

And all as speechless sat she—then the tears  
Broke from her eyes, her trembling breasts gan heave  
And sink with grief, and answer gave she none;  
The while the old man, all amazed, yet full  
Of pity looked upon her. Then at last  
She broke her silence, and with weak voice said:  
“Words of my poor dead mother, which she spoke,  
Whilst yet my brother lived with us, remain  
Firm fixed in my remembrance. “Once,” she said,  
“Ere morn had scarce begun to dawn, I went  
To worship at the temple: as I passed  
Through the churchyard twixt rows of gravestones hoar,  
And blooming white chrysanthemums, I heard  
The piteous wailing of a little child.  
Which following, I found, amidst the flowers,  
A fair young child with crimson-mouthing lips,  
And fresh soft cheeks—a veritable gem.  
I took it as a gift that Buddha sent  
As guerdon of my faith, and brought it up  
As my own child, to be my husband’s joy,  
And mine: and as I found thee couched  
Amidst white-blooming asters, I named thee  
White Aster, in memorial of the day:  
Thus are you Akihide’s sister, and  
His early playmate, and henceforth, you must

Practise all womanly accomplishments  
And every maiden virtue, that you may,  
In years to come be his true-hearted wife,”  
Thus spake my mother then, and, since that time,  
Though years have passed, and many a sad mishap  
Has marred the hoped-for joy, my mother’s words  
Sound in my ears as clear, as though she stood  
Bodily here before me. I am bound  
(My destiny all settled) till the dust

