MISHIMA, Yukio

**Spring Snow**

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Time is what matters. As time goes by, you and I will be carried inexorably into the mainstream of our period, even though we’re unaware of what it is. And later, when they say that young men in the early Taisho era thought, dressed, talked, in such and such a way, they’ll be talking about you and me. We’ll all be lumped together…. In a few decades, people will see you and the people you despise as one and the same, a single entity.

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For everything sacred has the substance of dreams and memories, and so we experience the miracle of what is separated from us by time or distance suddenly being made tangible. Dreams, memories, the sacred—they are all alike in that they are beyond our grasp. Once we are even marginally separated from what we can touch, the object is sanctified; it acquires the beauty of the unattainable, the quality of the miraculous. Everything, really, has this quality of sacredness, but we can desecrate it at a touch. How strange man is! His touch defiles and yet he contains the source of miracles.

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Everything has turned sour, I’ll never be carried away with joy again. There’s a terrible clarity dominating everything. As though the world were made of crystal so that you only have to flick part of it with your fingernail for a tiny shudder to run through it all.… And then the loneliness—it’s something that burns. Like hot thick soup you can’t bear inside your mouth unless you blow on it again and again. And there it is, always in front of me. In its heavy white bowl of thick china, dirty and dull as an old pillow. Who is it that keeps forcing it on me? “I’ve been left all alone. I’m burning with desire. I hate what’s happened to me. I’m lost and I don’t know where I’m going. What my heart wants it can’t have … my little private joys, rationalizations, self-deceptions—all gone! All I have left is a flame of longing for times gone by, for what I’ve lost. Growing old for nothing. I’m left with a terrible emptiness. What can life offer me but bitterness? Alone in my room … alone all through the nights … cut off from the world and from everyone in it by my own despair. And if I cry out, who is there to hear me?

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**Confessions of a Mask**

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I do not mean to say that I viewed those desires of mine that deviated from accepted standards as normal and orthodox; nor do I mean that I labored under the mistaken impression that my friends possessed the same desires. Surprisingly enough, I was so engrossed in tales of romance that I devoted all my elegant dreams to thoughts of love between man and maid, and to marriage, exactly as though I were a young girl who knew nothing of the world. I tossed my love for Omi onto the rubbish heap of neglected riddles, never once searching deeply for its meaning. Now when I write the word love, when I write affection, my meaning is totally different from my understanding of the words at that time. I never even dreamed that such desires as I had felt toward Omi might have a significant connection with the realities of my "life.

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The blossoms seem unusually lovely this year. There were none of the scarlet-and-white-striped curtains that are set up among the blossoming trees so invariably that one has to come to think of them as the attire of cherry blossoms; there were no bustling tea-stalls, no holiday crowds of flower-viewers, no one hawking balloons and toy windmills; instead there were only the cherry trees blossoming undisturbed among the evergreens, making one feel as though he were seeing the naked bodies of the blossoms. Nature's free bounty and useless extravagance had never appeared so fantastically beautiful as it did this spring. I had an uncomfortable suspicion that Nature had come to reconquer the earth for herself.

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