

# HEART AND ART

(福 田 勳)

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## MY NEIGHBOURS' VOICE

Night has come.  
All is silent  
Except for the neighbours' voice,  
Coming through the thin partition  
Separating my house from theirs.  
I can't understand  
What they are saying,  
But their voice  
Is my comfort, my solace;  
The only daughter left  
Has been married and gone  
To a distant place.  
They are talking,  
Laughing together.  
Their voice was once  
A nuisance to me.

## MY HEART IS A PENDULUM

My heart is a pendulum,  
Swinging between the two,  
The light and the shade,  
When it is in the light,  
Everything is dear to me,  
Even a broken piece of glass.  
When it is in the shade,  
Everything is hateful to me,  
Even my healthy and happy self.  
My heart is a pendulum  
Swinging between the two,  
The light and the shade.

## HEART AND ART

### HEAVEN AND HELL

I have travelled  
All over this country.  
I have travelled  
All over the world.  
I have no more land  
To go to,  
Except Heaven and Hell,  
To neither of which  
I am willing to go  
For the time being.

### ENGLISH TEACHING

I teach English  
To my girl students  
To make money.  
  
They forget it soon,  
Only to make a sweet home,  
With their sweethearts.

### ENGLISH

"English is spoken  
Even by a baby or a beggar  
In your country,"  
I said once to an American,  
Who is too proud to speak Japanese,  
And always complaining  
Of the poor skill  
Of Japanese students  
In English conversation.

### JOYFUL LAMENTATION

Days have passed,  
Months have passed,  
Years have passed,  
Leaving my wife and me  
In our unsunny house,  
With all our children  
Now married and gone,

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To her daily and nightly  
Joyful lamentation.

### THE SKY IS CLEAR

The sky is clear.  
The day is warm.  
I enjoy my mental serenity,  
Basking in the mild sunlight,  
And waiting for suburban train,  
Which, I hope will take me  
To the end of the world,  
Rushing through the refreshing air.

### THE CURSE OF CIVILIZATION

Evening calm has come at last.  
All day long  
The housing tower construction  
Clanged, clattered, and banged  
Its unharmonious symphony,  
Driving into my heart  
The curse of civilization,  
The fume of resignation,  
To be eternally confined there.

### THE STARS

The sun has left me,  
And the moon is smiling on me,  
But I love the stars.  
They are not smiling on me,  
But they are twinkling  
High and near,  
Silent and far.

### TO TERRIFY DEATH

I am growing more and more  
Short-tempered  
With the addition of my years.  
How strongly I wish  
To terrify Death  
With the sudden burst

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Of my fume,  
To make him beat  
A sudden retreat,  
When he comes to welcome me  
Into his realm of eternal silence!

### CICADAS' SHELLS

The youngest daughter  
Is now married and gone.

My wife and I  
Are cicadas' shells  
Cast to the west wind.

### A THIN RAY OF HOPE

While leading my pen of creation,  
Darkend by the housing tower  
Building close by,  
I thought of a prisoner in old days  
Confined in the dark dungeon  
Of a castle,  
In whose heart  
A thin ray of hope  
Might have been flickering  
To his last moment.

### JAPANESE

English is a world language.  
Everyone knows it in this country,  
And tries to learn it,  
But few can master it,  
Though everyone knows  
A word or two of the language.  
Will the day come  
When Japanese may be spoken  
All over the world?  
I remember having written  
"Welcome" in Japanese,  
At Dublin in Ireland,  
Asked by the people there;

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Some prominent Japanese  
Were to visit the town,  
I was told.

### HOME

Home, home,  
Where is my home?  
I once thought  
It was where I was born;  
Now I don't find it there,  
But my heart is yearning for it,  
The more strongly,  
As days pass on.  
Home, home,  
Where is my home?  
Here, there, or nowhere?

### THE MILD LIGHT OF THE SUN

The last day of the year  
Is quiet and beautiful.  
With the mild light of the sun  
On my back,  
Which has now a shorter duration  
To shine upon me  
With a new dwelling tower  
Building close by,  
I have begun to read a book,  
Or rather to enjoy  
The beautiful sunlight in it.

### LYING IN BED

This evening lying in bed  
For a slight cold,  
I have thought of my past days  
Encircled by squares, triangles,  
And seldom by circles, of life,  
Looking up at the bright circles  
Of the neon lights.

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### ENGLISH

English is a strange language.  
If we wish to master it,  
It slips away like an eel.  
If we leave it as it is,  
It comes nestling  
Like a Persian cat.  
When we read it in a book,  
It sounds like the sougning  
Of the summer breeze.  
When we write it with a pen,  
It rustles on  
Like a silver serpent  
In the grass.  
When we speak it to others,  
It flows on  
Like a limpid stream  
In the deep mountain.  
English is a strange language,  
English is a mystic language,  
But it is also an attractive language.

### DAYS AND NIGHTS

Living in a house  
Which is not a house,  
Enjoying sunlight  
Which is not sunlight,  
Hurrying along the street  
Which is not a street,  
Teaching English  
Which is not English,  
I spend days and nights  
These days.

### NEW YEAR'S CARDS

The quiet of the New Year's Day  
Has made me unquiet  
With the weight of the obligations  
I ought to meet with my pen.

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### WHAT I AM

Like a willow branch  
I swing and sway.  
Like a stone you stumble on  
I am hard and dumb.  
Like a bee flying about  
I am busy and buzzy.  
Like a screech owl  
I hoot at the world.  
Thus I was,  
Thus I am,  
And thus I shall be  
Till I am not finally  
What I am.

### IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

My wife and I  
Live comfortably  
On my humble salary.  
We hav a house,  
Though small and shady,  
To live in.  
We have a few potted flowers  
To satisfy our aesthetic sense,  
And we have nothing more to desire,  
But to be sent to Heaven,  
While we are sleeping,  
As my grandfather did.

### A BAMBOO-LEAF BOAT

I will sail  
A bamboo-leaf boat  
On the pond of my heart,  
And blow it to and fro  
With my breath  
To bring back  
My childhood days  
When my father,  
My mother, and sister,  
Lived and loved me.

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### IN THE REALM OF MY HEART

In the realm of my heart  
The sun rises late,  
And sets early.  
The moon rises early,  
And sets late.  
The stars shine,  
But are often clouded.  
Here winter is  
The longest season,  
And summer is  
The shortest.  
Here I enjoy night  
Better than day,  
Making my soul  
My best friend.  
In the realm of my heart  
Night is longer,  
And more delightful  
Than daytime.

### THE ROCKY SHORE OF REFLECTION

Daily I stand  
On the rocky shore  
Of reflection,  
Dashing the fanciful vanities  
Of my petty and selfish self  
Into thousands of breakers  
To be sent back crystalline  
Into the bosom  
Of the ocean of eternity.

### MY PEN

When my pen leads me,  
I follow it as it will,  
And something comes from it sometimes,  
And sometimes nothing comes from it,  
But I like to follow my pen,  
Not to lead it.  
My pen knows my heart



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Much better than my will.

### CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

I spent my Christmas holidays  
At home, hugging my foot-warmer,  
Reading, writing,  
Napping,  
And seldom going out.  
Whenever I went out,  
I found how distantly  
I was connected  
With the outer gay world.

### MY MEMORY

"Once I had a strong memory,  
And could learn all the words  
In a little English dictionary by heart,  
But now my memory is weak,  
And even the Christian name  
Of my wife I often miss,"  
I said one day to my students  
In the classroom,  
To my pride and humiliation,  
And they burst out laughing.

### A PENSIONER

I am now a pensioner  
With a salary  
From a private school.  
I have nothing to worry about  
But the threatening shadow  
Of the inevitable,  
Which I loved once  
When I was young and weak.

### A NAMELESS NEW YEAR'S CARD

Among piles of New Year's cards  
I found one without the name  
Of the sender.  
It pleased me most

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With the innocent carelessness  
On the part of the well-wisher  
In this world of sharp practice.

### THERE IS TIME

There is time  
When I feel lighter in heart  
Than air.  
There is time  
When I feel heavier in mood  
Than lead.  
There is time  
When I feel paler in thought  
Than the moon.  
There is time  
when I feel I am  
Less than nothing.  
It is then that in my heart  
A fountain of joy  
Begins to rise.

### I AM A PENSIONER

When I am alone,  
I often play with my thoughts.  
When I am with my wife,  
I mostly listen  
To her regrets.  
When I am with others,  
I usually make fun of them.  
I am a pensioner,  
But still a teacher,  
Waiting for the inevitable  
Mostly unwillingly,  
But sometimes  
Willingly.

### I HAVE DONE SOMETHING

I feel something coming,  
Though I don't know  
What it is.

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I feel something going,  
Though I don't know  
What it is,  
But I know I am here,  
And have done something  
Today.  
I don't know  
What will come and go  
Tomorrow,  
But I know for certain  
That I am here,  
And have done something  
Today.  
Let tomorrow do  
What it will,  
Let it do its best  
Or its worst,  
As it pleases  
Or displeases.  
I have done something  
Today.

## POETRY

It is good to read poetry,  
It is better to make poetry,  
It is best to live poetry,  
When one was unfortunate once,  
But now is fortunate,  
Though sometimes  
The contrary may be the case.

It is good not to read poetry,  
It is better not to make poetry,  
It is best not to live poetry,  
When one was fortunate once,  
But now is unfortunate,  
Though sometimes  
The contrary may be the case.

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### DEATH

Once when I was young and weak,  
Death was a colourful arch of rainbow,  
And it seemed easy  
To enjoy eternal felicity.

Now when I am old and healthy,  
Death threatens me with its hell fire,  
And the mere thought of it  
Makes me tremble.

### MY FRIENDS

I had once  
Many friends  
Surrounding me,  
But I felt alone,  
Lived alone;  
My slough was not shed.

Now I have only a few friends,  
But I don't feel alone,  
Rather I feel many;  
My slough is now shed.

### NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Television said yesterday  
So many cannon balls  
Had been dug out rotten  
In Osaka at the place  
Where once the arsenal was.  
I wished all the nuclear weapons  
In the world  
Had rotted away.

### WHAT I AM

"How many years  
I have been a hard master  
To my frail frame!  
How many years  
It has served its tyrannical master,

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Silent and patient!"  
I said to myself,  
And knew the cause  
Of eternal class strife.

### CLOUDS

I love clouds  
For their freedom.  
I love clouds  
For their silence.  
I love clouds  
For their aloofness.  
I love clouds  
For their multiplicity.  
I have lived like clouds;  
I shall disappear like clouds.

### SORROWS AND JOYS

When there are  
So many sorrows  
In the world,  
Why am I so indifferent?  
Because there are too many.

When there are  
So many joys  
In the world,  
why am I so indifferent?  
Because true joys are so few.

### HALF AND HALF

Half of myself  
Says I am wise.  
Another half of myself  
Says I am a fool,  
And I see now  
That when I thought  
I was wise,  
I was a fool,  
And that when I thought  
I was a fool,

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I was wise.

### POETICAL RUBBISH

I asked myself,  
“What is poetry?”  
And answered,  
“It is a mere waste of time,”  
And wasted much time  
In writing lots of poetical rubbish,  
To please my fancy.

### MAN

One is very proud,  
When one is one-hundredth  
Taller than another,  
And one feels ashamed,  
When one is one-thousandth  
Shorter than another,  
When one is less than nothing  
In this wide universe.

### BY SOMETHING

By gold  
We know human cupidity.  
By silver  
We know human dubiousity.  
By lead  
We know human hypocrisy.  
By life  
We know human stupidity.  
By death  
We know human equality.  
By my palm lines  
I know my settled fortunes.

### THE CAUSE

“Why are you so cynical?”  
“Because the world has made me so.”  
  
“Why are you so capricious?”

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“Because the world has made me so.”

“Why are you so impatient?”

“Because the world has made me so.”

“Why are you so frail and thin?”

“Because English has made me so.”

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

“Do you like to live in this wicked world?”

“No, I don't.”

“Why are you living, then?”

“Because I am afraid to die.”

“Why are you afraid to die?”

“Because I am a coward.”

“Why are you a coward?”

“Because God has made me so.”

“What is God, then?”

“I don't know, but he may be  
Something.”

## ONCE AND NOW

Once I read in words  
Mountains and seas.  
Now I read words  
As mountains and seas.

Once I read in books  
My own self and others.  
Now I read in books  
Enjoyment and disappointment.

## SPRING

Spring is dancing  
With her light steps  
In the gentle rain.  
I hear their approaching sounds,  
Hugging my foot-warmer,

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And sneezing and coughing.

### MY SHADOW

Once seldom looking back  
Upon my shadow cast behind,  
I went on my way  
With quick steps.

Now I am trudging on slowly,  
Often looking back  
Upon my shadow  
With rueful meditation.

### HAIKU

So many advertizements  
are found everywhere.  
So few relations they bear  
with me, a poor pensioner.

Sneezing and musing,  
musing and sneezing,  
I popped out a haiku,  
pale with a cold.

Hugging my foot-warmer,  
and sneezing and coughing,  
I am waiting for the flower-viewing,  
or rather the crowd-viewing season.

### SNOW IS FALLING

Snow is falling.  
I have called to mind  
A blooming girl,  
Who loved to climb  
Mountains alone,  
And was killed alone  
On one of the peaks  
Of the Japan Alps,  
Frozen to death.  
She had early been



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Bereft of her parents.

### BLOOMING BEAUTY

Though it is mid-winter,  
The weather is spring-like today.  
Basking in the beautiful light of the sun,  
I have enjoyed talking for some time  
With my girl students in blooming beauty,  
Looking now and then  
At my veiny, shrunken hands.  
They have told me, shining with hopes,  
That they are planning to go over to America  
In spring after graduation.

### TELEVISION

Suddenly my wife  
Bursting out laughing,  
I have stopped reading.  
These days she does not know  
No other pleasure  
Than to watch television  
Day and night,  
All her children  
Having married and gone,  
And I, who should be  
Her comforter, enjoying reading,  
Buried in books  
With my gray hair  
And weakened memory.

Rising suddenly from my desk,  
I have gone downstairs,  
And enjoyed television  
With my wife.

### WHAT I AM

English has made me  
A spectacled parrot.  
Books have made me  
A wise dolt.  
Students have made me

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A grown-up child.

### MY LATTER LIFE

Good health  
Gives me  
A joyful sense  
Of longevity.

Empty stomach  
Gives me  
A pleasant sense  
Of sound health.

Hot-bath  
Brings me back  
To the happy days  
Of a singing child.

### WHAT COMES

When I sit and think,  
Regret comes.  
When I stand up and stir,  
Hope comes.  
When I teach English,  
Joy comes.  
When I read books  
Dozing comes.  
When I go to bed,  
The thought of death comes.

### THOUGHTS AND WORDS

Thoughts came like mists.  
Words came like clouds.  
Making thoughts warps,  
And making words woofs,  
I began to weave a fablic  
Of my fancy;  
Suddenly thoughts went out  
Like ghosts,  
And words disappeared

## HEART AND ART

Like mists.  
I was left like a kite  
Hanging from a tree branch.

### A JAPANESE TEACHER OF ENGLISH

As fine as fine weather,  
As pleasant as summer clouds,  
As merry as a skylark,  
I go to school  
Every other day,  
Where my girl students  
Are waiting to enjoy  
My tall and idle talk  
Rather than English lessons.

### JANGLISH

To get my pay  
I go my way  
As a teacher,  
A poor creature,  
Speaking Janglish,  
And not English.

### SOMETHING IN COMMON

Seeing so many cruelties  
And devilish acts done  
By our brethren in the world,  
I am appalled and shudder  
At something which I may have  
In common with them,  
And which may burst out,  
If occasion for it  
Should arise.

### THE ALARM-CLOCK

I listened to the alarm-clock  
Ticking away every second of my life  
Regularly,  
And thought how irregularly  
My life had been spent.

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### MY WAY IN THE WORLD

One day I lost my way  
In the world,  
And tried hard  
To find it,  
Going this way,  
And that way.  
Completely tired out  
With my fruitless effort,  
I looked up at the sky,  
When I found my way there  
As clear as day.

### DREAMS

Dreams go away,  
But they come again.  
My dreams are my realities.  
When I am gone  
From this world,  
They will remain  
In heaven as stars,  
Or burn as hellfire  
In the bowels of the earth.

### THE WIND BLOWS

The wind blows.  
The river flows.  
Fire burns.  
Rain falls.  
Dogs bark.  
Cats mew.  
You laugh.  
He sings.  
She loves.  
I teach English.  
That's all,  
And nothing more.

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### SOMETHING DEFINITE

I have dozed away  
My life.  
Wandering in the twilight  
Of life,  
I am searching  
For something definite  
Indefinitely.

### WHAT I LIKE TO DO

When I am full of joy,  
I like to be among the crowd  
To know how happy and blessed I am.

When I feel sorrowful,  
I like to be alone  
To enjoy my sorrow heartily.

When neither joy nor sorrow  
Beguiles my caprice  
I like to fall to dozing,  
To enjoy death vicariously.

### A GOOD BOOK

There are many books to read,  
And few books to enjoy.  
These days  
I have a good book  
To read and enjoy.  
I carry it day and night  
In the depths  
Of my aged heart.

### A UNIVERSITY TEACHER OF ENGLISH

What a happy life  
A university teacher of English  
Can lead!  
He can enjoy  
With his students  
The mortal pain

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Of a rejected lover,  
Calling it a literary masterpiece.

### REMEMBRANCE

Like a rainbow  
Remembrance  
Hangs high  
Over my past,  
Brightening up  
Its burst dreams.

Like a mist  
Remembrance  
Fades away,  
From my past,  
Trailing its regrets  
In my yearning heart.

### THE EVENING GLOW

I like the evening glow,  
The lingering glow,  
The quiet glow,  
The fading glow,  
Brightening up  
My old heart.

### OLD MAN AND WIFE

Day is long,  
Night is short,  
When we,  
Old man and wife,  
Spend hours  
In looking back  
Upon our past,  
Hugging our foot-warmer.

### KITE-FLYING

How much I enjoyed  
My kite-flying,  
When a little boy  
In the biting blast

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Of winter  
With Mt. Fuji  
Covered with snow  
Rising high  
In the distance!

Now I enjoy  
sending up  
My kite of remembrance  
High up into the sky  
Of the long past  
In the biting blast  
Of the madding world  
With Mt. Rokko before me  
With big hotels on its top.

### A HOUSING TOWER

How late the morning sun,  
Or rather the mid-day sun  
Shines into my house and heart  
With the construction  
Of a housing tower  
Towering high and dark  
Beside my ramshackle house  
To tell us  
How limited our land is,  
While in the world  
There is so much land  
Lying wild and waste.

### IN A SINGLE GRAY HAIR

In a single gray hair  
May be found the toil  
Of one thousand years.

In a single line on the face  
May be found the joy  
Of ten thousand years.

In a nameless flower  
May be found the beauty

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Of one hundred thousand years.

In my numberless gray hairs  
I find a wise dolt  
More than sixty years old.

### POETS

How many poets there are!  
How few poets there are!  
It seems that I am one of them  
Happily or unhappily.

### GOD

You who complain of your misfortune,  
You had better be God yourself,  
And you will find how busy you are  
Day and night and night and day,  
In this wide and crowded world.

### WHAT I ENJOY

When I eat,  
I enjoy eating.  
When I travel,  
I enjoy travelling.  
When I teach English,  
I enjoy teaching English,  
But there is what I don't enjoy  
At all.  
It is politicians' talking.

### THE BARBER

The barber made me look  
Much younger,  
Cutting my gray hairs short,  
And shaving my lined face  
Smoothly.  
I came back to my wife  
As the handsomest boy  
In the world,  
Making her wish



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To go to a beautician.  
And she did go.

### MY ENGLISH

Today the sun  
Is warm and beautiful.  
Spring seems to be approaching.  
I have sunned myself for hours  
To dry my damp winter English.