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Translations from the Japanese

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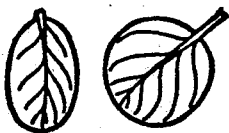
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Translations from the Japanese
by *Makoto Ueda*



When the Wind is Strong

When the wind is strong
The globe is like someone's kite.
While the day is yet blossoming,
Man already finds the night there.

As the wind has no tongue,
It only runs about, agitated.
I think of the winds of other stars
And wonder if they can be mutual friends.

On the globe are the night and the day.
Meanwhile, what are other stars doing?
How do they bear with the silent, endless space?

In the daytime the blue sky tells a lie.
While the night murmurs the truth, we are asleep.
In the morning everyone says he has had a dream.

—*Shuntaro Tanikawa* (b. 1931)

A Swaying Phantom

You, a flower feebly tottering in the light,
You, a fish in the endlessly darkening voice,
Dripping the heart,
Faintly rustling the words,
Bluely, lightly, pile up the dreams.
You, floating and drifting on the water,
Call the distant calm of the evening.

You, a formless lamp of the sea,
You, a pistil of life ceaselessly born;
You appear,
You disappear,
You, wavering, bloom fragrantly in my heart.

When the pale blue phantom comes walking,
I drift around here and there,
And deeply drown in the dream.

Like thin snow incessantly falling,
My heart drifts onwards and onwards,
And faintly plays on the lips of death.

You, a flickering shadow that roadlessly cross;
The shadow is fragrantly tangled;
The shadow is gently blown in disorder.

—*Takuji Ōta* (1887-1934)

The Blue Flute

In this evening field
Long-eared elephants are walking in parties.
The yellow evening moon wavers in the wind,
Hat-like grass leaves flutter here and there.
Are you lonesome, Miss?
Here is a small flute, its sound a clear green.
Gently blow the mouthpiece;
Make it tremble in the transparent sky,
And call in your mirage.
From a distant sea of longing
An image, it seems, slowly comes near.
It is like a headless cat, staggers in the grass shade of the cemetery.
Could I die once for all in a sorrowful scene like this, Miss!

—*Sakutarō Hagiwara* (1886-1942)

The Village

At the village now
The deity may not be present,
Because the children
Put him into a specimen bag this afternoon.
At last a yellow bee that keeps cattle from sleep
Has begun its journey on a road which flows out of the village.
The poplar leaves are faintly weeping,
Wondering why the window may not open wider,
Why the song has been lost.

—*Yoshiaki Sasazawa* (b. 1898)

The Star and the Dry Grass

The star and the dry grass were talking.
Late in a calm night
The wind was blowing only around me.
Somehow feeling lonesome,
I tried to join their talk,
When the star came falling from heaven.
I sought in the dry grass,
Yet the star was never found.

In the morning
As I awoke,
A heavy stone
Lay fallen in my heart.
Every day since then
I talk to myself:
When will the stone become the star?
When will the stone become the star?

—*Shigeji Tsuboi* (b. 1898)

The Sea in the Daytime

On a bright day like this
A strange song may be heard on the sea;
A mermaid appears out of the waves
And passes by a young sailor
Who, leaning on a brace, drowns.

Waves are fast.
Waves have fins and tails.
Waves are swimming.



The swimming one, that is a mermaid.
A mermaid comes with the waves.
Soon she goes far away.

While I closed my eyes for a moment
The color of the sea
Changed as if today were over and tomorrow had come.
Many shades formed on the waves.

—*Kaoru Maruyama* (b. 1899)