

## FOUR JAPANESE WOMEN POETS

TRANSLATED BY GRAEME WILSON

### 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)