

LADY OTOMO NO SAKANOUÉ (669-C.781)

RED STAR LILY

In the shadows of a thicket
On this summer-wasted land,
Their startling colours unremarked,
The red-star lilies stand.

To burn with love, and yet to be
Not even noticed. Agony.

ANONYMOUS (LATE 7TH CENTURY)

SURPRISE

Heart-warming, when I visit
Unannounced, is her surprise.

Promises are merely words
And words are often lies,
But O her lifted eyebrows
And the shining in her eyes.

NOTE: The *Manyōshū*, containing 4516 poems, is the earliest of the many anthologies in Japanese. It ranks in poetic status with the Chinese *Book of Songs* and the Palatine edition of the *Greek Anthology*.