Twenty-Five Views of Japan

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Images: Patricia Farrell

Original source for text:
Peter Quennell,
_A Superficial Journey through Tokyo and Peking_
(first published 1932)
I

The better part of June
The cloudy sky
Behind a palisade
Gutters choking
II

Queer evergreens
Smooth and pallid
A sticky spire
Disconsolate on stormy days
III

A three-storeyed plainly built wooden structure
A small lake
Inner rectitude
Virtues of the unexpressed
IV

Little elbow-room
A cupboard and a gas stove
A crumpled tin
Cigarettes
V

A forest of stone cylinders
Something still alive
Unwilling to answer the summons
Foxes on pedestals
VI

Sweet-stuff and paper toys
Diameter of a sixpenny piece
A button or a box of matches
Simply indifferent
VII

Red azaleas
Green mats
Black butterflies
Perplexing
VIII

Not an island and not a tree
Symbolic or fantastic
Fidelity to the observed groupings
Exquisitely stylized
IX

A thousand islands of distinctive beauty
An electric train
So efficient
So anxious to strike a bargain
Prettily set with coloured offerings
Shinto mirrors
Copper or silver coin
Infinitely more vital
XI

Fresh-coloured and sharp-scented
Fiery scarlet red
Less beautiful - though very beautiful
Greenish-dark
XII

Bare elegance
Heavy snow
Cumbrous silks
Always harsh
XIII

A certain degree of austerity
A resilience that never flags
A pleasant but also a respectable institution
An aimless call
XIV

Shining bronze-pink leaves
Stone foxes
Paper windows
Silence
Intricate as a feverish dream
Sugared American dance tunes
Anchored barges
A cluster of little bells
A dozen painted skiffs
A tufted island
A memento of the afternoon
Young maples
XVII

The voice of the American star
Queer elysium
The magic of a full-blown talkie
Platonic sensualist
XVIII

Tattered swallowtails
Fallen dryad with gauzy wings
Mechanical toys
Cruel paws
XIX

Thick viridian moss
Solemn stones
Fine breath of mounting steam
A nameless insect
In the ‘modern style’
Vitreous green
A bough of blossoming cherry
Gold-stopped teeth
XXI

A secret
Till three o’clock or four o’clock
The passage-room
At midnight the last trams
XXII

Seven months
Our formality
A moment’s patience
Sometimes cheerful
XXIII

A double sliding-door
A curious mica finish
Narrow roof-joists
A casket
XXIV

Tumbled skyline
Pine-boughs
Grass-spears
Untroubled water
XXV

The garden beyond the fence
A clear but sunless sky
A shabby place
A pond, usually empty