

Japanese Theatrical Imprints

ANDREW PARKIN

I.

Seami Exiled

(Seami was the great dramatist and dancer who wrote down the secrets of his art and hid them when banished by the Shogun, who favoured the dramatist's nephew, Onami.)

I am an old man;
I journey thankfully
to my place of exile!
My brush and scroll
compose my art.

Greater than Onami
was my son,
Motomasa;
but he is dead
and my grandchildren
can scarcely walk.

I am an old man:
in my heart is a scroll,
a folded flower.
But for you it blooms not,
Onami!

II.

Haiku in homage to Makio Umewaka, a great modern Noh actor:

Taking tea at his house after a performance

Green leaf floats in amber
father's voice sings Noh.
You poised moth stamped in me.

Flower power, Noh style: 'The Ground Spider' at the Aldwych

Two fingers hook the web,
paper coils the air you spin:
red wig, gold grin.
Rich sword, bright and sharp
as your stage, your part,
that cold flute: they score the heart.