The Hearts of Men

The hearts of men, like hunting-tunics
Dyed to a light light-blue,
Cannot hold their colour.

It’s not that they’re untrue
But, of their very nature,
Run as a dye will do.

Lady Sakon (early 11th century)

Dead Child

My hunter of blue dragonflies,
How far today
Through the endless wither of the other world
Has he wandered away?

Kaga no Chiyojo (1703-1775)
Bereavement

Shimmering above the golden
Paddies thick with ripened grain,
The mists of morning thin to nothing.

But how shall this, the marrow-pain
Of my loneliness without him,
Ever be dispersed again?

Empress Iwa no Hime (-347)

Blaze

On a night too dark for meeting,
No moon, not even stars,
I wake, breasts heaving, needing you.

Within its rib-cage bars,
That brazier of the heart, my heart,
Like some meat-offering, chars.

Ono no Komachi (834-880)