

Japanese Language and Literature

Journal of the American Association of Teachers of Japanese

jll.pitt.edu | Vol. 53 | Number 2 | October 2019 | DOI: 10.5195/jll.2019.77

ISSN 1536-7827 (print) 2326-4586 (online)

Fragrant Spaces between Words: Prolonging Shōjo Liminality into Adulthood in the Poetry of Yonezawa Nobuko

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So, for us as amateurs to distinguish “the expression of perfume,” the darkness is good; a place where absolutely no noise is audible is good; the morning is good; early summer is good; it is good to be alone; it is good not to speak; it is good to try one perfume per hour; it is good to wait one hour after eating; application to a piece of cloth is better than direct use; it is good to experiment twice, with eyes open and closed; it is good to experiment with many different distances; it is good for men and women to experiment separately; a day with no wind is good; and even better is to experiment with the senses in total nudity.¹

Symbolist poet Ōte Takuji (1887–1934), who worked as a professional copywriter for a cosmetics company, wrote the preceding passage in a 1931 essay called “On ‘The Expression of Perfume’: Idle Chatter” (*Kōsui no hyōjō’ ni tsuite: Mandanteki-na muda-banashi*), first published in a commercial periodical by his employer, Lion Corporation.

Why do Takuji’s instructions for how to appreciate perfume involve separation by gender? Why do they involve nudity? What does it say about poetry, supposedly a high literary art removed from the world of commerce and advertising, that one could replace the word “perfume” with “poetry,” and the passage would still mostly make sense?

This article examines commercial scent, including perfume and incense, in the work of the Japanese Symbolist poet, Yonezawa Nobuko (1894–1931). In her poetry, Yonezawa uses fragrance to portray the



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inherent sexuality of poetic creation, creating a feminine, sexual creative voice. Yonezawa uses the idealized homosocial relationships found in *shōjo*, or girls', culture to imagine a world determined by the creativity and community of women. The relationships between women feature ecstatic sensory pleasure and shared poetic inspiration, brokered by the sense of smell. Married to dentist Yonezawa Masatami in 1918 and publishing under her married name, Yonezawa prolongs the liminality of the *shōjo* into adulthood, and she uses the sense of smell to add a sense of corporeality and sexuality.

Her poems express an uncertainty about the border between womanhood and girlhood. Is the liminality and same-sex sexuality of *shōjo* gender expression limited to single, unmarried women, or does some form of it survive into heterosexual marriage and adulthood? Suzuki has explored similar tensions in the work of Yoshiya Nobuko (1896–1973), whose late fiction according to Suzuki portrays friendship amongst heterosexually married women as a kind of “lesbian continuum” (the term originally comes from an essay by Adrienne Rich).² Yonezawa, too, places friendship between women on a kind of lesbian continuum, brokered by the sense of smell.

Dollase has argued that *shōjo* writer Yoshiya Nobuko's writing is an example of Cixous's *écriture féminine*,³ a mode of writing rooted in female corporeal experience, and that Yoshiya uses *shōjo* motifs to express a critique of male-dominated society.⁴ The space of the attic, where the two female characters of Yoshiya's story “Two Girls in the Attic” (*Yaneura no nishōjo*, 1919) cohabit, is revolutionary, where girls' desires are given free reign and same-sex desire is acted upon.⁵ Yonezawa's work suggests that the liminality of the *shōjo* does not have to be confined to the chronological realm of girlhood. Like Suzuki suggests of Yoshiya Nobuko's late work, in her poetry, Yonezawa finds compatibility between adult womanhood and practices of same-sex desire and auto-sexuality.

Yonezawa connects her endeavor to prolong *shōjo* liminality into adulthood to the avant-garde project of Symbolist poetry. The literary movement of Symbolism was both a specifically Japanese literary movement and a global avant-garde phenomenon. Tsuboi Hideto posits the early twentieth-century Japanese Symbolists, including Ōte Takuji (1887–1934) as well as other poets like Kambara Ariake (1876–1952) and Susukida Kyūkin (1877–1945), as an alternative to the realist school of Naturalism that then dominated Japanese letters.⁶ Rather than treating language as a transparent medium for the communication of interiority, as

the Naturalists supposedly did, the Symbolists created meaning through suggestion and sensory disorientation, disrupting the relationship between language and signification. Their work would influence subsequent avant-garde movements such as Japanese Surrealism and Futurism.⁷

As a global phenomenon including poets like Stéphane Mallarmé (1842–1898) and Arthur Rimbaud (1854–1891), Symbolism also occupies a foundational place in the lineage of avant-garde literary, theoretical, and political movements. Julia Kristeva calls the Symbolist Poets “a second over-turning of the Hegelian dialectic” that brought the unconscious and the body into language the way that Marx brought production into history. Kristeva uses a psychoanalytic framework to politicize the Symbolists. She uses the term “chora” to describe the subconscious, non-signifying elements of language, a sublingual space of movement, possibility, and becoming that the Symbolists mobilize in their poetry. In Kristeva’s work, according to scholars Johanne Prud’homme and Lyne Légaré, “[t]he ‘unitary’ subject is replaced by a subject in process (understood as movement) whose representation is a space of mobility: the semiotic chora.”⁸

The Symbolists create a space of radical potential to critique modern notions of the self and subjectivity. According to Earl Jackson Jr., the Japanese Symbolists had an ambivalent relationship to the notion of a self.⁹ Using the poems and prose of Kanbara Ariake, Jackson shows how the first-person subject vacillates from a cohesive lens for viewing reality to an entity whose borders are submerged or overwhelmed by sensory experience.¹⁰ Jackson quotes Ariake in 1909 as stating:

The parameters of the “self” and the universe are both unstable. That they both undulate, gleam, and cloud over obscurely is due to the fact that the “self” is neither a private possession nor a still life...Here is the realm of true freedom; here is where Symbolism is engendered.¹¹

Ariake’s concept of an “unstable” self that is “neither a private possession nor a still life” resonates with the volatile and unclosed subjectivity found in Kristeva’s work. Through intense sensory experience, the Symbolists destabilized the unitary subject and sought to replace it with a provisional, always-in-process self. Kristeva asks at the end of *Revolution in Poetic Language*:

Is it possible to keep open the heterogeneous and contradictory moment, which is unbearable for the subject, within a text that

represents, through this moment, the diversity and multiplicity of social practices which disregard that moment in their own realization?¹²

The poems in this article tread the line between poetry and commerce, blurring the border between high art objects and commodity goods, keeping open “the heterogeneous and contradictory moment” of their composition and the “diversity and multiplicity of social practices” in which they are embedded.

How does the sense of smell help bring about a potentially radical language of the body? In the West, the sense of smell has often been perceived as the overlooked or least important sense, especially in comparison to vision and hearing. Scholars have shown how the modern era in the West ushered in “a general devaluation of, and inattention to, olfactory power and meaning.”¹³ Brian Moeran says the sense of smell is the sense most people are willing to give up.¹⁴ Immanuel Kant classified taste and smell as the two “lower senses.”¹⁵

For Symbolist poetry, the sense of smell plays a key role in imagining and subverting the relationship of bodies to the world and to each other. Mary Fleischer argues that “smell is the Symbolist sense par excellence...used to dissolve barriers between subject and object, between individual and environment.”¹⁶ Fleischer describes how scent in the form of perfume and incense was used as a subversive technique in Symbolist performances in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century:

[T]he quest to sanitize modern life made the artistic evocation of all kinds of smells, foul or fragrant, a means of rebellion against sterile bourgeois conventions (Classen 1994:87). And the inherent formlessness of smell, its transgressive ability to permeate the atmosphere and dissolve boundaries made it a suggestive medium and metaphor for overrunning conventional concepts of subject matter and form.¹⁷

Fleischer shows how a concern for the sense of smell amongst the Symbolists and other avant-garde writers thus aligned with attempts to reverse the hierarchy of the senses, where vision and hearing reside at the top, and other more supposedly primitive senses at the bottom.¹⁸

The Japanese Symbolist use of scent differed from their European counterparts. In Japan, the sense of smell, far from being the most forgotten or undervalued sense, has a long aesthetic and literary lineage.

In Heian period court culture (794–1185), incense (*takimono*) was used in two realms: Buddhist religious use in ritual, and aristocrats’ use for

pleasure. People had their own unique individual scent formulated from incense. Aristocrats held competitions to craft seasonal scents, in which, Aileen Gatten states, “incense, like the other arts practiced by aristocracy at the time, is a reflection of personality.”¹⁹

At the end of the Kamakura period (1185–1333), the use of incense was systematized into an aesthetic practice. This was the beginning of *kōdō*, the way of scent, a ceremony in which participants identify key ingredients in a scent made from fragrant woods. The scented wood the speaker burns in Yonezawa’s poem “Night and Fragrance,” which I will discuss in more detail later, recalls this ceremony.

In the Tokugawa Period (1600–1868), incense in the form of joss sticks became available to the growing commercial class outside of the aristocracy.²⁰ The sense of smell, *nioi*, became theorized as a poetic and artistic principle. Haruo Shirane describes the “poetics of scent” in the work of *haikai* poet Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694) as a principle of associative linking between verses in a sequence based on mood, atmosphere, and tone, rather than on content. Shirane writes as follows: “Modern Japanese scholars define *nioi* as a manner of linking in which the mood, atmosphere, or emotion of the previous verse is carried over to the added verse or made to move back and forth between the two.”²¹ Rather than writing poems that feature scent as a sensory image, Bashō and other *haikai* writers used the associative quality of scent to describe certain kinds of linked verse. Shirane compares Bashō’s use of scent as an associative linking device to “the montage in modern cinema in which a succession of seemingly unrelated shots are closely linked by connotation or overtone.”²² Smell thus operates as a kind of poetic, associative logic in Tokugawa linked verse, one that operates in contrast to more direct links by content, canonical literary allusion, or social class.

Yonezawa and the other Japanese Symbolist poets were drawing on this long tradition of smell and Japanese aesthetics in their work: on Heian notions of scent as a creative mode of self-expression, on medieval practices of a systematized way of incense (*kōdō*), and on Tokugawa-era imaginings of an associative poetics of scent. More than just write about smell, Yonezawa lets her work be permeated by the semiotics or the logic of smell, its tendency to dissolve and transgress barriers and its tendency to create associative, montage-like emotional leaps.

As we saw in the opening passage, Ōte Takuji uses perfume to elicit a sensory experience of the Symbolist dissolution of the self and to awaken socially unsanctioned same-sex desires. Ōte’s practice exists in what

Moeran calls the “olfactory culture” in Taishō period (1912–1926) Japan. In this culture, incense, perfume, and other commercially available scents were enjoyed as a leisure product by ordinary people.²³ They were both diffused in interior spaces for decorative purposes, as well as worn on the body and clothing. From his letters and from the essay quoted earlier, it appears that Ōte composed poetry while enjoying these leisure products, using perfume and incense as inspiration.

The sense of smell thus played a dual role, as an agent of sensory disorientation and the dissolution of the self in Symbolist poetry, and as a key element of rhetoric in commercial writing in the cosmetics industry. Interestingly, these two roles are not really in conflict with each other. Instead, poets and fashion writers of the Taishō period use the sense of smell in parallel, overlapping ways, as we have already seen in Ōte Takuji’s essay on perfume, which blurs the line between poetry and commercial writing.

In the early 1900s, Japanese poets and fashion writers linked the sense of smell to a critique of modernity and a search for alternative worlds. For example, beauty and fashion writer Misu Yutaka had the following to say in 1912, the last year of the Meiji era (1868–1912), in a pamphlet on making your own perfume from flowers, in which she linked the use of scented products to a critique of “civilization” (*bunmei*):

Either contemporary people’s sense of smell is strongly, completely numbed, or this is simply what we call civilization (*bunmei*). If it is said that civilization as such is to be distant from nature, then it is something to be grateful for that most of today’s scented products are filled with civilized articles, of course even with the cause that expensive ones are common, the scented products we smell today—in a word, they don’t smell of anything particular at all whatsoever, and thus they do not make one think of anything from nature. Instead, they stimulate people’s sense of smell, disorientate their spirits, so much so that the extent of their excessiveness leads people’s lives into error. Therefore, amongst perfumes made with this kind of scented ingredients, and even amongst other cosmetics, it goes without saying that in many cases, the unnaturalness of their scent just toys with and suppresses people’s sense of smell.²⁴

For Misu, smell is a sense that connects people to nature, while civilization (*bunmei*), a common Meiji-era term connoting modernity and progress, distances them from nature and numbs them. Yet this is not to set up a simplistic binary between natural and unnatural: the author is

“grateful” for artificial scents that remove one from nature to a certain extent. It is only when they get excessive that she objects, saying they disorient and stimulate people’s senses, rather than bringing them closer to nature.



Fig. 1. Two schoolgirls browsing in a bookstore

The fluid relationship between poetry and commerce becomes apparent in Yonezawa Nobuko’s appearances in the mass media. For example, she is mentioned in a 1937 advertising circular for the Nagoya

department store Matsuzakaya, in the blurb next to a heart-shaped picture of two schoolgirls browsing in the book section (Fig. 1). The blurb cites Yonezawa Nobuko's poetry as a popular favorite amongst fans of *shōjo* culture:

Young ladies at this age are extremely sentimental. Spilling tears of joy on the front covers of the Takabatake Kashō kind of stationery, generally perusing *Wakakusa* and *Reijokai* [popular *shōjo* magazines from the 1920s and '30s], leaving Yonezawa Nobuko's poetry collection idle in her handbag, where it lives with the other texts. Ah! Now with a deep sigh, she has taken another poetry book into her hand...Ooh, *sentimentale!*²⁵

Written a few years after her death, this quote suggests her work might have been taken up by *shōjo* culture retrospectively. The “sentimental” quality of her work is lauded here through the eyes of her young female fans, highlighting its emotionalism and femininity.

The olfactory culture of Taishō Japan bridged both avant-garde writing and commerce, which shared the desire for alternative worlds as posited by the sense of smell. The sense of smell figures prominently in the work of Symbolist poet Yonezawa Nobuko, the first woman to publish a full-length collection of free verse in Japanese, a book of poetry called *Holy Fount* (*Seisuiban*, 1919). Like Ōte Takuji, she too might have used incense and other scented products to help her compose poetry.

In her poem that I mentioned earlier, titled “Night and Fragrance” (*Yoru to kunkō*, 1919, *Seisuiban*), she describes a first-person speaker's experience of reclining half-asleep and half-awake in a kind of trance on a Western-style sofa for an entire night as she enjoys the smell of aloe wood incense. The smell brings her deeply into her body, where she feels her own blood in her heart, and ultimately produces in her a creative act of song. This song, however, is silent (*oto mo naku*), a song of bodily experience rather than linguistic, oral, or audio expression. The poem describes the “olfactory culture” of Taishō Japan as practiced by this particular poet, in which solitary bodily experience of scent gives rise to an act of poetic creativity.

Night and Fragrance
Every night
Crossing the pale blue glass door
With no sound

There is a thing that comes to me in a corner of my sofa
 It shines, and yet,
 It is talkative, and yet—

From the mouth of the deep bronze vessel
 The scent of young aloe profoundly rises
 When everything is silently suppressed,
 Color sinks,
 I take a deep hidden breath.

My heart wakes up slightly,
 Resembling blood
 The end of night is dipped in dye
 Shining things at last talkative,
 In loud voice
 Sing laughingly a small song.²⁶

The first stanza sets the scene in a Westernized Taishō interior, complete with a glass door and sofa. In this setting, the incense appears to be part of the Taishō leisure market. The burning of chips of incense wood, especially those in the aloe family, brings a *kōdō*-inflected classical whiff to this modern setting. *Kōdō*, however, is usually practiced in groups, and the speaker apparently seems to enjoy her scented products in solitude, for herself rather than as part of a ceremonial, ritualized framework.

At the end of the stanza, the poem's language splits apart, ending in a dash. While classical Japanese poetry often features fragmented language, the use of punctuation marks the poem as modern free verse. Notably, there is no reference to an absent lover, a common theme in classical Japanese poetry. Instead, the speaker appears to burn the incense for its own sake, for sensory pleasure. The incense is described in terms that suggest secrecy or even illicitness: it is “deep,” “suppressed,” and “hidden.” This creates the impression that the speaker is burning the incense alone, for herself, and that the physical pleasure she experiences is private and personal.

The poem ends with the speaker waking up to the reddening of night into daytime, which reminds her of blood. Until this moment, the incense has produced a trance-like state, almost like a drug, and she awakes to heightened sense of her own corporeality as a physical being, with a heart and blood. The blood creates corporeality, and it also introduces disturbing associations. Is it blood from violence? From sexual experience and the

loss of virginity? From menstruation or birth? The end of the night produces an intense sense of the speaker's self as a body, a thing made of blood.

The poem ends in song and laughter, a reference to poetry itself as song. The speaker has produced a composition from her body, writing through her experience of fragrance. By submitting to the scent and becoming just a body, she has produced the silent, wordless song of bodily creation. The burning of incense enables a poetic act of creation that is auto-erotic in nature, outside the constraints of marriage and heterosexuality.

In another poem "Hidden Dream" (*Hisomeru Yume*, 1919, *Seisuiban*), the smell of cinnamon emitted by a Catholic-esque "holy fount" (*seisuiban*) provokes an ecstatic spiritual vision. The end of the poem links this spiritual ecstasy of the holy fount to creating poetry with the body:

A dream,
In the shadow of the faintly darkened holy fount,
Whitely submerges its body,
Forever giving birth to pure red "creation,"
Forever singing gold-colored "eternity."²⁷

The act of creation is coded red, similar to the blood in the vision of the speaker at dawn in "Night and Fragrance." The dream is made corporeal so that it has a body to submerge in the fount. The submergence of the white dream body gives birth to the red of creation, and to a transcendent poetic song of eternity. In sum, the smell of cinnamon inspires a bodily creative act, of giving birth to a poetic song.

What does it mean to give birth to a song, and what does this mean about Yonezawa's view of female sexuality? In the poem "Creation" (*Sōzō*), both romantic love and birth are invoked, but in the service of a creative pursuit, rather than coupling or creating a family. She invokes the sense of smell to perform the Symbolist dissolution of the self and inspire the act of bodily creation.

It comes visiting, formless bondage
Smoothly
On oh so pliant flesh
Ah
Pleasure the color of flower petals

Pearling drops of oil
 My body fills with an ever-changing smell
 All of a sudden to love heaven and earth,
 Ah,
 The heart can give birth to a precious thing.²⁸

The poem describes writing as an act of bodily creation, in which the speaker gives her “pliant flesh” (平らけきししむら) over to the “formless bondage” (無形の緊縛) of sensory pleasure, probably a floral-scented oil such as camellia. The phrase “formless bondage” links the oblique violence of poetic creation with sexual pleasure so that there is an experience of gaining power through being dominated, of a creative act emerging out of an experience of submission. Throughout Yonezawa’s work, the bodily act of creation is framed as passive and submissive, whether an act of “submerging the body” (*mi o hisome*) in “Submerged Dream,” or of “formless bondage” in “Night and Fragrance.”

Throughout the poem, female sexuality is invoked in oblique terms. While the speaker is not overtly gendered, flowers are associated with femininity and are a common ingredient in perfume, especially for women’s products.²⁹ The flower’s appearance in the poem has a kind of sensual, even a masturbatory quality, how it appears at the moment of pleasure. The fragrance it emits is associated with change and transformation (*tsune naki kaori*), which in turn is linked to creation, so that the masturbatory pleasure of the flower is a creative act, leading to the birth of a poetic song, rather than a child.

The poem features an emphatically physical image of the speaker’s body. The “[p]earling drops of oil” that fill the speaker’s body “with an ever-changing smell” suggest the speaker is using scented oil, but they could also be drops of something bodily, like sweat or discharge. The speaker’s body itself is a productive agent, creating drops of liquid and smells that mix with the odor of scented products to provide the speaker with inspiration.

In the next Yonezawa poem I will look at, “October Veranda” (*Jūgatsu no veranda*, 1919, *Seisuiban*), the dissolution of the self is not solitary, but shared by a speaker and a feminine companion. Here the avant-garde pursuit of sensory disorientation through smell is linked to the idealized same-sex relationships between girls often found in popular *shōjo*, or girls’, literature of the day.

Ripe, shaken fennel's faintly sweet
Cool blue of peppermint left on the round table of the veranda,
We, cheerfully bathing in October sunlight,
All the more, for no reason thinking of nothingness,
With hearts that would forget all things.
In any case, the stray hairs on your forehead
You comb them up in the fragrance-filled spaces between words
—Black comb—

This,
You are addictive, how you recall a suddenly young queen.
Two women here,
Looking up at the October sun.

To taste this faint wind
Sneaking to the marble round table
Transparent blue scent of peppermint

Unseen ripples are sent,
October atmosphere that deepens dreams,
Layering them increasingly around the body

At such a time,
The round pillar of the veranda, so good for leaning upon,
—Ah, its strange feel to the skin.³⁰

The aesthetics of *shōjo* culture permeate the setting of the poem. It is mysterious and exotic, a Westernesque veranda (written with the Chinese compound *ryōrō* [涼廊], which is sometimes used for the Italian word “*loggia*”) furnished with a rounded marble table and pillars that all suggest something like a European villa. The pair of women (*koko onna futari*) occupying the space resemble the pairs of graceful women portrayed by popular *shōjo* visual artists like Takabatake Kashō (1888–1986) or Yumeji Takehisa (1884–1934).³¹

The two women have a passionate connection and appreciation for each other's beauty. The speaker calls her addressee an “addiction” or “habit” (*kimi ga kuse nari*)—perhaps like the absinthe suggested by the fennel—and compares her to a “young queen.”

Deborah Shamon argues that *shōjo* culture practices a liminal femininity outside the strictures of marriage and patriarchy—in a safe space that does not actually challenge them. She describes what were

called “S relationships,” relationships between girls based on a same-sex idealized romantic love that is pure and spiritual.³²

Together, the two women indulge the sense of smell, as they share an experience of blurring between self and environment. Borders between their bodies and the setting blur due to the intensity of sensory experience: “October atmosphere that deepens dreams, / Layering them increasingly around the body....”

The scene of *shōjo* love includes an eroticized portrayal of language and writing. The words themselves—*koto no ha* (言の葉)—are plant-like, emphasizing the “leaf” kanji and filled with fragrance. Perhaps Yonezawa is referring to Yosano Akiko’s famous tanka collection *Midaregami* (1901), in which tangled hair serves as a figure for both erotic pleasure and the act of writing. Here too the hair is associated with words, and like language with a pen, the tangled hair can be shaped and formed with the comb. The typography of Yonezawa’s poem, including several end dashes,

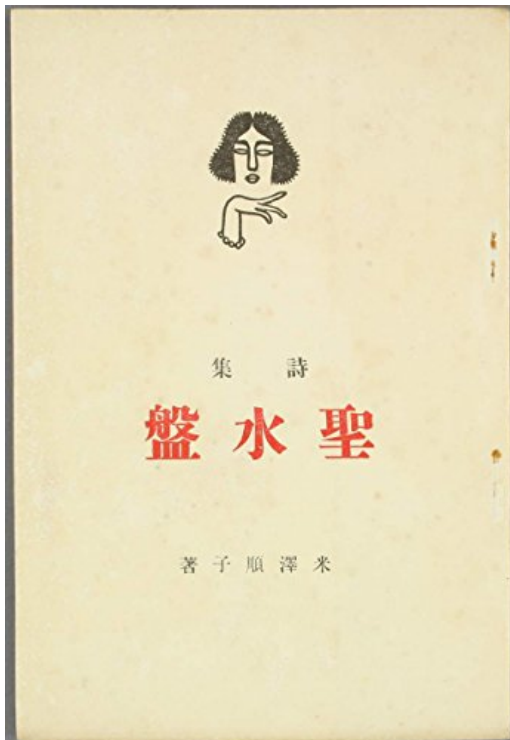


Fig. 2. Cover of *Seisuiban*.

draws attention to the materiality of language and its capacity to create sensory experience independent of its communicatory function. Writing, the act of self-beautification or adornment, smell, and a same-sex passionate relationship, are all linked, in a space of the unsaid, between the words.

The prolonging of the liminality of the *shōjo* into the realm of womanhood appears in the cover illustration of Yonezawa’s 1919 poetry collection, *Seisuiban* (*Holy Fountain*, Fig. 2), featuring a self-portrait by the poet.

In this image, she is singular, not in a pair like the artist Takabatake’s *shōjo*

or the two girls in the photo I described earlier (Fig. 1). In the cover to Yonezawa's collection, the girl's hair looks modern, maybe permed, cut short. There is something kind of adult about her, how she is holding her hand with the bracelet. She has a self-possession, a deliberateness, as if she is posing, or thinking very hard. She is positioned straight-on, not coyly turned to the side, and she is gazing out of the paper, rather than only getting gazed at by the viewer. This woman seems like she might be more adult and experienced in the world than a *shōjo*, though she shares her liminality. Her body is liminal and ethereal, mostly made up of empty space, like a human fragrance wafting across the paper, a body of pure smell. Is this a *shōjo* with corporeality, with her body and her sexuality not entirely disavowed, but added obliquely into the equation using the sense of smell?

In her self-portrait, Yonezawa prolongs the liminality of the *shōjo* into adulthood. As a married woman herself, she blurs the line between womanhood and girlhood, suggesting that the auto-sexuality and same-sex desires practiced by the *shōjo* are compatible with heterosexual, married adult life. Olfactory practices such as incense, perfume, and scented oils are the conduit for liminality to enter the realm of adult life and to transgress the line with girlhood. Yonezawa draws on the long Japanese poetic and aesthetic lineage of smell, linking it to creative expression. They allow for the act of writing to be corporealized, even sexualized, and for the *shōjo* practices of same-sex desire and auto-sexuality to pervade the adult world. The logic of smell, which transgresses and blurs boundaries between bodies and environment, permeates her poetry and allows it to transgress borders between womanhood and girlhood. In "Night and Fragrance," the sense of smell creates an auto-erotic act of poetic creation. While in "October Veranda," the sense of smell creates a moment of same-sex desire between women that also manifests in the creative act of writing poetry. In her work, the sense of smell, poetry, and sexuality are linked in a portrait of femininity that hovers between womanhood and girlhood, transgressing and blurring the boundaries of these two realms.

In so doing, Yonezawa connects *shōjo* culture to the Symbolists' larger avant-garde project of critiquing the unitary modern subject, from the specific position of womanhood and girlhood in early twentieth-century Japan. Bridging the gap between popular ephemera and high poetics, between the department store and avant-garde coteries, Yonezawa's work transgresses borders between high and low, as well as

between girl and woman. In the “fragrant spaces between words” of Yonezawa’s flowery, *shōjo*-inflected texts, there exists a corporealized language of the body that, through the sense of smell, creates possibilities for new subjective experiences. Her work allows readers to imagine a world where bodies and sexuality are fluid and in a state of becoming, not contained by already decided-upon boundaries.

NOTES

¹ だから吾々は素人として「香水の表現」を見分けるには、闇のなかがよい、騒音の絶対聞こえない所がよい、朝がよい、初夏がよい、一人で居るのがよい、無言がよい、一時に一つの香水を試みるのがよい、食後相当時間を経てからがよい、直接より布にでもつけるのがよい、眼をとちて眼をあいてと二様に試みるのがよい、距離もいろいろ試みるのがよい、男女別々に試みるのがよい、風のない日がよい、全裸体で感受して試みれば更によい。

Ōte Takuji, “*Kōsui no hyōjō’ ni tsuite: Mandanteki-na muda-banashi*,” in *Kaori*, edited by Tsukamoto Kunio, *Nihon no meizuihitsu* 48 (Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 1986), 97.

² Michiko Suzuki, “Writing Same-Sex Love: Sexology and Literary Representation in Yoshiya Nobuko’s Early Fiction,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* (2006) 65.3: 594. The Adrienne Rich essay Suzuki references is “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence,” *Signs* 5.4 (Summer, 1980): 631–660:

If we consider the possibility that all women—from the infant suckling her mother’s breast, to the grown woman experiencing orgasm sensations while suckling her own child, perhaps recalling her milk-smell in her own; to two women, like Virginia Woolf’s Chloe and Olivia, who share a laboratory; to the woman dying at ninety, touched and handled by women—exist on a lesbian continuum, we can see ourselves as moving in and out of this continuum, whether we identify ourselves as lesbian or not (650–651).

³ Cixous discusses *écriture féminine* in her essay “The Laugh of the Medusa,” *Signs* 1.4 (Summer, 1976): 875–893. She argues that although there is no single typical female experience, there is a universal woman subject rooted in the experience of the body:

A world of searching, the elaboration of a knowledge, on the basis of a systematic experimentation with the bodily functions, a passionate and precise interrogation of her erotogeneity. This practice, extraordinarily rich and inventive, in particular as

concerns masturbation, is prolonged or accompanied by a production of forms, a veritable aesthetic activity, each stage of rapture inscribing a resonant vision, a composition, something beautiful. Beauty will no longer be forbidden (876).

⁴ Hiromi Tsuchiya Dollase, “Yoshiya Nobuko’s ‘Yaneura no nishōjo’: In Search of Literary Possibilities in ‘Shōjo’ Narratives,” *U.S.-Japan Women’s Journal. English Supplement* 20/21 (2001): 173. The story Dollase refers to is Yoshiya Nobuko, “Yaneura no nishōjo,” first published in 1919, in *Yoshiya Nobuko Zenshū*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun Sha, 1975).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁶ Tsuboi Hideto, *Koe no shukusai: Nihon no kindaiishi to sensō* (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku shuppansha, 1997).

⁷ Ko Won discusses the link between Japanese Symbolism and Surrealism in “The Symbolists’ Influence on Japanese Poetry,” *Comparative Literature Studies* 8.3 (Sept. 1971): 263–264. Miryam Sas also cites the experiments of Symbolist poets and translators as coeval with and influential on Japanese Surrealism in her wonderful study *Fault Lines: Cultural Memory and Japanese Surrealism* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press 1999), 18.

⁸ Johanne Prud’homme and Lyne Légaré, “The Subject in Process,” Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières in Louis Hébert (dir.), *Signo* [online], Rimouski (Quebec), <http://www.signosemio.com/kristeva/subject-in-process.asp>.

⁹ Earl Jackson Jr., “The Heresy of Meaning: Japanese Symbolist Poetry,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 51.2 (December 1991): 582.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 583.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 583.

¹² Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, translated by Margaret Waller, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 213.

¹³ Constance Classen, David Howes, and Anthony Synnott, *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 84. Cited in Clare Brant, “Scenting a Subject: Odour Poetics and the Politics of Space,” *Ethnos* 73.4 (2008): 545.

¹⁴ Brian Moeran, “Japanese Fragrance Descriptives and Gender Constructions: Preliminary Steps towards an Anthropology of Olfaction,” *Etnofoor* 18.1 (2005): 101.

¹⁵ Hans Rindisbacher, “What’s this Smell? Shifting Worlds of Olfactory Perception,” *KulturPoetik* 15.1 (2015): 73.

¹⁶ Mary Fleischer, “Incense and Decadents: Symbolist Theatre’s Use of Scent,” in *The Senses in Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2012) 105.

- ¹⁷ Ibid., 107.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 108.
- ¹⁹ Aileen Gatten, “A Wisp of Smoke: Scent and Character in The Tale of Genji,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 32.1 (Spring, 1977): 41.
- ²⁰ Ōta Kiyoshi, “Kō to nihon bunka,” *Japan Association on Odor Environment* 3.2 (2008): 184.
- ²¹ Haruo Shirane, “Matsuo Bashō and The Poetics of Scent,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 52.1 (June 1992): 81–82.
- ²² Ibid., 46.
- ²³ Brian Moeran, “Japanese Fragrance Descriptives,” 97–123.
- ²⁴ Misu Yutaka, *Hana kara dōshite Kōsui o Toru Ka?* (Tokyo: Tokuda Kakyoku, 1912) Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan Digital Collection, <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/905476>, accessed June 28, 2018.

それとも現代人の嗅神は自然を嗅ぐべく余りに強く麻痺せしめられ了ったので有ろうか、或いはこれが文明といふので有ろうか。自然と遠ざかるといふことは或意味に於ける文明といふもので有ろう若しそうとすれば今日の香料は、殆んど文明的作品を以って満たされて居るといひ得ることを感謝する、勿論値段が高いといふことが多い原因を為しても居やうが今日我々の嗅ぐ香料といふものは匂い—即ち何物かの匂いこそすれ、其れに依って自然の何物をも感想せしめざるのみならず、反って人の臭神を刺激し、人の精神を攪乱し、其甚きに至っては人の命を誤るものすらあるほど有る、従って是等の香料に依って作られたる香水はいふに及ばず、其他の化粧品に至るまで、其香気の不自然にして只徒に人の臭神を圧するもののみ多いので有る。

- ²⁵ *Matsuzakaya Hyakunen shi*, edited by Torii Kazu and others, (Nagoya: Matsuzakaya, 2010), quoted in <http://d.hatena.ne.jp/foujita/mobile?of=1>, accessed March 16, 2018.

此齡頃のお嬢さんは断然センチです。高島華宵描くところのレターペーパーの表紙に随喜の涙をこぼし、若草と令女会は兎に角お読みになり手提鞆の中には米澤順子ものする詩集がテキストと同棲遊ばす……アッ！ 只今ふかきため息もて次の詩集を手にとられました……おゝサンチマンタール。

- ²⁶ Yonezawa Nobuko, *Yonezawa Nobuko Shishū* (Tokyo: Daiichi shobō, 1932) 82–83.

夜と薫香

夜ごと

うす青き玻璃戸を越えて、
音もなく、
わがソファアの片隅に来るものあり。
輝けども、
饒舌なれども一

深き紫銅の甕の口より、
浅香の気もおもとおもと立ち、
ものみな静かに壓さるれば、
色沈みて
かくれたる吐息をなす。

わが心ややに青ざめ、
血に似たる
ほどろを染め出せば、
輝けるものいよよ饒舌に、
声高く、
おどけたる小唄をうたふ。

²⁷Yonezawa Nobuko, *Yonezawa Nobuko shishū*, 25

夢は、
ほの暗き聖水盤のかたかげに、
しろじろと身を潜めつつ、
常に真紅の『創造』を生み、
常に金色の『永劫』を唄ふ。

²⁸Yonezawa Nobuko, *Yonezawa Nobuko shishū*, 132–133

創造
うかがひ寄る無形の緊縛、
なめらかに、
いとも平らけきしむらに
ああ
花びら色の快感。

なす油のしたたり、
我身常なき香に充ち、
そぞろ天地を恋ふ、
ああ
尊きものを生むころ。

²⁹Annette Stott, “Floral Femininity: A Pictorial Definition,” *American Art* 6. 2 (Spring, 1992): 67.

³⁰Yonezawa Nobuko, *Yonezawa Nobuko Shishū*, 72–73.

十月の涼廊

熟して揺るる^{ういきょう}茴香のほのあまき、
^{ヴェランダ}涼廊の圓卓に置かれたるペパアミンのすずしき青色、
われら、ほがらかに十月の日光に浴びしつ、
なほ、何ともしなき空虚を思ふ、
物わすれせしころ。
ともすれば額にかかる後れ毛を、
匂いみちたる言の葉の合間にかきあぐる
—黒き小櫛—

そは、
ふと若き女王を想はする君が癖なり。
ここ女ふたり、
十月の太陽をあふぎてあり。

味わふかき^{そよかぜ}微風
^{ヴェランダ}涼廊の圓卓に忍び寄れば、
ペパアミンの透きとほれる青きかをり

われらが肉声に混じりて、見えざる波紋を漂はせ、
夢をふくめる十月の大气、
いよよ身のまはりに重りゆく。

かかるとき、
凭るによき^{ヴェランダ}涼廊の圓ばしら、
—あな、奇きその肌ざはり。

³¹ Deborah Shamoan, *Passionate Friendship: The Aesthetics of Girl's Culture in Japan* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), 12.

³² *Ibid.*, 33.