

Where Have the Samurai Gone?

I sit cross-legged in the garden,
And stare intently at the pond.
Its ripples glisten in the sunshine,
I find myself immersed in calm.

As my mind begins its journey,
To the source of silent peace,
A thought arises all unbidden,
Where have the samurai gone?

I strive for calm, tranquil detachment,
But my thoughts return again
To this question, lately risen
Where have the samurai gone?

Where are they now, who once
Defended ancient shrines, temples blest;
Stately pine groves, verdant meadows,
All now diminished, for they are gone.

Across the land the silence deepens,
As if all nature mourns their loss;
As if at once the land of sunlight
Is hidden by some sudden dusk.

Uncrossed now my legs are aching;
Unfocused now, my wandering mind;
A haze unbidden hides reflections,
In the pond, and in my sight.

Then softly flowing, comes the east wind,
Like gentle singing in my soul,
A voice I hear, it beckons to me,
A sighing voice; firm, yet kind.

O foolish man, why do you worry,
For the mighty blessed ones?
Do you think they have abandoned,
This land they love, the people's hearts?

Do you believe they have departed?
That in this land they do not dwell?
They walk upon the gentle breezes,
They glide upon the rippling waves.

In every temple, every fountain,
Every leaf of every tree; in every rice field,
Every valley, every song upon the breeze,
Their spirit lives, if you believe.

No longer ask where they have ventured;
No longer ask where they may be.
Only ask that you be granted
The faith required for you to see.

I heard no more; the voice was silent.
I sat cross-legged at the shrine.
The sunlight played upon the waters
Of the pond before my eyes.

Overhead, a bird was singing,
The breeze brought scents, Sakura sweet;
Inside my soul found peace it longed-for,
The samurai have come again.