

Four Translations from the Japanese

By Graeme Wilson

Woman

That girl I took into an empty house
And loved a fortnight there
Is now grown up. Like other women,
Demure and debonair,
She glories in the glossiness
Of once dishevelled hair.

Anonymous (6th century)
Manyoshu No. 3822

Wife

Though all night long you sat and span
Whole bucketfuls of thread,
You'd still not have, so help me God,
Before this night has fled
Sufficient cloth to clothe a cat.
So why not come to bed?

Anonymous (6th century)
Manyoshu No. 3484

