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Influential Japanese novelist Yasunari Kawabata has constructed an autobiography through his fiction with this new collection of stories that parallel major events and themes in his life. In the lyrical prose that is his signature, these 23 tales reflect Kawabata's keen perception, deceptive simplicity, and the deep melancholy that characterizes much of his work.

The Dancing Girl of Izu and Other Stories Details

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Praj says

"As death approaches, memory erodes. Recent memories are the first to succumb. Death works its way backward until it reaches memory's earliest beginnings. Then memory flares up for an instant, just like a flame about to go out. That is the "prayer in the mother tongue."

A string of solemn words sprint from my mind onto my lips at slight picture of a funeral that passes on the street. With my **hands** pressed palm to palm; expressing gratitude to the death a **prayer in the mother tongue**, "Bless the departed soul and forgive all the mortal sins"; escapes in the melancholic air. Forgiveness, they say, is the only medicine that cures an infected heart. A prayer; a hope for betterment flickers as the mind enters into an empty abyss. When death approaches, it fetches the long lost past; nostalgia slowly creeps with the facade of first love; the fragments of a faded childhood and the tattered pages of life's desolation are pasted in a sentimental embrace even as the empathetic mother tongue binds the corpse in ropes of convention. As a child, I was terrified of funerals. But, it all changed on the day my grandfather died. The elders thought as I was too young to see the dead and so I was sent to the neighboring apartment. I never got to witness my grandfather's silent face; his last physical memories of this world. Not a single tear was dropped when I came back to an empty room and even today funerals never make me grieve. At funerals, I sit by the dead and stare blankly at the soundless face, searching for a fragmentary goodbye of my grandfather as my anguish never got the merited privilege of closure. Does death complete the emptiness that life always dwells in? Can death really erase all the mistakes and sins of mortality? When does a man rob the virginity of his life and then later, why does he regret it as a reckless act? Did my grandfather recollect his first spoken words in his mother tongue? The virginal call to his mother. Will I remember my first words on my deathbed? The choreographed beats of a drum lingered from a nearby tea house.

As I sat on the old steps, waiting for the youth, whom they called '**Master of funerals**', I heard the heart wrenching cries of a child as his poured the oil out of the lamp, lit in front of the dead. The boy despised the mere smell of the **oil**; rapeseed to be precise. The oil was cruel enough to play tricks on the child's mind. The lingering sweet odor brought back the dead. Unaware of his quandary, it would not be long till he smelled the rapeseed oil once again. Will he then offer a hundred lights at the altar to honor his parents? Ask the boy for whom death permeates through the viscous oil. A middle-school teen who had come to honor the dead sat besides me. He did not feel the need to put on a solemn mask like several others at the funeral. Just like me, he could not grieve the death. The rituals commenced with the entry of the 'master of funerals'. The youth was neither a temple priest nor a shaman. The fellow was in his 20s who unfortunately had seen more funerals than celebratory sacraments of life; his kimono smelled like a grave. Amid the chants, to the horror of the mourners, the teen slammed a book in my palm. "Please, read it carefully", he pleaded. Words were jammed up in my throat. How could he do such a disgraceful thing in the middle of the funeral? Doesn't he respect the dead? Tears flooded his aching eyes and I knew it right then, I had to read his penned **diary of the sixteenth year**. I could not bring myself to give him an unenthusiastic answer; I had to revere his words the way his belief resided in my approval. The boy's grandfather was on the brink of death. Maybe, it was fate giving me a second chance to pronounce my own unsaid goodbyes. Maybe, his word would lessen the weight of my onerous memories. Nevertheless, will the teen himself be able to unload his baggage? Will the sorrow of his loneliness vanish like the tears from his grandfather's hopeful eyes? Similar to his grandfather, would his heart stand strong for seventy-five years while the wounds of failure bled? Ask him on his 27th birthday.

The pristine images of the flowing white fabrics floated the virginal essence of life that conquered the

departed soul. The soft waves of the sea murmured the melancholy of breathing memories. The urn to be used for **gathering the ashes** rested peacefully on the wooden mantle that once was a proud owner of an authentic Japanese **watch** symbolizing the courage of love. Love is certainly a funny thing. It dawns from sheer vanity of beauty and crumbles in its opulent absurdities. **Frightening love**. Love that dwells on fringes of insanity; love that consumes the very essence of its purity to the advent of insanity. Is love a bastard child of lunacy or an orphan seeking a home in fostered hearts? Ask the man who patiently waited for the bitter blade to touch his warm neck.

The boy, who had come with a smartly wrapped parcel containing some of his mother's old kimonos along with his belongings, kept smiling as the **birthplace** bid a sorrowful adieu to one its children. Amid the ritualistic chants, the funeral proceeded onto the pompous street that prided in its mountains of silver and copper coins. The coins fell swiftly as pearls from a necklace. By honoring the dead, **the honey road** became an illusionary plaque of a melancholic heaven. Is then, paradise a distant path or is it found in the boots of the beggar who tonight will feast on a scrumptious sea bream and sake; the red comb a gift on her wedding night. The outlandish screeching of the cicadas interrupted the funeral procession as the villagers glanced at each other. The cries of the cicadas from the hill in the park metamorphosed into the merciful whimpers of a woman dwelling in the realms of her **chastity under the roof**. Once again the villagers glanced at each other. The rumor of a woman who lost her virginity three times preceded the procession. The woman who stood behind me in a white kimono grinned as only she knew the absolute truth. She had lost her virginity at the very sight of a wrinkle resting near her eye and the sting of her sagging breast bled for the first time. Not a single memory, just a flimsy shadow. Is old age the inevitable **enemy** of beauty that life prides upon? Do the baggage of our memories become detrimental as we head towards the dusk of our lives? Ask the woman who lost her virginity for the fourth time. Vile gossip is an illusion stemming from a nascent self-hatred. Like a chimerical ballet liberated from human errors, fantasy takes refuge into the arms of realism. Isn't it true that at times we choose to dwell in our rose-tinted prejudices? Ask the man standing in the shadow of a pilgrim in **the third-class waiting room** at the station. The voice of the drums seems to get closer.

The procession took a final turn on a narrow road that led to the 'Mountain Peach Bath'; a man-made paradise. Suddenly, a wild uproar halted the funeral procession. "*You worms. It's a small road just wide enough for automobiles to pass. If you were so shocked when you first realized what kind of intentions that road had, you had better open your eyes while you can and think about the intentions that lie behind that highway.*", howled an infuriated young man. The public bath gave way to a newly built private bath and the Mountain Peach Bath' could only be found in the **history** archives of fading memories. Somewhere, the crickets zealously chirped in a jar. The persistent odor that oozed from **burning the pine boughs** brought happiness to a gloomy heart. Did the ashes of the burned pine boughs cleanse the heart from the burdensome memories? Did the heart become a pictograph of purity, once again? Ask the heart who was anxious to eradicate the embedded orphan complex.

Underneath the persimmon trees, unaware of the large procession; the children played with their newly discovered half-sword. The blunt piece reminiscing in the memory of its sharpness lay on beneath the ancestral shrine. The samurai sword was chastised for tasting the blood of a grief-stricken **woman**. Did the sword have the right to take a genuine life? Who made the sword a messiah of justice? Ask the broken piece that drew blood.

"**Hurrah! Hurrah!**" yelled the sisters at the gate of the inn. Did they express the similar sentiments of the soul that had just departed from a sullied body? Or were these words of encouragement bestowed on the woman who in the memory of her father embarked on a journey of residing in the inns throughout Japan. Did the inn represented her unfulfilled dream or bear the burden of her unkind memories? Akin to the way I struggle to find my grandfather's face in the dead. The deafening sounds of the drum were excruciating to my emptiness. As I peeked into the tea house, I lost track of the funeral. An adolescent dancing girl in her teens was happily playing the drums, entertaining the tea house patrons. A virginal beauty daunting to the

eyes of her admirers; the **dancing girl of Izu** was a nomad of beauty and cleanness; a girl yet to be christened as a woman; someday.

Nearly after a somber hour, the funeral procession came to its end. Reminiscent to a soul noiselessly leaving a body in all its glory, **the setting sun** slipped into its watery grave leaving its memories in a violet sky. The soft waves of the sea melodiously hum a lullaby to **the princess of the dragon palace** who slept in the cerulean depths whilst a fairy tale was penned on a lover's grave. On my way back from the cremation, weary laborers walked from the mountains into the village; a girl sat terrified of **the sea**, wondering if there would be someone caring enough to take her away from this place. The nightfall glistened in the moonlight. **The moon** shimmered in its loneliness; its virginal baggage getting heavier with every star that cropped up in the nightly ecstasy. As the moon pondered on its forlorn fate, the **horse beauty** flew like an arrow towards the moon. The drums of the dancing girl welcomed a new life in to this world as it gave its first virginal cry. That day, I had witnessed both, the echo of life and the stillness of death; everything in between lay scripted in the unread pages of the diary that fervently fluttered in my lap.

"Put your soul in the palm of my hand for me to look at, like a crystal jewel. I'll sketch it in words..."

When I embarked on the Kawabata journey, I was determined to read each of his literary works, come what may. I desired to view Kawabata's primary strokes of his literary painting. A writer's first work resembles the monochromatic background splashed on a bare canvass; its image yet unknown. To discover the root after cherishing the grandeur, the essence of the root is placed on a critical dais. Alas, I had seen the painting first and not the bare canvas. I was handed a completed art and as I sat there trying to decipher and classify every color that amalgamated in the quest for a divine nothingness, I listened to the silence that lingered between the scripted words, comprehended the lingering sentiments and the opulent beauty that flowed with every stroke on the bare canvas. At times when the silence consumed me, I could observe the anguish of a soul that shimmered like a crystal jewel amongst the sketched words. To comprehend the meaning of nothingness, a cry of a lonely heart, to evaluate a character without any prejudices, the quest for a virginal soul, to hear the earthly grave that now bestows the divinity of a grain that feeds sons and grandsons; a need for the "ears of a Buddha". A privilege that Kawabata sometimes bestows.

Anina e gambette di pollo says

Autore: giapponese (1899-1972). Racconto.

Conosco troppo poco la narrativa giapponese per poter capire il ruolo innovativo di Kawabata e conosco abbastanza bene la natura americana per non prendere per buona la dichiarazione di Donald Keene sul fatto che gli americani capivano Kawabata più del giapponesi.

Ma a Keene possiamo perdonare l'entusiasmo vista la sua carriera decennale di esperto iamatologo.

Il racconto è breve e, come già presente nei suoi temi, riguarda un viaggio. Un giovane studente incontra durante il percorso verso la penisola di Izu una piccola compagnia di artisti girovaghi, categoria all'epoca non proprio ben vista.

Ma lui rimane affascinato. Si accompagna a loro, dorme e mangia con loro e rimane incantato dalla giovane danzatrice. Non accade nulla e nulla assume una forma. Tant'è vero che quando vede la danzatrice uscire

nuda dal bagno, lo studente è quasi sollevato dalla sorpresa di scoprire che è una ragazzina, quasi una bambina.

Nella bellezza del paesaggio le bianche lunghe gambe infantili della danzatrice sono anch'esse un lampo di bellezza che va semplicemente colto nell'attimo in cui il caso ce lo regala.

Non è un caso che il Giappone festeggi la fioritura dei ciliegi, che ci sia chi fa la previsione del giorno giusto e paghi col disonore una previsione sbagliata.

Al racconto seguono due brani. Uno un saggio di Kawabata che riguarda giustappunto la bellezza, l'altro di Amtrano sul racconto, sul premio Nobel etc.

11.01.2018

Fabfabian says

I preferred the Yasushi Inoue story, 'Obasute', beginning..." When on earth was it that I first heard the legends about abandoning the old people on Mount Obasute?" This theme is also dealt with in the movie 'The Ballad of Narayama'

Nissy says

Everytime i read for "Yasunari Kawabata" i got that feeling of being impressed and depressed at the same time ... there was a dark shadows that haunted me for days after reading this book, now that i also read for "Natsume Soseki" and "Yokio Mishima" i started to believe its a Japanese thing.

Carmen says

“La danzatrice di Izu” è uno dei primissimi racconti di Kawabata che ha avuto successo soltanto dopo qualche anno dalla sua pubblicazione e che in Giappone ora gode una fama immensa. Viene inserito in quasi tutte le antologie scolastiche, sono stati fatti anime, manga e diverse produzioni cinematografiche e quindi, inevitabilmente, del racconto originario è rimasto ben poco. “La danzatrice di Izu” non è per niente una storia d’amore, quanto una storia di amicizia, in cui Kawabata soltanto apparentemente ritorna ad uno stile o ai temi classici: la vena moderna e rivoluzionaria di Kawabata è sempre nella sua scrittura, in quel “lirismo controllato” che si muove alla ricerca della bellezza.

Terri says

For anyone who has watched a loved one slip away from dementia, old age, or illness, the autobiographical story "Diary of My Sixteenth Year" contained in this book will be both painfully familiar and oddly comforting. The other stories are also beautiful and haunting - I especially like the Money Road. The collection of short, short stories at the end are all challenging - their meaning isn't always clear, but they are

beautiful and will stay with you for a long long time.

Jon says

The stories are hit or miss but the title story, "the dancing girl of izu" is a subtle yet powerful coming-of-age story of a young man experiencing young love. Usually these stories are cheese but this one was very good. The other stories were generally just okay to me with some of them feeling like diary entries. If you liked his "palm of the hand stories" you may end up liking some of the other material in this book.

David says

Five stars for "The Dancing Girl..." Classic Kawabata in many respects, but there's also sobbing on a random schoolboy at the end.

The rest of the stories were lacking in sustenance, I felt. Shikoku had a few mentions, about which I was a faintly excited, but they've rather put me off the other Palm-of-the-Hand Stories. And without them I'll never achieve "Kawabata Completion"! Is it just me, but does "palm-of-the-hand" sound like they're supposed to be a bit raunchy?

Ema says

I'm hovering between 3 and 4 stars for this book and I can't decide, because I liked some of the stories, others depressed me, while one in particular was horrifying. I mostly feel like a superficial and uninitiated reader who stood at the foot of a complex work, but was not able to grasp it. Moreover, I let my personal weaknesses flood my perceiving of Kawabata's writing, judging it and condemning it for the uncomfortable and unbearable feelings he aroused inside me.

I don't even know whom to recommend this book to - people in a joyful state might see their happiness slip through their fingers, while people who are already sad will find themselves on the brink of depression. I might recommend it to the few that are in possession of a clear, balanced mind, as only they could appreciate the disjointed, chaotic world peopled by Kawabata's troubled characters.

There is not one single happy soul in this collection of short stories, with themes like alienation, loss, deception or cruelty. The wife of a scientist, whose husband is obsessed with having children, is unhappy in her marriage and feels attracted to a younger girl; a man literally on fire is brought to a hospital full of dying people, with a sad story of their own; a girl abandoned by her lover talks to his soul after he dies; survivors of war, homeless and starving, can no longer find their place in the post-war Japan; a widow remembers how she used to project the world in a mirror, for the comfort of her dying husband.

The sole exception among these plagued characters might be the orphaned student who becomes infatuated with a teenage dancing girl; he is not yet damaged by life, although he is pursued by melancholy. *The Dancing Girl of Izu* was my favorite story, along with *Moon in Water*. It seems wrong though to use notions as 'like' or 'enjoy' regarding Kawabata's stories in this collection. They are tormenting, unsettling and guarantee for the most unpleasant of reading experiences. The most horrifying was the story about a collector of birds who assumes the role of God with his live possessions, with power of life and death upon them. It's

disturbing to enter this man's mind and taste his indifference towards life, whether it's the beating heart of a puppy or that of a bird. I felt sick while reading this.

I feel my review is not doing justice to this book, but I might come back to these stories after reading some more Kawabata novels. I might understand them better. I might even surpass my weaknesses. I wish I could.

Pablo says

Relato breve de Kawabata. Describe el corto viaje de un estudiante que se encuentra en su camino unos músicos ambulantes.

En realidad no se puede decir mucho de este libro, o lo mismo, se puede decir tanto de él, pero es irrelevante. Llamar impresionista a esta obra es la mejor forma de describirla. Puesto que solo quien la lea, y como la lea, podrá llegar sentir el mensaje de amor y soledad que entrega.

Emeraldia Ayakashi says

5 new exemplary beauty, sometimes tight and will require breaks and reflection (or even several readings) to understand the full meaning. 5 news that we speak of love with subtlety and unspoken, old age and beauty of death exacerbates sensations and feelings.

5 new contemplative and poetic that emphasizes the impermanence and transience of happiness in life.

"The danseuze Izu" is the first publication of Kawabata. This new, published in 1926, made him famous man who would become one of the greatest Japanese authors.

The five that make up the new collection here this all revolve around the subject of love, the beauty of women and death, as we frequently find in his work.

The danseuze Izu (1926):

This first novel, which gives its name to the collection, inspired by the personal experience of the author.

In 1918, Kawabata on a trip to Izu. During his journey on foot, he meets a traveling theater troupe.

We find the same frame in the story where the narrator is fascinated by the beauty of one of the young actresses. It gives its way to that of the company, binds friendship with the leader, Eikichi to get closer to her sister, the beautiful Kaoru which will prove very young.

" Pour conserver ce reflet du monde, il aurait sacrifié sa vie. Certain jour, après une forte averse, tous deux contemplaient la lune reflétée dans une flaque d'eau. Cette lune, dont on pouvait à peine dire qu'elle fut l'illusion d'une illusion, resurgit dans le coeur de Kyoko. "

" On ne connaît que le reflet de son visage ; ces traits qui vous sont personnels, uniques, vous demeurent invisibles. On se touche la figure chaque jour, comme si les traits que renvoie le miroir étaient ceux de votre vrai visage..."

umberto says

I've longed to read "The Izu Dancer" by Yasunari Kawabata but I couldn't find one till last November. The

book was a bit disappointing due to such thrifty length, merely 21 pages, of the mentioned title as well as three obscure stories, except the title of “The Counterfeiter” casually seen somewhere, by Yasushi Inoue. So whenever I leafed through the stories, I couldn’t help asking myself, “Inoue who?” since his name was unfamiliar to me till I couldn’t recall reading any of his works before. Then, I’ve known Edward Seidensticker and read many of his fine translations from Japanese but the name Leon Picon as a new translator has started to worry me.

Probably more well-known to international readers than other Japanese writers since some 48 years ago, Kawabata awarded the prestigious Nobel Prize in literature in 1968 has written something enchantingly sentimental, I think, in most of his novels I’ve read so far. As we can see and imagine the seemingly loving bond initiated by the nineteen-year-old narrator ‘I’ when he again meets such a young, pretty girl named Kaoru, a dancer traveling as a member in a group to another town [“I had seen the little dancer twice before.” (p. 10)]. This might be quite a simple, ordinary story between a young man and his fledging love after seeing her but Kawabata has own ways of narrating to induce his readers to read on and wonder if his love is shared and ended happily. From the context, we can’t help wondering on the dancer’s age in some excerpts that follow:

“The little girl turned over the cushion she had been sitting on and pushed it politely toward me.

...

She was perhaps sixteen. Her hair was swept up in mounds after an old style I hardly know what to call. ...” (p. 9)

In fact, she is far younger than that, as we can see from this dialogue:

“I’m afraid not. That’s my wife, the older of the two women. She’s a year younger than you. She lost her second baby on the road this summer – it only lived a week – and she isn’t really well yet. The older woman is her mother, the girl is my sister.”

“You said you had a sister thirteen?”

“That’s the one. I’ve tried to think of ways of keeping her out of this business, but there were all sorts of reasons why it couldn’t be helped.”

He said his own name was Eikichi, his wife was Chiyo-ko, the dancer, his sister, was Kaoru. ... (pp. 18-19)

Nilu says

4.5 Stars

This collection of short stories can be described as semi autobiographical.

If you read up on Kawabata's life leading up to the early 1920's you'd find that he has scattered pieces of himself throughout the book.

The title tale will fill you with longing and melancholy nostalgia.

The several stories of death and funerals will impart what the author was going through during the time of writing.

He even hints at the eroding beauty of old Japan, which is on the course of hurtling towards development.

He is a master story teller and his work will make you weep for all the right reasons.

Xαρ? Z. says

This is a collection of short stories by Kawabata. The title of the book comes from the first story called "The Dancing Girl of Izu"

In general all of the stories had a strange feeling, very distant from me and yet very human. I enjoyed all of them quite a lot.

I don't think this is for everyone though.

Be well folks <3

Cristina says

La danzarina de Izu es una buena opción para aproximarse al universo de Kawabata. Se trata de un relato breve en el que se narra un enamoramiento juvenil entre un estudiante tokiota de viaje por la península de Izu y una joven percusionista, una bailarina para él, que se encuentra por la zona trabajando con su familia, un grupo de músicos ambulantes.

¿Por qué digo que es una buena manera de acercarse a Kawabata?

En primer lugar porque ya se entrevé aquí, siendo esta su ópera prima, escrita a los 27 años, la maestría que posee y que perfeccionará posteriormente, a la hora de crear imágenes bellísimas. Buen ejemplo es el principio del relato: "el sendero subía por la montaña, dando vueltas y vueltas. Cuando llegaba al paso de Amagi, descargó de pronto un fuerte aguacero que envolvió el frondoso bosque de cedros en un velo gris pálido"; la descripción paisajística cuando dice que "mientras anochecía lentamente, empezó a llover con fuerza. Las montañas parecían alejarse, del suelo se elevaban blancas nubes de niebla, y el arroyo que corría junto a la casa se tiñó de amarillo y sus aguas bajaban con más ímpetu y fuerza"; o el retrato idealizado de su enamorada: "sus grandes ojos negros y brillantes eran lo más hermoso en ella, y su risa era como abrirse de las flores. Se me ocurrió la expresión de "risa florida" y comprendí que sólo para ella era adecuada."

En segundo lugar porque aunque se intuye el tono melancólico tan característico del autor (la tragedia y la muerte se anuncian mediante la alusión a los abortos), al tratarse de una obra de juventud, este no llega a ser tan acusado y asfixiante como lo encontramos en País de Nieve o en Lo Bello y lo Triste, por lo que la lectura del relato es más ligera y agradable. Me quiero referir, con ello, concretamente, a la presentación de la historia amorosa que se erige como eje central de la narración.

Deliciosa es la escena cuando a ella se le derrama el té debido a los nervios (que me recordó a algo parecido que me pasó a mí en el cine con unas palomitas que acabaron esparcidas por el suelo), quedando él conmovido; o bien, cuando él afirma que "me resultaba incómodo permanecer de pie delante de ella, con toda mi estatura." Bello es el uso de la cabellera femenina como leitmotiv erótico que se puede apreciar en los siguientes pasajes: "llevaba el pelo recogido en lo alto de la cabeza, peinado en una forma que yo nunca había visto. Su lindo rostro quedaba empujado, pero aquel peinado le sentaba maravillosamente. Su cabellera era abundante, como la de esas ideales doncellas de los cuentos." (...) "Su precioso cabello negro casi me rozaba el pecho. De pronto, enrojeció." Se trata de un amor no consumado ya que los amantes no pueden estar solos ni un instante, circunstancia que añade tensión al relato, que se acentúa debido a la separación final inevitable, con toda la inmensa tristeza que supone, magistralmente descrita por el autor, concluyendo así la historia. No obstante, me gustaría destacar que justamente la frase final del texto

desprende una áurea positiva, lo que he agradecido enormemente: “me parecía que toda mi cabeza se diluía en agua clara, que iba goteando lentamente dejando tras de sí la dulzura de una dicha incomparable.”

Y, en último lugar, porque el texto contiene un amplio abanico de elementos japoneses, muy atractivos, por exóticos, a los ojos del lector occidental: el juego de go, los baños termales, la alusión al samisén o las descripciones del interior de las estancias podrían ser algunos ejemplos.

En el caso que esta lectura no sea nuestra primera experiencia con Kawabata podremos, quizás, ver más allá e intentar darle a la historia un sentido simbólico. A mi parecer, el autor describe un primer desamor, la pérdida de la inocencia infantil y, con ello, el paso al mundo de los adultos. Por una parte, la gorra de estudiante que el personaje principal lleva puesta al principio del relato y que entrega como regalo de despedida a Eikichi, sacándola arrugada de la cartera, simbolizaría este abandono del personaje niño que al tener que irse de Izu abandona la juventud, el paraíso. Por otra parte, la entrada en el mundo de los adultos se refleja en la responsabilidad que un hombre le encarga al protagonista en el momento de embarcar: el deber de hacerse cargo de acompañar a una anciana con un bebé hasta Tokio. De todas formas me gustaría recalcar que no debería entenderse en la atmósfera kawabatiana, a mi modo de ver, este paso del mundo infantil al mundo adulto de manera rígida sino que se trata más bien de idas y venidas constantes de un lugar a otro representadas por los personajes masculinos que pueblan sus novelas, siempre enganchados al recuerdo de la juventud y a los amores apasionados que en él encuentran, independientemente de la edad que tengan.

Respecto al entorno como espejo simbólico de las emociones de los personajes, el paraíso al que se ha aludido más arriba, concuerda con el lugar donde se ubica la historia, la península de Izu, un lugar tradicionalmente de recreo y ocio en Japón, en contraposición a Tokio, de donde viene el protagonista (dicotomía que encontraremos después tanto en País de Nieve, las montañas en ese caso, como en Lo Bello y lo Triste, Kioto allí). Otro elemento utilizado simbólicamente sería la estación de año en la que se sitúa la historia, el otoño, que jugaría aquí como elemento que acentúa la melancolía de la despedida, del abandono, tanto de la enamorada como de la juventud, quedando tan sólo después el frío invernal. El otoño viene acompañado de la lluvia además, presente durante toda la historia. El agua que cae del cielo se mimetiza con las lágrimas del protagonista al abandonar la isla que a la vez se funde con la estela que va dejando el barco en el mar mientras se aleja, estela a la que autor no se refiere explícitamente pero da suficientes recursos sensoriales y literarios para que el lector se la pueda imaginar.

Si tuviera que objetarle algo, objetaría la visión que se desprende de la mujer en la historia como ser inferior al hombre. Es cierto que debemos tener en cuenta que el relato se sitúa en Japón en los años treinta aproximadamente (o al menos en esa época fue escrito, en 1926 exactamente) por lo que la crítica puede resultar descontextualizada, pero vamos allá. El protagonista mira a su enamorada como a una niña, cuando en realidad él tiene veinte años y ella diecisiete, es decir, son de la misma edad. ¿Es que se cree que es su padre o su tutor? Además la venera como si de un objeto se tratara. Otro momento en el que se alude a la mujer como a un ser frágil es cuando dice que “pensé que, aunque estuvieran acostumbradas a caminar, al fin y al cabo eran mujeres y, aunque me llevaran uno o dos kilómetros de ventaja, podría alcanzarlas fácilmente.” Pero lo más sorprendente del caso es que las mismas mujeres comparten idéntica visión cuando a la hora de beber agua o de comer dejan primero que sea el hombre quien proceda para evitar que él se contamine, por resumirlo de algún modo. Ahí lo dejo.

Por último me gustaría añadir esta información curiosa que he encontrado en Wikipedia para vincular el relato con la actualidad: “la historia es bien conocida en Japón, hasta el punto de que parte del título del relato, odoriko (que significa "bailarina") se usa para designar a los expresos que van a la zona de Izu. “

Una lectura indispensable para los fans de Kawabata.

Muhammad Bahrul Abid says

Seperti saya baca di bagian yang menceritakan latar belakang Yasunari Kawabata, cerpen-cerpen (edit: novelet-novelet) di dalam buku ini banyak mengisahkan kesunyian, kematian. Ada cinta yang tak terungkap, ada cinta bertepuk sebelah tangan, kiranya begitu.

Yang saya suka dari buku ini adalah Yasunari Kawabata menuliskan kata-katanya dengan indah dan luwes. Namun, saya memang sedikit sukar memahami buku terjemahan, sebagaimana saya membaca karya terjemahan Jostein Garrder. Perasaan saya sama: lebih banyak hampanya.

Terakhir : 3.0 dari 5 bintang!

Mohammed Samih says

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Mafalda Afilhado says

2,5*

Ao inicio fiquei confusa porque esperava uma narrativa num todo mas só depois me deparei que este livro era de facto um livro de contos japoneses (3 contos)

Quanto ao primeiro conto que em conclusão foi o meu preferido, talvez aquele que eu mais me entreguei revelou-se muito personalizado de uma maneira boa e bonita, tanto como os espaços, sentimentos e personagens

O segundo conto achei muito confuso pelo facto, também de eu estar a querer estabelecer uma ligação com a história anterior

e o terceiro conto foi também muito satisfatório de se ler e ao mesmo tempo inquietante

Florenzia says

“When so many are lonely as seem to be lonely, it would be inexcusably selfish to be lonely alone.”

? Tennessee Williams, *Camino Real*

The Dancing Girl of Izu

looking from afar
wishing to break the silence
that haunts them tonight

Full review

Diary of My Sixteenth Year

lonely child
forced to grow
as leaves fall

Oil

crowded oil
fading away
amid the ashes

The Master of Funerals

existence whispers
ancient songs of winter times

solitude lingers

Full review

Gathering Ashes

old dust
makes the nose bleed
when cicadas cry

Hurrah

two loners meet
and start their journey
throughout Japan

The Princess of the Dragon Palace

sinners pay

they soon became
two lines
destined never to meet

The Honey Road

memories of loss
break into the mind
as a whitened pond
sings into the night

They say paradise is far away.

Chastity Under the Roof

I wonder
what to say
about this one

long sigh

moving on

The Moon

thoughts so heavy
that dig his clogs
into the snow

...one who intends to join her life with mine.

Enemy

a woman sees
a line of enemies
inside her screen

A Woman

where the gourds lie, a sullied sword pierced a tombstone to purify itself

Frightening Love

do the heavens
punish
too much love?

*

heavens punish
too much
doubt

Horse Beauty

ravishing horse
galloped off
leaving the cosmos flowers
behind

The Sea

stop hesitating
bring your silence
and walk with me

'Please take me where I can't look at the sea.'

Hands

silent hands
evoke her death
pomegranate flower

He believed that in this way his unexpressed feelings could somehow be communicated to others.

The Third-Class Waiting Room

Tokyo Station
has the feeling
she's not coming

The Watch

a lawyer
meant to talk
can't find the words
in his avalanche of thoughts

We mustn't condemn the vanity of these two. Vanity happened to give this man, who had groveled in fear of women, a little courage for love. ...perhaps, this thing called love is so absurd that it will manifest itself regardless of the means.

History

open your eyes now
under the fallen oak leaves
lie real intentions

Birthplace

financial
transactions
exhaust me

yet they brought the boy back to his land

Burning the Pine Boughs

the sounds of fear
cover the night
of the first sparrow

A Prayer in the Mother Tongue

the mind
remembers
as it says goodbye

'Perhaps Kayoko is something like a mother tongue to me.'

The Setting Sun

don't look at my past
she said to the poet
near the blossoms

*

the samurai's sword
grabbed a life
and broke it in two

your silence is sharper

Jan 01, 16

* First *review* of 2016. One can only hope...

** Also on my blog.

Akemi G. says

Oh, here is one of my fav of Kawabata: *Diary of My Sixteenth Year*. When I first read it, I was astonished of the power of these simple words.

The *Dancing Girl of Izu* is very popular in Japan. Not sure what else are included in this English translation, but if you like Kawabata, this should be a good read.

