

The New Criterion

Poems September 2001

Recollections of Japan

by Frederick Morgan

1.

The garden in the hills
shadowy still at dawn
shows no trace of footprints.
And yet, spring has arrived:
the snow is melting patchily.

2.

Wild blossoms on the river banks
sway yellow in the rising wind:
see their images bloom too,
deep in the watery clarities.

3.

Warm light floods the countryside.
Summer is all about
and the green takes on a different tone
a shade or two beyond
the green that was here before.

4.

A hasty rendez-vous
on the lonely mountain meadow
our pillows are of grass:
nor shall we ever speak one word
of this our dew-drenched meeting.

5.

How long will it endure?
My dear, I cannot tell.

I do not know your heart®
only the intricate tangles of
this dark rich-flowing hair.

6.

No moon in the sky tonight.
Is this cold autumn the same
as autumns now gone by?
Though I myself remain,
am I the I I was?

7.

What am I then to do
when the harsh winds blow through
this withered trellis?
The leaves are turning brown,
I have nowhere to hide.

8.

Through rifts in the night clouds
adrift in winter winds
shafts of bright moonlight pierce
shining remote and cold.

9.

And the ruthless winds still blow
at midnight as I wonder®
would I have been thus lonely
home in my own great city?

10.

A long year has passed
but this is not what I had hoped for.
The parched fields of summer are
far less arid than
these letters from a withered friend.

Frederick Morgan was the editor of *The Hudson Review*.

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