

## 清少納言

## SEI SHŌNAGON

JAPAN (966–?)

LANGUAGE: JAPANESE

## 春も秋も

## HARU MO AKI MO

## 春も秋も

Haru mo aki mo

## しらぬときはの

shiranu tokiwa no

## 山かはは

yamakawa wa

## 花吹く風を

hana fuku kaze wo

## 音にこそきけ

oto ni koso kike



Sei Shōnagon was a writer and lady-in-waiting to the Empress Sadako during the Heian period (794–1185) in Japan. She wrote *The Pillow Book*, a famous compilation of essays, diary entries, and poems about her life in the empress's court. She was confined to the small aristocratic world within the court, hardly ever venturing beyond its walls. When she was not busy entertaining the empress, she spent her time gossiping and observing the lives of those around her. She was known for her quick wit and for being able to recite hundreds of classical poems from memory. She wrote *waka*, short five-line poems in which the last two lines add to or modify the meaning of the first three. Her poems were typically about nature, the seasons, the passage of time, and the cycle of life. Though the date and circumstances of her death are mysterious, historians believe that she either lived until 1017 as the wife of a court official, or else died in 1025, a miserable, poor Buddhist nun.

TRANSLATOR'S GLOSSARY			
CHARACTER	RŌMAJI	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
秋	aki (n.)	the season when crops and fruits are harvested and leaves change color	autumn, fall
吹く	fuku (v.)	to be moved or affected by the wind, creating an air current	blow, whistle, float, carry, gust, waft
花	hana (n.)	the part of a plant that is colorful and only lives for a short time	flowers, blossoms, cherry blossoms, blooms, petals
春	haru (n.)	the season in which plants and flowers begin to grow	spring, springtime
風を	kaze wo (phrase)	within a natural movement of air outside	in the wind, in the breeze, in the air, in a gust, in a flurry
きけ	kike (v.)	used to urge someone to pay attention	listen, note, mark, follow, notice, prick your ears
こそ	koso (adj.)	used to indicate a specific thing observed or heard by the speaker	that, this, that there
…も…も	...mo...mo (conj.)	used to connect two words or phrases to stress that each is included	both, and
音に	oto ni (phrase)	the audible vibrations in the air made by someone or something	to the sound of, to the resonance of, to the music of, to the tune of, to the melody of
しらぬ	shiranu (adj.)	lacking knowledge or information	unfamiliar to, unknown by, foreign to, strange to, unrecognized by, nameless to, unheard of by
ときはの	tokiwa no (phrase)	made of or surrounded by trees whose leaves do not change with the seasons	in an evergreen forest, surrounded by pine trees, among cypress trees
山かはは	yamakawa wa (n.)	a large natural flow of water that crosses an elevated area of land	mountain river, mountain stream, mountain spring, mountain creek

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

PHRASE BY PHRASE

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## REFLECTING AND FINDING MEANING

Group Member Names:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Pick a scribe for the group, and work together to answer the questions.

What are the best parts of this translation, and why do you think they are good?

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What elements of the original poem did you lose in the translation? What did you manage to keep?

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Did you achieve something new with your translation, and if so, does it make sense in the poem or not?

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