

In the Tenth Month, we moved to the capital.²²⁶ Mother became a nun; although she stayed in the same house with us, she lived apart in her own quarters.²²⁷ Father just wanted me to assume the position of mistress of the household, but when I saw that this would mean I would be hidden away and never mix with the world, I felt shorn of support. Around this time, from someone to whom we were connected and who was aware of my situation, came an invitation for me to serve at court.²²⁸ She said, "Surely it would be better than having her mope around the house with nothing to do." My old-fashioned parents found the idea of my becoming a lady-in-waiting very distasteful, so they kept me at home. However, several other people said things like "Nowadays, almost every young woman goes into service like this, and there have been cases of women who have done very well for themselves, indeed. Why don't you give it a try?" so grudgingly Father agreed to send me to court.

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220. She likely feels bereft for both her father's sake and her own situation. Her father's giving up the world of political activity would mean that he also was giving up on her prospects in the world, for either a good marriage or a career at court.
221. She is now describing the landscape from her father's new residence in the Western Hills.
222. Mount Hiei is at the northeast corner of the capital, and Mount Inari is at the southeast edge of the capital in the Fushimi District.
223. The Narabi are small hills south of the present-day Muro and Ninnaji Districts.
224. Bird clappers were pieces of wood hung from strings so that they would clatter in the wind and scare away birds and other animals. The wording here recalls the description in "Writing Practice" (Tenarai), chapter 53 of the *Tale of Genji*, of Ukifune's retreat in the Ono District: ". . . rice fields nearby. There was something pleasing too about the sound of the bird clappers. It all reminded her of the East she had once known" (Royall Tyler, trans., *The Tale of Genji* [New York: Viking, 2001], 1085). With this allusion, she signals her own nostalgia for the East Country of her youth.
225. This poem was chosen for inclusion in the first "Autumn" section of the imperial anthology *Shinshūishū* (1364), poem 329. In the anthology, however, the last line of the poem was changed to the more emphatic *akikaze zo fuku*, which might be rendered "Ah, it is the autumn breeze that rustles."
226. Thus it seems that the residence in the Western Hills was temporary until the family could find a suitable residence in the capital proper.
227. As the text indicates, her becoming a nun does not mean that she has entered a monastery. But she has cut her hair short, accepted the monastic regulations regarding a nun's behavior, and will devote herself to performing services for the Buddhist image installed in her apartment. Her duties as a wife, however, are over. In the Heian period, becoming a nun within her own household was an aristocratic woman's most common form of taking the tonsure.
228. Serving at court meant taking a position as lady-in-waiting in the entourage of any of the members of the imperial family.

On the first occasion, I went into service for just one night.²²⁹ I wore eight layers of gowns in the chrysanthemum color combination alternating light and dark,²³⁰ with a jacket with a lustrous crimson silk.²³¹ For me—who had just lost myself in reading tales and knew nothing else and who, not even having visited other relatives, was used only to gazing at the moon and the blossoms living under the protection of my old-fashioned parents—my feelings at this moment of stepping out into court service—I could hardly believe it was I or that this was reality. I returned home at dawn.

When I was housebound, I occasionally used to feel that rather than being stuck forever at home, serving at court would give me the opportunity to experience interesting things and might even brighten my outlook, but now I felt uncertain. It seemed to me that indeed some things about this new life would cause me anguish. But what could I do about it?

In the Twelfth Month, I went again to serve. This time, I was given my own quarters and stayed for several days. Sometimes I would go up to my mistress's chambers and serve night duty. Having to lie down among strangers, I was unable to sleep a wink. I felt so embarrassed and constrained that I could not help weeping in secret. At the first light of dawn while it was still quite dark, I would go back to my own sleeping quarters and spend the whole day distractedly yearning for my father, thinking about how close we had become, living side by side, now that he was old and in decline and seemed to rely on me even more. Then there were my orphaned nieces,²³² who had been with me since they were born and slept on my left and right side at night and got up with me in the morning; how poignantly I now recalled them. So I would end up spending my days lost in homesick reverie. My ears would sense that someone was listening outside and peeking in at me, so uneasy I was.

After ten days of service, when I returned home, I found my father and mother waiting, having kindled a fire in the brazier. At the moment of seeing me get down from the carriage, Father broke into tears and said, "When you are at home, we see people from time to time and the servants are around, but in the last few days, I haven't heard the sound of human voices or seen a soul. How forlorn and lonely I have been!

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229. She became a lady-in-waiting to Princess Yūshi (1038–1105), who at the time was an infant of less than two years old. Princess Yūshi was the daughter of the reigning Emperor Go-Suzaku (1009–1045) and the late Princess Genshi, the adopted daughter of Fujiwara no Yorimichi (992–1074). Thus Princess Yūshi was being raised in the Takakura Palace of her adoptive grandfather, Yorimichi, who held the post of regent at this time. Service in that household had the potential of putting the author in touch with members of the innermost circle of Heian aristocracy. It appears from this entry that she started as a part-time lady-in-waiting for a trial period in the winter of 1039, when she was thirty-two years old.
230. The chrysanthemum color combination was white with a lining of dark reddish purple. The edge of the lining would be visible, resulting in the layering of light and dark at the garments' openings and skirt edges.
231. "Lustrous" silk was soft silk that had been "fulled" by pounding with soft mallets to bring out its shine.
232. The nieces were the children of her elder sister. It is now fifteen years since her sister died.

If this goes on, what is going to become of me?” Seeing this made me feel so sad. The next morning, Father exclaimed, “Since you are home today, there is lots of coming and going; how lively the house feels.” Face to face with him, I was moved to the verge of tears, wondering what on earth it was about me that made him feel that way.

Even though religious adepts find it very difficult to learn about former lives through dreams, and even though I was someone who felt aimless and confused, I had the following dream: I was sitting in the main hall of Kiyomizu Temple. A monk who was a kind of steward came out and reported, “You actually were once a monk in this very temple. As a monk artisan, you accumulated merit by making many Buddha statues. And so you were born into this life well above that lowly station. You built the one *jō*, six *shaku* Buddha²³³ that resides in the east section of this hall (figure 10). As a matter of fact, you passed away while you were applying the gold foil to this image.” “My goodness!” I said, “Does this mean that I applied the gold foil to that Buddha over there?” “Because you died while you were doing it, it was a different person who finished applying the gold foil and a different person who performed the offering ceremony when it was done.” Now after seeing such a dream, if I had made fervent pilgrimages to Kiyomizu Temple, surely, on the strength of having worshipped the Buddha at that main hall in a former life, something might have come of it, but there is no use talking about that now because in the end I became no more serious about making pilgrimages than before.

On the twenty-fifth of the Twelfth Month,²³⁴ I was invited to attend the rite of “Calling the Buddha’s Names”²³⁵ at the princess’s palace. I went expecting to stay only that night. There were as many as forty attendants, all in layers of white robes with jackets of lustrous crimson silk. I hid myself behind the lady who was my mentor at court and, after barely showing myself, returned home at dawn. Snow had begun to flutter down. In the very cold and sharp chill of the dawn light, the moon reflected faintly on my lustrous sleeves truly recalled the “face damp with tears” of long ago.²³⁶ On the road back, I wrote:

toshi ha kure
yo ha akegata no

The year is ending,
the night begins to dawn,



FIGURE 10 The veranda off the main hall of Kiyomizu Temple.

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233. This measurement corresponds to roughly sixteen feet. From the size and description of its placement, the monk is likely referring to the central image of Amida Buddha in the main hall of Kiyomizu Temple.
234. The intercalary Twelfth Month of 1039.
235. The rite of “Calling the Buddha’s Names” was an annual event at the imperial palace that involved reciting all the Buddha’s three thousand names in order to expiate the sins of the past year. After the performance of the rite at the imperial palace, the event was repeated in the home palaces of the imperial consorts. The ceremony the author attends is presumably at the Takakura Palace.
236. This is an allusion to poem 756 in the *Kokinshū*: *ahi ni ahite / mono omofu koro no / waga sode ni / yadoru tsuki sae / nururu kao naru* (Matching its feeling to mine, / when I am lost in melancholy, / even the moon / dwelling in these sleeves of mine / has a face damp with tears).

tsuki kage no
sode ni utsureru
hodo zo hakanaki

this brief moment when
 the rays of the moon are reflected
 on these wet sleeves, how
 ephemeral.²³⁷

Well, even though my debut had been like this, somehow I began to accustom myself to service at court. Although I was somewhat distracted by other things, it was not to the extent that people regarded me as eccentric, and as a matter of course, it seemed as though I was coming to be accepted and treated as one of the company. But my parents did not understand, and before long, they ended up shutting me away at home.²³⁸ Even so, it was not as though my way of life became suddenly happy and lively; rather, although I was used to feeling very much at odds with life, the situation I found myself in now was quite contrary to all my hopes.

iku chitabi
midzu no ta zeri wo
tsumi shika ha
omohishi koto no
tsuyu mo kanahanu

How many thousand times
 have I plucked the field parsley²³⁹
 from the water thus,
 without a dewdrop falling
 in the direction of my hopes.

With just this private complaint, I let matters go.

Meanwhile, I became distracted by this and that and completely forgot even about the world of the tales. I actually ended up feeling quite down to earth. Over the years and months as I lay down and got up in meaningless activity, why had I not devoted myself to religious practices or pilgrimages? Ah, but the things I had hoped for, the things I had wished for, could they ever really happen in this world? After all, was a man like the Shining Genji ever likely to exist in this world? No, this is a world in which being hidden away at Uji by Captain Kaoru could never happen.²⁴⁰ Oh, how crazy I was and how foolish I came to feel. Such were the thoughts that had sunk in, and had I then carried on with my feet on the ground, maybe things would have been all right, but that just was not possible.²⁴¹

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237. The author's poem is similar to one in the *Murasaki Shikibu Diary: toshi kurete / waga yo fuke yuku / kaze no oto ni / kokoro no uchi no / susamajiki kana* (As does the year / So my days draw to an end; / There is a coldness / In the voice / Of the night wind) (Yamamoto Ritatsu, ed., *Murasaki Shikibu nikki, Murasaki Shikibu shū*, Shinchō Nihon koten shūsei [Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1980], 72; Richard Bowring, trans., *Murasaki Shikibu: Her Diary and Poetic Memoirs* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982], 113). The author may have had Murasaki Shikibu's experience in the back of her mind. Just before she composed this poem, Murasaki Shikibu reflected on the first night that she ever served at court. Both Takasue no Musume and Murasaki Shikibu entered court life relatively late in life and found it difficult to fit in. As expressed in the poems, their feelings at the end of the year coincide nicely, although Murasaki Shikibu emphasizes a feeling of chilly loneliness, and Takasue no Musume stresses the ephemeral nature of her experience.
238. This is a veiled reference to her marriage to Tachibana no Toshimichi (1002–1058). From her following comments, it does not appear that at first it was a match to her liking.
239. "Plucking field parsley" was a proverbial expression for putting all one's heart into a project and having it come to nothing.
240. This is a reference back to her youthful dream to be kept in a rural setting by someone as handsome as Genji or Kaoru.
241. In other words, she was not able to give up her romantic dreams or her fascination with the world of tales. Nonetheless, as the beginning of this passage testifies, she had begun to live a more "down-to-earth" life. She had settled into married life, and from later references, we can assume she must have had a child quite soon after marrying.

Some friends had informed the place at which I had first gone into court service that it did not appear staying cooped up at home was really my true wish, so there were endless requests for my attendance. Among them came a particular one, “Send the young lady to court,”²⁴² an order that could not be ignored, so I found myself drawn back into occasional service in the course of presenting my niece to court. But it was not as though I could entertain the vain and immodest hopes that I had in days gone by; after all, I was just being drawn along by my niece. On the occasions when I went to serve, the situation was like this. The women really familiar with court service are in a class by themselves and greet any occurrence with a knowing face, but even though I could not be regarded as a novice, neither could I be treated as an old hand, so I was kept at a distance like an occasional guest. Although I was in this uncertain position, since I did not have to rely solely on that kind of work,²⁴³ I was not particularly envious of those who were so much better at it than me. In fact, I felt rather at ease, going to court just on suitable occasions, chatting with those women who happened to have time on their hands. On celebratory occasions—and other interesting, pleasant occasions too—in my present situation I thus was able to mix with society. Of course, since I had to maintain a reserve and take care not to push myself forward too much, I was privy only to the general goings-on at court. As I went along in this way, a time came when I accompanied the princess to the imperial palace.²⁴⁴ One dawn when the moon was very bright, I thought to myself, “The god Amaterasu to whom I have been praying actually resides right here in the palace’s Mirror Room;²⁴⁵ I would like to take this occasion to worship there.” So in the brightness of the moonlight of the Fourth Month, ever so secretly I went to pay my respects with the guidance of an acquaintance, Hakase no Myōbu,²⁴⁶ who served as mistress of the inner chambers. In the very faint light of the lamp stand, she looked amazingly ancient and had a divine quality. As she sat there speaking about things one might expect, she seemed scarcely like a human being; one might even think she was the god manifesting itself.

On the next night, too, the moon was very bright, and when I opened the east door of the Fujitsubo Pavilion²⁴⁷ to gaze at the moon and was chatting with the various ladies whom one would expect to be there,

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242. This request was to present the author's niece for service in Princess Yūshi's entourage.
243. This is because she is married. According to Teika's commentary, Toshimichi assumed the post of governor of Shimotsuke Province (roughly corresponding to present-day Tochigi Prefecture in the northeastern end of the Kantō region) on January 25 in Chōkyū 2 (1041), just one year after their marriage. We can assume that she stayed in the capital and that they lived apart for four years. This would have made it easier for her to continue her occasional service at court. The earnings from her husband's post would have provided a solid financial foundation for the family, so she did not have to feel economically dependent on her service at Princess Yūshi's court.
244. This took place in 1042. Teika added a detailed note in the margin of his copy of the manuscript about this event: it occurred in Chōkyū 3 (1042) on the thirteenth day of the Fourth Month, and the party was lodged in the Fujitsubo apartment of the palace until the twentieth. This appears to have been the first opportunity for Takasue no Musume to experience life in the imperial palace.
245. In the midst of her early infatuation with tales, she had a dream in which a monk, who was constructing an artificial stream for the Princess of the First Rank, instructed her to worship Amaterasu. Then, after the dream prophecy by the monk who took a mirror offering to Hatsuse Temple in her place, she records that several people told her to worship Amaterasu. Gradually, it becomes clear that worshipping Amaterasu is associated with achieving success in a court career. Now the author is actually staying at the imperial palace itself and thus has her first chance to worship the deity directly.
246. As noted earlier in regard to middle-ranking ladies in waiting, Hakase is translated literally as "doctor of letters" and implies that a male relative of the lady held a doctorate.
247. Readers of the *Tale of Genji* will recognize the name of this apartment as the sobriquet of Genji's stepmother. It literally means "Wisteria Pavilion" and was one of the apartments reserved for consorts of the emperor. Princess Yūshi's mother had likely resided there.

we heard the rustling sound of the Umetsubo Pavilion Consort²⁴⁸ going up to serve His Majesty. It was an enchantingly elegant moment, yet the other women could not help remarking, “If our late mistress²⁴⁹ were still in this world, it would have been her going to serve His Majesty like that.” Truly, it was sad.

<i>ama no to wo</i>	Although they all
<i>kumowi nagara mo</i>	dwell in the clouds together, ²⁵⁰
<i>yoso ni mite</i>	the moon feels estranged ²⁵¹
<i>mukashi no ato wo</i>	from heaven’s door, perhaps
	because
<i>kofuru tsuki kana</i>	it longs for traces of the past.

It was winter, and there was no moon nor was snow falling, but on a night when the vast sky was stretched right to its edges clear and cold in the starlight, I spent the whole night talking until dawn with the ladies-in-waiting from the regent’s household.²⁵² When it grew light, we all separated and went back to our various places, but one of the women recalling that night sent this to me:

<i>tsuki mo naku</i>	There was no moon,
<i>hana mo mizarishi</i>	nor were there blossoms to see,
<i>fuyu no yo no</i>	yet that winter’s night
<i>kokoro ni shimite</i>	penetrated my heart, and I long
<i>kohishiki ya nazo</i>	for it. I wonder why?

That was how I felt, too, and it was charming that we shared the same feeling.

<i>saeshi yo no</i>	The ice that formed
<i>kohori ha sode ni</i>	on that clear, cold night rests
<i>mada tokede</i>	unmelted on my sleeves.
<i>fuyu no yo nagara</i>	All through the winter’s night,
<i>ne wo koso ha nake</i>	I weep aloud remembering it. ²⁵³

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248. Umetsubo literally means “Plum Pavilion,” where the consort in residence was Seishi (1014–1068), the daughter of Fujiwara no Norimichi (996–1075), who in turn was the younger brother of Fujiwara no Yorimichi, Princess Yūshi’s adoptive grandfather.
249. This is Princess Genshi, the mother of Princess Yūshi, who died in the third year of Shoryaku (1039) at the age of twenty-four.
250. “In the clouds” was a conventional epithet for the imperial court.
251. The moon stands for the collective body of the ladies-in-waiting who long for the old days when their mistress was still alive. Heaven’s door stands for the emperor’s quarters in the palace.
252. Fujiwara no Yorimichi is the current regent and the adoptive grandfather of Princess Yūshi, whom Takasue no Musume is serving. Yorimichi’s residence was the Kaya no In, and Princess Yūshi was installed in his Takakura Palace. The two mansions were just across Tsuchimikado Ōji Avenue from each other, and the ladies-in-waiting of both households seem to have known one another well and could visit with one another when there were no pressing duties. This passage records such an occasion.
253. It is the sympathetic resonance between them that brings her tears, not sadness.

On night duty in our mistress's chamber,²⁵⁴ as I lay there listening, my eyes opened each time I heard the voices of the water birds as they flapped about all night long—

<i>waga goto zo</i>	They are just like me,
<i>midzu no ukine ni</i>	awake until dawn, sleeping
<i>akashitsutsu</i>	fitfully on the water,
<i>uhage no shimo wo</i>	struggling to brush away
<i>harahiwabunaru</i>	the frost on their wings. ²⁵⁵

—was what I murmured to myself, but the person sleeping next to me heard and said,

<i>mashite omohe</i>	Just try to imagine,
<i>midzu no karine no</i>	even from your own transient sleep
<i>hodo dani zo</i>	on the water,
<i>uhage no shimo wo</i>	how I struggle every night to
<i>harahiwabikeru</i>	brush the frost away. ²⁵⁶

One day, a good friend of mine in the next apartment slid open the door, and we spent the day chatting. Since another good friend of ours had gone up to serve our mistress, we repeatedly invited her to come and visit us. When she sent back a message, “If you really insist I come, I will try to get away;” we sent her this poem attached to a withered stalk of pampas grass:

<i>fuyugare no</i>	Our waving sleeves tired,
<i>shino no wo susuki</i>	like this plumeless stalk of grass
<i>sode tayumi</i>	withered by winter,
<i>maneki mo yoseji</i>	we will invite no more but
<i>kaze ni makasemu</i>	leave our entreaties to the wind. ²⁵⁷

Since it seemed that the persons designated to wait directly on the high court nobles and the senior courtiers²⁵⁸ were fixed from before, given that I was an inexperienced homebody, I could not expect anybody to even be aware of my presence. Nonetheless, on a very dark

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254. Every night, a group of attendants slept close to the princess's side.
255. This passage and its poem are reminiscent of a passage in the *Murasaki Shikibu Diary*, in which she, too, expresses a feeling of empathy with the water birds: *midzutori wo/midzu no uhe to ya/yoso ni mimu/ware mo ukitaru/yo wo sugushitsutsu* (Birds on the water;/ Can I look at them/ Dispassionately? / I too am floating through / A sad uncertain world) (Yamamoto, ed., *Murasaki Shikibu nikki*, 39; Bowring, trans., *Murasaki Shikibu*, 75).
256. Her companion attendant changes the *ukine* (fitful sleep) in Takasue no Musume's poem to *karine* (transient sleep), referring to the part-time nature of the nighttime duties performed by Takasue no Musume. She asks her to sympathize on the basis of her own brief experience with the hardship of someone like herself on permanent night duty. Although the circumstances and tenor of the exchange are somewhat different, this pair of poems resembles an exchange between Murasaki Shikibu and Lady Dainagon in the *Murasaki Shikibu Diary*. Murasaki Shikibu is back home for a rest and writes to a colleague at court whom she finds herself missing, even though she found service at court itself rather trying. She sends this poem: *ukine seshi/midzu no uhe nomi/kohishikute/kamo no uhage ni/sae zo otoranu* (My longing for / Those waters at the court / On which we lay / Is keener than the frost / On duck feathers) (Yamamoto, ed., *Murasaki Shikibu nikki*, 58; Bowring, trans., *Murasaki Shikibu*, 97). Lady Dainagon's reply is *uchiharafu/tomo naki koro no/nezame ni ha/tsugahishi woshi zo/yoha ni kohishiki* (Awakening / In the dead of night / To find no friend / To brush away the frost, / She longs for her) (Yamamoto, ed., *Murasaki Shikibu nikki*, 58; Bowring, trans., *Murasaki Shikibu*, 97).
257. Plumes of pampas grass bending in the wind were thought to resemble beckoning hands.
258. The two terms designate the highest two levels of court society. Although these designations were not tied precisely to court rank, in general, high court nobles (*kandachime*) held the first three ranks in the court hierarchy, and senior courtiers (*tenjōbito*) held the fourth or fifth rank. For a discussion of these designations, see McCullough and McCullough, trans., *Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, 2:791.

night in the early part of the Tenth Month, there was a service of uninterrupted readings of the sutras.²⁵⁹ When someone said, “Monks with particularly lovely voices are reciting at this time,” a companion and I went up to a doorway close to the reading, and while we were stretched out on the veranda listening and chatting away, a man came up to us (figure 11). My companion whispered, “It would look awkward if we were just to escape inside and call other, more experienced women in the ladies-in-waiting apartment. So be it. Let us just stay here and do our best in the circumstances.” So I stayed with her listening to the conversation and found that the man spoke with a mature and quiet demeanor, not unpleasant at all. He asked, “Who is your companion?” without a hint of the usual insinuating tone men use, and he spoke so sensitively of various touching things in life that in spite of my natural inclinations, there were several points in the conversation when I found it difficult just to withdraw in silence, and so both of us ended up conversing with him. He said things like “Well now, there still are some people here that I have not met before,” which seemed to indicate that he found us interesting, and he did stay for a while making no move to leave quickly. It was dark without even the light of stars; from time to time, drizzle fell, and the sound of it falling on the leaves of the trees was charming. He said, “It is an enchantingly lovely evening, is it not? If it were bright with the moon shining into every corner, I expect we would find it embarrassingly dazzling.”²⁶⁰ He spoke of the seasons: “Spring mist is lovely; with the sky gently overcast, even the moon’s face is dimmed, and it seems the light flows to us from afar. On such a night, how thrilling it is to hear someone plucking a *biwa* tuned to the ‘Fragrant Breeze’ mode.²⁶¹ Or again, when it is autumn and the moon is very bright: although haze may be stretched across the sky, the moon shines through so clearly that you feel as though you could reach out and take it in your hand, and with the sound of the wind and the voices of the insects making one feel that all the delights of autumn have been brought together, to hear someone casually strumming the strings of the *sō no koto*²⁶² accompanied by sharp, clear notes blown on a flute—well then, one wonders why one was ever enthralled with spring. But then again, when you think about it, on a winter’s night when the sky is perfectly clear and light from the sky meets the light



FIGURE 11 The veranda off the Isonokami Shrine.

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259. Services involving continuous readings of sutras for a fixed period of time were commissioned with the object of either gaining some benefit in this world or ensuring salvation for someone who had passed away. The monks here shared the chanting duties in two-hour shifts, in which they melodiously chanted sutras like the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Prajna Paramita Sutra*. Because the voices of the monks differed in quality, word would get around, as we infer from this passage, as to which groups of monks were good singers. This particular reading, which likely took place in 1042, may have been commissioned for Princess Yūshi's mother, the late Princess Genshi, who had died roughly three years earlier. The reading takes place in the Takakura Palace, and if we assume that it was being held for the late empress, it would explain why high-ranking courtiers were in attendance. The wide verandas of Heian-period dwellings made good meeting places.
260. His implication is that the women would feel uncomfortable and shy if they were exposed in the light of the moon.
261. The name of one of the tuning modes for the *biwa*, a kind of lute.
262. The thirteen-string koto, a stringed instrument plucked from above by the seated player.

from the fallen, piled-up snow and the wavering notes of the *hichiriki*²⁶³ sound forth—then we forget all about spring and autumn.” He continued, “If I may ask, ladies, with which season would your hearts be lodged?”²⁶⁴ In response, my companion answered that her heart was drawn to the autumn night, and since I did not want to say the same thing, I replied with this poem:

<i>asa midori</i>	Lucent green—
<i>hana mo hitotsu ni</i>	misting over, becoming one
<i>kasumitsutsu</i>	with the blossoms too;
<i>oboro ni miyuru</i>	dimly it may be seen,
<i>haru no yo no tsuki</i>	the moon on a night in spring. ²⁶⁵

Repeating this over and over softly to himself, he said, “Well, well, this consigns the autumn night to oblivion, doesn’t it?”

<i>koyohi yori</i>	From this night on,
<i>nochi no inochi no</i>	if it should be that my life
<i>moshimo araba</i>	continues on,
<i>sa ha haru no yo wo</i>	I shall always consider the spring
	night
<i>katami to omohamu</i>	a souvenir of you and this
	occasion.

Then the person whose heart was drawn to autumn said,

<i>hito ha mina</i>	It would seem that
<i>haru ni kokoro wo</i>	all people’s hearts are drawn
<i>yosetsumeri</i>	to spring.
<i>ware nomi ya mimu</i>	Shall I be left to gaze alone
<i>aki no yo no tsuki</i>	at the moon on an autumn
	night? ²⁶⁶

It seems that his interest was piqued by this, and yet having the air of finding himself in a difficult situation, he said, “I have heard that even in far Cathay, from ancient times when it came to choosing between

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263. A small reed instrument that makes a strident, piercing sound.
264. The seasons are compared in other classical literature texts but are found particularly often in the *Tale of Genji*.
265. The author's use of *asa midori*, rendered here as "lucent green," is both evocative and original. It is very difficult to define the precise quality of the color to which this phrase refers, as there was no clear demarcation between the colors green and blue in classical Japan and China. Accordingly, the grass could be described as blue and the sky as green. That said, however, the word *midori* in Japanese has a close connection with the fresh new green of spring, so at least part of the connotation of this term is the atmosphere of "green" in spring. It is a night scene, and the term *asa midori* can be used to refer to the radiant quality of the sky on a starry night when one might be inclined to call the sky "pale indigo," a sensation of color that is both dark and radiant. The author seems to be seeking a combination of both the green atmosphere of spring and the radiant darkness of a clear night sky. This is the first poem by Takasue no Musume to be included in an imperial poetry anthology, the *Shinkokinshū* (1205), poem 56 in the first "Spring" section. The *Shinkokinshū* signaled an important new direction in classical Japanese poetry. For a detailed discussion of the color issue and the originality of this poem, see Itō Moriyuki, "Sarashina nikki no 'asamidori . . .' ei ni kansuru kōsatsu," in *Genji monogatari kara, Genji monogatari e*, ed. Nagai Kazuko (Tokyo: Kasama shoin, 2007), 346–66.
266. The companion's poem alludes to a poem in "Bamboo River" (Takegawa), chapter 44 of the *Tale of Genji*: *hito ha mina / hana ni kokoro wo / utsusuramu / hitori zo madofu / haru no yo no yami* (It would seem that / people's hearts have all gone over / to the blossoms; / all alone I wander / through the spring night's darkness) (Abe Aiko et al., eds., *Genji monogatari*, Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū 24 [Tokyo: Shōgakusan, 1997], 73; see also Tyler, trans., *Tale of Genji*, 810). The companion has deftly adapted the *Genji* poem to suit her own situation by shifting the poem reference from spring to autumn. Her alluding to the *Tale of Genji* at this point also signals that she is aware that their conversation is like something out of *Genji*. This mutual savoring of elegant conversation supported by a shared literary connection creates an intimate bond among the three of them.

spring and autumn, people were unable to decide.²⁶⁷ And you, my esteemed ladies, must have your own reasons for choosing the way you have. As for where one's own heart is pulled, when one feels touched or delighted on a specific occasion, it seems that just naturally the look of the sky at that moment, the appearance of the moon or the flowers, becomes engraved on one's heart. I would love to hear the details of what it is that led both of you to feel the way you do about spring and autumn. From long ago, the look of the moon on a winter's night has been held up as the epitome of a dreary, uninteresting phenomenon,²⁶⁸ and at any rate, it is so cold at that time that one is not particularly inclined to spend much time looking at it. However, once when I was assigned the duty of imperial envoy to go down to Ise on the occasion of the priestess's 'Assumption of the Train' ceremony²⁶⁹ and I was to return to the capital at dawn, the light of the moon was shining on the snow that had been falling and piling up for days. I was feeling somewhat forlorn, given that I was to travel that day, but when I went to take my leave, I was struck by the sense of awe that this place inspires more than any other. I was beckoned to sit in the appropriate place by a serving woman from the august era of Retired Emperor Enyū²⁷⁰ who, with her old-fashioned air and deep sense of refinement, seemed almost divine herself. She talked to me about memories of the old days, weeping from time to time, and she did me the honor of bringing out a well-tuned lute for me to play.²⁷¹ I could scarcely believe I was in this world, and I regretted even that the night was going to break into day. Thoughts of the capital were quite extinguished, and since that time when I was so moved, I have come to deeply appreciate nights in winter when snow has fallen. Even if I have to hold a small brazier in my arms, I cannot help going out onto the veranda and contemplating the scene. Surely you ladies must have similar reasons of your own for how you feel about the seasons. And now from this night on, nights when the winter drizzle falls into the deep darkness, my heart will be steeped in this same feeling. I certainly feel that tonight is not inferior to the snowy night at Ise." And when he had finally parted from us after saying such things, I thought, "I would prefer that he not find out who I am."²⁷²

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267. This is a direct allusion to the most famous comparison of the four seasons in the *Tale of Genji*, which takes place in chapter 19, “Wisps of Cloud.” See Tyler, trans., *Tale of Genji*, 359. The male visitor signals his recognition of the allusion in the companion’s poem and follows it up with a *Genji* allusion of his own. We can only imagine how much this must have charmed Takasue no Musume.
268. This is another allusion to the *Tale of Genji*, chapter 20, “The Bluebell” (Asagao), in which Genji disparages the conventional opinion that the night sky in winter is dreary. See Tyler, trans., *Tale of Genji*, 373. In fact, this section in the *Tale of Genji* is the first time in the history of the aesthetic appreciation of the seasons in Japan that someone argues for the beauty of winter scenery. In the medieval period, aesthetic taste shifted toward an appreciation of the beauty of cold and wintry things, summed up in the term *hie* (chill), and this early reference in the *Genji* seems to presage that.
269. The “Assumption of the Train” ceremony was a coming-of-age ceremony for girls, usually held when they were about twelve. The long trailing garment was worn as part of the formal costume for women. A princess was chosen at the beginning of each new era to serve as the priestess of the Ise Shrine, where Amaterasu, the tutelary deity of the imperial family, was enshrined. The ceremony itself would have taken place at the Saikū residence of the Ise priestess and not at the Ise Shrine itself. The man’s recital of this episode in his court service allowed Teika to identify the male visitor as Minamoto no Sukemichi (d. 1060). At the end of the manuscript, Teika appends a substantial synopsis of Sukemichi’s successful official career. At the time of his death, he had managed to achieve the very high rank of junior second. Sukemichi’s surname, Minamoto, which was given to surplus imperial male progeny, marks him as someone of royal blood, if not status. In addition, this surname is often referred to by an alternative reading for the first character, *gen*, with the addition of *ji* (clan; that is, “member of the Minamoto clan”), which is the same *Genji* as in the name of the hero of the famous tale. Teika also appends a note about the “Assumption of the Train” ceremony for which Sukemichi was the imperial envoy. According to Teika, the ceremony took place in Manju 2 on the third day of the Twelfth Month, or January 2, 1026. Teika gives Sukemichi’s age at the time of his death as fifty-six; therefore, he would have been in his early twenties at the time of his service as imperial envoy. This would make him thirty-eight years old at the time of this winter’s night conversation, only about three years older than the author.
270. Emperor Enyū reigned from 969 to 984. This lady-in-waiting has served at the shrine through the reigns of five emperors—in other words, for more than forty years—which would put her in her late sixties or early seventies.
271. Sukemichi’s fame as a singer and player of the *biwa* (lute), *wagon* (zither), and flute is noted in official court histories.
272. Given her evident excitement and joy at this encounter with Sukemichi, this final remark may seem difficult to understand. Her reaction might have had many reasons. She might feel that the brief encounter was precious just for what it was, not as a prelude to a serious relationship. She was of much lower status than Sukemichi, and as already a mature married woman, she might be embarrassed to have him learn these facts about her.

The next year in the Eighth Month when our mistress was visiting the imperial palace,²⁷³ there was an all-night performance being held in the emperor's presence; I had no idea that that person was in attendance. I was spending that night in the lower apartments, and when I pushed open the sliding doors of the narrow hall and looked out, just as I was confused at the soft light, wondering whether or not it was the dawn moon, there was the sound of footsteps and a man reciting a sutra. The man reciting the sutra stopped in front of the opening, and when I replied to his words, he suddenly remembered me and said, "Indeed, I have never forgotten my fond memories of that short time we shared on the night of winter drizzle." It was not an occasion for answering at length or making a great deal out of answering, so I said,

<i>nani sa made</i>	Why, I wonder, should
<i>omohi idekemu</i>	you remember that so well,
<i>nahozari no</i>	since it was only
<i>ko no ha ni kakeshi</i>	the winter drizzle falling as
<i>shigure bakari wo</i>	it does on the leaves of trees.

But I had barely got this out when some other people came up, so I just slipped away inside, and since that night our party withdrew from the palace, I heard only later from the other woman who had been my companion on the first occasion that he had passed on a reply for me. Apparently he had said, "On another occasion like the night of the winter drizzle, I would like to play for you on the *biwa* all the pieces I know." When I heard that, I eagerly awaited such a chance, but it never came.

Around spring on a gentle, quiet evening, I heard that he had come to our mistress's residence for a visit, and my companion of that other night and I crept out quietly hoping to meet him, but other people had come visiting too, and since all the usual ladies-in-waiting were there, after getting that far, we went back in. Perhaps he, too, had been hoping to see us again and so had come purposefully on this quiet evening, but since it turned out to be noisy, it seems that he withdrew.

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273. Teika's marginal note confirms that Princess Yūshi and her sister Baishi visited the imperial palace on the twenty-third day of the Seventh Month of Chōkyū 4 (1043) and stayed in the Ichijō In (because of a fire in the palace the year before). They apparently stayed until the tenth day of the Eighth Month. Teika does not note the reason for the special visit.

kashima mite
naruto no ura ni
kogare idzuru
kokoro ha eki ya

iso no amabito

The heart of one,
 who, seeing a chance at Kashima
 rowed out yearning
 for Naruto Sound—did you
 understand,
 fisherman on the rocky shore?²⁷⁴

It all ended with my just writing this poem. Since he was a person of very upright character, he was not one to make prying inquiries as a more worldly man might, and so time passed and that was it.

Now I had come to the point that I was deeply aware of regretting my absurd fancies of the past, and I also could not help recalling with vexation that I had not been taken along on my parents' pilgrimages and such. So now, resolving to concentrate single-mindedly on achieving a state of wealth that would allow me to raise my "little sprout"²⁷⁵ with all the plentiful care I wished and to accumulate a status for myself that would exceed that of Mikura Mountain,²⁷⁶ and with aspirations extending to the world to come as well, just past the twentieth of the Eleventh Month,²⁷⁷ I set off on a pilgrimage to Ishiyama Temple.²⁷⁸

Snow was falling; the scenery along the way was beautiful. Upon seeing the Ōsaka Barrier, I suddenly recalled that when we crossed this barrier station long ago,²⁷⁹ it also was winter and, that time too, how wildly the wind blew.

afusaka no
seki no seki kaze
fuku kowe ha
mukashi kikishi ni
kaharazarikeri

The voice of the Ōsaka
 Barrier wind blowing now
 through the station,
 is no different at all
 from the one I heard long ago.

Seeing how splendidly the Barrier Temple²⁸⁰ had been built up, I recalled that time before when one could see only the roughly hewn face of the Buddha; realizing how many months and years had passed was very moving.

The area around Uchiide Beach and so forth looked no different from before. We arrived at the goal of our pilgrimage just as it was

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274. This poem is a complex of double entendres on place-names. Kashima is a place in the Inland Sea close to Naruto. Kashima can also mean *kashi ma* (an interval when no one is looking) and also evokes the adjective *kashimashi* (noisy). Thus the single place-name calls up the chance of a meeting and the reason why the meeting was forestalled. Naruto no ura (Naruto Bay) is a body of water close to the famous Naruto Whirlpool, whence the name *naru + to* (sounding gate). The translation here takes advantage of the double meaning of “sound” in English for both the sound one hears and the term for a body of water. Thus the place-name Naruto evokes both the noisy party that sent Sukemichi away and the promised sound of his *biwa* that the author had ventured out hoping to hear. In addition to these double meanings, the verb *kogare* (rowed) also puns on the verb *kogaru* (to burn with yearning).
275. This is a reference to a son she had with Toshimichi. Later in the diary, she mentions children in the plural, and it is recorded that she had another son and one daughter with Toshimichi, but the diary gives no precise information about the births. From other sources, we also know that Toshimichi was the governor of Shimotsuke Province beginning in 1041 and would have returned to the capital around the time of this entry.
276. Mikura Mountain (located in present-day Tottori Prefecture) was an *utamakura* whose literal meaning, “Great Treasure House” Mountain, is linked to the idea of accumulating wealth.
277. The year 1045, and the author is thirty-eight years old.
278. Ishiyama Temple on Lake Biwa in Shiga Prefecture is still a popular place of pilgrimage and, as mentioned earlier, an important site of Kannon worship.
279. The author crossed the Ōsaka Barrier, in the hills between the capital and Lake Biwa, when she was thirteen years old and on her way to the capital from the east.
280. She refers to the temple as Sekidera (literally, “Barrier Temple”), which was its common name.

getting dark, and getting down at the Purification Pavilion, we went up to the Sacred Hall. No one spoke; I found the sound of the mountain wind frightening. I dozed off while I was praying, and in a dream a person told me, “Some musk deer incense has been bestowed on us by the Chūdō.²⁸¹ Quickly announce this over there.” I woke up with a start, and when I realized that it had been a dream, I felt that it must be auspicious, so I spent the whole night in religious devotions.

The next day, too, snow fell wildly. I tried to soothe my feelings of uneasiness by chatting with the friend I had got to know at court who had accompanied me on the pilgrimage. We stayed in retreat for three days and then returned.

That following year, there was a great buzz about the procession for the Great Purification preceding the Great Festival of Thanksgiving that was to be held on the twenty-fifth day of the Tenth Month.²⁸² I had started fasting in preparation for a pilgrimage to Hatsuse Temple,²⁸³ and I was to leave the capital on that very day. People whom one might expect to take an interest in my affairs said things like, “One gets to see something like this only once in a reign; even people from the countryside and all over the place are coming in to see it. After all, with so many days and months in a year, for you to go off and desert the capital on that very day, why, it’s crazy!” Although my brother²⁸⁴ fumed about it, the father of my children said, “No matter what, do what you think best.”²⁸⁵ I was moved by his willingness to send me off in accordance with the vow I had made. It seems that those who were to accompany me wanted very much to view the procession. Although it was sad for them, I thought to myself, “After all, what does sightseeing amount to? The zeal of the intention to make a pilgrimage on this kind of occasion will surely be recognized as such. I shall certainly see a sacred sign from the Buddha.” I strengthened my will and left at the first light of that day. Just as we were passing along the grand avenue of Nijō itself²⁸⁶ (I had had my attendants wear pilgrim’s white garments and those in front carry holy lanterns), there were a lot of people going to and fro, some on horseback, some in ox carriages, some on foot, on their way to take their places in the viewing stands. Surprised and disconcerted at seeing us, people in the crowd murmured, “What on earth is this?” and some even laughed derisively and jeered.

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281. The *chūdō* (central hall) is the center of a temple complex in which the main object of worship is enshrined. The most famous *chūdō* in the capital region was that of Enryakuji on Mount Hiei, and the reference here may be to that specific hall.
282. The Great Festival of Thanksgiving is the grander version of the annual Festival of First Fruits. The Grand Festival was held during those years when a new emperor was officially enthroned. Emperor Go-Reizei (1025–1068) had assumed the throne the previous year, and it was the custom to hold the official enthronement rites the year after the succession. In the Great Purification preceding the festival, the new emperor performed a ritual ablution on the banks of the Kamo River. The pomp and pageantry made it a popular event for sightseeing.
283. More than a decade earlier, the author's mother had sent a mirror with a monk to Hatsuse Temple on the author's behalf. This, then, is the author's first personal pilgrimage to this center of Kannon worship.
284. This is likely the same brother, Sadayoshi, who was mentioned much earlier in her account of the journey from Kazusa to the capital as the one who carried her on horseback to say farewell to her nurse.
285. This is the first direct mention in the diary of the author's husband, and it casts a surprisingly positive light on their relationship. He appears to be the only one in the household to support her decision.
286. Nijō Avenue is the avenue down which the procession would pass.

When we passed in front of the house of the guard commander Yoshiyori,²⁸⁷ it seemed that he was just about to move to his viewing stand. The gates were pushed open wide, and people were standing around. Someone said, "That seems to be somebody going on a pilgrimage. And to think of all the other days she could have chosen." Amid those laughing over this, there was one (I wonder what was in his heart) who said, "What is so important about delighting one's eyes for a moment? With such fervent zeal, someone like that is sure to receive the Buddha's grace. Maybe we are the ones without sense. Giving up the sightseeing and making up our minds to do something like that; that is what we ought to be doing." So there was one person who could speak with some sense of seriousness.

So as not to be exposed to the eyes of others on the road, we had left while it was still dark. Now, in order to wait for those who had left later to catch up and hoping that the alarmingly deep fog would lift a little, we stopped at the main gate of Hōshō Temple.²⁸⁸ There, we could really see the crowds of people coming in from the countryside to sightsee; they flowed on and on like a river. Everywhere, it was hard to get through. Even some rather strange-looking urchins, who seemed hardly old enough to understand things, looked askance at our carriage as we forced our way against the stream. There was no end to it. Seeing all these people, I even began to wonder why on earth I had set out on this trip, but concentrating my thoughts single-mindedly on the Buddha, I finally arrived at Uji.²⁸⁹

There, too, was a crowd of people wanting to cross over to this side. The boat helmsmen were in no hurry to make the crossings; they stood around, sleeves rolled up, leaning on their oars, looking quite arrogant as though they were not even aware of all the people waiting to cross. Looking around, singing songs, they appeared very smug. We were unable to cross for an interminable amount of time. When I looked carefully around me, I recalled the daughters of the Uji prince in Murasaki's tale.²⁹⁰ I had always been curious about what kind of place she had had them live in; so this must be it, and indeed, it is a lovely place. Thinking these thoughts, I finally was ferried across. Also, when I went in to look at the Uji villa belonging to His Lordship,²⁹¹ the first thing

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287. Yoshiyori was the eldest son of Fujiwara no Takaie (979–1044) and brother of the late Empress Teishi.
288. Hōshō Temple was located at the southeast edge of the capital, directly on the road to Uji, where now the Zen temple Tōfukuji occupies approximately the same location. It was a popular place to break one's journey on the way to Uji.
289. Travelers had to be ferried across the Uji River. The place-name Uji was an *utamakura* for poems about sorrow because Uji was regarded as homophonous with *ushi* (sorrow, suffering).
290. These are the daughters of the Eighth Prince in the *Tale of Genji* who moved to Uji after his residence in the capital burned down. The courtship of these sisters, the untimely death of the elder sister, and, finally, the installation of their half sister Ukifune at Uji by Kaoru make up the content of the so-called Uji chapters of the *Tale of Genji*. The author's reference here to the *Tale of Genji* as "Murasaki's tale" seems to indicate that Heian readers had already started to refer to the author of the *Tale of Genji* by the nickname Murasaki.
291. This is the villa of Fujiwara no Yorimichi, who, as the adoptive grandfather of Princess Yūshi, was the author's employer, which is likely why she was able to tour the villa. Seven years after this date, Yorimichi rebuilt the villa magnificently and eventually had it consecrated as a temple, the Byōdōin, which survives.

that sprang to mind was, “Would not the Lady Ukifune have lived in just such a place as this?” (figure 12).²⁹²

Since we had left before light, my people were very tired, so we stopped at a place called Yahirouchi.²⁹³ While we were having something to eat, my attendants talked among themselves, “Say, isn’t this the infamous Mount Kurikoma?²⁹⁴ It is getting toward dusk. We had better get everyone ready to go.” I listened to this with apprehension.

We made it over that mountain, and just as we arrived in the area of Nieno Pond,²⁹⁵ the sun was setting over the rim of the mountain. “Now let us stop for the night,” my attendants said, and they spread out to seek lodging. It was not a suitable area. They reported back, “There is only this rather poor and shabby little house.” “What else can we do?” I replied, and so we ended up lodging there. There were only two, rather seedy-looking men servants in charge, who said, “Everyone else has gone up to the capital.” That night, too, we did not get a wink of sleep. The men servants kept wandering into and out of the house. I heard the maidservants in the rear of the house ask, “What on earth are you doing roaming around like that?” “Oh nothing much, but here we are putting up strangers. We got to thinking, suppose they were to make off with the cauldron, what would we do? We can’t sleep for worrying, so we are wandering around keeping an eye on things.” They spoke like this thinking we were asleep; hearing their words was both strange and amusing.

Early the next morning, we left and went to pray at Tōdai Temple.²⁹⁶ The Isonokami Shrine truly looked as old as its name makes one imagine;²⁹⁷ it was all wild and overgrown (figure 13).

That night we stayed at a place called Yamanobe. Although I was very tired, I tried to read the sutras a little. I dozed off, and in a dream, I saw myself visiting an amazingly beautiful and noble lady. The wind was blowing hard. She looked at me and smiled, “What brings you here?” she asked. “How could I not pay my respects?” I replied. “It is expected that you will live at the imperial palace. It would be good for you to discuss this with Hakase no Myōbu”²⁹⁸ is what I thought she said. I felt very happy and put much store by this dream. My faith strengthening more and more, I continued along the Hatsuse River and that night arrived at the holy temple. After performing ablutions, I



FIGURE 12 The Byōdōin, originally the Uji villa.

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292. This is another reference to the Uji chapters of the *Tale of Genji*.
293. This place-name does not correspond exactly to any present-day place-name. In Teika's copy of the manuscript, it was marked with red dots as a possible copyist's error.
294. Mount Kurikoma was noted for bandits.
295. Nieno Pond was in the area of Ide Street in the Tsuzuki District of present-day Kyoto Prefecture. The pond is mentioned in other diary texts of the period; apparently, it was one of the major landmarks on the pilgrimage path to Hatsuse Temple.
296. The temple is Tōdaiji in present-day Nara City, which houses the huge statue of the Buddha.
297. The Isonokami Shrine was in the village of Furu, a place-name homophonous with the words "to age" and the "passing of time." Hence, the Isonokami Shrine became an *utamakura* for poems about the passing of time and growing old.
298. Hakase no Myōbu was mistress of the inner chambers at the imperial palace who had acted as her guide to the Sacred Mirror Room when she visited the palace for the first time.



FIGURE 13 The pond at the Isonokami Shrine.

went up to worship. I stayed in retreat for three days. I was to start the return journey at dawn; night came, and I dozed off. From the direction of the main hall came a voice, “You there, here is a cedar of good omen bestowed from the Inari Shrine,”²⁹⁹ and as the person appeared to reach out and throw me something, I woke up with a start and realized it was a dream (figure 14).

At dawn while it was still dark, we departed. We found it difficult to get lodgings that night but finally asked to stay at a house on this side of the Nara Slopes.³⁰⁰ My attendants talked among themselves: “This place has a suspicious air. Don’t even think of sleeping. If something odd happens, no matter what, don’t look afraid or alarmed. Please lie down and hold your breath.” Just hearing this, I was miserable and afraid. I felt as though it took a thousand years for dawn to break. Finally, just as it began to get light, one of my attendants said, “This is the home of thieves. The woman who is our host was acting suspiciously, you know.”



FIGURE 14 The main hall of Hase (Hatsuse) Temple.

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299. The Inari Shrine at Fushimi, south of the capital. The custom was to obtain cedar seedlings from the Inari Shrine and take them home to plant. If the tree grew, one's wishes would be fulfilled.
300. The Nara Slopes are hills north of Nara. Earlier, the author's mother mentioned this area's reputation as being dangerous.

On a day when the wind was blowing hard, we crossed the Uji River and rowed very close by the fish weirs.

<i>oto ni nomi</i>	Having only heard
<i>kikiwatari koshi</i>	of the sound of the waves
<i>udjikaha no</i>	lapping against
<i>ajiro no nami mo</i>	the fish weirs of Uji River,
<i>kefu zo kazofuru</i>	today, I can even count them. ³⁰¹

Since I have been writing consecutively in no particular order of events that were two, three, four, or five years apart, it makes me look like a devout practioner who was continually going on pilgrimages, but it was not like that; years and months separated these events.

Around springtime, I went on retreat at Kurama (figure 15).³⁰² The rims of the mountains were covered in mist; it was warm and gentle. From the direction of the mountainside, some people came with mountain yams they had just dug up. This, too, was fascinating. When I set out on that trip, all the blossoms had fallen from the trees and there was nothing really to see, but when I made the same trip again around the Tenth Month, the mountain scenery at that time along the way was much better. The mountainsides looked as though they had been spread with brocade, and the water seemed to be scattering crystals³⁰³ as it flowed and burred. It was more splendid than anywhere else. When we reached the monks' quarters, the crimson leaves moistened thus with the winter rains were beyond compare.

<i>oku yama no</i>	In the mountain recesses,
<i>momidji no nishiki</i>	brocades of crimson leaves,
<i>hoka yori mo</i>	more than anywhere else,
<i>ika ni shigurete</i>	how did the winter rains manage
<i>fukaku somekemu</i>	to dye them so deeply?

About two years later, when I went again on retreat at Ishiyama, the rain fell hard the whole night through. Listening to it and thinking how unpleasant rain is when one is traveling, I opened the shutters and looked out to find that the moon at dawn was shining right down to



FIGURE 15 The gate at Kurama Temple.

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301. The fish weirs at Uji were a favorite subject for poetry.
302. Kurama is a temple halfway up Mount Kurama, north of the Heian-period capital.
303. The expression here, *suishō wo chirasu yau ni* (as though scattering crystals), is unusual. A similar expression, *suishō nado no waretaru yau ni midzu no chiritaru* (water scattering as though it were broken crystals), can be found in the *Pillow Book*. See Hagitani, ed., *Makura no sōshi*, 2:125; and Morris, trans., *Pillow Book*, 1:195.

the bottom of the ravine, and what I had taken for the rain falling was actually the sound of water flowing from the base of the trees.

<i>tanigaha no</i>	Although I took
<i>nagare ha ame to</i>	the rush of the ravine's stream
<i>kikoyuredo</i>	for rain, now I behold
<i>hoka yori ke naru</i>	the light of the dawn moon,
<i>ariake no tsuki</i>	unlike anything anywhere else. ³⁰⁴

When I went again on a pilgrimage to Hatsuse Temple, unlike the first time, I felt somehow secure. Here and there, we were entertained along the route; it was hard to make much progress.³⁰⁵ It was a time when the Hahaso Forest³⁰⁶ of the Yamashiro District was very charming with crimson leaves. When we crossed the Hatsuse River,

<i>hatsusegaha</i>	Like rapids repeating
<i>tachikaeritsutsu</i>	in Hatsuse River, back again
<i>tadzunureba</i>	have I come questing.
<i>sugi no shirushi mo</i>	I wonder, this time too, will I see
<i>kono tabi ya mimu</i>	the cedar of good omen? ³⁰⁷

With such thoughts, I was filled with hopeful expectations.

After performing devotions for three days, on the way back we stopped at the same place this side of the Nara Slopes. Since, given the size of our party this time, it was not possible to lodge in a small house, a temporary shelter was erected for some of us in the midst of an open field. The others spent the night just sitting up in the field. On the grass, they spread their saddle chaps and then laid straw matting on top, such a wretched way to spend the night. Their heads were drenched with falling dew. The moon at daybreak spread clear light over the scene; it was something out of this world.

<i>yukuhe naki</i>	In the sky
<i>tabi no sora ni mo</i>	of this aimless journey,
<i>okurenu ha</i>	a companion who
<i>miyako nite mishi</i>	has not failed to keep up with us,

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304. This poem was chosen for the “Miscellaneous” section of the imperial anthology, *Shinshūishū* (1364), poem 1634. The fourth line was slightly altered to *hoka yori haruru*, which would result in a translation of the last two lines as “the light of this dawn moon / clearer than anywhere else.”
305. Her description implies that her husband accompanied her on this pilgrimage. Accordingly, they would have traveled with a larger entourage and received invitations from dignitaries along the route.
306. This forest was located at the site of the present-day Hōzono Shrine on Seika Street in the Sōraku District of Kyoto Prefecture. The place-name Hahaso was an *utamakura* associated with crimson leaves.
307. This refers to the dream she had on her previous pilgrimage to Hatsuse, in which a figure offered her a cedar seedling from the Inari Shrine at Fushimi.

ariake no tsuki

the dawn moon we saw in the
capital.³⁰⁸

In this way, then, I was able to go on pilgrimages far afield, following my own inclinations, with nothing getting in the way.³⁰⁹ On these trips, the various interesting, and even the trying, experiences naturally lightened my spirits and also made me hopeful for the future. At that time, because I found nothing particularly troubling in my life, I just concentrated my hopes on seeing my young ones³¹⁰ grow up as I desired, and so the years and months passed by with that goal seeming still far in the future, and of course, my mind was full of earnest thoughts for the one on whom I depended, praying that he should achieve happiness in his career as others had.³¹¹

There was a friend with whom in the past I had conversed avidly, exchanging poems day and night over a long period of time, and although our communication was not quite what it had been in the old days, we still kept in constant touch. However, after she married the governor of Echizen Province³¹² and accompanied him to his posting, I heard not a word from her. Finally, there was an opportunity that I barely seized to send a message to inquire after her:

*taezarishi
omohi mo ima ha
taenikeri
koshi no watari no
yuki no fukasa ni*

Alas, even the
constant fire of our love has been
extinguished, it seems,
in the deep snows of the
environs of Koshi.³¹³

The reply she sent back:

*shirayama no
yuki no shita naru
sazare ishi no
naka no omohi ha
kiemu mono ka ha*

Buried beneath the
snows of Shirayama,
how could the sparks of
loving thoughts in this flint
ever be extinguished?³¹⁴

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308. This poem was included in the “Travel” section of the imperial anthology *Shoku gosenshū* (1235), poem 1306. The fourth line was revised to *miyako wo ideshi*, which would result in the translation of the last line as “the dawn moon that came out from the capital.”
309. This entry is likely from the period after 1045 when we know from official records that her husband, Toshimichi, had just completed a tour of duty as provincial governor in Shimotsuke Province. This governorship would have resulted in substantial economic benefit for the family.
310. The reference here, *osanaki hitobito* (young people), is clearly plural. She is recorded to have had three children with Toshimichi.
311. This is another direct reference to her husband.
312. In the Heian period, Echizen Province occupied the eastern part of present-day Fukui Prefecture on the Japan Sea side. It is an area of heavy snowfalls.
313. Koshi is the general name for the area that contained Echizen Province. This poem puns on *omohi* (thoughts of longing) and *hi* (fire).
314. Shirayama, known today as Mount Hakusan, is a volcano in Heian-period Echizen Province. Therefore, the response picks up on the notion of “fire” introduced by the preceding poem, and it extends this train of thought by using the metaphor of sparks in a flint for the loving thoughts in the friend’s heart.

Around the first of the Third Month, I went to a place deep in the Western Hills.³¹⁵ There, unseen by sightseers in the gentle mist, touchingly forlorn cherry blossoms were blooming in wild abandon:

<i>sato tohomi</i>	To this mountain path,
<i>amari oku naru</i>	too deep in the hills, far away
<i>yamadji ni ha</i>	from people's dwelling,
<i>hanami ni tote mo</i>	no one will even think
<i>hito kozarikeri</i>	to come blossom viewing. ³¹⁶

At a time when I found my relationship troubling,³¹⁷ I went on retreat to Uzumasa,³¹⁸ and while I was there, a colleague with whom I had been on intimate terms at court kindly sent me a letter. Just as I was about to reply to her, I heard the sound of the temple bell:

<i>shigekarishi</i>	Even the tangled, petty,
<i>ukiyo no koto mo</i>	troubles of this world,
<i>wasurarezu</i>	I am unable to forget,
<i>iriahhi no kane no</i>	as the evening bell tolls for
<i>kokorobosasa ni</i>	my heart's desolation.

This I wrote and sent to her.

On one warm and gentle day at court, three of us, who were kindred spirits, spoke together heart to heart. The following day, I returned home, and with time on my hands, I recalled fondly our conversation and addressed this to my two friends:

<i>sode nururu</i>	While I know
<i>araiso nami to</i>	it was a rough shore with waves
<i>shirinagara</i>	that drenched one's sleeves,
<i>tomo ni kadzuki wo</i>	our diving in together
<i>seshi zo kohishiki</i>	I remember with longing. ³¹⁹

After I sent it, from one of my friends came this:

<i>araiso ha</i>	On this rough shore,
<i>asaredo nani no</i>	although one seeks shellfish,

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315. This was likely the family country house in the western part of Kyoto, whose rural environs she described earlier in the diary.
316. This poem was included in the “Spring” section of the imperial anthology *Gyokuyōshū* (1313), poem 185.
317. The phrase used here, *yo no naka* (literally “relations in the world”), is used more often than not in Heian-period writing to refer to conjugal relationships between men and women, but it can also mean one’s relations in general with society. Another possible meaning here is that the author was having troubles with her social relationships at court.
318. See notes 103 and 193.
319. With associative language of the sea and fishing, the author creates a metaphoric evocation of working at court: “Yes, the work was hard and our sleeves were drenched with tears of disappointment, but the fact that we worked side by side makes me remember it with longing.”

kahi nakute
ushiho ni nururu
ama no sode kana

no good comes of it.³²⁰
 Ah, drenched indeed with brine,
 are the sleeves of this fisher.

And from the other friend:

mirume ofuru
ura ni arazu ha
araiso no
namima kazofuru
ama mo araji wo

If this were not a bay
 where the see-you weed³²¹ grows,
 then I would not want
 to be a fisher gauging the space
 between this rough shore's waves.

There was another kindred spirit with whom I corresponded in the same way, someone with whom I could share the sad and fascinating things in life. After she had gone down to Chikuzen,³²² on a night when the moon was very bright, I fell asleep longing for her, thinking again and again that on a night like this, serving together at court, we would not have slept a wink but would have stayed up the whole night gazing at the moon. I was startled to awaken from a dream in which I saw her just as she had been in reality when we had served together at court. The moon was just nearing the rim of the mountains. Feeling as though "had I known it was a dream, I would have not awakened,"³²³ I sank into reverie.

yume samete
nezame no toko no
uku bakari
kohiki to tsuge yo
nishi he yuku tsuki

Awakened from a dream,
 this bed of fitful slumber
 still afloat on tears,
 please tell her that I miss her,
 moon on your way to the west.³²⁴

For various reasons, I went down to Izumi Province around autumn.³²⁵ We started by boat from Yodo,³²⁶ and the beautiful and touching sights along the way were beyond description. That night we anchored off a place called Takahama;³²⁷ it was very dark, and late at night, we heard the sound of boat oars. When someone asked what it was, it turned out to be the sound of women entertainers approaching.

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320. This poem puns on *kahi* (shellfish) and the expression *kahi naku* (without good result).
 321. This poem puns on *mirume* (seeing eye), which is also the name of a type of seaweed, to say, “If I could not see you from time to time, I would not want to work here.”
 322. Chikuzen is the name for the northwest part of present-day Fukuoka Prefecture. It is likely that her friend accompanied her husband on a tour of duty.
 323. Ono no Komachi, *Kokinshū*, poem 552: *omohitsutsu / nureba ya hito no / mietsuramu / yume to shiriseba / samezaremasi wo* (When I fell asleep / longing so for him / he seemed to appear— / had I known it was a dream, / I would not have awakened).
 324. Poems very similar to this one, based on the image of the moon journeying west, were exchanged between Murasaki Shikibu and a friend who was going off to the western provinces. See Bowring, trans., *Murasaki Shikibu*, 219, poems 6 and 7.
 325. In 1049, the author’s elder brother, Sugawara no Sadayoshi, took the post of governor of Izumi Province, roughly the southwest part of present-day Osaka Prefecture. Thus the author may have gone to Izumi to visit her brother.
 326. Yodo is in the Fushimi District of present-day Kyoto Prefecture. This voyage was down the Yodo River.
 327. Takahama was a port on the Yodo River at a place now within the Osaka city limits.

We all were interested and tossed a line to attach their boat to ours. In the light of lamps set at a distance, we could see these women wearing singlets³²⁸ with long sleeves, hiding their faces with fans and singing songs; it was very moving.³²⁹

On the day after, just as the sun was setting over the rim of the mountains, we rowed by Sumiyoshi Bay.³³⁰ The sky was completely misted over, and the scene of the branch tips of the pine trees, the surface of the sea, and the shore on which the waves lapped was so beautiful that it could not be captured in a painting.

<i>ika ni ihi</i>	How to tell of it;
<i>nani ni tatohete</i>	to describe it, with what
<i>kataramashi</i>	could I compare it—
<i>aki no yufube no</i>	this evening in autumn
<i>sumiyoshi no ura</i>	on Sumiyoshi Bay.

I gazed fixedly on the scene and as we were drawn past it, I could not help looking back again; I felt I could never tire of it.

At the onset of winter,³³¹ we had just boarded a boat at a place called Ōtsu³³² to return to the capital when, that night, rain fell and the wind blew violently enough to move even boulders. What's more, thunder crashed and roared, and with the sound of the surging waves and the way the wind blew everything around wildly, it was terrifying. I lost control of my thoughts and was sure I was going to die. They pulled the boat up onto a hillock, and we stayed up all night. The next day, the rain let up but the wind still blew; they did not launch the boat. Unable to go anywhere, stranded on top of the hillock, we remained for five or six days. Finally, when the wind abated a little and I raised the blinds and looked out, the way the evening tide had, in a breathless moment, flooded in to the peak, with cranes along the inlet crying in full voice, it all seemed lovely.³³³ People from the province gathered around and observed, "If my lady had managed to set out that night for Ishizu,³³⁴ there is no doubt that your boat would have been lost without a trace." I listened uneasily to their words.

<i>aruru umi ni</i>	On that rough, tossed sea,
<i>kaze yori saki ni</i>	what if we had launched our boat

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328. A singlet was an unlined kimono; in other words, the entertainers were dressed casually.
329. This is the diary's third reference to female entertainers, and once again, the moving quality of the women's performance is the focal point of the author's perception.
330. Sumiyoshi is a district in the present-day city of Osaka and the site of the ancient Sumiyoshi Shrine. The shrine was right on Sumiyoshi Bay in the Heian period, but now the spread of reclaimed land has separated the shrine some distance from the sea. From ancient times, since so many poems were written about the shrine, the god of Sumiyoshi came to be regarded as the god of poetry. As an *utamakura*, Sumiyoshi had several connotations. Because the name literally means "Good for Living," it figures in auspicious poems. Poems about Sumiyoshi usually include references to the sea, waves, and pines—elements also in screen paintings of this place. Finally, Sumiyoshi is an important setting in some chapters of the *Tale of Genji*.
331. The author appears to have visited Izumi from early autumn to the beginning of winter, quite a long stay of about three months.
332. Ōtsu was a large port in Izumi Province.
333. This phrasing is almost an exact quotation from "The Pilgrimage to Sumiyoshi" (or Channel Buoys; Miotsukushi), chapter 14 of the *Tale of Genji*: "The scene's stirring mood, with the evening tide flooding in and the cranes along the inlet crying in full voice . . ." (Tyler, trans., *Tale of Genji*, 292). Chapter 14 describes Genji's pilgrimage to Sumiyoshi to give thanks to the god of Sumiyoshi for his good fortune after his deliverance from the trials of his exile in Suma, which included the survival of a great storm. In the same general geographical area, the author happens to see a similar scene after having survived a terrible storm herself.
334. Ishizu was the next large port along the coast to the capital located at the mouth of the Ishizu River. It corresponds to the Sakai municipality of present-day Osaka Prefecture.

<i>funade shite</i>	ahead of the storm
<i>ishizu no nami to</i>	and vanished utterly
<i>kienamashikaba</i>	in the billows of Ishizu . . .

During my life in one way or another, I had expended my heart worrying. How might my court service have turned out if I had only been able to devote myself to it single-mindedly? But since I went to serve only occasionally, it seems that I could not really have expected it to have amounted to anything. I had gradually passed my prime and could not help feeling that it was unseemly for me to carry on as though I were still young. My body had become weak through illness, so I could no longer go on pilgrimages according to my wishes. I had even stopped going out on rare occasions. While I hardly felt that I should live much longer, nonetheless lying down and getting up everyday, I was plagued with the thought, “How much I wish to live long enough in this world to see the young ones properly settled.”³³⁵ Meanwhile, I worried anxiously to hear news of a fortunate appointment for the one I relied on.³³⁶ Autumn arrived, and it seemed that what we were waiting for had come, but the appointment was not what we expected.³³⁷ It was a pity to be so disappointed. It did seem as though my husband’s post was a little closer than the East Country, the going to and returning from which we knew from my father’s time.³³⁸ Anyway, what could we do about it? We hurried with preparations for his imminent departure. He was to make the preliminary start a little after the tenth day of the Eighth Month from the residence to which his daughter had just moved.³³⁹ Unaware of what was to come, he took his leave in lively fashion, with lots of people bustling around.

Our son accompanied him when he left for the provinces on the twenty-seventh day.³⁴⁰ Our son, with a sword at his side, wore purple trousers of a twill weave, with a hunting cloak of the bush clover color combination³⁴¹ over a crimson robe that had been fullled to a glossy sheen. He walked behind his father, who wore dark blue trousers and a hunting cloak.³⁴² At the central gallery, they mounted their horses. After the lively procession had departed, I felt somehow at loose ends with nothing to do. Since I had heard that their destination was not so very far,³⁴³ I did not feel quite as bereft as I had on previous occasions.³⁴⁴

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335. This is a reference to the author's children with Toshimichi.
336. This is a reference to her husband, Toshimichi.
337. In 1057, Toshimichi received a post as the governor of Shinano Province (present-day Nagano Prefecture) in the Japan Alps. It had a harsh climate and was far away.
338. Her father had served in Kazusa and Hitachi Provinces, and her husband already had served in Shimotsuke Province—all of which were in the East Country.
339. This is apparently Toshimichi's older daughter from an earlier marriage. He received the appointment on the thirtieth day of the Seventh Month (September 1) in Tengi 5 (1057) and was already preparing to leave a mere ten days later.
340. Their eldest son is about seventeen years old, and the author is fifty years old.
341. The bush clover color combination was maroon with a lining of green.
342. Women's diaries from the Heian period frequently describe clothing, no doubt because a substantial part of a wife's work was overseeing and actively participating in its manufacture.
343. Shinano Province was a little more than half the distance to the East Country.
344. The previous occasion extensively described in the diary is her father's departure for Hitachi Province in 1032.

Those who had gone along to see the party off came back the next day and said, “They departed in great splendor.” And when they said, “This morning at dawn, a very large soul fire appeared and came toward the capital,”³⁴⁵ I thought surely it must be from one of his attendants. Did even an inkling of this being a bad omen come to me?

At the time, all I could think about was how to raise the young children into adults. My husband came back to the capital in the Fourth Month of the following year;³⁴⁶ summer and autumn passed. On the twenty-fifth day of the Ninth Month, my husband fell ill; on the fifth day of the Tenth Month, he died.³⁴⁷ I felt as though it were a bad dream; I could not imagine something like this happening. The image seen in the mirror offered to Hatsuse Temple³⁴⁸ of a figure collapsed on the ground weeping; this now was me. The image of the joyous figure had not come to pass. Now it seemed hardly likely that it could ever be in the future. On the twenty-third day, the night when the evanescent clouds of smoke were to be kindled, the one whom I had watched go off with his father last autumn in such a magnificent costume now wore mourning white over a black robe and accompanied the funeral carriage crying and sobbing as he walked away. Seeing him off and remembering the other time—I had never felt like this before. I grieved as though lost in a dream, and I wondered whether my departed one could see me.

Long ago, rather than being infatuated with all those frivolous tales and poems, if I had only devoted myself to religious practice day and night, I wonder, would I have been spared this nightmarish fate? The time that I went to Hatsuse Temple when someone in a dream threw me something, saying, “This is a cedar of good omen bestowed by the Inari Shrine,” if I had just gone right then and there on a pilgrimage to Inari, maybe this would not have happened. The dreams that I had had over the years in which I had been told to “worship the god Amaterasu” had been divined³⁴⁹ as meaning that I should become a nurse to an imperial child, serving in the palace and receiving the protection of the imperial consort.³⁵⁰ But nothing like that had ever come to pass. Only the sad image in the mirror had been fulfilled. Pitifully, I grieved. Since I had ended up as one without one thing going as I had wished, I had drifted along without doing anything to accumulate merit.

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345. "Soul fire" is the translation of *hitodama*, a bluish ball of light that was thought to depart from a person who was soon to die.
 346. In the Fourth Month of the following year, 1058, her husband was given permission to leave his post, possibly for health reasons, although the author says explicitly only that he had fallen ill in the autumn.
 347. The text itself does not state explicitly that he died; instead, it merely speaks of feeling as though one were having a bad dream.
 348. This is another reference to the mirror that her mother had cast and sent as an offering to Hatsuse Temple in order to try to foretell the author's future as a young woman.
 349. In the entries for these earlier dreams, the author remarks that she told no one about them. It is clear from this entry, however, that she sometimes had her dreams interpreted.
 350. Here readers are finally given the precise content of her hopes for a successful career at court.

Yet somehow it seemed that even though life was sad, it would continue. I worried that perhaps even my hopes for the afterlife might not be granted. There was only one thing I could put my faith in. It was a dream that I had had on the thirteenth day of the Tenth Month in the third year of Tengi.³⁵¹ Amida Buddha³⁵² appeared in the front garden of the house where I lived. He was not clearly visible but appeared through what seemed like a curtain of mist. When I strained to look through gaps in the mist, I could see a lotus dais about three to four feet above the ground; the holy Buddha was about six feet in height. He glowed with a golden light, and one of his hands was spread open; with the other he was forming a *mudra*.³⁵³ Other people could not see him; only I could. Inexplicably, I experienced a great sense of fear and was unable to move closer to the bamboo blinds to see. The Buddha deigned to speak: “If this is how it is, I will go back this time, but later I will return to welcome you.” Only my ears could hear his voice; the others could not. This was the dream I had, and when I woke up with a start, it was the fourteenth. My only hope for my afterlife is this dream.

My nephews, whom I had seen day and night when we lived in the same place, had gone off to different places after this regrettably sad event, so I seldom saw anyone. On a very dark night, the sixth youngest nephew³⁵⁴ came for a visit; I felt this was unusual. This poem came spontaneously:

tsuki mo idede
yami ni kuretaru

wobasute ni
nani tote koyohi
tadzune kitsuramu

Not even the moon has
emerged in the darkness deepening
over
Old Forsaken Woman Peak.
How is it, then, that you
have come visiting this night?³⁵⁵

And to a friend with whom I had corresponded warmly before but from whom I had not heard since I had come to this pass:

ima ha yo ni
araji mono to ya
omofuramu

Is it that you think
I am one no longer living
in this world of ours?

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351. The year was 1055, three years before her husband's death. This is the only time in the diary that the author gives such a specific date. For a detailed discussion of this dream, see chapter 3.
352. This is the Buddha whose vow was to save—by bringing them to dwell in the Pure Land of the West—all those with a believing heart who, when they were dying, called out his name.
353. The *mudra* is a sacred hand gesture.
354. This reference has puzzled commentators because the author never before has mentioned having as many as six nephews. Her elder sister could not have had more than three children. Although there is no record of how many children her elder brother had, he may have had a large family.
355. Old Forsaken Woman (Obatsuteyama) is the name of a mountain in the Sarashina District of Shinano Province. Its literal meaning is “the mountain where old women are abandoned.” It is an *utamakura* with complex associations. The place-name is connected with both a folk belief about an ancient custom of abandoning old women and a reputation for being a beautiful place to view the moon. The association with the moon arose from an anonymous poem in the *Kokinshū*, poem 878: *waga kokoro / nagasamekanetsu / sarashina ya / obasuteyama ni / teru tsuki wo mite* (My heart / is inconsolable, / Ah! Sarashina / where over Old Forsaken Woman Peak / I see the moon shining). This poem was given a narrative context in a collection of tales about poems, the *Tales of Yamato*. The place-name Sarashina has a further personal association for the author because Sarashina and Obasuteyama are in Shinano Province, the place of her husband's last posting. The author derived the title for her diary from this allusion to the Sarashina of the *Kokinshū* poem and the *Tales of Yamato* story. For a full discussion of this, see chapter 6.

ahare naku naku
naho koso ha fure

Sadly I cry and cry,
yet I do indeed live on.

At the time of the Tenth Month, crying as I gazed out at the exceeding brightness of the full moon:

hima mo naki
namida ni kumoru
kokoro ni mo
akashi to miyuru
tsuki no kage kana

Even to a heart
clouded by tears that fall
with no respite,
the light pouring from the moon
can appear so radiant.³⁵⁶

The months and years change and pass by, but when I recall that dreamlike time, my mind wanders, and it is as though my eyes grow so dark that I cannot recall clearly the events of that time.

Everyone has moved to live elsewhere; only I am left in the old house. One time when I stayed up all night in gloomy contemplation, feeling bereft and sad, I sent this to someone from whom I had not heard for a long time:

shigeri yuku
yomogi ga tsuyu ni
sobochitsutsu
hito ni toharenu
ne wo nomi zo naku

Mugwort growing
ever thicker, sodden
with dew;
a voice sought by no one
cries out all alone.³⁵⁷

She was a nun.³⁵⁸

yo no tsune no
yado no yomogi wo
omohiyare
somuki hatetaru
niha no kusa mura

In the mugwort of a
dwelling in the everyday world,
please imagine
the dense grasses in the garden
of final renouncement.