

A Window with Cyclamen

メタデータ	言語: jpn 出版者: 公開日: 2020-03-26 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: 小森, 道彦, Smith, Jeniffer Rose メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	https://osaka-shoin.repo.nii.ac.jp/records/4467

A Window with Cyclamen (2)*

－ 田辺聖子「篝火草の窓」－

小森 道彦

Jennifer Rose Smith

主人公の戸沢瑠璃は 64 歳，塚田は 68 歳，瑠璃の家の出窓に置かれた鉢植えの花を通して二人は出会う。二人はしばしば会うようになり同じ世代の者どうし昔話を楽しむが，やがて塚田は瑠璃を山陰の旅に誘う。前編の「Window with Cyclamen (1) 一田辺聖子「篝火草の窓」一」は、『大阪樟蔭女子大学研究紀要』（第 10 号）に掲載予定である。本編では，導入部の瑠璃についての記述が終わり，はじめて塚田が瑠璃の前にあらわれたときの描写から物語が始まる。

In the late fall of last year, when Mr. Tsukada came to her house for the first time, he was holding a pot of white cyclamen.¹

Ruri had taken the day off on that Sunday by chance because a Buddhist memorial service for her mother was being held, and her relatives got together that day at a temple. 'Irene' was regularly closed on Wednesdays.

When she came back home in the evening, a man was repeatedly pushing the intercom button. Then, he strained to catch any answer from inside. Because of the 'automatic' lighting system in the rooms, he might have been thinking that somebody was at home.

He was an older man, with a flowerpot covered with the wrapping paper of the nearby shopping center. It was a pot of white cyclamen.

When Ruri spoke to him, he turned around and said in a casual Osaka dialect, "Excuse me, do you live in this house?" He spoke very fluently, but not in a lightheaded manner, so she thought that this man was also old enough to be unwavering. Because it was cold, she wanted to get into the house quickly,

but she did not want to let a complete stranger inside, nor did she want him to see her unlock the door.

He seemed to have no intention of getting into the house, and while standing, he said that he enjoyed looking at the flowers in her bay window on his way to work. The pots had not been in the window for about a week, and that had never happened before, so he'd been wondering what had happened to her. What's more, since the flowers, cyclamen or begonias, were all red until now, he had brought white flowers, thinking that it might be nice to have white ones once in a while.

When Ruri heard that unexpected story, she first thought,
“He's different.”

She believed that Japanese men were not interested in flowers very much, and in addition, they had no room in their hearts stop for a moment and look at flowers in someone else's windows during their busy commutes. Until now, Ruri might have had a vague distrust and a disdain for men without knowing why.

“I'm just that kind of person. I don't mean anything by it, but please accept these white flowers, as a small token of my gratitude.”

He gave the pot of flowers to her with his business card. Ruri needed to take out her reading glasses to read the card, but she felt reluctant to do that. She received them without hesitation. Then, she expressed her thanks and explained that the red cyclamen had wilted because of overwatering, and she had moved them to another place, so she would put the white flowers in the window instead right away.

Feeling relieved, the man bowed with a smile and went away into the dusk of the evening.

Ruri remembered reading this haiku poetry somewhere before: “For the time being, I will consider him a good man (Monta Sugimoto),” and she thought that it was like this.

Later she went to ‘Meiroken’ to have ramen (Ruri often has dinner there), and while answering the question from the restaurant owner, “You finished the memorial service without any difficulties?” it suddenly struck her

that it would have been nice of her to buy that man a bowl of ramen.

But, she soon drowned out the thought.

Although she likes to work in the busy Suomachi Street, she does not want to have a personal connection with people any longer. To face a man she does not know makes her feel daunted. She thought she did the right thing by cutting off their interaction quickly.

The next morning, however, when she saw the white cyclamen, she honestly believed that the pot of flowers seen from a train window during the man's commute would cheer him. There might be somebody like that, she thought.

When she looked at his business card, just to call to say thanks, she found that his company was located in the Namba area, not too far from hers. She called and said, "I'm Tozawa... at the cyclamen house." "Oh, Yeah, yeah. It's you." His voice sounded defenseless and familiar to her. From his tone and voice, the thought suddenly popped into her mind that such a man could visit an unknown house with a pot of cyclamen.

"That's true, 'an unknown house'..." he said. After that, Ruri and the man, Tsukada, sometimes met because their workplaces were near each other. Tsukada used the 'Namba' and Ruri the 'Shinsaibashi' subway station. Since Shinsaibashi Station is closer to Umeda, they used to have light dinner around there, and have a little drink at one of the small bars that are all inside the buildings.

"...but, for me, it was like a house of my acquaintance, because I saw the house every day during my commute."

Tsukada's hair had turned white around his temples. His face was ruddy, perhaps from being sunburnt from golfing, although he said he had already stopped golfing. The company he is working for now is the second engineering company his acquaintance had started, and the orders from Okayama and Hiroshima prefecture had been increasing recently. In the near future, they may set up a Hiroshima branch of the company, and if that happens, he might be made to go there, he said.

“Every man is like Torajiro Kuruma or Santoka.² We are wanderers until we die.” Tsukada said he was sixty-eight.

“You don’t look your age at all,” Ruri said, although he seemed to be reliable because he was as old as to bring a pot of cyclamen.

“Oh! You, neither.”

Ruri didn’t know why, but when she talked with Tsukada who was defenseless, she also became defenseless and let him know her true age.

“To tell the truth,” Tsukada said in a low tone, “my opinion is that everyone should report their own age as they like, because age itself expands and contracts depending on the person.”

Ruri could not help laughing at the thought that he is more inflexible than her.

“Besides, you will have good sense only after you are over sixty years old.”

“What do you mean, by ‘good sense?’”

“I mean you understand the secrets of human nature. I don’t want to say you become a master of the art of living, but people come to realize that anything could happen in this world. That’s what I mean by ‘good sense.’ Don’t you think you can understand that only after the age of sixty?”

Tsukada said he grew in the engineering industry. He had never been a government official or a teacher, but, in fact, he seemed to be well-trained to say things the moment that he thought of it.

Maybe she judged him that way because of her mercantile viewpoint that she had acquired from work.

Ruri, being from an older generation, knows about the hierarchy in Edo era going from ‘samurai,’ ‘farmers,’ ‘artisans,’ to ‘merchants,’ but she believes that the hierarchy should actually be reversed from the perspective of humanity. Witty, free and capable “merchants” are the best. Maybe she thinks this because her father was a merchant working at Dobuike Street, although he closed his shop because he was too good-natured to be a merchant.

“I imagined that a couple of newlyweds lived in the house with flowers in the window. It was because the curtains are always neat, and the house

seems full of life.”

“I ended up unmarried. I’m happy to be mistaken for a newlywed.”

“How can you say that? Nobody knows what will happen in the future.”

“Well, that’s true.”

Ruri smiled, speaking little about herself. Tsukada talked a lot more than she did. His wife built a house in a mountain in Nishinomiya, and because the housing loan, he has to keep working. They took in his mother-in-law who had become bedridden, and furthermore, his daughter came back to live with them. His daughter had brought her two daughters because she was not able to “hit it off” with her husband. In contrast, his son and his wife were living in Kobe and had never come back home. Aside from Tsukada, every life plan of his wife’s was so messed up that she felt disappointed and got pouty.

“... It’s me who is the most disappointed in my family.”

“Did you say that to your wife?”

“Well, I tried to, but I gave up ’cause nobody listens to what I say.”

Ruri thought for a minute, wondering who Tsukada’s smiling face resembled, and asked him,

“Mr. Tsukada?”

“Yes?”

“Do you remember the comics *Tank Tankuro*, from a long time ago, in our childhood? What about *Adventurous Boy Dankichi*?”

“Well, I remember them. I think they might have been published in *Shonen Kurabu* magazine.

“You really resemble the main character of the comics, Mr. Tukada.”

“It’s been a long time since I have heard of those. They are drawn in the era of Minetaro Yamanaka and Kuni Sasaki.”

“You resemble the boy illustrated by Teiji Kawame.”

“Oh, that was also a long time ago. You liked reading boy’s magazines?”

“Because I had a brother...”

“Was he killed in the war?”

“No, he passed way at eighteen, before the war. My brother and sister died very young.”

“I’m sorry to hear that. Probably, unlike them, you’ll have a long life.”³

Since that conversation, Tsukada has been nicknamed, “Adventurous Boy Dankichi” by Ruri.

His stories got more interesting every time she met him. Tsukada had been working in the field of science and engineering, so he had not been drafted until late into the war. Student mobilization, air raids, etc... they never run out of memories when they talk about the time during the war.

Once, Tsukada happened to say, “Do you know about Yorie Kubo, who was a haiku poet in Taisho Era?”

“No, I’m not very familiar with haiku. Are you interested in it?”

“No, I don’t know much about it, either. But... when I was very young, well...maybe in about 1951, or 1952, immediately after the war... I came down with Tuberculosis.”

“In those days, there were many boys and girls who were attacked with TB.”

“That’s why my parents left me in the care of relatives in a fishing town in Tango. I ate nothing but fish, day in and day out. When I went there many years later, there were tulip farms and Tango silk being woven, but when I was there as a child, there was nothing there. I was bored to death, so I pulled out the old books from the stone storehouse and started to read them. Among them was a collection of haiku and essays by Yorie Kubo, that was published in the early Showa Era. Yorie Kubo had been an apprentice of Kyoshi Takahama, and had lived in Hakata in Kyushu. Her husband was a medical professor at Kyushu Imperial University.”

Though they had no children, the couple got along well.

“Yorie liked flowers and she put some pots of geraniums on the second floor railing. They bloomed in abundance, eye-catching. She was highly praised by the people in the town, and she was also proud of it. Someone in the town sent her a *tanka* poem,

‘Geraniums of Dr. Kubo, in the upstairs window,
can be seen from the street in the spring sunset.’”

“Oh, dear! When was that?”

“About 1922, or 1923. Then, among the passersby on the street, there was a mounted soldier, who always passed by, popping his head up over the wall. He seemed to be a brigade commander of the barracks in the town. In a meeting on one occasion, when the soldier sat with Yorie’s husband Dr. Kubo, he said, ‘When I come to and fro from the barracks every morning and night, I pass your house appreciating the beauty of the flowers in the upstairs window, but I think there are lots of red and pink ones. Fortunately, I have a surplus of white, so I will share some with you.’ So saying, an orderly brought a pot of white geranium in no time.”

“Wow, he’s so kind.”

“When I read the story, I felt as if that happened in another world. Since I was a small child, the soldiers we knew were always arrogant and walked with a swagger. I thought they were ferocious and slow-witted. But to learn that there was such a soldier in the Taisho Era... I was deeply moved. Your flowers remind me of that very old story—that’s why I pushed the intercom button of your house while holding a pot of white cyclamen in one hand. Well, I must have been really bored.”

“Then, I’m Yoshie Kubo? What haiku poems did she write? What kind of person was she?”

“I don’t remember her poems, probably because I had no cultural background to appreciate haiku poetry in my youth. But when reading her essays, she seemed like a very ladylike, graceful and modest woman.”

“Then, she was very different from me.”

“No, no... She lived in Matsuyama when she was a child, and she was doted on by Soseki Natsume and Shiki Masaoka who boarded in the annex. She was raised with a lot of affection by her grandparents, and immediately after she left school, she got married to Dr. Kubo who had just come back from abroad and was loved by him... She had been brought up without any hardships, or what should I say... She was too shy to introduce herself in a haiku gathering, and at one time in a gathering at Hototogisu School, when her haiku was read aloud, she began to identify herself in a barely audible voice, ‘I ...’ Then, Syuoshi Mizuhara asked, ‘Who is “I”?’ and everyone burst

into laughter. Well... she was what is called a sheltered wife.”

“I can’t believe there’s somebody like that...”

“I don’t like a sheltered wife. I prefer a woman who is mature for her age. I like a woman that lives alone and is proud of her life putting the flowerpots in the window.”

“I like the man who comes with a pot of cyclamen, and interferingly forces it on me, saying ‘This one is good for you.’”

The two friends from the same generation shared a laugh.

From Christmas to New Year, every shop was decorated with cyclamen.

Ruri’s cyclamen regained their health, put out buds and had hundreds of blooming red flowers. Ruri put the red cyclamen in the window and white ones near the TV. She can put only one flowerpot in the window at a time because of the triangular shape of the bay window.

The leaves of cyclamen grew very thickly wrapping around the stem like leaves of potatoes, the red-purple stems grew energetically, and nicely ordered flowers bloomed with petals of different sizes.

Most of the customers of the bar Ruri and Tsukada usually visited were middle-aged or elderly men, though sometimes young people came there. But these days, those men were often accompanied by middle-aged or elderly women.

Although these couples talked a lot for a husband and wife, they were not flirting as pairs of lovers. They were enjoying a friendly and never-ending chat.

They devoted themselves to talking as if nothing could make them happier than chattering.

“They are starved of talking with someone. Look at those men and women,” said Tsukada

“Especially the ones our age, you know...”

“Don’t you have chance to talk with your wife?”

“Why should I talk with my wife? Having a wife is the hardships of life itself. It’s like being tied by the apron strings to social obligation.”

Ruri thought when he was criticized or denounced by his wife, Tsukada

may stay inflexible, saying to himself, “It can’t be helped,” as he pretended to give an ear quietly to his wife’s story.

However, the idea may be a superficial understanding of someone who did not have experience of being married. While saying “It can’t be helped,” a husband and wife may be connected with an inextricable relationship. Even Ruri had comprehension of life enough to understand that. For that reason, all she hopes was to meet Tsukada and enjoy irresistible conversation, and to that purpose, she should treat Tsukada as ‘disposable.’ Men are disposable—Ruri thought so.

She encountered various men in her 20s, 30s and 40 respectively, and every time she stumbled over life, she has managed to survive. Reminding herself that men were disposable repeatedly, she did not look back and dumped the men thinking,

“It can’t be helped.”⁴

Ruri drank a glass of gimlet quietly and said to herself, “This is enough... meeting just like this.” Being from the same generation, when she happens to come across a man who is easy to talk to, they sometimes get together to meet. Somewhere at the bar in the town or a nice small restaurant. Never inviting him into her house after having ramen at ‘Meiroken.’

There was a pot of cyclamens on the edge of the counter.

They had pink flowers.

Drinking a glass of Suntory whisky and water, he said, “I heard the flower is called ‘swinebread’ in English,” and made her laugh. As Ruri thought on it, the round shape with of the combination of the long vertical petals was something like that.

“No way... Anyway, do you know that the flower was called ‘bonfire flower’ after it came to Japan?”

“I didn’t know that. I see...”

“Got it? The flowers blooming on top together look like a burning bonfire, don’t they?”

“You’re right. After all, ‘bonfire flower’ is better than ‘swinebread.’”

Women's culture is more refined.”

The change from spring to summer was very quick. The shop was so hurried that the sale of summer items was about to start immediately after the winter sale was over.

Ruri went to a classroom to study window-display and devoted herself to working at ‘Irene.’ As she got some regular customers, she thought she could continue to work there for a few more years.

‘Irene’ was closed for five days around the Obon holidays. Before the vacation, she met Tukada and was asked to go on a trip with him to the Sanin area. Without thinking about whether to accept his offer, she said, “The hotels must be fully booked. Isn’t it difficult to make a reservation this season?”

“It’s not a famous tourist spot, but a remote village that nobody knows of. It’s a beach behind the high mountains. Long ago, people went back and forth between one village and another by the sea, though they were adjacent to each other. Today there is a prefectural road, and taxies and buses run on it.”

“Are there any inns?”

“There is a nice private inn, not a hotel, that serves delicious seafood. A long time ago, when I passed by the village on business, I dropped in to have lunch. The crape myrtle were blooming, and the gravestones of the village faced toward the sea.”

—Ruri murmured something like a haiku poem: “Flowers of crape myrtle, against the gravestones of a village facing the sea.” The other day, she went to the library in the town and looked up some haiku poems of Yorie Kubo. She couldn’t find Kubo’s personal haiku collection, but she was able to find some in an anthology of the women haiku poets in the Meiji and Taisho Era. Among the calm and meek poems, “You and I, staying healthy, in front of the fireplace ” caught her eyes.

This ‘You’ may refer to her husband, and Ruri envied her peaceful life. Yorie Kubo would not have stayed unchanged, inflexibly, saying “It can’t be helped.”

Now Ruri felt like seeing the crape myrtle in the village. She said with

a little smile on her lips and with happiness in her eyes, “All right, I will also be ‘Adventurous Boy Dankichi.’

She thought he would answer, “That’s what I mean by ‘understanding the secrets of human nature,’ but he did not say such a stupid thing.

He corrected her words to ‘Adventurous Girl Danko.’

“Legend has it that this was a village formed by fleeing Heike warriors.”

The small fishing village Tsukumoura was a quiet village surrounded by mountains. Small fishing boats were hauled up on the beach, and fishing nets were hung out to dry. The beach was a curved arc with no one on it. The sea was blue, but it looked too deep to swim in.

A seawall like the edge of a bowl was erected, and there were houses on it. The sand of the beach was very hot, but the wind was unexpectedly cool. Ruri felt relieved because she was sensitive to heat and cold. She wore a breathable poplin dress, underwear and two more layers. She did not want to cool her lower body because as she got older she felt the cold more easily, even in the summer.

In addition, she put on a lot of sunscreen. Once she got a suntan, the traces of it would not disappear at her age.

As Tukada said, the graveyard of the village was in the middle of mountains overlooking the sea. The crape myrtle grew within the precincts of a temple, blooming bright red flowers between the green of the mountains and the blue of the sea.⁵

“Fleeing Heike warriors could have settled down here.”

Ruri felt as if she were dreaming, as if she had drifted to such a place unexpectedly.

She thought she was like one of the fleeing Heike warriors, and before she was aware of it, she developed a sense of aversion to the calm, peaceful haiku poems of Yorie Kubo. She could not acquire such a peace of mind in her life. However, the enjoyment of murmuring inflexibly “It can’t be helped,” had indescribable subtle charm, and she was getting excited with its turbulent

pleasure.

It was good to see the sea while bathing, but the inn had been cheaply constructed with new building materials. However, since Ruri has seen different eras and many things in the world, she did not complain by saying things such as, “The corridors felt rough with sand” or “The doors do not open and shut smoothly” like young people today. The building was good enough in this remote village.

A suntanned woman came and served the dishes. The inn seemed to be hosting two groups other than Ruri and Tsukada, one of which was there with kids.

The yukata, light cotton summer kimonos for guests, were clean and well-starched. They ate their fill of seafood in the room that was filled with the smell of the sea.

Suddenly, she felt “a life of sixty-four years is long.” When she was working at ‘Irene,’ time flew quickly and was very short, but all in all, it was long for her.

Having finished some beer and Japanese sake, Tsukada said from the bottom of his heart, “Alas! Through this trip, my life has become somewhat rich for the first time, my life so far was watery.”

Thinking that it was not necessary for her to confess her deep emotion “life is long” to the man who said his life was rich, Ruri kept smiling.

Though she had a little fat around the waist, Ruri looked good in the cotton kimono as her spindly body with a long torso and narrow shoulders gave a gentle impression. The women of her generation used to wear kimonos when they were in their twenties, as if they appreciated the happiness that the war was over. So, Ruri can tie the obi belt of her yukata by herself, even now.

“‘Ruri’ is a beautiful name, isn’t it?”

“This name is so beautiful it’s difficult for me to live up to it. There are now people who cannot read the characters that make up my name.”

They asked the staff to clear the table and lay out two sets of futons separated a little. Night breeze came from the screen window, the electric fan

in the corner of the room or the air-conditioner was not necessary.

“My parents had too much passion for naming, I guess.”

While lying on her back with the thin summer futon wrapped tight around her belly so as not to feel cold, she said, “My elder brother died young, as I said before, and his name was Santaro with a character meaning ‘precious coral.’ My sister had a name Takarako, meaning a child of treasure. She died young, just after getting married. However precious children are, it might be in vain to give them extremely good names.”

Tsukada was smoking a cigarette in the darkness of the room. He said that he wanted to kick back and relax because he did not have to go back home today. He said he did not usually smoke. He lay on his belly and put out the cigarette, saying, “Their lifespan has nothing to do with names. Everything will occur by pure happenstance. You’re sixty-four, I’m sixty-eight. We’ve been fighting bravely.”

“We did our best... both you and I, didn’t we?”

“You’re right. I thought I fought hard for myself, but you’re a woman, so I assume you’ve lived a harder life than me. Well done!”

Ruri was fighting back tears, thinking, don’t cry.

Tsukada’s words of praise felt like tender loving care from her very distant forefathers, those from long before her grandparents. She had never heard such kind words.

“Well, we would be ridiculed and criticized by people in their seventies, eighties, nineties, though. ‘You guys in the sixties don’t understand anything!’ they would say.”

Tsukada spoke brightly, knowing she was fighting back tears. Ruri also spoke in a light voice.

“Mr. Tsukada?”

“What?”

“Can I join you?”

“Oh, that’s what I was thinking.”

“Please do not call me ‘swinebread.’”

Ruri laughed too much, and was still laughing on the naked chest of

Tsukada. Feeling tickled, he patted her back.

She had Tsukada bring her to her home alongside the railroad tracks curving sharply.

Due to the Obon holidays, 'Meiroken' and 'Akane-ya' were closed. The town was dark.

There was a raised wooden stage for dancing that had been put up in the park across the railroad tracks, and a lot of paper lanterns were hung around it. Tsukada said, "Let's go see it. I'll go straight home from the station." So, they left her house after drinking only a glass of beer.

She thought that she would have gotten stuck if he had told her he would stay overnight. Tsukada's behavior was agreeable to Ruri. Happy meetings should not be drawn out. A party is fun because it has an end.

The circle of the dancing people in the park was bigger than she expected.

"Where in the town did they store such a big stage?" Ruri murmured.

"Don't you think they rent it?" Tsukada said in a monotone. He continued, "I was ordered to transfer to a branch office in Hiroshima. When the young employees get more experienced, I'll come back to Osaka again."

"You're going to live away from home?"

"That's right. I've already been kind of living away from home."

He's also a rental, Ruri thought, but she said clearly,

"Then, please search for some villages of fleeing Heike warriors in Hiroshima."

"Alright. But well, sometimes I'll come back to Osaka."

But, it will become difficult for them to drink happily, talking over the old days, or talking about old comics as before. Tsukada said, "Take care of yourself. I'm thankful that you are living in this world, I'm so happy. Don't ever change. I'll see you again."

"You, too."

At the ticket gate, she said goodbye, laughing, but tears were coming as she passed though the shopping gate where shops were closed for the Obon

holidays. She thought, "I know! We might not be able to see each other again because of our ages," and came to think of them as if they were a pair, an old cock and hen.⁶

'Irene' would open tomorrow.

Ruri looked in the mirror, pulling herself together, and wiped away her tears.

After about half a month, she got a postcard from Tsukada. The autumn wind had begun to blow, and it had become cold in the morning and evening.

His handwriting was that of older the generation, neat and prim.

He wrote that he would look for a village of fleeing Heike warriors, once things settled down at work. 'Adventurous Boy Dankichi.'

Ruri wanted do something to encourage Tsukada who was going to start, in the unknown town, a job while it was turning to be a cold winter but she was not in the role to say "Well done" to him. Well, should I send him the warm, light waistcoat she found at 'Akane-ya'? The boutique in Osaka Minami has things such as nice imported silk loungewear, but that would be inappropriate for their generation who exchange compliments such as, "Well done." It would be better to send a padded waistcoat made of polyester and cotton, and, as the sender's name on the package, should she write, for example, "The Window of Cyclamen"?

As Tsukada told her, she was also thankful just thinking of his existence in this world.

注

* この翻訳は田辺聖子「篝火草の窓」(『田辺聖子全集』第5巻(集英社))にもとづいている。この作品の翻訳についてお世話下さった田辺聖子文学館学芸員住友元美先生、快く翻訳の許可を下さった田辺美奈様に感謝いたします。翻訳にあたってはまず小森がテキストを英語に直し、Smith と小森で短編の構造、文化的背景などの検討・情報共有を行った上で、それを英語話者にとって自然な英語となるように改訂する方法をとった。また、冒頭で述べたように前編の「A Window with Cyclamen (1)―田辺聖子「篝火草の窓」―」は、『大阪樟蔭女子大学研究紀要』(第10号, 2020年3月発行予定)に掲載予定で、「大阪樟蔭女子大学リポジトリ」よりPDFで閲覧可能である。まず、(1)をお読みになることをおすすめします。

主人公の瑠璃は64歳の設定で、物語の主題の一つは「生」と「死」である。瑠璃は一人で老いることを決心していて、「精神力や」と健康に気を配って若さを保ち、外からは見えないが「ふてぶてし」く生きることを心に決めている。

一方で、死のイメージが物語のいたるところにちりばめられている。例えば、あの世とこの世を行き来する小野篁、死ぬまでさすらった車寅次郎、山頭火のエピソード、夭折の兄妹、平家の落人の村・村の墓、お盆の時期であることなど。

最後の「そういう存在が「生きてる」と思うだけで、瑠璃もありがたかった」から読み取れるのは、二人がこれからも互いの存在を確認しあうだろうということである。窓に置かれたシクラメンは瑠璃が「生きてる」生存証明であり、シクラメンの別名「篝火草 (bonefire flower)」がタイトルに使われているのは、まるで瑠璃の生命が燃えていることを示すかのようである。

- 1 塚田は白いシクラメンを「片腕」に抱えて現れるが、共同翻訳者の Jennifer Smith によると、... holding a pot of white cyclamens in his arm のように、単数形の arm は不自然である。(実際 Google で「hold ~ in his hand」で検索すると数件しか表示されない(2019年11月11日現在).)

前置詞 in がもつ空間性が片腕で物を持つことと相容れないのではないかと推測される。(以下、原文からの引用は「 」で示す.)

- 2 Torajiro Kuruma (車寅次郎) is the main character of the Japanese comedy movie “Otoko Wa Tsurai Yo” (『男はつらいよ』 <It’s Tough Being a Man>). Santoka (山頭火 1882-1940) is a famous haiku poet in Meiji era.
- 3 兄弟などが早く亡くなった分、残されたものが長く生きるという考え方は英語にはない。
- 4 「(しゃァないやん……)」 (“It can’t be helped.”) という呟きは、短編全体を通して7箇所出現する。同様に「ふてぶてし」という形容詞は11箇所。いずれも主人公瑠璃の64歳という年齢の性質でもあり彼女の生き方をあらわすキーワードで、瑠璃は(塚田も含め)周囲に合わせて自分を変えることをしないと宣言している。
- 5 海を見おろす「村の墓」のモノクロームを背景に、山の緑と海の青、百日紅の赤が美しい描写である。これも「死」と「生」の対比であると考えられる。
- 6 「このトシでは、再び会われへんことがあるかもしれない」を含む段落は、さらに「老いた雄鶏と雌鶏」の比喩、お盆で店を閉じた暗い商店街など「死」を連想させるものを含んでいる。

Comments for Readers:

In A Window with Cyclamen, Seiko Tanabe continues to challenge the stereotypes often set for female protagonists, and by doing so, adds richness to the discussion of gender roles presented in literature. In the story, Ruri's independence is shown in many ways, and this often leads the narrative on unexpected paths. This independence can be seen in three main themes: Ruri's personality, her lifestyle, and her relationship. Starting with her personality, Ruri is often described in the story as “inflexible” and “having a strong force of will.” Both of these characteristics are not commonly seen as positive traits in women. However, in this story, these are not considered as

negative by either Ruri or any other character. To the contrary, they are seen as helping Ruri shrug off the judgment that might be directed towards her for not conforming to expectations. Next, her lifestyle is one that is not often portrayed in literature. Ruri is a mature, single woman living alone, and it is not considered a tragedy. She has prepared for living alone in a methodical and logical manner. Ruri is not depicted as failing or incomplete for not being married with children, something that is infrequent even for modern stories about women. Finally, the way that Ruri approaches her relationship with Tsukada is unusual. Often in stories, a woman's existence is defined by her relationships with men. The presence or lack of a romantic relationship is the driving force of many stories with female protagonists. With Ruri's view of Tsukada as a "rental," Ruri's relationship becomes a feature of herself, rather than a defining characteristic. Ruri enjoys her relationship with Tsukada, but this relationship is not vital to Ruri's life or sense of self. In these and many other ways, Tanabe gives readers a short story that surprises and adds to the narratives of women in fiction. Although written over 25 years ago, *A Window with Cyclamen* can be read in ways that add to the modern discussions of gender equality and the depictions of women in literature.