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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERATURE
OF HORI TATSUO

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
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By

John Dale Rucinski

Dissertation Committee:

Valdo H. Viglielmo, Chairman
James T. Araki
Hiroko Ikeda
Mildred M. Tahara
Emily Zants

ABSTRACT

This study traces the life and works of the Japanese writer, Hori Tatsuo (1904-1953). It deals primarily with his early and middle periods, from the first poems through Utsukushii mura (1934). Appended are translations of representative works: "Fūkei," "Moyuru hoho," "Kaifukuki," "Arano," and Naoko.

The particular considerations of this study are Hori's position in the literary world of the Shōwa period, the development of his theory of literature, his reputation with Japanese critics, and the influences upon him of both Japanese and European authors. Thus, the topics include his first discovery of literature in the poetry of Hagiwara Sakutarō, his contact with Murō Saisei, his study of Jean Cocteau and French Surrealist poetry, and his own poems. Furthermore, his first works of fiction, such as "Bukiyō na tenshi," reflect his associations with the journal Roba, the Shinkō-geijutsu-ha, and Akutagawa Ryūnosuke. The death of Akutagawa prompted Hori to write "Seikazoku," a story created on the literary principles of Akutagawa and Raymond Radiguet. Hori pursued the topics of death and love in "Kaifukuki," "Moyuru hoho," and "Mugiwara bōshi." These stories show his growing interest in the literature of Marcel Proust and present in a Japanese milieu the Proustian themes of the mutability of the self and the forces of time.

The influence of Proust is most especially demonstrated in Utsukushii mura, as Hori treated the cycle of the birth and decay of love as symbolized in the changes of nature in the Japanese uplands.

The study closes with a survey of Hori's last twenty years of life. His works from this period--Kaze tachinu, his recreations, such as "Kagerō no nikki" and "Arano," of Japanese classics, and Naoko--are briefly described, and the debts which these works owe to Rainer Maria Rilke, European medieval literature, and François Mauriac are noted.

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PREFACE

To search for the universe within the petals of a wild rose is not an occupation which most of us might readily undertake. To believe that dreams are truer than what meets the senses is a philosophy held by few. Hori Tatsuo wrote poems and stories for that minority of the human race for whom wild roses and dreams are the vital things in life, indeed, life itself.

In his literature, Hori reduced the world to a minute sphere of alpine wild flowers, and spring snowfalls, and dappled patterns on the grass from sunlight filtering through the branches of a larch tree. Hori's fragile, fragrant world is one wherein foul odors, grime, and misery emerge purified and decorative. But, like the wild rose, whose delicate blooms fade with the winter, the perfume reminds us of both life and death.

Now, almost a quarter of a century after his death, Hori has come to be seen as occupying a unique position among Japanese writers. Hori represents artistic conscientiousness and propriety in the oftentimes chaotic history of the literature of the Shōwa period.

The manner in which he apprehended and transformed the themes and cadences of European literary works is respected for being calmly rational and always carefully selective. His finely-wrought prose remains a standard for a chaste, poetic style. In his earliest writings can be discerned themes which served as harbingers of those of post-World War II literature, for his attack on the Japanese tradition of

autobiography helped to clear the way for a new spirit of literary universalism. Thus such writers as Tsuji Kunio are writing today for an audience of young Japanese readers who, conscious of their sharing the planet with other peoples, are looking to literature for answers to problems that span the oceans.

During his lifetime, the Japanese literary world was enriched by Hori's publishings--both critiques and translations--which introduced superb European works into Japan. Due to Hori's encouragement of learning literature from the West and his personal guidance, younger poets such as Tachihara Michizō and Nomura Hideo perfected their craft. Similarly, Maruoka Akira, Nakamura Shin'ichirō, Katō Shūichi, Endō Shūsaku, Fukunaga Takehiko, and other noted writers owe a debt to Hori. The name of Mishima Yukio is not one that might be immediately associated with Hori Tatsuo, yet Mishima's Waga shishunki (My Puberty) stands as proof that even he looked to Hori's narrative technique for his own more lyrical writings.

In tracing the course of Hori's life and the development of his literature, I have relied heavily upon quoting directly from his writings. Not only did I wish to allow Hori to express himself in his own words, I hoped to give the reader a better indication of Hori's writing style than a description of it would provide. My purpose in including sections from the memoirs of others who knew Hori was to present their viewpoints in as unadulterated form as possible.

Parenthetical references are to the seven-volume Hori Tatsuo zenshū (Complete Works of Hori Tatsuo), edited by Kawabata Yasunari and others, published by Shinchōsha, 1954-1957. The appended stories as well are translated from the texts of this series. I am particularly

indebted to the Japanese study Hori Tatsuo: sono shōgai to bungaku (Hori Tatsuo: His Life and Literature). The first section, by Tanida Shōhei, furnished me with much of the biographical information and provided me with a basis for further investigation of the works. In the body of my text and in the Bibliography of Materials in Japanese, I have indicated the nature of other sources which I found to be the most valuable. All Japanese materials were published in Tokyo. Romanization is according to the 1954 edition of Kenkyūsha's New Japanese-English Dictionary. At the first mention of one of Hori's works, the date and place of its first appearance are noted. I also give an approximate equivalent of the title in English, except in those instances when Hori clearly derived a title from French--I merely restored these titles to their French origins. In by far the greater number of cases, I chose for clarity's sake to provide English versions of passages from French and German works. Where an English translation did not already exist, I did my own. The dates of birth and death are provided only for those persons who figure most importantly in Hori's life and in modern Japanese literature. But for critics with Japanese names who prefer Western order, Japanese names are given in the Japanese order, that is, the surname followed by the personal.

This study was made possible through a grant from the East-West Center of the University of Hawaii and a fellowship award from the University of Hawaii Japan Studies Endowment--funded by a grant from the Japanese Government. I would like to express particular appreciation to Mrs. Sumi Y. Makey, East-West Center Open Grants Executive Officer, to the staff of Waseda University Library, and to Mrs. Hori

Tatsuo (Taeko) for their kindnesses. My Committee Chairman, Dr. Valdo H. Viglielmo, provided me with much valuable guidance in my struggles with Hori, Marcel Proust, and spelling.

I regret that in the scope of this study I was not able to devote more attention to Hori's last and, in many ways, most important works. I hope to complete the task at some time in the near future.

CHAPTER I

L'ENFANT NERVEUX

Hori Tatsuo was a student of Tokyo's Dai-ichi Kōtōgakkō, a preparatory school for university under the imperial educational system. It was the winter of 1923. When evenings came, he would climb the stairs to his dormitory room, pull out from under his cape a small yellow volume of poems by Hagiwara Sakutarō (1886-1942), and read alone until the light faded. To the nineteen-year-old boy, as Hori explained twenty years later, the poet appeared alternately as a philosopher, a musician, or yet as a fanciful painter, and the slender book of poems filled him with emotion for its quiet thoughts more than any work of philosophy could. At times, he said, it lifted him with its even, solemn phrases like movements from Bach; at times it made him feel the melancholy of Chopin, or opened his eyes to the deep, and beauty in the commonplace things about him. (III, 468) "Now, when I take down my soiled copy of Aoneko [The Blue Cat] from the shelf and turn its pages, the soul of my youth seems to rise up from the poems. What I most wanted at that time was to be a poet-philosopher such as Japan had never yet had, to be able to write essays that brimmed with emotions like these rather than philosophical content and that expanded into the sphere of prose what Hagiwara Sakutarō's poetry contained." (III, 468)

What struck Hori with such force in the poetry collection was the expression in artistic terms of considerations which in his own heart he had held as true. For the first time he came under the direct impact

awakening to poetry, the first stage of his life began to slip out of sight behind him.

To know the circumstances of his birth and earliest days, we are largely dependent upon two of his own works of a much later date. In the summer of 1939, when Hori was thirty-four and had just married, he felt a desire to examine and evaluate the experience of his childhood and began writing of his memories under the title "Yōnen jidai" (A Childhood) (Murasaki, 1938-39). In 1942, having become aware of the true facts of his parentage, he felt obliged to complete the reminiscences of his childhood by writing "Hana o moteru onna" (Woman with Flowers) (Bungakkai, June). These two complementary records, these "two childhoods"¹ combine to form a revealing miniature sketch of a boyhood at the end of the Meiji period in Japan.

Hori's father, Hori Hamanosuke, was of a samurai family in the feudal domain that is now Hiroshima Prefecture. As a boy, Hamanosuke served as page to the daimyo. With the events of the Meiji Restoration, however, the family came to Tokyo, where Hamanosuke found employment as a chief court secretary. He and his wife were a lonely couple, for she was sickly and childless. Then he introduced another woman, Nishimura Shige, into the household. Tatsuo was born to her in 1904. Some forty years later, Hori wrote:

As of now I know nothing about how it was that this man called Hamanosuke, who was of such a different age and rank, came to know my mother, the daughter of an impoverished merchant house of Edo, or about the nature of the

¹Tanida Shōhei and Sasaki Kiichi. Hori Tatsuo: sono shogai to bungaku. Vol. 9 of Gendai sakka-ron zenshū. 1958. p. 7.

arrangement between them from which I was born. But soon after I appeared, I was named heir of the Hori family. At that time, the Hori house stood in Kōjimachi, Hirakawa-chō. And there my mother was supposed to remain with me until such time as I could be taken from her and given into the care of my Hori grandparents. She was in no mood to give me up, however, even after I was no longer breast-fed. With this state of affairs, it became increasingly difficult for mother and child to stay on there indefinitely. Finally she came to a decision; without a word to anyone, she fled with me from the house. I was two at the time. (III, 152)

Hamanosuke pursued them to Mukōjima, a district adjacent to the old, bustling merchant quarter of the shitamachi in Tokyo. But yielding to Shige, he agreed to forsake his family's prerogatives over Tatsuo. This was the last time Tatsuo was to see the father he had been so fond of; Hamanosuke died in 1910 of tuberculosis. Gradually his memories of the Hori mansion and of his father with his mustache and uniform grew distant and finally faded altogether.

Shige, the intrepid woman who had fairly kidnapped him, was the last prop of the Nishimuras, a family that had been steadily on the decline since the collapse of the Tokugawa regime. Her father had died penniless, and the care of her dispirited, fretful mother and five younger brothers and sisters fell to Shige. The boys trained to become rakugo performers, and the girls worked in teahouses or as geishas. But, apart from one sister, all died young. Shige may have been operating a small shop or was a geisha herself when she first met Hamanosuke.

"In these vicissitudes of my mother's family," Hori explained, "I do find a pathos in the downfall of an old merchant house of Edo and feel there was some faint, inexplicable shadow over my childhood, but what else is there to say? If it has left some slight scar upon my

heart, it is only a compassion for the sufferings of my mother."

(III, 161)

Tanida explains that Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892-1927), who had also been raised in difficult circumstances in the shitamachi, suffered as an adult from the burden of a dark family history, whereas Hori extricated himself from his and exerted himself in guarding over a world of his own creation.² In the main, this seems to be true. He writes in "Yōnen jidai" of his mother's sister, a small-time geisha, not unfeelingly, but there is a quality of remoteness about his sympathy, as he might write of an unfortunate stranger. The story "Hirugao" (Wild Morning Glory) (Wakakusa, Feb., 1934) is perhaps unique within the entire range of his work, for here he did take as material the troubled life of the Nishimuras; the result is an unusual piece for Hori, a picture of lower-class life in a Nagai Kafū vein. But yet, the character who is himself remains detached from the grief about him.

In 1906, when Shige left the more lavish life of the Hori mansion behind, she set up a small household with her mother and Tatsuo. Two unhappy years of privation followed, while she struggled to earn a meager livelihood running a tobacco shop. Their salvation came in the strange form of Kamijō Matsukichi. Past debaucheries, a dead child, one unfaithful wife, and bankruptcy had left him in a sorry state and scarcely anyone's idea of a bridegroom, but Shige was undaunted. She married him, moved into his ramshackle house, and took him in hand.

²Ibid., p. 18.

This was the kind of man my mother remarried and took her darling boy to. But it seems she had her own very good reasons.

Anyone would do, so long as he were good to me--this was first and foremost in my mother's mind. You see, she had no use for a man she would always have to keep bowing to. An unfortunate man was better, one who would put himself out all the way when times were bad, one who could never lord it over her. She finally found someone to fill her requirements. (III, 164-65)

Once Tatsuo grew attached to him, he never had a suspicion until after Matsukichi's death that this gentle man had not been his real father.

With Shige behind him, Matsukichi got down to business again as a metalworker, and his shop prospered. From the start, Tatsuo had the entire household in the palm of his hand. Under the protection of his strong-willed mother, pampered by his grandmother, stepfather, and the shop apprentices, he grew contented, merry, and spoiled. Such an environment surely accentuated his natural proclivities; his sensitivities sharpened, his tendencies to introspection and fantasy increased, and his feeling of self-importance went uncurbed. Like Proust's parents, Shige and Matsukichi were producing their own enfant nerveux. And, as at Combray, the days in Mukōjima were often tinted in soft, impressionistic shades:

When I try to recall the house in which we were then living, all that comes back to me are scattered fragments: a fig tree that in the autumn gave us children its delicious fruit, or else a tiny garden planted with two or three nameless trees, a veranda where the sun always shone, a corridor that led from it to a glass-covered workshop. . . . Some things more trivial yet--the odd twists and turns of the branches of the fig tree where my little swing hung, the earthy fragrance the garden sometimes had, or the smell of iron filings--return to me with even greater clarity and even now reawaken in me a sense of the happiness that drifted through those days. (III, 55-56)

Hori's adult emotions are no doubt woven into these accounts, but it may well be true that the child described in "Yōnen jidai" had, at least subconsciously, such impressions. Such episodes as these, then, give evidence of the germination of his unusual sensitivities.

"Don't go too far," Mother would always tell us anxiously.

I liked to go out with my father. But he would take me first into a rubber company or a soap factory around Hikifune-dōri and leave me waiting alone at the door to the office until he finished his business. In the meantime I had to stand there watching, a look of suffering on my face, while all around me machinery shrieked--the thought of it still sets my teeth on edge--and men, all drenched in sweat, carried great loads about, and rainbows of oil glistened in the inevitable water puddles by the office door.

Then Father would take my hand, and the two of us used to wander down Hikifune-dōri toward Narihira-bashi Station, which had just been built. This was the reward for my patience. Something about the new station attracted me. I especially liked the platform when not a soul was there, when it was almost too still for want of people, and a white cloud hovered in the distance. The engine eventually came puffing in and threw its wheels into reverse to come to a gentle halt alongside the platform, and everything was lost to sight. Finally, human forms flickered and detached themselves from the cloud of steam, and in the next moment the platform was crowded with people. But once, with a series of blasts on the whistle, the engine pulled out of the station, the scene was as deserted as before. And again, the white cloud floated in the distance. I never tired of the scene and clung to the railing at the turnstile, watching it in all its variations with fascination. Father sat on a bench, reading an evening paper from the newsstand. (III, 61-62)

As Tatsuo grew increasingly aware of life beyond the house and garden, his confidence was shaken. Was there a realm more beautiful, an atmosphere more rarefied than the workaday home over which he ruled? He made discoveries that disturbed his tranquility and gave him to

realize the universe which centered around himself was, after all, a trivial affair. The rowdiness and good cheer of the house and workshop, of his Edokko parents and the apprentices, began to appear a little coarser.

At the time we moved to the new house, there was still a field of susuki to the back. Then, just beyond a canal, stood the mansion of a noble family. On our side there was only a low hedge, so by brushing through the grass, which rose taller than myself, by making my way to the back of the canal, I could see inside the grounds of the beautiful mansion. The many groupings of trees, the lawns, the ponds, I could almost touch them, they looked that close. There were times when I caught sight of the ladies and gentlemen of the house, strolling through the gardens or tending to the flowers, and in my heart would well up an indescribable loneliness and yearning for . . . for I knew not what.

The fairy-tale world, so completely different from our home, that I had discovered was to hold great sway over my child's mind such as nothing of the real world was capable of doing.

My father rented a section of the field where the susuki grass grew and built an addition to the workshop on it. My hiding place, my secret place of private dreams, was suddenly reduced in scope. But these hiding places that children have, the tinier they are, the less vulnerable to detection they are, and consequently children love them all the more.

One day I found a boat in the canal. It was unmoored, and there was no clue to its owner. After that, when I came back to watch it, it would be floating every day with the current, drifting first one way, then another. I came to love that little boat. It seemed to promise that if I could step aboard it would carry me off to where all that I then hoped and dreamed for would be granted me. (III, 93)

In primary school, Tatsuo kept his distance from the other children. Out of his extreme bashfulness and a vague sense of superiority, he indulged in the feeling that he was not a part of the world about him. He wrote of a day in kindergarten, "Everyone, except myself, joined hands and formed a ring around the organ. I went to where my grandmother was waiting by the swings. I would have no part in their circle,

but I found in watching them dancing merrily around a pleasure equal to theirs, a pleasure I would not have found had I joined in with them." (III, 96) This aloof attitude to the life about him he never totally lost, and, if he was the better observer of life for it, it also exacted a toll in loneliness from him. Much of his literature is marked by the problem of the failure to touch another human soul and by a search for heartfelt companionship. To assuage his loneliness, he made attempt after attempt to create within his literature that place for himself which seemed to be denied him in life.

That he was to answer to the name of Horii and not Kamijō at primary school never gave him cause to wonder; he simply believed that at birth he had been made the heir of an elderly, childless couple sympathetic to his mother. His days in middle school at Tokyo Furitsu Dai-san Chūgakkō do not, he stated, deserve any special attention. His interest in literature did not go beyond reading a little of Tokutomi Roka, Shimazaki Tōson, and Izumi Kyōka.³ It was mathematics and science that most attracted him. His facility with these subjects was to be responsible for the logical, intellectual investigations he would make into the literary methods of others and for the ratiocinations behind his own.

Horii entered the Science Department of Dai-ichi Kōtōgakkō in 1921. This new world, sometimes brutal and sometimes sensual, is described

³Ibid., p. 23.

in "Moyuru hoho" (Les Joues en Feu) (Bungei shunjū, Jan., 1932): "I became seventeen. I had just gone from middle school to higher school. My parents were afraid that life under their roof might be bad for my nerves and had me board at the school. This change of environment could not but have had a great impact upon me. Because of it, the shedding of my childhood was to be curiously hastened." (I, 123)

This was a time of awakening and stimulation, sexually, emotionally, and intellectually. At the school was a remarkable group of fellow students, including the young future writers and critics, Kobayashi Hideo, Fukuda Kyūka, and Kasahara Kenjiro. But Jinzai Kiyoshi (1903-57) was the most consequential in changing the course of his life. From the beginning of their lifelong friendship, Jinzai took the lead, and under his direction a vast new world began to work upon Hori's mind. He took up Schopenhauer and Nietzsche before moving on to such authors as Ivan Turgenev, Gerhart Hauptmann, Arthur Schnitzler, and the French Symbolist poets. Nor did he neglect Japanese writers. There is a letter to Jinzai, dated March 17, 1923, his winter of Hagiwara's Aoneko, which tells of his enthusiasms:

". . . I particularly love Natsume Sōseki, besides Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Izumi Kyōka, and Saijō Yaso. And last night I finally felt an attachment to Satō Sōnosuke. As for attachments, I am hopelessly infatuated with Hagiwara Sakutarō and Murō Saisei [1889-1962] and idolize them to distraction. And I appreciate Satō Haruo, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, and the like. I confess I quite idolize Tanizaki Jun'ichirō these days. One day soon I will try writing you of how through him I became captivated by Satanism, decadence, and estheticism.

. . . And who would not love Yoshii Isamu?" (VII, 74-75) Only one name, that of Nagai Kafū, is wanting here for this to be a complete list of the Japanese poets and novelists whom Hori esteemed throughout his career.⁴

Hagiwara's particular appeal lay in his "flying away" like the sea-bird to another realm. To Hori, he thus manifested the nihilism that he himself felt within. But to be nineteen and a nihilist hardly meant for Hori that there was nothing more he expected from life.

While his interest in his major field, science, waned along with that in formal philosophy, it had served him well in causing him to learn German after English, the first foreign language requirement. The philosophical writings which Aoneko persuaded him to cast aside for works of a more literary nature were those by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. For all the eagerness with which he had read Nietzsche and his appreciation for "the nobility of his thought," he confessed he could not sympathize with him as he did with Hagiwara. "It was simply that I read him with a certain enjoyment--but I never was able to make my way through Also Sprach Zarathustra!" (III, 468)

In 1924 the school journal carried his article, "Kaitekishugi" (Pleasure-ism), a statement of his theory of life as inspired by Schopenhauer. In it, he describes life as pain and suffering. Granted this, how was one to find any pleasure? What he proposes is "a strolling life" (sanpo seikatsu), or, in other words, "an activized, idle life"

⁴Minamoto Takane. "Hori Tatsuo: eikyō-sareru seishin to hiyō-suru seishin." Taiyō. No. 122 (August 1973) p. 91.

(sekkyokuka-shita taida seikatsu). (V, 3407) We may take this to mean the stroller is one who, having actively pursued and discovered the true facts of existence, remains aloof as he views mankind. Hori did not follow Schopenhauer in concluding that once a man sees all things as one and sees that the distinction between the self and another is only apparent, he necessarily takes on the suffering of the whole world. Schopenhauer found that when enlightenment comes to a man, "There arises within him a horror of the nature of which his own phenomenal existence is an expression, the kernel and inner nature of that world which is recognized as full of misery."⁵ While accepting his gospel of resignation, Hori went on to a "pleasure-ism" which lies in achieving harmony with the world, not to come as near as possible to a negation of existence. His conclusion, so much more optimistic than Schopenhauer's, owes not a little to his native religious traditions. As a rule, Buddhism sees enlightenment as a joyous state and not the gloomy affair that early Indian Buddhism, as expounded by Schopenhauer, made of it. The destruction of the veil of illusion has not meant in Japan a grievous revelation of the inconsequence of human life in the light of the transience of all phenomena but a blissful realization that all desires which are the source of suffering are invalid before that same transience. Therefore, Hori rediscovered an attitude that could not have been totally unfamiliar to him which held that, come misery as it may, it was no cause for despair.

⁵Bertrand Russell. History of Western Philosophy. London, 1974. p. 725.

"Kaitekishugi," then, is Hori's first publication. It is his first work that owes its theme to a Western author. Most importantly, it already illustrates a creative method which he would never abandon, namely, the application of his own thought as a Japanese to material from abroad. As he matured as an artist, this technique naturally increased in sophistication and operated with greater delicacy. Hori, considered among the most Westernized of their authors by his countrymen, was a Japanese at nineteen and still a Japanese at death.

If he desired to remain aloof on a solitary path to some greater, more perfect world, it is not surprising that he found a confirmation of his own elitism in Nietzsche's "aristocratism" (kizokushugi). Particularly emphasizing a virtue of detachment, he wrote in his next article, "Dai-ichi sanpo" (The First Walk), of perhaps the same year:

The first requisite for a follower of aristocratism is that he be alone. He must be a man who is able to live perfectly well cherishing a philosophy of his own creation. Such a man is alone upon the earth, with strong faith in and deep reverence for nothing but himself and his own shadow. Therefore, let the greatest of men understand him or pay him homage, it is not the least bit necessary for him. What is more, even the thought that others understand him, to his mind, is a humiliation. There comes a point when he even desires to be blatantly misunderstood. So we see some aristocratists are never without their beloved masks. How truly admirable they appear with their masks of cheerfulness habitually in place, living happily, to all appearances, among the common herd while relishing the loneliness of proud isolation within their noble souls. (V, 348-49)

For all the pomposity of his prose, here, too, is an assertion of his intention to brace himself against the woes of the world and confront pain with a cheerful mien. Though he envisioned himself as singled out from his fellows, it was a kind of unobtrusive, enlightened

spirit among men, the Oriental sage. The Nietzsche hero, the Napoleonic figure of ruthless power and aristocratic pride, was not to his taste.

Equipped by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, Hori set himself the goal of staunchly pursuing, even at the price of a nihilistic rejection of the immediate world, a knowledge of life. Hagiwara's Aoneko disposed him to attempt that objective in literature, to follow the flight of "a poet's soul, painfully longing for a far, far reality." (III, 474) What the nineteen-year-old could not foresee was that there were to be many tests of his sincerity in the years to follow.

Hori turned to literature.

CHAPTER II

THE GUERMANTES' WAY

At thirty-four, Murō Saisei had to his credit such published works as Ai no shishū (Love Poems) and Jojo shōkyokushū (Lyrical Ballads) and, with Hagiwara, held a position in Taishō poetry circles as an avant-garde writer. He was experimenting with a prose style enriched with lush poetic elements and a refined melancholy. This was the man who became Hori's first mentor and who provided him with his long-awaited admission into what was to be a kind of Guermantes' Way for Hori whose life was so curiously similar to Proust's. When Hori was still a middle school student, the principal, Hirose Yū, had marked a special quality in him and had not forgotten it. He intended now, in May of 1923, to guide Hori toward a career as he had previously directed another graduate of his school and fledgling author, Akutagawa. Thus he led Hori to Murō.

Hori was painfully shy and hardly spoke, but Murō was impressed. In August, he took Hori to the mountains of Nagano Prefecture in the northwest of Tokyo. They made a ten-day sojourn in the fashionable summer resort town of Karuizawa. This little town below Mt. Asama had been "discovered" years before by Tokyo's foreign community of missionaries and diplomats. They put their own stamp on it by building Western-style summer houses and churches and giving English names to many of the streets and natural landmarks.

This excursion to Karuizawa gave the young man from the shitamachi his first taste of the "fairy-tale world" that he had glimpsed in the

mansion across the canal. Hori described his reaction to the haikara ("high-collar," or stylish) atmosphere in letter to Jinzai: "All day long I wander about. All you come across on the streets are foreigners and foreign languages. Wandering down the main street at night is especially fascinating. My companions on these strolls are imported cigarettes and the poet Saisei. Then, too, I have the honor of being under the same roof with Ichikawa Sadanji [a Kabuki actor]. Tonight, there's to be a recital; I'll be smelling foreigners to my heart's content!" (VII, 80)

At Muro's side, Hori began to consider that here was a world that might be his, one that he might create for himself through literature, a world in which the shitamachi would have no part.

It was also through Muro that Hori met Akutagawa. In the September following Hori's visit to Karuizawa, Tokyo was devastated by the Great Earthquake of 1923. Though Hori narrowly escaped the catastrophe, his mother, Shige, lost her life. Her death came as such a blow that he seems to have been very greatly reluctant to mention it in his writings. Eleven years later, he finally treated it in the story "Aki" (Autumn) (Bungei, Feb., 1934).

Muro took refuge at his residence in Kanazawa, entrusting Hori to the care of Akutagawa. From the beginning their relationship was one of great intimacy. Akutagawa readily discerned Hori's potential, and Hori was fully appreciative of the other's genius. Only a few years remained until Akutagawa's death, but his two-fold impact upon Hori's attitudes to life and to the creation of art was of such magnitude, it was not to be for some years later that Hori managed in some measure to exorcise his spirit.

By summer of 1925, Hori had turned twenty-one and was enrolled in the Japanese Literature Department of Tokyo Imperial University. Intending to devote himself in earnest to his studies, he went up in early June to Karuizawa again where Murō and Akutagawa were to join him in August. His expectations of savoring a literary atmosphere, however, met with considerable disappointment.

That summer his stepfather, Matsukichi, was deluged by a series of postcards from him that read now as half-ridiculous, half-pathetic. The high-minded young poet suffered one vexation after another from the gloom and inconveniences of his rented room and, most especially, from his want of spending money. His mental, if not his financial state improved with the arrival of Murō and Akutagawa. Another letter home for money, dated September 3, indicates his happier frame of mind and his feeling that his holiday was worth his father's sacrifices: ". . . So without another eighty yen I can't get back to Tokyo. It must seem to you as if I've been a bit of a spendthrift, but don't hold it against me. After all, it's been top-notch [ichi-ryū] here with everyone. And thanks to the last eighty yen I've become quite a favorite of the top-notch set. Hori Tatsuo too has become a little famous. (Still, the eighty yen I'm asking for is the very lowest estimate.)" (VII, 92)

What his stepfather may have thought of supporting him in his "top-notch" life we have no way of knowing, but it appears he did not begrudge helping him as he could. After his death, when Hori was finally told by his aunt that Kamijō Matsukichi had not been his actual father, Hori came to a fuller appreciation of the unstinting generosity of the hard-working, shitamachi metalworker.

In addition to Murō and Akutagawa, the "set" included Hagiwara, another writer Sasaki Mosaku, the painter Koana Ryūichi, and a woman, Katayama Hiroko, who wrote under the name of Matsumura Mineko. Hori's memories of their outings and conversations are recorded in two brief essays of 1934, "Hagi no hana" (The Bush Clover) (Kaikan geijutsu, Sept.) and "Kōgen nite" (In the Uplands) (Akutagawa Ryūnosuke zenshū). A story of 1930, "Rūbensu no giga" (The Counterfeit Reubens) (Sakuhin, May), as well is based upon the scenes and, apparently, upon the individuals and incidents of those days. In later stories too, the association in Hori's mind between the gentle, shady woods of the uplands and the desperate, tortured spirit of Akutagawa is clear. Perhaps until his own death Hori was never able to view the uplands divested of all reminder of Akutagawa and the summer of 1925:

Several days ago a friend from Sengataki came to call and began talking of how the foothills of Mt. Asama resembled Scandinavia in climate and types of vegetation. Then the conversation took a turn to Scandinavian literature. I suddenly recollected that Akutagawa as well seemed to have been quite a devotee of Norther European literature; before then, I had never paid much thought to that aspect of him. I do know that he had read some of Björnson, Lagerlöff, Hamsun, and so forth, not to mention Strindberg and Ibsen.

I recently began reading Rilke's Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge [The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge], a piece of Scandinavian literature in that the critics say it best demonstrates Rilke's admiration for the works of Kierkegaard and Jacobsen. The hero of the story, a young Danish poet, is in Paris writing with death immediately before him. A strand of indescribable sweetness runs through the gruesomeness of the notebooks, and while I was reading I sometimes found myself thinking of Akutagawa's "Haguruma" [Cogwheels]. I have never very deeply considered in what the resemblance originates; one day I hope to look more closely at the Scandinavian elements in both these works.

In the last section of "Haguruma," a Swede to whom he gives the name Strindberg appears briefly. In those days, an old foreign man of sixty or so, very stooped over, used to wander with a very dismal air about Karuizawa. His name was Sternberg, and people said he taught German somewhere. I suspect Akutagawa confused his name with Strindberg. Perhaps he, like Akutagawa's character, had a persecution complex; he seemed to have an intense dislike of whistling. If he heard a child or someone doing it, he would go up to him all of a sudden and put a stop to it. I saw this happen two or three times that summer. ("Kōgen nite," III, 340-341)

Despite the drives, the dining out, and the films of Gloria Swanson, which Hori mentions in his notes, he did not neglect the ambitious course of reading he had set for himself. Sometimes he availed himself of translations into Japanese when they existed, but more frequently he read the works in the original. How he came to read French remains a mystery, but certainly he had a gift for languages. From the first years of kōtōgakkō he devoured volumes of French poetry and fiction, finally slowing down, as is no surprise, in the convoluted sentences of Proust's A la Recherche du Temps perdu.

A partial list of the works he took up that summer includes Stendhal's Le Rouge et le Noir, Anatole France's Sur la Pierre blanche and Le Lys rouge, and La Flambée of Henri de Régnier. This was his first meeting with Gide's La Porte étroite, L'Immoraliste, and La Symphonie pastorale. Mérimée occupied him to a great extent: Carmen, Le Vase étrusque, Colomba, Il Viccolo di Madama Lucrezia (The "Viccolo" of Madam Lucrezia), Arsène Guillot, La Vénus d'Ille, Mateo Falcone, and La Dame de Pique--Mérimée's translation of Pushkin's The Queen of Spades. Hori later credited particularly Stendhal and Mérimée for inspiration,¹

¹Minamoto, p. 93.

and more than one of the above titles will recur when the prototypes for Hori's more successful ventures into fiction are considered.

A strange series of coincidences served to bind Hori's fate to Akutagawa's. Both were born and raised in the shitamachi and attended the very same middle and higher schools and university. The poet Tachihara Michizō (1914-39), whom Hori would later befriend, had the same history. All three of these men were products of the concrete and congestion of Tokyo. All three had the city dweller's longing for the countryside and turned to Karuizawa with its woodlands of larch and birch. But it is in Hori's literature where the snow-laden peaks, the wild flowers, the bird song--all the many moods of the uplands--are most perfectly captured, so much so that today his name is inextricably linked with Karuizawa in the Japanese public's mind. Such works as Utsukushii mura (The Beautiful Village) (1933) taught the Japanese to "see" Karuizawa just as the prints of Hokusai have formed their conception of Mt. Fuji.²

The uplands of Karuizawa are as essential to Hori's literature as the French seacoast on the Channel is to Proust's, or the pine forests of Les Landes are to François Mauriac's. Visiting the town today, one may not readily understand why it should have made such an impression on Hori. To an American, it is no more exotic than the lakeshore towns of northern Michigan or Wisconsin. But in the days before the great influx of people and products from other countries, it struck the Japanese as a

²Mita Hiroo. "Hori Tatsuo to Karuizawa nado." Bungaku. Vol. 44 (June 1976) p. 100.

rare spot. Mita Hiroo explains that Hori was necessarily drawn to this region in order to effect his repudiation of the watakushi shōsetsu, or autobiographical novel. Low-ceilinged rooms where one is forced to prostrate oneself, tatami floors cluttered with bedding for all the family, and toilet odors that permeate the house: this was the stuff of the watakushi shōsetsu. This is what Hori knew from the shitamachi. Futabatei Shimei's translation of Turgenev's First Love, with its lavish descriptions of nature, had demonstrated the lyrical heights the novel might attain. In Japan, only the cosmopolitan port cities of Kobe and Yokohama or the foreign atmosphere of Karuizawa offered alternative settings for a newer, less autobiographical novel, a novel that was freed from the mundane facts of Japanese life that generated the watakushi shōsetsu. "If a Japanese were to write a genuine European-style novel, he was almost bound to use Karuizawa as a backdrop."³ Mita is certainly exaggerating the situation, but it is true that from the first Hori was instinctively aware of the possibilities in the European--almost Swiss--aspects of the alpine landscapes and the summer homes and church steeples of the little town.

Other writers, such as Kubota Mantarō, delighted in the garishness and down-to-earth qualities of the shitamachi. But in his childhood there, Hori had been overindulged by his dotting parents and had thought himself the center of the universe. As soon as he discovered that outside of his household he could be alone, powerless, and unable to obtain immediate response to his need for love, he began his search for a world

³Ibid., p. 107.

more gracious and less apt to offend his sensibilities. Karuizawa hinted at what this world might be. So that he might one day grasp it, Hori had first to serve a term of apprenticeship as a poet.

From "Tenshitachi ga" (The Angels):

The angels
 Come on bicycles
 With bread and broth
 And flowers
 For my breakfast

I pluck the petals
 Sprinkle them on the broth
 Spread them on the bread
 And this is my humble bill of fare

(Tenshitachi ga
 Boku no asahan no tame ni
 Jitensha de hakonde kuru
 Pan to sūpu to
 Hana o

Suru to boku wa
 Sono hana o
 Mushitte
 Sūpu ni furikake
 Pan ni tsuke
 Sōshite sasayaka na shokuji o suru V, 68)

CHAPTER III
SEA-SHELLS AND ROSES

The reputation Hori maintains as a poet a quarter of a century after his death is founded on more than his actual poems. Indeed, their number is so small that Fukunaga Takehiko was hard pressed to collect a sufficient amount for a single volume.¹ They date only from his beginning years as an artist and, whatever worth they may have as independent poems, in a general survey of the work of his entire career, possibly should be seen as exercises and forerunners to the poetic prose style he later evolved. Hori himself seems to have considered them as such and was reluctant to have them published. In 1940 he did reissue three short sequences of verses under the title Hori Tatsuo shishū (Poems of Hori Tatsuo), as an offering before the grave of his young friend and fellow-poet, Tachihara Michizō, who had died the previous year. This homage was prompted by the love Tachihara had cherished for the poems and were all those that Hori cared to acknowledge: "Just these three constitute all the poems I have ever written." (V, 67) Originally, the first sequence, "Tenshitachi ga," of which we have seen an excerpt, and the second, "Boku wa" (As I Go Walking), were printed in Roba in February and March of 1927. At the time, Hori was twenty-three and deeply involved in the publication of this small private review.

¹Fukunaga Takehiro. Hori Tatsuo shishū. 1966. p. 160.

The third sequence, "Yamai" (Illness), was carried in another small magazine, Yama mayu, in March of the next year.

From "Boku wa":

As I go walking
In the wind

It pierces through my skin

Where underneath there lies
A violin of bones. . .
Might there not come a time
When the wind performs a tune?

(Boku wa aruite ita
Kaze no naka o

Kaze wa boku no hifu ni shimikomu

Kono hifu no shita ni wa
Hone no vaiorin ga aru to iu no ni
Kaze ga fui ni sore o
Narashi wa senu ka V, 70)

"Yamai":

Songbirds, tuberculosis of the lungs,
Perching on my bones!

Because of your pecking
The blood mingles with my spittle

When you flap your wings
I start in coughing

I'll put on the respirator--
That will put you to sleep.

- - -

To trick the pain
I'll make fun of death,
Like making fun of a dog

When death tries to bite
And stamp his initial on me,
He bares his teeth.



(Boku no hone ni tomatte iru
Kotori yo hai kekkaku yo

Omae ga kuchibashi de tsutsuku kara
Boku no tan ni wa chi ga majiru

Omae ga habataku to
Boku wa seki o suru

Omae o nemuraseru tame ni
Kyūnyūki o kakeyō

- - -

Kutsū o gomakasu tame ni
Boku wa shi ni karakau
Inu ni de mo karakau yō ni

Shi wa boku ni kamitsuite
Kare no inisharu o irezumi shiyō to
Ha o boku no mae ni mukidasu V, 71)

These poems from Hori Tatsuo shishū illustrate the concerns uppermost in his mind at the beginning of his career: disease and death, a search for a world of beauty, and Jean Cocteau.

His mother and Akutagawa had already died by the time "Yamai" was published, and he himself had been shaken with such violence by tuberculosis in 1923 that he temporarily withdrew from school. This disease, which took a heavy toll in pre-war Japan, is a major leitmotif in the greater portion of his works, but in these early poems he was still able to ease the pain with flippancy and to snap his fingers in the face of the specter in an effort to disguise his real horror. Tachihara singled out for praise such poems as "Yamai" wherein Hori's own physiology is treated in terms of imagery from nature.²

²Tachihara Michizō. "Kaze tachinu." Tachihara Michizō zenshū. 1965. Vol. 4. p. 250.

"Tenshitachi ga" was written to celebrate the fanciful in life. It is a simple hallucination, the product of a still-youthful heart that sees angels for girls on bicycles and bedecks with flowers a meager meal. The sequence echoes some of the brief playfully sentimental poems that Akutagawa wrote during the summer of 1925 in Karuizawa:

Let's make a breakfast
Of our morning bread
And the blossoms of the pinks.

(Asa no pan o
Sekichiku no hana to
Issho ni kuō.³)

Farewell to the city of concertinas,
Farewell to my age for lyric poetry.

(Sayōnara.
Tefūkin no machi,
Sayōnara,
Boku no jojōshi jidai.⁴)

Angels, roses, violins, blackamoors, parrots, El Greco figures-- exotic images (more exotic yet in the Japan of fifty years ago) of lands far from the shitamachi floated through his early works. These he gleaned from the poet, novelist, and designer Jean Cocteau--"gleaned," for out of all the rich imagery of Cocteau, the sensualist and opium smoker, for reasons of his own Hori appropriated only the lighter, less flamboyant elements. It was the small, rapid, humorous side of Cocteau's poetry to

³ Akutagawa Ryūnosuke. Akutagawa Ryūnosuke zenshū. 1934-35. Vol. 7. p. 395.

⁴ Ibid., p. 398.

which Hori leaned. Cocteau found that brevity is the essence of wit, a maxim that has underlain Japanese poetry for centuries. His compositions often have the time span and limited development of one bon mot. Of his inclination to the minute, Cocteau wrote, "The eloquence I was allotted doesn't have much strength."⁵ If this is true of the staccato pensées of Le Coq et l'Arlequin, how much more so is it true of the fragmented verses of Hori Tatsuo shishū, each section featuring a single haiku-like image. In Le Cap de Bonne Espérance, Cocteau, obviously influenced by Apollinaire's Calligrammes, linked his stanzas into the length of a book.⁶ Hori was much more short-winded, but both Le Cap and Hori's sequences read like accumulations of poetic telegrams. Both employ a free association of irregularly spaced lines, giving the impression of a structure so fragile the slightest puff would scatter it. Hori's sequences were less ambitious and consequently saved from the presumptuousness of Le Cap. Hori took short-ranged flights which delight for their brevity; Cocteau skimmed the ground interminably, trying to get up the speed to soar.

By the time the teenage Hori discovered Cocteau, Japanese poetry had made great strides toward modernization, which greatly implies Westernization. Takamura Kōtarō was perfecting his colloquial free verse, and Hagiwara Sakutarō, Hori's idol, was producing some of his finest poems, portraying an inner life in free verse, in a symbolic

⁵ Frederick Brown. An Impersonation of Angels: a biography of Jean Cocteau. New York, 1968. p. 168.

⁶ Ibid., p. 185.

style and a blend of fantasy and the near-macabre. The Japanese Symbolist School (shōchō-ha) as such had been underway since the beginning of the century when Ueda Bin introduced the French Symbolist poets in translation. Kambara Ariake had demonstrated the potentiality of symbolism with his original verses, and in the early 1920's the school was at its height with Hinatsu Kōnosuke, Saijō Yaso, Miki Rofū, and Noguchi Yonejirō in its ranks. At the time when Hori gained an entry into the literary circles of the day, they were filled with fervor for the avant-garde -isms, especially Dadaism and Surrealism, of European artists proposing variations and refinements upon Symbolism.

Much of Hori's talent was devoted to translating. A 1970 biography of Cocteau declares, "No translation of Le Potomak has ever been made or is likely to be made, and nonreaders of French can only be asked to believe the assurance that it marks a stage in Cocteau's development."⁷ Yet, for all the strangeness of its form and content, Hori was not dissuaded, and his translation appeared in 1929. Until about 1930 Hori continued to translate Cocteau, and his selections widely represented the best of Cocteau's early poetry, fiction, and essays: Le Cap de Bonne-Espérance, Le Coq et l'Arlequin, Poésies, Le Secret professionnel, Vocabulaire, Le Grand Ecart, D'un Ordre Considéré comme une Anarchie, Autour de Thomas l'Imposteur, Opéra, and more.

The charge sometimes voiced by Japanese critics that his versions are inexact enough to suggest he misunderstood the originals can be

⁷ Francis Steegmuller. Cocteau, a biography. Boston, 1970. pp. 90-91.

Soshite aa nan to boku wa boku no kono tohō mo naku
 ōki na shinzō o mukidashi ni shite iru no da! V, 16)

(Mon ange, laissez-moi m'êbattre dans ce champ;
 Aucun oeil ne me voit, dites, vous trahirai-je?
 La ville, grâce à vous, me croit le coeur méchant,
 Mais, au soleil, fondez votre armure de neige.

Dormez un peu. N'ayez rien à me reprocher.
 Voici la folle mer qui brise au bord ses coupes.
 Son champagne tonnante inonde le rocher
 D'où je vois ses jupons, ses linges et ses croupes.

Le bain depuis toujours invite le héros,
 Car de tous les dragons la mer est le moins bête.
 Ah! que je puisse rire! Ah, que je me dévête!
 Et que je mette nu mon coeur, mon coeur trop gros.⁸⁾

An oft-cited and irrefutable instance of Cocteau's shadow in Hori's own poetry occurs in "Yamai." The bird imagery of a stanza from "Nocturne," which Hori translated in Vocabulaire, was reworked into a symbol of the ugly decay within Hori's body. For Cocteau, the birds had acted as some of the discordant elements uniting in harmonious beauty within him:

Dans le bocage de mes os,
 Dans l'arbre bleu de mes artères,
 Mêlez-vous, fleurs, poissons, oiseaux,
 Si mal réunis sur la terre.⁹

(In the rubble of my bones,
 In the blue tree of my arteries,
 Mingle, flowers and fishes and birds,
 So ill united on the earth.)

In "Kaigara to bara" (Sea-Shells and Roses) (Yama mayu, Feb., 1924), Hori elaborated on the appeal Cocteau had for him. Once Guillaume

⁸Jean Cocteau. Poésie 1916-1923. Paris, 1925. pp. 440-41.

⁹Ibid., p. 391.

Apollinaire struck a new path in poetry at the beginning of the century, Hori explains, André Salmon embraced the spirit of modernism and so adeptly blended fantasy with reality, even a butterfly would be deceived by his paper flowers; his poems glitter with the hard beauty of sea-shells. After the sea-shells came the roses--the brave, delicately balanced poems of Cocteau. Hori compares his poetry to the mysterious transformations to be seen in the paintings of the Cubists. The power Picasso works upon newspapers, bottles, guitars, and playing cards and that which Cocteau works upon roosters, harlequins, roses, and soap bubbles is not mere sorcery, it is a miraculous Midas touch. Cocteau portrays the dancer in the corps de ballet on her toes and with arms circling round as she dances from the wings, as a smiling, flower-bedecked crab. The poem has the brevity of the Surrealist music of Erik Satie, but is the ballerina-crab comparison mere caricature? No, declares Hori, no more than are El Greco's distortions. Hori finds Cocteau's imagery is true to the essence of the object portrayed, for "nature moves him. But he does not express his emotion carelessly. He is alive to the harmony flowing through nature. That harmony he expresses distinctly but thoughtfully." To free the motif of a poem from mundane reality, the threads restraining it--here Hori quotes from Cocteau's Le Secret professionnel--must all be severed. Then the poem becomes free and rises above the earth "like a solitary, beautiful balloon." (V, 361-64)

In his own poems, Hori strove to capture the mystery and conciseness of Cocteau's. The five verses of Shōnen shishū demonstrate the lesson from Cocteau. Persons and things are thrown out of conventional

focus and given double and triple images under Hori's own delicate direction. These verses were evidently written before those of Hori Tatsuo shishū, for these, he wrote to Jinzai, might be titled Poèmes d'enfance, not his Premiers Poèmes. In the same letter of Oct. 11, 1950, there is little enthusiasm on Hori's part for Jinzai's plan for publishing them. (VII, 378) They did appear in Bungei shunjū bessatsu, December, 1950.

From Shōnen shishū:

Fantasia

I have a little book of poems
 Within a flower garden fashioned from verses
 Whenever I open it
 There rises the mingled scent of blossoms
 One night to the flower garden
 Came a maid awandering
 When someone put out all the lamps
 That the flowers in bloom might sleep
 In his carelessness
 He put out the moon-lamp as well
 So the maid seemed nothing more than a sheaf of dark wind
 A moth there was
 Who feared the shadows of the thickets
 And let the dark wind waft him aloft
 The faintest of lights he then espied
 And flew with a happy flutter of his wings
 On the finger ring of the maid
 Sparkled a jewel of crystallized light of dawn
 And she with shadows in her voice
 Whispered "Oh, I hate you" to the moth
 When came I to be a moth?
 The maid's fingertip had a smell of fire

(Fuantasuchikku

Watashi wa chiisa na shishū o motte iru
 Sono naka ni shi de tsukutta hanabatake ga ari
 Soko o hiraku to itsu mo
 Samazama na hana no nioi ga suru
 Sono hanabatake ni aru ban
 Hitori no ojōsan ga sanpo shi ni kita

Saita hana o nekasu tame
 Sukkari ramupu o keshita toki
 Dare da ka sosokkashiku
 Tsuki no ramupu made keshite shimatta no de
 Ojōsan wa tada kurai kaze no taba no yō de aru
 Kusamura no yami o kowagari
 Jitto shite ita ga wa
 Sono kurai kaze no yō na mono ni nagasarete kuru
 Kasuka na hikari o mitsukeru to ureshisō ni
 Hane o batabata sasete tonde itta
 Yoake no hikari o korashita yō na ishi ga
 Yubiwa ni kagayaite ita no de aru
 Ojōsan wa koe ni kage o atsumete
 "Maa iya na hito" to ga ni sasayaita
 Watashi wa itsu ga ni natta no ka shira
 Ojōsan no yubi no saki wa hi no nioi ga shita V, 75-76)

The Pain of Parting

The shaking train stirs this pain of parting
 Great gusts of soiled smoke rise outside the window
 I can scarcely breathe
 I lean lazily against the window
 And trees with green shadows
 Silently watch me go . . .
 On an afternoon when the air is black
 A bad case of neurasthenia
 Drives me from the city too brightly lit

(Rishū

Kisha ga boku no rishū o yusubutte iru
 Mado kara ippai yuen ga tobikonde kite konna ni museppoi
 Hikage no aoi kigi wa bonyari to shasō ni motarete ru
 [boku o damatte miokutteru yo.....
 Kūki no kurozunda aru hi no gogo de aru
 Hidoi shinkei-suijaku-shō ga
 Boku no nikutai o anmari akarui tokai kara opparatte
 [iru no da V, 77)

Another pastoral scene is presented in "Inakamichi" (The Country Path), first printed in Roba in May, 1926. Horii was twenty-two.

A path drenched with rain
 That fell as I slept
 A path no one walks
 A path in eerie green shadows of the grasses
 With no thought but of the path
 I went walking one morning
 Just as though following a country girl

(Boku no nete iru uchi ni futta rashii
 Ame ni bisshori nurete iru michi
 Dāre mo inai michi
 Kusa no kage ga aokutte kimi no warui michi
 Sono michi no koto bakari kangaenagara
 Maru-de inaka musume no ato o tsukete de mo iru yō ni
 Boku wa aru asa sanpo shite ita V, 207)

Cocteau's reputation as a poet has not stood the test of time as well as Apollinaire's, but in the 1920's he was a considerable rage. It may have been this publicity that originally drew so much of Hori's attention to him, but the similarities in their perceptions sustained his interest. Yet in "Kaigara to bara" we have already seen that if he was primarily taken up with Cocteau, at the same time he was far from ignoring other French poets. 1926, the year he was writing his own poetry such as the future Hori Tatsuo shishū, saw the appearance in Roba of Tsue no saki (The Tip of the Walking-Stick), an assortment of eight translations of poems by Apollinaire, Max Jacob, Salmon, and Francis Carco as well as Cocteau. For better or worse, says Fukunaga, these illustrate Hori's taste at the time but, as translations, are no more than the points where his cane fell as he was learning to walk as an artist and are not to be discussed in the same breath with his later renditions of Rilke, Comtesse Anna de Noailles, and Louise Labé.¹⁰ Before the year was out, Roba had also printed Makkusu Jakobu shishō (Selected Poems from Max Jacob), Supō shishō (Selected Poems from Philippe Soupault), and thirteen verses from Francis Jammes' Quatre Livres de Quatrains. Yama mayu carried several selections from Rimbaud. The

¹⁰Fukunaga. p. 165.

surrealistic visions, the fanciful humor, and the curious, evocative imagery--the sea-shells and roses--of these poets found their way into poems such as "Fuantasuchikku" and "Inakamichi" and persisted into his fiction.

CHAPTER IV
THE PIPE SOCIETY

Roba, the small review in which Hori was publishing his poems, came about from the efforts of a group of promising young writers. At his home in the Tabata district of Tokyo, Murō maintained something of a literary salon, and here a close and cordial clan, including Hori, Nakano Shigeharu, Kubokawa Tsurujirō, Hiraki Niroku, Nishizawa Ryūji (pen name Nuyama Hiroshi), Ōta Tatsuo, Miyaki Kikuo, and Tajima Ineko (pen name Sata Ineko), formed. The habitués appear to have been held together largely by Hori. Through his initiative they undertook to print their own journal. It was also he who gave it the name Roba (Donkey), from a poem of Francis Jammes.

Though the official purpose of the group was the exploration of new avenues of literature, their interests extended far afield. The backdrop for their escapades was the Tokyo Jazz Age of the late 1920's. Murō's jeunesse dorée seemed to be trying hard to transform themselves from college boys into voluptuaries. Along with the new, innovative literature from France, their cults ran to jazz clubs, whiskey, and flapper-waitresses they called Mädchen. Around all they blew such clouds of tobacco smoke, they gave themselves the name the Pipe Society (Paipu no kai). Bourgeois notions on sexual matters were discarded, and gender was not always a vital factor when it came to placing their affections. The hours the Pipe Society spent together during the years from 1925 to 1928 were in many ways to be among the most carefree that many of them were ever to know.

One of their number, Kubokawa, later recalled how, in Miyaki's rented room above a sweetshop near Murō's home, they worked on the journal while snacking on chicken gizzards. When Kubokawa teased Hori about the thick shock of hair that fell over his forehead, giving him a ruffian look, he answered back with a show of dimples, a quiet laugh, and a long look. Akutagawa and Hagiwara as well lived in the neighborhood, and, like Murō, visited the workshop.¹

Murō, writing in 1953, tells of Hagiwara's reaction upon first meeting the group. Hagiwara normally met aspiring young authors with a hard glare, but on this occasion he looked uneasily at Hori, the way he would at a woman. Hori's manner was a feminine blend of timidity and boldness. He was the favorite of the group, Hagiwara decided. He turned directly to Murō and remarked that it seemed Murō preferred to surround himself with many good-looking young men. And, Murō writes, what Hagiwara had said was true: Nakano's clear complexion and manliness, Nishizawa's flawless beauty, Kubokawa's engaging eyes and smile, Hiraki's fair skin and his heart as stout as a samurai's, and Hori with the blush of roses in his cheeks.²

According to Hagiwara's own account, only two of the young men made a particularly strong impression on him:

One of them had extremely passionate eyes and kept his shoulders squared as though in the thick of the battle of life. The other was the reverse: gentle as a girl,

¹Kubokawa Tsurujirō. "Roba jidai no Hori to no koto." Bungei tsuitōgō. Vol. 10. No. 8. (August 1953) pp. 44-45.

²Murō Saisei. "Shijin: Hori Tatsuo." Bungei: Hori Tatsuo tokuhon. Vol. 14 No. 3 (Feb. 1957) pp. 58-59.

pampered, somehow like a child with little knowledge of the hard facts of life. He was a man who spoke only after careful reflection. One knew at a glance each possessed an intelligence and sensitivity that set him apart from the herd. One was Nakano Shigeharu, the other was Hori Tatsuo. . . .

It was odd but there was a certain air about Hori. Some sort of scent, as of flowering plants or freshly cut grain, perpetually emanated from him. No, it wasn't a cologne; it was the scent of the personality of the man himself. Whenever a number of persons got together, Hori's just being there created a special atmosphere of camaraderie. Invariably he was the center. And yet, he did nothing more than sit in a corner and listen with a smile to the conversation. That he should have been such a central figure in a group can only be taken as proof of his personal qualities.³

Hori drew upon his experiences with the "fallen angels" of the Pipe Society for his story "Bukiyō na tenshi" (Les Anges Maladroits) (Bungei shunju, Feb., 1929). How much is fact and how much is fiction is not very clear, but Hori's own feelings and the atmosphere of those days are carefully preserved: "I was twenty. Until then I had lived in almost complete isolation. But my age would no longer allow me the tranquility necessary for a life alone. No other time of my life had been as difficult to bear as that year when spring was giving way to summer." (V, 101) His youthful thirst for adventure led him into an infatuation for a waitress at the Café Chat Noir. Hori, perhaps to inject a hint of French decadence, seems to have borrowed this name for his café from an actual haunt of Cocteau's in Paris. Maki, the friend already in love with the waitress, in real life was Nishizawa. The

³Hagiwara Sakutarō. "Hori Tatsuo." Bungei: Hori Tatsuo tokuhon. Vol. 14 No. 3 (Feb. 1957). p. 103.

figures in the triangle are blurred most of the time in a haze of tobacco smoke and whiskey; the emotions of the three occasionally become entangled and overlap. After taking the waitress to "Variété," a German film of 1925 starring Emil Jannings, the narrator reflects, "I sensed that in the course of the film she had subconsciously confused Jannings' shoulders with Maki's. And she wanted to feel the weight of his broad shoulders upon her own. I, too, had to admit to one and the same desire." (V, 117) The waitress refuses Maki and eludes the narrator. He arrives at a final impasse, ensnared in the obfuscations of his own impressions. In the closing scene, he and two other cohorts join Maki at the Gigi Bar where Maki has found a girl who, though coarser than the Chat Noir waitress, bears some resemblance to her and is an easier conquest:

We left the Gigi Bar some time after one. The taxi was too small for the four of us. I had no choice but to sit on Maki's lap. His thighs were thick and sturdy. I felt my ears redden like a girl's.

"Did you like the place?" he asked behind me.

"What? A joint like that?"

I gave him a jab in the chest with my elbow. In my mind's eye the face of the girl in the Gigi Bar came vividly back. It was joined by the face of the Chat Noir girl. Then one became superimposed upon the other, and the two merged and, like a puff of smoke from a cigarette, swelled until at last fading away. A feeling of great fatigue came over me. I raised my hand to my face. The fingers were still stained white with the girl's powder. (V, 122)

While the journal lasted, it was an important vehicle for the coterie. Hori and Nakano profited most, for the works they published in Roba augured in many ways what were to follow. Nakano presented his own critiques and translations of essays and poetry from Paul Claudel and

other French writers. Hori's first experiments in translating and short-story writing saw the light of day originally in the pages of Roba. Notwithstanding the obscurity of Nakano, Hori, and the others, the journal, as an organ for the introduction of new works from France, played a vital part in formulating the courses Shōwa literature subsequently followed.⁴

While still involved with Roba, he had a part in Kobayashi Hideo's journal Yama mayu (The Cocoon of a Wild Silkworm) as well, plus at least two other short-lived journals, Niji (Rainbow) and Hōki (Broom). Throughout much of the remainder of his life, he maintained his eagerness for organizing literary reviews. The reasons for his enthusiasm are explained in part in a letter of April 25, 1926. One cannot become a writer by oneself, he wrote to Jinzai. Even Rimbeau understood that a writer, though he himself may be convinced of the worth of his works, must present them as proofs of his claim; alone, an author cannot succeed. He must follow one of two courses, to work under trustworthy masters or to work with a coterie journal. As for himself, he had Akutagawa and Murō, and what he expected from the coterie was that he should have a "home." (VII, 98-99)

His desire for a "home" testifies to more than the penchant Japanese writers have for collecting into groups of similar minds. Particularly in these years, he seemed to be battling against his inherent sense of aloofness. For a time he achieved a measure of success in

⁴Fukuda Kiyoto, Iijima Aya, and Yokota Reiko. Hori Tatsuo: hito to sakuhin. 1968. p. 32.

assuaging the loneliness that had plagued his childhood and that would redescend upon him after the Pipe Society disbanded and Akutagawa committed suicide.

The life the Pipe Society led in the 1920's was swept away when Japan entered into grimmer times. Kubokawa, in 1953, wrote its epitaph: "Once, during the air raids, I was caught in Tabata so went for a look around Akutagawa's old house. A sign was posted: Railway Personnel Boardinghouse. For an instant, the blood drained from my face as I stood there. I wanted to ask the perpetrators of this war what they meant by putting up such a sign. The next time I was in Tabata during an air raid and went for another look, the area was entirely destroyed. After only a glance around, I left with heavy steps, dumfounded."⁵

The semblance of cohesion among the members had grown too thin. The collapse of Roba symbolized the division that was rending the entire Japanese literary world.⁶ Nakano committed himself to the new revolutionary literature of the proletarian movement, drawing most of the Pipe Society along after him in his headlong rush into the tumultuous 1930's. They ran off to brandish red banners before the rising tide of right-wing militarism, leaving to Hori the pursuit of the introspective, refined, and delicate in literature. First shaped and defined by his family, who surround him with love yet never fully understand him, he reaches out toward society both in the form of a literary élite, which for a time he admires and envies, and in the form of men and women he

⁵Kubokawa, p. 46.

⁶Fukuda, p. 33.

seeks to know as individuals and possibly to love and possess. Then he increasingly retreats within himself to search for a quiet domain form which he may observe the manifestations of society and nature and the workings of the human heart.

"Bukiyō na tenshi" marked the end of a time that had been experimental in terms both of life and literature. This exploration of poets and poetry led him step by step to a new medium of expression. In the very deliberate construction of the early verses, he seemed to have already intended them as sketches for prose passages. The date of composition of "Noibara" (The Wild Rose), published in 1933, is not certain, but it forms the kernel of a scene from the story Utsukushii mura.

At one time or another
I got a tiny hole in the sleeve of the sweater
I always wear when I go out walking
And with the passing days it grew ever larger

Now I remember where it came from--

When I would walk on Belvedere Hill
How much I loved
The sprigs heavy with white blossoms,
But after the flowers had long been lost
I paid no more heed as I passed by
And out of spite
There reached out and held my sleeve the tiny thorns
of the wildrose.

(Aanpo no toki ni wa
Itsumo boku no kiru koto ni shite iru
Sūetā no chōdo ude no tokoro ni,
Itsu no hi kara ka,
Chiisa na hokorobi ga dekite
Sore ga himashi ni konna ni mo ōkiku natte kimashita.

Sōshite boku wa yatto ima omoidasu no desu,
Kono aida boku ga Beruvedēru Hiru o sanpo shite ita
[ori no koto,
Sono chiisa na eda ga shiroi hana o ippai tsukete ita
[jibun wa

attempting at that time, and center on playful, topsyturvy worlds, such as seen in "Hitori no shinshi ga futari ni natta koto" (Tale of a Gentleman Who Divided Himself in Two):

I was strolling in broad daylight when a gentleman came frantically running in my direction, brushing against me as he ran by.

I glanced back at him out of curiosity and felt someone else brushing by me.

For an instant I saw the second one rushing past was none other than another gentleman chasing the first, from his hat to his shoes a duplicate of him.
(V, 208)

But he felt free verse or prose poems were limited in their potentiality as mediums for breaking down the ordinary views of reality and for penetrating to more essential truths. The promise of fiction for these ends is explained in an essay of 1930, now included with others under the title, "Shijin mo keisan-suru" (Poets, as well, Calculate). The act of giving birth to a poem, Hori writes, demands sweat, but for a novel that alone is not sufficient. The writing of a novel requires a much more complex, spirited operation, the creation of total fiction. What we call a good novel is the one in which "truth proceeds from falsehood." The true novelist uses falsehood in preaching truth. Conversely, he who gives the impression of truth to falsehood is the very worst novelist. "The novelist must stake his life on lying." If the proper role of fiction is not to be confused with poetry, neither must it overlap into the domain of cinema, which has appropriated to itself the function of portraying plot, action, and scene. What this leaves to fiction Hori does not explain clearly, but we can assume it is psychological description, for he claims that of all the many modern novels, the

skillfully fictionalized account of true human relationships of Raymond Radiguet's Le Bal du Comte d'Orgel mark it as a genuine novel. That is, the interest in the work lies in the mental operations of the characters, and therein lies its truth. What governs Radiguet's method of creation are the traditional laws of literature such as Stendhal's. Yet there are those who would destroy those laws in their efforts to give what they believe is a new form to the novel. Witness James Joyce. Can we simply call his Ulysses a novel? No, Hori declares, it is a new, hitherto unknown form, as independent of the novels of Joyce's day as those of Balzac's were of the novels of his day. Yet we cannot accept it as our model, for its innovations perplex any reader not sharing Joyce's view of literature. Thus, novelists of this age are in the dilemma of trying to improve upon Radiguet without going to the extremes of Joyce. While all else are hesitating, there are unique works being produced from this atmosphere of anxiety. These are, again, the writings of Jean Cocteau. He is giving to the novel an original form as a poésie du roman, a novel of poetry (shōsetsushi). His new style, Hori concludes, adds another dimension of Radiguet's traditional fiction and points the way which the novel of the future will surely follow. (V, 431-33)

To Hori's line of thinking, then, Cocteau was a golden mean. The psychological novel, as enhanced by Cocteau's poetic style, was to be the vehicle of his search for reality. He intended the "falsehoods" of fiction to illustrate truth to his readers as poetry never could. The conclusions he reached were to be constantly rethought during the next twenty-five years in his search for the ideal form. Yet the steadfastness with which he clung to the principles regarding content and style

he laid down for himself here testifies to his determination and the consistency of his mind.

The Japanese novel envisioned by Hori in 1930 was the kind Cocteau describes in Le Secret professionnel, the kind Cocteau had been occupied with since 1919 when he met Radiguet. Radiguet taught Cocteau the beauties of a simpler, more classical and direct means of expression and to deny his inclination for the extravagant such as had resulted in Le Potomak of 1913. Radiguet inspired him to write Le Grand Écart by introducing him to Madame de La Fayette's La Princesse de Clèves as a model of literary art.⁷ This seventeenth-century work later became a standard for Hori as well.

"Konto" (Un Conte) (Roba, Oct., 1926) is one of Hori's first pieces of fiction, but, despite its title as "a story," it is only distinguishable from the prose poems by its slightly longer length. It is included here in its entirety:

One morning when I awoke, I found to my astonishment that I had shrunk to a size no larger than a calling card. Could it be this was my true size all along and only my conception of myself as a human being had kept me puffed up to human proportions? And that morning, oddly enough, I had not been conscious of myself as a human. Be that as it may, the clock struck eight, and I had to be on my way to school just as always. Habit is a curious thing. There was nothing to be done but get on my little toy motorscooter and set out. The marvelous weather outdoors was perfect for a day of mysterious happenings. There was a splendid effect of breezes and rays of sun blending delicately with each other. I craved a cigarette and finally managed with one hand to strike a match. My motorscooter was overtaking a young lady from behind. To beep the horn I tossed the match aside,

⁷ Bettina L. Knapp. Jean Cocteau. Vol. 84 of Twayne's World Authors Series. New York, 1970. p. 23.

and what do you think? The match flew and landed, still lit, on her shoulder. I jumped down, for I had to apologize to her, and ran over. There she was, all whooshing flames, like a burning plastic doll. (V, 96)

"Doyōbi" (Saturday), appearing in Yama mayu in the same year, is a considerably longer sketch and shows a development toward greater realism. The plot concerns the narrator following a girl and her mother down the Ginza. The fanciful touches are used more exclusively for the descriptive passages, such as the opening scene in which the shoeshine boys "look for all the world like evangelists on the avenue, calling people over as if to say, 'You'll never get to Heaven with those dirty shoes!'" (V, 82)

Yama mayu in 1925 published his "Amaguri" (Roasted Chestnuts), which seems a fairly straightforward account of his mother's intrusion upon his stay with friends at the seaside in Chiba Prefecture when he was seventeen.

Once more the boundary between reality as he knows it and the realm of dreams dims and fades in "Nemurinagara" (As I Slept) (Yama mayu, June, 1927). Half asleep, he sees himself anew, floating through strange metamorphoses: "How flexible I've become! I'm like a cloud growing longer and shorter! I'm drawn out like a picture by El Greco! Oh, the waves keep changing my shadow on the water--I am Narcissus! Narcissus! Oh, but so different from Narcissus Why is it I can't gaze enraptured like Narcissus at my own reflection?" (V, 98-99)

Hallucinations figure largely in "Chō" (The Butterfly) (Nov., 1928), wherein the visage of a girl once glimpsed reappears in the window glass of a tea shop and on the face of his watch.

Karuizawa is the scene once more in "Tenshi ni karakau" (Making Fun of Angels) (Reijokai, issue unknown, 1929). A lively girl and her American boy friend scandalize a sedate tea party by dancing the tango.

These stories plus "Fūkei" (The Seascape) (Yama mayu, Mar., 1926), notes Tanida Shōhei, "can only be called practice works that display a clever skill in creating fiction out of fantasies and dreams."⁸ Yet "Fūkei" deserves more attention. In his description of a seascape, Hori combined delicate vision with a realistic mise en scène to create in prose what seems at first to be a charming picture of the Impressionist School. The narrator stumbles upon a harbor view, a perfect "seascape."

I watched for a time, charmed like a child with the tramp steamer, when a section of the sky came into my field of vision. It was sparkling like fragments of glass. Small white clouds, a host of them, were gathered about the mast of the steamer. The slowly moving ones had all taken on the forms of fish. Some of them were jellyfish, and the ones not moving at all recalled to mind beautiful sea-shells. The sky was an exact reflection of the depths of the sea. What I had at first taken to be a cluster of buildings, thrown like dice on a shore far beyond, now rose steadily up the mast. They too were clouds. (V, 92)

But with a last stroke he adds a déjà vu impression. A foreign man abruptly sticks his head out of the window of a building, angrily tells him that smoking is not allowed, and disappears. He discovers on an old signboard that the building is a customs house.

"So that's what it is! But why a person can't smoke near a customs house... Just a minute! That foreigner! I knew I had seen him before. Wasn't he Rousseau, the one they called 'Le Douanier'? I never saw him except in his self-portraits, but he did look rather like that."

Then I remembered the smell of fresh paint from the building. It must have been the paints Rousseau was using in his studio. And if that's true, he must have been as enchanted with the scene as I and was in the process of painting it. While he was quietly absorbed in his work, he heard me striking matches outside. It didn't bother

⁸Tanida, pp. 39-40.

him much at first, but when the noise persisted he finally thought someone was up to some mischief, stormed over to the window, and flung it open to yell at whoever was outside.

I saw the mystery in a new light now. The scene I had been watching must have been aware it was being drawn by Henri Rousseau in the customs house, and that's why it was so strangely nervous; that's why its self-conscious beauty so impressed me, a chance intruder upon the artist and the sitter.

These unexpected findings thoroughly cheered me up. All of this happened on a day when summer seemed to be vying with autumn for possession of the skies, like the constant battle between light and darkness within myself. The unlit cigarette still in my mouth, I slipped through the gate and walked off as softly as I could. (V, 94-95)

The incident of catching sight of the face in the window of someone long dead suggests that Hori remembered his readings of Mérimée. While discarding the gloomy, Gothic elements of Mérimée's Il Viccolo di Madama Lucrezia, Hori retained the mysterious and fantastic in order to embellish the rational world. "Fūkei," written when Hori was only twenty-two, is the best work of his younger period and is the supreme example of what he could achieve with a discriminating imitation of Surrealism's moods and styles. Being one of his few works Akutagawa was ever to see, "Fūkei," took on a special significance for Hori.⁹

The fantasies, hallucinations, and dreams in his poetry and first pieces of fiction clearly owe a debt to Cocteau and the French Surrealists. But even at this early stage, Hori placed more emphasis on realism than they and would increasingly do so as he continued to write. He clarified the reasons for his reluctance to indulge in the reverie of the French

⁹Fukuda, p. 32.

poets: "Now I certainly think that Freud's thesis is interesting as a comment on dreams. But I should not think to use that thesis to create new dreams. I find the same true of Surrealism. To be sure, it is interesting as a new interpretation of art. But I doubt that it can lead to the creation of new poetry. That is why, however many works of the Surrealists I read, I do not come across anything as interesting as their theory." (V, 430)

It appears that he saw the French Surrealists as regarding the dream as an entity in itself, whereas to him it was a method of revealing aspects normally unseen of the real. He claimed: "The dream does not add anything else to reality. It simply churns it up." (V, 428) In churning it up, the dream discloses a truth underlying the reality which greets the senses. Thus, the hallucination in "Fūkei" is not divorced from the real but presents it in a new perspective and makes something beautiful, even rare and precious, out of the ordinary. In the way that Hori discovered a dream-reality dichotomy in French Surrealism unacceptable to him, Takiguchi Shūzō, a leading spokesman for the Surrealist movement, --admittedly, only vaguely--of his notion and rejection of a French concept of the duality of subjectivity and objectivity resolved in the objet. According to Ōoka Makoto, Takiguchi's article "Shi to jitsuzon" (Poetry and Existence) in Shi to shiron magazine (No. 10, 1930) evidently represented the opinions of the day.¹⁰ The aim of the Japanese Surrealists was not to relate the dream to reality, the subject to the object,

¹⁰Ōoka Makoto. Chōgenjitsu to jojō: Shōwa jūnendai no shiseishin. 1965. p. 32.

and the ego to the universal, but to demonstrate that these opposites existed only in the mind and were otherwise invalid. In essence, this was the very same goal as that of the French, and the difficulties that Hori and Takiguchi saw seem to stem from the vague, overly simplistic notions held by the Japanese of French Surrealism.

There was, of course, the eternal language problem. "It is no joke to say," Ōoka contends, "that to a certain extent the level of understanding of Surrealism deepened in proportion to the level of improvement of French-Japanese dictionaries." André Breton's "Manifestes du Surréalisme" appeared in the September, 1929, issue of Shi to shiron, so badly rendered into Japanese that no one can say what readers might have made of it.¹¹

They could not clearly relate their philosophy to Freud, but they did find a kinship with Rimbaud. If, as products of a Buddhist tradition, they sought to reveal the "nothingness" (mu) or the supreme truth beyond rationality, reflection, and language, what was more congenial than Rimbaud's interest in a world which transcends the sphere where all matter is categorized by rationality? Thanks to Rolland de Renéville's view of elements of ancient Indian philosophy in Rimbaud, Takiguchi saw in him a recognizable mysticism. The opinion that Rimbaud had an idea of Eastern philosophy more profound than what was common knowledge among ordinary literary people in Europe is no longer held by Western critics.¹² But

¹¹Ibid., p. 27.

¹²Enid Starkie. Arthur Rimbaud. London, 1947. pp. 33-34.

that is not the point here. The Japanese may have imagined it, but it lent a kind of authorization to their own beliefs or sentiments. Hori concurred with Breton's citing Rimbaud as a forerunner of surrealism in that Rimbaud was an artist not satisfied with what the world calls reality and strove to seize "that reality beyond reality." (V, 428-30)

The theatricality of the French Surrealists also baffled the Japanese. This is to be expected, for there was in Japan at this stage little of the ambition born in France after World War I to repudiate existing knowledge and social order, and little of the goal of épater le bourgeois, which served the French Surrealists as a means to attack the values of the establishment. The Great Earthquake of 1923 was the sole catastrophe in the memory of young Japanese writers, and this, as a natural disaster, was not seen as a spiritual crisis.¹³

Without Freud, without the post-war despair, Japanese Surrealism was largely a combination of Buddhism and Symbolist poetry, and, in a large sense, not essentially different from Bashō's poetics. Its excitement came from the addition of an imaginative, refreshing use of imagery from Surrealism. The French writers for the more matter-of-fact made for an artless innocence--some might call it triviality--in his early works, but he remained long attached to an occasional surrealistic use of language to give to his later stories startling, thought-provoking, comical, or near-vulgar touches, such as the "refreshing beauty of my amber-colored urine" in "Doyōbi" (V, 88), the shower of ashes in

¹³- Ooka, p. 24.

"Kaifukuki" (Convalescence) (Kaizō, Dec., 1931), and the spinal deformation in "Moyuru hoho."

With such works as "Fūkei," Hori, as much as any other member of the Pipe Society, was underway as a writer of fiction. But it was poetry that had initially attracted him to literature, and it was the poetic form through which his talent was first displayed:

1

It was on a train.
 Directly opposite me, a child was peacefully asleep,
 His hand like a dangling fruit.
 On the back of it, blue veins traced a map.
 And I, I studied it as if it were an eerie map of death.

(Kisha no naka datta.
 Watakushi no manmae ni, hitori no kodomo ga suyasuya to
 [nemutte ita,
 Te o kajitsu no yō ni tarashinagara.
 Sono te no kō ni wa, soi jōmyaku ga, chizu no yō ni
 [ukande ita.
 Soshite watakushi wa to ieba, sore o bukimi na shi
 [no chizu no yō ni nagamete ita. V, 78)

2

----a tunnel.....
 ----open country.....
 ----a tunnel.....
 ----open country.....
 Again a tunnel.
 This stupid one is awfully long.
 Oh! I must have fallen asleep.

(----tonneru.....
 ----fūkei.....
 ----tonneru.....
 ----fūkei.....

Mata tonneru.
 Kondo no yatsu wa baka ni nagai n da naa.
 Oya, watakushi wa itsu nemutte ita n darō? V, 78-79)

These were written as part of a small collection, Ehagaki (Picture Postcards), in 1930 and were never seen by Akutagawa, but possibly the poems he complimented Horii on in a letter of 1923 were not so very different. The famous author had received a small number of poems from the schoolboy and offered him some words of encouragement:

. . . I have looked at the two collections of poetry. I understand the artistic quality of your mind perfectly. Perhaps I even understood things about you which I had not realized at our recent meeting. Do not let go of what you have managed to capture. Go ahead quickly, for you are on the right track. (Of course I am not a poet. Moreover, I confess to being one who does not understand poetry. So I am not telling you to believe in what I say. You are free to believe me or not.) I feel your poem, especially "Machikado" [The Streetcorner], show a certain soundness in what you have captured. That is why I felt I might discuss art with you without any qualms. What I mean to say is your sending me the poems was much better for me than it was for you.¹⁴

"Go ahead quickly, for you are on the right track" (Sono mama zunzun osusuminasai). This was the very same expression Natsume Sōseki had used in 1916 to encourage his favorite and most promising disciple, Akutagawa. Seven years later, Akutagawa was repeating the words to another novice.¹⁵

¹⁴Akutagawa Ryūnosuke zenshū. Vol. 10. pp. 490-91.

¹⁵Shindō Sumitaka. "Hori Tatsuo to Akutagawa Ryūnosuke." Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū. July, 1963. p. 62.

CHAPTER V

GUARDIAN ANGELS

That Murō Saisei wrought great changes in Hori's life is indisputable. What is more difficult to define is the impact Murō had as an artist upon Hori's developing philosophy of literature. Being more dramatic, Akutagawa's influence has drawn much the larger share of the attention of the critics. The most explicit clues to the significance Murō's works of fiction had for him are offered by Hori himself in "Murō-san e o tegami" (Letter to Murō) for the March, 1930, issue of Shinchō magazine.

Murō's early prose style, Hori claimed, was poetic while sparing in the use of words, and sensuous rather than intellectual; in those qualities lay its resemblance to the paintings of Henri Rousseau. (IV, 92-93) Hori's own "Fūkei" was aiming for the same effect as Rousseau's landscapes.¹ He was attempting to achieve with words what Rousseau had done with oils. Murō, in whose prose Hori saw Rousseau's sensuousness, must have served Hori as an example of the painter-become-writer.

But Murō's methods seem to have been limited in appeal to Hori. He found that Murō, in his longer works of fiction, such as "Shi to kanojora" (Death and the Women), sacrificed realistic psychological description to a bold and striking poetic effect, and, therefore, the

¹Yoshimura Teiji. Hori Tatsuo: tamashii no henreki to shite. 1955. p. 15.

novels were a series of like scenes such as a painter might have dashed off without revealing the deeper realism of any. For all Hori's interest in a poetic style, he placed more emphasis on psychological factors. He saw these factors as being responsible for the tragic sentiment in the story "Genkaku sanbō" (The Genkaku Villa) by Akutagawa, a sentiment more lasting than what he believed Murō's dramatic but shallow scenes could produce. He explained further that the function of the camera was to record superficial realities, thereby freeing the painter and the novelist to pursue the underlying reality by examining details; thus had evolved the works of Matisse, Picasso, and Akutagawa. But Murō did no more than the motion-picture camera. He presented only a plot, action, and scene. (IV, 95-96)

An idea of Hori's disillusion with Murō's undue sensuousness can be gained from a consideration of the entire body of his works; from "Fūkei," written solely for a visual effect, through Utsukushii mura to Naoko, a gradual subjugation of poetry-for-poetry's sake to psychological portrayal is discernible.

Hori may have been surprisingly critical of the works of his teacher and guardian, but for the spirit behind those works he had only praise. There is, in the same letter to Murō, a tone of genuine respect and love and, perhaps, an implication that it was to Murō that Hori felt he might always turn for support and sympathy. By 1930, Hori already had reason to believe that others of his idols had failed him:

I know of no one who is so forever frantic on the outside as yourself, nor of anyone who has such an absolute lack of anxiety in the inside. This is the great difference between you and Hagiwara Sakutarō. Although he may appear to

be easy-going at first, he gives one the impression that within him there is some constant, fierce turmoil--a fight, like Jacob's wrestling with the angel. On this point, he may be much more modern than you and may not care for the tranquil spirit you possess. Although Akutagawa had the same inner turmoil as Hagiwara, he seemed to have fully understood and valued your sense of tranquility. Once, when he made the comment that you were a happy man, I had the impression you felt only derision in his words, but that was not his intention. I believe that at those times, when he was tortured by the thought of his complete lack of satisfaction with his portion from God, he was painfully envious of your satisfaction and resignation, for what he never left off pursuing was the peace which you have kept intact from your birth. And so, it was only natural that for you life was simply a sadness, not the torture that Akutagawa suffered through. Among all the people I know, the one with by far the most Oriental spirit is yourself. (IV, 97-98)

"Bukiyō na tenshi" was born of Hori's struggles to apply the lessons of Murō and Akutagawa and to reconcile a poetic style with psychological depth. At the time it appeared, he referred to it as his virgin work. (IV, 134) Insofar as this was the first of his stories to be carried by an important journal, Bungei shunjū, and to gain the notice of the literary world, this was true. From this point on he began to be seen as a new figure in the ranks of those who were advocating new directions in literary style.

In 1950 he wished to dismiss "Bukiyō na tenshi" and his early works as practices or impromptu sketches: "Can I really have written such things? I must have been a bit frivole. . . ." (IV, 357) Frivole or not, he could not have arrived at his first truly meaningful creation, "Seikazoku" (The Holy Family) (Kaizō, Nov., 1930), without these experiments in fiction.

The plot structure of "Bukiyō na tenshi" is extremely loose, and the ending is inconclusive--this is a complaint critics have repeatedly

made of Hori's fiction. Moreover, the materials of "Bukiyō na tenshi" are commonplace: the stirrings of love, yearnings, jealousy, and the doubts of youth. What saves the story from triteness is the style Hori brought to it. Fresh imagery, an economy of words, and abrupt, rapid-fire sentences work at times to endow the hero's emotions, conventional as they are, with a sparkling originality:

A feeling I had never known before gripped me. Was this pain? My friend was moving his lips vigorously. But I no longer heard a single word. . . . I had gone very far from the facade he saw. I was fathoming, like a diver, the depths of my own pain. And the music and clatter of plates came to me very late, like sounds reaching the bottom of the sea only long after the waves have broken on the surface.

I did all I could to float back up on the strength of the alcohol. (V, 106)

It was this deft use of language that readers remarked and praised. One of them, Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972), wrote of the story, "A truthful work, combining naivety with beauty and sharpness."² But Hori was far from satisfied. While placing more emphasis on "facts" (shinjitsu) than he had hitherto done, he felt he had not achieved a harmonious relationship between these facts and poetry (shi). (V, 134) Tanida takes this to mean realistic psychological descriptions were still lacking in that there was almost no investigation of the characters' minds save the hero's; this lopsided approach was to be rectified in "Seikazoku."³

²Kawabata Yasunari. Shōsetsu no kenkyū. 1942. p. 142.

³Tanida, p. 50.

"Nemureru hito" (The Dreamer) (Bungaku, No. 1, Aug., 1929) is even more overlaid with fantasy and illusions. The sketchy plot again concerns his rivalry with a friend for a girl. But objective reality is obscured by shadows of death and by surrealistic, almost Buddhistic, dreams and hallucinations: "I have dreams any time of the day, all day through. I even dream the present. And in that present, the dream and reality overlap. I cannot distinguish where dreaming leaves off and reality begins. I sometimes hear the singing of a bird, sometimes the beating of my own heart." (V, 125) Thus "Nemureru hito," even more so than "Bukiyō na tenshi," reads like a lengthy expansion of one of Hori's prose poems.

Much closer to "Seikazoku" in organization and style is "Rūbensu no giga." The hero's affection for an older woman and her daughter forms the thread upon which lyrical descriptions of Karuizawa are strung. The girl, like the waitress of "Bukiyō na tenshi," is another of his pure, angelic heroines, with a face Rubens might have painted. Though "Rūbensu no giga" may have been for the most part an exercise, here and there a passage stands out as the skillful synthesis of poetry and psychological description for which he had been striving. In this instance, the hero has been sitting in the dining room of a mountain lodge. A parrot is on a perch nearby. When a vivacious pretty girl he knows by sight and her latest escort bicycle up and enter the lodge, he feels vaguely envious, for which he takes his guardian angel to task:

The young man with the girl was altogether different from the Eurasian youths of the year before, not only in face but in the refinement of his entire appearance. Perfectly self-assured, he was every inch an aristocrat, a character from a Turgenev novel. Perhaps the girl

herself has lately become aware of the superiority of her companion over the others. . . . Pleasant as these notions were, he felt it best to leave off imagining things before he came too engulfed in a fiction of his own making.

He briefly debated with himself whether he would stay any longer or leave. All this time the parrot had kept up its imitation of human speech. The idea came to him that if he could understand the chatter, he would be able to make sense of the chaos in his heart.

He got up all of a sudden and walked clumsily through the lodge.

Outside he saw that the two bicycles had tumbled over. They lay in a bizarre position in the grass, their handlebars entwined like pairs of arms.

The girl's high-pitched laughter came to him from behind.

At the sound of it, a sensation as though he were hearing bad music welled up within him.

Bad music. Exactly so. Clearly the slightly silly angel who was assigned to watch over him had a tendency to play his lute off-key.

He never failed to be flabbergasted at the stupidity of his guardian angel. Not once had he ever dealt him the right cards. (I, 68-70)

His guardian angel? At the story's end, he believes he has finally learned to distinguish between the real girl and the Rubens-like figure of his own creation. But just then his bumbling angel appears in a strange guise to remind him of how much the make-believe impinges upon reality:

When evening came on he started back alone in the fading light to the hotel.

In the thick woods lining the path stood a large chestnut tree. His attention was drawn to a violent stir in its branches, as some presence in the treetop raced to and fro.

Thinking of his dim-witted guardian angel, he looked upward uneasily. With a series of quick leaps a dark gray animal descended the tree. It was a squirrel.

"Idiot squirrel!" he whispered for no reason and watched after it as it scampered off excitedly, tail curved over its back, to disappear in the shadows of the woods. (I, 77)

To read these stories now, so long after they were written, we may be hard pressed to find anything in Hori's devices that warrants much excitement: his descriptions of pastoral scenes may have charm and elegance, but we have read Turgenev ourselves; his demonstrations of the interplay between external objects and sensations may not be unimaginative, but by now we know Joyce and Virginia Woolf; Hori's decadents do not appear so very decadent nor his aristocrats so very aristocratic, for we have read The Great Gatsby; his imagery is sometimes bright and sparkling but does not arouse any great sense of wonder for us, for we have read Kawabata at his best. We are not ordinarily impressed with scientific inventions dating back half a century; neither can we much marvel over literary innovations just as old. But what we are jaded with today was stimulating and even provocative in Japan in the 1920's and 30's.

More of Hori's experiments with fiction appeared in 1930. Though not as ambitious as "Rūbensu no giga," they display a cleverness and breadth of imagination at times which merit a closer look by Japanese critics, and, whatever their faults, the stories are proofs that Hori's interests were considerably more varied when he was twenty-six than they were in his latter period.

"Nekutai nan" (The Necktie Caper) (Shinseinen, Mar.) and "Te no tsukerarenai kodomo" (The Unmanageable Children) (Bungei jidai, April) both deal with crime as an act undermining the foundations of commonplace

logic--a theme that had been employed by the French Surrealists.⁴ The title and elements of the plot clearly indicate the debt "Te no tsukerarenai kodomo" owes to Cocteau's Les Enfants Terribles. Violence figures in "Suizokkan" (The Aquarium) (Modan TOKIO enbukyoku, April) as well and serves to illustrate the horribleness of death. Again, the story is set against the dark streets and night spots of Tokyo, and again the plot deals with rivalry for a girl. This time she is one of the dancers in blond wigs in a chorus line. But Hori added a rare twist, with a scene taken from Cocteau's Le Grand Écart.⁵ One of the girl's suitors follows her after the show as she goes off with someone else to a small hotel. Out of jealousy he barges into the room of the lovers: "He boldly switched on the light. The scene inside the room was more of a surprise than he had bargained for. . . . There lay two nude female bodies in an unusual position, with arms and legs interlaced. The four limbs were so equally white, he could not tell whose they were. 'So after all,' Hata told me, 'it was a woman. If it had been a man, I don't know what I'd have done to him. But now I know that it's a woman. . . .' He smiled cheerfully." (V, 152) The story ends with the self-destruction of the dancer's female lover--a duplicate of the startling scene in Radiguet's Le Diable au Corps.⁶

"Jigon to boku" (The Dugong and I) (Bungei shunju, May) is drawn from Cocteau's Potomak.⁷ "Suetsumuhana" (The Saffron-Flower) (Wakakusa,

⁴Brown, p. 178.

⁵Jean Cocteau. The Miscreant. Trans. Dorothy Williams. London, 1958, pp. 108-109.

⁶Raymond Radiguet. The Devil in the Flesh. Trans. Kay Boyle. London, 1949, pp. 17-23.

⁷Jean Cocteau. Cocteau's World: An Anthology of Writings by Jean Cocteau. Ed. Margaret Crosland. London, 1972, p. 96.

Sept.) is the first instance in Hori's writings of his drawing inspiration from a classical Japanese work. He demonstrates here that too much fantasizing can lead to a ridiculous situation. The hero is rudely awakened when the girl of his dreams turns out to have a nose as bright red as that of the unfortunate lady in Genji monogatari (Tale of Genji). and, like Genji, he ends up with a foolish dab of red paint on his own nose.

These stories appeared when for the most part Japanese writers were divided into two camps, the Marxists and the bourgeois. Several of the latter had formed themselves into the Shin-kankaku-ha (Neo-Impressionist School) for the preservation of aesthetics in literature. The school formally dates from the first issue in October, 1924, of Bungei jidai and included such writers as Kawabata, Yokomitsu Riichi (1898-1947), and Nakagawa Yoichi. They embraced modernist practices in order to enliven Japanese prose and the nature of fiction, borrowing at random from Western movements and authors. Their attempts at enlarging the possibilities of language, their weaknesses, and their ultimate failures are described, among others, by Masao Miyoshi.⁸

The impact Bungei jidai had on young writers, however, cannot be overlooked. As a definite school, the movement was short-lived; Bungei jidai ceased publication in May, 1927. During its existence it printed several influential stories, such as Yokomitsu's "Haru wa basha ni notte" (Spring Comes in a Surrey) and Kawabata's "Izu no odoriko" (The Izu

⁸Masao Miyoshi. Accomplices of Silence. Berkeley, 1974. pp. 95-100.

Dancer), and some articles of considerable consequence for the upcoming generation of writers. If Hori read Yokomitsu's "Kankaku to katsudō" (Impression and Action) in the February, 1925, issue, he must have appreciated the Surrealist stance: ". . . The objective held by the Shin-kankaku-ha is the detonation of perceptions. Quite needless to say, this is to be accomplished with the vocabulary, poetry, and rhythm of literary style. Of course there is more to it than that. There are other manners of detonation; at times it results from the refracted angles of theme, at times from the leaps from one quiet line to the next, at times from the reversal of plot progression, from reiteration, and from velocity."⁹ And some of the untraditional stylistic elements of "Rūbensu no giga" had already appeared in Yokomitsu's fiction. An example from "Nichirin" (The Sun) of 1923: "He picked up a pebble and threw it deep into the forest. The forest shook off sunlight from several oak leaves and murmured."¹⁰

Despite this evidence of some inheritance, it cannot be argued that Hori was a direct successor of the Shin-kankaku-ha. In the heyday of the school, his energies were concentrated on Roba and Yama mayu, and his main interest lay in directly investigating the sources the Shin-kankaku-ha drew upon plus other French writers. At least in one area he had the lead over the Shin-kankaku-ha--they learned much of Cocteau from him. Furthermore, Hori clung to his own ideas of literary style,

⁹Quoted in Tanida, pp. 53-54.

¹⁰Yokomitsu Riichi. Yokomitsu Riichi zenshū. 1956. Vol. 1. p. 10.

cultivating a more standard and chaste language in preference to their determinedly eccentric, unidiomatic expressions and ungrammatical syntax.

The quarrel between the Shin-kankaku-ha and the Marxists was mainly over questions of style, not ideology. Thus there was a rapid change to the left, and many of the Shin-kankaku-ha deserted their school and affiliated themselves with the proletarian writers--the fate of Hori's Pipe Society. Those who remained pitted against the Marxists, such as Kawabata, Yokomitsu, and Nakagawa, pooled their resources and formed themselves anew into the Shinkō-geijutsu-ha (New School of Aesthetics) of 1930. The ranks swelled to about thirty members, both established writers and new faces. These included Nagai Tatsuo, Ryōtanji Yū, Ibuse Masuji, and long-time friends of Hori, Kobayashi Hideo, Kasahara Kenjirō, Fukada Kyūya, and Jinzai Kiyoshi. Yokomitsu, at thirty-two, was one of the oldest.

Hori's association with the group was extremely tenuous. Certainly he sympathized with their goals; he was adamant in his belief that an art based upon politics could offer him nothing in his quest for a formula for a literature that was both aesthetic and revealing of the essence of life and reality. He briefly but unequivocally repudiated leftwing literary theories in "Geijutsu no tame no geijutsu ni tsuite" (On Art-for-Art's-Sake) (Shinchō, 1930, Feb.). Taking up the remark of Nakano Shigeharu, by then a committed proletarian writer, that a program for art and a program for politics could not be interchanged, Hori defends what he believes is the "correct art" (tadashii geijutsu):

However great a political revolution, it cannot transform art. The most it can do is to suspend it temporarily. No revolution but one from within art itself will change it. And this will only be brought about by one new

masterpiece. Recently the proletarian revolution has created a hodgepodge of young artists and politicians. This, however, has resulted in nothing other than a needless proliferation of soiled handbills and pamphlets and speeches.

Our sole need is a single masterpiece such as to sweep our present works into the past. I leave it to a third party to speculate upon who shall write it, one of our own--Yokomitsu Riichi, Kobayashi Hideo, Fusa, or Nagai Tatsuo--or [the proletarian writers] Nakano Shigeharu, Takeda Shigerō, or Fujisawa Takeo. That this masterpiece come forth even a day sooner--this is the end to which all our efforts must be directed and to which all our writings must be devoted. (V, 417-18)

The anti-Marxist, pro-aesthetics position of the Shinkō-geijutsu-ha was put forth by Nakamura Murao in a manifesto, "Dare da? Hanazono o arasu mono wa!" (Who are They, Those Who Ravage the Flower Garden?), in the June, 1928, issue of Shinchō magazine: "Who are they in the flower garden who attempt to trample beneath their filthy, muddy boots all the beautiful blossoms, sparing only the cankerous, filthy flowers of red?" With such bombastic rhetoric he denied to ideological literature any kind of value, bemoaning "ism literature" (izumu no bungaku) while calling for "personal literature" (kosei no bungaku).¹¹ But his thesis was overly simplistic and testifies to the insubstantiality of the raison d'être of the Shinkō-geijutsu-ha. Neither did their works offer much to counteract the rising popularity of the Marxists. They were often a jumble of eroticism and flamboyant modernistic styles--in Itō Sei's words, "a vulgarization of the Shin-kankaku-ha."¹² Even Kawabata, in his defense of the intentions of young writers was forced to admit that they produced little that gained public attention.¹³ Thus the school did not long endure, and already by the end of 1903 it was disintegrating into many splinter groups.

¹¹Quoted in Tanida, p. 55.

¹²Quoted in Tanida, p. 56.

¹³Kawabata, p. 94.

Hori refused any large part in these internecine squabbles. Perhaps some fortunate insight gave him to understand that the best service he could perform for literature and the times was to study and work quietly on the quarterly journal of the Shinkō-geijutsu-ha, Bungaku (Literature). Like Roba, Bungaku was organized chiefly through Hori's efforts and took much of its direction from him. While Shi to shiron (Poetry and Poetics) was fading from the scene, Bungaku assumed its principles of the investigation and adsorption of the techniques and spirit of European, especially Surrealist, literature. Hori wrote "Bungaku no seitō na hōkō 0" (Toward a Proper Direction in Literature) to announce the new review in the Yomiuri shinbun, September 7 and 8, 1929. In this notice, he remarked upon the literary ills of the age and proposed Bungaku as a cure:

Of course literature is a matter of the individual. Sometimes superior individuals created new literary fashions. But it depended upon many serious writers to strengthen the fashions. Today, however, the situation is reversed, inasmuch as many serious writers have been overwhelmed and remain divided by frivolous fads, losing sight of new, serious directions.

We suffer from the lack of even a single direction. This is what must be given, and this is what we seven--Inukai Takeru, Kawabata Yasunari, Yokomitsu Riichi, Nagai Tatsuo, Fukada Kyūya, Yoshimura Tetsutarō, and I--believe to be our greatest task as we present this journal titled Bungaku.

Some have thought the name Bungaku somewhat wanting in color for the magazine of a group whose members are as young as we, but that does not trouble us. By daring to employ such a name, we mean to show our foremost intention, namely, the reevaluation of the very essence of literature. . . .

We number no more than seven in order to facilitate as much as possible the complexities of printing a journal. But I anticipate great things from the young writers about us. Happily many of them are students of contemporary foreign literature. They will strive to keep Bungaku supplied

with translations from first-rate modern authors such as Gide, Proust, Valéry, Cocteau, Breton, Mann, and Joyce. Such translations cannot but be of paramount assistance to us in our search for the proper direction in literature.

For example, the first section of Marcel Proust's À la Recherche du Temps perdu, Du côté de chez Swann, which will be serialized from the first issue, has become the center of interest of the greatest intellectuals in the world today. The translation, done by four young scholars of Proust [Kanda Tatsuo, Miyake Toshisuke, Satō Masaaki, and Yodono Ryūzō], is the finest available to date. (VI, 399-401)

The reason for naming the journal Bungaku may have been simply that which Hori gave here. Yet it seems more than a coincidence that the French Surrealists, under André Breton, had launched a journal in 1919 to which Valéry gave the title Littérature.¹⁴ Moreover, Bungaku curiously duplicated for a Japanese audience the devotion of Littérature to the esprit nouveau. As Hori promised in his announcement, Bungaku did introduce hitherto unknown Western authors via translation and explication, so much so that it took on the appearance of a journal of studies of Western literature. Hori's particular contributions in its six issues over a year and a half were stories, essays, and translations, some of which have been previously discussed.

Kokubo Minoru gives a detailed account of the role that the Shinkō-geijutsu-ha and Bungaku played in early Showa literary history.¹⁵ But in order to know Hori, it should be remembered that the movements and journals and the persons of those years all had a part in reinforcing his

¹⁴Brown, p. 177.

¹⁵Kokubo Minoru. Hori Tatsuo-ron. 1965. pp. 233-44.

conviction that the true realm of literature was the study of the beautiful, the personal, and the innermost heart of human beings. "Seikazoku" was the first fully ripened fruit which that conviction bore.

CHAPTER VI

THE SEASON OF DEATH

"It was exactly as though Death had opened a new season." (Shi ga atakamo hitotsu no kisetsu o hiraita ka no yō datta.) (I, 13) With these words, Hori began "Seikazoku," a story of a "holy family" and of the death of his teacher and friend, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke. It marked in many ways a turning of the seasons of Hori's life. In taking his own life, Akutagawa forced a new maturity upon Hori. His term of apprenticeship was ended as the season of his youth was closed forever.

"Seikazoku" appeared in 1930, a datable point in Hori's career when fame began to come to him. The story brought Hori into the eye of the general reading public as "Bukiyō na tenshi" had given him a name in the literary world. Earlier that year, Hori had made an appeal for a "masterpiece such as to sweep our present works into the past." Yokomitsu's "Kikai" (The Machine) with its interior monologue, and "Seikazoku," published respectively in September and November in the journal Kaizō, were the answers to that appeal. Together, they set a new standard of style for the literature of early Shōwa.¹

Akutagawa had committed suicide on July 24, 1927.

"To discuss Akutagawa Ryūnosuke is no simple matter for me," Hori wrote. "He is rooted too deeply within me. To view him with detachment demands that I also look at myself with the same detachment. It is more difficult to be objective about oneself than about anything else

¹Tanida, p. 63.

whatsoever. Nonetheless, the value of any literary criticism is measured by the degree of self-objectivity achieved by the critic." (V, 367) Thus, Hori undertook his evaluation of the writings that immediately preceded Akutagawa's death. This was his graduation thesis, "Akutagawa Ryūnosuke-ron: geijutsuka to shite no kare o ronzu" (On Akutagawa Ryūnosuke: A Discussion of the Artist), of 1929. Our chief concern in this thesis--one of Hori's lengthiest writings--is the relationship of Hori's views on Akutagawa's literature to the creation of his own.

We have seen how, in his childhood, Hori seemed to live in a world that was more imaginary than factual; his fantasies and dreams blended with the reality of life about him. Later, the literature of Europe, especially that of the twentieth century, furnished him with an avenue into worlds far removed. Foreign literature was for him the material with which to recreate other worlds--fictionalized worlds yet more revealing of the essence of life than what he believed confessional literature could be. He might be defining his own position as he writes of Akutagawa, "He had an immense sympathy for the statement of Anatole France that it is not from contact with people that one learns of life, but from contact with books. Moreover, Akutagawa had a great scorn for people who claimed that, despite their love of books, they did not understand life." (V, 371) Therefore, Hori continues, Akutagawa believed in "art derived from art" (geijutsu ni yoru geijutsu). Akutagawa looked to Poe, Baudelaire, and "the mad genius of Sōseki" (kichigai-jimita tensai no Sōseki). (V, 372) With the same philosophy, Hori turned to other writers.

Two opposing feelings regarding structure mark Hori's fiction. "Seikazoku" is a work plotted by that element in his character which had earlier made him a student of mathematics and philosophy. "Kaifukuki" follows a freer format, with a looseness of structure closer to diary. Kaze tachinu (Le Vent se lève) is an example of the many works that fall in between these extremes. In his selection of what Hori considered the best stories of Akutagawa, something of his opposing inclinations can be distinguished.

His criticism of "Shinkirō" (The Mirage) is noteworthy for what it reveals of the appeal of the poetic sketch of illusive impressions. "Shinkirō" also seems to be a lesson for Hori on the treatment of the theme of death: "His morbidity and the raw state of his nerves form a work like a Cézanne painting, in which colors exist scarcely dependent on form. No 'story' as such can be found anywhere in it. This, then, of all his fiction, is the one which best fulfills his desire for a story approximating poetry. Furthermore, the moving quality of the work lies in its undercurrent of dark, death-like fear. 'Shinkirō' is an allusion to the death that was closely pursuing him." (V, 400) But for Hori there was another work closer to perfection.

A firm structure and penetrating psychological depiction win Hori's unqualified praise of "Genkaku sanbō." Hori declares this story to be superior to Akutagawa's others in which no plot is evident; while it may not have the poetic beauty of "Shinkirō," "Genkaku sanbō" is on a higher plane. Works like "Shinkirō," he says, are pictures drawn in the colors of Akutagawa's own nerves. "Conversely, 'Genkaku sanbō' gives one the impression of architecture. What impressed me first of all in this

story was its structural beauty. Only then did I discover that, here and there on the interior walls of this magnificent edifice, fine paintings were hung. These paintings (that is, the details of the story) also commanded my admiration." (V, 401-2) Hori goes on to explain how he sees the details combined into a unified whole which captures the atmosphere of the gloom of the Genkaku household. The insightful descriptions of the psychology of the characters and the nature of the relationships between them work together to achieve a solid, three-dimensional beauty:

The works of Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, who is said to have the greatest structural power of all Japanese authors, are indeed rushing torrents of sentences, but many of them do no more than give the feeling of pictures and, in the final analysis, do not come up to "Genkaku sanbō" in terms of structure. If we search for such beauty in other authors, we shall discover it only in the great French Romantic, Balzac. But the few pages of "Genkaku sanbō" are a match for one-hundred from Balzac. To admit to the lavish beauty of "Genkaku sanbō" is to recognize the beauty of modern condensation.

His sentences here discard the brilliant tricks his talent was capable of and, by way of comparisons, expose the gaudiness of some of his prior works. (V, 402)

Thus Hori saw "Genkaku sanbō" as possessing virtues he sought to capture: a concise structure composed of vivid accounts of the interwoven emotions of the characters and the events that stir them. This was Hori's goal as he approached "Seikazoku."

The aesthetic distance between an author and his work is Hori's concern in his treatment of Akutagawa's "Kappa." At this stage, Hori was strong in his condemnation of confessional literature. Autobiography was the weakness he spied in "Kappa," in spite of its mythological setting, and which prompted him to declare it far inferior to "Genkaku sanbō" and a betrayal of Akutagawa's literary theories. True realism--an idea he

will repeat when he writes of Radiguet--does not result from copying reality but in giving life to one's concept of reality. "Genkaku sanbō," he claims, is realistic in that what it shows us is not the melancholy life lived by the author but a fictionalized life, which, by virtue of its distance from the author, is a more moving statement on the melancholy of life than strict autobiography is. "Genkaku sanbō," therefore, is realistic in the highest sense of the word, whereas "Kappa" is only a copy of Akutagawa's daily existence. All Akutagawa has done is to show us that existence highly fantasized, not fictionalized. (V, 403-4)

Further, Hori explains, "I feel that the most carefully described of the kappas is Tokku, the poet who commits suicide. What is more, no one else feels as strongly as I that Tokku is a portrait of Akutagawa. (Granted, I cannot help but see Akutagawa's own pain also within the insane sufferings of the philosopher Mag and the musician Craback.)" (V, 406)

Why Hori should have thought his view of Akutagawa in these characters was unique is a puzzle; critics at the time the story appeared generally shared that opinion.² It may have been that Hori, having been so close to the author, saw more of him and, according to his ideas on the desirability of objectivity, too much of him. Neither did Hori explain by what criteria he identified Akutagawa with Tokku but not with the narrator of "Shinkirō."

In his essay, Hori does not attempt an analysis of the motives for Akutagawa's suicide, feeling that an examination of Akutagawa's soul is a task too painful for him. Therefore, he does not treat such pieces as

²Beongcheon Yu. Akutagawa. Detroit, 1972. p. 89.

"Aru kyūyū ni okuru shuki" (Note to an Old Friend) and "Aru ahō no isshō" (A Fool's Life). These, he explains, he sees as extremely personal accounts of Akutagawa's mental condition, not primarily as artistic works. (V, 411-12) Yet, discussing "Haguruma," Hori notes that what struck him in this story was the resemblance it bears to Strindberg's Inferno. Both writers were tortured by a sense of being trapped between two extremes. The narrator of "Haguruma" expressed it as follows: "I can't describe them clearly, but they're something like the negative and positive poles of electricity. Whatever they are, these two contradictory forces are operating simultaneously within me." (V, 408-9) Strindberg resolved the contradiction of these forces, life and death, by turning to Christianity, but Akutagawa, as demonstrated in the dialogue with the zealous Christian, found no hope in religion. (V, 410) Taking this measure of Akutagawa's plight, Hori would go on in "Seikazoku" and "Kaifukuki" to his own resolutions of the dilemma of life versus death.

Hori closes his essay with a consideration of "Saihō no hito" (Man of the West). What he has to tell us of the identification of the author with Christ and of how both of them were driven to their own destruction is not essentially different from Kinya Tsuruta's point in "The Man Who Envied Christ, the Super-Fool: Akutagawa's Genius and Fool."³ But Hori sees yet another resemblance between Akutagawa and Christ. Akutagawa, in his craft as an artist, had a divine power to instruct and move men. The creator of fiction, like Christ as he spoke of the bride, the vineyard,

³ Kinya Tsuruta. "The Man Who Envied Christ, the Super-Fool: Akutagawa's Genius and Fool." Alaska and Japan: Perspectives of Past and Present. Ed. Tsugo Arai. Anchorage, 1972. pp. 123-35.

the donkey, and the laborer, speaks of what is before the eye. Christ and the writer are "post-journalists" (shijin ken j̄anarisuto). Hori seems to mean here the same ability he found in Hagiwara, Cocteau, and Picasso, that is, the power of the artist to open our eyes to the essential realities of life as they are manifested in the most trivial objects. As artists, Christ and Akutagawa worked miracles, demonstrating that the beauty of a single lily of the field is greater than Solomon in all his glory. (V, 412-13)

In a section of "Shijin mo keisan-suru," Hori overcame some of his reluctance to examine Akutagawa's suicide and its repercussions upon himself. "The true disciple," he writes, "does not copy the work of the master; he starts from where that work ended." "Life does not equal even one line of Baudelaire's poetry"--this is the point at which Akutagawa ended his work and life and the point from which Hori intends to recommence his. And as a beginning, Hori challenges Akutagawa's belief. Akutagawa's sentiment cannot be Hori's, even while he admits the wondrous qualities that "one line" may have. In Hori's view, the emotional power of a line depends upon the appropriateness of its place within a hundred pages: "The miraculous one line is not the one that exists simply of itself. It is the line born of the vast background of a hundred incidents and a thousand details. Akutagawa suffered out of his desire for one line of Baudelaire. And why should that desire have plunged him into such despair? Might it not have been because he confused one line of a poet with one line of a novelist? These two kinds of lines are inherently dissimilar. Should not Akutagawa have sought the one line within Dostoyevsky?" (V, 427-28)

Hori believed he saw what Akutagawa overlooked. Akutagawa's great expectations from art and his final disappointment have been traced by Tatsuo Arima in "Akutagawa Ryūnosuke: The Literature of Defeatism."⁴ He describes Akutagawa's sense of alienation from society and his search for an aesthetic order. Within the ordered world of art, Akutagawa thought to find relief from the hellish chaos of society. Art, however, was able to provide him with only a temporary repose.⁵ That there was no lasting relief in art is the anguish behind the eighth segment of "Aru ahō no isshō": "Though he considered all of human existence, there was nothing special worth having. But those violent blossoms of fire,-- those awesome fireworks in the sky, to hold them, he would give his life."⁶ To Hori's way of thinking, Akutagawa's demands from art were excessive; one has to wait patiently until art reveals beauty and to be content with that momentary revelation. Furthermore, art cannot exist of itself but only as the reverse side of life. For Akutagawa, art and life--like life and death--were contradictory forces. For Hori, they are complementary. This discrepancy between their outlooks originates in a difference in temperament. Hori was more capable of seeing life dispassionately from his stance as an observer. This is the spirit of detachment he wrote of six years earlier in "Kaitekishugi" and "Dai-ichi sanpo."

⁴Tatsuo Arima. "Akutagawa Ryūnosuke: The Literature of Defeatism." The Failure of Freedom. Cambridge, Mass., 1969. pp. 152-72.

⁵Ibid., pp. 159-60.

⁶Akutagawa Ryunosuke. A Fool's Life. Trans. Will Petersen. New York, 1970. p. 27.

The interdependency of opposites forms the theme of a brief story of May, 1930, "Shi no sobyō" (A Dessein by Death) (Shinchō). In "Seikazoku" and "Kaifukuki," he will expand upon the ideas he introduces in the story: the psychological is bound to the physiological; life and death form one entity--"The living and the dead are so very far, yet all the same so very near, like the head and tail of a one-sen coin" (V, 162); to love means to cause pain; the savior and the executioner are one--"I suddenly began to wonder if my angel was not actually a secret agent of death, disguised as an angel." (V, 166) In particular, the reconciliation of life and death--a kind of shōji-ichinyō from Buddhism--is his theme in "Seikazoku," as their irreconcilability was Akutagawa's theme in "Haguruma."

Hori, in his childhood, knew great love and security. In the same shitamachi, Akutagawa suffered from the coldness of those about him, fears of insanity, and poverty, all of which created a bitter antagonism toward society. Thus, his predicament was the tension between his ties to a despised society and his commitment to an art to pull him away from society. Yet art could not provide him with the refuge for which he searched with such desperation. Hori had no such reasons to regard society with Akutagawa's hostility, and, accordingly, what he sought from art in the way of escape was less intense.

Nakamura Shin'ichirō points out that Hori had a calmness of spirit that Akutagawa lacked, and that, even when Hori did write of the shitamachi in "Yōnen jidai," he transformed it into an unthreatening and poetic place. Ordinarily, however, his settings were the gentle, insular

atmosphere of Fujimi Sanatorium, Karuizawa, and the mountain resorts.⁷ Perhaps, then, to reconcile the realities of life with art was an easier task for Hori. Existence lost its harshness in the soft melancholy of his fictional worlds.

But none of the solutions came easily. From the shock of Akutagawa's death to "Seikazoku" was a difficult three-year period of having to come to terms with the fact of death.

He suffered another attack of pleurisy at the end of 1927. His mother's death, Akutagawa's, and then his own near escape--death seemed to be remorselessly haunting him, and it often required an effort not to give way to despair. A letter of April 30, 1928, to Jinzai is full of morbidity yet tells of his determination for the future. It was written from the town of Yugawara, where he was recuperating:

. . . I show no sign at all of improvement and every day feel wretched. Maybe it's so very depressing because I'm alone. But still, I don't want to see any of my friends. I don't want to go back to Tokyo either. I don't want to stay on at this hot spring either. I have no idea what to do; there's no letup to this nervous feeling that death is nearby. I've let hardly anyone know about my coming to Yugawara. I don't intend to write the name of my inn in this letter. I don't want so much as one letter from anyone. Don't get in touch until I get back to Tokyo. I hate all the people who have ever known me even slightly. If I can creep away from this despair, I expect to have a new personality. Those people who have known me in the past will be the ones least capable of understanding my new personality. This is how I feel. (VII, 106-7)

Even the publication of "Bukiyō na tenshi" and the notice and praise which it brought him did little to assuage his gloom. On February 12, 1929, he wrote to Jinzai:

⁷Nakamura Shin'ichirō. "Hori Tatsuo." Hori Tatsuo. Ed. Nihon bungaku kenkyū shiryō kankō-kai. 1973. p. 4.

Once again these days I cannot bear being in the house so haven't been able to write you. Every day I wander around Tokyo. I do nothing but go to films. Except for "Hatoba" [The Harbor], which we saw together, they are all boring. But none the wiser, I slink into the theaters. Like slinking into a hideout. I'm absolutely no good these days. The happier I look to others, the more miserable I feel. What undeserved criticism and undeserved praise I get! I don't want that. I just want love. But I know one thing-- while he lives, a poet is never really loved by anyone. No matter how you live, the perplexities of life! I'm forcing myself to stay in today to work on the translation of Cocteau's Lettre à Jacques Maritain for the March issue of Yama mayu. A problem of art serving God. (VII, 113)

No one can say now what Hori meant then by his rather maudlin plea for love. It may have been his need for acceptance and companionship from the young writers of Roba and Yama mayu. Tanida's speculation is that he was alluding to a young woman. The mother and daughter who figure in "Rūbensu no giga" were modeled upon two women whom he had met in Karuizawa through Akutagawa. The mother was Katayama Hiroko. Her daughter had some literary talent and wrote poems and stories under the pen name of Fusa. Evidently Akutagawa had known the mother some years before but was then attracted to the daughter.⁸ Fusa, then, appears to have been the woman who, according to Yoshida Seiichi, gave Akutagawa his "last experience with new love," and the one for whom Akutagawa wrote a number of poems such as "Koshibito" (The Northerner). She was also the "woman who was his intellectual match" in segment thirty-seven of "Aru ahō no isshō."⁹

This triangle between mother, daughter, and Akutagawa was further complicated when Hori felt himself drawn to Fusa, for herself and for the

⁸Tanida, p. 76.

⁹Yoshida Seiichi. Akutagawa Ryūnosuke. 1942. p. 275.

elements of her mother within her. He wrote of this situation in "Rūbensu no giga" and developed the theme further in "Seikazoku." He was still occupied with it ten years later in "Nire no ie" (The House Under the Elm) and Naoko.

In the years before "Seikazoku," Hori had been conducting a pains-taking search for the proper function of literature and had been striving for the perfect literary form; thus he had turned from poetry to fiction, took a stand against the confessional tradition, and had rejected both proletarian literature and the excesses of the Shinkō-geijutsu-ha. All this he did for the sake of a poetic, psychological work of fiction. The essay "Shijin mo keisan-suru" gives some indication of his objectives.

The role of author he was devising for himself can be discerned in his comparison of the methods behind the writing of Le Rouge et le Noir and The Idiot. Taking a clue from Gide's criticism of Dostoyevsky, Hori elaborates on the powerful presence of the author's mind in The Idiot, and on how the work is a dialogue between Dostoyevsky and God rather than between Dostoyevsky and the reader. Yet, "very rare is the man who can endure the pain of carrying on a dialogue with God." And this is a pain which Hori rejects. For his own purposes, he elects Stendhal's method, whereby the author conscientiously withdraws from his work. Stendhal's will directs Julien Sorel in order that Julien himself, and not Stendhal, moves the reader. (V, 426-27) Whether we agree with Hori's analysis or not, it testifies to his reluctance to indulge in confessional literature and to make a display of his own soul-searching upon the pages as Akutagawa did in "Kappa." Always temperamentally reserved, he seems to have almost had a timidity regarding life; as early as his kōtōgakkō days he construed

his shyness into a philosophical stance of aloofness, and the distance he kept between himself and life he often maintained between himself and his literature. Even in works which critics take as the most autobiographical, it cannot be automatically assumed that we are seeing an unadorned Hori. His heroes amount to a kind of self-creation, not a betrayal of the self he was.

To disguise the self behind a skillfully fabricated account of society was Stendhal's method, Hori claims, and, later it became the method of Cocteau and Raymond Radiguet. Elsewhere he elaborated upon the advantage for literature in the elimination of the author from his work. Marleigh Ryan has discussed the traditional belief in Japan that the autobiographical, highly subjective work is the most sincere and therefore the highest form of literature.¹⁰ Hori challenges that belief:

What we know as Romanticism began from a blend of the literary work and reality. Since that time the relationship between the two has steadily deepened. As a result, the work has become the author's confession. Confessional literature is by far the most naive type. When a suffering human being writes, "I suffer," he differs in no way from a bird when it sings. If we are to be moved by his pain, the further that pain is removed from his own heart, the better.

By this criterion, Gide is still a Romanticist. There is too much of the confessional in his works.

But anything that could be considered confessional is scarcely evident in the writings of Cocteau and Radiguet. The works have been perfectly divorced from reality. It is this quality that makes them the more moving. (V, 431)

Hori was referring to what French critics consider the nouveau classicisme of Cocteau and Radiguet.¹¹ Stendhal's La Chartreuse de

¹⁰Marleigh Ryan. "Modern Japanese Fiction: 'Accommodated Truth'." The Journal of Japanese Studies. Vol. 2. No. 2 (Summer, 1976). pp. 249-66.

¹¹David Noakes. Raymond Radiguet. Vol. 181 of Poètes d'Aujourd'hui. Paris, 1968. p. 6.

Parme had encouraged Cocteau in the direction of objectivity in the novel. Thus he created Thomas l'Imposteur, a work of classical simplicity and clarity.¹² His Thomas is a purely fictional character who represents Cocteau's truth more completely than autobiography could.¹³ Yet, if there was a spirit besides Akutagawa's that hovered over Hori as he wrote "Seikazoku," it was Raymond Radiguet's. Cocteau belongs essentially to Hori's youth as Rilke, Proust, and Mauriac belong to his later periods. But when Hori found Radiguet, he found a philosophy of literature so complementary to his own that it figured in his art year after year, in one form or another. Therefore, any student of Hori cannot ignore his explanation of the immense appeals Radiguet had for him. These were enumerated in "Rēmon Rajīge" (Raymond Radiguet), an essay for the January, 1930, issue of Bungaku.

First of all, Hori notes Radiguet's dictum, "Make an effort to be commonplace" (Heibon de aru yō ni doryoku-seyo). (Iv, 83) This is his interpretation of Radiguet's often-cited advice to Cocteau, Il faut faire des romans comme tout le monde.¹⁴ By so saying, Radiguet denounced the tendency of the newer writers of his day to appear original. He himself aimed for a simplicity of art and followed the example of La Princesse de Clèves in the composition of his novel, Le Bal du Comte d'Orgel. Like Radiguet, Hori avoided literary extremes; we have seen his sobriety in

¹²Knapp, p. 69.

¹³Wallace Fowlie. The History of a Poet's Age. Bloomington, Ind., 1966. p. 44.

¹⁴Jean Cocteau. My Contemporaries. Ed. Margaret Crosland. London, 1967. p. 51.

stories such as "Bukiyō na tenshi," written while others of the Shinkō-geijutsu-ha were striving for originality and achieved mostly eccentricity.

Hori's notions on Radiguet stem from critiques by Cocteau and Henri Massis, but Hori made a discovery for himself. Perhaps because he was of a culture which strongly emphasizes shame in its moral code, Hori thought he detected the consequences of a sense of shyness or "shame" (haji) and "secretiveness" (kakushidate) in Radiguet. These two elements, Hori explains, were owing to his youth (Radiguet died at twenty). He re-emphasizes that Radiguet's Le Diable au Corps and Le Bal are pure fictionalizations, that is, not confessional. "And I admit that this is the only kind of novel that interests me these days. . . . What I found most effective was the purity and great frankness of the psychological analysis in Le Bal in particular. When I tried to divine Radiguet's state of mind as he wrote such fiction, by pure accident I stumbled upon his great sense of 'shame.' For the first time I realized how priceless a thing 'shame' is." Radiguet was criticized for his "dryness" or lack of emotion, but Hori finds the "dryness" is the natural outcome or "the reverse side" of "shame." (IV, 86-87) What this seems to have meant to Hori is that when an author, out of a sense of personal reserve, declines an active role in the scene, he is capable of greater objectivity and, consequently, of truer depictions of human character. Tanida claims this view of Radiguet was a significant discovery.¹⁵ Perhaps it was, in that it assisted Hori to clarify his particular literary position. We may, however, have some reservations concerning its applicability. To judge from personalities, Hori's theory has more validity for himself than for Radiguet. None of the accounts of Radiguet's life tells of

¹⁵Tanida, p. 61.

any such modesty but, rather, of the opposite. Moreover, if it is "shame" that produces objectivity in literature, we may want to ask Hori why the Japanese, with all their consciousness of "shame," have concentrated overwhelmingly on writing subjective novels.

Political and social realities play an infinitesimal part in all of Hori's fiction. Little of the chaotic conditions engendered in Japan by the Marxists or militarists is reflected in his works of the 1920's and 30's. But for several details regarding the railway system, it is almost impossible to assign a time to Naoko, and this he wrote while Japan was waging World War II. Hori intentionally neglected timely social conditions in favor of a timeless, art-for-art's-sake literature. Here, too, he could almost be speaking of himself and his reaction to his own times; he is discussing the attitude of calm behind Le Bal, which Radiguet wrote amidst the disorder of post-war Paris.

We would do well to compare Radiguet's Le Bal with Paul Morand's Ouvert la Nuit. Morand faithfully depicted the disorder of society in all its detail. But, unlike Morand, Radiguet was not intimidated by the disorder. Needless to say, he had to place his characters within their proper social frame. He did so not for a realistic depiction of manners but for an accurate analysis of their mental states, for the creation of "an atmosphere necessary for the development of an emotion."

Thus, as Radiguet proved, a tranquil art can exist.
(IV, 87-88)

Hori further defends the value of the commonplace in literature: Did Radiguet depict only ordinary emotions? Yes, contends Hori, speaking as the champion of the ordinary in modern Japanese literature. "But never before was ordinary psychology written of in such a precise and refined manner." In his homage to Radiguet's technique, Hori was overly affected by Cocteau's enthusiasm for Le Bal; yet his defense of the

avoidance of extremes is revealing. By quoting Le Bal for the purpose of illustrating Radiguet's intentions, he also provides us with a clear insight into his own: "Do the emotions that stir the heart of a woman like Madame d'Orgel belong to the past? A combination of such a sense of duty with so much weakness perhaps seems incredible in our day Can it be that today fidelity has less appeal on the score that irregularity offers more savour? But the unconscious reactions of a pure soul are still stranger than the complexities of vice."¹⁶ "And," Hori adds, while inveighing again against the "fearful exaggerations and decadence" of his contemporaries, "it is the strangeness of the very commonplace emotions that moves us, the readers." (IV, 88-89) The commonplace in literature--a guiding principle for Hori. What, however, would he have made of the "exaggerations and decadence" in such acclaimed authors as Tanizaki, Kawabata, and Mishima Yukio (1925-70)? But those who accept Hori's thesis will always be drawn to his kind of dateless literature. With a last quote from Radiguet, Hori unknowingly predicted the essence of the author he was to become: Musset fit son oeuvre sans se préoccuper du romantisme. De même Jean Cocteau écrit sans viser au modernisme. Il y a en lui assez de nouveauté pour qu'il puisse se permettre de respirer une rose.¹⁷

"Seikazoku," then, was composed according to a definite, well-thought-out formula, which was supplied in large part by Radiguet's definition of

¹⁶ Raymond Radiguet. Count d'Orgel. Trans. Violet Schiff. New York, 1953.

¹⁷ Raymond Radiguet. Œuvres Complètes. Paris, 1952. pp. 461-62.

Le Bal as a novel in which the adventure element in the psychology: Roman où c'est la psychologie qui est romanesque.¹⁸ Accordingly, its language is simple and direct; it deals with the emotional life of ordinary characters in order to "remind us," Radiguet-fashion, "of the grandeur of ordinary feelings."¹⁹ And, as in Le Bal, the austere plot functions solely to provide cues for the successive stages of the emotions. Whether Hori achieved the high level of objectivity he admired in Radiguet is questionable. Henri, his young hero, is a much clearer representation of Hori than François is of Radiguet. Yet, "Seikazoku" is far from strict reportage. Considering his many departures from factual autobiography, we can only safely conclude that as Henri views Kuki's death, he mirrors some aspects of Hori as he viewed Akutagawa's.

The story begins as Mrs. Saiki is on her way to the funeral of Mr. Kuki. She can make no progress in her car due to the crush of spectators. She descends and is assisted out of the crowd by an unknown young man, Kōno Henri. He leads her to the safety of a small café. Only then does she recognize him--he was the young man with Kuki at the Mampei Hotel in Karuizawa several years ago. Even then she noticed a similarity between Kuki and Henri.

He still remembers her and how in Karuizawa she seemed to be sacred and unapproachable. As they are leaving the café, Henri thinks to give her his calling-card. He finds he does not have one of his own so writes

¹⁸Wallace Fowlie. "Raymond Radiguet." The Sewanee Review. Vol. LXI, No. 4 (Autumn, 1953), p. 529.

¹⁹Martin Turnell. "The Novels of Raymond Radiguet." The Commonweal. Vol. LXII, No. 15 (July 15, 1955) (New York), p. 379.

his name on the back of someone else's, which he happens to have. It is an old one of Kuki's. This reconfirms Henri's strange resemblance to Kuki, a paradoxical resemblance in that he is temperamentally the exact opposite of Kuki.

One day, as Henri is at work organizing Kuki's library, he finds an old letter to Kuki in one of the volumes. It is written in a woman's hand and reads, "Let us try to discover who can torment the other more." (I, 20) That evening he finds a message waiting for him in his cluttered room. It is an invitation from Mrs. Saiki. From the handwriting, he knows it was she who wrote the letter to Kuki.

Mrs. Saiki introduces Henri to her daughter, Kinuko, but the two young people are distant with each other. In the course of the conversation, Henri admits he sold a book Kuki had given him. It was a collection of paintings by Raphael.

Henri grows more familiar with Mrs. Saiki and Kinuko until one night Kuki appears to him in a dream. He shows Henri a painting that at first he takes to be a Raphael "Madonna and Child." Looking more carefully, he finds the Madonna has Mrs. Saiki's face and the child has Kinuko's. When he awakes, he finds another envelope from Mrs. Saiki. It contains a money order with which he is to buy back the book of paintings.

That afternoon, as Mrs. Saiki is lost in thought over the book, Henri is escorted by Kinuko through the wild roses in the garden.

Since Kuki's death, Kinuko has become closer to her mother, for she herself is growing into womanhood. Henri comes to call one day when Mrs. Saiki is out. Both he and Kinuko are agitated in each other's company, and Henri leaves hastily. He begins to feel a danger from the

two women, just as Kuki was threatened by Mrs. Saiki. He keeps away from the house, only to fall into confusion and boredom.

At this point, he begins an affair with a dance-hall girl, even while he has vague suspicions that the one he really loves is Kinuko.

For reasons unknown to her, Kinuko is disturbed by Henri's prolonged absence. She and her mother are on a drive around the park one morning, when they catch sight of Henri with another girl. Neither one, however, acknowledges to the other what she saw.

Kinuko's depression increases over the days. She does not realize her despondency stems from her jealousy. When she hears that Henri's girl friend works in a dance-hall, she is relieved and happy, believing Henri is seeing this low-class girl only to avoid seeing her. Therefore, Kinuko reasons, she must be the one Henri actually loves.

Henri finally returns to the house to announce he is going on a trip. Kinuko's belief that he is suffering on her account grows all the stronger at this news.

On the train, Henri can no longer deny that he loves Kinuko. Ill and exhausted, he stops at a gloomy seaside town. Everywhere he sees symbols of death. Then he realizes his morbidity derives from his constant preoccupation with the dead Kuki.

With Henri's departure, Kinuko falls ill. She, too, now realizes she is in love and broods upon her unkind treatment of Henri. Mrs. Saiki comes in with a postcard from Henri. Kinuko abruptly asks her if Henri is going to die. Is Kinuko in love with Henri? she wonders. Is Kinuko suffering now as she did when Kuki died? Finally she answers her daughter, "Of course not. He may be possessed by Kuki, but that's the very reason

he'll be saved, don't you agree?" (I, 42) Kinuko looks up wonderingly at her, and her face takes on the look of the infant gazing up at the Madonna.

Out of the many commentaries and critiques dealing with "Seikazoku," that of Kawasaki Toshihiko is one of the most interesting.²⁰ Kawasaki takes great care in analyzing the structure of the story by the use of the tools of New Criticism: metaphor, symbol, archetype, and myth.

The first sentence, ". . . death had opened a new season," introduces the paradoxical theme of the work, as one normally considers death as an end. No such idiom as shi ga kisetso o hiraita exists in Japanese. The story, then, is one of rebirth after death, a theme which originates from Christianity. Mrs. Saiki belongs to the netherworld. For example, she is like one dead in her car on the way to the funeral, only to be led to the café, another macabre atmosphere. Henri, however, symbolizes revival after death. He is the spiritual son of Kuki and is intended to carry on with his spiritual inheritance. But, due to his youth, he does not have the wisdom to recognize his role. Gradually, Mrs. Saiki reveals herself to be no longer the life-giving Holy Mother but Maria Dolorosa-- Our Lady of Sorrows. Henri must abandon his worship of her in favor of the young daughter, even though the development of love is hindered. Kinuko desires to remain a bystander in life--a child.

According to Kawasaki, the theme follows a "pattern of archetypal experience."²¹ That is, "Seikazoku" is based upon a timeless principle

²⁰Kawasaki Toshihiko. "'Seikazoku': Hori Tatsuo." Bunseki hihyō nyūmon, 1967. pp. 211-38.

²¹Ibid., p. 222.

of progression from an old generation's death to a new generation's love and life. That this new generation finds the path to love so difficult represents the difficulty of human salvation.

It is difficult to quarrel with Kawasaki, and there is much proof for his opinion that "the metaphors within 'Seikazoku' function coherently, but never are they firm; they are employed as allusions to ill-defined emotions."²² But some of the complexities of metaphors and symbols, which he discovers, imply Hori had a much greater knowledge or subconscious understanding of Christianity than we have any reason to suppose he did. Hori's interest in Christianity would increase in later years.

In his analysis of imagery, Kawasaki proceeds to demonstrate how love develops while Henri and Kinuko are as yet unaware. Roses, for example, symbolize the blooming of love, but a love which is painful to admit. When Henri is alone in the room with Kinuko, they both imagine they are boring the other and become bored themselves. After a time, the atmosphere becomes suffocating. After Henri leaves, Kinuko feels a slight headache which she attributes to the tiresome time she spent in Henri's company. "But the truth was her headache came from being too long near the roses." The roses are the pure love of Henri and Kinuko. They give off a heady scent which requires some boldness to bear. Henri, too, temporarily denies the roses and Kinuko for an easier love with the dance-hall girl. "This alternative between the roses and the dance-hall girl," Kawasaki remarks, "is perfectly in keeping with Hori's literature, based as it is upon the fin de siècle literature of Europe."²³ He may not realize

²²Ibid., p. 229.

²³Ibid., p. 224.

how accurate he is. Although the rose-love symbol is not employed in Le Bal, the scene is otherwise drawn from two in Radiguet's novel.²⁴

Henri's final resolution, described only very cryptically by Hori, is seen by Kawasaki as a "rite of passage." Henri is tormented by "secret signals of death" (shi no angō) and the shadow of Kuki. Finally he realizes that the source of all his bewilderment regarding life is his being possessed by Kuki. Kuki's death, he feels keenly, is embedded within his own soul; he feels the closeness of it while, paradoxically, feeling it to be very distant. Now he knows an indescribably happy relief. The lesson that Henri finally takes from the bitter experience of the death of his beloved Kuki is that death does not succeed death, life is the reverse side of death. The new season brought on by Kuki's death is the season of life for Henri. Henri's place in the cycle of life and death is symbolized by the sea, the "mother of all life" (zenseimei no haha) and the archetype of "death and rebirth" (shi to saisei).²⁵ Kinuko as well is rejuvenated and sanctified by being loved and by loving.²⁶

Kawasaki's critique leaves little more to suggest, except that the role of Kuki as a possessing spirit is further implied by his name, meaning "nine demons." As for the name "Henri," it is an almost unheard-of Japanese personal name; evidently Hori chose it for that reason.

By now it should be clear that "Seikazoku" owes a considerable debt to Le Bal. But the great discrepancy between the two cannot be passed

²⁴Count d'Orgel, p. 126 and p. 162.

²⁵Kawasaki, pp. 231-33.

²⁶Ibid, pp. 237-38.

over. "Seikazoku" is an account of a process from spiritual death to live through love. Le Bal traces the course of a love that leads to the death of the heart. C'est ce bal qui ouvrira la saison.²⁷

In this case, the season is the living death of Madame d'Orgel. With Radiguet, love was destructive, the person one loved was the enemy, and even in a love that seemed pure, moral degradation was present.²⁸ Life which succumbs to death, equally the theme of Cocteau's Thomas l'Imposteur and Le Grand Écart, is explained by Cocteau in Le Rappel à l'Ordre:

Death is the underside of life, which is why we can't visualize it, but the idea that it forms the weft of our human being keeps obsessing us. We come to feel our deaths pressing against us, yet doing so in such a way that any contact with it is impossible. Imagine a text whose sequel we cannot know because it is printed on the back of a page only one side of which we can read. Well, the outer face and the inner--a convenient expression on the human level though probably nonsense on the superhuman--this vague reverse side creates around our acts, our words, our least gestures a hollow which dizzies our soul as certain parapets cause the heart to flip over.²⁹

But, with a kind of Buddhistic enlightenment, Henri understands that there can be no life without death. His enlightenment and salvation are wrought by the redemptive quality of love.

That love should figure so importantly in Hori's scheme is by no means unreasonable. In "Bukiyō na tenshi," "Rūbensu no giga," and

²⁷Œuvres Complètes, p. 311.

²⁸George Woodcock. "The Living Dead--VII: Raymond Radiguet." The London Magazine. Vol. 7, No. 5 (May, 1960), p. 68.

²⁹Trans. Brown, pp. 229-30.

"Seikazoku," Hori sets up two figures of love, the impure and the pure, symbolized by the bad woman and the young lady. From this point on, he will neglect the carnal to concentrate on purity as personified by woman. A concept of the Jung school of psychology, as Kawasaki points out, is that the male symbolizes the anima, or spiritual fulfillment, with the female form.³⁰ Chaste love, as the highest spiritual state, is the basis for much the greater part of Hori's best fiction and is the most valuable key for understanding the work of his entire lifetime.

Le Bal and "Seikazoku" also share a certain similarity of style. Both the French and the Japanese sentences are the antithesis of the loquacious and tiresome. They are the swiftest and most condensed descriptions of a scene and an emotion. But a comparison of both works will reveal that the style works more effectively for Radiguet than for Hori. Hori's story is much the shorter--thirty-one pages to Radiguet's one hundred seventy-eight. Consequently, the short, stark sentences tend to give the reader the effect of reading a long telegram. The greater length of Le Bal furnishes Radiguet with margin for more coloration of scene and psychology. Moreover, the brevity of "Seikazoku" makes impossible the wider range of characters and complications which relieve any monotony arising from the essential simplicity of the plot. Despite Hori's contention that Radiguet did not write of social conditions, the characters of Le Bal do speak and act according to their role in society. Most Western readers will probably find Henri's epiphany less

³⁰Kawasaki, p. 237.

interesting, for it comes about undramatically, merely by his gazing at the sea. Madame d'Orgel reaches her resolution through the consequences of the sudden appearance of a highly colorful and tragic figure, a Russian Prince just escaped from the Bolsheviks. By comparison, Mrs. Saiki, Henri, and Kinuko live in an atmosphere so entirely divorced from the rest of the world, it will seem to some readers to be an almost sterile vacuum.

Considered for itself, however, when "Seikazoku" appeared, its value lay in the fact that it showed that the Western classical method was a perfectly adequate instrument for exploring the intricacies of contemporary psychology. It showed, too, that ordinary feelings were not an exhausted theme and that the study of them was by no means incompatible with the sort of psychological discovery which young Japanese writers were seeking. It suggested to the Japanese literary world that modernistic technical innovations were not really all that necessary. "With this work," Kawabata wrote at the time, "the author took the new spirit of foreign literature and gave it another existence after his own tastes such as no other author has done. As a statement of the totality of the author's being, it is one of the representative forms of new Japanese fiction. . . . [In regard to its careful psychological descriptions,] anything like its style has rarely been seen before in Japanese fiction. Possibly it is closer to the truth to say 'never before.' As proof, consider the vividness and realism with which the processes of the heart are drawn."³¹

³¹Kawabata, pp. 142-43.

Hori's avowed intention of writing fiction according to Radiguet's theories of the novel were in many ways fulfilled. The success of "Seikazoku" lies partially in his appropriations of passages from Le Bal; two very obviously borrowed scenes are Henri's being discovered in the park and his announcement of his trip.³² But important elements of Thomas l'Imposteur as well are incorporated into Hori's story. His interest in the phenomenon of a young man's attraction to the daughter via the mother may well have originated from his experiences with Fusa and her mother. But the figures of the two women in "Seikazoku" must be more fictional than factual. Their great likeness to Madame de Bormes and Henriette cannot be denied; and Hori's mother and daughter relationship is too close to that described by Cocteau to be coincidence. Hori's scene, wherein Kinuko lies ill in bed as she agonizes over Henri, is only slightly altered from Cocteau's.³³ If Radiguet and Cocteau looked to La Princesse de Clèves and La Chartreuse de Parme for models, Hori took his sources from Le Bal and Thomas l'Imposteur. Many of his poems and stories prior to "Seikazoku," as we have seen, are also heavily indebted to some Western work or other.

It is not extraordinary that Hori, at the age of twenty-six, leaned heavily on other works. Proust did the same.³⁴ As the years pass, he

³²Count d'Orgel, pp. 128-29 and pp. 137-38.

³³Jean Cocteau. The Imposter. Trans. Dorothy Williams. London, 1957.

³⁴Wallace Fowlie. "Raymond Radiguet." p. 530.

will gradually learn to do without such dependency. With the increase in confidence in his own abilities, the temptations to employ another writer's style, image, character, or thought will gradually weaken.

But there is much in his works to encourage a reader to play a game of source hunting. And there is considerable value in the game if it does not become an end in itself. "Any serious study or analysis of any author includes consideration of the component parts of his work, their meaning and relationship, how they were suggested to the author, and what they mean to him and his work."³⁵ Literary indebtedness need not imply a lack of originality.

As an example of how effectively Hori could adapt other material for his own purposes, we may consider the motorcar incident from Le Bal and the corresponding scene of the funeral procession from "Seikazoku." Radiguet's purpose was to illustrate the social gap which divided the crowd from the idle rich:

They were only at the Orleans Gate. A procession of cars was held up. The crowd formed a guard of honour. Since there was dancing at Robinson's the tramps who prowled round the city walls and the decent folk of Montrouge, came to this gate to admire smart society.

The idlers who composed the gaping crowd, flattened their noses against the windows of the cars to look at the owners. The women pretended to think the ordeal charming. The delay at the toll-gate was unduly prolonged by the attendant. Those who were nervous at being inspected and coveted, as behind a shopwindow, experienced a slight attack of faintness, as they did at the Grand-Guignol. This rabble was the inoffensive revolution. A parvenu touches the necklace at her throat; but to an elegant woman these glances add value to her pearls.

³⁵J. T. Shaw, "Literary Indebtedness and Comparative Literary Studies," Comparative Literature (Carbondale, Ill., 1973), p. 85.

Side by side with the imprudent ones the timid with a shiver raise their sable collars.

There was in fact more thought of revolution inside the cars than outside. The people were too greedy for a gratuitous entertainment every night and this evening there was a big crowd. After the Saturday programme at the cinemas of Montrouge, the public enjoyed an additional free entertainment; it was like the continuation of a luxury film.³⁶

With the same setting, Hori creates a vastly dissimilar mood and introduces his major motif, the constant presence of death. Thus, it is not to a dance hall that Mrs. Saiki is going, but to a funeral. It is no continuation of a luxury film which the crowd sees now behind the window glass, but a lady who is almost dead, a grief-stricken Madonna:

The road that led to the house of the deceased gradually became congested with automobiles. Because of the narrowness of the road, the line of traffic was more often at a standstill than in motion.

It was March. Although it was still cold, the air no longer assailed the lungs as fiercely as it had. A curious crowd gathered around the procession and flattened their noses against the windows to look at the owners. Their breath clouded the glass. The people inside the cars were uneasy but smiled back as though they were on their way to a dance.

Behind one of the windows was a lady, her eyes closed, her head resting wearily against a cushion, still as a corpse. Spotting her, the crowd speculated in low tones on who she might be. It was Mrs. Saiki, a widow.

The car had never been stopped for as long as this. The prolonged inactivity seemed to revive her from her temporary death. With a word to her chauffeur, she opened the door herself and got out. At that moment, the line of cars started moving, and her own was forced to proceed ahead and leave the mistress behind. (I, 13-14)

The success or failure of each of Hori's works lies in the extent to which it moves the reader. As long as the work produces an independent

³⁶Count d'Orgel, pp. 33-35.

artistic effect, it has artistic originality, whatever its debt. "The original author is not necessarily the innovator or the most inventive, but rather the one who succeeds in making all his own, in subordinating what he takes from others to the new complex of his own artistic work."³⁷ In this sense, Hori is an original author. As he wrote, "This matter of influence--I see it as something above and beyond influence when one very consciously accepts it and creates with it an effect totally different from that of the original."³⁸

For his original works, Hori seems to have looked to Western models to a much greater extent than any of his contemporaries did. He hinted at his motives in "Akutagawa Ryūnosuke-ron: geijutsuka to shite no kare o ronzu." To avoid writing confessional literature, he found in Karuizawa a place and an atmosphere which was alien to the physical circumstances of his life. Surely he valued the worlds within Western novels for the same reasons. What he, as an original artist, had to do was to recast them aesthetically into Japanese stories conveying his personal and cultural attitudes to life.

The better appreciation of Hori's artistic methods depends a great deal upon examining his borrowings and discovering the relationships of the source material to his use of it. How central a role influence played upon Hori and how vital a part it must be of any serious study of his literature is demonstrated by Hori's quoting from Gide, "The best brains in France take in as much influence from foreign literature as they can."

³⁷Shaw, p. 86.

³⁸Quoted in Minamoto, p. 93.

And Hori adds, "I would like to make the critics who sweepingly condemn our authors writing under the influence of foreign literature read these words."³⁹

³⁹Quoted in Minamoto, p. 93.

CHAPTER VII

LES JEUNES FILLES EN FLEURS

There is a photograph of Hori, taken soon after he completed "Kaifukuki."¹ It shows him in kimono, seated at a low Japanese table. His arms are folded, and he sits relaxed but erect. The thick hair is brushed back, framing a slender face. The black, arched eyebrows contrast sharply with the fairness and clarity of the complexion. He is not wearing his customary round glasses, and his eyes are focused directly at the camera. Despite the seriousness of his expression, there is the faintest of smiles on his lips. The composed attitude and the trace of a smile reflect something of the heart of the hero at the close of "Kaifukuki."

For this story, Hori drew heavily upon his experiences. Soon after he wrote "Seikazoku," he suffered a near-fatal lung hemorrhage. Ever since his mother's death, his stepfather had been despondent and neglecting business to the extent that there was no money to send Hori away for treatment until the next year. Finally, in April of 1931, he was admitted to Fujimi Sanatorium at the foot of Yatsugatake, a mountain range on the Yamanashi-Nagano border. He was released at the end of June and went to stay at the Katayama summer house in Karuizawa until well into autumn. In December, he published "Kaifukuki," the record of his convalescence, in the journal Kaizō.

¹Hori Tatsuo. Vol. 4 of Nihon bungaku arubamu. Ed. Nakamura Shin'ichirō. 1954. p. 17.

The motivation behind the story and its particular quality are aptly summarized in Jinzai's critique: "Its form gives the impression that Hori Tatsuo had temporarily wearied of following the hard path to fiction and wrote this story in an earnest attempt to calm his spirit after his illness. A relaxed work, it has a faint air of diary to it, and may be taken as just that. But yet, to my mind, it serves as a prelude hinting at the stories he was yet to write, such as Utsukushii mura and Kaze tachinu--his own particular, musical watakushi shōsetsu (I use the word in the German sense)."² It was not merely a matter of Hori's not having had the energy for creating another deliberately calculated novel like "Seikazoku"; he was correcting a fault he came to see in the firmness of the structure of "Seikazoku." Even Le Bal, he decided, suffered from being overly structured: ". . . Thinking on it now, the only failing of the novel is that Radiguet's management of his characters was too strict." (IV, 119) He charged himself with the same unduly zealous control over his own story. "Seikazoku," he explains in "Shōsetsu no koto nado" (On Fiction and Such) (Shinchō, July, 1934), was an experiment in throwing Rembrandt-like rays over the characters and in manipulating them into the light and back into the shadows. (That is, he sharply delineated some aspects of the characters and neglected other aspects.) Furthermore, his characters were like chess pieces which he moved in accordance with the rules of the game. (IV, 104-5)

²Quoted in Tanida. pp. 77-78.

It should be noted that Hori's criticism is much more valid for his own story than for Le Bal. Being much briefer, "Seikazoku" is that much more clearly an overly manipulated product.

In comparing "Seikazoku" with "Bukiyō na tenshi," Kokubo prefers the latter for its greater freedom from a novelistic form. He remarks that, while not as consistent as "Sheikazoku," "Bukiyō na tenshi" has a quality of disorder to it which very effectively gives a sense of the squandering of the emotions of puberty.³ Therefore, with the intention of eliminating a forced, almost mathematical format from his next piece of fiction, and perhaps with some idea of returning to a freer style, he composed "Kaifukuki" with a more relaxed approach and considerably more flexibility.

The story is in two parts, the first dealing with his stay of several months at the sanatorium, the second part with his visit to his aunt's summer house in Karuizawa. Very simply, it is an account of his "convalescence," both physical and spiritual.

There is some irony in the fact that this work should be an improvement upon "Seikazoku." "Seikazoku" had been written according to carefully devised theories on the need for objectivity and sound structure. Yet "Kaifukuki," the more subjective, less structured piece, reads better for its natural tone and less rigid style. Despite Hori's intellectual position against confessional literature, it is almost as if there was an irresistible temptation at work which drew him to the traditional materials of Japanese literature, his own experience. This is not to say that he surrendered himself over to writing pure auto-

³Kokubo. p. 160.

biography--"Kaifukuki" is far from that. But, as Jinzai points out, its appeal lies in its episodic style, reminiscent of a diary, despite the use of the third-person. The idea suggests itself that, when Hori laid Le Bal aside, he fell instinctively back into the Japanese diary genre. There may be some truth in this, but, at this point, Hori never discusses nikki or zuihitsu in his critical writings. What he does evince increasing interest in, and what perhaps did more than any native tradition to encourage him toward a greater freedom in style and composition, was Marcel Proust's À la Recherche du Temps Perdu.

"Freedom" does not mean haphazardness. "Kaifukuki" is a careful blend of poetry and prose, the delicate synthesis that characterizes the style of his best writing. The overall composition, extremely loose compared with the conciseness of "Seikazoku," follows a definite though non-linear pattern, more akin to that of À la Recherche than to that of Le Bal. The theme is not nonexistent; it traces a subtler course, like a slender, elusive thread, through the fabric of the text.

The motif is introduced when the hero is in the berth of the sleeping coach on his way to the sanatorium. Only one eye opens and one hand moves, while the rest of his body is under the influence of a sleeping drug. The struggle between waking and sleeping represents the greater struggle within him, life versus death. Again, as he finally rises and wavers down the passage of the coach, he is aware of an eye upon him. He is being watched by his "other self," his own lifeless body still lying in the berth.

Nature seems to offer salvation, as Tachihara Michizō suggests in his essay.⁴ He calls on an old man, and from the window, glimpses a

⁴Tachihara Michizō. p. 225.

scene which hints at grace: "The dawning light colored the water of the lake the blue of the Virgin's mantle in old paintings." (I, 91) But he cannot grasp the healing message of nature or religion. The old man attempts to console him with reading him passages from the Bible, but instead his thoughts are occupied with the question of why this old man should cling so tenaciously to life.

Once at the sanatorium, the view of the mountain range provides him with some element of relief: "The window of his room was thrown open to form a perfect frame. A romantic landscape of the Southern Alps, their peaks still covered with snow, presented itself to him as he lay in bed." (I, 92) Nature and art--the scene is described as though it were a painting--are some source of solace, for they hint at a harmony he will discover more fully later. Yet he feels he cannot join the other patients sunbathing contentedly on their balconies; the sight of them recalls to his mind the only thing he remembers from the Bible, the morbid phrase, "They have numbered all my bones." [Psalms xxi.18] (I, 92)

He is assailed again by thoughts of death when he finds that his room appears to be two in one. The number on the door is 5, yet his room must also have the unlucky number 4, that is, shi, the same pronunciation as "death." The dimensions of life and death, then, overlap in this room, as wakefulness and sleep tore him in two on the train.

One stormy night, snow is driven through a crack in the window, swirls across the floor, and, to his feverish mind, takes on all the colors of the rainbow. The dazzling colors awaken a memory in him of a

magic lantern show he saw when he was a boy. At that time, when the picture was finally brought into focus, the beautiful colors merged to form a gruesome picture of a soldier dead in the snow. Is the colored snow in his room now also a façade behind which something dreadful is hidden?

The eeriness of the nurses strikes fear into him, and he seems to hallucinate macabre sounds. The sounds, it turns out, originate within himself, as he has suffered a recurrence of his pleurisy. This projection of his physical condition into the external world was a common technique of Hori, one he had used in his earliest poems.

He reaches a crisis one night, triggered again by a bright crimson pattern across the floor. It is the blood he has coughed up. The horrible sight leads him to a strange vision in which his friends are hovering over him, as though paying their last respects to a person on his deathbed.

Yet he gradually recovers with the coming of spring. The final passage of Part One speaks for itself. The doctor has prescribed sunbaths for him: "For his first venture outside, the nurse gave him a pair of dark glasses against the ultraviolet rays. Immediately putting them on, he stepped out on the balcony as lightheartedly as a child. He raised his eyes upward. Only the early summer sun which was dazzling overhead heard him as he spoke: "'The sun! Until today I saw nothing but death through my pain, but from this day on I'll face the sunlight through a pair of dark glasses!'" (I, 102) Thus, he stands as one who has passed from death to life.

In the latter half of the story, he steadily improves at his aunt's summer house. His aunt's affection, the house itself, and even its furnishings create an aura of warmth and goodness and testify to the sweetness of existence. In the sanatorium, he had glimpses of death through the memories evoked by the colored patterns. Now, however, it is life which memory shows him. As he lies in the garden, the scent of mint reaches him, curiously carrying him back in time to the day of an outing with Dorothy, a little Canadian girl. On that day he was brought round out of a fainting spell by a taste of a mint liqueur. Even now, mint has the power to create a sensation of bliss over him. "Now he understood that the oddly euphoric sensation the fragrance always gave him was precisely the feeling he had experienced that summer day of several years before. He was delighted at his discovery." (I, 114)

But this "oddly euphoric sensation" does not originate solely from a sense of delicious victory over death. The day of the outing, he was confronted with death in the form of the blood on Dorothy's shin. The sight of it carried him off to a temporary death--a fainting spell. But the fainting led to revival--the two sides of the coin of "Seikazoku." In evoking the memory of the sensation of that day, the mint demonstrates to him the essential unity that binds life with death. With the scent of the mint and the sweep of the past over him, his mind is stripped of its reason. His vision is restored to a pristine intensity which it normally lacks, and he intuitively grasps the harmony underlying the division of life and death. The Buddhistic aspects of this phenomenalist viewpoint are apparent; he sees that "the real aspect is all things" and

that, as Dōgen wrote, "Death and life are the very life of the Buddha."⁵ The unification of life and death, as experienced that day and now recalled, is underscored by the impressionistic beautification of the external world that greeted his senses upon his waking from his faint. The world was recreated by the breaking down of the intellectualization which normally accompanied experience: "He was still somewhat dazed, and, to his hazy vision, the collection of little blonde heads was a cluster of yellow grapes, gently swaying back and forth." (I, 112)

The lesson of the mint is brought home to him all the more forcibly when, in the final scene, Mt. Asama erupts. But this time the lights radiating from the volcano have lost their frightening connotation. Now the scene impresses him with the ugliness of the desire for life, the same ugliness he displayed when, trying to stifle his lung hemorrhage, he spewed up blood all the more. There is no struggle between death and life, there is only realization that death is the necessary complement to life, and one can do no more than accept the balance.

The combat between his two selves--death and life--within him was based on a false premise: "To stand here now put him unexpectedly in mind of himself as he was a year ago, before any sign of his illness, watching the same terrible blasts of smoke. As he compared the past time with the present, an irrepressible feeling rose within him that the person he had been then was still the reality, while the person he was

⁵ Quoted in Hajime Nakamura. The Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples. Ed. Philip P. Wiener. Honolulu, 1974. p. 352.

today was the illusion." (I, 115) Was he healthy a year earlier? Did he then fall ill? Is he healthy once again? These distinctions between "particular incidents"⁶ are no longer tenable. Memory has shattered the desire to grasp the present self, for it has shown that the present self can be held no more than time itself can be arrested in its passage. To capture any one segment of life or time is impossible; there is only the cyclical rhythm of time and life and death. Once the universal movement manifests itself, the desire of the hero to seize the present disappears, to be replaced by a calm resignation to the truth.

The resolution of the dichotomy between life and death is portrayed with one last image. A sound, like a dry rainfall, comes from the trees. It is a fall of volcanic ash. The phenomenon is the final synthesis, as the ashes of death, like the life-giving rain, fall from above.

"Kaifukuki" is a restatement of the Buddhist philosophy of time, according to which the ever-changing, incessant temporal flux is identified with ultimate being itself, and true reality shows itself to be not something static but dynamic.⁷

Involuntary memory is the means through which the hero attains knowledge, and "Kaifukuki" cannot be discussed without mention of Proust. The greatest difference in the use of involuntary memory by Proust and

⁶Garma C.C. Chang. The Buddhist Teaching of Totality. University Park, Penn., and London. 1974. p. xv.

⁷Hajime Nakamura. p. 353.

by Hori is that Proust's are always pleasurable. But, in both À la Recherche and "Kaifukuki," memory serves to illustrate the reality of personality as a succession of selves and to testify to the concept--whether we call it Proustian, Buddhist, or Bergsonian--that the moi psychologique is subject to the law of evolution which never ceases changing and transforming it.⁸ As demonstrated in the volcano scene, memory brings about an internal upheaval of the selves, which may be of such force that a former state of soul, when remounting to the surface of consciousness, can render unrecognizable the self of a few moments previous to the memory.⁹

It is no wonder that the diary-like style worked well for Hori in "Kaifukuki." It worked well for Proust and for Japanese diarists for centuries. Both meant to record the succession of time and the daily reincarnations of the self rather than to capture any permanent quality of an individual forever frozen in time.

In "Kaifukuki," Hori appears to have relied very little on appropriations of scenes from Proust. There are almost no suspiciously similar episodes here--certainly not to the extent of those found from Radiguet and Cocteau in "Seikazoku." Some consideration, however, should be given to his use of the evocative power of the swirling colors of the snow. The dazzling colors, it will be remembered, lead him to recall a magic lantern show of years before, and from his unconscious rises a

⁸Jacque J. Zéphir. La Personnalité humaine dans l'Oeuvre de Marcel Proust. Paris, 1959. p. 109.

⁹Ibid., p. 88.

sense of horror. Here, Hori has abstracted and concentrated elements spread more diffusely in his own experience. In so doing, he departs from his actual experience in some external respects, while entirely adhering to it with regard to its essential meaning. "Yōnen jidai" tells us of what, from his infancy, may have been an association in his mind between the lights and a threat to his safety:

"Look! Fireworks! Aren't they pretty?"

Without actually understanding why, I leapt about joyfully in my mother's arms as I, like everyone else watched a corner of the sky. There would be a burst and a beautiful light would fan out wondrously, to disappear as quickly as it had appeared.

Whether it was on that same occasion or on another, I have no way of knowing, but I remember being with my mother again in a crush of people. I was on her back. But now I was all in tears, as though frightened of something. My mother was fighting against a flow of people coming from the other direction. Sometimes we were forced back toward what was threatening us. Our nightmarishly slow progress made me all the more frantic. The truth is our house had caught fire. My mother had picked me up and run from the house with just the clothes on our backs. (III, 51)

At a later age, he was given a picture-book and was particularly impressed with battle scenes in the snow. (III, 90) It seems reasonable to suppose he combined the fireworks and the picture-book for the appropriate effect in "Kaifukuki." To this he added a magic lantern, almost certainly borrowed from Marcel.¹⁰ Surely the fantasy of the machine appealed to Hori, and the eeriness of Marcel's Golo and Geneviève performance was just the element he needed in "Kaifukuki."

¹⁰ Swann's Way. p. 8. All quotations from À la Recherche du Temps Perdu are from the seven-volume series Remembrance of Things Past, translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Andreas Mayor, New York, 1970-71.

Though sleep is a temporary death in "Kaifukuki," it also is a healing process. Thus, at his aunt's house, the hero "would sink into sleep deep and perfect, the sleep of a child in his mother's arms." (I, 408) More Proustian is the state between waking and sleeping when the rational mind relaxes, and he gains an insight into the otherwise invisible reality behind external forms. Therefore, while he drifts off, he listens to the romantic tales whispered by the old furniture of the summer house. (I, 107) Or again, under the larch trees, the sun as it filters through the branches appears as though it lies submerged under a lake of water. (I, 109)

Hori's acquaintance with À la Recherche goes back several years before this time. The first mention he makes of Proust is in a letter to Jinzai of August 3, 1928. But it is not until his period of convalescence in 1931 that he turned into an avid reader. This new stimulation from Proust spurred him on, and he wrote, in addition to "Kaifukuki," a brief love scene called "Aibiki" (The Rendezvous) (Bunka, Dec., 1931) and "Moyuru hoho" for Bungei shunjū. "Aibiki" is a more carefully structured story in the vein of "Seikazoku" and "Mado" (The Window). "Mado," published in the October, 1930, issue of Bungei jidai, is a kind of Gothic tale after Mérimée's manner.

According to Hori's often quoted remark, "Moyuru hoho" is his Vita Sexualis. That is, it was intended to have the frankness of Mori Ōgai's 1909 work by that title, an account of sexual attitudes and experiences. Hori's title is taken from an expression much used by Cocteau and Radiguet, les joues en feu. The image of "flaming cheeks" aptly captures the mood of the story, a shy and hesitant awakening to

sexuality. It was written, as Tanida observes, with the objective of revealing the pathos of love from a detached viewpoint on the author's part as he viewed his own days at boarding school.¹¹

The story begins with watakushi or "I," in the school garden. He watches as a bee is hovering over a cluster of white flowers, each of which seems to be coquettishly enticing the bee to herself. He picks the one pollinated by the bee and ruthlessly crushes it in his palm. This is the motif of the story--yearning for love, love consummated, and love destroyed.

This love centers on Saigusa, a classmate. The hero remains strangely distant throughout the story, little more than a clinical observer of the phenomenon of love and his own emotions. This watakushi, Kokubo points out, is the author fictionalized into a mere abstraction, the better to capture the universality of the moods of young love.¹² For the purposes of this revelation of love, Hori draws upon his own experiences, but, once again, makes use of elements from other writers. These elements are employed as catalysts in the development of his hero's emotional life. The scene of the flowers and the bee seems an adaptation of Proust's, wherein the Duchess's orchid waits in anticipation of the bee.¹³ Both in Sodome et Gomorrhe and in "Moyuru hoho," the laws of the vegetable kingdom operate upon human beings as well. As M. de Charlus and Jupien are drawn together, so watakushi is beckoned by Uozumi, the school hero. The face of Uozumi undergoes the

¹¹Tanida, p. 81.

¹²Kokubo, pp. 132-33.

¹³Cities of the Plain, pp. 3-4.

same transformation as M. de Charlus's as desire rises in them.¹⁴ But there is more to Uozumi than M. de Charlus. When the hero rejects Uozumi's advances, Uozumi's reaction is identical to Peter's in Cocteau's Le Grand Écart.¹⁵ Cocteau's Peter, with his athletic, Greek beauty, is the physical model for Uozumi.¹⁶ What Hori emphasizes in this scene is the failure of desire, for, as the hero crushes the flower, so he escapes from Uozumi.

Saigusa is based upon Petitcopain of Le Grand Écart.¹⁷ He, however, becomes the love object, while Petitcopain is no more than a sickly milksop. Hori does more juggling to create an original scene out of another of Cocteau's incidents. The narrator witnesses more of the carnal aspects of love as he discovers Saigusa and Uozumi in the bedroom. Uozumi is lust incarnate as his shadow flaps eerily on the ceiling. So it was with Mme. de Berlin in her attempt to seduce Jacques.¹⁸

Finally, Hori compares the loss of innocence to the discarding of a snakeskin: "Every now and then I would recall all that had happened in the dormitory and could not help but feel that I had ruthlessly stripped away the beautiful skin of childhood and had left it to lie

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁵ The Miscreant, p. 35.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 36.

like an opalescent snakeskin entangled among the brambles." (I, 131)

This snakeskin of innocence first appeared in Le Grand Écart: "His mother thought she was bringing back the same person, rather disturbed by the panoramas of Italy. She was bringing back another person. And it was precisely in Venice that the change had occurred. Jacques only felt it through his uneasiness. He attributed that to the suicide and the unexpected meetings at night in the arcades. In reality, he was leaving a dry skin floating on the Grand Canal, like a snake's slough hanging on a wild rose bush, as light as foam, slit at the eyes and mouth."¹⁹

"Moyuru hoho" is not the patchwork that these observations of similarities may suggest. Each element of the story, whether gleaned from Hori's personal experience or from his readings, functions smoothly as an integral part of the system.

The dexterity with which Hori adapted scenes can be seen in a comparison between the meeting with the village girl in À l'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs and the meeting with her counterpart in "Moyuru hoho." For Marcel, the girl represented a feminine sexuality which he desired to possess. But first he had to compel her admiration and desire for him.²⁰ Hori's village girl acts much the same role but, additionally, functions as the agent through which the hero's affection is altered from homosexual to heterosexual. She affects this transformation by her

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 24.

²⁰ Within a Budding Grove, pp. 214-15.

beautiful eyes and a voice--perhaps acquired from Albertine²¹--which has a strangely haunting quality. This very minor character in Proust assumes a primary importance here as the pivotal point around which the hero is irrevocably swung in another direction, leaving his love for Saigusa in ruins.

No love relationship in "Moyuru hoho" is successful. If Saigusa was hurt by the hero, so is the hero hurt by the girls with the haunting voices: "In the course of those years, how many were the strange voices I heard! There was not one among them which did not lead me to grief; and I was all too fond of grieving over them, until one day I was finally dealt a wound to the heart from which there was no recovering." (I, 136)

To love and be loved means to suffer and cause suffering--the principle that Hori introduced in "Seikazoku" is the essence of "Moyuru hoho." It may well have been Proust's extensive treatment of this theme which led Hori to explore it. We may also speculate that it was Proust who taught Hori that a sudden memory of one who has died can be more moving than the intellectual knowledge of the death. One morning, the school bulletin board has an announcement of Saigusa's death. The hero reads it casually, as though it concerns someone he never knew. Several years later, he is in a sanatorium for treatment. Another patient there has a disturbing resemblance to Saigusa. The hero is able to ignore it, until one day it strikes him forcibly. He is watching the boy sunning himself on the opposite veranda: "He could

²¹Cities of the Plain, p. 141.

not have known he was being watched. My heart pounded. I am near-sighted and squinted for a better look. When I made out on his dark back what seemed to be that distinctive ridge of Saigusa's, a sudden dizziness came over me. I managed my way back to the bed and collapsed." (I, 137)

In "Seikazoku," "Bukiyō na tenshi," and in earlier fiction and poems, the beloved has been a pure being, almost more spirit than flesh. Even more does Saigusa take on a divine aspect, not unlike the first impression that Marcel, in his infatuation, had of Gilberte, the Duchess, and Albertine. Marcel, in his search for fulfillment, sought to find it in the possession of these women. In Hori's literature as well, women are the personification of the ideal. Saigusa is a near forerunner of the heroines of Utsukushii mura and Kaze tachinu:

"Going to leave the candle burning?" he asked.

"As you like."

"I'll put it out then." To blow out the flame, he drew his face close to mine. I kept my eyes raised to his cheeks where the shadows of his long lashes fell and flickered in the candlelight. Compared to mine, flaming as they were, his cheeks seemed celestially cool. (I, 129-30)

Homosexuality in Japanese literature cannot be discussed without considering Mishima Yukio's novel, Kamen no kokuhaku (Confessions of a Mask). In the respective treatments of awakening sexuality by Hori and Mishima, Fukuda points out a kinship which may be more than coincidental. Both Mishima's narrator and Hori's character from "Kao" (The Face) (Bungei shunjū, Jan., 1933), a story similar to "Moyuru hoho," identify so strongly with the objects of their desire that, in almost identical terms, they wish "to be" that very person. But the strapping youth in Kamen no

kokuhaku is the antithesis of the fragile, anemic Saigusa type. Fukuda's point is summarized--and will be immediately appreciated by one who has read both authors--in his statement, "In Mishima's case, the physical beauty of the beloved is in his tight trousers [momohiki], in Hori's world, it lies in his rose-colored cheeks [barairo no hoho]." ²²

According to Kokubo, affection for the effeminate boys on the part of Hori's heroes is a temporary substitute for heterosexual desire, but Hori himself had a lasting inclination for the thin, delicately-modeled type, whether male or female. ²³ He goes on to trace the appearance of this type in Hori's fiction, emphasizing the almost total lack of sensuality in Hori's treatment. ²⁴

Hatashita Kazuo's psychological observations on Hori and sex are fairly predictable: protective motherly love and the lack of a strong father figure fostered a great dependency upon his mother. Hatashita claims that this dependency led Hori to recreate his mother in Saigusa and his heroines, while fearing any great masculinity. ²⁵ This reasoning, however, remains questionable. From what we know of his mother, she was a hardy spirit, little like the languid, ethereal Setsuko of Kaze tachinu. Moreover, there indeed was an attraction for the strong male in "Bukiyō na tenshi."

²²Fukuda, pp. 106-8.

²³Kokubo Minoru. "Hori Tatsuo." Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kanshō. No. 503 (Nov., 1974). pp. 57-58.

²⁴Ibid., p. 61.

²⁵Hatashita Kazuo. "Hori Tatsuo." Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kanshō. No. 503 (Nov., 1974). pp. 64-65.

After all, any dissection of Hori's sexual libido can only remain guesswork and possibly not worth the effort. More appropriate for an appreciation of Hori's art in "Moyuru hoho" is a single line from Kawabata: "What a wonder it is that the author should have such purity of perception, like the innocence of a nude child!"²⁶

"Mugiwara bōshi" (The Straw Sunbonnet) appeared in 1932, in the September issue of Nihon kōron. A clear idea of Hori's "purity of perception" can be obtained from a consideration of the following scene:

A swimsuit ruins the fun of swimming for me, so I would look for secret spots where, shielded by the rocks, I could swim and lie nude in the sun. Sometimes I would hear footsteps from above; I used my book as a fig leaf. One day, on raising my head, I spotted Denise on top of a rock. . . . As soon as I raised my head, she disappeared behind the rocks. I was thinking with some regret that I might never see her again when I found her before me.

"Pardon me," she said with a smile, "what way do I take to return to Carqueyranne?"

Her brazenness was dumfounding! To dare to ask me to tell her a way she must have been taking since she was a child. She had descended on me simply to have some fun at embarrassing me.

"You know it better than I!" I shouted very angrily--an anger intended to disguise my discomfort. She beamed a smile, seeming to find it the most natural thing in the world that she ask a way, with which I knew she was familiar, to a boy with nothing more on than The Imitation of Christ.

"What are you reading? Let me see your book."

I had never met with such a lack of decency. Was she next going to tear it from me by force?

"You may as well speak frankly, you slut!"

²⁶Kawabata Yasunari. "Hori Tatsuo no 'Moyuru hoho.'" Hori Tatsuo zenshū. Ed. Murō Saisei et al., 1965. Vol. 10, p. 71.

She looked so astounded, with such an expression of incomprehension, that I calmed down a little. But it was too late. I had already flung The Imitation in her face, mute with rage at not having been able to throw at her what she deserved. She picked up the book and ran away with little cries of laughter.

It should be perfectly obvious that this scene could never have been written by Hori Tatsuo. His literature is far removed from the risqué and, parenthetically, the comic tone here. This episode is from "Denise," a short story by Radiguet.²⁷ Eguchi Kiyoshi reveals that toward the end of June of 1932, Hori asked to borrow his copy of "Denise." About a month later, he completed "Mugiwara bōshi."²⁸ Thus the opening scene of Hori's story:

I was fifteen, and you thirteen.

Your brothers and I would play baseball in a field covered all over with white clover blossoms. You would have your little brother with you and watch our game from afar, making floral wreaths of the white blossoms you had gathered. There was a fly ball. I dashed after it. As I reached up for the catch, my foot slipped. Tumbling head over heels out of the clover field, I landed in the adjacent rice field. I was as muddy as a sewer rat.

They took me to the well of a nearby farmhouse. I took off every last bit of my clothes. Someone called you. You came running, careful of the wreath dangling from your hands. How being naked changes a person's way of seeing things! Suddenly a young woman appeared in front of me--you whom until that moment I had always thought of as a little girl. Flustered in my nudity, I finally thought to clamp the glove down in front of me.

Everyone else ran back to the baseball game, leaving only me, in my embarrassment, and you behind. Then, as you washed the mud out of my trousers, to disguise my

²⁷ Œuvres Complètes. pp. 453-54.

²⁸ Eguchi Kiyoshi. "Hori Tatsuo to Radege." Reimon Radège to Nihon no sakkatachi. 1973. p. 30.

discomfort, I took your wreath and, as a joke, crowned myself with it in place of my cap. I stood up straight and struck a pose like an ancient statue for you. But my face was crimson. (I, 183)

Other incidents and expressions borrowed from Radiguet are noted in Eguchi's essay.²⁹ Hori's crisp narrative style in "Mugiwara bōshi" is still patterned after Radiguet's, but it was Proust who provided Hori with the main theme of his work.

In "Kaifukuki," Hori explored his own self through the convolutions of memory and immediate impressions. Now it is the mystery of another person's existence which he attempts to unravel. The other person is the girl whom he addresses throughout the story. She is the object upon which his love, created from imagination and desire, is focused. He does not fall in love with a real person but with an image in his mind which has arbitrarily attached itself to a person. He seeks in outward reality what exists only in his mind, and thereby condemns himself to the pursuit of an illusion. The girl is Hori's Albertine. For Hori, she seems to embody the essence of the seaside village of happy summer holidays. He cannot, however, trace this essence to its lair: "You stooped over to bait my hook for me. You were wearing the hat you saved for special days, the straw sunbonnet trimmed with red cherries. The soft brim lightly grazed my cheek. Unknown to you, I took a deep breath. But there was no scent at all of you, only the faint dry smell of the sunbonnet.... In my disappointment, it seemed to me that you had somehow deceived me." (I, 188-89)

²⁹ Eguchi, pp. 30-34.

Always alert to signs which he might decipher, he follows her through several summers, through jealousy, through his growing distance from his mother, and through her changes into womanhood. But his desire to penetrate her mystery remains frustrated by her faculty of change. His own increasing maturity eventually brings about a final disillusionment:

One more time I wanted to see, if only a glance, the places that filled my memories of my boyhood--the sea by the village, the tiny streams, the meadows, the fields of grain, the old church. Perhaps my whole life through I would never have another chance. And, above all, I wanted to know what you had become.

Yet how shabby and inconsequential the seacoast village appeared to me now! And in my memory it had always been so beautiful, like some gigantic sea-shell cast up by the sea! And the girl whom I had once loved for her simplicity was nothing more in my eyes now than a stranger with a little mind! (I, 206)

As written of Proust's work, "the enchantments of the past must always become the disenchantments of the future. But memory, a preservative, may intervene. The embalmer of original enchantments, it is the only human faculty that can outwit the advance of chronological time."³⁰ One final time his love for her reawakens. At the time of the Great Earthquake of 1923, he escapes from Tokyo and falls in with the girl and her family. Along with other refugees of the disaster, they spend the night in a nearby village where emergency tents have been set up.

Your family and I packed ourselves in tightly to lie down in a corner of the tent. Whenever I turned, my head bumped against someone else's. For the longest time none

³⁰ Howard Moss. The Magic Lantern of Marcel Proust. New York, 1962. p. 18.

of us could settle down to sleep. From time to time there were rather big aftershocks of the earthquake. Each one was immediately followed by the sound, almost like laughter, of someone sobbing.... Finally I fell into a doze, only to be awakened again. I felt the touch of a woman's tangled hair on my cheek. As I lay between sleeping and waking, I breathed in its faint scent. Yet I cannot say the fragrance was from the hair across my face; it seemed to be rising faintly from the depths of my memory. It was your scentless scent. It was the smell of sunlight, the smell of your straw sunbonnet.... While pretending to sleep, I buried my cheek in your hair. You never moved. Were you too only pretending to be asleep? (I, 208)

In the morning, his father arrives with the news that his mother is missing and must have died.

I came out of my sleep as I listened to my father's sad tale. Though no one else saw them, tears ran from my eyes. But they were not from grief over my mother's death. The sadness of her death was too great for tears! I was crying at the thought of the unforeseen, mysterious caress that had passed between us during the night, thought I had believed that I no longer loved you and that you no longer loved me. (I, 209)

Thus, a mere scent had reawakened the memory of a past time, and for a brief space he knew love again. The sadness of love fading away once more is so great as to even becloud what, by rights, ought to be the more momentous grief of his mother's death. The girl and her family ride off in a cart, raising a dust to obscure his vision of her. In the end, he never knows who she is or what she might have been, or what of her was reality and what the illusion. The narrator, who has long known, observed, and studied the girl in different circumstances and at diverse epochs of her life is finally obliged to confess to himself, as Marcel did of Albertine, the impossibility of knowing her deeply and of grasping her true character.³¹

³¹Zéphir, p. 110.

Hori's seaside village is probably Takeoka in Chiba Prefecture, where he had vacationed as a kōtōgakkō student. If it echoes Balbec, so too does his hero's pursuit recall Marcel's budding affair with Albertine. A scent of A l'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs is given off by such other elements as the hero's jealousy over the girl's almost lesbian affection for another and his infatuation with the names of girls. In 1932, few were the Japanese readers who knew Proust and might consequently appreciate--or be distracted by--those elements in Hori's text. And surely the story stands on its own merits; in all of Japanese fiction, the earthquake scene is noteworthy not only for its poetic eloquence but also for being a rare description of an event curiously ignored by other writers of the period.

It should be mentioned, however, that Hori's appropriation of one episode is likely to give an uncomfortable sense of déjà vu to a Proust reader who remembers the meeting of Marcel and Elstir with the band of girls. Feeling that Elstir was about to introduce him, Marcel turned away from the band and gazed into the window of a curiosity shop, in order not to appear overly anxious. But no introduction was forthcoming.³² Much the same fate befalls Hori's hero, although the setting is transported to what is obviously Karuizawa. Elstir is transformed into a poet (Hori was certainly thinking of Murō Saisei in the role). Marcel was pretending to be engrossed by pieces of old pottery in the window of the curiosity shop. Watakushi feigns an avid interest in--of all things--a turkey kept in front of a butcher shop. Despite Hori's

³² Within a Budding Grove. pp. 314-15.

appropriation and rather outrageous manipulation of this scene, like others we have seen, it performs a valuable operation. This encounter with the girls of Karuizawa is instrumental in bringing about his disillusionment with the girl in the seacoast village.

Hori is by no means finished with les jeunes filles en fleurs; the pursuit of love next led him to Utsukushii mura, normally considered one of the three major works of his lifetime and his most sophisticated expression of Proustian techniques.

From "Seikazoku," through "Kaifukuki" and "Moyuru hoho," to "Mugiwara bōshi" was a season of great growth. He had met death and commenced the search for knowledge of life and his own being. At twenty-eight, he was established as an author. The confidence and optimism of his spirit at this juncture are displayed in the epigraph from Goethe to Utsukushii mura:

Refreshed anew life's pulses beat and waken
To greet the mild ethereal dawn of morning;
Earth, through this night thou too hast stood unshaken
And breath'st before me in thy new adorning,
Beginst to wrap me round with gladness thrilling,
A vigorous resolve in me forewarning,
Unceasing strife for life supreme instilling.³³

³³ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Faust, trans. George Madison Priest. New York, 1963. p. 139.

CHAPTER VIII

FROM COMBRAY TO KARUIZAWA

Utsukushii mura was written in the course of the summer of 1933. As Hori completed the sections, they were published in various journals, and the story appeared in its entirety as a single volume in 1934. His "beautiful village" is, again, Karuizawa. At this same time, he was writing articles on Proust and his literature, which have since been gathered under the title of "Purūsuto zakki" (Miscellaneous Notes on Proust). In one of these essays, his equating Karuizawa with Proust's village is clear.

Like Combray, the countryside where I am now staying is filled with flowers. At the time of my arrival at the beginning of June, azaleas were everywhere in bloom, and when I walked in the shady groves clusters of wisteria blossoms hung from the most unexpected spots in the trees where the vines had wound their way up. Then acacia began coming into flower along the streams. They must, I thought, have been scattered in the long rains that followed, and I did not go back for a time to see them, until one day when I defied the rain and went to the bank of the stream. They had almost all fallen. No one else appeared to be out on the path, and here and there over the drenched volcanic gravel were glistening, soft lavender mounds of fallen petals. For some reason the sight gave me a slight chill as I walked along.

On my way back, I grew curious about the cloud of fragrance enveloping me and found that flower petals had fastened themselves all over the top of my umbrella when I must have brushed it against the branches, and the soles of my shoes as well were covered with them. (IV, 184-85)

In this village of flowers, the narrator's quest is one of penetrating the mystery of the wild roses and to grasp their essence--an endeavor likely to call to mind Marcel before the hawthorns.¹ Marcel's

¹Swann's Way, pp. 106-7.

efforts, however, met with more frustration than do those of Hori's narrator:

The next morning was wrapped in a heavy mist. Throwing on my raincoat, I walked toward the church which was still boarded up and through the grove of chestnut trees behind it. The path led me out of the trees to one of the small streams and ran parallel to it, tracing great winding curves. This morning, however, the stream was totally lost to sight in the mist. Only its continual murmur gave proof of its existence. Eventually I crossed a small wooden bridge. From this point on, the path followed the opposite side of the brook. As I came to the other bank, I stopped in my tracks. I dimly perceived in the path ahead a strange crouching figure. The curious apparition was at the very edge of the faint, circular glow of light which, like some great halo, centered around me. But in the restless movements of the mist, the form lost its human aspect in the flow of a denser wave, gradually resuming a clarity of outline as the wave passed on. Finally I saw what appeared to be a foreign man under an umbrella, bending over in the contemplation of a small shrub. The mist continued to rise, and I realized he was studying the very rose bushes I had come to see. He seemed to have no idea of my presence. In consequence his posture, as he obstructed my path, was the contorted one assumed by a man when, believing himself unobserved, he loses himself in thought, a pose which, upon coming back to himself, he would be at a loss to recall. Only then did I become aware of the wild rose bushes immediately beside me and lingered over them, although they were poor excuses as roses, compared with those I wanted to see. The man straightened up at last and, shifting the umbrella to the other hand, began walking away. In the next moment he faded into the mist.

I proceeded on my way to the little cluster of rose bushes. In imitation of the man who had just gone on, I then bent down with some vague notion that such a measure would furnish me with an insight into his own thoughts. The thick tangle of branches was covered with small, tightly enclosed buds which looked up at me with an expression of silent petition. Softly I lifted the branches in turn and became absorbed in patiently counting the buds. The realization of what I was doing vividly recalled to me the mysterious way the first man at the rose bushes had handled the branches. Almost simultaneously I was aware of the scent of pipe tobacco drifting up from the branches. The roses themselves seemed to be emitting the fragrance when actually, because of the dampness of the air, the smoke had remained imprisoned in the interwoven branches. I thought of Dr. Reynolds, who was never without his pipe. It could only have been the elderly physician whom I had seen. And the reddish-brown structure beyond, which I had occasionally glimpsed through the mist, must have been his sanatorium.

Still encircled by the faint, almost supernatural glow, I continued along the mist-shrouded path, yet, however far I went, I had no sense of motion or progress, and all my walking seemed to no purpose. My heart was recaptured by the wild roses in the mist, looking pleadingly up at me. I had made merciless use of these tiny white blossoms in my poetry, although until today I had never carefully looked for their inner essence, but it was gladdening to know that in the future I would be able to write of them with complete truthfulness. And my joy was such that I felt it would not be enough merely to recite what the ancient poets had written on the wild rose; rather, it inspired me with a desire to shout aloud all the poetry I had ever known. (I, 228-30)

One important addition to Hori's scene is Dr. Reynolds. As Hori describes him, Dr. Reynolds appears as a duplicate for Proust himself. Hori's notes refer to a lecture by Jacques Rivière, containing Rivière's anecdote of how Proust became absorbed one day before a hedge of Bengal roses. (IV, 157-58) In Hori's story, Dr. Reynolds' attitude is portrayed in much the same terms used by Rivière for Proust's. The hero of Utsukushii mura then bends over the roses in imitation of Dr. Reynolds. This mimicking of Dr. Reynolds implies that it is Hori who, in this story, is duplicating Proust's inquiry into the essence of the manifestations of nature.

The wild roses function in another way which is a much more obvious borrowing from Proust. As the hawthorn blossoms were associated with Gilberte, so Hori's wild roses carry the hero back to a time when he knew a band of girls and loved one of their number. Yet, as with Marcel, forgetfulness is love's enemy. Utsukushii mura is thus a story of how, as the roses bud, blossom, and fall, the memory of love fades into nothingness. The steps to the gradual effacement of love from Marcel's memory are categorized by William Stewart Bell.² Of these, it is the

²William Stewart Bell. Proust's Nocturnal Muse. New York and London, 1962. pp. 177-78.

resumption of a vie mondaine that is the most efficacious in Utsukushii mura. And in the course of these days, as he wanders about the environs of Karuizawa, the changes he notes are analogous to the workings of forgetfulness. His memory of what the past was in fact can no longer be trusted:

Now when I stand vacantly before her villa a glossy white fence clearly separates the lawn from the path. Thus has everything changed. What a contrast between the innocent look she had when I first saw her and that cold look which still haunts my memory--the one she had when we last met several months ago. Did the features of her face actually change this much, or is it that the image I had of them changed? Maybe everything has changed, including myself. (I, 249)

Try as he may to cling to the past, it continues to slip away behind him and will not let itself be recaptured in the story he is trying to write. Thus he only gropes for the memory which he intends as the theme of his story. He falters, like an unskilled player at the piano:

One afternoon during a lull in the rain I went for a walk around the villas near the water-mill, whose foreign owners were now arriving one after another. Someone was practicing the piano in a villa belonging to the Czechoslovakian legation. The villa next to it was still unoccupied, so I entered its garden to listen. They were playing Bach's Fugue in G Minor. In this piece one theme is repeated while the melody itself gradually develops. But whoever was practicing repeated the same section three or four times with the result that the movement proceeded at a snail's pace. As I stood there listening the peculiar smile of one bewitched appeared on my face. The faltering notes of the piano well represented the frustration I felt because the novel I was working on developed so slowly. (I, 242)

All this while, the flowers of early summer continue to disappear, and flowers of a later season come to take their place. The changes in his heart can be stayed no more than can the process of the flowers, and

the memory of his love vanishes as a new love comes to occupy his heart:

Beyond the flowerless azaleas that stood in the middle of the garden facing my window, something as brilliant as a sunflower abruptly burst into bloom beside the window of the detached house. Then it dawned on me that there was a tall slender girl wearing a yellow straw hat standing there.... She seemed to be waiting for someone. . . . Presently her father came from the detached house, and the two of them cut across the garden before my window. She was taller than he. Her father kept speaking to her, but she answered him indifferently as her exquisite eyes kept looking across the azalea bushes at me. After the two had left the garden I continued staring vacantly at the spot near the window where she had stood like a sunflower. Then all of a sudden it seemed to me that my surroundings had changed completely. Without my being aware of it the smell of summer had filled the air.
(I, 254-55)

Yet, this love has its own share of obstacles. Intrigued though he is, she remains illusive for a time--the illusiveness again of the girl in "Mugiwara bōshi" and of Marcel's Albertine. Neither does the memory of the first girl sink calmly into oblivion. Through an occasional involuntary memory, the past sadness comes sweeping back over him. It will be remembered from Chapter 4 that Hori writes in Utsukushii mura of a wild rose bush which snares his jacket, forcing upon him the memory of the girls he once knew. In his review of Samuel Beckett's study, Proust, Hori enumerates the instances of involuntary memory in À la Recherche. (IV, 170-71) The fifth instance from this list is as follows:

Suddenly, in the little sunken path, I stopped short, touched to the heart by an exquisite memory of my childhood. I had just recognised, by the fretted and glossy leaves which it thrust out towards me, a hawthorn-bush, flowerless, alas, now that spring was over. Around me floated the atmosphere of far-off Months of Mary, of Sunday afternoons, of beliefs, or errors long ago forgotten. I wanted to stay it in its passage. I stood still for a moment, and Andrée, with a charming divination of what was in my mind, left me to converse with the leaves of the bush.

I asked them for news of the flowers, those hawthorn flowers that were like merry little girls, headstrong, provocative, pious. "The young ladies have been gone from here for a long time now," the leaves told me. And perhaps they thought that, for the great friend of those young ladies that I pretended to be, I seemed to have singularly little knowledge of their habits. A great friend, but one who had never been to see them again for all these years, despite his promises. And yet, as Gilberte had been my first love among girls, so these had been my first love among flowers.³

In Utsukushii mura as well, through the stimulus of a plant, a past time and a forgotten self rise up again in the mind of the narrator. Thus, Hori did little more with this scene from Proust than to substitute a rose bush for the hawthorn. The message--the force of involuntary memory--which Hori meant his scene to convey is not essentially different from Proust's. In this case, it must be acknowledged that Hori displayed only a minimal skill in adapting his material.

But, whether described in Hori's own terms or merely paraphrased from À la Recherche, involuntary memory is not all powerful in Utsukushii mura. One day, walking with this new girl friend, he finds the roses no longer evoke the past:

Hand in hand we awkwardly walked across the little wooden bridge. Crossing to the other side we walked along the sanatorium path. The rose bushes in the hedge along the path had long since lost their small white blossoms. Now nothing but leaves, they reminded me of what they had looked like when full of blossoms, yet, even if I had wanted it, they would have made little impression on me. Thus had everything changed. When I thought of my own responsibility for this change, a sudden surge of sadness overwhelmed me.... (I, 271-72)

All sad memory of his former love is totally vanished by the story's end. Indeed, the process of forgetting has been more complete than he

³Within a Budding Grove, p. 362.

expected. When by chance he meets his former beloved's band of friends, he discovers they seem scarcely to remember who he is.

Out of Proust's vast scheme, Hori chose to concentrate upon how a former love and self can be forgotten, even while they may sometimes be awakened and reanimated. Thus the moments of involuntary memory operate merely as interruptions in the forgetting process. A consideration of Hori's various uses of involuntary memory will reveal that it was used more effectively elsewhere. In "Kaifukuki," it gave the hero insights into the reality behind life and death, a theme considerably more profound than that of Utsukushii mura. In "Mugiwara bōshi," involuntary memory very delicately recreated a sweet-sad mood of a love that had passed. This simplicity behind Utsukushii mura is its flaw; this casual treatment of the theme of forgetfulness being the main premise behind Utsukushii mura, it is difficult to understand why Japanese critics normally rank it above "Kaifukuki," "Moyuru hoho," and "Mugiwara bōshi." Of course, at sixty-nine pages, it is one of Hori's most ambitious undertakings. But this greater length may be to its disadvantage. There is a danger of tediousness in this diary-like account of daily strolls down country lanes, observations on flora, and meetings with village folk. The nature of his relationships with the former and new girl friend is never described with any great precision, nor does the ending do more than relate what the reader will already know, that the transfer of his affection from one girl to the other is now complete.

Although Hori's wisdom and novelistic technique may be questionable, about his sense of beauty and feeling for poetry there can be no question.

The delicacy and refinement of his perceptions make for passages which amply justify his reputation as the "poet of the uplands."

Hori's conception of À la Recherche, his inspirations from Proust, and his objectives for his own work reveal themselves in the many pages of "Purūsuto zakki," making this collection of essays the surest guide to Utsukushii mura.

Hori's notes are often explanations of the opinions of other critics of Proust, such as Rivière, Charles du Bos, and Beckett. But it is difficult to say how fully he may have appreciated the vast structure of Proust's work, considering his confession, "Reading even one page a day is extremely frustrating. I never feel so ambitious as to want to read one of the volumes through from beginning to end. So my usual practice is to pick up the volume that happens to be at hand and read the page where the book chances to fall open. Such a reading method does not overly tax my patience." (IV, 138) Hori's illness was a great factor in his work at this time, and his physical condition certainly was not equal to the strenuous task of working at Proust's French. Despite his admiration for Proust's panorama of characters and society through time, Hori could not hope to imitate it in his work: "What a splendid structure he has erected! But if any of us were even to conceive such a project, we would not have one-tenth of the perserverance necessary to complete it." (IV, 140-41) Obviously, Hori's brief stories will be a disappointment to those readers who look within them for Proust's grand scale. Hori's brevity is also the reason his descriptions of characters altering in time are not as effective as those which Hori admired from Proust. (IV, 141-44)

A shift at this time in Hori's taste in art is significant. In his earlier essays, he wrote of Picasso and Chirico as painters who captured what interested him in the styles of Cocteau and the Surrealist poets. Now he saw Renoir and the Impressionists achieving in painting what Proust did in words. (IV, 144-45) One of the most valuable studies of the influence of Proust on Hori is that by Miwa Hidehiko, who traces the gradual change of Hori's loyalties from the Surrealist writers in the classical, intellectual style of Radiguet.⁴ It was this same carefully calculated approach of Radiguet that Hori learned to see in Proust and, consequently, in the Impressionist painters.⁵

As a poetic writer, it is not surprising that Hori's comments upon Proust should deal more fully with Proust's descriptive passages than with theories of the roman fleuve. That he saw Proust as his instructor in style is demonstrated by his citing this passage, intending it as an illustration of Proust's Impressionistic style:

Since I had seen such things depicted in water-colours by Elstir, I sought to find again in reality, I cherished, as though for their poetic beauty, the broken gestures of the knives still lying across one another, the swollen convexity of a discarded napkin upon which the sun would patch a scrap of yellow velvet, the half-empty glass which thus shewed to greater advantage the noble sweep of its curved sides, and, in the heart of its translucent crystal, clear as frozen daylight, a dreg of wine, dusky but sparkling with reflected lights, the displacement of solid objects, the transmutation of liquids by the effect of light and shade, the shifting colour of the plums which passed from green to blue and from blue to golden yellow in the half-plundered dish, the chairs, like a group of old ladies, that came twice daily to take their places round

⁴Miwa Hidehiko. "Hori Tatsuo to Purūsuto." Hori Tatsuo. Ed. Nihon bungaku kenkyū shiryō kankō-kai. 1973. pp. 205-12.

⁵Ibid., pp. 206-7.

the white cloth spread on the table as on an altar at which were celebrated the rites of the palate, where in the hollows of oyster-shells a few drops of lustral water had gathered as in tiny holy water stoups of stone; I tried to find beauty there where I had never imagined before that it could exist, in the most ordinary things, in the profundities of 'still life.'⁶

Such a passage could not but have appealed to Hori. Beauty in commonplace objects had been his concern for years; the portrayal of it, as we have seen, had drawn him in his youth to Cocteau and Radiguet.

Hori's own position as the passive observer of life on the one hand and the active pursuer of knowledge of life on the other is reflected in his discussion of this duality in Proust. (IV, 155) In the section on Radiguet presented previously, Hori's advocacy of a passive stance for the author was noted. As other critics have done, he describes this passivity in Proust in terms of "flora," as opposed to the active, or "fauna," temperament. (IV, 183-86) In Utsukushii mura as well, we see the narrator as a distant, analytical observer of nature, other characters, and his own emotions. And too, the girl who is his new love is a painter. While these roles are not elaborated upon in Utsukushii mura, it is reasonable to suppose that Hori intended to contrast watakushi, the observer, with the girl, the creative artist, in the manner of Proust's contrast between Marcel and Elstir.

Perhaps it is obvious by now that Hori was not one to elaborate, in his stories, upon the points he wished to convey by those stories. Greater understanding of the objectives of his fiction can be gained by considering the Western sources which he drew upon. Therefore we turned

⁶Within a Budding Grove. p. 325.

to the novels of Cocteau and Radiguet in order to see "Seikazoku" and "Moyuru hoho" in a clearer light. So too should Mauriac's Thérèse Desqueyroux be examined before any judgment is made of Naoko. As for Hori's intentions behind the device of involuntary memory in his works, the surest guide to them is this explanation, quoted by Hori with little additional comment, from À la Recherche:

The being which had been reborn in me, . . . this being is nourished only by the essences of things, in these alone does it find its sustenance and delight. . . . But let a noise or a scent, be heard or smelt again in the present and at the same time in the past, real without being actual, ideal without being abstract, and immediately the permanent and habitually concealed essence of things is liberated and our true self which seemed--had perhaps for long years seemed --to be dead but was not altogether dead, is awakened and reanimated as it receives the celestial nourishment that is brought to it. A minute freed from the order of time has re-created in us, to feel it, the man freed from the order of time.⁷

The same is true for the principle underlying all of Hori's art: it is again a passage from À la Recherche, again quoted by Hori, which best defines Hori's lifelong concern with interpreting the manifestations of the world and transforming them into art:

. . . the task was to interpret the given sensations as signs of so many laws and ideas, by trying to think--that is to say, to draw forth from the shadow --what I had merely felt, by trying to convert it into its spiritual equivalent. And this method, this apparently sole method, what was it but the creation of a work of art.⁸

Anyone reading Utsukushii mura after Hori's earlier works cannot fail to notice a considerable revolution in Hori's style. The short,

⁷The Past Recaptured. p. 134.

⁸Ibid., pp. 138-39.

crisp sentences of "Seikazoku," for example, give way to much more elaborate, convoluted sentence structures. Clearly this is Proust's influence at work, for Hori speaks with praise of Proust's long sentences containing a wealth of imagery and sensations. He singles out the description of asparagus as a choice example of this use of language. (IV, 188-90) Although Hori's style definitely moved in the direction of Proust, at the same time he could not forget Radiguet's lesson of clarity and lucidity of expression.⁹ Consequently, Hori's sentences in Utsukushii mura, while long by usual English standards, do not go to such lengths as Proust's. To illustrate Hori's reconciliation of Proust's style with his own inclination to brevity, Tanida cites Hori's first version of the scene of the walk by the flowerless roses with the new girl. This version he later abbreviated into the form in which it appeared previously in this discussion. The first version:

The hedge of wild roses, covered with leaves, was a painful sight to me as they revived in me the thought of how beautiful they had been at their peak and the feeling I had held for them, and the thought of how they had once before conjured up the memory of my first happy meeting with the band of girls, and how I had seen a cluster of the same flowerless roses once before, though in a different place, which had gently reprimanded me for my capriciousness in having forgotten them, and in consequence had ripped a hole in my sweater, which, although inconspicuously small at first, had grown larger with the passing days so that now I was no longer able to go out walking with it on. But the moment quickly passed. The reason was that the girl with me now occupied such a large place in my heart that such a recollection of past days could not remain in my mind for long.¹⁰

⁹ Miwa. p. 209

¹⁰ Quoted in Tanida. p. 102.

Hori had an ingrained goût de perfection, which, further cultivated by the classical style of Radiguet, tended to make of him a writer of concise, aphoristic statements. At the same time, however, he adulated Proust as a prolific artist capable of apprehending and describing with intricate prose the process of time. Utsukushii mura is an attempt to imitate this quality in Proust and fails in its aim, as Hori, despite his considerable inspirations from Proust, was not by nature capable of writing according to Proustian concepts of literature.

One thing Utsukushii mura does achieve is to furnish a kind of ending to "Seikazoku" and a beginning to Kaze tachinu. The girl whom the narrator forgets in the course of the story is based upon Fusa, who was the girl Henri fell in love with in "Seikazoku." The girl who replaces her by the end of Utsukushii mura is drawn from someone Hori had recently met--Yano Ayako. The further course of their love affair is told in Kaze tachinu.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

After the publication of Utsukushii mura, twenty years of life remained to Hori. The disease which eventually overcame him steadily devoured his lungs over the course of these two decades, and the theme of death came to permeate his literature. But the spirit that marks these works is one of being convinced of the perilousness of life yet not discouraged by it, a spirit resigned to the approach of death, not embittered by it.

Le vent se lève, il faut tenter de vivre. These words from Paul Valéry's poem, "Climetière marin," impart the message of Hori's story of Yano Ayako, to whom he became engaged in 1934. In July of the following year he accompanied her to Fujimi Sanatorium where she was admitted as a tubercular patient. He remained watching over her until her death in December. Kaze tachinu grew from the life and love they shared and from their eternal separation.

In the beginning the narrator and Setsuko, as Hori named his heroine, are wrapped in the lyrical atmosphere of the mountains, with indigo skies, dazzling sunlight, and the songs of nightingales and cuckoos:

When I try to recall those first days together,
the days when I rarely left Setsuko's bedside, I
cannot distinguish one from another, for one day
so resembled the others in the simplicity of its
charm.

Perhaps it would be more truthful to say that the
repetition of those indistinguishable days made them
seem outside all flow of time. And in those days

freed from time, each trifling affair of our daily life had a fascination it had never had before. Her warmth and fragrance beside me, the slight quickening of her breath, the elegance of her hand as it held mine, her smile, the meaningless phrases we would exchange--take these away and there was nothing extraordinary in our days. Yet these things and these alone were the elements of our life, and I am certain the reason we derived such satisfaction from these insignificant things is because we two shared them.

Only her attacks of fever interrupted the even tenor of our time. It must have been these attacks which gradually caused her to weaken. But even on those days, we attempted--only more prudently, more slowly--to savor like stolen fruit the charm of our unchanging daily routine and thereby guard all the more over the happiness of our lives, which was so strangely flavored with death. (I, 374-75)

But Setsuko continues to weaken and resign herself to the inevitable. After death finally comes for her, he realizes that it was death itself which imbued their short time together with so much happiness and that it is love which is the true victor over the grave. And yet, if he is to continue on in life, he must renounce clinging to her. Though her memory will remain with him, he must live his life fully, with Setsuko's spirit of gentle resignation. Toward the story's end, a year after her death, he writes in his journal:

December 18

The snow finally stopped, so I took advantage of the lull to go deep into the woods behind the cabin, a direction I had never before taken. I enjoyed making my way from one stand of trees to the next, while the branches above sighed and shook themselves free of snow to send it tumbling down on me. The snow was too new to expect any footprints, only here and there were the circular tracks of a hopping rabbit, or straight lines across the path, the traces of a pheasant perhaps.

I had come a considerable distance but the woods gave no sign of thinning, and snow clouds were beginning to gather again overhead, so I renounced the idea of going any deeper and turned back.

Soon I discovered I must have gone wrong, for I could not locate my own footprints. Disregarding my uneasy feelings, I plowed on steadily through the snow in the general direction of the cabin. Then, as I was going along, I could not prevent the feeling that I could hear from behind footsteps other than mine across the snow. And yet, so soft they were, scarcely the sound of walking at all....

I kept up my pace down the wooded slope, and not once did I turn around. An indefinable emotion swept over me, and the closing lines of Rilke's "Requiem" came to my lips as I remembered them from my reading of the night before:

"Do not return. If you can bear it, stay dead with the dead. The dead are occupied. But help me, as you may without distraction, as the most distant sometimes helps: in me."¹ (I, 440-41)

The scope of Kaze tachinu and the profundity of its theme, only slightly indicated above, throw Utsukushii mura far into the shade. The richness of its imagery and the dexterity of Hori's language, both in description and dialogue, fulfill the promise of his early poetry. Much of the success of the work is due to Hori's bringing to bear the inspiration he derived from Rainer Maria Rilke upon a deeply moving personal experience. Hori left voluminous notes on Rilke, "Riruke zakki" (Miscellaneous Notes on Rilke), and translated various works. Among these, it is Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Briggs (The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge) which particularly moved him and affected his creation of Kaze tachinu. Tanida very carefully demonstrates Hori's absorption in Rilke's themes of the sublimity of life as revealed by death and immortalization through love.² Endō Shūsaku offers his own

¹Rainer Maria Rilke. "Requiem" and Other Poems. Trans. J. B. Leishman. London, 1957. p. 136.

²Tanida. pp. 97-101.

interpretations of the vast influences of Rilke upon Hori, emphasizing the differences between Rilke, a product of a monotheistic creed, and Hori, of a pantheistic culture.³

With the completion of Kaze tachinu, Hori continued to draw upon Rilke's works as he went on to create his heroines, women who suffer from loving too greatly and from being loved too little in return.

His association with the literary journal Shiki (Four Seasons) began in 1933. As with Roba, Hori was instrumental in giving it its direction as a forum for the introduction of Western literature and Japanese poetry in Western modes rather than for tanka and haiku. When his health permitted, he worked enthusiastically with Miyoshi Tatsuji and Maruyama Kaoru, and, as occasional editor, he assumed a role as protector and guide to such young poets as Nomura Hideo and Tachihara Michizō. Further details of the history of Shiki are given by Koyama Masataka.⁴ When it went out of existence after World War II, Hori began another literary magazine, Kōgen (The Uplands), which was only short-lived.

In June of 1937, he visited Kyoto for the first time in his life. He had depicted Setsuko in Kaze tachinu as a docile spirit, resigned to fate. It was this type of woman which he began to discover in Japanese court literature. This interest appears to have had no connection with the political climate which urged a revival of traditional Japanese literature. According to a note of 1941, he had been attracted to the

³Endō Shūsaku. Hori Tatsuo. 1955.

⁴Koyama Masataka. "Hori Tatsuo to Shiki." Hori Tatsuo. Ed. Nakamura Shin'ichirō. 1958. pp. 305-13.

classics long before the 1937 organization of the Kokumin seishin sōdōin (The National Spiritual Mobilization): "Sarashina nikki [Sarashina Diary] has been a favorite work of mine since the days of my youth. I had dreams then and was enraptured with foreign literature. It was Matsumura Mineko who spoke to me one day of this courtly diary from which rises the scent of ancient pressed flowers." (II, 157) His first "classical" heroine, though in modern dress, appears in "Monogatari no onna" (The Heroine of a Romance) (Bungei shunjū) of October, 1934.

Hori's approach to the Japanese classics was derived, once more, from Rilke. The following passage from Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge furnished him with the theme for his own stories of Heian period gentlewomen:

Fate loves to invent patterns and designs. Its difficulty lies in complexity. But life itself is difficult because of its simplicity. It has only a few things of a grandeur not fit for us. The saint, rejecting fate, chooses these, face to face with God. But the fact that woman, following her nature, must make the same choice relative to man, conjures up the doom of all love-relationships: resolute and without fate, like an eternal being, she stands beside him who changes. The woman who loves always transcends the man she loves, because life is greater than fate. Her devotion wants to be immeasurable; that is her happiness. But the nameless suffering of her love has always been this: that she is required to restrict this devotion.⁵

Hori traced the theme of ennoblement through suffering for love through such works as the Correspondence of Héloïse with Abélard, the Portuguese Letters of Marianna Alcoforado, and the sonnets of Louise Labé. His adaptation of the Heian diary, Kagerō nikki (The Gossamer Years), was published in 1937 in the February issue of Kaizō. In

⁵Rainer Maria Rilke. The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge. Trans. M. D. Herter. London, 1964. p. 176.

reworking the original, Hori retained some parts, rearranged others, and added his own sections, in order to emphasize the psychology of a woman who, crossed in love, transcends her pain. More complex is the psychology of the heroine of his "Hotetogisu" (The Cuckoo) (Bungei shunjū, Feb., 1939), which is often seen as a sequel to his "Kagerō no nikki." She conquers her pain by torturing the man who does not return her love.

In April of 1938, Hori married Katō Taeko. Murō Saisei served as the official go-between at the ceremony. At their homes in Karuizawa or the neighboring village of Oiwake, Taeko was to be Hori's companion, hostess to his friends, and finally his nurse. Hori viewed their marriage as a kind of self-discipline through which he anticipated maturing more fully as a writer.⁶ Soon after, he began writing "Yōnen jidai" as an attempt, in the manner of Hans Carossa's Eine Kindheit (A Childhood), to capture the essence of childhood.

Continuing with his stories in a classical mode, Hori published "Ubasute" (Mt. Ubasute) (Bungei shunjū) in July of 1940. The story is based on Sarashina nikki. As with the original, Hori's lady safeguards herself from the uncertainty of her fate by relying increasingly on dreams. Her faith in the purity of her dream-world and her calm acceptance of harsh reality evince both Rilke's thought and the convictions Hori had long maintained.

In "Arano" (The Wilderness) (Kaizō, Dec., 1941) the lady is tortured both by the demands of love and by a cruel fate. Yet it is from her

⁶Tanida. p. 116.

agonies that she derives the little happiness she has: "By now the lady stood in need of many of the items of daily life but, withal, she did not leave the mansion nor cease her vigil. 'If he be happy, can I want for anything more?' she thought, and her lot was not necessarily an unhappy one as yet." (II, 432)

Hori's creation is a synthesis of various sources. His heroine entrusts all to a love which cannot be refused, and through her self-sacrifice achieves an almost saintly nobility--a theme of Paul Claudel in his play, L'Annonce faite à Marie. To describe the bitterness and sweetness of her yearnings and remembrances, Hori took a cue from Louise Labé's sonnets, which, incidently, share a great similarity in mood with the passionate poetry of Heian women poets:

No sooner does my bed softly induce
Me to the sweet repose for which I long,
The spirit from my body breaking loose
On wings of sorrow flies to you headlong.

Then I imagine fondly to my side
I press that dearest treasure for whose sake
So many bitter tears I have cried,
So often thought my body like to break

In two. O sleep, O respite of delight,
O pleasant rest and peaceful, I enjoin
You to repeat this same dream every night;

And if it's destiny's intent to cheat
And dispossess my soul of love's true coin,
At least let me receive love's counterfeit.⁷

The plot of "Arano" has a long history; Hori employed the fourth story of the thirtieth book of Konjaku monogatari-shū (Tales of Long Ago).

⁷Louise Charly Labé. Sonnets. Trans. Graham Dunstan Martin. Austin, 1972. p. 29.

This story is an expansion of the sixty-second section of Ise monogatari (Tales of Ise) and thus dates back to at least the tenth century. Compared to the version in Konjaku, Hori's retelling is a fuller account of the heroine's heartrending grief, and the ending is shortened for a more dramatic effect.

Among the tales Hori set in the Heian period, "Arano" is his most successful statement of love's pain and joy. It is the product of an interest that he seems to have had since his earliest readings in Western literature. The Mérimée stories which he had read in his youth already hint at the theme of "Arano"; the following passage is from Arsène Guillot:

"Poor child!" exclaimed Max, arousing from the stupor in which he seemed to be lost. "What happiness has she had in this world?"

"I have loved," she murmured in a hollow tone.⁸

Clearly his interest in the Japanese classics did not stem from any sort of rejection of Western culture. Mita furnishes details concerning Hori's appropriation from European literature and art of the story of the Annunciation; he indicates how, conversely, the Japanese classics deepened his appreciation of Western thought.⁹ Yoshida Seiichi's study, "Hori Tatsuo to ōchō joryū nikki" (Hori Tatsuo and Women Diarists of the Heian Period), is valuable for its further treatment of Hori's inspirations from the West and for its discussion of the differences in approach

⁸ Prosper Merimee. Works of Prosper Merimee. Ed. George Saintsbury. New York, 1905. Vol. 1, p. 188.

⁹ Mita. pp. 104-5.

which Hori, Akutagawa, and Tanizaki took to classical Japanese literature.¹⁰ Hori's concepts of the divine are Satō Yasumasa's concerns in "Hori Tatsuo to Kirisuto-kyō" (Hori Tatsuo and Christianity) and "'Arano' no sekai" (The World of "Arano").¹¹

Any evaluation of Hori's reconstructed classics ought to take into consideration his own views on the art of translation as he expressed them within "Geijutsu no tame no geijutsu ni tsuite":

Reading Cocteau's versions of such works as Antigone and Romeo and Juliet, I am struck by his method of translating from one language into another; it is translating from a dead language into a living one. Cocteau himself calls this an "operation." That is to say, an old masterpiece is rejuvenated by removal of its rusted and rotted parts. The operation requires chloroform. When the aged masterpiece wakes, it possesses the vitality it had when Shakespeare or whoever first wrote it.

The contrast between the immortal parts and the rotted parts of Shakespeare was made glaringly apparent to me by comparing the original with Cocteau's translation. And what surprised me most was the discovery that Cocteau would retain the exact line from Shakespeare.

It is up to us now to apply chloroform to the masterpieces of our ancestors (Genji monogatari comes to mind) and perform the same type of operation on them. (V, 423-24)

Whether Cocteau improved upon Shakespeare does not concern us. Surely Hori, by careful pruning of Kagerō nikki, Sarashina nikki, and the story from Konjaku, has made them more readable for the modern reader. And yet, even "Arano," the most eventful of his stories, may very well grow

¹⁰Yoshida Seiichi. "Hori Tatsuo to ōchō joryū nikki." Gendai bungaku to koten. 1961. pp. 154-73.

¹¹Satō Yasumasa. "Hori Tatsuo to Kirisuto-kyō" and "'Arano' no sekai." Bungaku sono uchi naru kami. 1974. pp. 256-71.

tiresome for the reader--Japanese or Western--who demands more in the way of a story line than an account of a lady who, huddled behind her screen; reacts to any given situation with sighs, tears, or faintings. Furthermore, the themes of Hori's "classical" works will perhaps not convey the deep sense of tragedy that is to be found in some of the Western literature Hori employed. There is little dramatic conflict in Hori's languishing ladies; the Correspondence of Heloise, for example, reveals a soul torn between passion for a man and duty to God.

Even after America's entry into the war, the turbulence of the times intrude so infrequently into his writings, it is as though such things belonged to a world beyond the confines of his idea of civilization. His first letters after the attack on Pearl Harbor concern the amount of snowfall and his Christmas celebration. Perhaps the secluded life he was already leading allowed him the rare luxury of aloofness; certainly it is consistent with his theories of literature that he excluded such events from his writings. We have seen how, years before, he had criticized Paul Morand's Ouvert la Nuit as the work of an author who had been overwhelmed by the chaos of the day. Little in Hori's stories is attributable to the events of the early 1940's; the stories are almost entirely the products of his own internal development and his lifelong dedication to his concept of universal, timeless art. His concern for the deterioration of this kind of art can be found in his essay "Ise monogatari nado" (On Ise monogatari) for the June, 1940, issue of Bungei. He makes a muted plea that writers return to the essentials of sound literature, which, under government pressure, they had abandoned:

This much I know: there must be at the base of all good literature that which has a certain quality of a requiem to it and which penetrates into the very hearts of men, bringing peace to their souls. It is this which gave rise to the ingenuous literature of past ages and has flowed on in an unbroken undercurrent through the literary works of the modern--and much graver--period. (IV, 318)

Naoko is his own contribution to the literature he described. The story won him the 1941 Chūō kōron Prize for literature. Since its appearance, a great number of critiques have been written, each attempting to fasten upon the meaning behind this story of a man and a woman --Akira and Naoko.

The influence of Mauriac, whom Hori discusses in "Shōsetsu no koto nado" and "Veranda nite" (On the Veranda) (Shinchō, June, 1936) now began to manifest itself in Naoko. He had read intently Mauriac's works, such as Le Baiser au Lépreux, Genitrix, Le Nœud de Vipères, and, most particularly, Thérèse Desqueyroux, while nursing Yano Ayako in 1935. In these novels he rediscovered the same quality which had drawn him to Radiguet: the ability to create complex, emotional characters within a carefully constructed format. Mauriac's Catholicism, as Miwa points out, had less appeal for Hori than did his aesthetics.¹² For this reason, he sees Naoko as a work which is faulty in that it remains an experiment in novelistic form rather than having developed into a close analysis of the struggles of a soul.¹³ While Miwa's thesis has much validity, it implies somewhat rashly that a novel which emphasizes conflict between man and God over conflict between man and society automatically has greater profundity.

¹²Miwa, pp. 209-10.

¹³Ibid., p. 211.

Like Le Bal, Naoko is largely a novel of the workings of society, society meaning in this case the institution of marriage. Naoko is the last of Hori's heroines who suffer from the burden of their fate. Here that burden is the one imposed by the obligations of modern-day matrimony. Hori's description, then, of the relationship of Naoko and her husband, Keisuke, appears to have been inspired by that of Radiguet's d'Orgels. Eguchi remarks further upon the similarities between these two ineffectual husbands.¹⁴

Although Mishima Yukio has high praise for the lyrical descriptive passages on nature in Naoko, it is Hori's treatment of his male characters for which he takes Hori to task.¹⁵ Mishima remarks that Keisuke, one of the few male characters in all of Hori's fiction, has elements of modesty, determination, and loneliness and a touching quality rarely found in a man. Yet the character never becomes truly alive--he remains a mere paper cut-out. In Mishima's eyes, ". . . what Keisuka needed was to have been drafted into the army!"¹⁶ Mishima's main quarrel with Hori is that he did not have the same talent for creating evil characters as he did for creating good ones. His point is well taken and will be proven by a comparison between the descriptions of Keisuke and his mother and the fuller, more loving descriptions of Sanae and Naoko.

Yoshimura elaborates upon evil and goodness within Naoko in terms of the battle between the two within a soul. It was from Mauriac,

¹⁴Eguchi, pp. 42-44.

¹⁵Mishima Yukio. "Gendai shōsetsu wa koten ni tariuru ka." Hori Tatsuo. Ed. Nihon bungaku kenkyū shiryō kankō-kai. 1973. pp. 142-52.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 145.

Yoshimura claims, that Hori learned that an individual may be simultaneously possessed by demons and angels.¹⁷ But "good" and "evil" are relative terms. The chief distinction which Kokubo finds between Hori and Mauriac is that Naoko is not based upon Mauriac's premise of the necessarily sinful nature of human beings. Kokubo's article "Mōriakku to Hori Tatsuo" (Mauriac and Hori Tatsuo) is one of the most valuable references to Naoko, for it indicates those lessons from Mauriac's critical writings, Le Roman and Le Romancier et ses Personnages, which Hori did apply to the composition of Naoko.¹⁸

Mauriac was an important aid to Hori in his position against the confessional aspects of the modern Japanese novel. Perhaps the more autobiographical nature of Utsukushii mura and Kaze tachinu made him feel he had drifted toward the enemy camp:

. . . the problem of how vital it is for the novelist to cast off his own person is one with which we ought most to concern ourselves today. I am a little angry with myself now for the way I have been blithely writing only tales of myself, or very nearly so. (IV, 101)

Naoko was an attempt to withdraw again as an author from his own creation, to place himself, Mauriac-fashion, at a distance from the action of his characters and thereby transpose life rather than simply reproduce it. Of all his stories, Naoko most successfully fulfills his ideas for purely fictional literature.

Naoko, Keisuke, and Akira are three different personalities with three different views of life. Being a chronicle of the processes of

¹⁷Yoshimura, pp. 151-60.

¹⁸Kokubo Minoru. "Mōriakku to Hori Tatsuo." Nihon kindai bungaku no hikaku bungakuteki kenkyū. Ed. Yoshida Seiichi. 1971. pp. 403-23.

their minds and emotions, the story contains little action that is not internal. An important feature of the work is that these three main characters have little communication and few actual meetings; in almost total isolation from each other, they follow their individual paths toward their own resolutions. The greater part of the work is devoted to plotting two directions, Naoko's and Akira's. Through the course of the months at the sanatorium, Naoko examines her situation and determines that, if she is to realize her life, she must take decisive action. Impetuously and boldly she returns to Keisuke, only to meet with his rejection. But her having taken such a step represents a victory over her own dreaded passivity. Akira, however, has all this time been actively striving to find the meaning and value of his existence. His efforts bring about exhaustion and death. But by this time he has learned a precious message from the snow--the only possibility available to him is resignation to the fragility of life:

"These frozen flames are just like my life. After we perish what remains of us? Just something which is lost without a trace in the next gust of wind. And he who comes after me leaves nothing more behind him than I did. This is the fate handed down from one man to another, without end...." (II, 357)

On the same day, Naoko, half covered with snow as though half dead herself, decides to leave the mountain to resume life in society. Snow, the symbol of resignation for Akira and of defeatism for Naoko, works to bring about the denouements to their two stories. In Endō's analysis of Akira's and Naoko's respective dilemmas and resolutions, he discovers influences from Rilke at work. Akira's gentle submission to death, he explains, is a spirit derived from Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge; the resistance against death and challenge to life on Naoko's

part spring from the life-affirming poems of Duneser Elegien (Duino Elegies).¹⁹

The vagueness with which Naoko's final situation is described makes for some frustration; to read the closing passage, one might well ask what will become of her after this:

The outlines of the snow scene outside had by now been completely absorbed into a pallid white haze. But still she stood gazing out, her forehead to the cold glass, following her thoughts. Little by little her spirits rose. True, she would have to return to the hard, biting cold of the mountain tomorrow, but now, how good the warmth of the hotel lobby was! How glowing it made her cheeks feel!

"Dinner is being served, madam," a waiter came to inform her. She silently acknowledged his message and suddenly felt famished. Without going back up to her room, Naoko walked directly toward the dining room, toward the soft tinkling sound of crystal and silver. (II, 374-375)

Among Hori's notes on Naoko, discovered after his death, is the phrase, "Her life is to be all the more perfected through the fate she endures." (II, 421) Thus it appears it was Hori's intention that we are to know Naoko will return to her husband's house and continue living there in silent protest. But, unlike her life before with Keisuke and his mother, her future will hold no illusions. By her sudden flight to Tokyo, she has arrived at a lucid understanding of her position:

Whenever something had come along to capture her imagination and she allowed herself to be swept perilously away, then a ray of light would flicker, as it did today, over hitherto unknown facets of life. And if she had remained calm and firm, never would she have imagined the regions she glimpsed nor have seen her way clear before her. (II, 374)

Her impetuous action has gained her knowledge and the determination to live on in the face of her husband's cruel rejection. This is the main

¹⁹Endō. pp. 52-62.

similarity which Naoko shares with Thérèse Desqueyroux. It is typical of Hori and his inclination for the commonplace that the crime of his heroine is a trifling affair compared to that of Mauriac's Thérèse.

According to the same fragmentary notes, Hori evidently had an idea of expanding the novel into a much lengthier history, incorporating into it two other works, "Nire no ie," itself a revision of "Monogatari no onna," and "Furusatobito" (Hometown People) (Shinchō, Jan., 1943). This, however, he never did. Furthermore, there are jotted down a few sentences from Mauriac's La Fin de la Nuit. Not only does the quoted passage clarify the message of Naoko but it summarizes a philosophy Hori cherished until his death:

Though my only purpose in writing these pages has been to set the suffering figure of Thérèse in the full light of day, I have come to realize what it was that she meant to me. She took form in my mind as an example of that power, granted to all human beings--no matter how much they may seem to be the slaves of a hostile fate--of saying "No" to the law which beats them down.²⁰

Naoko was his last work of fiction. In the first several years of the 1940's, he devoted much of his dwindling energy to visiting historic sites such as Nara, Kurashiki, and Kyoto. These excursions resulted in a number of impressionistic essays. "Banka," published in the September, 1940, issue of Fujin kōron is one of the first of these, and is a lyrical account of a stay with his wife at Lake Nojiri. The title, meaning "late summer," may have been borrowed from Adalbert Stifter's Der Nachsommer, although the essay concerns his reading of Die Judenbuche (The Jew's Beech), by Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, at a lakeside hotel.

²⁰ François Mauriac. Thérèse: A Portrait in Four Parts. Trans. Gerald Hopkins. New York, 1973. p. 189.

Many of his other travel accounts were printed in the same journal from January to August of 1943, under the title "Yamatoji: Shinanoji" (The Highroads of Yamato and Shinano). As he went from one temple to another, he was struck by the perseverance displayed by the ancient structures and statues. Those things had long outlived their original purpose and been enfeebled, yet they continued to exist with a life that transcended the toll of the years. They spoke to him both of the transitoriness of life and of its value:

The things which the human race has created out of its desire to transcend nature have, with the long passage of the years, all fallen into decay. Even those things which still remain in some small part have all but dissolved back into their original nature. And the two [i.e., art and nature] have become one, discovering, so to speak, their second nature. Is it not in this that the inexplicable charm of all ruins lies? (III, 262-63)

The ennoblement of all things that persevere in the face of fate's decree that they must fall--this, Tanida suggests, is Hori's interpretation of Rilke's "Neunte Elegie" (Ninth Elegy). It was also a lesson Hori found repeated in Sophocles' Oedipus at Colonus, that is, a tale of endurance despite the deafness of the gods to all petition. Forbearance was the quality he remarked in Genji and was symbolized for him in the Kudara Kannon Buddha of the Hōryūji. For its maidenly beauty, the statue had been forcibly preserved far beyond a natural span of existence and had been doomed to a wandering life, transported from temple to temple. Still young and elegant on the surface, it had a long sad history that inspired reverence.²¹

²¹Tanida. pp. 155-58.

The exertion of Hori's journeys took their toll. In March of 1944 he suffered from a series of lung hemorrhages. His plans for one more novel, set in the Nara period, had to be renounced.²² Moreover, conditions in Tokyo were growing severe, and, in the general evacuation of the city, he and his wife Taeko returned to Karuizawa.

After the conclusion of the war, he assisted in the revival of Shiki and attempted to launch a new literary review, Kōgen. But he was not equal to the task of another lengthy work like Naoko. He confined his original writing to short, impressionistic sketches, such as "Yuki no ue no ashiato" (Footprints on the Snow) (Shinchō, Mar., 1946), which were formulations of the ideas he had gleaned from art, literature and his travels. His condition took a sharp turn for the worse in the summer of 1946, and that winter he became bedridden. Taeko took on the responsibility of finding him proper nourishment when even the most ordinary foods were in short supply. His visitors during these painful years were such friends as Nakamura Shin'ichirō and--the oldest friend of all--Jinzai Kiyoshi. Before long, however, the times improved, and he was able to have a small house built in Oiwake. He was carried to it by stretcher in 1951. This cottage would be his last home and the one where Hori Taeko still lives.

In addition to his essays, his occupations in these years included guiding such promising young poets as Nomura Hideo and studying European literature. He occupied himself with Rilke, de Noailles, Mallarmé, Valéry, Julien Green, Louise Labé, and Jules Supervielle--a list of

²²Ibid., p. 159.

writers whose literature is heavily marked by the theme of death. It is indicative of his loss of energy that, while he translated from these authors, he no longer attempted the more demanding effort of transforming what he found in them into original stories.

There was one other interest which he seemed to develop first in these years--Chinese poetry and painting.²³

All that greets the eye is full of grief and sorrow.
So fatigued am I, I doze before the flowers.

(Banji shōshin zai mokuzen.
Isshin shōsui tai ka min.²⁴)

These are two lines that he loved from a verse by Ssu Kung-shu, a poet of the T'ang Dynasty. Perhaps they most aptly expressed for him his spirit of calm acceptance of life's sadness and advancing conclusion.

As the months of 1953 passed, he put his papers and library in order. His last effort at a literary composition was a rough draft of an afterword for a poetry collection by Nomura Hideo. Taeko watched on as he worsened. Later, she recorded what she remembered of their conversations:

In the course of the changing symptoms of his illness, there were times when Tatsuo, attacked by anxieties, sought some higher source of strength. Sometimes it was the God of Christianity, sometimes the Buddha. I suspect he could not submit to a Christian God who demands that one accept on faith the illogical doctrine of Christ having been born of Mary, a virgin. I had no reply for him when he would tell me that he could believe in God but not in Christ; I thought of Christ's words in the Bible, when he said to the Jews who would not believe in him, "I come to you in the

²³Ogawa Kazusuke. "Kaisei" Seikazoku, Moyuru hoho. Vol. 442 of Kadokawa bunko. 1972. p. 187.

²⁴Kanshi taikan. Ed. Saku Setsu. 1943. Vol. 2. p. 752. In Chinese the lines read, Wan shih shang hsin tsai mu ch'ien. I shen ch'iao-ts'ui tui hua mien.

name of my Father, but you receive me not." Once Tatsuo said to me, "It would be much simpler to enter into a religious creed of prayer to the Holy Mother; Christ is too unapproachable. If you had been a Catholic, faith in God might have come more easily to me." Tatsuo and Nomura Hideo had gone together as sightseers to St. Paul's Church in Karuizawa. Nomura had since been baptized, and Tatsuo was envious of the ease with which he had converted to Catholicism. When I think of those days with Tatsuo, I can only remember how I used to see to his meals and nurse him; it seems to me now that I've forgotten the more important things.²⁵

Elsewhere, Taeko tells of his thoughts of death and his spent life.

Once more, his faith in the value of life can be seen:

Once, out of his loneliness and physical suffering, he whispered, "I think I'd rather be allowed to die than live with this pain." Feeling his suffering, I answered, "Shall we die together?" He looked up at me.

"If I do commit suicide, all the work I've ever done will die with me, won't it?.... Do you see? All my efforts will have been in vain."

His words remained with me for a long time.

Some time later, he read me a line from, I believe, a poem of Rilke: "Human suffering is finite; death marks the bounds." Cheerfully, as though a weight had been lifted from him, he explained this to mean that one can always bear agony until the coming of death. The passage seemed to be a great comfort to him. By reading, he would distract the pain of his illness and sought in books the words of life.

I felt then that he was thinking more and more frequently about the past. He would speak about the Roba days and the happy gatherings in Saisei's parlor, or about life at boarding school. He purposely mentioned only his happy memories. I remember how he surprised me once when, as though jarred by something he would have preferred forgetting, he suddenly said in an angry tone, "I would hate living through my youth again. There's no pleasure in the thought of how ridiculous I was."²⁶

²⁵Hori Taeko. "Bannen no Tatsuo." Hori Tatsuo. Ed. Nihon bungaku kenkyū shiryō kankō-kai. 1973. p. 172.

²⁶Ibid., p. 173.

Taeko describes his last few days and the events of the twenty-eighth of December, 1953.

One long rainy day, I was at the glass doors, looking out into the garden. "How tiresome," I inadvertently sighed and sat down in the wicker chair. When I glanced in Tatsuo's direction, I was startled to find him staring at me, as though there was something he wanted me to know.

"Is something wrong?" I asked.

"Tiresome, is it? Well, what can we do about that?"

I remember how completely flustered I was. To my surprise, my offhanded remark had disheartened and hurt him.

"It's written somewhere that Mori Ōgai told his daughter Annu that one must find pleasure in everything, no matter how trivial. That's what you must attempt to do, you know."

Two days before Tatsuo passed away, the sky darkened all of a sudden and there were peals of thunder. Gusts of wind picked up sand from the slopes of Mt. Asama and hurled it against the glass. In my fright I ran to Tatsuo's bedside and held him as he lay in the futon. When I gripped his hand, he too seemed to feel afraid of something. "Such an eerie wind," he said again and again.

That night after his supper he told me he worried that I was such a coward. "Well! And who said he was afraid of the gusts of wind? You! I'm not afraid in the least." He simply smiled and said nothing more. The following night as I was preparing for bed, he told me again that he worried about my lack of courage. I knew then he was referring to something other than the wind. He took his customary sleeping medicine at eleven. "You go to bed too," he said, and his long thin fingers made a slight movement in a parting gesture. Then, "Good-bye," he added in English in a half-joking tone unusual for him. "Not 'good-bye.' You mean 'good night.'" I smiled and went into the next room. Earlier that night he had coughed up blood, so I stayed up, waiting for him to fall asleep. The lamp was dimmed so he would not be disturbed. I took up some sewing. About two hours later, I heard him call, "I think I'm going to cough again," and ran in. I worked frantically but the blood would not stop coming. At a loss for what to do, I pressed the bell with my knee, both hands being occupied, and woke the maid and had her go for the doctor. That much I remember. The next thing I was aware of was my own voice, repeatedly calling his name, shattering the

silence of the room. It was over. All trace of pain was gone from his face. When the doctor left, I went for the inn-keeper of the Aburaya and asked him to get word to Tokyo and to order a hearse from Ueda or Nagano. I could not bear the thought of taking Tatsuo all the way to the crematorium in the ox cart. By now the day was beginning to break. Still sitting there at Tatsuo's side, I vacantly caught the notes of a cuckoo as it flew across the brightening sky.²⁷

²⁷Ibid., pp. 173-74.

APPENDIX

SELECTED STORIES

THE SEASCAPE

The area around the harbor is always filled with busy stevedores and sailors reeking of drink. I had decided, rather than struggle through all that, I would see if I could not follow a more deserted-looking route, and consequently lost my way altogether. It was a strange spot that I had stumbled upon. No sooner did the queerness of the place strike me than my impression changed to one of surprise, for I felt as though I were seeing a seascape for the first time.

It was the quietest place imaginable. I cannot say very clearly where it was but it must have been somewhere within the harbor area as I certainly had not wandered that far afield. All I am certain of is that the docks were not so far off that the noise was inaudible, but it was so muffled, the silence of this place seemed all the more absolute by way of contrast.

An old weathered building with a high fence surrounded the place on three sides, leaving only a very narrow view of the outside world. The harbor was completely shut out and not much more than the sea was visible. That's what makes me believe it was at the farthest end of the harbor. Very possibly, I was standing in the central courtyard of the building. I call it a courtyard but there wasn't a single tree or shrub, nothing more than a weed or two poking up from the bare ground.

It fronted directly on the sea, without the smallest embankment.

The view thus restricted, there was only one antiquated steamer, like a relic of the last century, floating across the surface of the water. While it did have something of the look of a child's toy, it was a discordant element in the composition of the seascape, for its bulkiness gave the curious illusion of protruding beyond the frame of the picture. But this may have been due to the extraordinarily large shadow of the ship the sunlight created on the water.

I watched for a time, charmed like a child with the steamer, when a section of the sky came into my field of vision. It was sparkling like fragments of glass. Small white clouds, a host of them, were gathered about the mast of the steamer. The slowly moving ones had all taken on the forms of fish. Some were jellyfish, and the ones not moving at all recalled to mind beautiful seashells. The sky was an exact reflection of the depths of the sea. What I had at first taken to be a cluster of buildings, thrown like dice on a shore far beyond, now rose steadily up the mast. They too were clouds.

It was not the simple beauty of the seascape that I found so spell-binding, but rather that it contained the quintessential quality of a seascape. I lost nothing of my initial sense of surprise that I was seeing my first seascape, but what could have been creating this impression? At this point I relinquished my childlike delight in the steamer and clouds, and set myself the task of considering the essence of the view on a philosophical level: the beauty of the seascape lent itself best to a comparison with a certain expression on a human face.

More precisely, it was as though the seascape were slightly flustered, as a demure young girl might be if she felt herself being watched by keen, devouring eyes; the quick rise and fall of the waves was the fluttering of her heart.

It was only then that I became aware of a movement on the deck of the ship. I squinted hard for a better look, and not until I had a sharp pain between the eyes did I make out a sailor leaning on the ship's railing. He was puffing on a cigarette with what appeared to be his great satisfaction.

The smoke gave me the same idea, and I took a cigarette from my case and put it between my lips. I couldn't get a match lit and suddenly remembered the swimming clouds-- Well of course! There's a wind.

I looked around-- Now that old building will keep the wind off. I went over to it unsuspectingly, but when I got close and bent my head down to the wall, something struck me as odd. As grimy and weathered as the wall looked, it gave off a smell of fresh paint. Perhaps I was just imagining it. I nonchalantly struck a match, but the wind was all the stronger here, hurling itself back off the wall at me. I tried any number of ways of shielding myself but all I got for my pains was a pile of dead matchsticks.

All of a sudden there was a sound as if someone had thrown a handful of gravel down on me. Startled, I glanced back at the building, noticing for the first time a window above. The sound had come from its being thrown violently open from the inside. Then through the open window a European-looking man in a frightful rage thrust out his head.

"No smoking here!"

It was so sudden and so altogether baffling I could only glare indignantly back up at him. But something about his face, that brown moustache like two cigars.... I felt I knew him from somewhere. All this happened in an instant, for he immediately pulled his head back in and, with another rattle, slammed the window.

So there I was with my cigarette still dangling unlit from my lips, shut out by the window, struck out of the seascape. What's more, I had absent-mindedly bitten down on the end of the cigarette, and now there was a peculiar, bitter taste in my mouth from the loose pieces of tobacco.

It was not good my staying any longer. Making my way out again, I happened to spot what seemed to serve as a gate to the place. Such an old, broken-down, wooden affair, attracting so little attention to itself, I had scarcely noticed it when I first passed through. It occurred to me I might find a clue to what sort of place it was. I looked around for a signboard on the gate and soon found what did seem to be one, yet the writing was so completely worn away it was practically indecipherable. With some recourse to imagination, I eventually made out the name of a customs house.

"So that's what it is. But why a person can't smoke near a customs house.... Just a minute! That foreigner! I knew I had seen him before! Wasn't he Rousseau, the one they called 'Le Douanier'? I never saw him except in his self-portraits, but he did look rather like that."

Then I remembered the smell of fresh paint from the building. It must have been the paints Rousseau was using in his studio. And if that's true, he must have been as enchanted with the scene as I, and

was in the process of painting it. While he was quietly absorbed in his work, he heard me striking matches outside. It didn't bother him much at first but when the noise persisted he finally thought someone was up to some mischief, stormed over to the window, and flung it open to yell at whoever was outside.

I saw the mystery in a new light now. The scene I had been watching must have been aware it was being drawn by Henri Rousseau in the customs house, and that's why it was so strangely nervous; that's why its self-conscious beauty so impressed me, a chance intruder upon the artist and the sitter.

These unexpected findings thoroughly cheered me up. All of this happened on a day when summer seemed to be vying with autumn for possession of the skies, like the constant battle between light and darkness within myself. The unlit cigarette still in my mouth, I slipped through the gate and walked off as softly as I could.

LES JOUES EN FEU

I became seventeen. I had just gone from middle to preparatory school. My parents were afraid that life under their roof might be bad for my nerves and had me board at the school. This change of environment could not but have had a great impact upon me. Because of it, the shedding of my childhood was to be curiously hastened.

The dormitory was divided up for all the world like a honeycomb into many small studies, each one kept in a perpetual state of turmoil by the ten or so boys occupying it. These "studies" were furnished with nothing more than a few huge, scarred tables, each heaped high with school caps, dictionaries, tablets, ink bottles, and packs of cigarettes and such, all languishing for want of an owner. Among all this might be found a boy doing his German, or another precariously straddling the old chair with the broken leg, idly puffing away at a cigarette. Of all the boys I was the smallest. To be one of them, I tortured myself trying to smoke and timidly took a razor to my still beardless cheeks.

The bedroom on the second floor had a strange smell of soiled linen that made me queasy. The smell even found its way into my dreams while I slept and imbued them with sensations unknown as yet to my waking hours. But gradually I grew accustomed even to that.

And so my innocence was tottering. It needed only the final blow.

One afternoon recess, I was wandering alone in the deserted flower garden to the south of the botany laboratory. I halted all of a sudden.

A honey-bee, dusty with pollen, flew up from a great riot of pure white flowers I did not know, blooming in a corner of the garden. I thought I would watch and see to which flower the honey-bee carried the pollen clustered on his legs, but he appeared indecisive and not about to settle on any of them. At that moment, I sensed that every one of the flowers was coquettishly arching her styles in a stratagem to entice the bee to herself. He finally chose one and flew, clinging to her. He fastened his dusty legs around the tiny tips of her styles and presently flew up once again. As I watched, I suddenly felt that cruelty only children are capable of and yanked at the fertilized flower. I scrutinized her styles flecked with the pollen of the male, crushed her in my palm, and wandered on again through the garden blossoming in flaming reds and purples. Just then someone called my name through the glass doors of the botany laboratory. It was Uozumi, an upperclassman.

"Come take a look. I'll let you see the microscope."

Uozumi was on the discus-throwing team and seemed about twice my size. When he was on the field, he bore a slight resemblance to "The Discus Thrower," one of the Greek statues on the German picture postcards that we circulated among ourselves. Consequently, the lower-classmen idolized him in spite of his perpetual look of disdain for everyone. I wanted him to like me. I went into the laboratory.

Uozumi was the only one there. His hairy hands were fumbling with a specimen. Every now and then he took a look at it through the microscope. Then he let me have a look. I had to hunch over, shrimp-like, in order to make anything out.

"Can you see?"

"Yes."

Awkward as my position was, I still was able to keep a secret watch on him out of my other eye. I had already noticed a peculiar transformation in his face. Whether it was due to the bright light of the laboratory or to his having removed his mask for once, the flesh of his cheeks was oddly slack and his eyes were deeply bloodshot. A faint smile, like a girl's, kept flickering on his lips. For some reasons, I thought of the honey-bee and the strange white flowers of the garden. His warm breath grazed my cheek.

I abruptly raised my head from the microscope and, with a look at my wristwatch, stammered, "Well, I.... I've got to get to class."

"Oh?"

His mask was already deftly back in place. He stood looking down at my face drained of color, with his customary expression of disdain.

In May, Saigusa, who was in the same class as myself though a year older, was transferred to our study. He was known for being a pet of the upperclassmen. He was a slender boy and made me envious of his fragile beauty, for his skin was translucent, blue-veined, and fair, while his cheeks still retained the tints of roses. In the lecture hall, I went so far as to steal occasional glances from behind my textbook at the back of his slender neck.

At night he would go up to the second-floor bedroom before anyone else. This was about nine o'clock even though there was a regulation that lights could not be turned on in the bedrooms until ten. After he

went up, my mind would evoke a phantasmagoria of his faces, all asleep in darkness.

I had acquired the habit of not going to bed until midnight, but one evening I had a sore throat and I seemed to be running a slight fever. Soon after Saigusa went up, I took a candle and climbed the stairs. I opened the bedroom door without a forethought. It was pitch black inside, but suddenly a strange shadow in the form of a large bird was thrown on the ceiling by the light of my candle. It flapped about eerily, as if in a fierce struggle. My heart skipped a beat. Then it was gone. My only thought was that the phantom on the ceiling was created by a caprice of the flickering light of the candle, for when the flame stopped its wavering, except for Saigusa in his bedding against the wall, I saw nothing more than a dark, sullen form in a hooded cape, sitting beside him.

"Who's there?" the huge boy in the cape asked, looking around.

When I realized it had to be Uozumi, I became flustered and put out the candle. Ever since the time in the botany laboratory, I was sure he hated me. I did not say a thing and crawled under my shabby quilt next to Saigusa's. Saigusa too was silent all this time.

I lay there choking for several minutes. The man I took to be Uozumi eventually got up. Without a word he stomped through the dark and left the room. When his footsteps grew fainter, I told Saigusa in a suffering tone that I had a sore throat.

"You must have a fever, too."

"Maybe just a little."

"Here, let me see." He stretched over and laid a cold hand on my throbbing forehead. I held my breath. Then he grasped my wrist. If

he intended taking my pulse, it was a strange way of doing it. But all that worried me was that he might find the beat had suddenly quickened.

All the next day I stayed buried under the covers and even wished my sore throat might never get better so that I could go up to bed early every night. Several days later, my throat started hurting again in the evening. Deliberately coughing, I went up to the bedroom soon after Saigusa, but his bed was empty. Wherever he had gone, he was a long time coming back. A whole hour went by as I suffered in solitude. It seemed to me my throat had taken a turn for the worse and might well be the end of me.

He finally came back. I had left a candle burning beside my pillow. Its light traced a weird, writhing form on the ceiling as he undressed, and the memory of the phantom of the other night came back to me. I asked him where he had been until then. He hadn't felt sleepy, he said, and had gone for a walk alone around the playing fields. Something in his tone made me think he was lying, but I didn't question him any further.

"Going to leave the candle burning?" he asked.

"As you like."

"I'll put it out then." To blow out the flame, he drew his face close to mine. I kept my eyes raised to his cheeks where the shadows of his long lashes fell and flickered in the candlelight. Compared to mine, flaming as they were, his cheeks seemed celestially cool.

At some point, my relationship with Saigusa passed beyond ordinary friendship. If he grew closer to me, Uozumi, on the other hand, became all the more overbearing to everyone in the dormitory, and from time to

time was to be found alone on the field, practicing discus-throwing like a demon. He disappeared altogether while we were in the midst of preparations for the final examinations of the half-year. The entire dormitory knew he had gone, but not one of us said a word about it.

Summer vacation came. Saigusa and I planned an excursion of a week or so to the seacoast. We felt somewhat heavy-hearted, like children sneaking off from their parents, as we set out one leaden gray morning.

By leaving the railway at a seaside station, by then walking a mile on a road that followed the shore, we came to a small fishing village cradled in the jagged hills. Our inn had a woebegone look about it, and the smell of seaweed came drifting in with the night. A maid brought in a lantern. Saigusa took off his shirt to go to bed, and in the dim lantern light his bare back showed a peculiar ridge on his spine. An unaccountable urge to touch it came over me.

"What's this?" I asked, putting my finger to the spot.

"That?" He reddened a little. "That's a scar from tuberculosis of the spine."

"Let me feel it, will you?"

I stroked the curious ridge on his spine as I might a piece of ivory, not allowing him to dress. His eyes were closed and he shuddered slightly.

The weather had not cleared by the next day but nonetheless we set out once moreover the pebbles of the road that led us through the little villages along the sea. Around noon, we were coming upon yet another village when the sky grew ominous and rain threatened to fall at any

moment. Furthermore, both of us were tired of walking and somewhat cross with each other, so we decided that when we got to the village we would ask when the public coach passed through.

On our way was a small wooden bridge where five or six village girls, each with a fish-basket on her arm, had stopped to talk. When they saw us coming they fell silent and watched us with curiosity. I discovered among them a girl with particularly beautiful eyes and kept looking just at her. The girl, evidently the oldest, gave no sign of annoyance at my stare. In order to make the best possible impression on her in the shortest possible time, I attempted that swagger boys affect in these situations. I wanted to say something, anything at all, but my wits completely failed me, and I was just about to pass by without a word when Saigusa suddenly slackened his pace and, to my surprise, went boldly up to her. He was asking her about the coach--quite a shrewd maneuver. Now this tactic of his was likely, I thought, to give her a better impression of him than of myself. Not to be outdone, I went up to her and, while they were talking, took a look in her basket.

She was answering him without the least trace of shyness. Her voice was unexpectedly rasping and failed in its duty to the beauty of her eyes; yet, the very harshness of it added mysteriously to her charm.

I decided to speak up. I asked faintheartedly as I pointed to the basket what the little fish inside were called. There must have been something odd about the way I asked, for she seemed to find it unbearably funny. The other girls followed her lead and burst out laughing. The blood rushed to my cheeks and, with a glance at Saigusa, I caught the flash of a malicious smile. A sudden hostility toward him came over me.

We headed for the end of the village where the coach was to stop, neither of us saying a word. We had a long wait and it had already begun raining. Once in the coach, we were left largely to ourselves and hardly spoke; I was depressing him as much as he was me. We finally arrived in a misty rain at a town by the sea, where we might find lodgings for the night. The inn was just as gloomy as that of the night before. There was the same faint smell of seaweed and the same light from the flame of a lantern, conjuring up hazy ghosts of ourselves as we were one night before. The restraint between us eventually melted. We blamed our low spirits on our having had such bad weather for traveling. My proposal was that the next day we go directly by coach to a town where we could get a train and return to Tokyo for the time being. He agreed, evidently at a loss for what else to do. In our exhaustion both of us soon fell sound asleep.

Some time close to dawn, I happened to wake. Saigusa was sleeping with his back to me. I noticed the small ridge on his spine under his bed clothes and gently stroked it as I had done the previous night. When I did so, I found myself thinking of the beautiful eyes of the girl on the bridge. That strange voice of hers still echoed in my ears. I heard Saigusa lightly grind his teeth as I drifted back to sleep.

The next day as well brought rain, or rather a dense mist. We no longer had a choice; the trip had to be given up. In the coach rattling on through the rain, and later in the crush of the third-class carriage of the train, both of us did all we could--and it is this that marks a full stop to love--to spare the other pain. Something made me feel that hereafter we were never to meet again. A number of times he seized my hand. If I did not give it to him, neither did I withdraw it from

him. All the same, when fragments of a strange rasping voice came drifting from time to time to my ears, I was deaf to all else. We were all the sadder when we said good-bye.

The most convenient way for me to get home was to get off the train at a station along the way and change to a branch line. While I made my way through the crowd on the platform, I kept looking back at him in the railway carriage. To see me better, he pressed his face to the window beaded with rain but succeeded only in clouding the glass with his white breath, and hid me all the more from his sight.

August came and I went with my father to a lakeshore in Shinshū. I hadn't seen any more of Saigusa but he sometimes wrote what might be called love letters to me at the lake. In time I gradually stopped answering. Echoes of strange voices had effected a change in my love. From one of his last letters, I learned he was ill. I gathered he was suffering again from his spinal tuberculosis. Regardless, I wrote no more.

The autumn half began. On my return from the lake, I once again moved into the dormitory. Everything was different now. Saigusa had gone somewhere by the sea for a change of climate; Uozumi took no more notice of my existence now than he did of the air around him.

With winter, there came a morning all encrusted in a thin shell of ice, when I discovered Saigusa had died. The announcement was on the school bulletin board. I read it through vacantly, as if it concerned someone I had never known.

Several years went by. Every now and then I would recall all that had happened in the dormitory and could not help but feel that I had

ruthlessly stripped away the beautiful skin of childhood and had left it to lie like an opalescent snakeskin entangled among the brambles. In the course of those years, how many were the strange voices I heard! There was not one among them which did not lead me to grief; and I was all too fond of grieving over them, until one day I was finally dealt a wound to the heart from which there was no recovering.

In the uplands near the lake I had once visited with my father, was a sanatorium, and here I was sent after a serious hemorrhage of the lungs. The doctor's diagnosis of tuberculosis has no particular importance to this story but to demonstrate that the petals of the rose must fall and that I, too, had now lost the bloom from my cheeks for all time.

There was, besides myself, only a single patient in what was known as the White Birch Ward of the sanatorium. He was a boy of fifteen or sixteen and had been treated for tuberculosis of the spine but was simply convalescing then, and for several hours a day he would be conscientiously taking his sun bath out on the veranda. When he learned I was confined to bed, he took to paying me calls occasionally. On one of his visits, it struck me that his lean face, although darkened by the sun until the only trace of red was in the lips, bore the stamp of the dead Saigusa. From that time on, I did my best not to look directly at him.

One morning was so fine I had a sudden desire to get up from bed and ventured cautiously over to the window. There, on the opposite veranda, was the boy, totally naked, sunning himself. He was leaning slightly forward, intent on a part of his body. He could not have known

he was being watched. My heart was pounding. I am near-sighted and squinted for a better look. When I made out on his dark back what seemed to be that distinctive ridge of Saigusa's, a sudden dizziness came over me. I managed my way back to the bed and collapsed.

The boy was discharged several days later, without his having the slightest notion of the great blow he had given me.

CONVALESCENCE

Part 1

To all appearances he was soundly asleep in his berth in the sleeping coach. It was late at night.

All of a sudden, one of his eyes opened grotesquely.

His hand began moving spasmodically in an effort to pick up the pocket watch lying beside his pillow. But the hand felt as heavy as iron. Except for the one eye, all the parts of his body were still under the influence of the sleeping drug he had taken several hours earlier. The eye, too, resigned itself at last and closed.

After some time, the hand started moving again. The command from the brain had been so slow to reach it, the hand seemed now to have a life of its own as it groped for the watch. Its independent movement reminded him of his command, which he had almost forgotten issuing.

"Only 3:30," he whispered to himself and coughed. The cough led to another and continued with no sign of letting up. It's hopeless now; I might as well get up, even though it's still an hour too early. He sat up and, with various contortions, finally managed to put his arms through the sleeves of his suit jacket. It was a poor fit at best; for almost the last half year he had been living in bed clothes. The necktie gave him a great deal of trouble, and the shoes, so loose on his feet, made him wonder if he had got somebody else's by mistake. All the while he dressed, he never left off coughing. Then he realized it was not his alone he heard; someone was coughing along with him. The

sound seemed to be coming from the berth directly above him. Did someone catch my cough? His glance at the floor met with a pair of lady's shoes at his feet.

He eventually stood up, reached for a bottle of antiseptic solution, and stepped out into the passage. The steam heating had clouded the air, making it painful to breathe. As he made his way down the passage, he continually knocked against traveling bags and almost squashed a number of shoes. At one point, his progress was hampered by what seemed to be an artificial leg in an argyle sock, protruding from one of the berths. He staggered from side to side through the clutter, wide-eyed as a lunatic.

Just then he became aware of a single eye glaring fixedly at him from behind as he labored down the passage. It was his other self, still in the berth, lying with his jacket and necktie and shoes scattered about him, coughing ceaselessly.

Some time before dawn, he got off the train at Lake Suwa where it was necessary to hire a car to take him to his destination, a sanatorium in the uplands. He had the driver stop on the way before a shabby, makeshift hut on the lakeshore, the home of an old man, formerly a family servant. About seventy years old now, he had for ten years and more been living all alone in the little house by the lake. He had heard once that the old man was sometimes half-paralyzed with neuralgia, and wondered how, being so old and enfeebled, he was able to manage by himself. "Still, why should he have gone on living as long as this?" He had no good answer for his own question, and a shadow fell across his heart.

From inside the hut, the surface of the lake was faintly visible through the window; the dawning light colored the water the blue of the Virgin's mantle in old paintings. The old man had been sitting before him when without warning he opened up an old, dilapidated Bible. But he did not pay much heed to the passage the old man read so zealously for his sake. He merely remained looking curiously at a kind of poultice pasted over the cracked leather binding, which must have served to hold it together, and at the resemblance the shaking hands that gripped the Bible bore to chicken claws. These two things were more meaningful for him than the biblical phrases. To him, they symbolized to perfection the persistence of life.

The sanatorium, situated some miles distant from Lake Suwa, was at the base of a mountain range known as Yatsugatake.

The large, red-roofed structure comprised three wards running parallel over the gently inclining slope. Each ward had a name: the White Birch, the Bellflower, and the Rhododendron. There seemed to be very few patients in the White Birch Ward where he was assigned a room. One sided looked out over an expanse of forested valley while on the other, the mountain range loomed closely. The window of his room was thrown open to form a perfect frame. A romantic landscape of the Southern Alps, their peaks still crowned with snow, presented itself to him as he lay in bed.

Wondering if Lake Suwa were visible, he ventured out on the south balcony but found only an unbroken expanse of fir trees in the direction of the lake. He did, however, discover that from where he stood he could easily see the balconies of the wards below his. Here and there, other

patients had stripped down to sunbathe, every one of them brown as tree bark, lying contentedly on their bellies, as though at some beach along the seacoast.

He imagined to himself how his own body would appear, naked, stretched out under the sun like those others. Suddenly his lips whispered a phrase, "They have numbered all my bones."--a phrase the old man had read to him from the Bible. Of all the lines he might have learned, it seemed to him that only the most worthless had stuck in his memory. ". . . all my bones." In the course of the long solitary day, he often repeated the phrase unconsciously to himself.

By the time evening came, he was so exhausted he sank like a stone into sleep.

He woke later in the night. He did not know how many hours he had slept but he felt the night was greatly advanced. He left the room and went to the lavatory. Enveloped in the distinctive smell of the corridor, he made his way back by beginning at room No. 1 and carefully counting the numbers. Just as he reached for the doorknob to his room, No. 4, he happened to glance at the number outside. It was No. 5. Thinking he must have miscalculated, he quickly retraced his steps. And yet, the next room down was No. 3. I must be half asleep, just wandering back and forth in front of my own room, he thought, and went the other direction. But the next room was still the same No. 5. This can't be some sort of fairy tale. A room doesn't simply disappear in the middle of the night while you're gone to the lavatory! All the same he remained standing foolishly in one spot in the middle of the corridor. Only the glimmer of the overhead lights disrupted the late-hour darkness.

Unexpectedly the name, hydrogen peroxide, came to him; it was the smell in the air. As soon as he identified it, he recalled as well the strip of gauze that for some reason had been tied around the outside doorknob of his room. And there it was on the knob of No. 5, the door he had repeatedly passed. Now why didn't I notice it when I grabbed it before? He tried the knob and the door yielded before him. It's my room, all right. There I am, empty, waiting for me. Overcoat, suit jacket, shirt, down to gloves and socks--perfect replicas of myself scattered around the room.

Once he crawled back into bed, he carefully reconsidered the source of his confusion with the room numbers: hospitals never have a room No. 4! It's an evil omen in that "four" can be pronounced shi, the same as "death." So mine is actually the fourth one down but they gave it the number 5. And that's all there is to it.... But wait. How did the architect of the hospital get the room with the unlucky number off his hands? Maybe he used some sort of sorcery and just plopped it into the next room, my room. Then this one room is actually two, illusion and reality stuck together, with the dimensions of one not quite a perfect fit with those of the other. Yes, if someone stood on the balcony in the middle of the night like this, and if he spied in through the window, two shadowy images of everything, including myself, would appear, exactly like images refracted by a crystal prism.

Then he remembered the chaotic scene of the night before in the sleeping coach. While his body had remained in a strange half-waking, half-sleeping state, another self of his had risen up from it and gone weaving down the passage between the berths. Last night's hallucination

and tonight's curious misadventure became jumbled in his mind and took on the complex, enigmatic aspect of a William Blake picture, to harry him and drive all sleep even further away.

Several nights later, he discovered blood seeping from the gauze bandage wrapped like a human hand around his doorknob. But by the next day it had been exchanged for a new one.

Since his admission to the sanatorium, winter had begun to lapse into spring and, but for his attack of nerves that first night, his condition steadily improved along with the weather.

Beyond his window, the snow-cover over the Southern Alps grew sparser with every passing day. And their peaks, like great teeth bared by the earth, seemed to be moving more and more closely in his direction. He watched them untiringly.

It was already the last part of April when, to his surprise, snow started falling suddenly one morning and continued without a lull the day through. Neither did it stop the next day, nor the next.

Late one night of the snowstorm, he was awakened out of a light sleep by a turmoil all about. The snowfall had earlier seemed to be letting up a bit, but while he slept it had turned into a full-scale blizzard accompanied by great blasts of wind. The door and window on the balcony side were customarily left open a crack by doctor's orders and, on this particular night, innumerable fine snowflakes came flying in on the wind and swirled round and round about the room, tracing random patterns across the floor. All that could be seen of him were his eyes peeking out from the blanket bundled around him. They were held spell-bound by the dancing snow until finally they were seeing not a mere

uniform whiteness in the host of nimbly revolving particles but, blended in, reds and blues and yellows and purples--all the colors of the rainbow. In that instant a slight dizziness came over him. Nonetheless he kept his gaze fixed on the rotations of the rainbow. Something in the sight gradually awakened within him a memory of his childhood.

He was a boy again and someone was trying to work the magic lantern for him. He was sitting in the dark, eyes straight ahead. It took a considerable time before the lens could be adjusted, and although he could make nothing out of the varicolored splotches wandering hazily across the white sheet, his heart fluttered in anticipation. When at last the picture came into clear focus, he was completely unprepared and his delight vanished. There on the screen, the body of a Chinese soldier lay in the snow. Impulsively he covered his eyes at the horrible scene

Perhaps I'm falling into the same kind of trap I did as a child, but greater this time, enchanted by a facade behind which something more horrible yet is hidden. Despite his thoughts he continued staring at the giddily swirling rainbow, falling ever more deeply under its spell. Suddenly there came a great crash of glass immediately followed by the same sounds from all along the ward. Many of the windows were giving way, he realized, and almost simultaneously his ears were numbed by a reverberating sound many times more violent yet, coming from somewhere very near him. He made no attempt to investigate and simply pulled the blanket up over his head. A sleeping powder was prepared for him on the nightstand. He was on the verge of taking it when he reconsidered; going

off to sleep while ignorant of what was happening was a harrowing thought. He lost all track of the time after that, but the multicolored particles continued flickering at the base of his eye sockets. Then, all at once, they vanished, and an unforeseen falling sensation, like being in a swiftly descending elevator, came over him. It was not simply a matter of falling asleep but rather a loss of consciousness symptomatic of cerebral anemia.

When a genuine sleep did come, it served only to prolong the attack.

Ten o'clock the following morning he returned from his temporary death. The wind was perfectly still now, and water vapor was rising copiously from the snow that lay half-a-foot thick on the balcony. The view of the balcony was very much changed from the one which he had been accustomed to see from his bed, not merely for the snow, nor because the window frame had been stripped clean of its glass. As his mind cleared, he realized the balcony door had been torn right off its hinges. Last night he had rightly guessed the cause of the sound of bursting glass, but to think he had not had the least idea at the time that the door, for all its sturdiness, had collapsed, sent a shiver down his spine.

The heights of the Alps, covered over with white once more, had retreated well away from his window. As he looked out over them, he lightly put his hand to his disheveled hair, as though determining whether or not he was still alive. Every single strand hurt, like so many exposed nerves.

He became troubled with insomnia and in the middle of the night would feel feverish. Just when he was about to drop off, he would break out in a sweat and wake up again. In the course of twenty-four hours, his temperature followed a pattern contrary to that of a person in sound health. His first reading in the mornings showed a high of approximately 100.4°. From there it fell steadily until it reached its lowest point, about 98.6°, in the evenings. He attributed his difficulty in sleeping to the onslaught of fever accompanying the nightly rise.

No matter which one of the nurses might be making the rounds, he learned he could expect her to reach his room at about midnight. As a mild joke, he thought of them as pigeons for the way they came strutting down the corridor. They would silently open his door and look around the dark room for a moment to see if all was in order. Assured he was asleep, they pulled the door softly shut and pigeon-walked off again. One of them would not even take the trouble to open the door, but simply peeked in on him through the keyhole. He came to know every detail of their routine, for invariably he was still awake at these times. Even if he did happen to be drowsy, he was certain to be startled awake again by the eerie eye he sensed, rather than saw, upon him. Then the sweat would begin to pour. Once the nurse left, he rapidly pulled off his terry-cloth nightgown, turned it inside out, and slipped it back on. Some time after, the late-night calls were no longer limited to twelve o'clock. As late as two a.m. or even three, when he still lay awake, he would see the door open and close of itself or sense the staring eye at the keyhole. Moreover, this might happen now any number of times a night, each time making his flesh crawl as he lay without stirring, feigning sleep. And each time a certain sound came to him from beyond

the room. His hearing had grown hypersensitive and he seemed able to distinguish in the night a sound of the rise and fall of wings.

He was intent and wary as a school-boy yet never mentioned a word of his fears to anyone. The sleeplessness and fever were giving him hallucinations, he told himself, and resolved to harden himself to the sounds. "It's just the pigeon, flapping her wings." But one morning the director examined him and found a recurrence of his pleurisy. Thus he knew that the vibration of wings he heard in the dead of night was a sound originating in his own chest.

With the passing nights, sleeplessness became a habit with him. He even learned to prefer it, for what was sleep to him, after all, but night sweats invariably followed by frightening dreams from which the fever surged? But still he had to contend with the nightmares he had as he lay wakeful and open-eyed.

It was on one of these nights he had just such a dream. The window was always supposed to be left open but on that night it had been closed for some reason. He suspected there was a bright moon for, through the crack where the window did not quite meet the frame, a moonbeam found its way and scattered a wealth of minute spots by his bed. The spattered pattern across the floor might well have been phlegm which he himself had unknowingly coughed up. He had an impression that someone was standing in the ghostly moonbeam, with his head hanging over him. Well, it's A come to see me! At that second A was transformed into someone else. Oh, it's B! Sorry, I thought it was A.... Hey, you're not B. Is it you, C?.... And so it went. There was never any more than one figure bending over him, but no sooner did he think

he had recognized him when the man was changed into another. Unlike most dreamers, he did not accept these irrational metamorphoses as something perfectly natural. His dream was different; to him the changes were completely baffling. More than baffling, they struck him as something gruesome and sinister.

When in this fashion all of the friends that he could think of had appeared by turns, he finally was freed from the dream. Perhaps it had been meaningless, yet of the dreams he had those nights, this had been the most agonizing. A high fever seemed to be coming upon him. He reached for the thermometer only to have it slip from his hand. As it snapped smartly in two upon the floor, what he had thought to be the spillings of the moonbeam suddenly glittered crimson, all the more resembling a spray of phlegm. Oh no, when could I have coughed up blood? Repulsed, he averted his eyes but could not suppress the thought that this might be the way death was to come to him. He thought of his friends, the sight of whom had just been tormenting him in his dream, and with a morbid curiosity began depicting to himself the shock each of them would receive upon opening a telegram with the news of his death.

In order to ward off a repetition of this "crisis," the doctor ordered a full four-week period of absolute quiet for him.

One day at the beginning of June, he was finally permitted out on the balcony again. A prickly sensation troubled his eyes but he bore with it as he gazed out over the new green bursting from the forest. He had never given much thought to it before, but the greater part of the forest was birch and larch.

For a brief time the fever described a wildly zigzagging line across his temperature chart. The fluctuations gradually lessened, however, until eventually his readings fell once and for all, and the line maintained a steady course below the 98.6° mark. But still his overall condition remained unstable and, just as though suffering the aftershocks of a great earthquake, his body was incessantly being shaken by attacks either of neuralgia, headaches or toothaches. Even while he lived in dream of these aftershocks, little by little he grew to draw breath with greater eagerness. For now birds began frequenting his balcony, and he would whistle to himself, in imitation of the almost excessively boisterous birdsong. Or at times he received a share of the tiny alpine flowers that the nurses carried back by the armfuls from their walks. Making a vase of the teakettle on the nightstand, he discovered the scents of bellflowers and lilies-of-the-valley.

The doctor prescribed daily sunbaths for him as well now.

For his first venture outside, the nurse gave him a pair of dark glasses against the ultraviolet rays. Immediately putting them on, he stepped out on the balcony as lightheartedly as a child. He raised his eyes upward. Only the early summer sun which was dazzling overhead heard him as he spoke: "The sun! Until today I saw nothing but death through my pain, but from this day on I'll face the sunlight through a pair of dark glasses!"

Part 2

. . . Furthermore, the only thing that matters is that you are improving.

If your health permits, see if you can't come to visit me here for a while. I'm renting the summer house

of a foreign family this year and am all alone except for the maid. So there's plenty of room for you. The beds are awfully squeaky though. The garden is full of the ferns you like so well. (But the ones you see here aren't from my house.)

He was still in the sanatorium when, early in July, he received the picture-postcard of beautiful, luxuriant ferns. It was from his aunt in the summer-resort town of Karuizawa. He wrote an immediate reply:

Thank you for the card.

As much as I would like to start right away for this Fern Hermitage of yours, the sanatorium director won't permit it yet. We've agreed that I should wait a week or so. In the meantime, I'll work hard on my suntan. Until now, I've only had my legs out, so they look like artificial limbs made of mahogany. . . .

July was almost over when one morning he made a sudden appearance at what he called the Fern Hermitage. He was wearing a sweater unusually heavy for the season; it was of a bold pattern such as the American and European residents favored, and gave him an incongruently bright appearance.

All he carried was a cane walking stick, as though he were merely returning from a stroll. The grass brushed against his legs as he walked up the path; the ferns were especially high and made a splendid sight. They looked to him exactly like pretty children waiting with open arms to welcome him, and he could not help smiling back at them.

He caught sight of his aunt on the veranda at the back of the house. She was alone, reclining on a wicker chair. He called out to her in a hearty, friendly tone.

"You look just like the Queen of the Ferns on your throne."

"Do I? So long as I'm a queen, I don't mind what I'm queen of," she called back, a smile beaming on her face.

Not bothering to remove his shoes, he came up on the veranda and flopped down in another wicker chair. His breathing was a little labored.

"You must be tired. Would you like to take a nap right away?"

"Well, maybe so.... And where is Uncle?"

"Still in Tokyo.... We two here must make a funny sight, a couple of skeletons."

He laughed softly.

"The same thought occurred to me on the way."

She looked embarrassed at having reminded him of his illness and did not reply.

"But you know," he continued, "there was a time when both of us put together must have weighed about the same as he. No more, though. I'm a good twelve pounds thinner now."

"But to compensate, I've gained a little, don't you think?"

But he did not look again in her direction and simply remained lying back wearily, eyes shut.

Until this year, his aunt's house in the ferns had been the summer house of a very refined elderly couple, perhaps from Scotland. He had a favorite path in the area, and, on previous visits to Karuizawa, had often strolled down it through the deep grass and passed this very house. Every time he went by, he used to see the old couple quietly having tea on the veranda. He had heard that they had been missionaries in Japan for some thirty years, but the man looked to him more a philosopher than a clergyman. So much so that he took to thinking of the path as Philosophen Weg, following the example of the foreign residents in these

uplands; they had a habit of assigning names of their own invention to even the tiniest, most out-of-the-way paths.

Maybe the old couple had finally completed their term of duty and had gone home. --Yes, they seemed to have been people of great taste, and preferred to live unpretentiously, not like the American missionaries. You can tell that from the furnishings they left behind for those who would take the house over after them: like the large bed, or the massive dinner table, or the chairs with their artless carvings. Not a single scratch on any of the pieces after thirty years of use. People far from home don't take such care over the years merely from a sense of frugality, but more from a love of fine things.

His eye fell on a chair hiding shyly behind the other furniture. It was a miniature, such as a child no older than five or six might use, and, except for its size, was scarcely any different from the other old chairs; the wood was as aged, and the design carved into it had the same rustic charm. It may have been that they brought it with the other pieces from Scotland when they came to settle in Japan thirty years ago. Perhaps it had been for a little boy just small enough for it then. Yet in all that time he had never once seen a child who might have been theirs. In any case, he would have to be over thirty by now, and might have gone back home alone for his schooling or a career long ago. Or possibly he had died? However it may have been, he imagined the constant source of comfort the sight of the pretty little chair must have been for the old couple and the grief they must have felt at having to leave it behind when they gave up the house.

He was lying on the bed, which was rather too large for him. Though he had not been the least bit sleepy, while he listened to the romantic

tales that the bed beneath him and the other old pieces of furniture were whispering to him, he slowly drifted off into a peaceful sleep.

It was time for supper. He went to join his aunt in the dining room but then hesitated. The large, circular table could easily accommodate seven or eight persons where they were only two.

"This is certainly an odd situation," he remarked as he considered what seat might be best.

"Sit directly opposite, even if it's a little far. At least with two of us there is some balance. When I was alone I felt quite lost."

As she suggested, he took the place on the other side. But the distance across the table gave him the impression he would have to shout in order to make himself heard, and, consequently, he decided against making conversation at mealtimes. Instead, his eyes wandered over the table while he ate, and one by one he studied the tablecloth, perfectly clean but greatly faded in patches, the old, elegant silver coffee pot, ready to lose its handle but for the wire clumsily binding it, each of the mismatched, quaint little plates, with their simple, European floral designs, and so on. All these things, he imagined, had been left behind by the old couple.

He found himself wanting to tell his aunt his idea regarding the child's chair; she might have a greater insight into the mystery. Perhaps it was due to her continual reading of detective stories, but she had a love of speculating on the life histories of others. After all, he decided against it. The effort of speaking in an extra loud voice across the table was beyond him.

His desire these days for sleep was so incessant it reminded him of an experience of several years earlier. At that time he had suffered a mild nervous breakdown of the type wherein the patient remains in a calm sleep for as long as two or even three days. Now, when he did fight his drowsiness and stayed up, he felt as though he would collapse to the floor at any moment. His body seemed to be trying to regain as speedily as possible all of the sleep he had missed at the sanatorium. He had been so restless there, his nerves worn to such a frazzle, even the nurses gave up trying to help him. Here, however, surrounded by the stillness and serenity of the mountain hideaway, and by the simple, old-fashioned love of his aunt, he would sink into sleep deep and perfect, the sleep of a child in his mother's arms. How many days had passed since his arrival? Ten? Twenty? Or had it been merely a week? Even that much he could not remember. And yesterday seemed further in the past than the day before yesterday.

His aunt had callers, friends of about her own age, almost every day, and these ladies occasionally held small gatherings in the front room. She had explained them to him as simply being her friends from school, but, from what he could later learn from her, he surmised that all of them were of old families. Once, out of curiosity, he intentionally listened from his room on the second floor to try to discover what such blue-blooded ladies had to say to each other. One of them was speaking of how a squirrel had made a nest in the walnut tree in her back garden; the conversation moved on to such things as the state of vegetables and firewood. He smiled to himself as he eavesdropped.

Other times when she was entertaining, he would steal unseen from the second floor and slip quietly out the back door. Then, taking a

wicker chaise lounge, he went to the cool, green shade under the lush larches, and lay down. The trees soared up over him, their branches filtering the sun and making it appear as though it lay submerged under a lake of water. Sometimes he fell asleep watching it.

He was under the trees again one afternoon when he noticed his aunt. She was absentmindedly leaning against the frame where the French doors opened onto the back garden. The ladies had evidently gone home.

"You know," he called from the chaise lounge, "being here like this always reminds me of Dorothy. Now why should that be?"

She looked overtired and his question failed to rouse her.

"Didn't Dorothy come up this summer?" he persisted.

"I hear they all went back to Canada last year."

"Oh? Well, well. I wanted to see what kind of girl she'd turned into."

Some summers ago, he had taken the house next door to Dorothy's family. That time, too, he was with his aunt. Dorothy herself was only seven or eight. He sometimes joined in when she and her little sisters were playing. As a little girl with the name Dorothy should be, she was a pretty child. Her Japanese was quite good, but if she did become confused speaking to him, she would lapse into English. He, who had never in his life spoken with anyone in English, would momentarily be brought up short. If his speechlessness continued too long, she turned a thoughtful, somehow quizzical look up at him. He found her expression beautiful at those times.

One day he took her and one of the sisters on an outing in the vicinity of Organ Rock. Dorothy ran about all the while, and on the way

home she suddenly darted away and clambered up a small bluff. Now that she was up there, she'd be too afraid to come down, it was so steep. He watched with concern to see what would happen. Dorothy briefly eyed the slope, cocked her head to one side to consider the situation, and started down at a break-neck speed. Look out! The moment he yelled, she missed her footing and came tumbling down the last half of the slope to land just where he stood. But she was back on her feet again immediately. Upon investigating, he saw she had muddied a white shin and, inasmuch as there was some trace of blood, had evidently broken the skin. She herself was not particularly upset at the sight, but all the same he thought he ought to take her quickly to the resort hotel nearby and have something done for her. He was by far the most worried of the three. He made for the hotel, pulling along with one hand the injured little girl and, with the other, her sister, who was by now tired out from walking. Soon, he began feeling a little peculiar himself. The sight of blood, whether his own or someone else's, usually made him pass out, and now too the glimpse he had had of the blood, red as a rose against her white skin, seemed to be bringing on a fainting spell. His vision blurred as if he had run head-on into a cobweb which could not be wiped away, and he did not realize how far they had come until the entrance of the hotel loomed directly in front....

"Brandy! Brandy!"

He made out some shouting in a foreign voice right by his ear. The next thing he knew was that his feet were being held up by someone unseen as he lay on his back on the hotel floor. At the same time he caught a whiff of perfume, sweet and flowery. The couple attending him seemed to be foreigners.

"Brandy!"

Evidently a bellboy had arrived with something, for the man who had been holding his feet up was now leaning over him, forcing an amber-colored glass between his lips. He was beginning to come round and drained the liqueur at one gulp. Being otherwise at a loss to express his gratitude, he could only smile back up at the foreign man and woman.

Her hand was on his forehead, but then something behind the woman drew her attention. He managed to raise his head and followed her gaze. There, on the porch, Dorothy and her little sister were surrounded by a band of their little girl friends. They were at the hotel to play, and now, like learning some new sort of game, were trying to get Dorothy's explanation right. He was still somewhat dazed, and, to his hazy vision, the collection of little blonde heads was a cluster of yellow grapes, gently swaying back and forth.

The mystery was why all the particulars of that scene should return to him with such vividness now as he lay in the shade of the trees. It had, of course, something to do with the present atmosphere--that much he realized. But whenever he turned the problem over in his mind, it would only begin to tire him, and he would cease thinking of it any further.

Finally, one day when he was feeling rather better than usual, he determined to think the matter through. He knew that at some distance beyond his shady spot grew various weeds which he would not have been able to identify by name. And the farther one went, they grew all the more thickly. One variety among them was clearly giving off a certain distinctive scent, and possibly it was this which stirred something within him and evoked the memory of that day. He got up and, alert to

the tell-tale scent, wandered at random through the field of weeds. Yes, there was one particularly pungent smell, no mistake about it. As he inhaled, he felt a slight light-headedness. Oh oh! It looks like I'm in for another fainting spell. The fragrance had a mildly hallucinatory effect, rekindling the feeling that always directly preceded one of his spells. Convinced now that the scent lay behind it, he turned to search in the direction from which it seemed to be originating. It was growing much stronger, yet, in that jungle of weeds, how was he ever to locate the right spot? In his dilemma, he simply stood there helplessly, like a blind man.

He was about to give up when he discovered the source at last. Quite by chance, he had trod upon it. At his feet was a dense cluster of lacy, emerald-green leaves. He broke off a sprig and examined it. The leaves were crinkled like crêpe de chine and glittered with a harsh brilliance in the sunlight. He could not quite recall what the fragrance was and carried the sprig back to his aunt.

"Look here. Do you know the name of this plant? This is it, what makes me think of Dorothy." He remembered the fainting spell of several years ago even while he spoke.

She took it from him, looked, and sniffed at it.

"It has a kind of peppermint scent, doesn't it? Isn't it mint?"

"Well, of course! It was the smell of mint!"

Now he understood that the oddly euphoric sensation the fragrance always gave him was precisely the feeling he had experienced that summer day of several years before. He was delighted at his discovery.

He was lingering lazily in bed later than usual one morning, listening to the chilly sound of rustling leaves; it seemed that already an autumn wind was shaking the trees on all sides, even though it was only a little past the middle of August. All of a sudden he heard the sound of an explosion outside, as if from a charge of magnesium. It was immediately followed by a great jolt to the house.

"It's Mt. Asama! Come quick!" he heard his aunt calling from the veranda below.

He threw a jacket on over his shoulders and hurried down.

"It sounded like a photographer setting off flash powder, but I thought it funny in broad daylight."

Mt. Asama! From the veranda he had a clear view of the volcano as it spewed forth an indescribably hideous cloud of smoke, like some grotesque head of cauliflower against the sky. Mimicking thunderclouds, the billows of smoke sometimes radiated with inner lights. These flashes, he had heard last summer, were caused by colliding lava flows. To stand here now put him unexpectedly in mind of himself as he was a year ago, before any sign of his illness, watching the same terrible blasts of smoke. As he compared that passed time with the present, an irrepressible feeling rose within him that the person he had been then was still the reality, while the person he was today was the illusion.

It had turned faintly chilly on the veranda.

He went into the front room. Though it was still so early in the season, on a morning like this, he thought, a fire would be a good idea. The corner fireplace was made of weathered lava stone and looked ideal for a cabin in the mountains. He had noticed it his very first day in

the house and ever since had been wanting to try it out. His chance having finally come, he had the maid bring in an armload of pine kindling. He then took over and crouched down to set to work getting it lit.

After some failures, the smaller branches finally caught fire and started blazing with a cheerful crackling sound. His aunt came in and drew a chair up alongside.

"You've recovered a great deal if you feel up to that job."

"Do you think so? Well, it's almost a year now.

"You know, I had two lung hemorrhages last year. Strangely enough, the first time I even felt good. Of course, I had never had a lung hemorrhage before in my life, so naturally it did come as a shock. But even so, when I thought I was going to die, I was quite calm. Now the second time, that was really awful. I felt there might be something I could do to save myself and got all excited. I even swallowed back half the blood rising in my throat. Nothing could have felt worse; and the doctor was angry with me.... And, you know, never was I so impressed with the ugliness of the desire for life."

He failed to notice the look of discomfort that crossed his aunt's face and talked on more to himself than to her. When at last he looked to the side and caught her expression, he forced himself to say nothing more. His irritation at having something to say yet being totally unable to do so could be read in the way he played with a smoldering twig. And if he could have spoken, he would have asked her, "Do you really think there's any good reason for me to go on living?" But the two of them simply sat there in silence.

Suddenly there was a sound of something showering down on the leaves of the trees. It sounded like a dry rainfall.

"The ashes from Mt. Asama?" she suggested in a soft voice.

She rose quietly and went over to the window.

THE WILDERNESS

Ever happy, ever gay, that forgetful heart of yours,
While I am plagued with memories my long life through.

Anonymous, from Collection of
Gleanings (Shūishū), ca. 1005

I

There was in those days living in the western part of the ancient capital of Kyoto, a certain vice-minister of an old-fashioned disposition, from the Ministry of Central Affairs. His father had bequeathed to him a great mansion in a grove of pine trees, near the Sixth Ward. Here he led a retired life all but forgotten by the world. To share his peaceful days and quiet nights, he had with him his wife of many years and an only child, a much-cherished daughter.

When, with the passage of the years, the daughter grew to womanhood, her father and mother began to fear for her; the day was swiftly approaching when they must leave her and at present there was no one on earth upon whom she could rely but themselves. Among the various suitors for her hand, however, was one Hyōenosuke. This young man was all they had wished for. Not only was he in all respects a man of parts, but it was clear the deepest spring in his heart had been touched by their daughter's beauty. They gave her in marriage to him and every night the man came to the mansion and visited the bride in her chamber in the west wing. Life for all of them continued free from care, far from the eyes and thoughts of the world.

After several such happy, uneventful years, the fortunes of the vice-minister's house fell into a decline. The son-in-law at length discerned the truth. He saw the lady and her parents were denying themselves in order to entertain him in the same sumptuous manner as ever. While this state of affairs caused him much anguish, he could not bring himself to quit his visits and thereby to unburden the lady and her parents. For how was he to give her up when the tender vows they had exchanged grew each day ever more difficult to cut asunder?

Then there came a winter when the vice-minister took ill of a sudden and passed away. When soon thereafter his wife followed him to the grave, the lady was left in the greatest affliction with no recourse but to wring her hands and lament for the parents taken from her. To be sure, the man came to her every night as he had always done and consoled her to the utmost of his power. But they had only one another, and one was as ignorant of life as the other; it was inevitable that trials beyond their ability to cope with should arise. Even to maintain him in the finery necessary for his daily duties at the court became a perplexing problem. Of the two, the lady was the more distressed over this, but try as she might, the task was beyond her.

One evening when spring had come again, he sat looking out into the garden. As though the lady had finally determined to tell him of something which had long been preying on her mind, she turned directly to him and said, "This life we share--I see all too clearly now it can only end in consequences harmful to you. When my parents were alive, there was still some way we were able to see to your wardrobe. But in my present want, I can no longer do even that as I would wish. When you

are in attendance at court, what must your humiliation be! I beg you to do what will serve your own best interests, for my own welfare is a matter of complete indifference to me."

He had been listening to her quietly but at this point he abruptly broke in, "And what is it you would have me do?"

"How long can you bear the shame at court?" she began in a tone of great distress. "Another woman could provide you with the clothing that I cannot. But even if you should wed again, know that I will always welcome you here if you should have occasion to think of me with pity from time to time."

With eyes closed he allowed her to finish, then suddenly met her look.

"Do you think me the kind of man who would heedlessly forsake you?" he said firmly, dismissing her complaint. With that, he turned from her with deliberate coldness. Tender young vines had sprouted upon the crumbling garden wall and, feigning a great interest in the sight, he fixed his gaze upon them.

The tears she had thus far restrained now burst forth and her sobs shook her violently.

And so it was that despite her talk of separating, not for one night did he interrupt his visits to her and they pretended as though all was exactly as it had been. Yet he could not remain forever blind to the facts: the number of the lady's men and women was steadily diminishing, the garden wall was falling in bits and pieces, and the rich furnishings and heirlooms began disappearing one by one. It was not long after this that she marked a considerable change in him; his

taciturn moods grew ever longer and of greater frequency. To all appearances, this was the sole alteration in his temper, and his attempts to cheer her only became more unsparing. She was beside herself each time she met with his affection, and her distraction over what was to be done merely exhausted her.

At length her endurance gave way, and one evening she felt she must speak out once more.

"My happiness ought to be perfect so long as you remain with me, and yet, greater than my happiness is the remorse I feel. Greater than the joy of being at your side is the pain, the unbearable anguish of watching you waste away. What is more, your mind is occupied with something of late and you keep your thoughts hidden from me. Why will you not unburden your heart to me?"

He looked at her for a time before he replied.

"How can I keep anything concealed from you?" he said with difficulty. "How ill at ease you make me feel. I cannot bear to see the way you devote all your attentions to my welfare, with never a care for yourself. But my fortunes must improve soon. Until such time, have patience. Whatever you may desire will be yours and to give it to you the simplest matter on earth.

He looked at her with pity in his eyes until she lowered her head and wept into her sleeve, her long, black hair billowing down. Finally he tore his eyes away to hide them in his own sleeve.

Before many days had gone by, he ceased his visits to her.

II

Without a farewell, he had left her. He vanished so utterly not one letter did she receive. The very thing she had desired had come to pass but brought with it a distress beyond her ability to bear, for her thoughts continued to be wholly taken up with him. Her life was cheerless and forlorn, her only companions her few servants, and there was not one thing to distract her from the pain of waiting for his return. And yet, she did perceive some manner of satisfaction even in the midst of her sorrow.

The servants, seeing no hope of the man's return however long they waited, one by one slipped quietly away and ran off their separate ways.

A year later, only a little girl was left of all the servants of the mansion, and not a pillar remained of the main hall. Even the ancient pines in the innermost part of the garden had been felled for firewood and nothing flourished but rank, wild grasses; the gate had become impassable for the entangling vines. The cracks in the wall were so wide now that barefoot children freely went in and out gathering wild flowers. The sagging west wing offered only a slight shelter from the falling rains and dews, but still the lady kept close within and watched and waited. By and by, the long-faithful child as well abandoned her, and she remained alone.

Then one day an old nun arrived from the country. She was a distant relation who once long ago had been in attendance at the mansion. Knowing no other place to go, she settled in a corner of the dilapidated east wing. The lady of the west wing aroused the nun's pity and moved her to make her gifts of sweets or some small tidbit from time to time. By

now the lady stood in need of many of the items of daily life, but, withal, she did not leave the mansion nor cease her vigil. "If he be happy, can I want for anything more?" she thought, and her lot was not necessarily an unhappy one as yet.

For the man, these several years passed in the twinkling of an eye, though there never was a day in all this time when he did not recall her who had been his wife. But while she retained a place in his affections, he never wrote and even endeavored to remain at a distance from her. His duties at the court greatly occupied him, but, more importantly, he had begun visiting another lady in the house of the governor of the province of Iyo. She and the household looked after him kindly, and he, sensible of his obligation to them, was loath to betray their trust.

At first, he had thought if he were prudent he could avoid being recognized, and had indeed set forth at dusk any number of times for the mansion in the west of the city. But upon nearing the path he had once been used to take so often by the light of the setting and rising sun, he would suddenly feel strangely hindered and go no further. Thus, he came to be persuaded that some cruel, inexorable decree of providence was keeping them apart.

So much time had passed since last they met, there would have been nothing very extraordinary in his having forgotten her. But whenever his thoughts through some odd chance turned to her, he could not prevent an image from rising before him: it was of a lady, prostrate, weeping into her sleeves from loneliness. Each time she appeared with greater vividness, until he heard again the very sound of her breathing and the soft rustle of fabric.

One evening as spring was waning he grew restless thinking of her, and his desire became so irresistible he determined to go to her mansion.

He made his way down the old path. All about, the walls of the gardens were crumbling to earth and the houses themselves were empty, overgrown with mugwort, and falling to ruin. Eventually he drew near the garden wall of the once-familiar mansion. A dilapidated gate entangled with spring-green vines, and garden shrubbery, overwhelmed by a riot of wildroses, met his eyes. All was so desolate and disordered, he felt in his heart that no one could be living there any longer.

Surely another man had discovered her and carried her off elsewhere, he thought in disappointment, and an even fiercer yearning for her welled up within him. As if he could not yet tear himself away, he followed the crumbling garden wall around. He found in one place a breach, such as children might have broken, large enough to pass through. Without the least reserve, he slipped through it and into the grounds. Where once the many great trees had stood, now only grasses grew at will, and all around the old pond was a mass of wildrose blossoms. Beyond, the moon hung low over the sagging roof of the west wing. The rooms were pitch-black and utterly devoid of any sign of life. He ventured calling out the lady's name but, as he had expected, there was no answer at all. His heart was pierced with longing as he broke through the cobwebs strung between the wildroses. He stopped to brush them from his sleeves and once more called out hopelessly. Suddenly a painful trembling seized his heart. There; from a chamber of the opposite wing, a faint light was streaming. He pushed toward it through the grass and called her name. Just as before, there was only silence. He peered

through the grass. Someone was certainly within, but when he discerned it to be a strange nun, he hung his head and retraced his steps back to the path. It was impossible that they should ever meet again. With this resignation, the love which filled his heart to aching was changed into an indefinably bitter-sweet sensation, an almost pleasurable remembrance of a thousand things of the past.

That same evening, the lady had been lying within the decaying west wing as she did every evening. Since the rising of the pale crescent moon in the late afternoon, she had been behind the rotting paneled door, gazing up at the sky; the darkness had advanced and she was all but lost in the gloom.

As she lay there, suddenly she stirred and sat up with a strange presentiment. It seemed to her she had been called by name. Her heart, however, did not make the smallest leap. Oftentimes before her ears had deceived her into thinking she had heard that voice. This, too, was surely another delusion. Yet as she sat still and listened for a time longer the voice came again, so clearly now it was impossible to believe it was her imagination. She immediately felt numb and then, scarcely aware of what she was doing, hurriedly threw a faded crimson robe over herself and shrank back to conceal herself in its folds. If she had ever had a thought of her appearance before, she had never given it much heed, but now she was horrified at how wretched she must look, how wasted into a mere shadow of her former self. She was seized with fear lest he, the one for whom she had waited, should discover her in this sad state. The cruelty of her fate that she should be reduced to being capable of nothing but holding her breath and keeping silent! After

another brief space, she heard a rustle from the grass near the pond. The second time he had called he seemed to have gone some distance away, in the direction of the nun's chamber in the wing beyond. That much she discerned; after that, there was only silence.

All was lost. He had been there, she was certain he had. Broken cobwebs, glittering in the moonlight, hung from the tangle of wild roses where he had passed. Each silver strand presented itself as evidence to her. She sank where she was to the rough floorboards and wept far into the night.

III

A half a year went by.

It was at the end of autumn when there came to stay with the nun her nephew from the province of Ōmi. He was the son of a magistrate there and had come to the capital to serve a term of duty in the palace guards.

After several days, the guardsman spoke to the nun with a curious glitter in his eye.

"Last evening I was searching for firewood in the ruins of the mansion. The setting sun was shining full on the west wing and gave me a clear view inside, and I saw a solitary woman, still young, lying there very pensively. I was so astonished I came away directly. What do you know of her?"

The nun was in some confusion but, as secrecy would serve nothing now, she told him of the lady's unhappy lot. So greatly did the story move him, he listened eagerly until the end.

"You must present me to her," he answered with provincial candor, eyes once more a-glitter. "And if it may please her, I will take her

with me when I return to the country and she will never know a lonely day again."

Never would she have imagined such a notion from him. But yet, would it not prove to the lady's benefit if she were agreeable to it? For all her hesitation, she saw in the end she could not refuse conveying his proposal to her.

On a wintry, windy morning, the nun went across to the lady's chamber with a gift of sweets. She found her with the same faded crimson robe over her shoulders, and began in a direct, comforting tone, "How long do you think you can go on in this manner? The son of a relative of mine has come up from Ōmi for a time and is staying with me. He learned of your difficulties and vows that nothing would please him more than to take you back to the country. I know I take too great a liberty in suggesting such a thing to you, but what if you should take him at his word? Would it not be better than going on like this?"

Without replying, the lady raised her eyes and gazed vacantly outside where, above the wind-blown plumes of grass, torn clouds scudded across the sky. She remained watching them as though there were something in their restless passage concerning her. Suddenly she was assailed by the thought, "So I am never to see him again!" and threw herself down.

After the nun's visit, the guardsman took to going out with his bow in hand in the late hours of the night. While he wandered at length about the west wing, wild dogs would howl and night creatures cry from the trees. The cheerless sound of icy winds sweeping through the bush clover and field grasses was mingled at times with the sound of brief, freezing

showers. When the eeriness of the night began to arouse his apprehensions, the guardsman would tramp on all the more resolutely through the grass to distract his mind.

Each night, the lady wrapped her crimson robe about her and cowered in the furthest corner of her chamber, the doors shut fast, no light burning. Many were the times she lay wakeful in the crumbling mansion in abject fear, as if at any moment some specter might spirit her away.

On an evening of chilling rains the nun came to the lady and spoke to her in her usual forthright manner.

"Your feelings, then, are not at all changed from what they were?" she asked with a sigh. "You may be able to manage now, but what would become of you if something were to happen to me? The day is going to come when I will no longer be here."

The lady recalled how she had felt several days previously when the nun had first broached the subject. She remembered how she had started at the thought which still rended her heart-- Never again would she see him. Until then, she had drawn strength from the belief that, come what may, they would one day meet, but her confidence had rapidly given way since the nun first spoke to her. Her spirits were broken now and she no longer was the woman she had been.

That night the nun sent the guardsman to pay a secret visit to her.

From that time on, he went to her nightly.

The lady suffered him to visit her, all the while chagrined at her helplessness; that no other course was open to her but to place herself entirely in the care of such a man was a source of great vexation to her.

With winter, his term of duty at the palace finally came to an end and he no longer could put off his return to Ōmi. He was by now completely enraptured of the lady and would not consider for a moment that he leave her behind.

In spite of the great tribulation it would be for her to depart the city against her will, she felt at the same time that here was a way to renounce the even greater tribulations as she trust to providence for the future. Thus it was that she found herself accompanying the guardsman into the country.

IV

Upon their arrival at his country seat, who should be waiting for him but a wife of several years! Out of deference to his parents, he had no choice but to install the lady in the household as a waiting woman.

"But I fully expect to go to the capital again some day," he said to soothe her, "and when I do, you may be sure you will go with me as my wife. Do forbear until then."

She was not deceived, however, of the truth of her position and wept until it seemed her heart would burst. Her last hopes had been dashed to pieces.

One month passed and then another as she lived in a daze, altogether incapable of recognizing herself in this neglected waiting woman. The sadness of the past faded until the life she had once led remained in her memory as nothing more than a desolate wilderness, a wasted and withered field where the winter storms had passed. By and by one thought gained possession over her--that she be allowed to thus end her life in obscurity as a simple waiting woman.

She scarcely knew the limit of her unhappiness now.

Though only a single mountain separated her from Kyoto, so much more fiercely did the winds blow here, she wondered at the sounds in the treetops. Her nights grew ever longer and more wakeful as she lay listening to the calls of the wild geese in constant flight over the lake.

It was now the autumn of several years thereafter. Throughout the province was a great stir, for a newly-appointed governor had arrived to take up residence and was now undertaking a tour of inspection of the region.

On the day his entourage reached the lakeside village of the magistrate, the guardsman's father, winter had come and Mt. Hira already showed itself under a thin fall of snow. That evening the governor was feted at a banquet at the magistrate's mansion on the hill.

As he sat acknowledging the toasts proposed to him by the assembly, his attention was distracted from time to time by the short, sharp cries of sandpipers calling to one another as they circled above. Then he would fall silent and turn his head to gaze at the scene outside. Through the bare branches of a grove of persimmon trees, beyond the withered reeds along the shore, the dying light of day still shimmered faintly far out over the lake.

The magistrate began some boastful account of his son in some adventure in the snow. Slightly intoxicated now, the governor was doing his utmost to listen when some of the lesser servants came in with trays of sweetmeats. His eye chanced to fall on one of their number, a slight, slender woman, and he looked long and intently upon her. Her hair was

bound back and her gown was of some coarse material like that of the other serving women. And yet, there was that about her, with her air of great sorrow, which suggested gentle birth. From the moment he had first remarked her, he had been curiously affected.

The banquet at an end, the governor beckoned a page close and whispered in his ear.

Late that night, the lady was summoned to the magistrate. She was given a robe of brocade and bidden to go do her hair and powder her face well. What this meant she did not know but did as she was told and went again to the magistrate.

When he saw her in the brocade, he turned to his wife beside him and told her cheerfully, "So, she's a fine lady from Kyoto after all! Some powder and she's such a beauty you wouldn't know her."

The magistrate then took her along and as he was leading her off to the guest quarters, she realized what all this signified. She made no protest, however, and did not resist the magistrate; in her own eyes she was a mere shell at the mercy of some all-compelling force.

When she was led into the presence of the governor, she cowered away from the flickering lamplight and shielded her face behind her sleeve.

There was no seeing her without the governor's compassion being aroused, and he addressed her kindly: "I am told you are from the capital."

She did not make the least reply.

When, a number of years before, she had surrendered her will to a total stranger from the country and had allowed herself to be carried

off from Kyoto, how she had pitied herself for her misfortune. Then, she had felt justified in heartily scorning the man. But this time the man was so far superior to the other; to find herself here, on the point of submitting to him, she could scorn no one other than herself, just as he, do what she would, must surely despise her. Her reflections plunged her into the last degree of despair. Rather than have been thus sought out and chosen, would it not have been much the better for her had she remained ignored by all as a lowly waiting woman, buried away with her sorrow?

Softly, he said, "I cannot prevent the strange feeling that I have seen you somewhere."

As though determined to be deaf to anything he might say, she kept her sleeve to her face and merely shook her head gloomily.

From the lake, the sound of waves came stealing into the room.

When on the following night she was again summoned by the governor, she appeared even more greatly out of countenance. She huddled away from him and trembled in fear and consternation, and, as ever, said not a word.

The night deepened and wintry winds raced about the mountain peaks beyond. The waves of the lake were in greater turmoil than on the night before and, with every lessening of the wind-swells, their roar and crash could be clearly heard. From afar the cries of sandpipers would come to mingle with the noise of the tempest. The governor had gathered the lady comfortingly in his arms and was listening to the plaintive night-sounds. For some reason, he was suddenly put in mind of the woman he had visited nightly when a young man known simply as Hyōenosuke. His heart turned within him at the recollection of her.

"No, it is only some illusion," he told himself and waited for his agitation to cease.

He could not, however, restrain the tears that began streaming from his eyes to fall upon her hair. She was so curious at this, she raised her face to his for the first time.

When their eyes unexpectedly met, he suddenly embraced her tightly in a mad transport of joy.

"It is! It is you!"

The lady gave a faint cry and struggled with all her strength to escape from his arms.

"You know me then?" he said in a trembling voice, never releasing his hold upon her.

There was a rustling of fabric as she fought in greater desperation to free herself, until, with an unintelligible cry, she collapsed spiritlessly in his arms.

He frantically raised her up, and to touch her hand only heightened his fears.

"Do not lose heart!" he encouraged her, stroking her hair. Years ago, to her unhappiness, she must have been persuaded that he had merely used her and passed on, and in dismay she had given herself over to the next passing man. She had at last come into his life again, and he knew now to the very depths of his soul that nothing was so endearing, so precious to him as she. For the first time he understood that the only joy he might meet with in this world lay in this forlorn woman.

As he held her firmly, only once did she open her eyes wide to gaze at him in wonder, and the face she turned up to him was slowly transformed into the face of a corpse.

NAOKO

1

"It is! It is Naoko!" Tsuzuki Akira was compelled to stop and look around. As she was approaching, he had had his doubts but when she swirled by she suddenly resolved herself unmistakably into Naoko.

For a moment, Akira stood still in the midst of the bustling crowd and watched the receding couple, a woman in a white cashmere coat and a man, evidently her husband. Then the woman too gave a sudden half-look back, as though only now realizing who it was she had gone by. Following her glance, the husband shot a look around at him. At that moment a passerby jostled Akira as he was standing there absentmindedly, setting his tall frame tottering. By the time he regained his balance the two had melted away into the crowd.

She had become strangely haggard compared with the Naoko of some years earlier. Wrapped in white, she had been walking rapidly, her eyes straight ahead, with an air of being so preoccupied with her thoughts that she was oblivious of the man shorter than herself walking beside her. At one point, hadn't the husband spoken to her? Yet her only acknowledgement was a smile, quick and scornful. Out of the oncoming throng Akira had picked out the two figures and, with the idea that the woman looked like Naoko, his heart turned over. He had kept walking, his eyes fixed on the woman in white, until she hurled a glance of suspicion at him. Even while she met his gaze, her eyes were remote and still unaware. Akira, however, flinched before their emptiness and

instinctively tore his gaze from them. And so it was that he had looked away, she and her husband went by, and her eyes did not know him.

Akira went on with an overwhelming sense of loss and a sudden bewilderment that he should be forced alone toward an opposite direction. Walking like this through masses of people now struck him as pointless. Every evening after work at an architectural office, he wandered in the Ginza crowds for hours rather than return directly to his lodgings in Ogikubo, and while it may have had an illusion of purpose for him, now that illusion was beyond ever being recaptured.

It was a city evening in mid-March, harsh and cloud-covered.

"Naoko didn't seem any too happy," thought Akira as he headed for Yūrakuchō Station. "But who am I to make such hasty judgments? Anyone would think I took pleasure in the misery of others."

2

Akira had been working for the architectural firm since graduating the previous spring from a private university. Every day he commuted from his boardinghouse to a Ginza office building where he would diligently apply himself to blueprints for public buildings. During the past year there were periods when he was completely absorbed in his work, yet at no time could he truthfully say he enjoyed it. From time to time a soft voice came to him, "What are you doing in a place like this?"

He had once promised himself he would never again think of Naoko, but the memory of their recent chance meeting remained in his heart, striking deep roots which all his efforts could not dislodge; it was a

nagging secret which he could not share. He still recalled it all vividly--the congestion on the Ginza, the smell of the evening, the man who seemed to be her husband . . . and her, all in white, her look straight and vacant as she passed. Most of all, what he remembered, and this with special clarity, was the emptiness of the eyes that even now made him flinch in pain. One day it occurred to him that just such a blank, faintly contemptuous veil would always fall over Naoko's eyes whenever she was displeased. "Yes, that may have been why I sensed she was unhappy that day, because of that look in her eyes."

With that idea, Akira let his drafting lie for a time; his gaze wandered through the office window to the roofs of the city and the hazy sky beyond. Thoughts of his happy childhood unexpectedly rose up. At such times work became impossible and he would surrender himself over to his musings.

It was from the village of Oiwake in Shinshū where a maiden aunt, who had assumed care of him when he was orphaned at seven, kept a small cottage; it was from the summer holidays there, and the nearby Mimura household; but above all it was from the daughter his age, from Naoko, that the glow of his boyhood days radiated. Akira and Naoko, and tennis games, and long bicycle rides. With the village as their stage, the boy, who was even then beginning to show an affinity for dreams, and the girl, who was just awakening from them, played a serious game of blindman's bluff, one hiding--"Catch me if you can"--and one seeking. And the boy was always "it."

One summer day the famous writer, Mori Otohiko, stepped into their lives. He came to stay for a time at a hotel in the next village, a

well-known upland summer place, for a rest-cure. Mrs. Mimura and he had been friends once and when they chanced to meet in the hotel, they had a long social talk. Several days later, there was a visit which a sudden downpour could not dissuade him from making to Mrs. Mimura, a stroll together after the rain, with Naoko and Akira as well, to a silk-producing village, and a parting replete with pleasant expectations.... Simple as all this was, he could not refrain from feeling a curious quickening, a sudden returning from himself as he was, the artist lonely and wearied by life, to the youth he once had been.

With the following season, the forlorn, consumed writer returned to the hotel and he would call from time to time at their village. It was at this time that clouds hinting of tragedy began gathering about Mrs. Mimura. Akira was irresistibly drawn to the spectacle, to the exclusion of all else, and when he finally looked around the same dark forces had already driven away the happy spirit of the girl from the Naoko he knew; by the time he awoke to the transformation, she had already gone from him to a place where he could scarcely follow. All that time she had been guarding over a secret sorrow by the sheer force of her will, and now the girl she used to be no longer existed. Then it was that his boyhood days, days glittering and breathless, fell into the shadows.

One day the door of Akira's office opened.

"Tsuzuki!" The section-chief came over to Akira. He seemed surprised at Akira's dejected look.

"You're very pale. Is something wrong?"

"Nothing special," he answered awkwardly. The section-chief's eyes suggested to him that he was speculating on why Akira's former enthusiasm for his work had lapsed.

But he said unexpectedly, "If you push yourself too hard, you'll ruin your health. I'm going to let you have a month or two off. Why don't you go to the country?"

Akira began to reply hesitantly, "Really, I'd rather....," but then, as a camouflage, in his characteristically friendly way, "Well, yes, I'd like that."

Taken in, the section-chief smiled back. "Go when this job's finished."

"Right. Just as you say. It never occurred to me you'd let me." He was thinking of how he had been about to ask the section-chief to let him quit but had stopped short, for he had suddenly realized he didn't know himself if, once giving up his job, he had the energy to make a new start. At the same time it flashed across his mind that his attitude might change should he follow the chief's advice and get away somewhere for a while to recuperate.

Akira watched as the section-chief--he really was a good-natured fellow--went out. Left to himself again, his despondency redescended upon him.

3

Mimura Naoko had married one winter three years before, when she was twenty-five. The man she married, Kurokawa Keisuke, was ten years older than she. He had graduated from a commercial college and was employed by a business concern. People considered him now to be rather well-set-up. His father, a banker, had died ten years prior to Keisuke's marriage, leaving behind him the old rambling house on top of a hill in Ōmori in Tokyo, in which Keisuke and his mother continued to live their

simple lives. His father had been fond of gardening and even now the spreading branches of the oaks he had planted around the mansion suggested he was still acting as a staunch sentinel of the staid existence of his wife and son against worldly perdition. Every evening as Keisuke climbed the slope on his return from work, he felt relieved and quickened his pace at the sight of the trees. Then after dinner, with the evening paper spread over his knees, he talked for hours about the affairs of the day to his mother and new wife on the other side of the oblong hibachi. And for her part, Naoko did not particularly show any sign of discontent with this calm, even bland, life.

Yet all her former friends were at a loss to understand what she could have been thinking of to have chosen such a nondescript man for a husband. Not one of them realized it had been an escape from an ominous sense of unease. In the first year of her marriage Naoko did not feel she had made a mistake; another household, despite its frigid, lusterless hush, was the haven she needed. Or at least so she thought. Her mother had been deeply hurt by Naoko's marriage and when she unexpectedly died of heart failure the autumn following the wedding, Naoko, was disturbed by a sudden sense that the calm she had known in her marriage was shattered. It was not that her strength to quietly endure the coldness had collapsed; rather she felt there was not the slightest reason for endurance at the cost of self-deception.

She had an air now of steeling herself against something. Nevertheless, for a time life continued as before, presumably free from woe. Invariably, Keisuke spent long inert hours in the dining room every evening. More and more he excluded Naoko from the conversations with

his mother on household affairs. If Keisuke seemed almost indifferent to Naoko in her shadowy banishment, his mother, being a woman, could not long remain ignorant of the signs of Naoko's restiveness. Whatever lay behind her daughter-in-law's dissatisfaction with life under their roof, her predominant fear was that it might eventually poison the atmosphere of their home.

About this time Naoko knew sleepless nights, and at an inadvertent cough, a stir, a sigh from her, the eyes of Keisuke's mother in the next room would flash open. If Keisuke or something else woke her, she found no difficulty in going back to sleep. But if Naoko did, she stayed awake. All this Naoko knew and it added to her strain.

On such occasions there came the inevitable, inexorable thought, as a dagger thrust into her heart, that she was one of those who had entrusted herself to strangers and that all her freedom had been forfeited. And the illness within her, dormant since her marriage, stirred. She grew noticeably thinner. At the same time a yearning for the self she had lost in her marriage welled up, then flowed copiously from some profound recess. Yet, as if she were still in ignorance of herself, her resolution to endure, to forbear with all the strength at her command, gave no hint of crumbling.

One March evening, she went out with her husband on some matter to the Ginza and noticed in the crowd a tall man, faintly sullen yet with the same, once-familiar warmth-- It must be Tsuzuki Akira. He knew her instantly, but only some moments after they had passed did she realize who it was. When she looked around, his tall form had already been engulfed in the surging waves of people.

What was this but an accidental meeting, perfectly meaningless? Nonetheless, as that day was succeeded by another and another, she began to feel an obscure, inexplicable distaste for going anywhere with her husband. Added to this was her surprise upon discovering that this feeling sprang directly from the realization of her own self-deception. All this time the feeling had been lurking in the misty depths of her consciousness; after she saw Akira with his loneliness, something prodded it to a sudden ascent to the surface.

4

When Akira had been told to go to the country, his first thoughts were of the village in Shinshū, the scene of many boyhood summers. He had never seen the mountains of winter's end and their mystery was the greatest temptation--maybe it would still be cold and the mountain ranges under snow; everything would be suspended.

The village had been a post town in the old days, and Akira remembered there was a large inn called the Peony which let rooms to students during the summer holidays. When he wrote about lodgings and they replied telling him to come any time, he decided to take formal leave and to set out for Shinshū at the beginning of April.

The Shin'etsu Line train took him through Jōshū, with its many mulberry fields, and when at length it entered Shinshū, the terrain suddenly took on an alpine aspect, desolated by winter and patched in the mountain recesses and shadows with snow. In the dying light Akira got off at a small valley station. In the immediate background rose Mt. Asama with bizarre bloody scars revealed by the melting snow.

As he walked from the station to the village, the scenery so little changed over the years had an inexplicably lonely mood. Was it simply due to the fact that he alone had changed while the landscape remained as of old? No, intrinsically it was a scene of ageless loneliness: a road sloping up from a train station, roadside remnants of snowdrifts stained with the glow of a sunset sky, an abandoned house standing lost and forgotten by the edge of a wood, then an expanse of the forest itself, a fork in the road (one branch leads to the village, the other to the old cottage in the forest) as a sign the journey is at last half accomplished, and, when the traveler emerges from the trees, the poignant sight of a small bump of a village set aslant on the base of a volcano red as flame.

There, in the village of Oiwake, Akira relinquished himself to the placidity of his self-imposed exile.

Spring was slow in coming to the mountains. The stands of trees still remained in almost complete nakedness, but there was a discernible springlike quickening in the shadows of birds darting now among the branches. And, ever so near, the twilight calls of pheasants from the woods were often heard.

The people at the Peony had not forgotten Akira as a boy or his aunt, dead now for several years, and were very hospitable. The old woman over seventy, her son the inn-keeper with his bad leg, his young wife from Tokyo, and his divorced older sister Oyō-- Akira had known them from childhood and had always taken them for granted. It was only in Oyō that he had any particular interest, having heard the story of how, when she was young, her beauty had enabled her to marry into a family

that operated a luxury hotel in the next village, the well-known summer place. But she had married only to find she could never be contented there, and after a year she fled back home. Not until his present stay, however, did Akira learn that Oyō had a nineteen-year-old daughter, Hatsue. These past seven or eight years, she had been confined to bed with spinal meningitis.

For an attractive woman with a past, Oyō now had no more thought for her appearance than any ordinary woman. She must have been approaching forty. But as she busied herself around the kitchen, the lightness of the girl was still preserved in her movements. That there should be such a woman in these mountains was for Akira a happy rediscovery.

Each succeeding day brought new vitality to the forest and the volcano slope which was still visible through the lacework of bare branches.

A week passed. Akira had by now seen about all there was of the village. He had walked out a number of times to his aunt's old summer house in the forest. Both this cottage, now belonging to someone else, and the neighboring Mimura cottage under the great elm were completely boarded up, as if they had known no visitors for many years. Under the elm, where everyone used to gather on summer afternoons, stood the bench leaning to one side. It looked in danger of imminent collapse from the weight of a cover of dead leaves. The memory of his last summer day in the shade of the elm came back to him all too keenly: Summer was coming to an end. There had been a rumor that Mori Otohiko had come again to the hotel in the next village. A few days after his sudden appearance in their village, Naoko abruptly left for Tokyo without so much as a word to

anyone, and it was only the next day that, under this very tree, Akira heard the news from Mrs. Mimura. The boy grew noticeably restless, as if concerned that he was somehow to blame, and could not refrain from asking if Naoko hadn't left some message for him.

"Nothing in particular," her mother answered, staring at him with thoughtful, cheerless eyes. "That's the kind of person she is, though."

With a martyred air, he nodded and left without saying anything more.

That was the last time Akira had come to the summer house under the elm tree. The following year his aunt died so his visits to the village came to an end altogether.

He sat on the old bench as he had done so often in the past and the scene of that day of his final summer was played again in his imagination. Once more the picture came to his mind of the girl who was never again to turn back to him, and he stood up with a start.

He announced to himself that he would not come here any more.

Each day now never failed to bring with it one or two showers as tokens of spring. On one such day Akira met with a fierce, thunderous cloudburst. He was drenched from head to foot when he came across a thatched hut in a forest clearing and bounded inside. Was it some sort of storehouse? It was pitch dark, yet evidently quite empty. He found it surprisingly deep and felt his way down five or six steps of some sort of ladder. The clammy, eerie air at the bottom made him shudder in spite of himself. As strange as the place was, what was even more surprising was the impression that with him in the hut there already was someone else taking shelter from the rain. As his eyes gradually became

accustomed to the darkness, there appeared in the corner the form of a girl huddling before the chance intruder. To cover the awkwardness of the situation he turned away from her and looked steadily outdoors.

"What a rain!" This as if talking to himself.

The storm, in its increasing rage, lacerated the volcanic earth before the hut and whipped it all into a murky flow. Dead leaves and broken twigs were caught in it and swirled away. The rain began dripping down from the half-rotted roof of straw and forced Akira back step by step. The distance between him and the girl gradually diminished.

"What a rain!" This time his voice was louder and directed at the girl. She said nothing, but seemed to nod. Seeing her up close, he now recognized her as Sanae from the village store called the Wataya. Evidently she had known all along who he was. At this point, the oddity of the silence between the two of them alone in the shadowy dark, was reaching embarrassing proportions; he spoke in a louder tone yet.

"Just what kind of place is this?"

A certain hesitation but no answer.

"It doesn't look like an ordinary storage shed." His eyes, much sharper now, peered around the gloom.

"It's an ice house." An answer finally came, faint and soft.

The rain drops admitted by the thatching continued plopping to the floor below, though the worst of the storm seemed to have passed. Outside there was a new-born brightness.

Akira spoke abruptly and carelessly. "So this is an ice house."

Years ago, when the railway was put through to this district, some of the village people cut and stored natural ice every winter. Come

summer, it was shipped out to various parts of the country. When the big ice-making plants in Tokyo started producing artificial ice, the villagers gradually gave up and left the ice houses just as they stood, to fall into decay. Akira had heard that there might have been some that were still standing in the forest, but this was the first he had actually seen.

"It looks as if it may collapse any moment," Akira said with another slow look around. Just then the rain drops falling from the chinks in the thatching were alchemized into long, slender threads of sunlight. The girl at once lifted her face toward the light. It was pale for a villager's. Akira stole a glance and in that moment found her beautiful.

They left the hut, Akira going out first. The girl had a small basket with her, for she was on her way back from the brook beyond the forest where she had been gathering parsley. Leaving the woods behind, they walked back to the village through the mulberry fields, without a word passing between them, one always out of step with the other.

From that day Akira became enamored of the forest clearing where the ice house stood. He would go there in the afternoon, lie in the grass before the dilapidated building, and gaze at the volcano looming behind a fringe of trees. Sanae began stopping in the evenings to exchange a few words with him on her way home with her parsley.

5

Soon they were in the habit of spending long afternoon hours before the ice house.

One gusty day, the forest had at long last begun to put forth burgeoning signs of new life, and with every bustle of wind the branches

of the trees trembled and the buds at their tips sparkled gold. At those moments, Akira was struck with awe by the girl's face, a study in unterrestrial purity. She may have been a little deaf, the way she was absorbed in elusive, wafting sounds. How good it was simply to be together like this, scarcely talking. They came here not to say words that had to be said; their silence bespoke a thing higher. Could there ever be a meeting so exquisite as this where there is no desire for anything other than silence? She must, he thought, understand this too.

On Sanae's part, while she may have had only an indistinct idea of how Akira felt, she usually did remain quiet, for if she should say anything beyond the absolutely necessary, he immediately looked curtly away. At first she did not fully understand his attitude and thought she may have said something about Oyō and the people at the Peony to offend him. Her family and Oyō's, although they were related, had been on bad terms for years. But whatever she might say to him, the result was the same. There was one thing, though, that he liked to hear her speak about, her own childhood. Over and over he had her tell one particular story of her childhood friend Hatsue. One winter day, when Hatsue was twelve, she was on her way to school and was shoved down on the frozen snow. This was the cause of ~~the meningitis~~ the meningitis which still afflicted her. Many children from the village were there when this happened, but not even they knew who was responsible for the prank.

Hearing about Hatsue's childhood, Akira imagined Oyō, when shielded from all eyes, change her self-assured look for one of secret loneliness. If now, to all appearances, she no longer had a thought for herself and was living solely for her daughter, Akira remembered a time several

summers back when rumors of Oyō and a certain law student reached their cottage. The story was that he had come to the Peony in the spring to study but would not return even with the coming of winter. The thought ~~that Oyō had had such an infatuation~~ served to fill in more completely the picture Akira had of her.

While Akira and his eyes were lost to her, Sanae amused herself playing with the supple blades of grass, bending them back and forth and stroking her ankles with them.

After two or three such hours had drifted away, they usually walked back separately in the gathering darkness. On his way home through the mulberry fields, Akira often met a man on his bicycle. He was the young policeman, popular among the people of these villages on his circuit. In time Akira heard about this sociable fellow and knew him for the ardent suitor of the girl he had just left. Thereafter he all the more wished the young policeman well.

6

One morning as Naoko was getting up she started coughing violently. The phlegm she coughed up felt strange. It was bright red. Unruffled, she disposed of it herself, got up as usual, and mentioned the fact to no one. During the rest of the day nothing else out of the ordinary happened. But in the evening when she saw the habitual gloss of contentment her husband wore on returning from work, she was seized with a desire to upset him. As soon as the two of them were alone she revealed her having coughed up blood in the morning.

"Oh well, that sort of thing.... It's nothing really," he said to reassure her, but it almost hurt to see how his face blanched.

Naoko purposely made no answer and simply kept looking at him, leaving the hollow words hanging helplessly in the air. He averted his eyes from hers and made no more attempts to be encouraging.

The following day Keisuke told his mother of Naoko's illness, omitting the fact that she had coughed up blood, and suggested that it might be well for her to go somewhere for a brief change of climate. And, he added, Naoko was of the same opinion. The brightening of her face betrayed a light-heartedness at the possibility of having Naoko temporarily out of the way and being alone with her son once more. And it was true Naoko wasn't looking too well these days. But at the same time she could not condone the notion of her daughter-in-law going off by herself. She thought, with her everlasting sense of propriety, of how bad it would be for appearances. The doctor who examined Naoko finally persuaded her. It was his recommendation and Naoko's wish that she be sent to an upland sanatorium on the slopes of the Yatsugatake mountain range in Shinshū.

The morning was slightly overcast. Naoko, accompanied by Keisuke and his mother, boarded a train on the Chūō Line and set out for the sanatorium.

They arrived at the mountains that afternoon. After seeing Naoko admitted as a patient and assigned a room on the second floor of the ward, Keisuke and his mother made a rapid retreat while it was still light. At their departure, Naoko did not feel any soft-hearted appreciation for the pains her mother-in-law took in coming along with her and Keisuke. The whole time she had been in the sanatorium she kept cringing in some imagined fear; and Keisuke was too timid in his mother's presence to speak

freely with his own wife. Wasn't his mother's primary motive not concern for Naoko but rather a wariness that if she left the two of them to themselves Keisuke might have doubts about leaving his wife behind? Yet, that Naoko should have these suspicions gave her a sense of being friendless and without ally, and this feeling prevailed over any despondency rising from her abandonment in a sanatorium in the mountains.

This was certainly the ideal sanctuary for her, she thought in her first days there. Her solitary supper finished, she would turn to the window and watch the mountains and forests lose themselves in the silently encroaching darkness. On the veranda as well, the sole sounds were those of nearby villages, echoing as from some great depth. The fragrance of the forest, fanned by an occasional wind-swell, would suddenly be wafted to her. Here, no other odor of life was allowed. How much she had wanted to be alone like this to reflect on the peculiar fate that was hers. Only yesterday her craving was for a place where she could take her fill of repose and give herself over to her despair, whose origin was a mystery even to herself. And now it was all about to come true. Now she might do as she pleased. No more forced attention or strained laughter. No more concern for her expression, for the look in her eyes.

That there should be in the midst of this loneliness such a strange sense of rebirth! If this was loneliness, how splendid! It was at home with her husband and mother-in-law where an unspeakable solitude suffocated her. Sentenced like this to seclusion in a mountain sanatorium, she savored for the first time the deliciousness that life might be. The deliciousness of life? Wasn't it simply a soporific effect, a languor

undisturbed by all trifles, which was induced by the disease? Perhaps too it amounted to nothing more than some sort of sickly hallucination, a natural reaction against the old upon her life.

Silently the days passed, one just like another.

With the carelessly flowing solitude, Naoko did come magically back to life both mentally and physically. Yet the more she recovered, the more undeniable was the sense that this incarnation taking form within her was somehow different from the Naoko she had been so desirous of regaining. No longer was she that young girl. No longer was she single. Regretfully, she was another's wife. The painful rites of everyday life had lost their meaning, yet, alone though she was, she persisted in their empty performances. She still put on frowns and smiles before an imaginary audience. Then too, there were times by herself when a look of cool detachment lingered in her eyes as if in answer to some bitter confrontation.

When she caught herself like this she told herself, "Be patient.... Just a little more patient," not knowing what the words meant.

7

It was May. There were long letters from time to time from Keisuke's mother, although he rarely wrote himself. Naoko thought this was typical of him, but preferred his silence, for it left her to her own devices. She might be up and feeling well, but when compelled to answer her mother-in-law's letters, she sank back into bed and, on her back, wrote in a shaky hand intended to demonstrate the effort she was making to write. This served to disguise her true feelings about

writing. With a person like Keisuke there was less need for subterfuge. Were she writing to him rather than to his mother, she would not have been able to resist being perfectly candid about the pleasure she was finding in being left to herself; the temptation to trouble his peace of mind would have been too great.

All the same, there were moments when, concerned about her self-indulgence, she told herself in a benign tone, "Naoko, you wretched thing. Are you proud of yourself, brushing other people aside and being so wrapped up in yourself like this? Don't you suppose there's going to come a day when you realize it's all vanity, this 'real you,' this precious ego of yours?"

But she knew when such disagreeable thoughts forced themselves on her, she had only to raise her eyes. Outside the window the trees yielded up their rare perfumes to the persistent breezes which rustled through their leaves and set them flickering. Oh, so many trees.... Oh, how nice they smell....

One day Naoko was walking along the downstairs corridor on her way to be examined. Outside the door of Room 27 she saw a young man in a white sweater. His face was buried in his arms and he was sobbing uncontrollably. It was the quiet boy here with a seriously ill young girl. The two of them were engaged. Since she had taken a sudden turn for the worse a few days earlier, Naoko was constantly seeing his white sweater in the corridor as he went back and forth, eyes somewhat bloodshot, between the girl's room and the dispensary.

"So it's hopeless. What a shame!" The sight of his suffering made Naoko hurry by.

When passing the nurses' room, a sudden concern seized her and she went in to enquire about the case. The fact was, they told her, that the patient had just suddenly begun like a miracle to rally and regain her strength. The boy had always been so quiet at her side all through the crisis, but when he heard the news, he ran out of the room and burst out in such loud sobs of joy even the patient could hear him.

Returning from her examination, Naoko again found him--and his white sweater--still outside the girl's room. His sobs were no longer audible although his face remained buried in his arms. Slowly this time, with long steps, she passed him by. Her eyes betrayed an avidity as they watched his shaking shoulders.

The days that followed were strangely oppressive for Naoko. She eagerly asked about the girl's condition whenever she could detain one of the nurses. For all her heartfelt sympathy, when Naoko heard that after five or six days the girl had died from a sudden hemorrhage in the middle of the night and that the boy had already disappeared from the sanatorium, she felt an undeniable sense of relief, a release from that vague oppression she neither understood nor yet tried to understand. The feeling that had worried her meaninglessly for several days ceased to trouble her further.

8

The meetings in the ice house continued much the same as ever. Akira, however, grew increasingly difficult and rarely let Sanae speak. Nor did he say much. Small clouds crossed the sky, in the woods new green glittered from the leaves, and the two of them sat next to each other and watched.

At times Akira's gaze would turn and rest upon Sanae. A careless laugh from her and he, no longer able to bear even that, looked aside with a frown. All he took pleasure in, it seemed, was her look of innocence. She gradually came to understand this and finally pretended not to notice whenever she felt his eyes on her yet seeing beyond her.

But never did his eyes have such a faraway look as they did today. Was she imagining it? She had decided to make some vague revelation to him today about the irrevocable decision for her marriage in the autumn. She had no desire for him to do anything once she told him; only that he should listen and she should cry. This was the way she wanted to say a final good-bye to the last of her girlhood, for she had never felt herself so much the unsophisticated girl as she did during these times with him. However much his moodiness might demand of her, because it was Akira, how could it possibly upset her? If he treated her badly, she simply felt all the more like a child.

For some time now they could hear the sound of trees being felled, far away in the forest.

"Must be cutting down trees somewhere. It sounds rather sad," Akira mumbled all of a sudden.

"Those woods too all used to belong to the Peony, but two or three years ago they sold everything," Sanae replied offhandedly but then wondered if her tone might have irritated him.

Akira said nothing, but in his empty eyes there was a quick, sad glint at the thought that the lands should inevitably pass piece-by-piece into other hands, for of all the village the Peony had the longest history. The people of that sad old house--the inn-keeper with the bad leg, his ancient mother, Oyō, and the sick girl....

That day too, Sanae found that after all it was impossible to speak of herself to him. Evening was coming on so she left him behind and went home alone with her regret.

Some time after he had sent her off in his usual curt manner, Akira thought of the reluctant air she had had that day. He rose quickly and went over to a red pine where he could watch her returning along the village road.

He stood there as she grew smaller and smaller in the brilliance of the declining sun. The young policeman, walking his bicycle, had fallen in with her and they went on together, now close now drawing apart.

He thought to himself that she was going where she belonged. It was in order to lose her that he had searched for her. If he was pained now by being left behind, he had willfully brought it on himself as something that had been necessary to him all along.

As though quite pleased at this passing thought, he rested his hand on the red pine and resolutely watched Sanae and the policeman continue drawing together and apart with the bicycle between and the flooding sunset behind, until they finally disappeared.

9

In June Naoko was permitted twenty-minute walks. On days when she felt better she wandered out alone as far as the meadow on the mountain slope.

The sweep of the meadow extended far into the distance. On the horizon stood clusters of trees at irregular intervals, casting forth purplish shadows. There was a herd of about ten horses and cows that moved here and there, grazing at the farthest meadow reaches. Naoko

would follow the fence, and her thoughts, like the yellow butterflies fluttering about the air, wandered aimlessly. But gradually they came to settle on the eternal question, "Why did I get married like this?"

Whenever her mind took this turn, she sat down on the grass and wondered if there might not have been another sort of life for her. "Why did I feel so desperate and fly into this marriage as if it were the only possible escape?" The day of the wedding came back to her. Standing at the entrance of the hall with Keisuke and receiving the well-wishing young men, she had thought she could have married any one of them. That thought had given her a certain comfort in the bridegroom no taller than herself at her side. "Whatever became of the peaceful feeling of that day?"

One day she ducked under the fence and walked out a considerable distance over the meadow grass. There, in the middle of the field, was a great solitary tree. In its pose was some essence of tragedy that invited her. Keeping an eye on the far part of the field where the cattle were grazing, she gathered up her courage and went as close as she dared. As she approached the tree she could not tell what kind it was but discovered that its trunk was split in two, and while one half was a wild, green burst of leaves, the branches of the other bespoke an agonized death. She compared the graceful branches of leaves fluttering and glittering in the wind with the painfully stricken and withered branches.

"I am this tree," she thought, "half dead."

So strong was the impression this idea made upon her that she never gave a thought on her way back out to her fear of the horses and cows.

As June faded, clouds boding a season of long summer rains covered the skies, and for several days on end Naoko's walks would be impossible. The dragging of the time, even for her, proved almost unbearably dreary. She waited idly through the day for nightfall, but when the dark came at last it inevitably brought with it the dismal sound of rain.

On one such chilly day Naoko was informed, to her surprise, that Keisuke's mother had come. She came out to meet her at the front entrance at the very moment a young man, just discharged, was saying good-bye to some of the nurses and other patients. Naoko as well stopped to watch his departure. While she stood there with her mother-in-law, one of the nurses near her whispered that the man, a forestry engineer, had taken it upon himself to go down the mountain against the doctor's advice because of research he wanted to finish. A startled "Oh!" sprang from Naoko's lips, and she looked at him once more. Though he could, at a glance, pass for being sound enough as he was the only one there in a suit, a closer look revealed he was much more wasted than the other patients. Then too, they had better coloring, for their arms and legs were deeply tanned. For all this, there was about his brow a sense of life imminent and irrepressible which might not be seen on those staying behind. Naoko's heart went out to this young man she did not know.

As they walked along the corridor Keisuke's mother asked, "Those people there, they were patients?" with a note of doubt in her voice. "Everyone of them looks sound enough."

"They may seem so but they're all quite ill." Naoko found herself defending them. "If there's a sudden change in the air pressure, some

of them will cough up blood. When they get together like that, they wonder to themselves whose turn will be next, maybe their own, and hide their fear from each other. So they're not really so energetic, just showing off."

It occurred to Naoko that the characteristically haughty manner in which she replied might seem as if she was quite her old self again and bring Keisuke's mother to remark that it was time Naoko left the sanatorium. Therefore, in a more theatrical, stricken tone, she explained how the obstruction of the air channels of her left lung still plagued her.

When they entered her room toward the end of the second floor of the last ward, her mother-in-law--was she afraid of staying too long in a hospital room smelling of creosol?--did no more than glance about before hurrying out to the balcony. There was a coolness in the air outside.

Really now, can't she do anything other than hunch over like that when she comes here?--Something in the sight of her with her hands on the railing and her back to her irritated Naoko. Abruptly turning around to Naoko, she saw the vacancy in the eyes upon her and responded by twisting the corners of her lips. But the affectionate smile was all too obvious a fiction.

Though Naoko dutifully attempted to detain her, she insisted on leaving quickly. After another hour, Naoko was again at the entrance to see her off. Again the feeling, stronger now than ever, that there was something that did not ring quite true in her mother-in-law's exaggerated, cringing apprehension.

The painful realization that one may suffer because of another, by and large an experience of the young, came without undue haste to Kurokawa Keisuke at the mid-point of his life.

One day early in September, Keisuke had a visitor at his Marunouchi office, a distant relative named Nagayo. Business matters concluded, their conversation turned to personal affairs.

"I hear your wife is in a sanatorium somewhere. How's she getting along?" asked Nagayo, blinking in a curious way he had when asking questions.

"What? Oh, nothing serious, it seems." He dismissed the matter lightly and tried to change the subject. Odd that this fellow should know something about Naoko being hospitalized for lung trouble when his mother wanted it kept quiet.

"The story is she's in a special ward reserved for the worst cases."

"Not at all. There must be some mistake."

"Oh? Well, I'm glad to hear it, but my mother said she heard it recently from yours."

For once, Keisuke was caught off guard. "Now why should she say anything like that?"

In a strangely unsettled state of mind, he saw his friend off unenthusiastically.

"Nagayo knew about Naoko being hospitalized," Keisuke broached the subject casually with his mother that evening over the quiet dinner table.

"Well, I never!" she answered with feigned innocence. "Now how did the Nagayos come to hear about that, do you suppose?"

Keisuke turned impatiently away from her toward Naoko's place with a sudden sense of unease for her who was no longer there. She had always been left out so from these conversations at the table; his mother and he had passed the time talking of their old friends or petty details of the household budget with scarcely a thought for her. There she sat--he saw her vividly--with eyes downcast, long suffering, tense... It was unlikely that such reflections had ever crossed Keisuke's mind before.

His mother had been very scrupulous about not letting it be known her son's wife was consumptive and in a sanatorium. She glossed over the facts with a tale that she was away because of a slight case of nerves. Keisuke himself had been appeased and dissuaded from making any visit to his wife. Thus he little thought his mother might purposely be spreading stories about Naoko's illness behind his back.

He knew there was a frequent exchange of letters between her and Naoko. On these rare occasions when he had asked about her, he was satisfied with the simple answers his mother made and had never been more inquisitive about the contents of their letters. Judging from what Nagayo said that day, his mother must be keeping something from him. He was beset simultaneously with an indescribable sense of irritation and an overwhelming feeling of self-reproach for his past behavior.

Several days later he abruptly announced he was taking the next day off and would go to see Naoko. His mother heard the news with a bitter scowl but took no more definite steps to oppose his going.

Might Naoko be desperately ill and dying?--Keisuke tried not to let his vague forebodings get the better of him and set out for the south of Shinshū on a stormy day in the typhoon season. The wind came in violent blasts and drove great, frantic raindrops against the train window with a clamor. Braving the storm, the train came to the mountains at the prefectural border and began zigzagging upward through a series of switchbacks. The window, blurred with rain, afforded only the most fragmentary impression of the landscape beyond, and Keisuke, being no great traveler, felt he was being spirited away into regions unknown at every reversal of the engine.

The train had pulled into a typical little mountain station and was just about to get under way once more when Keisuke realized he was to get off there for the sanatorium. He hurriedly leapt into the driving rain and was immediately drenched.

In front of the station, a single antiquated taxi stood in the rain, waiting for passengers. Both Keisuke and a young woman dashed for it, but, since she too was bound for the sanatorium, the obvious thing to do was to share it.

"There's an emergency case so I'm in a rush myself," she offered in the way of an apology. It turned out she was a nurse from a neighboring town and was sometimes called in on the spur of the moment when a patient hemorrhaged.

Keisuke's heart leapt. "A woman patient?" he blurted out.

"No, I think it's a young man," she remarked indifferently. "His first hemorrhage."

The dingy houses lining the street were splashed again and again as the taxi rattled on in the downpour through the puddles. Leaving the village behind, it began the struggle up the slope toward the sanatorium. The sudden grinding of the engine, the tilting of the cab, all this did nothing to lessen Keisuke's qualms.

There was no one about when the car pulled up to the front entrance; it was doubtless the patients' rest period. Keisuke got out of his wet shoes, found some slippers for himself, and headed straight down a corridor until he realized he had turned into the wrong ward. While retracing his steps, he found the door to the room of one of the patients had been left half-open. He looked in as he was passing and his idle glance was confronted by the sight of a young man in bed, his upturned face waxen under a slight growth of beard. His head never moved when he became aware of Keisuke outside the door; only the eyes, wide and bird-like, turned slowly toward him.

Keisuke started and was about to hurry on when someone inside came up to close the door. As she did so she made a scarcely perceptible sign of acknowledgment. It was she, the girl in the taxi, already in her white uniform.

He finally found a nurse in the corridor and was told Naoko was one ward further down. Accordingly he climbed the stairs at the further end of the passage. He recognized the ward now and thought back to the time he had come here with Naoko. He went up to Room 3, her room, his heart throbbing with emotion. "It's just possible she's become much weaker. Perhaps she won't even recognize me at first. Maybe she'll just stare at me with those big, awful eyes, like that young man who was hemorrhaging." His own thoughts sent a shiver through him.

He pulled himself together, knocked lightly on the door and gently tried it to find the patient lying in bed, facing away from him. Not a sound, not a movement betrayed that she was in any way curious to know who it was entering her room.

At length she turned. "Why, it's you!" The eyes looking up at him --was it because her face had grown somewhat thinner?--were larger than before. They were lit up with an uncanny sparkle.

Keisuke felt relieved at the sight of her and his heart was filled.

"I had intended to come earlier but I've been so busy...."

At this pretext, the mysterious glimmer softened and faded from her eyes. She turned her gaze, darkly clouded now, toward the double-paned window. Outside, the wind grew quiet, then, as if recalling its task, recommenced hurling huge raindrops against the outer sheet of glass.

Keisuke was a bit disappointed his wife was not more impressed with the gallantry of his feat in coming up to the mountains in such a storm. But when he thought of the fears that had been weighing on his heart until he actually saw her for himself, he was encouraged at finding her as well as she was.

"How've you been? You're getting along fine, aren't you now?" As always, when he had something serious to say to Naoko, he averted his eyes.

She, aware of this habit of his, said nothing but simply shrugged as a sign that, let him look at her or not, it was no longer the least concern to her.

"Well, you know, if you just stay up here and rest quietly a little longer you'll soon get better."

The macabre eyes of a bird in its death throes appeared before him, and he ventured a searching glance at Naoko. But all he met with was a look of pity. He turned his face aside in defeat and bewilderment. "Why does this woman always have to look at me like that?" he thought going over to the rain-splattered window. The trees were shaking their branches with a fury, raising a spray such as to efface the view of the ward across the way.

By the close of day the rage of the rain had not yet exhausted itself and in consequence Keisuke had made no attempt to leave. At last the darkness was complete.

"I wonder if they would let me stay at the sanatorium," suddenly came from Keisuke hovering by the window, arms folded, watching the commotion of the trees.

"Stay here overnight?" She was suspicious. "If you want to do that, you can find an inn in the village. But here . . ."

"For that matter, I can stay here too, I suppose. It'd be much better for me here than in some inn." He looked around the small room that he had never really seen before. "For one night I can sleep on the floor. And it's not all that cold."

In her surprise she looked at him steadily. "What's gotten into him now?" She scoffed, "What an idea!" and shrugged the matter off. Yet there was nothing this time in the mockery of her eyes to put him on the defensive.

Keisuke ate by himself in the dining room for the people, mostly women, who were staying there to attend the patients, and he made his own arrangements for his stay.

About eight o'clock the nurse on duty brought him a folding cot and blankets provided for those staying over. After she took Naoko's night temperature and left, Keisuke clumsily undertook to put the bed together himself. Knitting her brows slightly, Naoko watched him from her bed when she began to sense from some corner of the room an almost sinister look upon her; it was the look she used to see from his mother.

"Well, that's that." Keisuke sat down to test his makeshift bed. He fumbled in his pocket for a while, finally pulling out a cigarette.

"I guess it's all right to smoke in the corridor?"

She kept silent as though unaware he had spoken.

With this rebuff, he reluctantly went out to the corridor and paced back and forth as he smoked. Naoko listened alternately to the sound of his footsteps and to the fury of the wind and rain in the trees.

When he returned to the room, a feathery moth was fluttering over Naoko's pillow, throwing a great frenzied shadow on the ceiling.

"Turn out the light before you go to bed," she told him with some sternness.

He went up to her bed, brushed the moth aside and, as he reached for the lamp, considered sadly the dark circles around the eyes closed against the glare of the light.

Canvas creaks kept coming from the cot at the foot of her bed, and finally she asked through the darkness, "Can't you sleep?"

"No," in what he intended a drowsy voice. "The rain's so loud. You can't sleep either then?"

"It doesn't bother me. I always stay awake."

"Really? But you wouldn't want to be alone in such a place on a night like this." As he spoke he turned to face away from her as a measure to get up the courage to ask next, "You.... You don't want to come home?"

Instinctively, she shrank back in the darkness.

"I've decided not to think about that till I'm completely recovered." With that, she turned away and fell silent.

Neither did he say anything further. And the darkness all around them was filled with the wild sound of the rainfall on the trees.

12

The next morning Naoko was held in thrall by a single leaf that had been hurled by the wind against the window glass and there, in the very center, remained affixed. As she gazed, she realized with a start she had been smiling to herself over some secret thought.

"For heaven's sake, I wish you'd stop looking at me that way," Keisuke had halfheartedly protested, with eyes averted again, when he was leaving. Something in the reflection of her own eyes, lost in the sole paralyzed leaf, suddenly brought his odd complaint back to mind.

"Oh well, this expression in my eyes isn't anything new. When I was a girl and mother was alive it used to annoy her too. Did he notice it only now? Or couldn't he bring himself to say anything about it all this time and only got the nerve today? He certainly wasn't his usual self last night. But he's so timid, he must be fairly frightened out of his wits alone in the train in such a storm."

Keisuke had remained awake through the dimly sinister night and when at last there were rifts in the mid-day clouds and a great thick mist came rolling in, he hurried down, visibly relieved, to the station. But the weather did not hold. The storm must have caught him about the time he made his train--she did not particularly consider it, and her dark gaze was recaptured by the leaf fastened to the pane, almost an etching wrought upon the glass. Soon and faintly, so faintly she herself was not aware of it, the smile came again to her lips.

At that very moment the train carrying Keisuke was making its way, buffeted by the storm all the while, across the heavily-wooded border into Yamanashi Prefecture.

What was more disturbing for him than the storm and still would not be dislodged from his mind was the bizarre turn all the events had taken at the sanatorium. This had been his first venture into a world not governed by the laws he knew. Little else was visible from the train save the trees immediately beyond. They writhed in agony and shook their leaves in pain under the torture of the winds, which were more brutal now than when he had come up. Through his mind, dulled by the first sleepless night in his life, ran thoughts of his wife under a pall of even greater loneliness, of himself who had watched through the night with her with feelings so totally foreign to his usual self, of his mother alone in the Omori house who would be waiting for him without a wink of sleep . . . The peace of their home, so zealously guarded for the two of them by his mother who valued nothing in this world but herself and her son to such an extent that Naoko had been driven away.... How negligible that peace was alongside the dense, rich, and mysterious

tapestry of life and death with Naoko figured in its center, which even now kept reappearing before his eyes. This idea, encouraged by the state of exceptional excitement his mind had fallen into, assumed a power such as to strike at the root of his usual complacency. Thus engrossed, Keisuke kept his eyes closed for the most part while the train sped on through the storm and past the stand of trees that marked the end of the uplands. His eyes were startled open from time to time as if by a sudden recollection of the tumult without, but closed again of themselves out of his heartfelt exhaustion, and he quickly slipped once more over the border between dreams and reality. Present impressions and impressions present as memories from the past met and entwined, and his existence was divided between two planes of time. For all their effort to pierce beyond the glass, his eyes met only a blank and looked back at him, reawakening in him the feeling that had struck him yesterday when as soon as he came to the mountains he found himself looking through the half-opened door into the unearthly eyes of a dying man, and in turn the reflection faded into those insufferable, veiled eyes of Naoko. Finally all three expressions commingled and fused eerily.

A sudden brightening over the scene outside in some measure lightened his own spirit as well. For, on wiping a finger across the clouded glass, he saw the train had at length left behind the last of the alpine terrain at the prefectural border and was penetrating the great lowland basin. The wind and rain, however, continued in full force. A scene of small groups of men in straw raincoats, shouting to each other as they stood among the wide vineyards, jarred oddly on his benumbed vision. With the repeated appearances of these extraordinary vineyard workers, the inside of the train as well took on some

animation. From the conversation of those about him, Keisuke overheard that last night's torrents of rain had been accompanied in these parts by considerable hail, which had done serious damage to the many fields of ripening grapes, leaving the farmers to do nothing now but stand by, arms folded, watching and waiting for the storm to finish its work.

Each time the train pulled into a station excitement heightened, and outside his window drenched station officials went rushing about, shouting in angry voices which the wind blew carelessly away.

After the train had crossed the plain with its vast, sad spectacle of ruined vineyards and climbed upward a second time, the clouds began to part and an occasional beam of sunlight fell through to set the window glass sparkling. Keisuke felt like one awakening from a long sleep. Really, how morbid he was being! He calmly dismissed from his mind all thought of the patient with the eyes of a bird in its death throes, and of his own eyes which only now had been strangely duplicating their macabre expression. And yet, one thing remained with him as vivid as ever it had been--the pain in Naoko's eyes,

By the time the train reached Shinjuku Station the rain had let up, and the station yard was overflowing with the reds and oranges of the western sun. He stepped down from the train and was struck by the sultry air. At once the bracing chill of the mountains came pleasantly back to mind. As he made his way through the crowded platform he saw a gathering of people by the station bulletin board, and he stopped for a quick glance. It was a notice to the effect that service on a length of the Chūō Line, by which he had just returned, had been disrupted.

A bridge--one of those his own train had crossed--had collapsed into a ravine, and the trains, he read, which followed his were stranded in the storm.

"So that's what the fuss is! And yet, as he resumed walking through the bustling platform, he was conscious of a sensation he could not identify. Of all these many people, he thought, only he was crushed under some strange and portentous burden, something he had brought away with him from the mountains and could not cast off. Walking resolutely ahead, he felt like a man singled out for great sorrow. What he did not consider deeply enough to perceive was that this weight upon his heart was in reality a sense of the precariousness of life, which is never more than one step ahead of death.

That evening Keisuke felt no inclination whatever to return directly to the Ōmori house. He ate alone at a Shinjuku restaurant, lingered over a cup of tea at another shop, and wandered on at length, mixing in with the crowd and the Ginza night. Almost forty years old and never before had he behaved like this. His mother must be anxiously waiting for him at home. Every time the thought crossed his mind he perversely put off going back, almost as if he wanted to treasure a little longer the image of his mother's anxiety. He even brooded on how he had ever been able to endure life alone with her in that house so devoid of any warmth. But at last he dismissed such thoughts as due to the fatigue of yesterday. After all, his own existence was much the same, he came to feel, as that of the other people passing by. He refused to be provoked any longer by Naoko's haunting eyes, and the tapestry woven of life and death lost a little of its brilliance with

each sweep it made before his mind. His resistance to the power that was drawing him now collapsed utterly, and as he made for Ōmori at last, he was curiously aware for the first time that where he wanted most to be was under his mother's roof. It was close to midnight by the time he arrived.

13

Oyō was in Tokyo with her daughter, Hatsue, to see if the doctors could do anything for her. Since July Akira had been as despondent as ever going back and forth to the architectural firm. When he learned they were in town he went to visit them at the hospital in Tsukiji. This was on a day late in September.

"How is she?" He was being careful to look at the bedridden Hatuse as little as possible and kept turned toward Oyō.

"How good of you to ask," she mumbled like a woman from the mountains. She did not know what was expected of her in this situation, but her happiness in seeing him again was apparent in the eyes upon him.

"Things haven't quite turned out as I expected. Really, these doctors! Not one will tell you anything definite. We came to Tokyo ready to take a chance on an operation but now they all say it probably wouldn't do her any good anyway."

Akira glanced toward Hatsue. Never had he looked at her so closely. She had the beautiful, slender face of her mother and was not as wasted away as he had expected to find her. Rather than being offended at being discussed like this, she simply looked embarrassed.

Oyō went to make tea, and for a time Akira and Hatsue were left face-to-face. From her pink blushes and the perplexity in her eyes he

knew she did not know how to act toward him so he avoided looking too directly at her. Prior to today, he had only overheard her speaking to Oyō in the little-girl tone of a twelve- or thirteen-year-old, and he had no idea her eyes could shine with this femininity. But, come to think of it, this same Hatsue and Sanae, the girl he used to be seeing, had been children together. And Sanae must have got married early this autumn to that young policeman, the one so popular in the villages.

Thereafter it was rare for more than two or three days to pass without Akira looking in on them on his way home. He scarcely ever found them without the last mellow rays of the sun flooding their hospital room with autumn. As Akira watched and listened, there would seem from the casual way mother and daughter spoke and acted to each other to waft a sudden scent, a special scent of their mountain village. He inhaled greedily. At such times he even suspected he may have stumbled upon here, in mother and daughter, what he had sought in vain from the village girl. Surely Oyō could not have been totally unaware of what had passed between Sanae and him but, happily, never once did she allude to it. Indeed, there were moments when he wished he might go to Oyo like a child to his mother and bury his head in the warmth of her bosom and there be comforted, neither speaking nor spoken to, and breathe in deeply of the perfumed airs of the upland meadows and pine forests.

"When I wake up in the middle of the night, I don't feel very well, what with the dampness in the air." She was accustomed to dry mountain air, but perhaps no one but Akira could understand why she complained in Tokyo. Oyō was perfectly, from first to last, a woman of the

uplands. To see her in Oiwake, one would think her a woman rare in the mountains, attractive and strong-spirited, but in Tokyo, even within the hospital which she never left, she looked quite countrified and somewhat out of place.

Oyō, in whom vestiges of the girl were still discernible notwithstanding her past history, and her daughter, Hatsue, who despite her new adulthood had not outgrown the child--Akira had come to find it impossible to imagine one without recalling the other. Whenever he left the hospital he was keenly conscious of Oyō coming behind to see him off at the lobby, and he would entertain the not too improbable possibility of sharing his fate with this mother and daughter.

14

One afternoon Akira felt slightly feverish. He left the office early and returned directly to Ogikubo. Ordinarily he only left work early in order to stop in on Oyō and Hatsue, and the lingering brightness that he stepped into getting off the train at Ogikubo Station came as a surprise. He raised his eyes and became absorbed in the western sky, a vast canvas of thin-blown vermillion clouds above the stands of coloring trees, when he was overcome with a violent fit of coughing. A man, short, and evidently an office worker, had been standing idly at the edge of the platform, lost in his own thoughts. He looked around in astonishment at Akira as he coughed. Noticing his glance, Akira felt he had seen him somewhere before. He bent over to ease the cough while the other watched. When the spell passed he headed for the stairway, with no more thought of the man. But just as he took a step up,

the resemblance between him and Naoko's husband struck him and he quickly looked back. The man was still standing there but was facing away now, dwelling on the same sadness.

As he continued out of the station, Akira thought, "He was rather lonely-looking. Can anything be wrong with Naoko? Maybe she's ill. She didn't look too well the time I saw her. And her husband doesn't seem such a bad sort after all. But how should I know? Everyone always looks a little lonely to me in the beginning."

Once at his lodgings Akira did not even want to exert himself changing clothes immediately lest the coughing recur, and simply sank down before the window. Can Naoko be somewhere out there far away, in some distant place living a life far too unhappy for me to imagine?-- He turned his eyes to the gilded treetops and the afterglow of the western sky as if he had never beheld them before. As he watched the transformation of the colors, a sudden penetrating chill came over him.

Even then Keisuke remained standing on the platform, with the same brooding look, the fading sunset before him. Any number of trains had already come and gone. But no, he did not appear to be waiting for someone. Only once had his near-trance been broken, when he twisted around bewildered at a violent coughing. It was a tall, thin young man, a complete stranger. He had heard that frightening, ominous cough before--it was so like the way Naoko used to cough in the early mornings. There were other trains, and then the ground was set trembling as a long train of the Chūō Line rumbled through the station. Keisuke looked up startled and, with a desperately searching look, peered into one coach after another as they passed. Anyone watching him might have thought he

was scrutinizing each and every face in the train. Within a few hours they would be passing the southern foot of the Yatsugatake mountain range and could, if they cared to, look through the train window and find the red roof of the sanatorium where Naoko was....

Keisuke was simplicity itself, and once the thought occurred to him that Naoko must be extremely unhappy so long as they lived apart, he could not easily rid himself of it. A month and more had gone by since his visit to the mountains, and his work at the office had kept his mind occupied; furthermore there had been a succession of fine autumn days such as to make all unpleasantness fade away. Yet he remembered as if it had happened yesterday every detail of his meeting with Naoko. He might be hurrying home, exhausted from the day's work, through the evening rush when the thought came again that Naoko was not waiting for him. This led in turn to a swift reawakening of all he had felt both at the mountain sanatorium isolated in the downpour and on the return train under attack by the storm. Constantly, from somewhere or other, Naoko was watching him. He would suddenly see that glint in her eyes. Sometimes on the train he looked up in surprise and glanced around to discover if there hadn't been a woman there with Naoko's eyes.

Not once had he written to her. It would never have occurred to a man of his type to ease his heart in a letter; if he did have such an idea, it was temperamentally impossible for him to carry it through. He never made mention of the occasional exchange of letters between his mother and Naoko. Come one of her carelessly penciled letters, he never thought to open it to see what she had written. He might simply look at the envelope for a time as at an uneasy omen, and a hazy image

would appear of Naoko, weary, lying in bed, stroking her wasted cheek with her pencil as she tried writing thoughts she did not mean. Once he had gone to a farewell party for a senior employee and as he was coming away with a fellow worker with whom he was on friendly terms, he suddenly felt he could confide in him about Naoko.

"That's really too bad." His friend was listening with a not altogether sober sympathy, then, as if a thought had just occurred to him, he blurted out, "But, on the other hand, a wife like that doesn't give you any trouble."

Keisuke did not at first understand, then he remembered having heard some talk about the man's wife, and dropped the subject.

What his friend had said depressed him all that night. He could scarcely get a wink of sleep, his thoughts turning constantly to Naoko. Entirely lacking any appreciation of the solace to be found in nature, he could only see the forests and mountains all about the sanatorium as intensifying her loneliness, as barriers to keep her from the rest of the world: Nature was holding Naoko captive, while she was submissively watching and waiting alone for the silent approach of death....

"No trouble," his friend had said. As Keisuke lay alone an anger without object welled swiftly up in the darkness. Countless times he had resolved to speak to his mother and bring Naoko back to the city, then he would think of how his mother, who seemed relieved and cheered in Naoko's absence, was sure to oppose him in her obstinate way on the plea of Naoko's condition, and he would give up the idea in defeat.

"Even if I were to bring Naoko home, considering the state of affairs between her and Mother, what could I do to make her happy?"

So he left things as they were.

Keisuke was returning from a funeral and pacing up and down the platform of Ogikubo Station as he waited in the last of the daylight for his train. Cold, mournful winds were blowing away the last of autumn. Suddenly the many leaves that were scattered on the platform leapt up in a dance of the dead in the gust of a long, swift train of the Chūō Line. He knew it for the train bound for Matsumoto.

Keisuke had never been one for wandering the streets in aimless pursuit of a cherished image, but this time he was taken unaware and felt himself momentarily assailed in every fibre of his being by a keen sense of Naoko's existence. Thereafter, if he left work early he was not content without taking the National Line from Tokyo Station to Ogikubo and standing there to wait for the evening train for Shinshū to pass. And each time it sped by in an instant, and all the dead leaves swirled about his feet. He intently watched the string of passenger coaches, and he felt with a painful sharpness that what had been suffocating him throughout the day was being torn away from him to be borne off by the passing coaches.

15

The autumn skies lingered on over the mountains, serene and untroubled. All about the sanatorium the slopes were bathed in sunlight. A happy part of Naoko's cure was a daily walk by herself over the rises and among the wild roses which greeted her playfully with bright red berries. On warm afternoons she extended her walks to the meadow and, ducking under the fence, stepped cautiously through the grass. She went to a spot from where she could see glittering in the sun the few golden leaves that still clung to the old, half-rotted

tree in the middle of the field. The days were short now, and the shadow of the high tree as well as her own stretched perceptively into long, strange shapes across the ground. They were a sign to her that it was time to leave the meadow and return to the sanatorium. Her illness, her isolation--she often forgot all about them. For these were days languid and fair, that come so very seldom in the span of a lifetime, days of sweet insidious forgetfulness.

But the nights were cold and desolate. When the winds blew from the low-lying villages up to the higher reaches of the mountain they became bewildered, and kept prowling about the sanatorium searching their way, prying and rattling through the night at any window left unshuttered.

One day Naoko heard from one of the nurses about the young forestry engineer who, against the doctor's advice, had left in the spring to go down the mountain. He had hopelessly aggravated his illness and had returned to them after all. She recalled him setting out from the sanatorium, so eager and yet so very pale. How moved she had been at the sight of his eyes bright with youth and ambition, at how much finer than any of those watching him go he was! Her memory of that day made her feel his cares her own.

The mild autumn drowsed on, blissfully ignorant of the impending winter.

After Hatsue had been under the doctors' observation for more than two months they found there was nothing they could do and released her.

Oyō was to take her home to Oiwake, and the young wife from the Peony came all the way into town to accompany them back.

Akira had been away from the office for two weeks and came with his throat wrapped in a compress to see them off at Ueno Station. With Oyō walking alongside, Hatsue came on to the platform on the back of a rickshaw man. She saw Akira, and the color mounted to her shallow cheeks as never before.

To Oyō, it was Akira who looked like the patient, and telling him good-bye she added out of concern, "Now you take good care of yourself too."

"I'm all right. If I get a chance I'll come up for a visit over the winter holidays, so look for me then." A promise and a sad smile for the two of them.

"Well then, have a nice trip."

The train eased out. In its wake a vaporous winter light drifted over the platform. Akira was left standing alone with some dark, ghostly thing. He walked away listlessly as if not knowing what now to do with himself. Then he fell to pondering: So the doctors gave up and they've gone back to their village. Sure, there was something a little forlorn about them, but still neither Oyō nor even Hatsue acted in any way despondent. Why, they actually looked relieved and happy they could go home to Oiwake so soon. Can their village or their own home mean all that much to them?

"But what can I do? I have nothing like that. And why this void within me these days?" Although the times he had been with Oyō and Hatsue, who knew nothing of his sense of emptiness, persuaded him all

the more that he had his own solitary path to walk, yet it was true that only during those same times did he know any peace of mind. Now that they had deserted him there was no one to whom he might turn for solace. Suddenly, like a persistent memory, his violent cough returned. He stopped, bent over, and waited for it to pass. By the time he straightened up again there was scarcely anyone left in the station.

"The work they give me at the office, anyone can do that. But take that away and just what's left in my life? Have I ever done what I really wanted to do? I don't know how many times I've decided to give up my job and work on my own, but when I try to tell the section-chief he smiles at me so good-naturedly and looks so trusting I just drop the whole thing. What good is all this hesitating going to do me? I ought to take another sick leave and get away somewhere on my own and try to determine what it is I really want and why everything seems so hopeless. The things I've lost--can I say I ever earnestly searched for them? What about Naoko and Sanae, or now Oyō and Hatsue?"

He walked pensively through the barren station in the wavering light of the winter day. His shoulders slightly hunched, he cut a gloomy figure.

The peaks of Yatsugatake now showed themselves with a crown of snow, but on fine days Naoko still took the walks that had been part of her routine since fall. The winter weather in the uplands was such that, though a dazzling sun might emerge and strive to warm and wake it, the earth could never entirely free itself of the benumbing cold of the day before and rouse itself from its stupor. Sometimes the grass covered

with hoarfrost would snap and crumble beneath her feet as she walked along, swathed in her white coat. At other times, when she went out to the old, half-dead tree in the empty meadow, an icy wind swept by, playing with her hair on its way. She would raise her face to the uppermost branches where the shriveled leaves were indicated now by a few simple strokes forming the sole stain on the immaculate winter sky. She would watch them endlessly trembling in their powerlessness to resist the wind and, a deep sigh escaping from her, trace her way back to the sanatorium.

December brought only ashen days of piercing cold. Since the advent of winter a cover of clouds snowed days at a time over the mountain tops even while the lower slopes remained unvisited. Waiting for the snow to reach the sanatorium, the patients became oppressed under the heaviness of the air. Naoko as well was too lethargic to continue her walks. She lay in bed all day with the blankets up to her eyes, her windows thrown open to the cold. With the sting of the outside air on her face she would think of good kitchen smells in some cozy little restaurant with a fireplace making happy, crackling sounds, of then walking out into some narrow, tree-lined bystreet to stroll through fallen leaves--trivial things, but things which made the life still remaining to her precious. But there were times too when she felt there was nothing more for her in the future, not one thing left to hope for.

"Is this all life is?" she thought with alarm. "Isn't there someone who can tell me what I'm to do now, or if I must resign myself to things as they are?"

These thoughts were revolving through her mind one day when she was brought back to reality by a nurse looking in and calling out cheerfully, "You have a visitor." At no sign of objection from Naoko, she told someone in the passage to go in.

There was a sharp cough outside which Naoko did not recognize. She waited uneasily. Presently she saw a tall, slender young man standing in the doorway.

"Well, Akira!" The eyes greeting her surprise visitor had an element of severity and reproach. He remained at the door and, confused at her scrutiny, nodded stiffly. He glanced curiously about the room as if to avoid the fix of her eyes, and started taking off his coat when he was shaken once more by an attack of coughing.

Without rising from bed, Naoko said out of pity, "It's cold. Keep your coat on."

Akira obediently readjusted his coat and simply stood there, unsmiling, ready for her next instructions.

He was before her again, the very image of the friend he used to be, gentle and guileless. She felt a tightening in her throat. But what possessed him after all this time of hardly a word--especially since her wedding--to come suddenly one winter day all the way up to the mountains for a visit? Until she understood his motives, she could only find him and his ingenuousness vaguely exasperating.

"You can sit over there," she said finally, and with a look of infinite detachment indicated a chair.

"All right." One stolen glance at her profile and he quickly looked away again, seating himself on the edge of the leather chair.

"It suddenly occurred to me on the train to stop off and see you. I heard just before leaving Tokyo that you were up here," he said with a stroke of his palm over a hollow cheek.

"And where, might I ask, are you going?" Her voice betrayed she had not yet reconciled herself to his intrusion.

"Oh, nowhere...." This in a mumble almost to himself. Then abruptly his eyes opened wide and, in a spontaneous, self-reflective tone as if he were alone in the room, "I suddenly wanted to be somewhere, somewhere in the winter."

He brought a smile almost bitter from her.

So it was ever since she was a girl. These young men with their impossible visions! What fun she used to have at their expense, poking fun at their tendencies to strike languid poses and grow poetic.

When the smile that had been so characteristic of her years before crossed her face, it brought back to life within her the person she had once been, and she was curiously stirred. But the sensation died in a moment; she impulsively frowned as Akira's violent cough returned.

"He must be mad," she thought gratuitously, "going around coughing like this on some wild-goose chase," Her eyes frosted over again.

"You seem to have a cold. Do you really think you should be out in this cold weather?"

"I'm all right. Just that my throat's giving me a little trouble. I think the snow will do me some good," he answered, and all the while thinking, "Funny, I hadn't any intention of coming up to such a place and seeing her again after all these years, but why, when the idea just came to me on the train, did I want to rush up here? I know I wasn't

wondering how she was, if she was quite different now or still the same, or anything. I only wanted to pick a fight and make her scowl at me for a moment, as we used to do as children, and then leave. But now she's gone off on that old aloof tack. And the more aloof she gets, the more vindictive I'll become and won't be satisfied unless I can force her eyes to my wounds and scars. Well, at least I've accomplished my first objective and made her angry; I'd better go now."

He stood up abruptly on the strength of this conclusion, but saw her profile against the pillow and his resolve faltered. He could not bring himself to leave her just yet. He coughed slightly, a hollow cough.

"Still no snow, I see." Watching for some response from her, he walked toward the balcony. He posted himself at the half-open door, shivering as he scanned the forests and mountains. Several moments passed and he turned to her,

"I was hoping for some snow. It must be nice up here then."

He finally determined to step out on the balcony. There, the landscape presented itself to greater advantage, and he put his hands to the railing and leaned over to study it more deliberately.

All the while he stood motionless, gazing at the same far spot, Naoko watched him from behind and remembered; He's just the same as before. Ever since she had known him he had a way of appearing weaker than the others and of being the last to assert himself. But there was another side to him. When he wanted to be, he could be so obstinate; once a person like him sets his mind on something, he can be maddening about having his own way.

He looked around. Was she trying to keep a straight face? He winced, took his hands off the railing and came back into the room.

"Akira, you haven't changed at all," she told him casually. "I could almost envy you. But it's different for a woman, you know. She changes completely as soon as she marries."

He stopped suddenly at this unforeseen remark and in his turn asked, "And how have you changed?"

To parry his directness, she smiled. It was a smile of self-scorn as much as one calculated to conceal her true feelings.

"How do you imagine?"

"Well...." The look he returned to her was full of perplexity. "It's.... It's difficult to say," he mumbled.

He felt deep down how unhappy she must be with no one to share her feelings. Nothing in the world would have induced him to question her about events after her marriage, nor would she, certainly, confide in him of her own accord. Yet he thought there was nothing about her which he could fail now to understand. There was a time in the past when he had found the motives for whatever she did a mystery; now, however tortuous she might reveal them to be, it was only he who was infinitely capable of following the processes of her heart.

"It must pain her to think that no one can understand these things about her. She never had anything but scorn for my daydreaming, but at the same time she's had dreams of her own. In that way she's like her mother whom I was so fond of. But Naoko was so strong-willed she simply kept them locked up in the deepest part of her heart and no one knew they were there, not even herself. What rare dreams they must be,"

Naoko might have read his thoughts in the look he fixed upon her, but she was absorbed in her own behind closed eyelids. From time to time a slight twitching ran across her thin throat.

Akira suddenly recalled the man who looked like her husband at Ogikubo Station, and he was on the verge of telling her about him before he went. But no, perhaps it was for the best not to mention it. And there was nothing else to stay for. He crossed the few steps to the side of her bed, but there he hesitated.

"Well, it's about time...", was all he said.

What is he going to say to me now?-- Her eyes remained closed and she waited. But no words came and they opened and turned to find him ready to go.

"You're not leaving already?" she asked surprised. This was too abrupt; he was leaving something undone. But would she detain him? No, she was already enjoying in anticipation the vague sense of relief his departure would bring. "What time is your train?"

"I don't know. I didn't think to look. On a trip like this, the time doesn't really matter." He duplicated his first stiff nod. "Take care of yourself,"

She saw the constraint in his farewell and was conscious of a sudden, sharp pain within her; since he had first appeared before her, she had been false to her true feelings. And as if to make up for it, her last words to him had a new tenderness.

"Really, don't let anything happen to you."

"Right!" he answered cheerfully. Eyes wide, one last momentary look at her, and he was gone.

From within the room Naoko followed the receding sound of his coughing. Now that she was left alone, her remorse swiftly expanded and flowed like a dark stain over her heart.

18

A bird soaring across the winter sky--it flashes before you briefly and is lost. That's all, she thought, the solitary traveler was. But with the passage of the days, the image of his restlessness impressed itself more and more deeply upon her. All that day, after Akira had left, she continued to be plagued by a sense of regret that she had somehow not been honest with herself about Akira. And why hadn't she? Was it entirely due to the irritation, either with him or with herself, which she had felt all the while they were together? Wasn't it because he, after all, had been trying to bare his sufferings to her as he used to do when they were younger? No, there was something else. --Now think, Naoko, if not exactly happiness, at least you found some temporary peace here. Then that peace was threatened. Akira's health is far worse than your own but he is struggling for life with all his strength, like a bird with an injured wing, striving all the more to fly. Oh, you might scoff at him, but, when he was here, didn't it sometimes cross your mind how much more sincere he was than you with your sighs of despair? But you couldn't frankly admit such feelings even to yourself, much less to him.

It was not until several days later that she finally acknowledged that she had deceived herself. How could she have been so abrupt with him? After all, he had taken the trouble to interrupt his journey and come up to see her, and she had let him go off without one heartfelt

word from her. "Oh, it really was too absurd of me!" Yet at the same time, there was lurking within her a feeling of relief, for again, how small she would feel!

It was from this same time that her mind began to be dominated by the problem of how wretched and without value her solitary life was. Just as a sick man will put his hand up, timidly at first, to stroke his wasted cheek in order to assess the progress of his disease, Naoko's thoughts turned with increasing frequency to her wretchedness. Her childhood had been happy enough, it was true, but thereafter nothing had happened to her, as it did to her mother, that might have touched her soul and become a consoling memory for the latter half of her life; nor did it seem, in view of present circumstances, that anything capable of arousing hope within her was likely to occur. It was not that she thought herself the unhappiest person in the world--after all, there was an element of peace in her present life even while it was far from anything blissful. But what little compensation this peace was for the insipidity she had to endure day after dismal day in these white mountains! And how full of deceit her life was before Akira's sincerity. He certainly had no cause to feel assured about the future and still he was going to the very verge of his existence, risking all in a venture to pursue his dreams to their limits. And she? Why should she have to idly mope the days away, trying to find for herself a reason to expect something from the days still lying ahead? Or was it true there was something in store capable of reviving her?

And so her thoughts always centered upon her own wretchedness, and with this as a focal point she would pile up one vain conjecture on top of another,

When she received one of the thick letters from Keisuke's mother she would toss it aside, only opening it at last with her inevitable aversion. Even greater was the aversion she had to overcome to write an answer, but this she did by stringing together phrases she did not feel.

From the beginning of winter the emptiness that had marked her mother-in-law's previous letters gradually subsided. The lines at which she used to frown she came to read with more ease. Now, when a letter came, she still left it untouched for a long time as if she could not be bothered. But once she finally took it up and opened it, she was slow to put it aside. She never stopped to ask herself just how it was they had become less disagreeable, but she could not deny that with each succeeding letter an image of Keisuke's depression was emerging with greater clarity from the uneven brush strokes.

It was several days after she had seen Akira, on an evening with a sky threatening snow, that another gray envelope came. Her first impulse was to let this one as well lie, but on a premonition that something might have happened, she hurriedly broke the seal. It had little in it that was different from the others, which brought a trace of disappointment to her face. There was nothing of the sudden critical illness she had imagined for Keisuke a moment earlier. The parts that were difficult to decipher she had only skimmed over on her first reading; she went through the letter again more carefully from the beginning. She closed her eyes for a while, lost in thought, until she realized she had not taken an evening reading on her temperature. No

change--the same 99°. Reaching out from the bed for a pencil and a sheet of paper to write an answer, she began slowly in her loss for anything to say-- "I can't tell you how cold it's been yesterday and today. But the doctors say if I make it through the winter up here, it'll cure me once and for all. So they are quite reluctant to let me go home now as you suggested. Without me, both you and Keisuke...." She stopped and ran the tip of her pencil across a wan cheek. She was picturing to herself the various ways Keisuke might look in his depression. As she concentrated on each of the faces in turn, that hard look of hers which he had never been able to bear upon him came of itself into her eyes.

Day after day, clouds low and heavy with snow covered the skies. There were occasional stray flutters of white carried by the winds from the upper reaches of the mountains, and the patients would tell each other they were in for some snow at last. But nothing more came of it, and the clouds merely continued their brooding and the penetrating cold would not relinquish its grip. Under such a morbid winter sky as this, Naoko thought, Akira--who with his haggard look was far from anyone's idea of a tourist--must be wandering about from one strange town to another, so disappointed at not yet having come to the end of his search. And what the object of that search was she could not have said. The more she deliberated on him and his obsession, the more she felt for the friend who shared her childhood, and ever more her determination regarding her own life was aroused.

Then the piercing thought, "But I'm not like Akira, I don't really know my own mind about what I want to do! Is that because I'm a woman

with a husband? Am I like other women who marry and have to live with strangers, without a life of their own?

20

One evening a Tokyo-bound train was making its way deep out of Shinshū with a semi-invalid passenger aboard. It was drawing ever nearer the Shinshū-Jōshū border and the village of Oiwake.

A week of dismal winter travel had left Akira totally exhausted. His cough was as fierce as ever and he seemed now to have a high fever as well. For the most part he had his eyes closed and was leaning limply against the window frame, but at times he raised his head and felt rather than saw that the forest was becoming thicker. Withered now, they were the larches and oaks he had known as a boy.

His winter journey had turned out miserably short of his expectations. His only purpose in taking a month's leave and traveling had been to think over his future, and to end on an empty note like this was difficult to accept. Why not stop off in Oiwake again and rest there for the time being? And the journey, which he intended as an end to some things and a beginning of others, he could resume when his strength returned to him. Sanae would not be in the village, for she had left when her husband had been transferred to Matsumoto. Although he would miss her, Sanae's not being there made him feel somehow easier about putting himself in the village's care. And, if not to the Peony, where could he turn for sympathetic help?

Deep groves of trees passed in succession. Through the thick clusters of naked larches appeared a snow-capped Mt. Asama inlaid into

the gray, cloud-woven sky. The strand of smoke it sent out was immediately torn to fragments by the wind.

Some time before, when the engine had begun puffing more vigorously up the lower slope, Akira realized that the train was drawing closer to the village. It was the same, deeply poignant sound he used to hear earlier that year. In the evenings when spring was giving way to summer, there would come through the darkening forest the rhythmical puff-puff from the smokestack of the night train for Tokyo as it headed into the station.

He turned up the collar of his coat and tried to stifle his cough as the train pulled to a halt. Other than he, only five or six local people were getting off. The moment he stepped down from the coach he staggered. As if his small traveling bag had been to blame, he made a show of roughly taking it by the other hand and went on through the wicket. A single desolate bulb burned feebly overhead. He caught a brief reflection of his own corpse-like face, before it vanished again into the grimy glass of the waiting-room door.

The days were short and, though it was only five o'clock, darkness was even now taking possession over everything. The road leading to the village was one continuous upward slope until it met the wood, but at such a mountain station any sort of bus was out of the question. Therefore, bag in hand, he began his arduous climb. He rested time after time on the way, and as he stood in the rapidly cooling evening air, he would feel his entire body seized with a deathly cold, only to feel it in the next moment as hot as flame. But he noted the changes only passively.

He was getting near the wood. Against the background of the trees the same farmer's hut still stood, looking all but deserted, a mangy dog crouched in front of it. --Yes, long ago the house had a dog. When Naoko and I were coming back from long bicycle rides, it always used to run after the wheels and make her scream. But that one was black, not brown.

It was still somewhat bright under the trees, for there was scarcely one which had not lost all its leaves. How full of memories this place was! When he used to cycle home across the scorched fields and into the wood, his burning cheeks would be refreshed by a rush of cool air. Through a sudden reflex, he raised a hand to his face. A unique sensation, born of the infinitely cold night, his labored breathing, and the glow of his cheeks, swept over him, curiously destroying the time that divided the man on foot, stooped and tired, from the boy with the red cheeks, pedaling hard on his bicycle.

There was the fork in the road; one branch led straight on to the village and the other, buried in thick grass, to the cottages of the summer residents, which once included the Mimuras. From where Akira stood, it descended gently toward the cottages, winding in loose, graceful curves on its way. "Look! No hands!" Naoko sped down the path. When she turned back to the boy racing after her, he saw her teeth sparkling under her straw hat.

He was taken off guard by this sudden rebirth of sights and sounds long dead, and tossed his traveling bag on the roadside. His shoulders were racked with the pain of breathing, but for a brief time his spent heart pounded excitedly.

"Why, when I'm coming to the village again, should I remember so clearly things I'd long since forgotten? As though a torrent of memories were about to sweep me away... Can the fever be doing these strange things to me?"

By now the darkness in the woods was perfect. He took up his bag, hunched his shoulders, and started walking again. He put down one foot after another in a semi-trance, all his impressions entwined and sad. After a time he chanced to look above where some light still hovered. Slender, withered branches high on a birch tree laced and relaced, dividing and redividing the twilight into minute patches of pale gray.

Something in the branches startled him; it was a silhouette traced in the sky, and it too seemed to be trying to speak to him of some forgotten time of long ago. He was powerless to explain it but he felt briefly refreshed, as if he had overheard a phrase of sweet, soothing, unearthly music. He remained for a time absorbed in the lacework of branches but when he bent over again and trudged on, he thought no more about their secret and it slipped from his mind. But even then, the sensation which they had evoked continued to comfort him. He suddenly thought, "How good it would feel to die right now!" "But you have to go on living," he told himself encouragingly. Then a doubtful voice asked, "With this loneliness, with this emptiness, why should you?" "You simply have to, that's all," he answered negligently. It seemed to him that before he realized what the things he was seeking were, they had already escaped from him. Out of his fear of looking at the gaping void within himself, he had come to throw himself blindly into this winter journey, like a bat at evening darting off into the darkness. And what had he hoped to accomplish? Right now the only thing he could say was

that he had become certain of what he had lost forever. And to endure this loss--was this his appointed task? If he could be assured of that, he would shoulder it gladly! "Shoulder it gladly? It's all I can do now to bear my own body, flashing away hot and cold like a machine gone mad."

He reached the end of the wood. Beyond a dried-up mulberry field, the whole of the village--houses, fields, and trees--tilting on the mountain slope was displayed. The smoke of kitchen fires was rising untroubled from the homes; he could make out the line that traced its way upward from Oyo's. He stood relieved, looking at the picture of peacefulness and evening, and as he did so the bizarre fevers and chills coursing through his body were forgotten. For some reason, he found himself thinking of his mother, her face lined with age, whom he had lost in childhood. It was then he realized the etching, which the interlacing boughs of the birch tree in the forest had slyly hinted at only to efface, was the image of her who had died so long ago that she scarcely existed in his memory.

21

The rigors of the trip had taken a heavy toll on Akira. Once he put himself into the hands of the people of the Peony, the first thing he did was to take to his bed with relief. There was no doctor in the village but he adamantly refused the suggestion that one be called from the town of Komoro. Against the illness and pain, he would use only the strength that yet remained to him, and he bore up bravely under the attacks of the fever. He seemed not to want to acknowledge the gravity

of his condition. Oyō and the others watched over him devotedly, saying nothing that might dishearten him.

When he closed his eyes and fell into a half-dream, he had feverish, poignant dreams in which he relived the events of his journey. He saw himself in one village, running desperately from a pack of dogs; in another he was watching as some of the villagers made charcoal; then he was searching for an inn in yet another, wandering round and round in the dusk, cooking fumes irritating his lungs. Now he was looking back again and again over his shoulder at the old, expressionless face of a woman standing in front of a farmhouse, a crying baby strapped on her back. The scene changed once more: a whitewashed village wall bathed in soft sunlight, and there, with something of regret, he saw his own forlorn shadow pass dimly. These elusive, vaporous figures of himself from the many times and places of his lonely winter journey appeared at random before him, first one, now again another, and lingered briefly before they vanished once more....

In the evenings, the sound of a train drawing into the station came to him clear and plaintive. It was the same train for Tokyo, puffing up the incline to the village, that several days before had carried him here. The throng of phantoms, the evocations of himself that whirled in his brain beat a retreat before the sound of the engine. Two, however, held fast: the one of himself getting down from the evening train, completely exhausted, and struggling up toward the village, and himself a little later when he had made his way into the wood and, as though a fragment of soothing music was coming to him, had been lost in the sight of the network of branches above him. In the

wake of this feeling had come a throbbing of his heart when at the edge of the wood he knew he had glimpsed the aged face of the mother whom death had long ago taken from him....

Throughout this time the young wife of the innkeeper had Akira in her care, but if she was needed elsewhere, Oyō would come to give him his medicine in the odd times she had from nursing her own daughter. Watching her face which forty years had begun to line, Akira felt the intimacy between the two of them now was a kind altogether different from what it had been. With Oyō sitting beside him like this, he recognized something in her of the chance silhouette in the boughs.

He asked briefly about Hatsue.

"She still takes up all my time." She smiled sadly. "You know, it's eight years now she's been like this. The time I took her to Tokyo, everyone marveled that someone in her condition could get along so well. But it's the climate up here that's so good. You should stay up here too now, until you get over your trouble for good. That's what everybody says."

"Yes, if I live," But this thought he did not put into words and merely smiled back at her warmly as if he were of the same mind.

The snow for which he had yearned on his journey and which had walways disappointed him, began quickly one evening in the latter half of December. It was still coming down heavily the next morning even though the woods, fields, and farmhouses had long been covered over. But now he had little interest in it. From a sitting position in bed he had a view of the unbroken white over the fields and stands of

trees behind the inn, but he found nothing in the winter prospect but dreariness.

With dusk, the snow died away, though menacing, sullen clouds still hung in the sky. A soft wind rose, and as it blew, first one tree then another shook its branches free with a sigh and sprays of snow came fluttering down. Listening in bed to the southing of the wind, he at last grew restless and raised himself to the window. To his wonder, the white fields were in a constant state of turmoil. The snow would begin by lifting like smoke in the wind-swells and be churned into cones of cold flames swirling across the fields. As the wind passed on, the flames dissolved, leaving nothing but powdery ashes upon the snow. Then another gust and new columns of smoke rose and more cones of flames raced to scatter the ashes of the old, until they too disappeared into powder...

"These frozen flames are just like my life. After we perish what remains of us? Just something which is lost without a trace in the next gust of wind. And he who comes after me leaves nothing more behind him than I did. This is the fate handed down from one man to another, without end...."

Engrossed in his thoughts, his eyes drawn by the glowing snow, he was hardly aware of the darkness stealing over the room.

Naoko's patience was at an end. She slipped on her boots and tried time and again to make her way out of the sanatorium, only to retreat to her room out of fear of discovery by the nurses or other

patients. Her chance finally came, and she stole along the balcony and through the back entrance, unseen by anyone.

Once she passed through the coppice, she took the back road leading to the railway station. She was walking directly into the wind and had to stop at times and turn to shield herself against the driving snow. The distance along the back road to the station did not amount to five blocks, and she had started out with the idea she would merely walk there and back in the snowfall. In the pocket of her overcoat she had a letter ready to throw into the mailbox at the station; it was an answer to the one that had arrived that morning from Keisuke's mother with the news she had been laid up for the past week with a slight cold.

A woman wearing baggy snow pants had been coming with her umbrella up the road. Now, just as she was passing by, she suddenly addressed Naoko.

"Well, if it isn't Mrs. Kurokawa!"

Naoko turned around to her in surprise.

"Where do you think you're going?"

It was a young nurse from her own ward. Bad luck! Naoko had taken her for one of the local women in her snow pants, not recognizing her with her face hidden behind her scarf.

"Just down the road a way." She raised her face in a guilty smile but had to pull it away again from the pelting snow.

"Well, hurry back as soon as possible," the nurse told her with some emphasis.

She nodded silently without looking up again.

The snow continued down on her as she went on for another block and by the time she reached the railroad crossing, she had doubts about going on any further. She stopped and raised a hand in a large-mesh, woolen glove to brush the snow from her hair, and thought of the nurse who had surprised her a little before. --She might have put up a fuss but was too good-natured for that. The way she had her scarf wrapped round and round her face, like a Russian, encouraged Naoko to do the same, and she pulled her neck scarf up over her head. Now she saw her meeting with the nurse and not someone else as a special providence, and she continued toward the station while the snow proceeded to cover her once more.

The station fronted north and the wind met it head-on, entirely coating that side with snow while sparing the back. Beside the station, an old automobile sat and, like the building, only one side of it had a crust of snow.

She thought she would stop at the station to rest and, realizing she herself was half white, brushed herself off as thoroughly as she could. She shook her hair free of the scarf and casually strode inside where some people waiting for the next train had gathered around the small stove. Without exception, they turned to see who it was entering, then deserted their places by the stove and filed out. The thought flashed through her mind that they were avoiding her. She frowned instinctively and looked aside but quickly realized her mistake--the train from Tokyo was just then pulling into the station.

Each car, one after another, was half-encrusted in snow. Only fifteen or so passengers got off. They were talking together as they

passed the young woman in a white coat who was standing at the door, and looked at her quizzically before they went off into the snowstorm.

"It was snowing hard in Tokyo, too," were the only words that reached her clearly. She was staring vacantly at the old, snow-bound automobile, wondering about the snow in the city.

By now she had caught her breath and it was time to start back. She took a final glance around the inside of the station to find another group clustered around the stove. Most of them seemed to be local people and spoke infrequently. Occasionally, as though suddenly recalling the woman at the door, one of them would cast a look toward Naoko. Evidently they were waiting for the Tokyo-bound train that would now be a little up the line, passing the outbound train that had just left.

In her imagination she saw this train too with its one side all white with snow, and in the next instant a shadowy form crossed her mind--Akira, in some village or other, trudging about, half plastered with snow. Oh, he must be ecstatic! Earlier, she had sunk her hands deep into her coat pockets to warm them, for the gloves alone did not keep off the freezing cold. Now she became aware that all this time she had been fingering either the letter to Keisuke's mother or her own billfold.

The stove was deserted once again by the ten or so people. Suddenly she was at the ticket window.

A sharp, "Where to?" came from within.

She leaned over and as she withdrew her billfold, the name, "Shinjuku," sprang to her lips.

She could scarcely account to herself for her own actions; as if she had given her will over to some great, invisible power, she stepped up into the train that had come steaming to a halt. It was snow-white all along one side, as she had foreseen. Every eye turned at the strange apparition in the third-class coach of a woman in a fashionable coat coming in out of the blizzard. Scrutinized so flagrantly, she drowned and thought to herself what a stark sight she must be. She found a seat beside a dozing old man in a railway uniform at the furthest end of the coach. One by one, the other passengers forgot her existence and by the time the train was chugging over the plateau, no one paid any more attention to her. Outside, even the nearest hills and woods were hidden behind the high drifts.

Gradually she recovered her presence of mind and tried to consider her next step. But why was it so painful to breathe? Instead of the familiar smell of chloride and creosol, the air in the coach was heavy with human odors and tobacco fumes. It was an old, sweet smell, heralding the world that was about to be restored to her. The oppression in her lungs was forgotten and a strange tremor ran through her.

The storm was blowing with rising violence and only spectral forms of the very closest farmhouses and groves of trees emerged between the rushing surges of snow. Nevertheless, she still had a fairly clear idea of the countryside. Some distance over there would be the meadow, barren, empty and forlorn; and in it, the stricken tree, with which she had so often felt such kinship, must be standing deep in the waves of snow, ever alone, ever tragic. Yes, it too would be half white.... Then a sudden, disquieting thought came to her: "Why is it I didn't go out to

see the tree in the snowstorm? If I had started out in that direction I wouldn't be on this train right now." The varied odors of the coach were still choking her. "They must be getting worried at the sanatorium about now. And what a surprise they're going to have in Tokyo! Then what'll they do with me? There's still time to turn back if I want to.... What now? Am I losing my courage?

While these thoughts were revolving in her mind, she was at the same time hoping the train might cross quickly and irrevocably over into the next prefecture when some final stand of trees flashed by. They were the sign, though she had almost forgotten, of the end of the snowy uplands. Half impatient, half apprehensive, she followed the trees with her eyes until the train had left them far behind.

23

It was snowing heavily in Tokyo too.

Naoko was at a corner table of the German Bakery, a coffee shop off the Ginza. For the last hour she had been expecting Keisuke, but did not give the impression of a person tired of waiting. With every new scent, she would narrow her eyes and breathe deeply in of the life that was soon to be hers again. Beyond the partially clouded glass of the door, people scurried back and forth in the snow. She watched them with that almost hard look she had, the look Keisuke would have complained of had he been with her.

It was evening now, when the shop ought to have been busier, but perhaps because of the great snowfall, only a few widely scattered tables were occupied. Besides herself and several small groups of customers, near the entrance a young man with the look of an artist to him sat with

a foot propped up against the stove. From time to time he turned to look at Naoko, something in her appearance drawing him.

Finding herself the object of someone else's attention, she made an unflattering appraisal of how she must look. Wisps of hair had strayed out of place--it needed doing badly. High cheekbones, a slightly prominent nose, pale lips--hers was a type of beauty that in childhood older people used to regret as not being a bit softer. The sole change in these features, now that she was a woman, was a slightly greater air of melancholy. Her clothes, which had been conspicuously sophisticated at the little mountain train station, went largely unnoticed in town, but the pallor she had brought back with her from the sanatorium made her stand out oddly from the others. Time and again she put a hand up to her face as if there was a secret there which must not be discovered.

Suddenly she felt a vague, threatening presence and looked up with a start. There stood Keisuke, looking down at her. The snow was thick on his coat and streaked where he had attempted to brush it away.

She smiled weakly, gave him an almost imperceptible nod, and shifted uneasily in her chair. He looked ill-humored. Without a word he took the seat facing her, breaking the silence at last with, "You can imagine my surprise at your sudden phone call from Shinjuku Station. What in the world's happened?"

The only answer she made him was the same weak smile. For an instant, all that had happened to her came rushing back: the little adventure of her escape that morning from the sanatorium into the wind and snow, the station in the snowdrift, and then her impetuous decision, and the smell of human life hanging heavily in the third-class coach and

how it had curiously made her tremble. Could she tell him her soul had been possessed? Could she explain it all step-by-step in order that another person could clearly understand? It was impossible. But in the large eyes resting upon him was an appeal that everything she had to say to him he read there.

It was the old look, the very one he had pursued in vain one lonely day after another. But now, with the reality of it before him again, as always before, his courage broke, and his eyes had to turn away from hers.

In defeat, he stammered, "Mother's sick. So all this comes at quite an inconvenient time."

"Of course. It was thoughtless of me to have come back." She signed deeply as if a sad truth had dawned on her. "I'll go back at once," she told him with an acquiescence rare for her.

"Go back? In this snow? Tomorrow is soon enough. We can put you up somewhere in town tonight. It's just that it might be rather difficult at home, so for Mother's sake...."

Something on Keisuke's mind was unsettling him. Abruptly leaning over to her, he began in a low, intimate voice, "Would you mind staying by yourself in a hotel somewhere? There's a comfortable little place in Azabu."

Naoko had come closer and was listening intently but as soon as he finished, she drew away, slouching back in her chair.

"As you like," she sighed in a passionless voice.

What remained of the firm resolve that had driven her thus far? To face her husband again, to talk with him like this, she began to lose

sight of why she had fled from the mountain and come running back in all this snow. She had staked her life on the first look to cross his face when he learned she had returned to him, heedless of everything. But what had come of it? Imperceptively, irresistibly, they had fallen back into their old, noncommittal ways--the eternal husband and wife. To believe people can be otherwise, she thought, was sheer delusion. The old, vacant look came over her eyes and she stared at him numbly.

Keisuke sat transfixed, his small eyes receiving the full brunt of her stony, blank gaze. He struggled to break free and gain the upper hand. As he groped blindly for the cause of her affronted look, he remembered the little hotel he had just mentioned. A while ago, when he and another man from the office had been passing in front of it, the man pointed it out and remarked half jokingly that he should keep it in mind. It was always deserted, he told him, an ideal spot for a rendezvous. That was all there had been to it, but Naoko must be suspicious of why he knew of such a place, he reasoned, and his face reddened.

What this sudden rush of blood to his cheeks meant, she had no idea. But it seemed to her to contain a clue to her own motives for her reckless flight back to him.

Her thoughts were interrupted by Keisuke's urging that they leave. She rose from the table, took a final look around the shop as though regretting having to leave it and the rich scents drifting through the air, and followed her husband out.

The snow continued relentlessly. Each person in the hurrying throng had his own method of bundling himself against the white fall.

Naoko arranged her scarf closely about her face as she had done in the mountains and walked briskly off ahead of Keisuke, disdainful of the protection of his umbrella.

At Sukiya-bashi they broke away from the crowd and hailed a rare taxi coming over the bridge. Keisuke gave the driver directions to the hotel on an Azabu back street. Swerving sharply at Toranomon, they started up a steep slope. There, midway up the street, an automobile under a heavy mantle of snow was hopelessly stuck in a ditch. Naoko saw it through the clouded window of the cab and her thoughts were led in turn first to the other car alongside the station, its one side taking a beating from the snow, then directly to the state of mind she had been in prior to her spur-of-the-moment decision to leave the mountain. She saw vividly now what had been at the bottom of her heart then--a yearning to throw herself into.... Into what she was at a loss to explain. Yet one thing she had known--if she were not to risk everything and plunge ahead, any possibility of knowing what it was she longed for would be forever denied her. And Keisuke? Was it in him she had expected to find an answer? Yes, but in a Keisuke capable of understanding, a Keisuke she had created in her own mind, not this man sitting beside her whom she had only to see to remember what he really was.

There was a snowball fight underway in front of a mansion, evidently some foreign consulate. The children, with some foreign boys and girls in their ranks, had divided themselves into two sides and were pelting each other with snow. Their car proceeded cautiously by, but at the last moment a snowball came directly at Keisuke's window and exploded

against it with a hard thump. His hand went up spontaneously to shield his face and he glanced severely toward the children. But seeing them intent on their battle with no regard whatsoever for him, he smiled to himself and watched them over his shoulder with amusement until they were out of sight. "Is he all that fond of children?" Naoko took note of this hitherto unsuspected side of his nature and found a certain charm in it.

At last the car made a sudden turn off the crowded avenue into a deserted back street close-set with trees. Keisuke stirred impatiently.

"Pull up over there."

Naoko looked up curiously at the hotel as the taxi came to a halt. It was a small, European-style building set by itself back from the street. Several short ornamental palms with a layer of snow over their fronds ranked themselves before it.

24

"Naoko, what made you do it? Why did you come back, today of all days?" As soon as Keisuke had spoken, he remembered he had already asked her that and all he had gotten from her was an equivocal smile and a prolonged look. Afraid of the same silent answer, he hastened to add, "Did you find something unsatisfactory at the sanatorium?"

He saw she was hesitating, but it did not occur to him that she was troubled by an inability to explain her actions. His one fearful thought was that the reason for her reticence might only prove to precipitate him into even greater anxiety. But, at the same time, he was forced to acknowledge his curiosity was such that he must ask now, however great the risk to his peace of mind.

"Now, I know you could never do anything without having thought it through carefully beforehand," he pressed again.

She looked out a north window of the hotel room to gain time. A slight valley of small, close houses, all buried under the snow, sloped away from the hotel. Beyond the white valley rose a phantom-- it was a church steeple behind a quivering veil of falling snow.

His whole approach, she thought, was typical of him. If she had been in his place, she would have begun by divulging the doubts she herself harbored. But him? He had to guard himself and only after some sort of explanation from her would he give a problem the seriousness he thought it deserved. But because this was so like him, she recognized the old Keisuke and something of their one-time comfortable relationship. Now, at this late stage, if she could only take advantage of his accommodating mood in order to draw him closer to her, if she could find some way yet to make him understand her better. She closed her eyes. Keisuke, in his impatience, took her silence as the only answer she was willing to offer.

"Well, whatever the cause, wasn't it all rather sudden? Acting this way, there's no telling what people might think," she heard him say as if he were tired of the whole situation. The moment for any intimacy between them had passed and he had become a stranger to her.

"What people might think!" She seized upon his words. "That's sacrosanct to him. It has to come before everything else." She felt again the exasperation he had always inspired in her at home. So unexpectedly did the feeling come back to her, she was not able to smother it. With rising anger, she spoke the first words that came to her.

"If you must know, I went out to see the snow. I knew I shouldn't, but I couldn't help myself. I just wanted to, so I did, like a stubborn child. What other reason could there possibly be?" As she spoke she remembered the lonely image of Akira that had been preying on her mind of late and, without any assignable cause, tears gathered in her eyes. "So I'll go back tomorrow and tell the sanatorium people something or other. That'll settle the matter, won't it?"

Her eyes were glistening when she finished. When she had first begun her totally impulsive explanation, she had not been sure that she hadn't done so simply to catch a look of uncertainty and uncease in his eyes. As she was speaking, it struck her that the reason she had so little understood until now for her return to Tokyo might very well lie in a desire to see such a look in him. Perhaps it was this clarification of her own emotions that was responsible for the vague feeling of relief that came to her.

The two of them had been standing some little while looking down on the snow scene beyond the window. Neither was speaking.

"I won't tell Mother anything about this," Keisuke said at last. "I'd appreciate it if you'd do the same."

He saw his mother's face that had aged so rapidly of late appear before him; it was a consolation that this thing could be put to rights without any trouble for her. But at the same time he had an uncomfortable feeling there was something unsatisfactory in leaving the situation as it was. He had a moment of compassion for Naoko and hesitated. What if he had said to her that things would be different if it were for his sake she was so set on coming home? But no, now that he had got her to

behave sensibly, better leave well enough alone. This way she would be back on the train before anyone in town saw her and thought it peculiar that she should be returning to the sanatorium when she no longer looked sick. They had already agreed that she would return tomorrow and that no more would be said. He would resist the temptation of bringing the matter up again inasmuch as nothing was to be gained by it other than his being afforded an opportunity of acting the part of some benevolent judge, cross-examining the accused. And yet, for one critical moment, something deep within his heart trembled. For one moment, he sensed how near their two souls were to touching. If he could just seize this moment and keep it for the two of them for all time.... But with another part of his heart, he saw more clearly yet the tired face of his mother watching his every move from her sick bed. He was unaware, and never would have imagined, that her letters to Naoko had taken on a more conciliatory tone of late, and in his temerity felt strangely guilty, as if what the two of them were doing here in this place was the cause not only of the sudden old age marking her face but even of her illness. Moreover, the bitter regret over Naoko that had once plagued him had faded with time. He thought of that tranquility, amounting to a kind of stupor, ~~which was reseeded~~ upon the life he shared with his mother since Naoko's disturbing influence had been removed. With the results of this analysis of his feelings, he came to the conclusion he would have to insist that Naoko bear with things as they were until such time as something else could be worked out.

Naoko's mind was empty of all thoughts, and she was staring blankly across the valley in the gathering dusk to the distant steeple. Its

sharp form now obliterated by the flurries of snow, now revealed, was exactly like something she had seen once in her childhood.

Keisuke took out his pocket watch and consulted it. She glanced in his direction.

"Go on home now. Don't feel you need come by tomorrow either. I can manage alone."

He still held the watch in his palm, picturing her boarding the early train, traveling back through the snowstorm, and taking up once more her solitary life in the mountains where the snow must lie all the deeper. A smell which he had forgotten existed assailed him now with a soul-jolting violence. It was the pungent smell of disinfectant and putrefaction and fear of death.

All this while Naoko had been intent upon his vacant, faraway gaze. Then, inexplicably, something of a smile formed on her lips. She fancied that at this late moment he had read her mind and was close to asking if she wouldn't stay on at the hotel for several days so that they might be alone here, without anyone knowing.

Keisuke, however, said nothing and merely shook his head as if sloughing off a bad idea, while he slowly returned his watch to its pocket--a sign to her that he meant to go.

Even after she had watched him plow his way through the snow, she remained in the semi-darkness of the foyer, with her forehead to the glass pane of the door. Her mind was elsewhere as she looked out over several pure white goblins--the hotel palms--to the twilight snow scene beyond. The snow still showed no sign of letting up. One image, then another, arose, and what significance they had for her she did not understand:

First there was a station in the mountains where everything was half draped in snow, and a church steeple--now where was it she had just seen it? Then, a look of patient endurance on Akira's face--the face of a martyr for some unknown cause--and a wealth of children's laughter in the snow.... But her heart had not the strength to hold any of the images fast, and no sooner did they reveal themselves to her than they slipped away again.

Someone switched on a lamp behind her and the scene outside was obscured by a bright projection of the hotel lobby. With the reflection upon the glass, she thought for the first time of her having to spend the night in the small hotel. She would be quite alone; the only other guests she had caught sight of were several foreigners. Yet any loneliness or self-pity she may have felt was short-lived, for a single idea was quickly gaining over her: Whenever something had come along to capture her imagination and she allowed herself to be swept perilously away, then a ray of light would flicker, as it did today, over hitherto unknown facets of life. And if she had remained calm and firm, never would she have imagined the regions she glimpsed nor have seen her way clear before her.

The outlines of the snow scene outside had by now been completely absorbed into a pallid white haze. But still she stood gazing out, her forehead to the cold glass, following her thoughts. Little by little her spirits rose. True, she would have to return to the hard, biting cold of the mountain tomorrow, but now, how good the warmth of the hotel lobby was! How glowing it made her cheeks feel!

"Dinner is being served, madam," a waiter came to inform her. She silently acknowledged his message and suddenly felt famished. Without going back up to her room, Naoko walked directly toward the dining room, toward the soft tinkling sound of crystal and silver.

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Fukuda Kiyoto, Iijima Aya, and Yokota Reiko. Hori Tatsuo: hito to sakuhin (Hori Tatsuo: the Man and his Works). 1968.

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Fukunaga Takehiko. Hori Tatsuo shishū (Poems of Hori Tatsuo). 1966.

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The last volume of this series is a collection of essays by many writers. The entire series is heavily annotated with informative notes.

Hori Tatsuo, Miyoshi Tatsuji-shū (Collected Works of Hori Tatsuo and Miyoshi Tatsuji). Vol. 64 of Gendai Nihon bungaku taikei (Modern Japanese Literature Series). 1973.

The chronology (pp. 416-19) of Hori's life, by Kokubo Minoru, is very detailed.

Hori Tatsuo. Ed. Nakamura Shin'ichirō. 1958.

Nakamura wrote the introduction to this collection of Hori's most famous poetry and stories. Nine essays by other scholars of Hori's literature are included.

Hori Tatsuo. Vol. 4 of Nihon bungaku arubamu (Japanese Literature Albums). Ed. Nakamura Shin'ichirō. 1954.

This collection of photographs is not as complete or as beautiful as the more recent Hori Tatsuo by Takada Mizuho, 1966.

Hori Tatsuo. Ed. Nihon bungaku kenkyū shiryō kankō-kai (Committee for the Publication of Materials for the Study of Japanese Literature). 1973.

Of the various collections of essays, this is perhaps the finest. Authors represented include Nakamura Shin'ichirō, Itō Sei, Nakano Shigeharu, Maruoka Akira, Yoshida Seiichi, Fukunaga Takehiko, Mishima Yukio, Kokubo Minoru, Origuchi Shinobu, and Hori Taeko.

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Kokubo Minoru. "Mōriakku to Hori Tatsuo" (Mauriac and Hori Tatsuo). Nihon kindai bungaku no hikaku bungakuteki kenkyū (Comparative Studies of Modern Japanese Literature). Ed. Yoshida Seiichi. 1971. pp. 403-23.

Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kanshō. March, 1961.

This collection of articles has been largely outmoded by those of a later date.

Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kanshō. Feb., 1974.

This issue is devoted to the works of both Hori Tatsuo and Fukunaga Takehiko and their relationships.

Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū. July, 1963.

Hori is discussed in one more special issue.

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Kubokawa Tsurujiro. "Roba jidai no Hori to no koto" (With Hori in the Roba Days). Bungei tsuitōgō (Bungei Memorial Issue). Vol. 10. No. 8 (August 1953). pp. 44-47.

Maruoka Akira. Hori Tatsuo. 1953.

The first part of this study traces the elements running through Hori's fiction from "Seikazoku" to Naoko.

Maruoka Akira. Hori Tatsuo kenkyū (Studies on Hori Tatsuo). 1958.

Minamoto Takane. "Hori Tatsuo: eikyō-sareru seishin to hiyō-suru seishin" (Hori Tatsuo: Spirit under Influence and Critical Spirit). Taiyō. No. 122 (August 1973). pp. 91-93.

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- Of the several articles which the author wrote on Hori for the Kokugakuin University, this is the most informative, contrasting "Monogatari no onna" and "Nire no ie."
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- Ōshiro Nobue. Kaze tachinu nōto: Tachihara Michizō to Hori Tatsuo (Notes on Kaze tachinu: Tachihara Michizo and Hori Tatsuo). 1974.
- Ōshiro gives a detailed and well-written account of the personal and artistic relations between the two men.
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Tachihara Michizō. "Kaze Tachinu" (Le Vent se lève). Tachihara Michizō zenshū (Complete Works of Tachihara Michizo). 1965. pp. 249-73.

Tachihara discusses the art of Hori, his friend and teacher, in a very personal fashion.

Taiyō. No. 122 (August 1973).

This special issue, devoted to Hori, offers many excellent photos of Hori's mountains and forests.

Tanida Shōhei and Sasaki Kiichi. Hori Tatsuo: sono shōgai to bungaku (Hori Tatsuo: His Life and Literature). Vol. 9 of Gendai sakka-ron zenshū (Studies on Modern Authors). 1958.

This study is composed of Tanida's extensive critical biography and Sasaki's article on the major thematic elements within Hori's literature.

Uchiyama Tomiko. Hori Tatsuo fumigatami: kōgen (The Prose of Hori Tatsuo: The Uplands). 1969.

Uchiyama's essays are greatly impressionistic, yet, unlike many other more well-known critics, she also attempts to analyze Hori's works in terms of their symbols and themes. She includes synopses of the stories.

Yokomitsu Riichi. Yokomitsu Riichi zenshū (Complete Works of Yokomitsu Riichi). 1956.

Yoshida Seiichi. Akutagawa Ryūnosuke. 1942.

Yoshida Seiichi. "Hori Tatsuo to ōchō joryū nikki" (Hori Tatsuo and Women Diarists of the Heian Period). Gendai bungaku to koten (Modern Literature and the Classics). 1961. pp. 154-73.

Yoshimura Teiji. Hori Tatsuo: tamashii no henreki to shite (Hori Tatsuo: Pilgrimage of a Soul). 1955.

The presence of "good" and "evil" within Hori's fiction receives much attention in this survey. Yoshimura's analysis of Naoko is particularly revealing.