



The Tale  
of Genji

Y O S H I T A K A A M A N O



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# The Tale of Genji

Text by Anri Itō and Junichi Imura  
Additional English translation by Rachel Nacht

  
MILWAUKIE







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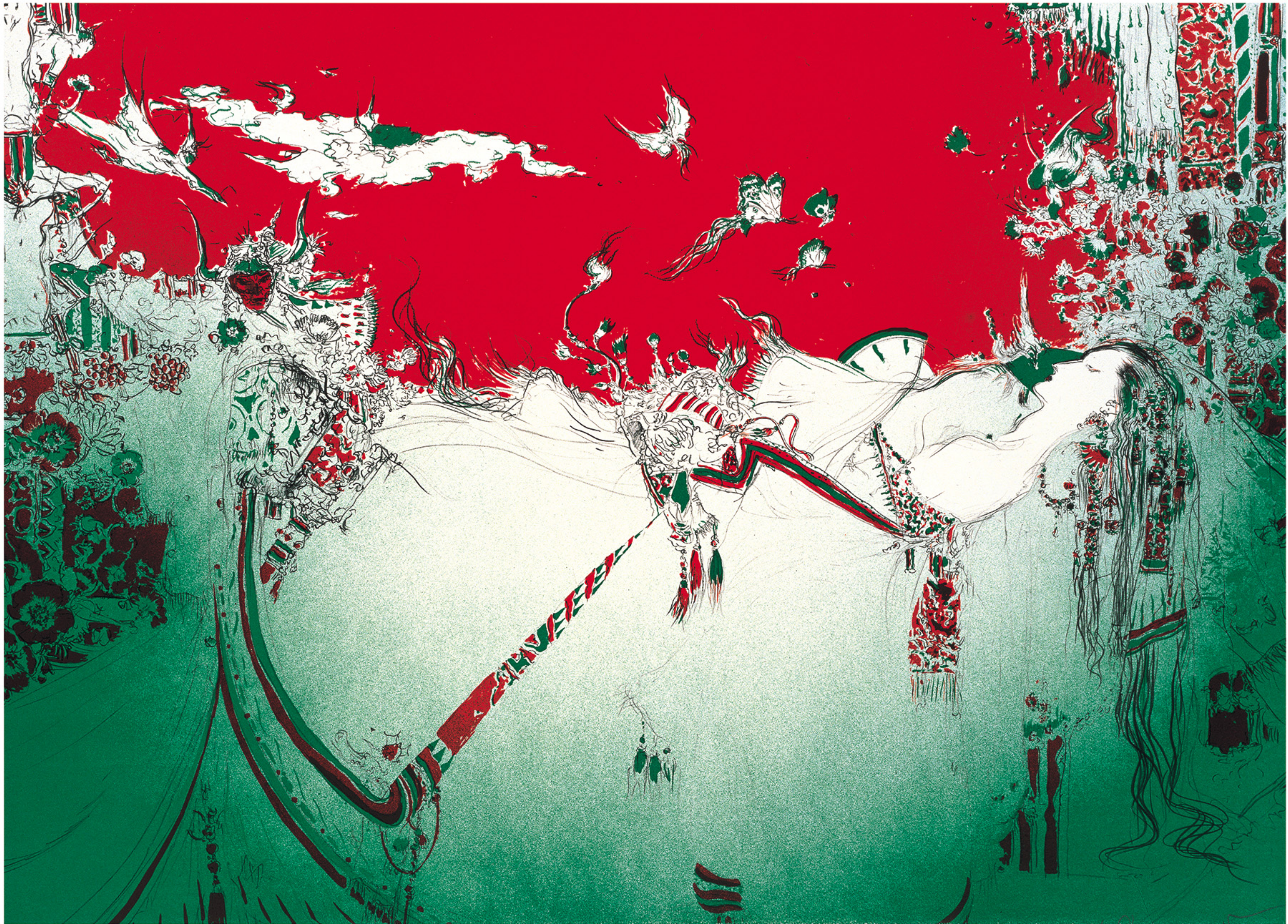




Be it  
your will  
that I  
live out  
my days  
feeling  
sorry for  
myself?  
Though  
night  
may end  
and turn  
to dawn,  
never will  
there be an  
end to my  
thoughts  
of you.







The  
sailing  
moon that  
disappears  
into the  
heavens  
knows naught  
of the  
mountain's  
heart.  
Lured from  
my abode by  
this moon,  
it seems that  
I too am  
disappearing  
into the  
heavens.



If we  
shall  
never  
again meet,  
would that  
I slip  
into my  
dreams  
tonight.





You need  
but to  
think of  
me whole-  
heartedly  
and you  
will never  
be lost,  
not even  
when the  
sky is  
bereft of  
the moon's  
light.





As  
evidence  
of my  
undying  
love  
for you,  
we have  
found  
each other  
here at  
Devotion  
Point.  
So deeply  
do I feel  
the bond  
between us.



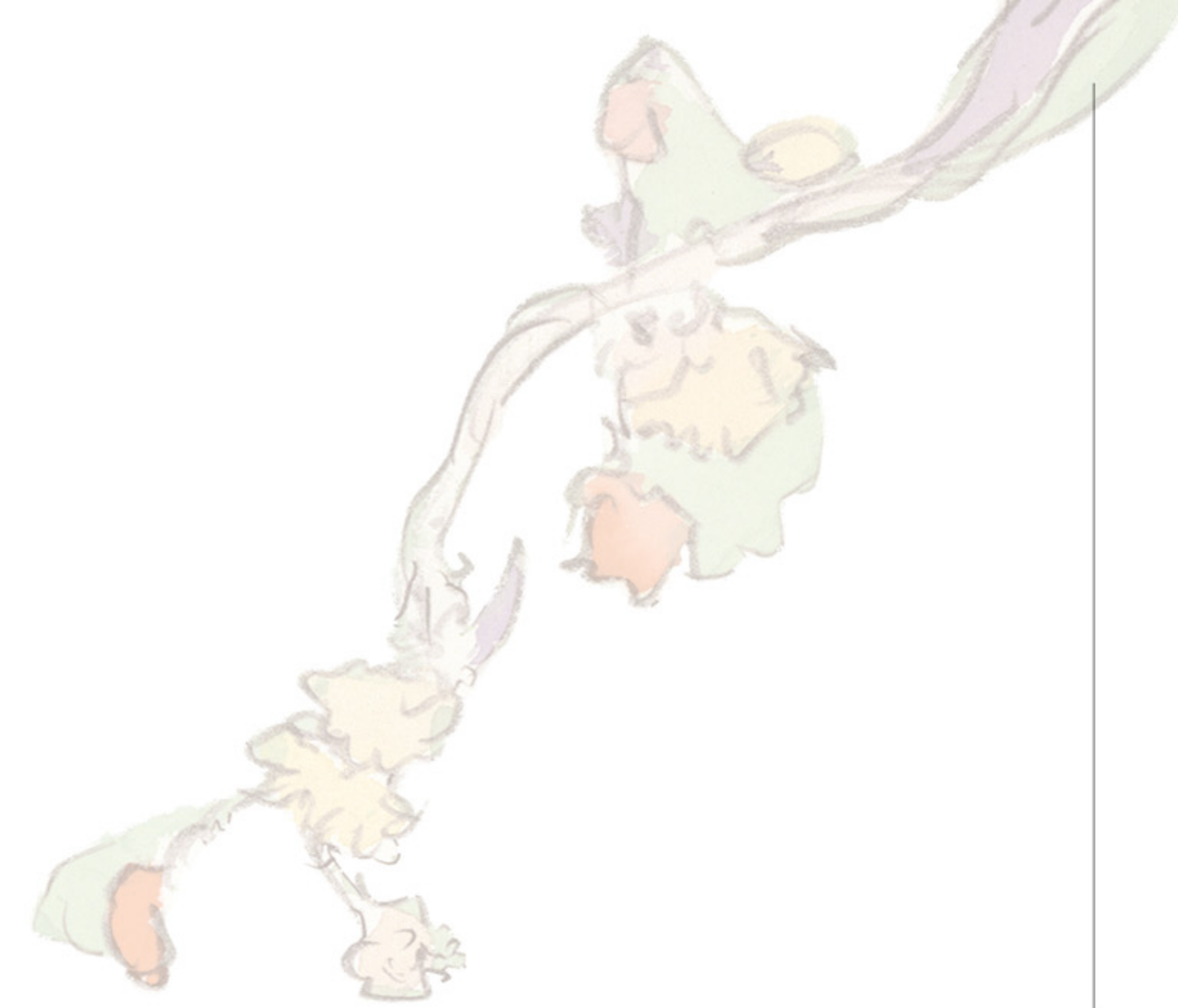


To bid  
farewell  
at dawn  
will surely  
elicit  
a tear,  
though never  
have I seen  
such a lonely  
autumn sky  
as this  
morning I  
witnessed.



V. A. — a —





## THE TALE OF GENJI

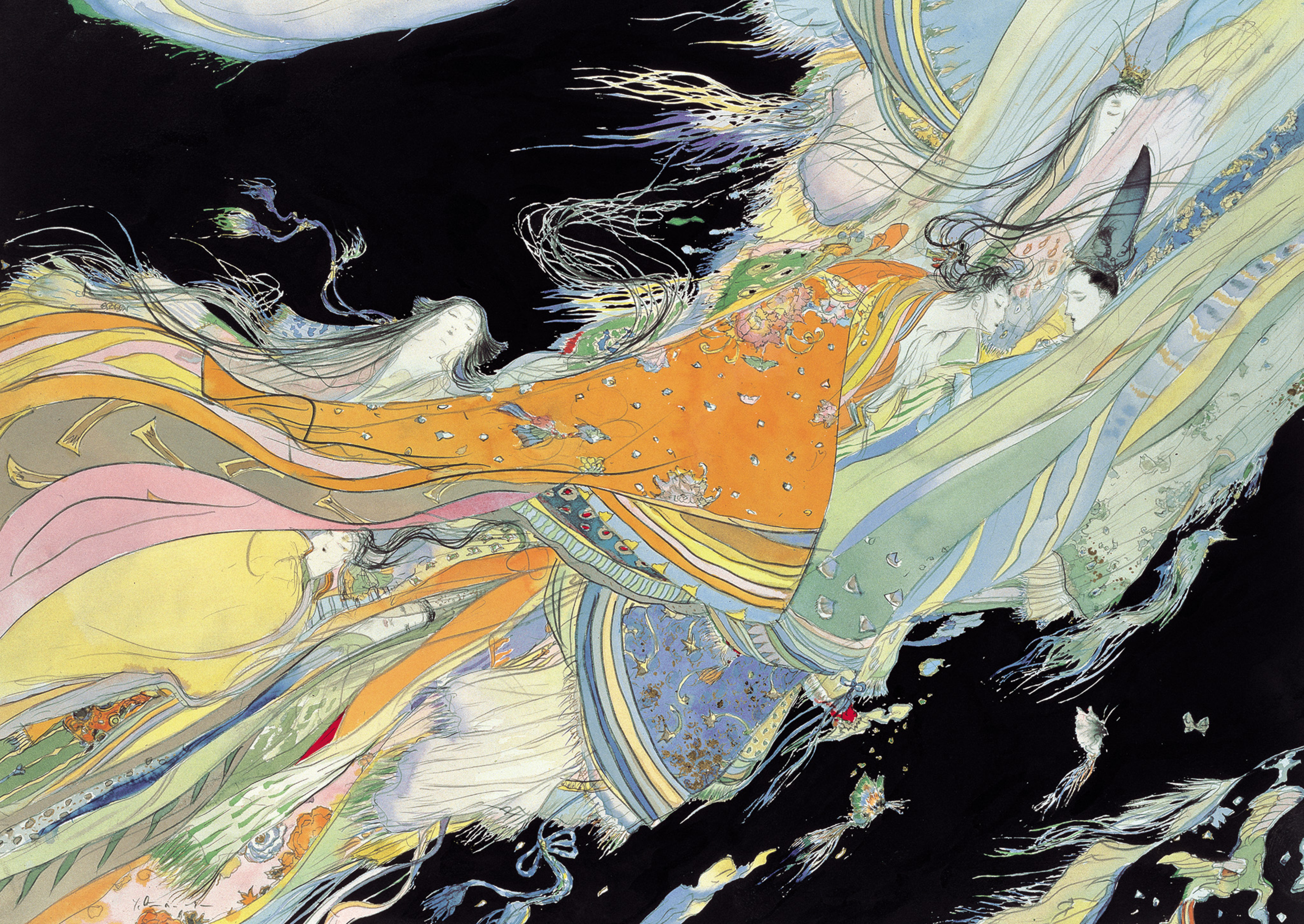
*The Tale of Genji* is truly an epic, written at the beginning of the eleventh century by an imperial lady attendant named Murasaki Shikibu.

The tale is set in the imperial Palace and the aristocratic circle of the Heian Period. Nevertheless, after 990 years, we continue to be inspired by it. This is not only because of its epic stature and deep insight into human psychology, but also because it explores the universal theme of Love, depicting every aspect of human life.

The hero of the tale is an extraordinarily handsome prince named Hiraku Genji. Highly intelligent, he possessed almost superhuman capability in everything he did, but he was nonetheless a pleasure-seeker always in love. A variety of women became his love matches, ranging from his stepmother to a ten-year-old girl, but he was not a simple philanderer. His love in every instance was so serious that he was prepared to sacrifice his status and even his life.

The epic drama, then, depicts Hiraku Genji's life and his love affairs, and it portrays a variety of women in various states of love.









Shed and  
abandoned,  
your  
threadlike  
garments  
appear in  
my hands  
like the  
cast-off  
skins of  
the cicadas  
gathered  
under the  
trees.

I detest you  
for eluding  
my grasp,  
but the scent  
of your  
perfume  
fills me with  
longing for  
what once  
was.

## UTSUSEMI

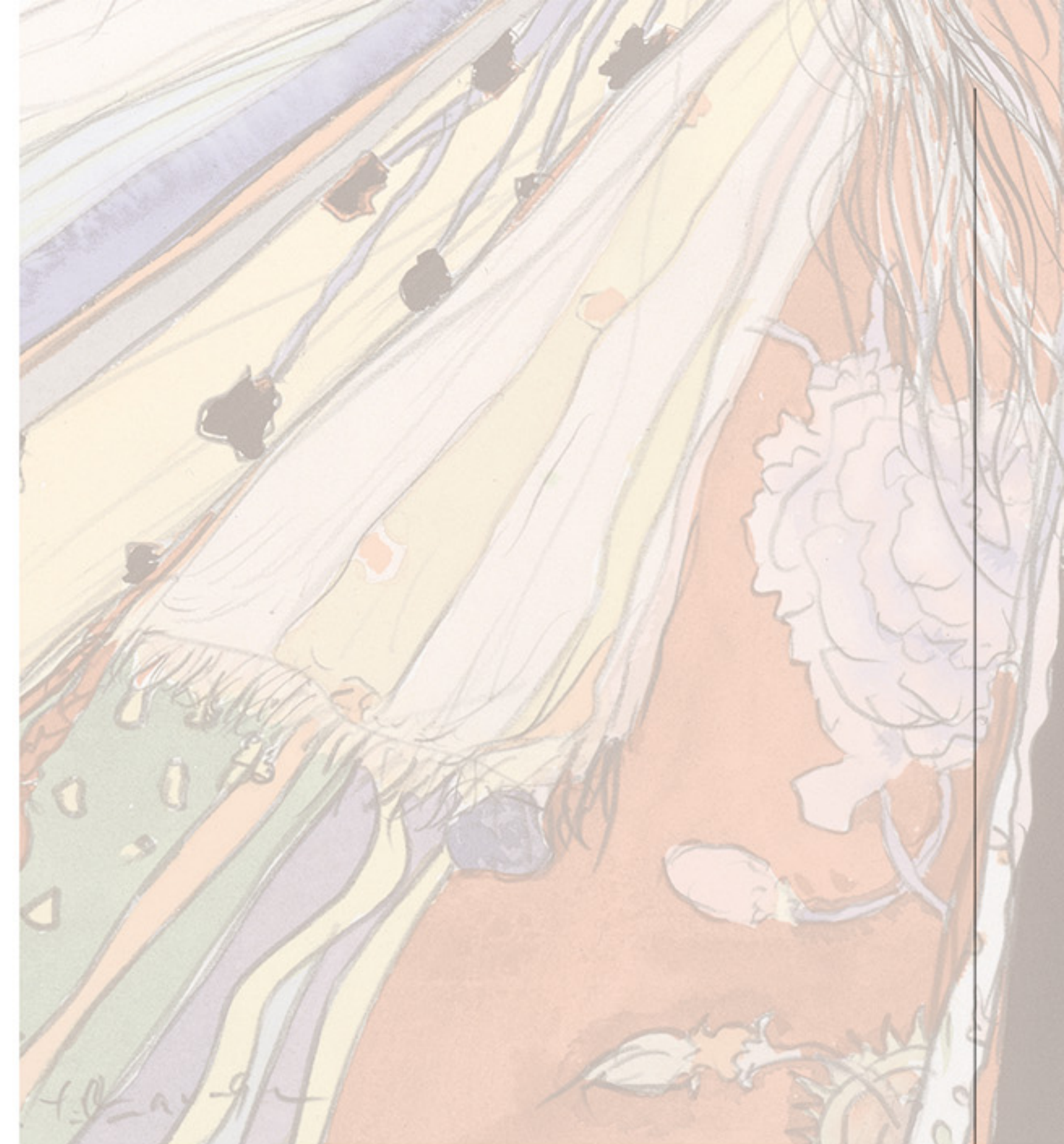
The tale features a young woman, the second wife of a local government official. After a rainy day, Genji was to stay in their house. It so happened that the official was away on business and Genji became emotionally drawn towards the wife left behind in the house. When everyone was asleep, Genji stole into her bedroom and despite her resistance he gently persuaded her and made her his own. She became ashamed to have had this casual affair despite her married state. When Genji stole into her bedroom again, she sensed his arrival, cast off her dress, and swiftly ran away in her undergarments. Genji embraced the dress she left behind and, lamenting, said that it resembled “Utsusemi,” the cast-off skin of a cicada.







Can it  
be you who  
eternally fills  
my thoughts;  
you who  
look like a  
yūgao flower,  
gleaming with  
the glow of  
white dew-  
drops?



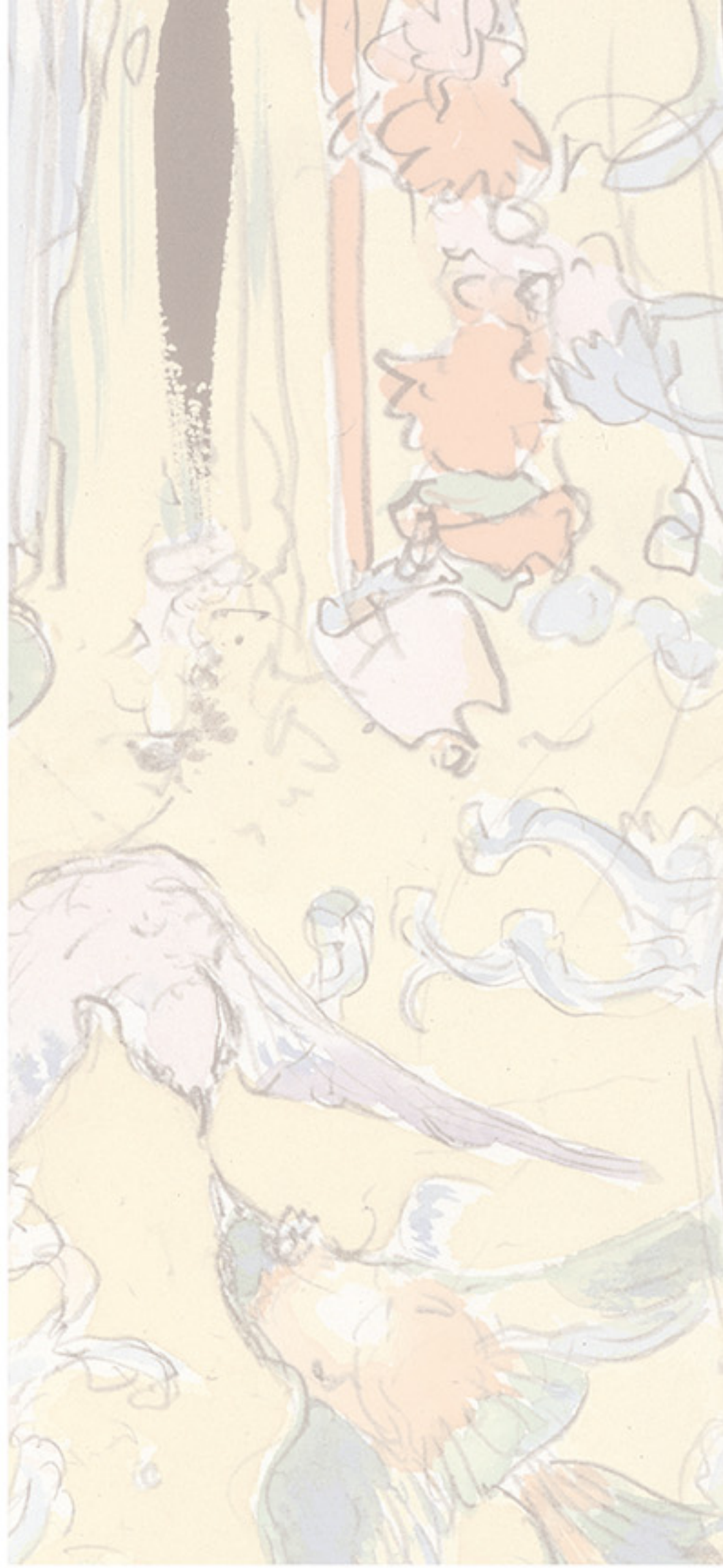
## YŪGAO

One day, Genji was visiting his sick wet-nurse, when he saw evening blossoms beyond the neighboring fence. When he tried to pick the flower, the lady of the house, declaring that the flower was too delicate to touch, ordered it to be presented to him on a white fan. Genji became fascinated by her and began to frequent her company in secret. They fell in love without revealing each other's status or name. One night, after spending a sweet and joyful day, Genji was disturbed by a terrifying dream. When he called his servants to bring some light, he saw Yūgao beside him, lying lifeless and cold.









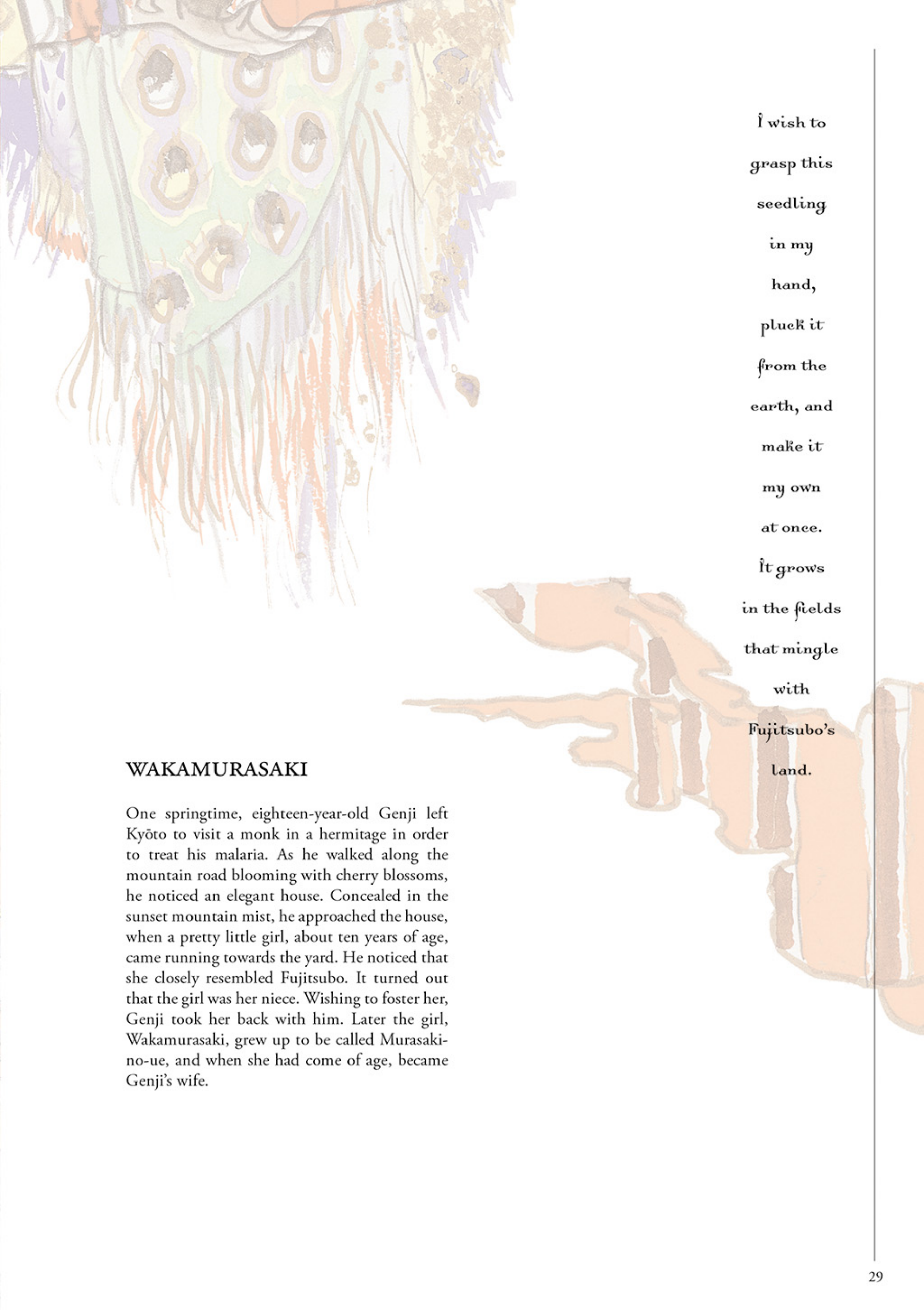
For  
generations  
to come,  
the tale of  
my painful  
existence  
will spread  
its seed . . .  
even if I  
am forever  
caught in  
a dream  
from which  
I will  
never wake.

## FUJITSUBO

Fujitsubo was a wife to Genji's father, the Emperor. She closely resembled Genji's natural mother, who died when he was three. And due to his yearnings for his dead mother, young Genji eventually fell in love with her. When he turned eighteen, he finally confessed the feelings he held for her. After one night of secret passion, she gave birth to a boy with a striking resemblance to Genji. Not knowing the truth, the Emperor was overjoyed, and, deeply in guilt, Fujitsubo kept a strict distance from Genji. Five years or so later, the Emperor died. From then on, respecting her feelings as she entered the state of a nun, Genji held back his love for her and would only pay her formal visits.







I wish to  
grasp this  
seedling  
in my  
hand,  
pluck it  
from the  
earth, and  
make it  
my own  
at once.  
It grows  
in the fields  
that mingle  
with  
Fujitsubo's  
land.

### WAKAMURASAKI

One springtime, eighteen-year-old Genji left Kyōto to visit a monk in a hermitage in order to treat his malaria. As he walked along the mountain road blooming with cherry blossoms, he noticed an elegant house. Concealed in the sunset mountain mist, he approached the house, when a pretty little girl, about ten years of age, came running towards the yard. He noticed that she closely resembled Fujitsubo. It turned out that the girl was her niece. Wishing to foster her, Genji took her back with him. Later the girl, Wakamurasaki, grew up to be called Murasaki-no-ue, and when she had come of age, became Genji's wife.









Today,  
from afar,  
I saw your  
brilliant  
figure at the  
ceremony,  
but your icy  
demeanor  
invoked in  
me a painful  
longing.

### ROKUJYŌ-NO-MIYASUDOKORO

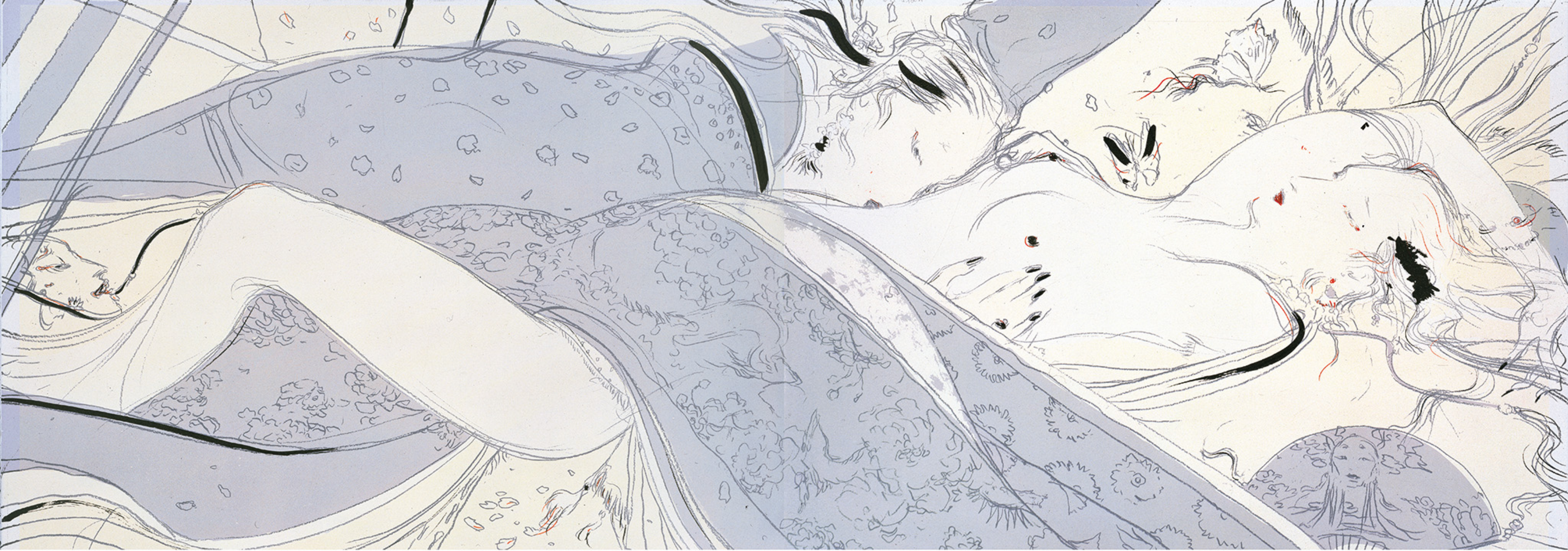
The widow of Genji's stepbrother, the former Crown Prince, this lady, seven years senior to Genji, was elegant and well-educated, but also a proud and jealous woman. On a festival day, her inconsiderate attendants came into conflict with those of Genji's wife, Aoi-no-ue, and she was publicly humiliated by this incident.

Her bitterness projected a demonic phantom which possessed and killed Aoi-no-ue. Genji was frightened by her delusion. Rokujyō-no-miyasudokoro also was ashamed of herself for her terrible behavior, and spent her last days in sorrow and ill-health.







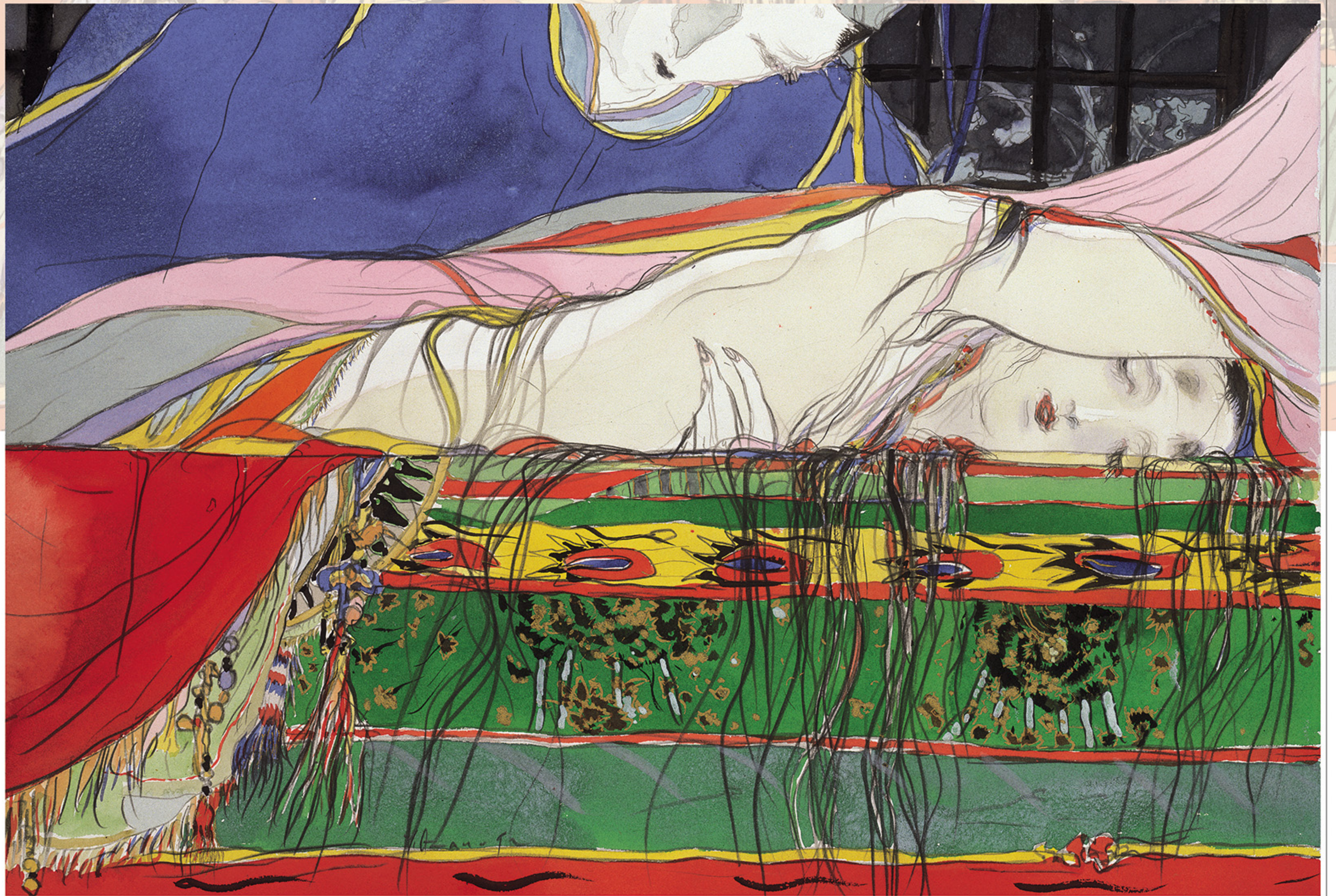








Yūgao,  
you are  
a summer  
moonflower.  
There is  
no other  
akin to you,  
a woman  
of more  
beauty  
than a  
blossoming  
flower.







You  
who know  
the beauty  
of this  
spring  
night,  
surely  
it is our  
deep-rooted  
connection  
that has  
brought us  
together.

### OBOROZUKIYO

One day in spring, after a banquet under the cherry blossoms, the twenty-year-old Genji came across a lady singing most beautifully along the palace corridor. He quickly took hold of her by the sleeves and closed the door of a small room behind him. Although resisting at first, she soon gave herself to him when she realized that the assailant was Genji, but she turned out to be a daughter of his political enemy. Later she came to the palace to serve the Crown Prince, but, unable to resist the burning desire for each other, they continued to meet. One stormy night, her father came looking for her in anxiety and discovered the secret affair. When the mother of the Crown Prince found out about this, she took the opportunity to exercise her vengeance upon Genji's family, devising his downfall by sending him to a desolate area by the sea. On his return to resume his former life, he kept his love burning for Oborozukiyo in a lasting friendship.

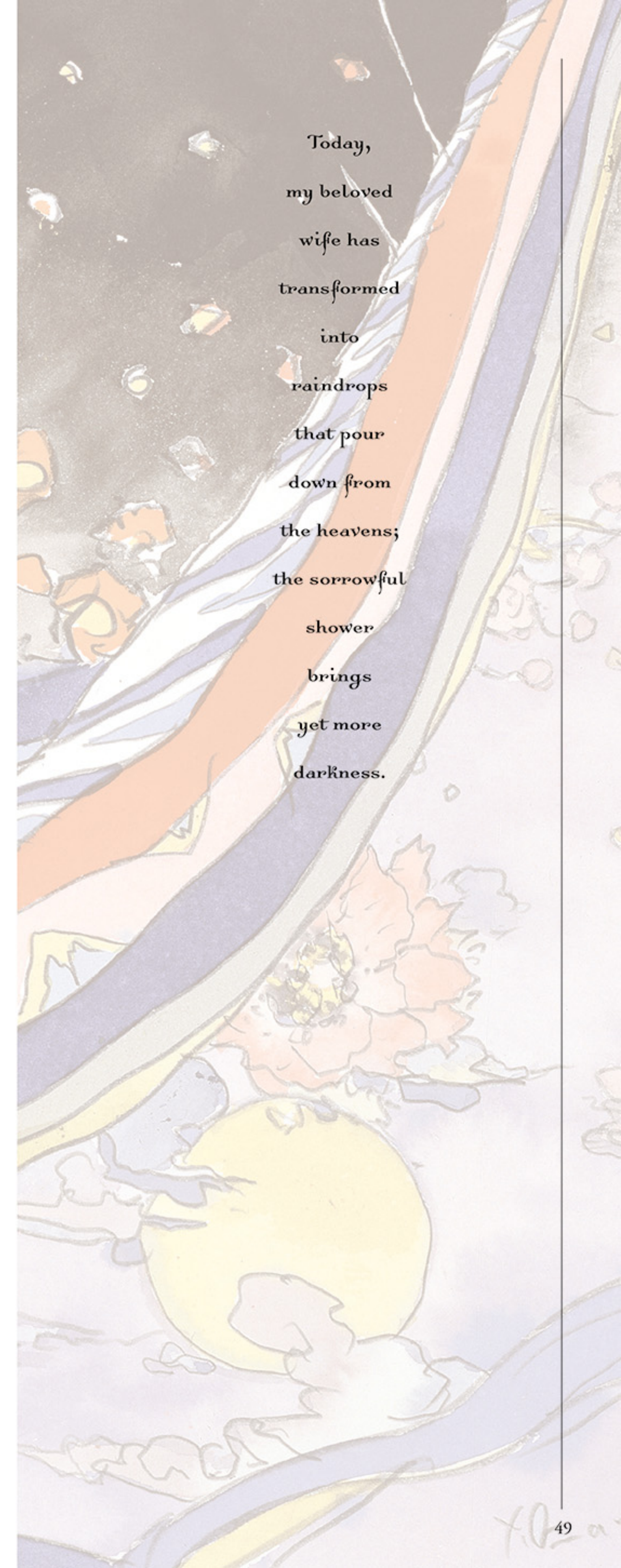




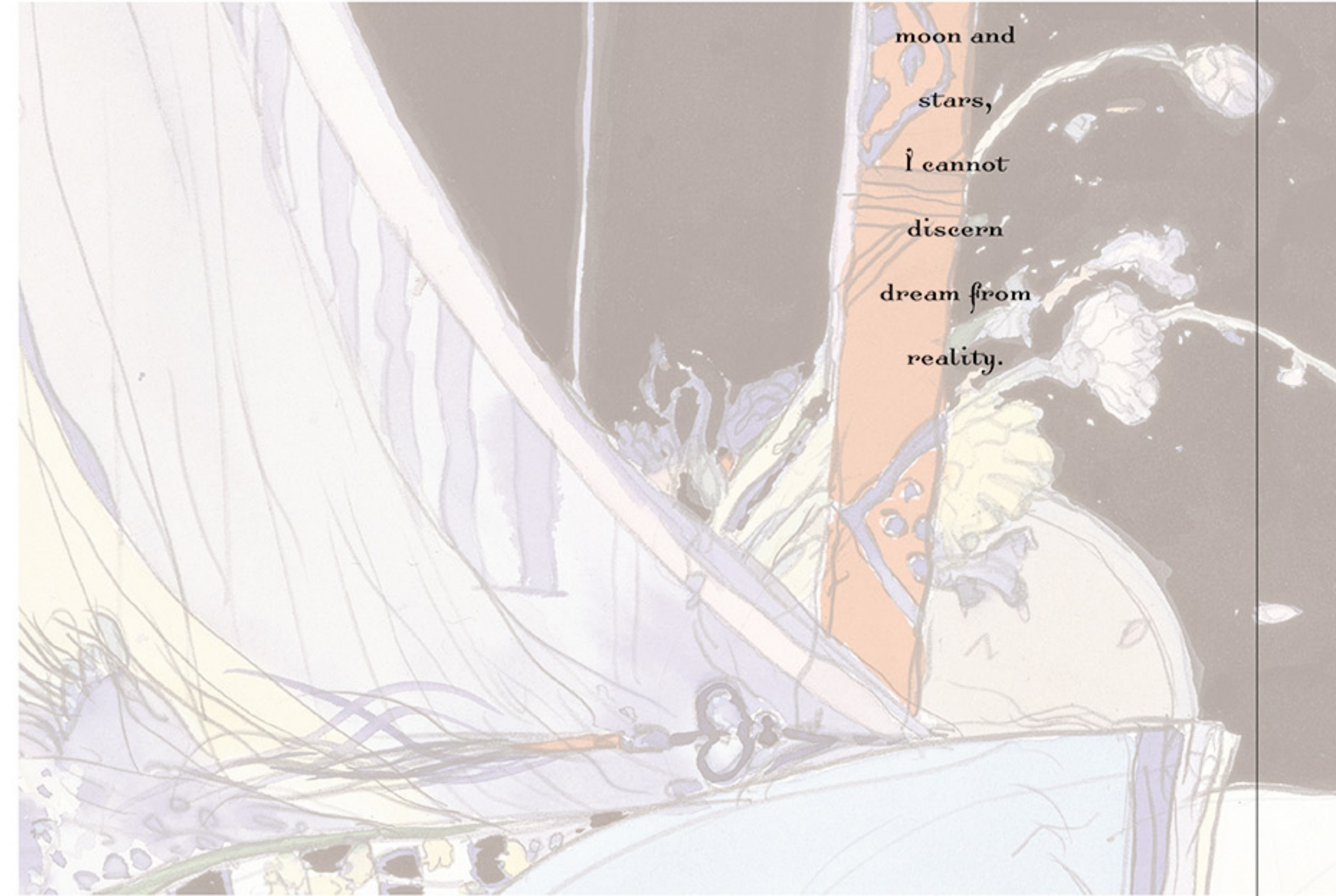
### AOI-NO-UE

Aoi-no-ue was the first wife of Genji. She was a daughter of a minister who was the second-in-command. Turning down the wedding proposal by the Crown Prince, her father arranged for her to be the bride of Genji. She was four years his senior, and she married Genji when he celebrated his manhood at twelve years of age. She, however, did not open her heart to him because of her pride and her feelings of inferiority to her husband's dazzling beauty. She died young after possession by the demonic phantom of vengeful Rokujyō-no-miyasudokoro.

Today,  
my beloved  
wife has  
transformed  
into  
raindrops  
that pour  
down from  
the heavens;  
the sorrowful  
shower  
brings  
yet more  
darkness.







Wandering  
in the  
deep night  
devoid of  
moon and  
stars,  
I cannot  
discern  
dream from  
reality.

### AKASHI-NO-KIMI

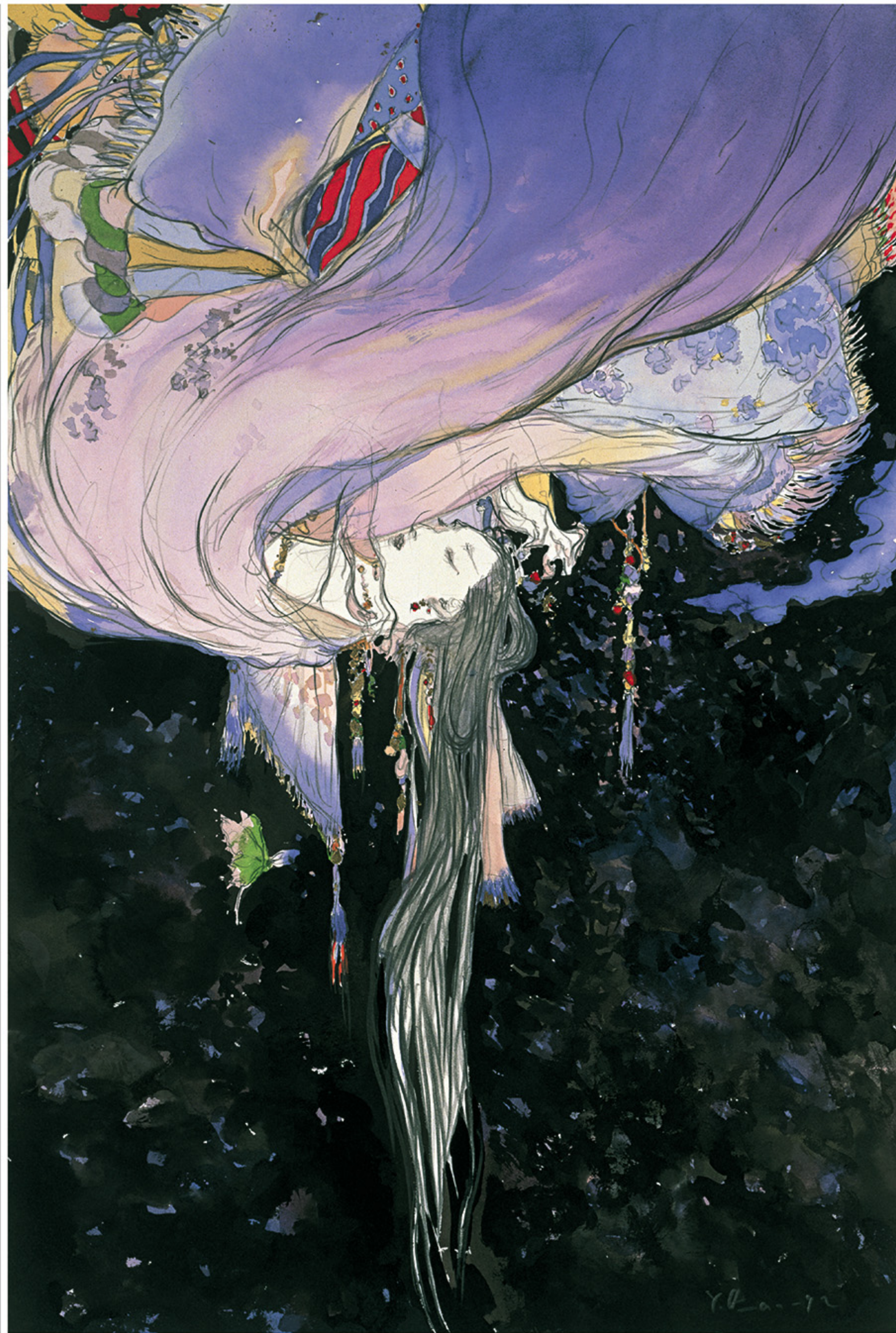
Genji was living in exile in a lonely place by the sea. There also lived nearby a young girl who was as elegant and beautiful as any ladies of the city. They felt a strange affinity toward each other, and, hesitating at first, they were soon united. She gave birth to a girl. Fearing that her low status would endanger Genji's political standing she, in tears, surrendered the baby to his second wife, Murasaki-no-ue. Akashi-no-kimi then went to serve in the Palace, but her love of Genji and her anxiety did not fade with time. She was such a reserved and kind-hearted person, that eventually she won sympathy from Murasaki-no-ue and trust from Genji, and managed to marry her daughter well.



I mustn't  
abandon  
you to  
this  
Akashi  
inlet  
or you  
will be  
fright-  
fully  
lonesome.







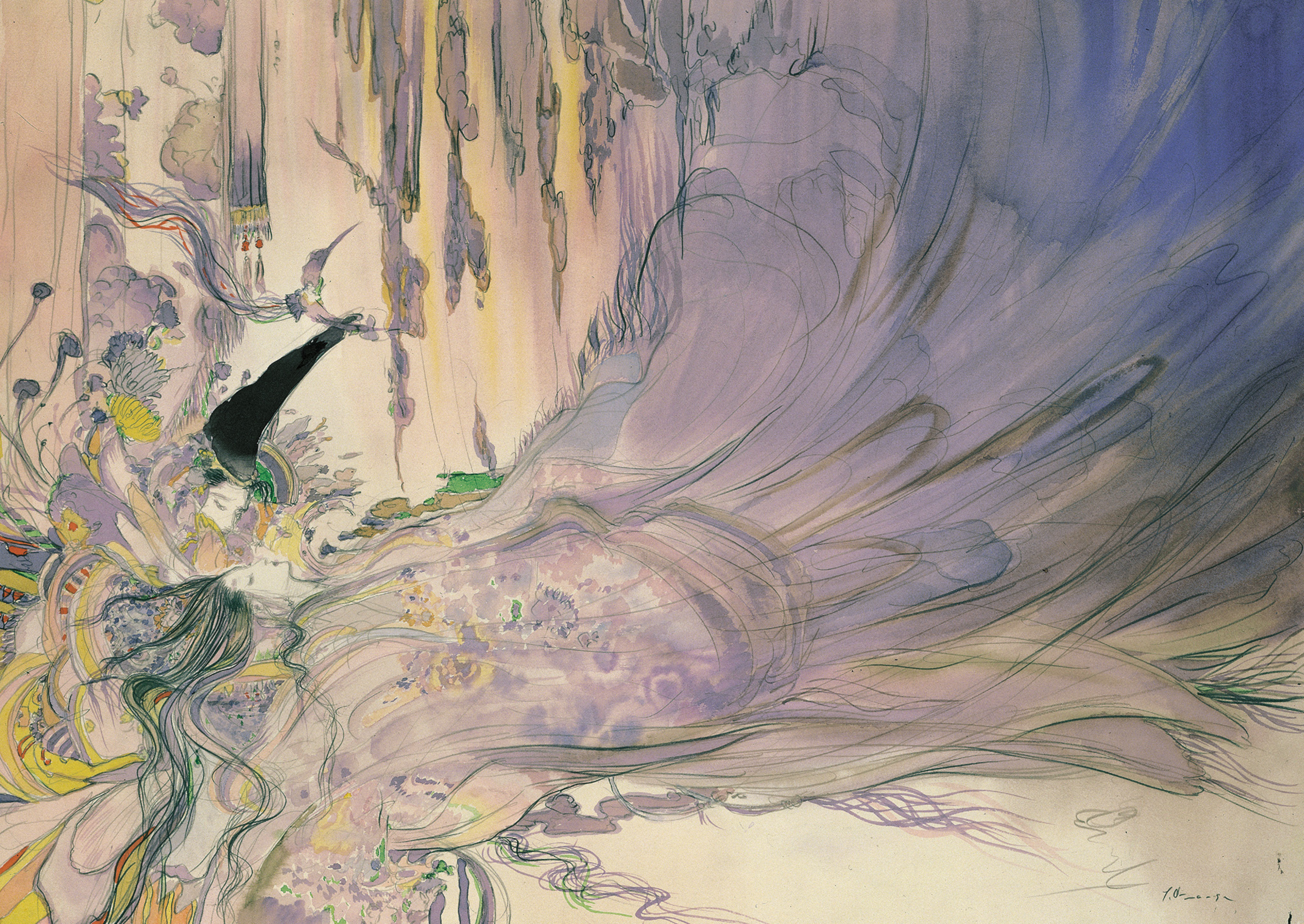
### MURASAKI-NO-UE

Murasaki-no-ue grew up to be Genji's ideal woman. She looked after his concerns during his exile, and when he ascended to a special position with political authority, she took charge of the household. She received enviable favors from Genji. Meanwhile, she endured many of his love affairs, expressing her love for him through numerous self-sacrifices. After a long married life, Genji's pleasure-seeking had calmed down; but he was made to marry the daughter of the former Emperor. In despair and sorrow Murasaki-no-ue became ill and died before reaching her fortieth year. Genji was once again reminded of her deep love, and he lived his last days haunted by her memories.

I would  
surrender  
my life  
if only  
you would  
grant me  
more time  
to bid him  
farewell.







1.0-0-52





Why  
did I  
pick up  
this  
safflower  
when its hues  
were not  
the least  
remarkable?

### SUE-TSUMU-HANA

One day, Genji heard of a noble lady living alone in a dilapidated house, and his interest was aroused. She was an accomplished *koto* player and he imagined her to be very elegant. Spending a night with her, he was disappointed by her reticence. He left early, but he felt obligated to visit occasionally.

One winter morning, he called her to a window to look at the snow. In daylight, he noticed that her nose drooped like an elephant's and its tip was red like a flower named Sue-tsumu-hana. He was disappointed even more, but because she was so graceful and good-natured, he felt sorry and, ordering her house to be repaired, he took her under his care.







Just  
as the  
long grass  
growing  
under the  
eaves of  
this tattered  
abode is wet

with dew,  
so too is my  
sleeve wet  
from tears  
of longing  
for you.

### HANA-CHIRU-SATO

Hana-chiru-sato lived quietly in a dilapidated house with her sister. She was not particularly beautiful, but she had a kind and maternal nature which enabled Genji to find comfort. While in exile, he found peace through her correspondence, and on his return, even though he did not visit her often, she never felt bitter or reproached him. She became a valuable confidante to him, eventually receiving Genji's considerate patronage. She also became the shield for one of Genji's sons, and even undertook to educate the girl fostered by Genji. She quietly devoted her life to him until the end, remaining his trusted friend.





TAMAKAZURA

Genji's lover Yūgao had a daughter by a previous lover. Wet-nurses and servants took care of her in the southern country away from her family. She grew up to be a stunning beauty, and many of the local men of low estate wanted to be her suitor, so she decided to go to Kyōto. Not knowing anyone in the city, she felt helpless, and visiting the shrine she was rescued by Genji's lady attendant. In Kyōto Tamakazura was again inundated by suitors; even Genji, who fostered her, started to woo her, being reminded of Yūgao. Although perplexed, she became attached to Genji, but she was eventually won over by a whiskered soldier. After marrying, she became a fine lady, serving the Emperor as his lady attendant.

By fated  
encounter,  
Tamakazura,  
daughter  
of the  
unforgettable  
woman,  
graced my  
abode with  
her presence,  
exposing the  
string of  
destiny  
that binds  
us all.





I beg that  
you smother  
the smoke  
of love that  
rises into the  
vast heavens  
as you stifle  
the rising  
flames of the  
watch fire.







As we  
cannot be  
together,  
I all but  
disappear  
far-off  
into the  
distant sky,  
like the  
light snow  
of spring  
drifting with  
the wind.







My cat,  
that in his  
stead I keep,  
whom I  
secretly love,  
why do you  
fawn and  
cry so?



### ONNA-SAN-NO-MIYA

Genji's stepbrother decided to give up his imperial throne and enter the priesthood. He, however, was concerned for his third daughter, whom he doted upon, and because Genji had political authority, he decided to ask him to take her as his wife. Genji could not refuse the request of the Household; but, though elegant and beautiful, she was too childish to satisfy Genji, who felt the guilt of Murasaki-no-ue's suffering.

One day, when young noblemen were playing with a ball, a cat made a hole in the bamboo fence and they could see the women inside. One of the noblemen fell in love with the innocent Onna-san-no-miya. Unable to forget her, he inquired after her, and consoled himself just by getting hold of her cat. Having worked up his courage, he finally stole into her bedroom. At first she thought it was Genji, but when she saw an unknown young man looking heartbroken, she was frightened. The young man could not control himself when he saw her graceful and gentle form, and he raped her. A child from that night's encounter was born. She entered a monastery, and the young man died heartbroken. When Genji learned of this he was painfully reminded of his affair with Fujitsubo.

Must I shed  
tears like  
dewdrops  
at dusk,  
for you seek  
to return  
home,  
leaving me  
behind to  
listen to the  
evening cries  
of the  
cicada?







Before  
dawn,  
before  
the sun  
glimmers  
its rays  
upon me,  
I yearn to  
fade into  
the heavens.  
I wish this  
were naught  
but a dream.



Ignorant  
of the  
passing  
of time,  
my thoughts  
are filled  
with the face  
of he who  
passed.  
Yet,  
I wonder if,  
like the  
evanescent  
life of  
every man,  
that which  
binds me to  
this earth is  
slowly  
fading.





I know  
your love  
will not  
change,  
but like  
a boat  
upon the  
water,  
I cannot  
but  
wonder  
where the  
future  
will  
carry  
me.







Born in 1952, **YOSHITAKA AMANO** was hired at the age of fifteen by Tatsunoko Productions, where he was involved in character design for the animated television program *Gatchaman* (aired in America as *Battle of the Planets* and *G-Force*) among other projects. His career in publishing began with *Twilight Worlds* in 1981. In 1983 he was presented with the Seiun Award for Art, which he went on to win for three subsequent years. In 1987 he did the character design for the first Final Fantasy video game, winning him widespread acclaim. In 1990 he branched out into new artistic realms, doing stage design for Tamasaburo Bando's production of *Nayotake* and other plays, and designing a stained glass window for the Yosei Museum. In 1995, a deepening interest in art led him to begin making lithographs at a studio in Paris. In 1996, he began doing lithographs at a studio in New York and has since held solo exhibitions in galleries all over Japan. In 1997 he held his first solo exhibition in New York.

Credited as perhaps the first modern novel, the original *The Tale of Genji* (or *Genji Monogatari*) is the work of **MURASAKI SHIKIBU**, a writer and servant in Japan's imperial court during the early eleventh century. While little is known of Shikibu (whose real name is lost to history), her epic sweeping novel has inspired works on the stage, in film, and even in video games, and today survives as one of the greatest accomplishments of Japan's Heian Period.

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Yoshitaka Amano has been praised around the world for his lush watercolors and evocative work dealing with myth and legend. In *The Tale of Genji* Amano brings his considerable talent to retelling one of the most famous of Japanese myths: written by Murasaki Shikibu shortly after 1000 AD and considered by most scholars to be the first novel ever written, *The Tale of Genji* is the epic story of the breathtakingly handsome prince Hiraku Genji, his many adventures, romantic conquests, and the women in his life. Told through stunning paintings, Amano brings this classic story to life for a new generation.

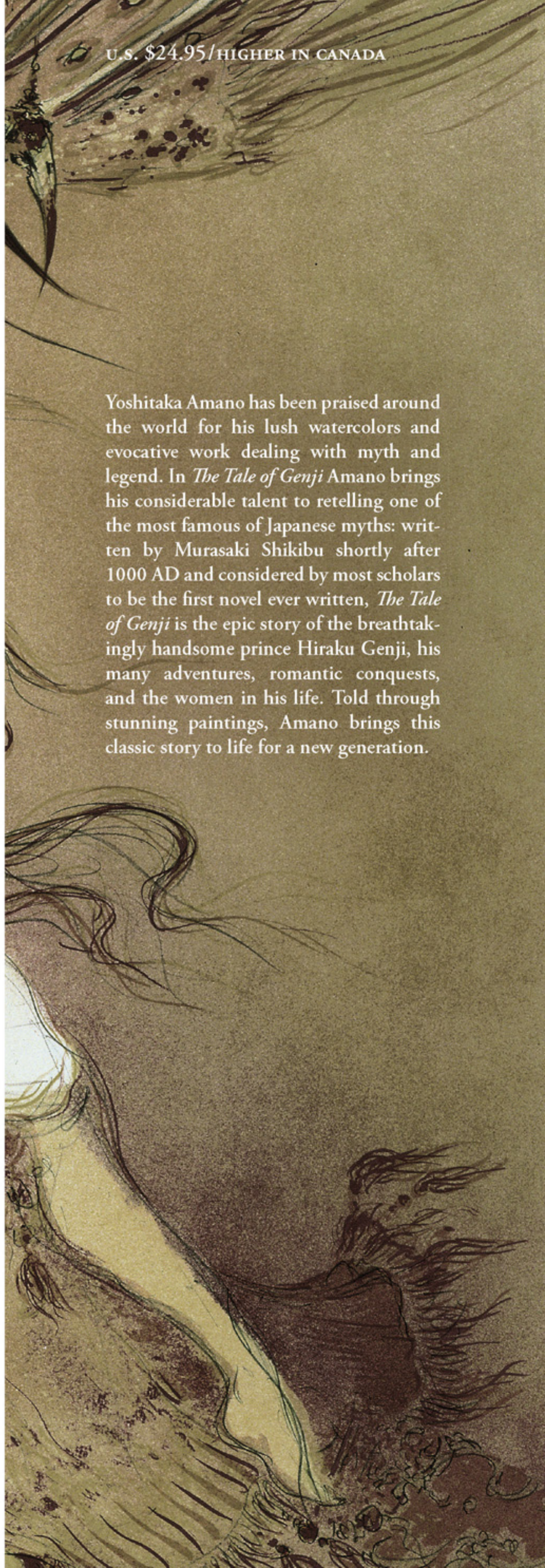


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In *The Tale of Genji* Yoshitaka Amano, famed illustrator and designer, brings the immortal tale of love, honor, betrayal, and adventure to thrilling life through over forty all-new epic paintings.

