

IN THE SPRING GARDEN

Variations on a poem by Ōtomo no Yakamochi, Man'yōshū Book 29, 4139

i

IN A SPRING garden: peach trees full of flowers;
A pink shaded path; and your first steps.

ii

See the garden full
Of peach trees
Full in bloom:
Our path is pink with petals.
I pause, and see
You walk ahead:
A vision in a world
Of spring.

iii

In the flowering of spring, I saw
A petal fall.
How can it be:
That in the shadow of the petal
I saw you?

You stepped into a shadow and
Remade the world.
How can it be:
That you can animate the world
In small things?

iv

Spring, green and glowing,
Colours and scents the garden.

This clear grey stand of trees
Sheds substance with the cold:
It warms, and grows
Ethereal with leaves.

Into this warmth of spring
You step.
With you the wind
Shakes leaves into a cloud
Of all my senses,—
My spring love,
Your quietude.