

## TWO POEMS FROM THE JAPANESE

*Translated by Graeme Wilson*

### Two at Night

The night-trains plopping coldly into snow  
Forewarn that we shall starve. Chicko's tough,  
A woman tougher than most other women,  
But cherishes a weakness, mild enough,  
For notions drawn from centuries ago:  
She'd rather die by fire than die by famine.

Our talking peters out. We lie and listen  
To the wet ploppings of the falling rain.  
The wind seems slightly stronger. Rain-drops glisten.  
Rose-branches niggle at the window-pane.

*Takamura Kotaro (1883-1956)*

### Serendip

The natives of the island  
Were all indoors.

Alone

I walked in the searing sunlight.  
A lizard like a stone  
Lay stretched out on a sewer-pipe.  
A blaze of aubergine  
Blazed, and the glare of violets  
Consumed all sense of green.

Hot sand from the violet-leaves  
Spilled on my hand, and shone:  
The island of Sri Lanka  
When it was still Ceylon.

*Nishiwaki Junzaburo (1894-1982)*