

Setsuko Kambayashi

Want to be a Wind

A Memory

Will you love me as I am?
Just like a long time ago
Mother called to me
when I was leaving home,
and smoothed the wrinkles of my skirt?

Weeding

Pulled off the soil suddenly,
the root of the weed cried "Oh" in a low voice.
Do you mind giving me your life
on this sunny day in May?

A Journey

I will carry to the final destination
my breasts and genitals
so that I will not forget
the sweet sorrow of life.

The Down of Dandelions

Good-bye.

Bye.

This is the last time I ever see you.

Bye.

Good-bye.

This is the last time ...

White airships are greeting me,

passing me lightly

one after another

after another

after another.

A Mantle of a Cool Breeze

It was a miracle
that you healed my broken heart.
Will you please accept my gratitude,
which is a thin, light mantle of a cool breeze?

With that veil of the breeze between us,
I will never hurt you.

Our life may be a fighting festival,
where time alone is the opponent,
and we are destined to lose naturally;
but we will live lively all the same.

You are here in front of me
wearing the mantle of a cool breeze,
warming it with your own temperature.
You are warming
that festive costume, which is my prayer.

A Fish that Cannot Swim

I am barely touching the world
with the surface of my skin,
and I know that I will die if I dry.

I am like a fish that cannot swim,
being caught in a net,
waving its fins,
not knowing what this is all about.

My wish to live beside you
seems to be a tender fishing net,
not the one I want to escape from,
but the one I want to be caught in forever.

A Woman

has a place for her beloved one
in the depth of her soul.

She is careful to be sure
that it is always occupied.

Loneliness

The ticktacks of time
I hear in the darkness.
They sound as if
they were my own heartbeats.

So I think of my heart,
which is working hard without a rest
to send the warm blood
throughout this body.
I appreciate it,
smiling.

Love

Please let me drink
a drop
of your beautiful heart.

The deep color of your eyes
make my words shrink away.

Are you sad
because I have so many stains?

Please let me drink
a drop
of your beautiful heart.

Spring

Spring has come again.

I will start looking for happiness again.

Spring is the season

for me to look for happiness.

Yes, just for that reason.

At Zero

On a night
when the air becomes cool and transparent
I let my favorite music jump.

With a power trying to pull me minus and
a power trying to pull me plus on balance,
I am breathing at the position-zero.
My warm tears are comfort,
thawing the tension.

Suddenly I heard a casual voice:
“There are many gentle hearts around you,
aren’t there?”

To My Daughters

When something hard happens to you,
my girls, try this.

Close your eyes,
and you will see a sharp arrow
coming toward your mind,
as if to stab it deeply.
With your eyes still closed,
receive it as softly as possible.
As softly as possible.

I know it is difficult,
but please try, girls.

Cherry Blossoms

For a vivid impression,
you are hurrying to go.
Waiting for a gust of wind,
you shine to the last extremity.
Oh, please, send off a petal of yours
to my lips.

A Baby

We cannot help smiling at you
because you trust the world so naively.
We cannot help smiling at you
because we have totally forgotten
that we were like you.

Ginkgo Nuts

Light-green ginkgo nuts
appeared beautifully,
nice and round,
from under their thin brown skin.

I want to mature on New Year's Day
like those ginkgo nuts,
throwing off the old skin of mind
in a smooth and shiny feat.

Broad Beans

You forgive me, don't you?
I took you out of the violin case,
where you were so comfortably dozing off.

The delivery clerk delivered to me
not only the feel of the strong hands
of the slender lady living far away
but also the sincere light of her eyes.

The story still remains in the hull
which had softly wrapped you till a minute ago
that the lady had grown you
with the earth, the sun, the water, and the air,
discussing together for many days.

Rice Plants

How I wish I could lay
all over my four-and-a-half-tatamimat room
those beautiful young rice plants
which are growing so fresh and green!

The impatient wind
would dive into my room
to kiss them,
I am really sure.

A Sunset Glow

When I heard a scream in the air,
all the windowpanes turned crimson.

Whose cry was it?

A Coward

I am pretending to be strong.
I clench my back teeth,
and tell myself not to ask for understanding.

In reality, however,
I am barely living
in the whirl of warm misunderstandings.

I must say thank you instead.

The Powder Snow

started to fall from the height
down into the town
after a spell of the warm weather

Innumerable powders of white snow
are falling onto you
and you
and you....

The white powders are coming down in a hurry
so that none of you can be missed out.

You are important,
and you too,
and you too,
and you too....

Chasing you,
the love from the sky is reaching out,
dancing in the freezing wind.

So please don't run away,
even though you feel cold,
because you are important,
and you are important too,
and you too,
and you too

The Rain

“What do you want?”

“Nice clothes, a boyfriend, money, and a decent job.”

“What can you do without?”

“All that I mentioned.”

The rain is pouring
intensively down onto the sidewalk.
Cars are speeding away
in a different world.

I hear the breath of the rain.
Very close.
My footsteps are being absorbed away
by its breath.

On such a day
I feel like clinging desperately
to that moment when I exchanged good-byes
with my friends.

The Cup and Ball

Oh my stray soul,
which is hanging at the end of the string,
come back
to me.

Come back
to me.

Come back.

Come back.

To me.

Wiping the Wooden Corridor

Before you wipe the wooden corridor,
squeeze the wet dustcloth hard
so that no water will drip.

Crouch, kneel, and start on all fours.
Clean the corridor without distraction.

When you feel distressed
about a question you really cannot answer,
it is the best thing to do.

Remember to squeeze the cloth hard.
Even so it gets wet
and becomes heavier and heavier
while it moves along the corridor.

Because it gradually soaks up your feelings,
as if it were cleaning your mind,
and you will find yourself dry and light
when it finishes.

Laughter

Mom laughs
like a small explosion
in the kitchen.

What round eyes!
And those buck teeth!
How loud it is!

Her cheeks flush.
Her eyes become watery.
Still laughing!
She laughs with her whole body.

Watching her,
I almost believe
that to love her is to make her laugh.

In Prayer

Mom looks smaller and beautiful,
sitting straight on her folded legs
in front of the Buddhist altar.

“Please,
please,”
says she
with her palms put together.

A Sight

Sitting side by side,
Father and Mother
are watching Sumo on TV.
They occasionally clap their hands
and give each other happy cries.
How can this sight
turn into a sepia picture some day!

Mom's Hands

Just in front of me
are your hands
which have grown old
after so many years
of giving away of love.

The Socks

On a cold winter morning
while putting the laundry on the line
I found two pairs of Mom's socks,
two in one.

I took out a pair inside,
pulled them right
and hung them.
I took the other pair,
pulled them right
and hung them too.
It was then
that I saw her old feet
just around my fingers.

A piece of ice
seemed to have melted
and a drop of water
came out of my eye,
falling onto the ground.

Father

Father witnessed
the worst Hiroshima,
the festered Hiroshima,
when he was eighteen.

How could I know
what was in his mind?

The Atomic Bomb Dome

I came all the way to see the Atomic Bomb Dome.
I came as if I were a pilgrim.

It stood there
much closer to human beings,
and kept adamantly off the surrounding buildings.
It stood silently
under the spring sky at four in the afternoon.

It looked like an old tree.
An old tree whose life had been taken away completely.
An old tree glaring at the sky with its hollow body.
Its anger refused the slightest moan.
And the depth of its silence
was the darkness of the sorrowful sea.

The Testimony

The pieces of time of our life go away very quickly.
So let us remember those countless pieces
which cannot be reached now,
together with the temperature of our bodies.
Let us testify for each other
that those pieces were surely ours.

Withstanding the formidable power of Nothingness,
let us show to the hard, cold court
ourselves that are still alive and this warm
in witness of our life.
Let us tell the court clearly
that we fear nothing at all.

Hearing our testimony,
all the people with whom we have shared warmth
should arrive at the court on end
till the court is filled and heated.
The testimony should never stop after us.
The testimony
that those dead *were* all alive
and that we *are* all alive
should never stop.