

The Green Sheaf

THE VIOLET.

ONE night,
When breezes and mists were grey with one sad memory
(The stars had lost their way to their posts)
I stood upon the street:
I felt as I were older than a star.
I watched the people passing by.
Phantoms were they not?
Were they not part of the ashen air?
I thought they were more glad to disappear than to exist:
They were no more distinct than their shadows on the ground.
Some tempting odour as from a happy dale
Made them bend forward with hurrying step.
I watched them for many an hour:
Suddenly a girl's shape caught my eyes:
"Thou art my lover lost," I cried.
How well I remembered her slightly turned face,
Like a flower in rapture with God's bliss!
'Twas her old manner to show her ankles small,
Her dress flapping like her own heart.
Her tassels of hair hung as of yore,
Like whispering grasses on the sky-road.
I rushed forth: "My O Yen, my beloved!"
O Yen San was my old lover lost,
I knew not how long ago,—
Surely it was in another happier world!
Alas, she vanished.
In vain I ran after her.
Only a bunch of violets was left behind:
The soul of the flower was O Yen's soul.
O Violet, dear one, fed by gossamer and shower,
In the bosom of light and wind!
'Twas many a year ago I bade thee farewell,
Leaving the path of beauty and love,
To wander toward the city and dust.
Tell me, Violet, does O Yen love me no more?
Pray, open thy soul of Spring and smile,
Let me dream awhile upon my sweet past!
Lo, my soul smitten by noise and storm,
Is like a dead leaf on the stream to the Unseen.

Yone Noguchi.