Kan'ami Kiyotsugu

Kan'ami Kiyotsugu (1333–1384) was one of the principal performers of *sarugaku-no* and the leader of a prominent company. When he appeared before the *shogun* Yoshimitsu Ashikiga in 1374, the *shogun* was so impressed with the company that he retained them as his players. Kan'ami is generally credited with refining and systematizing the Noh for his aristocratic audience and with writing many of the plays that became part of the standard Noh repertoire. Kan'ami's son, Zeami Motokiyo (1363–1444), succeeded his father as the leader of the company and had a massive influence on the development of the Noh. Zeami both reworked older plays and wrote many new plays of his own; of the 241 plays in the Noh repertoire, more than 100 are connected to Zeami. Zeami influenced the development of Noh in other respects as well, mainly in writing sixteen essays on Noh esthetics. These essays cover a range of topics, including the training of actors, the proper style of dramatic writing, and the goals of performance. Although Zeami enjoyed the favor of Yoshimitsu until the *shogun*'s death in 1408, he fared less well under the rule of Yoshimitsu's son, Yoshimochi (1386–1428) and was banished to the remote island of Sado in 1434 when Yoshimochi's younger brother Yoshinori (1394–1441) became *shogun*. The reasons for Yoshinori's hostility to Zeami are not clear but may involve Yoshinori's preference for another playwright, On'ami. Zeami did succeed in passing his essays on to his son-in-law, Komparu Zenchiku (1405–1468), who became an important Noh playwright and theoretician. Not much is known about the end of Zeami's life; legend has it that he was able to return to the mainland after Yoshinori was assassinated in 1441.

MATSUKAZE

Matsukaze was originally written by Kan'ami and extensively reworked by Zeami; it has remained in the Noh repertoire since the fifteenth century and is performed by all Noh companies.

This elegant drama, like most Noh plays, takes place in a setting familiar from the classic literature of Japan, the Bay of Suma. Suma is principally associated with the famous poet, courtier, and scholar Ariwaka no Yukihira (818–893), whose exile at Suma was recounted in his own poetry and formed the basis for many stories and legends. It also inspired the narrative of Genji's exile at Suma in the Japanese epic *Tale of Genji*. The narrative of the play, though, seems to have been invented by Kan'ami. The play opens when the *waki*—playing a priest—enters the stage, singing a traveling song about his arrival at Suma. He asks the *kyōgen* (playing a villager) about the significance of the pine tree, and he is informed that it memorializes two fisher girls, Murasame and Matsukaze, who have long since died. Shortly thereafter, Murasame—played by the *tsure*—enters, followed by the *shite*, Matsukaze. The two girls elaborately mime dipping brine into their cart with their fans, and in speeches that quote from Yukihira and from other poets, they describe their desolation. Their language here is rich with imagery, particularly of the changing sea, the hard lives of the fishermen, and of the moon, a Buddhist symbol of enlightenment. As is typical of the Noh, many of their lines are spoken by the Chorus.

Although the *shite* and his *tsure* do not leave the stage, they retire to the *shitebashira*, where they mime sitting in their small hut. The *waki*—who has observed them throughout the first scene—approaches the hut and asks for shelter, quoting one of Yukihira's poems in passing. The girls then reveal that they are the ghosts of Matsukaze and Murasame, still "steeped in longing" for the exiled poet, even in death. They had fallen in love with Yukihira during his exile at Suma, and he had given them their names, "Wind in the Pines" (*matsukaze*) and "Autumn Rain" (*murasame*), names redolent of the imagery of classical Japanese poetry. The girls were not able to follow Yukihira when he returned to court after his exile;

This production of Kan'ami's *Matsukaze* emphasizes the traditional spatial, costume, and performance elements of Noh theater.

all they have in his memory is his hunting cloak and court hat. Driven nearly to madness with her eternal grief, Matsukaze puts on Yukihira's cloak and hat for her final dance.

Matsukaze is an evocative example of the way Noh theater attempts to capture a particular mood through the collaborative interplay between each of its highly wrought arts. The beauty of the language, the delicacy of characterization, the succinct action, the music of the flute and drums, the chanting of the Chorus, and the refinement of the acting combine to capture the subtle intensity of feeling for which Noh theater is famous.

MATSUKAZE

Kan'ami Kiyotsugu

TRANSLATED BY ROYALL TYLER

CHARACTERS

AN ITINERANT PRIEST *(waki)*
A VILLAGER *(kyōgen)*
MATSUKAZE *(shite)*
MURASAME *(tsure)*

PLACE: *Suma Bay in Settsu Province*
TIME: *Autumn, the Ninth Month*

(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 the 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.)*

MATSUKAZE: The autumn winds are sad.
When the Middle Counselor Yukihira
Lived here back a little from the sea,
They inspired his poem,
"Salt winds blowing from the mountain pass. . . ."
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.
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, 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

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48 **"Salt . . . pass"** from the poem by Yukihira, No. 876 in the *Shinkokinshū*: "The sleeves of the traveler have turned cold; the wind from Suma Bay blows through the pass." 52 **We've . . . moon** a modified quotation from the poem by Hōkyō Chōmei, No. 187 in the *Kin'yōshū*: "Pillow of grass—as I sleep on my journey I realize I have no companion but the moon." 58–59 **salt sea** the words "salt sea," which can also be translated "brine," lead to mention of the brine cart even though the cart does not logically belong in the context 64 **That . . . moon** from the poem by Fujiwara Takamitsu, No. 435 in the *Shūishū*: "In this world which seems difficult to pass through, how I envy the pure moon!"

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!
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!

85 **The twilight** the following description is generally inspired by the "Exile at Suma" chapter of *The Tale of Genji*

Are we always to spend only
The sad autumns of fishermen?
At Ojima in Matsushima

(MATSUKAZE half-kneels 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
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.
CHORUS: On Ise Bay there's Twice-See Beach—
Oh, could I live my life again!

(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—
CHORUS: You speak of Narumi; this is Naruo,
Where pines cut off the moonlight
From the reed-thatched roofs of Ashinoya.
MATSUKAZE: Who is to tell of our unhappiness
Dipping brine at Nada?
With boxwood combs set in our hair,
From rushing seas we draw the brine,
Oh look! I have the moon in my pail!

113 **Ojima** is one of the islands at Matsushima, a place renowned for its scenic beauty. Both names are conventionally associated in poetry with *ama*, fisherwomen. 120 **As in far-famed** the following passage is a *tsukushi*, or "exhaustive enumeration," of place-names associated with the sea, including allusions and plays on words. This passage was apparently borrowed from an older work, a play called *Tōei* that was set by Ashinoya Bay. Michinoku is a general name for the northern end of the island of Honshu. Chika was another name for Shiogama ("Salt Kiln"), and sounds like the word meaning "near." 124 **Akogi** the name of a stretch of shore on Ise Bay. The pulling in of the nets and the hauling of the wood for the salt kilns at Akogi were frequently mentioned in poetry. 125 **Twice-See Beach** (*Futami-ga-ura*) is a word evocative of Ise and often used in poetry for the meaning of its name. 129 **Narumi** often mentioned in poetry because of its dry flats that appeared at low tide. 132 **Ashinoya** (modern Ashiya) and Naruo are two places near Suma. Ashinoya means literally "reed house." 134 **Dipping . . . Nada** derived from the poem in the eighty-seventh episode of the *Ise Monogatari*: "At Nada in Ashinoya, I have no respite from boiling brine for salt; I have come without even putting a boxwood comb in my hair." 135 **With boxwood** the line recalls the poem quoted in the previous note, but it is used because of the pivot-word *tsuge no*, "of boxwood," as *tsuge*, "to inform." Similarly, *kushi sashi*, "Setting a comb (in the hair)," leads into *sashi-kuru nami*, "in-rushing waves."

(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. Yukihira wrote,

"If ever anyone
Chances to ask for me,
Say I live alone,
Soaked by the dripping seaweed
On the shore of Suma Bay."

(*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. Yukihira'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 Yukihira 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.

185–189 **If ever . . . Bay** poem No. 962 in the *Kokinshū*

But he changed our salt makers' clothing
To damask robes,
Burnt with the scent of faint perfumes.
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,
The 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."

(*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 . . ."

(*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 world 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."
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
Has gloomy shallows
Of never-ending tears;
I found, even there,
An abyss of wildest love.

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240 **Burnt . . .** derived from a poem by Fujiwara Tameuji, No. 361 in the *Shingo-senshū:* "The fishermen of Suma are accustomed to the moon, spending the autumn in clothes wet with waves blown by the salt wind." 258 **Despite prayers . . .** literally, "purification on the day of the serpent." The ceremony was performed on the first day of the serpent in the third month. Genji had the ceremony performed while he was at Suma. The streamers were conventional Shinto offerings.

276–279 **This keepsake . . . forget** a slightly modified quotation of the anonymous poem, No. 746 in the *Kokinshū.* It is also quoted in *Lady Han.* 283–285 **Each night . . . up** the first part of a poem by Ki no Tomonori, No. 593 in the *Kokinshū.* The last two lines run: "When I wear it there is no instant when I do not long for him." 293–295 **"Awake . . . me"** the first part of an anonymous poem, No. 1023 in the *Kokinshū.* The last part runs: "Helpless, I stay in the middle of the bed." 298 **River . . . Three Fords** the river of the afterworld.