

Matsukaze by Kan'ami, reworked by Zeami.

Introduction

The word *matsukaze* (wind in the pines) evokes for Japanese a feeling of exquisite solitude and melancholy. Suma Bay, the scene of the play, has similar associations, for it was the place where Genji was exiled. The account of Genji's exile, recounted in the "Exile at Suma" chapter of *The Tale of Genji*, was apparently inspired by the exile of Ariwara no Yukihiro (818-893), a famous poet, courtier, and scholar. Yukihiro's poem on his exile, found in the *Kokinshu*, is quoted in the play. Another source for the play is a story told in the *Senshusho*, a thirteenth-century collection of tales: One day, when Yukihiro was walking along a beach near Suma he met some men spearing fish. He asked where they lived, and they replied,

"We who spend our lives
By the shore where the white waves break
Are fishermen's sons, and we have
No home we can call our own."

Yukihiro was moved to tears.

Most of *Matsukaze*, however, appears to have been the invention of the playwright. It gives an impression of youthful vigor, but is constructed with care. *Matsukaze*'s "mad scene" is made almost inevitable, and the lack of surprise only heightens the dramatic power. Only at the conclusion of the play does the reader (or, even more so, the spectator) realize how completely he has been gripped by the lyrical and dramatic tension, when he is released from the dream by one of the most effective wordplays in literature: *Matsukaze* and her sister Murasame (Autumn Rain) withdraw, and suddenly the chorus restores their names to their original meanings. The ghosts dissolve back into nature, leaving us alone, listening only to the wind in the pines. No more beautiful awakening could be imagined.

The play's imagery is built around the sea (salt, brine, the tide, waves, the sea wind), the moon, and pine trees. These, with the mountains looming in the background, compose an archetypal Japanese landscape. The moon, moreover, is a symbol of Buddhist enlightenment. Although it shines alone in the sky, it is reflected in many waters, just as the unified Buddha-nature is manifested in seemingly distinct beings.

PERSONS

AN ITINERANT PRIEST (waki):

A VILLAGER (kyogen):

MATSUKAZE (shite):

MURASAME (tsure):

PLACE

SUMA BAY IN SETTSU PROVINCE

TIME

AUTUMN, THE NINTH MONTH

MATSUKAZE

[*The stage assistant places a stand with a pine sapling set into it at the front of the stage. The Priest enters and stands at the naming-place. He carries a rosary.*]

Priest

I am a priest who travels from province to province. Lately I have been in the Capital. I visited the famous sites and ancient ruins, not missing a one. Now I intend to make a pilgrimage to the western provinces. [*He faces forward.*]

I have hurried, and here I am already at the Bay of Suma in Settsu Province. [*His attention is caught by pine tree.*]

How strange! That pine on the beach has a curious look. There must be a story connected with it. I'll ask someone in the neighborhood. [*He faces the bridgeway.*]

Do you live in Suma?

[*The Villager comes down the bridgeway to the first pine. He wears a short sword.*]

Villager

Perhaps I am from Suma; but first tell me what you want.

Priest

I am a priest and I travel through the provinces. Here on the beach I see a solitary pine tree with a wooden tablet fixed to it, and a poem slip hanging from the tablet. Is there a story connected with the tree? Please tell me what you know.

Villager

The pine is linked with the memory of two fisher girls, Matsukaze and Murasame. Please say a prayer for them as you pass.

Priest

Thank you. I know nothing about them, but I will stop at the tree and say a prayer for them before I move on.

Villager

If I can be of further service, don't hesitate to ask.

Priest

Thank you for your kindness.

Villager

At your command, sir.

[*The Villager exits. The Priest goes to stage center and turns toward the pine tree.*]

Priest

So, this pine tree is linked with the memory of two fisher girls, Matsukaze and Murasame. It is sad! Though their bodies are buried in the ground, their names linger on. This lonely pine tree lingers on also, ever green and untouched by autumn, their only memorial. Ah! While I have been chanting sutras and invoking Amida Buddha for their repose, the sun, as always on autumn days, has quickly set. That village at the foot of the mountain is a long way. Perhaps I can spend the night in this fisherman's salt shed.

[*He kneels at the waki-position. The stage assistant brings out the prop, a cart for carrying pails of brine, and sets it by the gazing-pillar. He places a pail on the cart.*

Murasame enters and comes down the bridgeway as far as the first pine. She wears the tsure mask. Matsukaze follows her and stops at the third pine. She wears the wakaonna mask. Each carries a water pail. They face each other.]

Matsukaze and Murasame

A brine cart wheeled along the beach
Provides a meager livelihood:
The sad world rolls
Life by quickly and in misery!

Murasame

Here at Suma Bay
The waves shatter at our feet,
And even the moonlight wets our sleeves
With its tears of loneliness.

[*Murasame goes to stage center while Matsukaze moves to the shite-position.*]

Murasame

The autumn winds are sad.
When the Middle Counselor Yukihiro
Lived here back a little from the sea,
They inspired his poem,
"Salt winds blowing from the mountain pass. . . ." ¹
On the beach, night after night,
Waves thunder at our door;
And on our long walks to the village
We've no companion but the moon. ²
Our toil, like all of life, is dreary,
But none could be more bleak than ours.
A skiff cannot cross the sea,
Nor we this dream world.
Do we exist, even?

Like foam on the salt sea,
We draw a cart, ³
friendless and alone,
Poor fisher girls whose sleeves are wet
With endless spray, and tears
From our hearts' unanswered longing.

Chorus

Our life is so hard to bear
That we envy the pure moon ⁴
Now rising with the tide.
But come, let us dip brine,
Dip brine from the rising tide!
Our reflections seem to shame us!
[*They look down as if catching a glimpse of their reflections in the water. The movement of their heads "clouds" the expression on their masks, making it seem sad.*]
Yes, they shame us!
Here, where we shrink from men's eyes,
Drawing our timorous cart;
The withdrawing tide
Leaves stranded pools behind.
How long do they remain?
If we were the dew on grassy fields,
We would vanish with the sun.
But we are sea tangle,
Washed up on the shore,
Raked into heaps by the fishermen,
Fated to be discarded, useless,
Withered and rotting,
Like our trailing sleeves,
Like our trailing sleeves
[*They look down again.*]
Endlessly familiar, still how lovely
The twilight at Suma! ⁵
The fishermen call out in muffled voices;
At sea, the small boats loom dimly.
Across the faintly glowing face of the moon
Flights of wild geese streak,
And plovers flock below along the shore.
Fall gales and stiff sea winds:
These are things, in such a place,
That truly belong to autumn.
But oh, the terrible, lonely nights!

[*They hide their faces.*]

Matsukaze

Come, dip the brine

Murasame

Where the seas flood and fall.
Let us tie our sleeves back to our shoulders

Matsukaze

Think only, "Dip the brine."

Murasame

We ready ourselves for the task,

Matsukaze

But for women, this cart is too hard.

Chorus

While the rough breakers surge and fall,
[*Murasame moves upstage to stand beside Matsukaze.*]
While the rough breakers surge and fall,
And cranes among the reeds
Fly up with sharp cries.
The four winds add their wailing.
How shall we pass the cold night?
[*They look up.*]
The late moon is so brilliant --
What we dip is its reflection!
Smoke from the salt fires
May cloud the moon take care!
Are we always to spend only
The sad autumns of fishermen?
At Ojima in Matsushima ⁶
[*Matsukaze halfkneels by the brine cart and mimes dipping with her fan.*]
The fisherfolk, like us,
Delight less in the moon
Than in the dipping of its reflection;
There they take delight in dipping
Reflections of the moon.
[*Matsukaze returns to the shite-position.*]
We haul our brine from afar,
As in far-famed Michinoku ⁷
And at the salt kilns of Chika --
Chika, whose name means "close by."

Matsukaze

Humble folk hauled wood for salt fires
At the ebb tide on Akogi Shore; ⁸

Chorus

On Ise Bay there's Twice-See Beach --
Oh, could I live my life again! ⁹

[*Matsukaze looks off into the distance.*]

Matsukaze

On days when pine groves stand hazy,
And the sea lanes draw back
From the coast at Narumi ¹⁰ --

Chorus

You speak of Narumi; this is Naruo,
Where pines cut off the moonlight
From the reed-thatched roofs of Ashinoya. ¹¹

Matsukaze

Who is to tell of our unhappiness
Dipping brine at Nada? ¹²
With boxwood combs set in our hair ¹³
From rushing seas we draw the brine,
Oh look! I have the moon in my pail!

[*Murasame kneels before the brine cart and places her pail on it. Matsukaze, still standing, looks into her pail.*]

Matsukaze

In my pail too I hold the moon!

Chorus

How lovely! A moon here too!

[*Murasame picks up the rope tied to the cart and gives it to Matsukaze, then moves to the shite-position. Matsukaze looks up.*]

Matsukaze

The moon above is one;
Below it has two, no, three reflections
[*She looks into both pails.*]
Which shine in the flood tide tonight,
[*She pulls the cart to a spot before the musicians.*]
And on our cart we load the moon!
No, life is not all misery
Here by the sea lanes.

[*She drops the rope. The stage assistant removes the cart. Matsukaze sits on a low stool and Murasame kneels beside her, a sign that the two women are resting inside their hut. The Priest rises.*]

Priest

The owner of the salt shed has returned. I shall ask for a night's lodging. [*to Matsukaze and Murasame*]
I beg your pardon. Might I come inside?

Murasame

[*standing and coming forward a little.*]
Who might you be?

Priest

A traveler, overtaken by night on my journey. I should like to ask lodging for the night.

Murasame

Wait here. I must ask the owner. [*She kneels before Matsukaze.*]
A traveler outside asks to come in and spend the night.

Matsukaze

That is little enough but our hut is so wretched we cannot ask him in. Please tell him so.

Murasame

[*standing, to the Priest.*]
I have spoken to the owner. She says the house is too wretched to put anyone up.

Priest

I understand those feelings perfectly, but poverty makes no difference at all to me. I am only a priest. Please say I beg her to let me spend the night.

Murasame

No, we really cannot put you up.

Matsukaze

[*to Murasame.*]
Wait!
I see in the moonlight
One who has renounced the world.
He will not mind a fisherman's hut,
With its rough pine pillars and bamboo fence;
I believe it is very cold tonight,
So let him come in and warm himself
At our sad fire of rushes.
You may tell him that.

Murasame

Please come in.

Priest

Thank you very much. Forgive me for intruding.

[*He takes a few steps forward and kneels. Murasame goes back beside Matsukaze.*]

Matsukaze

I wished from the beginning to invite you in, but this place is so poor I felt I must refuse.

Priest

You are very kind. I am a priest and a traveler, and never stay anywhere very long.
Why prefer one lodging to another? In any case, what sensitive person would not
prefer to live
here at Suma, in the quiet solitude. Yukihiro wrote,
"If ever anyone
Chances to ask for me,
Say I live alone,
Soaked by the dripping seaweed
On the shore of Suma Bay." ¹⁴
[*He looks at the pine tree.*]

A while ago I asked someone the meaning of that solitary pine on the beach. I was
told it grows there in memory of two fisher girls, Matsukaze and Murasame. There is
no connection between them and me, but I went to the pine anyway and said a
prayer for them. [*Matsukaze and Murasame weep. The Priest stares at them.*]
This is strange! They seem distressed at the mention of Matsukaze and Murasame.
Why?

Matsukaze and Murasame

Truly, when a grief is hidden,
Still, signs of it will show.
His poem, "If ever anyone
Chances to ask for me,"
Filled us with memories which are far too fond.
Tears of attachment to the world
Wet our sleeves once again.

Priest

Tears of attachment to the world? You speak as though you are no longer of the
world. Yukihiro's poem overcame you with memories. More and more bewildering!
Please, both of you, tell me who you are.

Matsukaze and Murasame

We would tell you our names,
But we are too ashamed!
No one, ever,
Has chanced to ask for us,
Long dead as we are,
And so steeped in longing
For the world by Suma Bay
That pain has taught us nothing.
Ah, the sting of regret!
But having said this,
Why should we hide our names any longer?
At twilight you said a prayer
By a mossy grave under the pine
For two fisher girls,
Matsukaze and Murasame.
We are their ghosts, come to you.
When Yukihiro was here he whiled away
Three years of weary exile
Aboard his pleasure boat,
His heart refreshed
By the moon of Suma Bay.
There were, among the fisher girls
Who hauled brine each evening,
Two sisters whom he chose for his favors.
"Names to fit the season!"
He said, calling us
Pine Wind and Autumn Rain.

We had been Suma fisher girls,
Accustomed to the moon,
But he changed our salt makers' clothing
To damask robes,
Burnt with the scent of faint perfumes. ¹⁵

Matsukaze

Then, three years later,
Yukihira Returned to the Capital.

Murasame

Soon, we heard he had died, oh so young!

Matsukaze

How we both loved him!
Now the message we pined for
Would never, never come.

Chorus

Pine Wind and Autumn Rain
Both drenched their sleeves with the tears
Of hopeless love beyond their station,
Fisher girls of Suma.
Our sin is deep, o priest.
Pray for us, we beg of you!
[*They press their palms together in supplication.*]
Our love grew rank as wild grasses;
Tears and love ran wild.
It was madness that touched us.
Despite spring purification,
Performed in our old robes,
Despite prayers inscribed on paper streamers
¹²The gods refused us their help.
We were left to melt away
Like foam on the waves,
And, in misery, we died.
[*Matsukaze looks down, shading her mask.*]
Alas! How the past evokes our longing!
Yukihira, the Middle Counselor,
[*The stage assistant puts a man's cloak and court hat in Matsukaze's left hand.*]
Lived three years here by Suma Bay.
Before he returned to the Capital,
He left us these keepsakes of his stay:
A court hat and a hunting cloak.
Each time we see them,
[*She looks at the cloak.*]
Our love grows again,
And gathers like dew
On the tip of a leaf
So that there's no forgetting,
Not for an instant.
Oh endless misery!
[*She places the cloak in her lap.*]
"This keepsake
Is my enemy now;
For without it
[*She lifts the cloak.*]
I might forget." ¹⁷
[*She stares at the cloak.*]

The poem says that
And it's true:
My anguish only deepens.
[*She weeps.*]

Matsukaze

Each night before I go to sleep,
I take off the hunting cloak

Chorus

And hang it up. . ." [18](#)
[*The keepsakes in her hand, she stands and, as in a trance, takes a few steps toward the gazing-pillar.*]

I hung all my hopes
On living in the same work with him,
But being here makes no sense at all
And these keepsakes are nothing.

[*She starts to drop the cloak, only to cradle it in her arms and press it to her.*]

I drop it, but I cannot let it lie;
So I take it up again
To see his face before me yet once more.

[*She turns to her right and goes toward the naming-place, then stares down the bridgeway as though something were coming after her.*]

"Awake or asleep,
From my pillow, from the foot of my bed,
Love rushes in upon me." [19](#)
Helplessly I sink down,
Weeping in agony.

[*She sits at the shite-position, weeping. The stage assistant helps her take off her outer robe and replace it with the cloak. He also helps tie on the court hat.*]

Matsukaze

The River of Three Fords [20](#)
Has gloomy shallows
Of never-ending tears;
I found, even there,
An abyss of wildest love.
Oh joy! Look! Over there!
Yukihira has returned!
[*She rises, staring at the pine tree.*]
He calls me by my name, Pine Wind!
I am coming!

[*She goes to the tree. Murasame hurriedly rises and follows. She catches Matsukaze's sleeve.*]

Murasame

For shame! For such thoughts as these
You are lost in the sin of passion.
All the delusions that held you in life --
None forgotten!
[*Both step back from the tree.*]
That is a pine tree.
And Yukihira is not here.

Matsukaze

You are talking nonsense!
[*She looks at the pine tree.*]
This pine is Yukihira!
"Though we may part for a time,
If I hear you are pining for me,
I'll hurry back." [21](#)
Have you forgotten those words he wrote?

Murasame

Yes, I had forgotten!
He said, "Though we may part for a time,
If you pine, I will return to you."

Matsukaze

I have not forgotten.
And I wait for the pine wind
To whisper word of his coming.

Murasame

If that word should ever come,
My sleeves for a while
Would be wet with autumn rain.

Matsukaze

So we await him. He will come,
Constant ever, green as a pine.

Murasame

Yes, we can trust

Matsukaze

his poem:

Chorus

"I have gone away

[*Murasame, weeping, kneels before the flute player. Matsukaze goes to the first pine on the
bridgeway, then returns to the stage and dances.]*

Matsukaze

Into the mountains of Inaba,
Covered with pines,
But if I hear you pine,
I shall come back at once." ²²
Those are the mountain pines
Of distant Inaba,
[*She looks up the bridgeway.]*
And these are the pines
On the curving Suma shore.
Here our dear prince once lived.
If Yukihiro comes again,
I shall go stand under the tree
[*She approaches the tree.]*
Bent by the sea-wind,
And, tenderly, tell him
[*She stands next to the tree.]*
I love him still

[*She steps back a little and weeps. Then she circles the tree, her dancing suggesting madness.]*

Chorus

Madly the gale howls through the pines,
And breakers crash in Suma Bay;
Through the frenzied night
We have come to you
In a dream of deluded passion.
Pray for us! Pray for our rest!
[*At stage center, Matsukaze presses her palms together in supplication.]*
Now we take our leave.
The retreating waves
Hiss far away, and a wind sweeps down
From the mountain to Suma Bay.
The cocks are crowing on the barrier road.

Your dream is over. Day has come.
Last night you heard the autumn rain;
This morning all that is left
Is the wind in the pines,
The wind in the pines.