

清少納言

SEI SHŌNAGON

JAPAN (966–?)

LANGUAGE: JAPANESE

ここにのみ

KOKO NI NOMI

ここにのみ

Koko ni nomi

めづらしと見る

medzurashi to miru

雪の山

yuki no yama

所々に

tokoro-dokoro ni

ふりにけるかな

furinikeru ka na



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. This poem is one she wrote about the first snowfall in the imperial garden. 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
ふりにける	furinikeru (v.)	to move downward, typically rapidly and freely without control, from a higher to lower level	it falls, it is falling, it piles up, it tumbles down, it descends, it flutters down
かな	ka na (phrase)	possibly but not certainly	I wonder, is it?, possibly, so I've heard, I guess, I suppose, perhaps
ここに	koko ni (prep.)	in, at, or to this place or location	here, present, right here
めづらし	medzurashi (adj.)	not occurring very often	rare, unusual, curious, strange, unique, peculiar, special
のみ	nomi (adv.)	existing with no other or others of the same kind	only, alone, uniquely, particularly, singularly, solely, in particular, especially
と見る	to miru (v.)	receive the impression or sensation of something or noting a particular quality	seems (to us) to look like, appears (to us) as, (we) see as, (we) perceive as
所々に	tokoro-dokoro ni (adv.)	in different places	hither and thither, here and there, roundabout, elsewhere, all about, all around, in all parts
山	yama (n.)	the area of land that rises very high above the land around it, a very large amount of something	mountain, hill, mound, bank, pile, dune, heap
雪の	yuki no (adj.)	consisting of water vapor frozen into ice crystals	snowy, of snow, of powder, of slush

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

PHRASE BY PHRASE

ここにのみ

KOKO NI NOMI _____

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ふりにけるかな

furinikeru ka na _____

REFLECTING AND FINDING MEANING

Group Member Names:

Date: _____

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?

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

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