my tears.

暮はさみしき荒磯の  
潮を染めし砂に伏し  
日の入るかたをながむれど  
湧きくるものは涙のみ

Is it not dreary when the rough waves  
Crash and splinter against the rocks?  
Is it not dreary when the winter sun  
Returns home with the tide?

さみしいかなや荒波の  
岩に碎けて散れるとき  
かなしいかなや冬の日の  
潮とともに帰るとき

Who, when gazing out upon the currents,  
Does not long for home?  
Who, when seeing the tide go out,  
Does not hold dear our world?

誰か波路を望み見て  
そのふるさとを慕はざる  
誰か潮の行くを見て  
この人の世を惜まざる

With no almanac, on the sandy strip  
Of the rough coastline I wander alone;  
Sleet blends with the rain clouds  
And falls to join the tide.

暦もあらぬ荒磯の  
砂路にひとりさまよへば  
みぞれまじりの雨雲の  
落ちて潮となりにけり

To my lonely ears, accustomed  
To the faraway sound of the surging sea,  
An indistinct call issues  
From a bird of the field, still so young.

遠く湧きくる海の音  
慣れてさみしき吾耳に  
怪しやもるゝものの音は  
まだうらわかき野路の鳥

Oh, how rare that melody!  
To what does it address its song?  
Its green wings are still weak—  
Is it the first bush warbler of spring?

嗚呼めづらしのしらべぞと  
声のゆくへをたづぬれば  
緑の羽もまだ弱き  
それも初音か鶯の

Spring has come! Spring! It is spring!

春きにけらし春よ春

Though the white snow still piles high,  
The seedlings sprout into green,  
And my mood skims over the sand.

まだ白雪の積れども  
若菜の萌えて色青き  
こゝちこそすれ砂の上に

Spring has come! Spring! It is spring  
Happily delivered on the winds;  
It seems that spring has really come—  
The scent of plums perfumes the shore.

春きにけらし春よ春  
うれしや風に送られて  
きたるらしと思へばか  
梅が香ぞする海の辺に

I climb a giant rock on the shore  
And from up high I look around;  
In the dawn clouds spring has arrived,  
And far away the sound of the tide at daybreak.

磯辺に高き大巖の  
うへにのぼりてながむれば  
春やきぬらん東雲の  
潮の音遠き朝ぼらけ

#### 4. Springtime of Easy Sleep (眠れる春よ: *Nemureru haru yo*)

Springtime of easy sleep, how young you are!  
There is no need to hide your figure:  
Today's sun has just hidden itself away;  
The homes where all the people live,  
Even the waking Spring's figure,  
Look like something out of a dream.

ねむれる春ようらかき  
かたちをかくすことなかれ  
たれこめてのみけふの日を  
なべてのひとのすぐすまに  
さめての春のすがたこそ  
また夢のまの風情なれ

Sleepy Spring, wake up, Spring!  
When clever people are not looking  
Young Murasaki's morning mists,  
Wear sleeves of mists,  
Sing the birdsong of the seasons' first  
Notes of the joyful warbler.

ねむげの春よさめよ春  
さかしきひとのみざるまに  
若紫の朝霞  
かすみの袖をみにまとへ  
はつねうれしきうぐひすの  
鳥のしらべをうたへかし

Sleepy Spring, wake up, Spring!  
Hardened by Winter's ice,

ねむげの春よさめよ春  
ふゆのこほりにむすぼれし



Awaking from dreams of old,  
The tangled hair of willow strands—  
Take up the plum blossom comb  
And pin up your tangled sidelocks.

ふるきゆめちをさめいでて  
やなぎのいとのみだれがみ  
うめのはなぐしさしそへて  
びんのみだれをかきあげよ

Sleepy Spring, wake up, Spring!  
A Spring, raise aloft  
Your feet quickly from the sprouting  
Under the bracken's buds in the valley;  
Breathe your wondrous Spring breath  
And smell of deep-dyed plum.

ねむげの春よさめよ春  
あゆめばたにの早わらびの  
したもえいそぐ汝があしを  
かたくもあげよあゆめ春  
たえなるはるのいきを吹き  
こぞめの梅の香にほへ

## 5. Parting (別離: *Betsuri*)

A song to be sung by a man in love  
with another man's wife, on climbing a hill  
to look out upon her house

人妻をしたへる男の山に登り其  
女の家を望み見てうたへるうた

Can anyone stop the traveler  
From disappearing among tomorrow's clouds?  
Can anyone hear the traveler  
Declare that tomorrow he must part?

誰かとゞめん旅人の  
あすは雲間に隠るゝを  
誰か聞くらん旅人の  
あすは別れと告げましを

Pure love is one half of a clam's shell,  
For only I feel this way.  
As my love wells up and clouds over,  
I shed tears for you.

清き恋とや片し貝  
われのみものを思ふより  
恋はあふれて濁るとも  
君に涙をかけましを

If in your heart you understand  
The sorrow of loving another man's wife,  
I shall be happy even if you  
Call me a sinner.

人妻恋ふる悲しさを  
君がなさに知りもせば  
せめてはわれを罪人と  
呼びたまふこそうれしけれ

This suffering self that has no judgment  
Thinks of dying of love  
To escape the convict's whippings  
In the prison of painful love.

あやめもしらぬ憂しや身は  
くるしきこひの牢獄より  
罪の鞭責をのがれいで  
こひて死なんと思ふなり

Someone does not seek that flower,  
Someone is not lost in that color,  
Someone looks ahead of himself  
And does not think of plucking the flower.

誰かは花をたづねざる  
誰かは色彩に迷はざる  
誰かは前にさける見て  
花を摘まんと思はざる

The jealous butterfly is bitter,  
Playing among the flowers of love,  
Its two wings fold in and out,  
The color of its wings is faint.

恋の花にも戯るゝ  
嫉妬の蝶の身ぞつらき  
二つの羽もをれをれて  
翼の色はあせにけり

Though the life of a man  
Is as happy as a spring night's dream,  
What is in my thoughts  
Is much deeper still than a dream.

人の命を春の夜の  
夢といふこそうれしけれ  
夢よりもいやいや深き  
われに思ひのあるものを

When the plum blooms,  
The lotus worries about its blooming,  
And when the lotus blooms,  
The bush clover thinks of blooming in turn.

梅の花さくころほひは  
蓮さかばやと思ひわび  
蓮の花さくころほひは  
萩さかばやと思ふかな

In no time at all autumn has come,  
And though the bush clover blooms where I tread,  
The muddying love I have  
Has turned into pure malice.

待つまでも早く秋は来て  
わが踏む道に萩さけど  
濁りて待てる吾恋は  
清き怨となりけり

## 6. Under an Umbrella (傘のう ち: *Kasa no uchi*)

As two people bearing one  
Umbrella fold their shapes together,  
The steady rains of despairing love  
Soon dry out upon their sleeves.

二人してさす一張の  
傘に姿をつゝむとも  
情の雨のふりしきり  
かわく間もなきたもとかな

How poignant as they walk along  
With faces pressed so close together;  
Under the umbrella, her strewn black hair  
Spreads the scent of plum blossom oil.

顔と顔とをうちよせて  
あゆむとすればなつかしや  
梅花の油黒髪の  
乱れて匂ふ傘のう ち

Their love-filled reverie is wet,  
Drenched by rainfall in the heart;  
Their kimono linings are dyed a burning crimson,  
And their feet are hampered by the rain.

恋の一雨ぬれまさり  
ぬれてこひしき夢の間や  
染めてぞ燃ゆる紅絹うらの  
雨になやめる足まとひ

Listen, Umegawa,<sup>1</sup> to my song,  
And lay aside your passion awhile:  
To frolic all about in love—  
Such is Chūbei's tale of dreams.

歌ふをきけば梅川よ  
しばし情を捨てよかし  
いづこも恋に戯れて  
それ忠兵衛の夢がたり

Should showers of love fall, fall;  
In the glow of an autumn sunset,  
Before the umbrella's tears dry out  
They set off hand in hand and shan't return.

こひしき雨よふらばふれ  
秋の入日の照りそひて  
傘の涙を乾さぬ間に  
手に手をとって行きて帰らじ

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<sup>1</sup> Umegawa: a geisha whose freedom is bought by her lover Chūbei, in Chikamatsu Monzaemon's 1711 *jōruri* "Meido no hikyaku" (Express messenger from the dead; also known as "Umegawa Chūbei").

7. Two Voices (二つの声: *Futatsu no koe*)

Morning

Someone may be listening to the voice of morning,  
Breaking out of slumber and of dreams  
Riding within the painted clouds  
Sung by myriads of birds  
Appearing on the far side of heaven,  
In the eastern sky there is light,  
There is time and there are beginnings,  
There is a path and there is strength,  
There are colors and there are words,  
There are voices and there are lives,  
There are names, so it is sung,  
Rising into the sky, falling on the earth,  
In tandem with the remaining stars  
Within the light morning hides.

朝

たれか聞くらん朝の声  
眠と夢を破りいで  
彩なす雲にうちのりて  
よろづの鳥に歌はれつ  
天のかなたにあらはれて  
東の空に光あり  
そこに時あり始あり  
そこに道あり力あり  
そこに色あり詞あり  
そこに声あり命あり  
そこに名ありとうたひつゝ  
みそらにあがり地にかけり  
のこんの星ともろともに  
光のうちに朝ぞ隠るゝ

Evening

Someone may be listening to the voice of evening,  
The wings of mist, the belt of clouds,  
The robes of smoke, the sleeves of dew,  
Weary and worried, hurling strife  
To the far side of the dark,  
Bats, messengers of night,  
Cease not their cries even in mid-flight,  
Here are shadows and here is hesitation,  
Here are dreams and here is sleep,  
Here is darkness and here is rest,  
Here is long and here is far,  
Here is death, so it is sung,

暮

たれか聞くらん暮の声  
霞の翼雲の帯  
煙の衣露の袖  
つかれてなやむあらそひを  
闇のかなたに投げ入れて  
夜の使の蝙蝠の  
飛ぶ間も声のをやみなく  
こゝに影あり迷あり  
こゝに夢あり眠あり  
こゝに闇あり休息あり  
こゝに永きあり遠きあり  
こゝに死ありとうたひつゝ

Resting in the greenery, stepping in the fields,  
Together with the sun that falls on the other side,  
In colorless darkness evening hides.

草木にいこひ野にあゆみ  
かなたに落つる日とともに  
色なき闇に暮ぞ隠るゝ

## 8. Nostalgia (望郷: *Bōkyō*)

A song sung by a monk  
upon fleeing from a temple

寺をのがれいでたる僧の  
うたひしそのうた

Goodbye, then,  
This is farewell to that world—  
Will these eyes ever again see  
The white walls of the living quarters of that temple  
I grew so accustomed to, now that I am fleeing?

いざさらば  
これをこの世のわかれぞと  
のがれいでては住みなれし  
御寺の蔵裏の白壁の  
眼にもふたたび見ゆるかな

Goodbye, then,  
When one lives there even the Buddha's dwelling  
Becomes a house of flames;  
Tears stream down and fall  
From a heart that finds no comfort.

いざさらば  
住めば仏のやどりさへ  
火炎の宅となるものを  
なぐさめもなき心より  
流れて落つる涙かな

Goodbye, then,  
Though the lamp oil of the heart is fouled,  
Let us stir up the flame  
And in the blazing flames of passion  
Burn ourselves to ashes of longing.

いざさらば  
心の油濁るとも  
ともしびたかくかきおこし  
なさけは熱くもゆる火の  
こひしき塵にわれは焼けなむ

## 9. Fierce Rivals (強敵: *Kyōteki*)

To a single flower came a butterfly and a spider:	一つの花に蝶と蜘蛛
The little spider made a caring face to the flower;	小蜘蛛は花を守り顔
The little butterfly made a tipsy face for the flower,	小蝶は花に酔ひ顔に
Helpless though it danced and danced.	舞へども 舞へども すべぞなき
If the flower be for the little spider,	花は小蜘蛛のためならば
What to make of the little butterfly's dance?	小蝶の舞をいかにせむ
If the flower be for the little butterfly,	花は小蝶のためならば
What to make of the little spider's threads?	小蜘蛛の糸をいかにせむ
Presently the single flower fell,	やがて一つの花散りて
And though the little spider slumbered there,	小蜘蛛はそこに眠れども
The little butterfly on its light wings	羽翼も軽き小蝶こそ
Departed, destination unknown.	いつこともなくうせにけれ

## 10. Autumn (秋: *Aki*)

Autumn has come,	秋は来ぬ
autumn has come,	秋は来ぬ
Dewdrops on the leaf and the flower—	一葉は花は露ありて
In the sound of the coming breeze played on the lyre	風の来て弾く琴の音に
The green grapes have turned	青き葡萄は紫の
Into the purple wine of nature.	自然の酒とかはりけり
Autumn has come,	秋は来ぬ
autumn has come,	秋は来ぬ
The lately gone autumn grass, too—	おくれさきだつ秋草も
All where the evening frost settles	みな夕霜のおきどころ
The wine of laughter is to be poured	笑ひの酒を悲みの
Into the cups of sadness.	盃にこそつぐべけれ

Autumn has come,  
autumn has come,  
To the shrubs and the maples—  
Who is not drunk on autumn?  
In the loneliness of a wise face  
You play the flute and I shall sing!

秋は来ぬ  
秋は来ぬ  
くさきも紅葉するものを  
たれかは秋に酔はざらめ  
智恵あり顔のさみしさに  
君笛を吹けわれはうたはむ

B. From Doi Bansui's *Nature Has Feelings* (天地有情: Tenchi ujō, 1899)

1. Moon on the Castle Ruins (荒城の月: Kōjō no tsuki)

Where now is the light of long ago  
That broke through branches of the ancient pines,  
Twinkling on the wine cups going round  
Spring's blossom-viewing banquet at the palace?

春高樓の花の宴  
めぐる盃影さして  
千代の松が枝わけ出でし  
むかしの光いまいづこ。

Where now is the light of long ago  
That glinted on the swords stuck in the ground,  
Showing the many squawking geese flying over,  
The color of frost at the fall encampment?

秋陣營の霜の色  
鳴き行く雁の數見せて  
植うるつるぎに照りそひし  
むかしの光今いづこ。

For whom now shines the unchanging light  
Of the midnight moon on the castle ruins?  
All that remains in the hedge is the vine,  
All that sings in the pines is the wind.

いま荒城のよはの月  
變らぬ光たがためぞ  
垣に残るはただかづら  
松に歌ふはただあらし。

Though heaven's image does not change,  
Does not the figure of the passing ages  
Of glory and decay reflect even now?  
Ah, the midnight moon on the castle ruins!

天上影は變らねど  
榮枯は移る世の姿  
寫さんとてか今もなほ  
あゝ荒城の夜半の月。



## 2. Poet (詩人: *Shijin*)

O poet, should I describe you  
As a maiden drunk on love?  
For you hear music in the storm,  
And you see flowers in wild fields.

詩人よ君を譬ふれば  
戀に酔ひぬるをとめごか  
あらしのうちに樂を聞き  
あら野のうちに花を見る。

O poet, should I describe you  
As a child blind to the world's sins?  
For a divine voice sounds from your lips,  
And a dream of heaven is in your eyes.

詩人よ君を譬ふれば  
世の罪しらぬをさなごか  
口には神の聲ひゞき  
目にはみそらの夢やどる。

O poet, should I describe you  
As the waves of the open sea?  
On the surface a raging storm,  
And hidden in the depths a pearl.

詩人よ君を譬ふれば  
八重の汐路の海原か  
おもてにあるゝあらしあり  
底にひそめるまたまあり。

O poet, should I describe you  
As a volcano rising into the clouds?  
Stars sparkle from your brow,  
Waves of fire gush in your breast.

詩人よ君を譬ふれば  
雲に聳ゆる火の山か  
星は額にかゞやきて  
焰の波ぞ胸に湧く。

O poet, should I describe you  
As the cool light of the evening moon?  
Your body is held in the heavens,  
And your reflection in the dust of the world below.

詩人よ君を譬ふれば  
光すゞしき夕月か  
身を天上にとめ置きて  
影を下界の塵に寄す。

### 3. The Universe and the Poet (萬有と詩人: *Ban'yū to shijin*)

And he has traveled in mind and spirit  
through the immeasurable all.

—Lucretius<sup>2</sup>

Atque omne immensum  
peragravit mente animoque.

O poet, have you sung,  
And played the zither in the light  
Of the morning star that sparkles in your hairpins,  
Of the dawn of our world,  
When at the brink of Chaos  
Time came forth from the bosom of Eternity?

「渾沌」よさし窮りて  
時「永劫」のふところを  
出でしわが世のあさぼらけ  
かざしににほふ明星の  
光に琴を震はして  
詩人よ君は歌ひしか。

The streaming light and sinking shadows  
Have passed through seasons of countless ages;  
Boulders have moved, mountains have departed,  
Pools have transformed countless times—  
Now, as of old, the splendid creation  
Of the great heavens and earth.

流るゝ光りしづむ影  
過ぎし幾世の春秋ぞ  
巖は移り山は去り  
淵も幾たび替りけむ  
おほあめつちの美はしき  
たくみは今もむかしにて。

Lo, the whitecaps frothing up  
Are to me like flying silver snakes;  
I raise my eyes to see a rainbow aloft in the sky—  
My heart is not stirred by rainbows,  
My heart is dull to the waves—  
It begs of you one thing: your song.

あゝわだつみの波の花  
銀蛇の飛ぶに似たるかな  
仰げば空に虹高し  
虹にも酔はぬわがこゝろ  
波にもにぶきわがこゝろ  
たのむは獨り君が歌。

A baptism of living fire burns  
And sweeps away this worldly dust,  
Summoning the wind to stir the clouds,  
Attending light and darkness,  
And racing hither from the far skies—

生ける焰のバプテズマ  
浮世の塵を焼き掃ひ  
雲を震はせ風に呼び  
光に暗に伴ひて  
大空遠く翔けりくる

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<sup>2</sup> From *On the Nature of Things* (De rerum natura), Book I, line 74.

Do you hear the muse's song?

Morning sunlight and evening glow  
With such skill in different colors  
Dye the pale and flowery robes  
Of the clouds—and pulling at  
The crimson of their trailing hems,  
Do you see the muse's image?

“Clear spring, or shady grove,  
Or sunny hill,”<sup>3</sup> could that be all?  
Do not verses somewhere sing  
Of how the morning breezes blow,  
Of how the clouds at evening gather,  
Of how the beads of dew descend?

Do not verses somewhere sing  
Of the rivers flowing by,  
Of the bright stars twinkling,  
Of the green grass growing,  
Of an eagle's wings flapping,  
Of a lion roaring in a storm?

In spring—the faint dawn light in Yoshino,  
The crimson of the pressing mist,  
The ridge of bursting flowers far off;  
In summer—twilight on the Rhine,  
The water flowing far and pure  
Reflects the deep green of the banks.

詩神の歌を君聞くや。

あさ日の光りゆふ光り  
かれとこれとの染め替ふる  
たくみもよしや天雲の  
輕羅のころも花ごろも  
曳くやもすその紅に  
詩神の影を君見るや。

「泉のほとり森のかげ  
光てりそふ岡」のみか  
あしたの風の吹くところ  
ゆふべの雲のゐるところ  
露のしづくのふるところ  
いつくか歌のなからめや。

流るゝ水のゆくところ  
きらめく星のてるところ  
緑の草の生ふところ  
鶯の翼を振るところ  
獅子のあらしに呼ぶところ  
いつくか歌のなからめや。

春は吉野のあさぼらけ  
こむる霞のくれなゐも  
遠目は紛ふ花の峯  
夏はラインの夕まぐれ  
流は遠く水清く  
映るも岸の深みどり

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<sup>3</sup> Bansui's endnote: *Paradise Lost, Book Three*.

The rippling pools of the Miluo River<sup>4</sup>  
And the clouds on Wu Shan<sup>5</sup> disappear,  
And then again the scattering voice of autumn;  
Is the crimson casting light on boulders  
Glazed with ice from the north sea waves  
The unsinking light of the midnight sun?

Do you see a vision here  
Of the end of time when all is snuffed out,  
And the rotting bones of the broken down  
Caravan crumble into dust in the road,  
And even the grief of the wailing soul  
Swirls into the storm of the great desert?

Do you see a vision here  
Of the chaos of indistinct heaven and earth,  
Of black clouds rising in the sky  
To swallow up the shining sun,  
Of fierce flames of Red Lotus Hell,  
A great volcano melting boulders?

Weary from chasing illusions,  
Temporary lodgings at the field's edge,  
What kind of dreams do you weave?  
On waking to see reddened palms,  
Are those kind roses next to you

汨羅の淵のさゝれなみ  
巫山の雲は消えぬれど  
猶搖落の秋の聲  
潮も氷る北洋の  
巖を照らすくれなゐは  
光しづまぬ夜半の日か。

路に斃れしカラバンの  
枯骨碎けて塵となり  
魂啾々の恨さへ  
あらしにまじる大砂漠  
もの皆滅ぶ空劫の  
面影君はこゝに見む。

黒雲高くおほ空の  
照る日の影を呑みけして  
紅蓮の焰すさまじく  
巖も熔くる火のみ山  
あめつちわかぬ渾沌の  
おもかげ君はこゝに見む。

まぼろし追うてくたびれて  
しばし野末の假のやど  
結ぶや君よ何の夢  
さむれば赤したなごゝろ  
あたりの風を匂はして

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<sup>4</sup> Miluo River (汨羅, J: *Bekira*): A river in northeast Hunan Province. It is the river in which the statesman and poet Qu Yuan (屈原, J: *Kutsugen*, circa 343–277 BCE) drowned himself.

<sup>5</sup> Wu Shan (巫山, J: *Fuzan*): A famous mountain between Sichuan and Hebei provinces. Its clouds and rain were thought to exemplify the passions of men and women. It is not far from the Miluo River.

That smile and perfume the breeze?

In paths through meadows you've heard flowers  
Singing thoughts that brim with tears;  
In empty shells on rocky shores  
So many people without voices;  
You've heard the ocean's melody  
Somewhere deep inside your heart.

A flower perfumes the mountain ridge,  
A song springs from the passion-wave pools;  
You who change formless into voice,  
Listening with ears in the heart—  
What does the thunder foretell, what does  
The biting midnight wind reveal?

What does the biting midnight wind  
Reveal—as Sleep, or Death, or as  
The slackening wings of the gentle dove  
Descending in the sky at dusk,  
When the spirit of the muse  
Alights and fills your heart?

Nocturnal fragrance rises up,  
Heaven and earth dream silently;  
Gazing at the breeze's figure  
In the flickering window-flames  
Of dwellings with no sounds or words—  
These thoughts somehow are your own.

Whither go the stars that flow  
Into the sky you gaze out on,  
Opening the very window of your heart—

笑むはやさしの花ばらか。

涙にあまる思とは  
歌ふをきゝぬ野路の花、  
荒磯蔭のうつせ貝  
聲なきものを何人か  
海のしらべをこゝろねを  
其一片に聞きにけむ。

たかねの崖に花にほひ  
情波の淵に歌は湧く、  
無象を聲に替ふるてふ  
君が心耳のきくところ  
空のいかづち何をつげ  
夜半のこがらし何を説く。

夜半のこがらし何を説く、  
「眠」の如く「死」の如く  
やさしき鳩の羽たゆく  
ゆふべの空に下るごとく  
詩神の魂の降り来て  
君が心をみたすとき。

夜の薫りの高うして  
天地しづかに夢に入る  
うちに聲なく言葉なく  
またゝく窓のともしびに  
風の姿を眺めては  
思はいかに君が身の。

心の窓も押しあけて  
眺むる空に流れくる  
星の行衛はいづくぞや

To the banks of the clear Avon,<sup>6</sup>  
To the blooming Tuscan fields,<sup>7</sup>  
To the wooded shade of Weimar?<sup>8</sup>

The North Star is far, its light is high—  
Its rays of hope and color of love  
Stand out up there; and in Orion,<sup>9</sup>  
Shining up there across his belt  
(Symbols of truth, good, and beauty)  
—The three stars are aligned just so.

If we could peer straight through the earth,  
As though looking up instead,  
And gaze at the ten million  
Constellations that shine below,  
We'd know "the world down here" means naught  
And that our world is glorious.

The light of truth and beauty of truth  
Are shrouded behind a thin mist;  
Hovering in the dark, my heart  
Begs of you one thing: your song—  
Let your song bloom for the sake  
Of orchid's scent and lily's hue.

Strumming your bejeweled harp,  
Softening the raging storm,

清きアボンの岸のへか  
咲くタスカンの花の野か  
それワイマアの森蔭か。

北斗は遠し影高し  
望の光り愛の色  
かれにもしるき参宿の  
もなかにひかりかゞやきて  
(かたどる影は眞善美)  
三の星こそ並ぶなれ。

坤輿一球透き通り  
仰ぎて上に見るがごと  
下にも光る千萬の  
星の宿りを眺め得ば  
下界の名さへ空しくて  
我世いみじと知るべきを。

まことの光りまことの美  
狭霧に蔽はれとざされて  
暗にさまよふわがこゝろ  
たのむは獨り君が歌  
紫蘭の薫り百合花の色  
爲めに咲かなん君が歌。

しらべも高くねも高く  
あらきあらしを和げて

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<sup>6</sup> Bansui's note: Shakespeare.

<sup>7</sup> Bansui's note: Dante.

<sup>8</sup> Bansui's note: Goethe.

<sup>9</sup> Bansui's note: The constellation Orion.

To tender music you convert  
Its loud and high-pitched din;  
Smiling in the midst of tears,  
Shining even in the dark—

微妙の樂に替ふるてふ  
君が玉琴かきならし  
涙のうちにほゝゑみて  
暗のうちににもかゝやきて。

As Orpheus did, unbind your soul  
From its tie to the underworld;  
As Pythagoras professed,  
Listen to the celestial music;  
As Plato beheld, be overwhelmed  
By a dream of high ideals!

かのオルヒスのなすところ  
陰府に繋がる魂を解き  
かのピタゴルの説くところ  
御空に星の樂を聞き  
かのプラトンの見るところ  
高き理想の夢に酔へ。

#### 4. Evening Thoughts (夕の思ひ: *Yūbe no omoi*)

Whither goes the spirit in man? Whither  
goes man on the earth?

Où va l'esprit dans l'homme? Où  
va l'homme sur terre?

Lord! Lord! whither goes the earth in the sky?

Seigneur! Seigneur! où va la terre  
dans le ciel?

—Hugo: *Autumn Leaves*.<sup>10</sup>

O life as futile, then, as frail!  
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
What hope of answer, or redress?  
Behind the veil! behind the veil!

—Tennyson: *In Memoriam*.<sup>11</sup>

#### I

#### (一)

Advancing ahead of the pensive sinking sun  
In the sky approaching twilight  
A floating cloud cluster hesitates

思入日を先きだてゝ  
たそがれ近き大空に  
うかびいざよふ雲のむれ

<sup>10</sup> From Victor Hugo's "To My Friends L. B. and S.-B." (*A mes amis L. B. et S.-B.*), in *Autumn Leaves* (*Les Feuilles d'automne*, 1831).

<sup>11</sup> From Alfred Tennyson's *In Memoriam A. H. H.* (1849).

As a remnant of the dying day—  
By what scheme are dazzling colors  
Dyed before my very eyes?

At the limits of the many-layered sky,  
Above the many-tiered peaks,  
The lightly flowing crimson shows  
The flags of Seraph and Cherub,  
And the loosely trailing purple pulls  
The skirts of heavenly nymphs.

Above the skies of evening upon evening  
The myriad transforming vestiges—  
I looked there for unwavering love  
And only found the hint of connection.  
Clouds, spreading your unencumbered wings,  
To what far end do you gallop?

Lo, the evening clouds gallop  
To the land beyond the sky—  
There may be a river of life  
That stops the heart's thirst,  
There may be a secret key  
That opens the door to truth.

Behold, above the plumes of evening's clouds,  
Someone casts away this *vale of tears*,  
Perhaps to fly away beyond the sky  
Of brave racing eagles and swerving winds,  
To where the rays of light may shine, somewhere  
Unknown to darkness of the floating world.

As bees gathering nectar up

暮行くけふの名残とて  
見るめまばゆきあやいろを  
染むるは何のわざならむ。

あるは幾重の空のよそ  
あるは幾重の嶺のうへ  
かろく流るゝくれなゐは  
セラフ、ケラブの旗を見せ  
ゆるく鬨びくむらさきは  
あまつをとめの裾や曳く。

夕夕の空の上  
替るもゝちの面影を  
替らぬ愛に眺むれば  
たゞ聯想の端となる  
雲よ自在のはねのして  
いづくのはてに翔けり行く。

あゝ夕雲のかけりゆく  
空のあなたぞなつかしき  
心の渇きとゞむべき  
そこに生命の川あらむ  
眞理のかどを開くべき  
そこに秘密の鍵あらむ。

嗚呼夕雲のはねのうへ  
たれか「涙の谷」棄てゝ  
荒鷲翔けり風迷ふ  
空のあなたに飛行かむ  
浮世の暗にしられざる  
光はそこにてるべきに。

花より花にむれとびて



Dart from flower to flower,  
I watched the soul flying  
From star to star for light—  
As someone bringing back home  
The poet's<sup>12</sup> ethereal vision.

## II

The vision of the Garden of Eden  
Though vanished is not forgotten now.  
Thinking to sot myself on the dregs  
At the base of the bitter cup of wine—  
How long in the floating world of dust  
Could a body of dust abide?

Wandering in a vale of tears,  
Taken by surprise in dreamless sleep,  
Here weeps Byron over blood,  
Whence comes the “child of Doubt and Death,”<sup>13</sup>  
And here does Schiller raise his voice  
To cry, “Ideals are vanished.”<sup>14</sup>

Though in the quiet flowing Avon<sup>15</sup>  
Coolly swells the moon aloft,  
The waters at the invisible bottom sob,

蜜を集むる蜂のごと  
星より星に光をと  
飛行く魂を眺めけむ  
詩人のくしまぼろしを

## (二)

消えしエデンの花園の  
おもわは今も忘れず  
ほす味にがきさかつきの  
底なる澱に酔はんとて  
塵の浮世に塵の身は  
かくもいつまで残るらむ。

涙の谷にさまよひて  
ねぬ夜の夢に驚けば  
こゝにバイロン血に泣きて  
「死と疑の子」となりの  
こゝにシルレル聲あげて  
「理想は消ゆ」と叫ぶなり。

アボンの流しづかにて  
すゞしく月を宿せども  
見えぬそこひに波むせび

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<sup>12</sup> Bansui's note: See *Paradiso* from Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

<sup>13</sup> From Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto II, verse 3 (1812-18).

<sup>14</sup> From Schiller's “Die Ideale” (The ideals, 1795).

<sup>15</sup> Bansui's note: The river of Shakespeare's birthplace.

And on the surface of Grasmere,<sup>16</sup> too,  
Seeing this world's images reflected,  
Only longing for the sea gods<sup>17</sup> there.

グラスメヤアの水面にも  
うつる此世の影見れば  
たゞ海神のなつかしや。

Thus full of contemplation do the people  
Depart the banks of the far-off Rhine;<sup>18</sup>  
And a summer's eve in Geneva  
Accompanies other songs of woe;<sup>19</sup>  
And even the waves of Naples  
Cannot wash out<sup>20</sup> the deep wails.

さればラインの岸遠く  
思をこめて人は去り  
ゼネワの夏の夕暮は  
よその恨の歌を添へ  
深き嘆はネーブルの  
波も洗ひや得ざりけむ。

The moon in the sky illumines the waves,  
The butterflies in spring dance in the flowers,  
And Nature then has ingenious skill;  
Bodies of dust tormented in the world,  
Mortal frames lost in the dark,  
How inscrutable is the creating mind.

波に照れとて空の月  
花に舞へとて春の蝶  
「自然」のわざは妙ながら  
世に苦めと塵の身を  
暗に迷へと玉の緒を  
つくる心のしりがたや。

To invoke a deity as one  
Who decorates the sky with glittering stars  
And festoons the world with beads of dew  
Is to bind with flattery the human child  
Who wishes for wisdom of the mind

かゞやく星に空かざり  
玉しく露に地を粧ふ  
神にたづねむいかなれば  
なまじの絆人の子の  
心に智慧の願あり

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<sup>16</sup> Bansui's note: A lake near Wordsworth's home.

<sup>17</sup> Bansui's note: "Namely, Proteus and Triton. See the famous poem 'The World Is Too Much With Us'" (the poem's title is written in English).

<sup>18</sup> Bansui's note: "See Canto 3, verse 50 and thereafter, of *Childe Harold*."

<sup>19</sup> Bansui's note: "Lamartine later wrote of meeting Byron here in a poem of heroic mourning entitled 'The Man' [L'Homme]." That poem, from *First Poetic Meditations* (*Premières meditations poétiques*, 1820), is dedicated to Byron.

<sup>20</sup> Bansui's note: "Shelley's 'Stanzas written in dejection, near Naples'" (1818, with the poem's title in English).

And hopes for understanding in the breast.

胸に悟の望ある。

### III

### (三)

In the human world where only ruin prevails,  
At least the flower of love smells sweet—  
Who is to blame for its fragility?  
Starry eyes and eyebrow moons,  
Just kernels of a memory—  
Whither do these illusions flee?

荒れのみまさる人の世に  
せめては匂ふ戀の花  
脆きはたれの咎ならむ  
星の眸月の眉  
たゞ思出の種として  
いづく消行くまぼろしぞ。

Resting against a mother's breast,  
Filled with innocent dreams of spring—  
The devil must have laughed to see;  
The infant's sleep lasts but a spell,  
And soon enough the worldly storms approach,  
The bitter storms to which the child awakes.

母の乳房にもたれつゝ  
宿すもゆかし春の夢  
見なば魔王もゑみぬべき  
稚子の眠りもひとゝきや  
やがて寄來ん世のあらし  
つらきあらしのさますらむ。

The equal of these bitter storms  
Might even be the gates of hell—  
Within the voices down through ages,  
Sacrificing weak and fragile  
In the struggle to survive,  
Are wails of grief and tears of woe.

つらきあらしを譬ふれば  
陰府なる門のきしりかも  
脆き、弱きをにへとして  
いけるをきほふ世々の聲  
うちに恨の叫あり  
うちに憂の涙あり。

The bones of countless folk must shatter  
For one man's glory, it is told;  
Then how much more painful it is  
That social glory has been bought  
with individuals' grief and sorrow,  
Tears, and blood—and for whose sake?

民のもゝちの骨枯れて  
ひとりのいさを成ると説く  
それにもまして痛はしき  
個人の嘆と悲と  
涙と血とに買はれたる  
社會の榮はたがためぞ。

The tides of time eternally—  
Flowing surges, ebbing waves,  
Cresting, dipping, in the end  
Are just traces of sea foam;  
Has any time, has any age  
Been free from chaos and strife?

Rome, which gathered worldly riches,  
Her glory vanished like a dream;  
Nineveh and Babylon's  
Bejeweled golden castles ruined;  
The Tower of Babel built on sand—  
What now of it remains?

Alas, the heights and depths of men  
And the rise and fall of nations  
Thus revolve without an end  
And thus flow on unlimited—  
Time and floating world: whence came?  
Time and floating world: bound whither?

#### IV

Darkened solitary thoughts,  
My stopping shadow and pressing cloud  
Vanish in the lonely dusk;  
Is it the gracious watch of God?—  
In the sky when green fades out  
O how the stars begin to shine!

O shining stars, how dear to me,  
In this passing dream, this human world,

時劫の潮とこしへに  
寄するあら波返る波  
浮きて沈みて末つひは  
たゞうたかたのよゝのあと  
いづれの時かいつの世か  
亂れ騒ぎのなかりけむ。

世界の富を集めたる  
ローマの榮華夢と消え  
こがね鑲ばめ玉しきし  
ニネブ、バビロン野と荒れて  
砂上につきしバベル塔  
今はた何を残すらむ。

嗚呼人榮え人沈み  
國また起り國亡び  
かくてりて極みなく  
かくて流れてはてもなく  
時よ浮世よいづくより  
時よ浮世よいづちゆく。

#### (四)

ひとり思にかきくれて  
たゞずむ影もゐる雲も  
消えてむなしき夕まぐれ  
神の慈愛のまなじりか  
みどり澄みゆく大空に  
はやてりそむる星のかげ。

あゝなつかしの星の影  
夢と過行く人の世に

Showing traces of Eternity;  
As in long ago, when separated  
Into heaven and earth, forever  
Redolent with youthful starlight.

Lifting my eyes to that eternity  
I am overcome by tears,  
Gasping after traces of Hope,  
Whose image rests beyond the sky,  
Lofty, noble, without bounds,  
Fanned by the breath of the soul.

In heaven light, in earth darkness,  
And my thoughts hovering between;  
Gathering sorrows of the floating world,  
The tempests cry, “Despair!”  
Revealing faintly the glory of God,  
The stars whisper, “Hope!”

猶「永劫」のあと見せて  
あめとつちとの割れけむ  
むかしのまゝにとこしへに  
わかき光に匂ふかな。

其永劫の面影を  
仰げば我に涙あり  
高くたふとく限りなき  
靈のいぶきに扇がれて  
空のあなたにかげとむる  
「望」のあとに喘ぎつゝ。

天には光地には暗  
あひにさまよふ我思ひ  
浮世の憂を吹寄せて  
あらし叫びぬ「悩よ」と  
神の光榮をほのみせて  
星さゝやきぬ「望よ」と。

## 5. Evening Bell (暮鐘: *Boshō*)

The bell! Echo of the sky set close  
to the earth!  
Rumbling voice that speaks beside  
the thunder,  
One made for the city, the other for  
the sea!  
Vase full of murmurs that empties itself  
in the air!  
—Hugo: *Songs of Twilight*<sup>21</sup>

La cloche! écho du ciel placé près  
de la terre!  
Voix grondante qui parle à côté  
du tonnerre,  
Faite pour la cité comme lui pour  
la mer!  
Vase plein de rumeur qui se vide  
dans l'air!

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<sup>21</sup> From Victor Hugo's "To Louis B." (*À Louis B.*), in *Songs of Twilight* (*Les Chants du crépuscule*, 1835).

The bird in evening's forest roost,  
The traveller in the foothill village,  
The body in the silent grave,  
The spirits in the dark of dream paths—  
Ring and deliver them, evening bell!

Spring's hillside petal showers it beckons,  
And pattering rain on autumn leaves;  
In concert with the winds of hell  
It tolls the twilight of the ages.

Echo of heaven, cry of earth—  
Sound of spite or sound of comfort?  
Anguish over what has passed,  
Or joy that welcomes what may come?  
Foreboding of impermanence,  
Or chanting voice proclaiming hope?

When at parting sleeves are heavy  
At the gate of friendship's palace;  
When reminiscences lie thick  
In bleak dew midst the castle ruins;  
When standing at his silent window  
A saint thinks of the formless heavens—  
Raising its voice to the sky  
Now tolls the evening bell.

Where people dwell and where they go,  
Where there is grief and there is death,  
Where there is poetry and music;  
Where sadness, tears, and suffering,  
Laughter, pleasure, and delight  
Pass from one on to the next.

森のねぐらに夕鳥を  
麓の里に旅人を  
静けき墓になきがらを  
夢路の暗にあめつちを  
送りて響け暮の鐘。

春千山の花ふゞき  
秋落葉の雨の音  
誘ふて世々の夕まぐれ  
劫風ともに鳴りやまず。

天の返響地の叫び  
恨の聲か慰めか  
過ぐるを傷む悲みか  
來るを招く喜びか  
無常をさとすいましめか  
望を告ぐる法音か。

友高樓のおばしに  
別れの袂重きとき  
露荒涼の城あとに  
懷古の思しげきとき  
聖者静けき窓の戸に  
無象の天を思ふとき  
大空高く聲あげて  
今はと叫ぶ暮の鐘。

人住むところ行くところ  
嘆と死とのあるところ  
歌と樂とのあるところ  
涙、悲み、憂きなやみ  
笑、喜び、たのしみと  
互に移りゆくところ、

On city boulevards with flowers,  
In villages beneath thick clouds,  
On rocky shores beset with foam;  
In the innocent ears of children,  
And on mute beds of mounded earth,  
The evening bell resounds alike.

On a hill, recalling to mind  
The lone flank of a wafting cloud  
That wandered over the city skies  
Far from the springtime in the castle town,  
I, too, hear the evening bell.

As crows gather in yonder woods  
Amid the setting sun's soft light,  
At the tolling of the bell  
My thoughts rise up  
And flock together restlessly.

Reverberations shake again  
The waves of the once hushed sky  
And resound from cloud to cloud,  
To die out faintly, far away  
From the ears of the floating world;  
Yet know outside the formless heavens,  
Hearing this world's babbling dreams  
In the echoes of the bell,  
A high and noble spirit exists.

Do you climb to an *eternal* throne,  
Weaving through a crowd of angels?  
O bell, what is it you cry out  
Through the gates of light?

都大路の花のかげ  
白雲深き鄙の里  
白波寄する荒磯邊、  
無心の穉子の耳にしも  
無聲の塚の床にしも  
等しく響く暮の鐘。

雲飄揚の身はひとり  
五城樓下の春遠く  
都の空にさすらへつ  
思しのぶが岡の上  
われも夕の鐘を聞く。

鐘の響きに夕がらす  
入日名残の影薄き  
あなたの森にゐるがごと  
むらがりたちて淀みなく  
そゞろに起るわが思ひ。

静まり返る大ぞらの  
波をふたゝびゆるがして  
雲より雲にどよみゆく  
餘韻かすかに程遠く  
浮世の耳に絶ゆるとも  
しるや無象の天の外  
下界の夢のうはごとを  
名残の鐘にきゝとらん  
高き、尊き靈ありと。

天使の群をかきわけて  
昇りも行くか「無限」の座  
鐘よ、光の門の戸に  
何とかなれの叫ぶらむ、

That darkness of this world is deep,  
And sorrows of saints never cease?  
That flowers of this world are fragile,  
And tears of poets never dry?

A long, faint, and distant sound  
Even now keeps calling out—  
Does some voice of an earthly soul  
Cry out from the eternal depth?—  
“I, too, have floated on a boat  
Tossed by tempests of this world,  
And with the port of spring so distant  
I sank halfway along the voyage.”

Do not bemoan the world's bleak fate.  
Pulling the infinite future behind me  
And seeing the infinite past ahead,  
I am doubtful here and now,  
I am hopeful here and now.  
Laughter, pleasure, suffering,  
Light and darkness weave together;  
And so the evening bell may toll  
The melody of this floating world.  
Thus the thoughts of foregone souls  
Blend with thoughts of souls to come,  
Connecting wellspring to the sea  
In one great flowing river.

The storm at dusk blows from the east,  
The waves of western clouds approach;  
Often gathering in this hollow  
They say nothing to each other;

下界の暗は厚うして  
聖者の憂絶えずとか  
浮世の花は脆うして  
詩人の涙涸れずとか。

長く、かすけく、また遠く  
今はたつゞく一ひゞき  
呼ぶか閻浮の魂の聲  
かの永劫の深みより、  
「われも浮世のあらし吹く  
波間にうきし一葉舟  
入江の春は遠くして  
舟路半ばに沈みぬ」と。

恨みなはてぞ世の運命、  
無限の未來後にひき  
無限の過去を前に見て  
我いまこゝに惑あり  
はたいまこゝに望あり、  
笑、たのしみ、うきなやみ  
暗と光と織りなして  
歌ふ浮世の一ふしも  
いざ響かせむ暮の鐘、  
先だつ魂に、來ん魂に  
かくて思をかはしつゝ  
流一筋大川の  
泉と海とつなぐごと。

吹くや東の夕あらし  
寄するや西の雲の波  
かの中空に集りて  
しばしは共に言もなし



When the two part once again,  
Perhaps the storm will cry out, "Secret!"

How often have I laughed to think  
That human lives, ideals, and secrets  
Are the poet's dreams and fancies!  
As the wishing star vanishes  
In the radiant light of the sun,  
The floating world is cloaked in dust—  
I know not what is sin or filth.

Ringing out at every nightfall  
Through the dust-deep world of men,  
The evening bell tolls of a world  
Of infinite, eternal gods;  
Can it summon tears of passion  
As it gives its wordless sermon  
To a world awash in filth  
And distant from its headwaters?

The eaves of Gion Temple rot,  
Where only liquor's stench wafts up;  
The tower of Saint Sophia crumbles,  
While gospels flatter vulgar folk.  
Listen! Within the evening bell  
The great and venerable way  
Of Vulture Peak and the Mount of Olives!

At twilight, rife with *nature's feelings*,<sup>22</sup>  
No trace left of the phoenix tower  
When I wake from dreams of glory;

ふたつ再び別るとき  
「秘密」と彼も叫ぶらむ。

人生、理想、はた秘密  
詩人の夢よ、迷よと  
我笑ひしも幾たびか、  
まひるの光りかゞやきて  
望の星の消ゆるごと  
浮世の塵にまみれては  
罪か濁世かわれ知らず。

其塵深き人の世の  
夕暮ごとに聲あげて  
無限永劫神の世を  
警しめ告ぐる鐘の音、  
源流すでに遠くして  
濁波を揚ぐる末の世に  
無言の教宣りつゝも  
有情の涙誘へるか。

祇園精舎の檐朽ちて  
葎酒の香のみ高くとも  
セント、ソヒヤの塔荒れて  
福音俗に媚ぶるとも  
聞けや夕の鐘のうち  
靈鷲橄欖いにしへの  
高き、尊き法の聲。

天地有情の夕まぐれ  
わが驂鸞の夢さめて  
鳳樓いつか跡もなく

---

<sup>22</sup> *Nature's feelings* (天地有情 *Tenchi ujō*): This is the title of Bansui's poetry collection.

The flower, its scent, the evening moon—  
How fragile is this springtime world!  
The mists atop the mountain lift,  
And though the sleeves of fairies' robes  
Are left embittered by the storm,  
A musical sound faintly rings  
And stirs the bosom of Nature—  
That one sound is here at hand.

Heaven's majesty, earth's beauty,  
Flowers fragrant, stars atwinkle—  
The skill of Nature changes not,  
But troubles are constant in this world.  
When dreams of ideals disappear,  
Ring evermore, unceasingly,  
Uniting earth's and heaven's sounds,  
Voice of the bell at sunset!

花もにほひも夕月も  
うつゝは脆き春の世や  
岑上の霞たちきりて  
縫へる仙女の綾ごろも  
袖にあらしはつらくとも  
「自然」の胸をゆるがして  
響く微妙の樂の聲  
その一音はこゝにあり。

天の莊嚴地の美麗  
花かんばしく星てりて  
「自然」のたくみ替らねど  
わづらひ世々に絶えずして  
理想の夢の消ゆるまは  
たえずも響けとこしへに  
地籟天籟身に兼ねる  
ゆふ入相の鐘の聲。

## 6. Cherry Tree By the Riverbank (岸邊の櫻: *Kishibe no sakura*)

Flowering cherry, perfuming the banks  
Of that peaceful old stream in spring,  
Yearns for its reflection on the water's surface—  
How often have its tears washed down.

Not recognizing its own reflection,  
In the soft light of the morning sun,  
How often it has gazed  
At its own shape on the water's surface.

The reflection says nothing, the water moves on;

春靜かなる里川の  
岸のへ匂ふ花櫻  
水面の影にあこがれて  
涙灑げる幾たびか。

おのが影とも花知らず  
光のどけき朝日子に  
姿凝らして水面を  
あゝ幾度か眺めけむ。

影ものいはじ水去りて

Gazing at the reflected color  
Of the flower's face which all too soon grows old,  
Thoughts somehow turn to nightfall.

いつしか老ゆる花の面  
うつらふ色を眺めては  
思やいかに夕まぐれ。

When spring itself dying departs,  
See how the flower breaks away from the twig,  
Meeting its reflection on the water's surface—  
Whither its fate, how far its end?

春も空しく暮去れば  
梢離れてあゝ花よ  
水面の影と逢ひながら  
行くゑはいづこ末遠く。

## 7. The Moon and Love (月と戀: *Tsuki to koi*)

Awakened in deep night, I gazed out from  
The window, and saw, slipping through the cracks  
Of clouds, its figure biding silently,  
The moon—how much like love did it appear!

寢覺め夜深き窓の外  
しばし雲間を洩れいでゝ  
静かに忍ぶ影見れば  
月は戀にも似たりけり。

Yearning for this floating world, each night  
The moon bestows its light, but to what end?  
Blanketed by layers of thick clouds,  
O Moon Princess, what vanity is love!

浮世慕ふて宵々に  
寄する光のかひやなに  
叢雲厚く布き満てば  
戀はあだなり月姫よ。

Like a flower tended by the hands  
Of a maiden weeping vainly for her love,  
Its pallid figure ever waning thin,  
It goes away to hide beyond the clouds.

あだなる戀に泣く子らの  
手に育ちけむ花のごと  
色青じろう影やせて  
隠れも行くか雲の外。

## 8. The Eagle (鷲: *Washi*)

Where violets are dyed by the dew  
Of purple-scented cloud banks,  
Bees and butterflies frolic midst the flowers;  
Where, for love or enmity,  
Leaving the empty springtime,  
One eagle climbs into the sky,  
The winds chill and the way lonely.

紫にほふ横雲の  
露や染めけむ花すみれ  
花に戯るゝ蜂蝶の  
戀か恨かうつゝ世の  
はかなき春をよそにして  
大空のぼる鷲一羽  
あらしは寒し道さびし。

Exquisite though the figure of spring,  
Fragrant though the flower's scent,  
Lovelier than that spring  
And sweeter smelling than that flower,  
Aiming beyond the clouds  
One eagle high in the sky,  
The winds severe and the way harsh.

春の姿はたへなれど  
花の薫りはにほへれど  
其春よりも美はしく  
其花よりもかんばしき  
雲井のをちをめざしつゝ  
大空高く鷲一羽  
あらしはきびし道かたし。

Bearing the infinite heavens on its back  
And sundering the green clouds,  
Whither does it fly?  
Seeking the lofty scent  
That brings the tomorrow of desires  
One eagle traverses the sky,  
The winds bitter and the way frightful.

背には無限の天を負ひ  
緑雲はねにつんぎきて  
飛び行くはてはいづくぞや  
望のあした持ち来る  
高き薫りのあとゝめて  
大空めぐる鷲一羽  
あらしはつらし道すごし。

Ah, how high the peaks of the Caucasus  
And the gathering cloud banks—  
This world's sounds are about to cease;  
Was the figure looking up like him  
Who stole heaven's fire and brought it to earth?  
One eagle soars high in the sky,  
The winds violent and the way far.

嗚呼コーカサス峯高く  
千重の叢雲むらだちて  
下界のひゞきやむところ  
天上の火を奪ひ來し  
彼のたぐひか青ぐもの  
大空翔くる鷲一羽  
あらしははげし道遠し。

9. Hirose River (広瀬川: *Hirosegawa*)

To escape the dust of the capital,  
I have returned to the evening cool  
Of the Hirose River in my hometown.  
The fragrance of wild roses has vanished,  
And on the banks where no trace remains of yesterday's spring 昨日の春は跡も無き  
A solitary silent figure stands. 岸に無言の身はひとり。

Forgetting time and forgetting his body,  
Even forgetting his heart, he stares up at the sky,  
The breeze coolly clears away the clouds  
On a hazy night when the summer moon darts out,  
A glowing ring around it—  
Where now is the dream of flowers? 時をも忘れ身も忘れ  
心も空に佇ずめば  
風は涼しく影冴えて  
雲間を洩るゝ夏の月  
一輪霞む朧夜の  
花の夢いまいづこぞや。

As one woebegone spring  
Passes without a trace like a dream,  
The memory of bitter tears  
Even now has an overwhelming taste.  
What good fortune it would be to desire  
To discard the floating world and  
Sleep in the everlasting darkness of the grave. 憂よ思よ一春の  
過ぎて跡なき夢のごと  
にがき涙もおもほへば  
今に無量の味はあり  
浮世を捨てゝおくつきの  
暗にとこしへ眠らんと  
願ひしそれも幸なりき。

The current is gentle, the water is pure,  
The midnight moon coolly sets  
Amid the music, the light, the ripples.  
Ah, the heart of nature in my heart—  
If only I had no thoughts in my bosom  
How pleasant would be the human world. 流はゆるし水清し  
樂の、光の、波のまに  
すゞしく澄める夜半の月、  
あゝ自然の心こゝろにて  
胸に思のなかりせば  
樂しかるべき人の世を。

## 10. A Hope (希望: *Kibō*)

When rough offshore breezes blow,  
And fiercely the white waves roar,  
And the evening moon sinks into the waves,  
And the darkness creeps in—  
There is the light of the stars, leading  
My boat to the other side of the sky.

沖の汐風吹きあれて  
白波いたくほゆるとき、  
夕月波にしづむとき、  
黒暗よもを襲ふとき、  
空のあなたにわが舟を  
導く星の光あり。

When I wake from this long worldly dream,  
And to the earth my corpse returns,  
And my heart's distress comes to an end,  
And the shackles of sin are loosed—  
There is the heavenly voice, leading  
My soul to the other side of the grave.

ながき我世の夢さめて  
むくろの土に返るとき、  
心のなやみ終るとき、  
罪のほだしの解くとき、  
墓のあなたに我魂を  
導びく神の御聲あり。

This boat of life floating on the sea  
Of grief, worry, pain,  
Weeping even in dreams, a speck of dust;  
In the baleful roar of the waves of this floating world,  
Though the rain and wind be rough, endure—  
For fragrant is the flower of eternal night.

嘆き、わづちひ、くるしみの  
海にいのちの舟うけて  
夢にも泣くか塵の子よ、  
浮世の波の仇騒ぎ  
雨風いかにあらぶとも  
忍べ、とこよの花にほふ――

The inlet in the port tolls spring;  
The coursing river harbors words,  
The burning flame harbors thoughts,  
The skyfaring cloud harbors omens,  
The midnight tempest harbors warnings,  
The human heart harbors a hope.

港入江の春告げて、  
流るゝ川に言葉あり、  
燃ゆる焔に思想あり、  
空行く雲に啓示あり、  
夜半の嵐に諫誠あり、  
人の心に希望あり。

11. Night and Sleep (「暗」と「眠」: 'Yami' to 'nemuri')

The river willows, trembling at the sound  
Of flapping wings of bats roaming at dusk,  
Twist their tangled hair into loops,  
And, joining Night and Sleep,  
Have bowed their heads in silence.

Night walks with silent footfalls,  
Trailing long robes dyed in black;  
And where Sleep casts its shadow,  
Though unseen is the sprinkled dew,  
Eyelids everywhere grow heavy.

Sorrowful recollections of the past,  
Worried measuring of days to come—  
The burden of one day is enough;  
Come, Night and Sleep, and bring  
Rest to human children.

O you, the guilty and the guiltless,  
You who rejoice and you who weep,  
Escape this dream of reality and come,  
Wrap yourselves in the robes of Night,  
Bathe in the dew of Sleep.

The stars are silent in the sky,  
They now stand sentinel—  
Night and Sleep, whose two shadows  
Fall mercifully on all the human world—  
O how I yearn for you!

夕暮迷ふ蝙蝠の  
羽音にそよぐ川柳  
其みだれ髪わがねつゝ  
「暗」と「眠」とつれだちて  
梢しづかに下だりけり。

墨ぞめごろも裾長く  
「暗」の歩みに音もなし、  
ふり蒔く露は見えねども  
「眠」の影のさすところ  
人のまぶたは重かりき。

過ぐるを憶ふ悲みに  
來ん日を計るわづらひに  
ひと日のわざは足るものを  
「暗」よ「眠」よたづね來て  
休みを賜へ人の子に。

嗚呼罪あるも罪なきも  
喜ぶものも泣くものも  
現の夢を逃れ來て  
「暗」のころもを纏へかし  
「眠」の露に浸れかし。

星宵の空に聲もなく  
よさしは今と佇ずめる  
「暗」と「眠」の影ふたつ  
あまねき恵み人の世に  
たるゝいましのなつかしや。

## 12. Untitled (無題: *Mudai*)

A garden brimming with perfume  
With rays of light bejeweled with dew  
And lilies and roses and orchids—  
You would be the path to tread.

光り玉しく露満ちて  
百合花も薔薇も蘭も  
馨りあふるゝ園あらば  
君が踏み行く路とせむ。

A stream running through a pristine field  
Bearing the whiff of the far-off sea  
And tempting the flowers to cast themselves in—  
You would be the glassy water.

流るゝ花を誘ひては  
海原遠く香をはこぶ  
清き野中の川あらば  
君がかゞみの水とせむ。

A star appearing in the evening sky  
Shining on the world of dust  
And comforting it with smiling rays—  
You would be a gem in its crown.

夕の空に現はれて  
微笑める光に塵の世を  
慰めてらす星あらば  
君がかざしの珠とせむ。

A gentle bosom filled  
With love and tears and pity  
Pure and noble and unspoiled—  
You would be the shelter for its heart.

清くたふとく汚なく  
戀も涙も憐みも  
みつるやさしの胸あらば  
君が心の宿とせむ。

## 13. Lament (哀歌: *Aika*)

The River Hirose never changes,  
The same deep green as yesterday—  
And yet the former water must be gone;  
The cherry blossoms on the banks have scattered—  
Where now is the water that reflected  
The enchanting glow of wistaria robes?  
  
The springtime in all hearts is gone

同じ昨日の深翠り  
廣瀬の流替らねど  
もとの水にはあらずかし  
汀の櫻花散りて  
にほひゆかしの藤ごろも  
寫せし水は今いづこ。  
  
心ごゝろの春去りて



And all its color has faded away.  
When a cold breeze stirs up waves at evening  
The flower's spirit loses its way;  
Too soon her radiant traces vanish  
In the distance on the water's surface.

The winds of spring on Zuihō Hill  
Blow with grief down through the years;  
Her color are the flowery robes  
Of crimson on the misty ridge;  
How can their fragile dimmed glow  
Bear up when darkness falls?

A spring cloud figure on the hill  
At dusk sweeps up its green sidelocks;  
Her sleeves touching a fallen comb,  
Her hems' enchanting deep purple,  
The willow-beauty's splendid garments  
Weigh her down, like drooping flowers' hems;  
Those flowers have scattered, and above  
The night sky's stars are tears, as well.

The pond's ripples, the sky's rainbow—  
In the shade of flowers I weep over  
The path of splendor in this fragile world;  
The evening breeze sweeps flowers away,  
I'll call upon the butterfly's home  
To ask, "What of yesterday's dream?"

As butterflies and bees that bid  
Spring come now go beyond the sky,  
The jeweled pin cracks, the stars have fallen;  
O where now is that flower's spirit?

色ことごとく褪めはてつ  
夕波寒く風たてば  
行衛や迷ふ花の魂  
名残の薫りいつしかに  
水面遠く消えて行く。

恨みを吹くや年ごとの  
瑞鳳山の春の風  
をのへの霞くれなみの  
色になぞらふ花ごろも  
とめし薫りのはかなさは  
何に忍びむ夕まぐれ。

暮山一朵の春の雲  
緑の鬢を拂ひつゝ  
落つる小櫛に觸る袖も  
ゆかしゆかりの濃紫  
羅綺にも堪へぬ柳腰の  
枝垂は同じ花の緑  
花散りはてし夕空を  
仰げば星も涙なり。

池のさゞ波空の虹  
いみじは脆き世の道を  
われはた泣かむ花の蔭  
其花掃ふ夕風に  
蝴蝶の宿を音づれて  
問はん「昨日の夢いかに」

春を誘ふて蜂蝶の  
空のあなたに去るがごと  
玉釵碎けて星落ちて  
あはれ芳魂いまいづこ

The bare twig is all that remains,  
Grief in the spring rain is what endures.

Grief in the spring rain is what endures.  
What presently becomes the flame  
Along dark night's straight dream path?  
That trace of her in yesterdays  
Bestowing her unchanging smile,  
One spray of noted flowers  
In that slender, jewel-like hand!

残るは枯れし花の枝  
盡きぬは恨み春の雨。

盡きぬは恨み春の雨  
ともしび暗きさよ中の  
夢のたゞちをいかにせむ  
ありし昨日の面影に  
替はらぬ笑みも含ませて  
名におふ花の一枝は  
嗚呼その細き玉の手に。

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