

Japanese Nō Dramas

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Yashima

Yashima is almost certainly by Zeami, and its beauty is matched only by the thoughtfulness with which it treats the theme of war. Just as Hanago, in *Lady Han*, rises above the usual limits of the 'madwoman' role, so the Yoshitsune of *Yashima* rises above his counterparts in other warrior plays – not because he is braver than they, but because he is still more unreservedly human.

In *Yashima*, as in *Atsumori* and *Tadanori*, Zeami developed a passage of the epic *Heike monogatari* ('The Tale of the Taira', 13th–14th c.). The Taira clan had ruled in Kyoto for a generation when, in 1183, the approach of the rival Minamoto forces put them to flight. The next year, Yoshitsune led a daring attack to rout them from their camp on the shore at Ichi-no-tani (*Atsumori* and *Tadanori*). The Taira took to their ships and sailed across the Inland Sea to *Yashima*, on the northern coast of Shikoku, where, early in 1185, Yoshitsune's courage and cunning routed them again. This time, they fled south down the Inland Sea. Later that year, a fleet under Yoshitsune attacked them at *Dau-no-ura*, at the southern tip of Honshu, and destroyed them for ever. *Dau-no-ura* is evoked briefly at the end of *Yashima*.

Not only *Heike monogatari* but other, specialized, oral narratives made the battle at *Yashima* famous. Before Zeami's time, there was probably a *dengaku* play (an early variety of *nō*) on the theme. An incident told in part one of *Yashima*, the death of Satō Tsuginobu, appears in several *nō* plays and in various folk performing traditions as well. The struggle between Mionoya no Shiro and Kagekiyo, also told in part one, was equally well known. So was the feat of the Minamoto archer Nasu no Yoichi who, from horseback, shot a fan displayed on a Taira ship offshore. Although *Yashima* omits this incident, it may be told in a special version of the interlude known as *Nasu no katar* ('The recital of Nasu's feat'). *Nasu no katar* is a show-piece for a virtuoso *kyogen* actor and can easily overshadow the main play.

Zeami's treatment of such familiar material is unique. In *Heike monogatari*, the relevant incidents occur in this order: the death of

Tsuginobu, Nasu no Yoichi's feat, the encounter between Mionoya and Kagekiyo, Yoshitsune's dropped bow. The play, however, has Mionoya and Kagekiyo, the death of Tsuginobu, (Nasu's feat), the dropped bow. Moreover, Zeami eliminated most details of the action. His editing suggests a special purpose.

In *Haiké monogatari* (Book 3, the 'Ariō' chapter), a man who has landed on the shore of a remote volcanic island quotes to himself a phrase from the *Lotus Sutra*, 'The Ashuras dwell beside the vast sea'; then goes on to reflect that 'the hellish realm of the Ashuras lies between great mountains and the ocean'. The Ashuras are the warring demons of Buddhist teaching. They inhabit a realm of transmigration immediately below the human, and their struggles, endlessly poised between victory and defeat, take place (according to the passage just quoted) between the peaks and the abyss. Their landscape is therefore that of *Yashima*, which is set on the shore beside steep volcanic hills. A gentler version of this landscape is seen in *Pining Wind*. *Yashima* resembles *Pining Wind* in structure and language; it is like a transposition of *Pining Wind* into a different key. *Pining Wind* evokes romantic longing, *Yashima* the martial calling; one, a quintessentially feminine life between 'the seas and mountains of birth and death' and the other, a life quintessentially male.

The playwright carefully demonstrates in *Yashima* the hopeless symmetry of Ashura conflict. The Taira-Minamoto encounter, as told in part one, proceeds as though the two forces were mirror-images of one another. (This is true of Tsuginobu's death as well, although the mirror-symmetry is not fully stated in the play.) When Noritsune (the Taira commander) tried to shoot Yoshitsune, Satō Tsuginobu, one of Yoshitsune's cherished lieutenants, interposed his own body and was killed. Then Noritsune's equally cherished page, Kikunōmaru, rushed to take Tsuginobu's head but was shot in turn by Tsuginobu's brother. At this, Perhaps because sorrow had touched both sides, the fleet withdrew to sea, the army to camp. . . . It is as though sorrow has dispersed the mirror of war, leaving emptiness and silence. However, the mirror reappears near the close of the play, when Yoshitsune cries (remembering Dan-no-ura): 'Who today is my Ashura foe? What Noritsune, Lord of Noto?' One expects a direct encounter with Noritsune, and the text does go on to evoke the 'thundering clash, counterclash' of the two fleets. However, what actually happened between Noritsune and Yoshitsune was quite different (see note 12, below). Zeami took what he needed from his source and left the rest.

Between the two scenes of symmetrical conflict, at *Yashima* and at Dan-no-ura, Zeami placed the moment when Yoshitsune dropped his bow into the sea, then risked his life to keep it out of enemy hands. This is another side of war: not the clash of balanced forces but a man's insistence on honour. The bold Yoshitsune was physically small, and his bow was one that any man could draw. According to *Haiké monogatari*, he told his men after the incident that if his bow had been as powerful as his uncle's, he might even have dropped it into the sea on purpose, just to impress the enemy.

The hero of a warrior play normally triumphs or, more often, dies in battle; but in *Yashima*, Yoshitsune does neither. Instead, he gallantly risks all for a slight purpose: to prevent the enemy learning the banal truth about his physical strength. In the battle scenes of *Yashima*, and in the closing words of the play, Zeami suggested that final victory or defeat elude the warrior for ever. Thanks to the scene of the dropped bow, however, the play conveys both the absurdity of the warrior's struggle and the generosity of his motives. It is no mean feat.

Yashima is a steep volcanic peninsula, 282 metres high, that juts out into the Inland Sea between modern Takamatsu City and Shido Bay (the scene of *The Diver*). A long inlet runs down the peninsula's east side, and beyond it the rock rises precipitously once more to over 300 metres. The inlet is now known as Dan-no-ura; perhaps the name alludes to the much greater sea battle fought far to the south. The events of the clash at *Yashima* took place near the head of this inlet, on the east side. Monuments great and small still commemorate them. Yoshitsune entrusted the care of Tsuginobu's soul to a priest of *Yashima-dera*, high on the peninsula, and the graves of Tsuginobu and Kikunōmaru are not far away. A stele marks the spot where he dropped his bow.

Yashima

Persons in order of appearance

A Monk	<i>waki</i>
Two Companions	<i>wakergoto</i>
An Old Man, a Fisherman (<i>Asakura-jō</i> mask)	<i>masshita</i>
A young Fisherman (not masked)	<i>tsure</i>
A Villager	<i>ai</i>
Miyamoto no Yoshitsune (<i>Heida</i> mask)	<i>nachiyite</i>

Remarks: A second-category or warrior play (*shura-mon*) current in all five schools of nō. A variant performance tradition (*kyōka*) for the interlude has the Villager narrate a celebrated feat by the Miyamoto warrior Nasu no Yoichi.

* * *

To shidai music, enter Monk and Companions. They stand facing each other along front of stage.

MONK and COMPANIONS

(*shidai*) Southward the moon over ocean plains
southward the moon over ocean plains
sails and we follow to Yashima shore.

Face audience.

MONK (*nanori*) You have before you a monk lately come from Miyako.
Never having seen Shikoku, I have set my heart on a pilgrimage
through the provinces of the west.

MONK and COMPANIONS

(*agata*) Mists of spring!

Face each other.

Waves dance while our ship skims on
waves dance while our ship skims on
westward towards glowing sunset clouds,
and we sail, intent on distant skies,
down sea lanes that seem never to end,
until we reach at last Yashima shore
until we reach at last Yashima shore.

Face audience.

MONK (*tsukerigata*) Having come so swiftly, we have already reached
Yashima shore, or so I understand it is called, in the province of

Sauki. Now that the sun has set, we might as well go up to this
salt-house and spend the night here.

They sit in witness square.

*To issei music, enter Fisherman followed by Old Man. They stop at first and third
poles and stand facing audience. Both carry fishing-poles.*

OLD MAN (*sashi*) Such beauty! Moonlight on the sea
turns billows to night fires.

FISHERMAN An old fisherman, with dark, puts in to the west bank;

OLD MAN At dawn, he draws water from the Shinō and lights bamboo
of So: ¹

BOTH a scene now come alive.

Face each other.

The rush fire's glow

hints at ecstic sights, half-seen.

(*tsur*) Moonrise, flood tide, the rolling sea:

FISHERMAN in mist our skiff glides with the oar

Face audience.

BOTH till seafolk's voices reach us:

Face each other.

the village is at hand.

*To ashirai music they come on stage, Fisherman to centre and Old Man to bare
square. They face audience.*

OLD MAN (*sashi*) A leaf-like skiff roams ten thousand leagues –
for will, only the wind in its one sail.

FISHERMAN In the twilight sky, cloud billows

vanish with the moonrise; through the mist *Face each other.*

BOTH pine woods loom, mirrored in deep green.

Sea and shore fuse, on and on

to Tsukushi this same ocean runs.²

(*agata*) Here at Yashima, along the beach,
seafolk's homes crowd, numberless,

(*agata*) while fishing keeps us tossing on the waves
fishing keeps us tossing on the waves.

All veiled in haze the ocean deep

where fishing-craft gleam, vague in lingering light.

The shore winds blow on, soft and mild,

as to the heart spring comes beckoning

as to the heart spring comes beckoning.

1. A couplet quoted from a poem by the Tang poet Liu Tsung-yüan (773?-819). The
Shō (Hsinang) River is a tributary of the Yangtze, and So (Ch'u) is the name of the region
through which it flows.

2. Tsukushi is a poetic name for Kyushu.

OLD MAN (*tsukizetaji*) Let us go straight back to the salt-house and rest.

Old Man sits on a stool before drama, Fisherman sits directly on stage just behind him to the right. Monk rises and faces audience.

MONK (*monko*) The owner of the salt-house has returned. I will go and ask him for lodging. [*Turns to Old Man.*] I beg your pardon, there in the salt-house! May I disturb you?

Fisherman rises and steps forward.

FISHERMAN Who is it?

MONK I am a monk on pilgrimage through the provinces. My companions and I would appreciate lodging for the night.

FISHERMAN Please wait a moment. I will give the owner your request. [*Turns to Old Man and goes down on one knee.*] I beg your pardon, but a traveller is here. He says he and his companions need lodging for the night.

OLD MAN What is that? A traveller is here and says he wants lodging for the night?

FISHERMAN Yes.

OLD MAN That would be simple enough to grant him, were it not that the interior of our salt-house really is too poor. No, please tell him that we cannot have him and his companions to stay.

Fisherman rises and turns to Monk.

FISHERMAN Excuse me, but when I asked about lodging for you, the owner said the interior of our salt-house really is too poor. He said we cannot have you and your companions to stay.

MONK No, no, we have no objection to the poverty of the place. We are from Miyako, you see, and this is our first visit to this shore. Now that the sun is down, we hardly know what to do. Please try asking once more.

FISHERMAN Certainly. [*Turns to Old Man, goes down on one knee.*] When I passed on your answer, the traveller said he was from Miyako and begged me, since the sun is down, to try asking you again.

OLD MAN What? You say the traveller is from Miyako?

FISHERMAN Yes, he is.

OLD MAN Why, that is most distressing! [*To Monk.*] We will give you lodging.

FISHERMAN So poor a place, this rush-thatched hut —

OLD MAN but let it pass for your wayside rest.

FISHERMAN Still, recall:

Neither shining clear

OLD MAN nor clouded quite,

a veiled moon

BOTH makes a spring night

peerless in all the world,³

though comfortless our rough-made home

Old Man, abandoning stool, sits directly on stage facing Monk.

CHORUS (*uta*) at Yashima, the mighty pines

spread the forest floor

with a simple mat of moss.

Monk steps forward a little and sits. He is now in the hut. Old Man turns to audience while Fisherman goes to sit before Chorus.

(*aguta*) Yet we have pleasures: there, down Mure Shore

yet we have pleasures: there, down Mure Shore

cranes cluster in flocks — see, then, see!

Will they not return to their cloud dwelling?⁴

Ah, travellers, when I hear your home

is no less than Miyako, I am so stirred!

We ourselves, long, long ago . . .

But choked with tears, he can say no more

choked with tears, he can say no more.

W ceps.

Faces Monk.

Faces audience.

During these last lines, Villager slips in to sit at villager position.

MONK (*annannd*) Please forgive me — I know this is hardly a subject a monk ought to bring up, but I understand that the Minamoto and the Taira fought a battle on this spot. Would you pass the time tonight by telling us the tale?

OLD MAN I would not have expected your request, no. But since I can offer you no better entertainment, I will gladly tell you the story. [*Sits at centre on a stool, facing audience.*]

(*katari*) Now, it was the first year of Genuryaku,⁵ the third moon, the eighteenth day.

The Taira fleet was riding a hundred yards offshore

when the Minamoto burst on to the beach.

Their field marshal, in red brocade,

and clad in armour bound with purple cords,

3. A poem by Ōe no Chisato (late 9th c.), included in the *Shinkokinshū* (1206).

4. This 'cloud dwelling' (*kumori*) is not only the sky, but a poetic name for the imperial capital or palace. The Old Man and the Fisherman envy the cranes their freedom to return to the heavens. Mure shore is a stretch of shore at Yashima.

5. Most of the passage that follows, down to the *ronji*, is in the epic prose style of *Heike monogatari*.

He draws himself erect, glares ahead, then relaxes after Yoshitsune is named.

rose in his stirrups and declared his name:

His Cloistered Majesty's Envoy,

Field Marshal over the Minamoto Forces,

Censor of the Fifth Rank,

Minamoto no Yoshitsune!

Ah, I remember his mighty presence,

how great a commander he clearly was,

as though the scene were before me now!

FISHERMAN (*leaves*) Then among the Taira all quarrelling ceased.

One ship of theirs put into shore,

and there, on the wave-washed strand,

their warriors defied a land-based foe.

OLD MAN From the Minamoto, in quick response,

there raced forth fifty mounted men,

and among them, shouting out his name,

sped Mionoya no Shirō at the point of the charge.

FISHERMAN Of the Taira, Kagekiyo

roared out his name and closed with Mionoya.

OLD MAN Their fight shattered Mionoya's sword.

Helpless, he fell back a bit to the water's edge,

FISHERMAN where Kagekiyo pursued him,

OLD MAN seized the neckpiece of his helmet,

FISHERMAN and dragged him backwards, while Mionoya

OLD MAN struggled forward to get away.

Old Man, still seated, begins to mime action; below, at 'rode down to the water', he

rises and begins to use the whole stage. Monk, meanwhile, retires to witness position.

FISHERMAN Tug and heave,

OLD MAN they pulled with brute force

CHORUS (*into*) till neckpiece tore from helmet and,

one to one side and one to the other, they hurried headlong.

At the sight, Yoshitsune rode down to the water.

Just then, Saitō Tuginobu in his stead took an arrow

aimed by the Lord of Noto, and crashed from his horse;

while among the Taira, Noto's page was struck down.

Perhaps because sorrow had touched both sides,

the fleet withdrew to sea, the army to camp.

The battle tide ebbed, war cries died away.

Silence fell, but for the sighing

of waves on the shore and wind in the pines.

Old Man sits at centre. Chorus now speaks for Monk.

(*song*) How very strange! You fisherman

How very strange! You fisherman

give me an account far too exact!

If you please, now, tell me your name!

OLD MAN and FISHERMAN My name – but why need you know

now evening waves ebb with the tide . . .

Were this, of course, His Majesty's

Log Palace at Asakura

I might, as I pass by, say my name . . . ?

CHORUS No, the more you speak, the more I long

to learn your name. Tell me, old man,

OLD MAN and FISHERMAN the past: yes, many signs show who I am⁶

CHORUS this very moment, when

OLD MAN and FISHERMAN the spring night

CHORUS tide will soon ebb low, near dawn:

then comes the hour of the Ashuras.

Then I shall tell my name. *Old Man gazes at Monk.*

But whether I do so or not, *Rises, to bare square.*

in this sad life's field marshal your dream:

wake not nor let it fade,

wake not nor let your dream fade!

Exit Old Man, followed by Fisherman.

* * *

Villager comes to stand in bare square.

VILLAGER I am a saltnaker and my home is on Yashima shore. It has been

ages since I last made salt, so today I will go to the salt-house and get to

work. [*Looks towards Monk and Companions*] Goodness! The door of the

6. Nō poetry often puns on the homophonous *ini* ('say') and *iru* ('evening'). Here, 'Why should I say my name when the evening waves are withdrawing on the night tide . . . ?'

7. An allusion to a poem by Emperor Tenchi (r. 668–671), included in the *Shinkokinshū* (1206): 'Since I am the one who inhabits the Log Palace of Asakura, whose daughter [or son] are you, who call your name to me as you pass by?' This Log Palace (built at Asakura, in present Fukuoka Prefecture, by Empress Saimei, r. 645–661), is the scene of *The Damask Dream*.

8. Since the Fisherman has no identity of his own, it would be inappropriate to drop the first person singular even when he speaks with the Old Man.

salt-house is open! [*Sees them.*] Well, you monks, what are you doing in there?

MONK The owner said we might stay here.

VILLAGER No, no, that's quite impossible. We saltmakers here never borrow a salt-house from anyone else, or lend our own. This place is mine, and I'd never let anyone else use it. Reverend, you're making this up.

MONK I am not. This salt-house is yours?

VILLAGER It certainly is.

MONK Well then, I have something to ask of you. Please come closer.

VILLAGER Very well. [*Sits at centre.*] What do you want to ask?

MONK Something a bit surprising, perhaps. I hear the Minamoto and the Taira fought a battle on this beach. Would you tell me the story?

VILLAGER Your request certainly is a surprise. We who live nearby really know very little about such things, but I will give you the rough account that I myself have heard people tell.

MONK I will be very grateful.

[The Villager relates only the encounter between Mionoya and Kagekiyo, mentioning neither Yoshitsune nor the symmetrical deaths of Tsuginobu and the Lord of Noto's page. His garrulous recital has no poetic or heroic touches, but dwells instead on concrete matters — elements of the opponents' armour, for example, or parts of the broken sword — and indulges in some humour: 'They say Kagekiyo went flying, face up, and got a big lump on the back of his neck. Mionoya, now, went flying face down. This was the third moon. Mind you, when the flowers fall, and he certainly lost the bloom off the end of his nose.']

VILLAGER That's the story, at least as I myself have heard it. But why in the world, reverend sir, did you want me to tell it? I am a bit mystified.

MONK Thank you very much for your account. I asked for it because two men, one old and one young, were here before you came, and they claimed the salt-house was *their*. It was they who gave us permission to spend the night. When I questioned the old man about the battle, he told the story very much as you just did. 'In this sad life's field marshal your dream: wake not nor let it fade,' he said, and they suddenly vanished.

VILLAGER How extraordinary! Why, surely you saw Field Marshal Yoshitsune's phantom. You must stay here and meet Yoshitsune himself.

MONK Then I will stay, chant the holy Sutra, and wait to witness a new wonder.

VILLAGER If you will, then please accept lodging in my house, since I live nearby — though it is a very humble place.

MONK I will do so gladly.
VILLAGER Very well.

[Exit.]

* * *

MONK (*innamed*) How very strange! The old man now, when I asked to learn his name, gave me this reply:
in this sad life's field marshal your dream:
wake not nor let it fade —

MONK and COMPANIONS

(*agents*) his voice, through the hours, shore winds
his voice, through the hours, shore winds
whispering through pines, as we,
pillowed below on beds of moss,
dispose our hearts

patiently to wait, to dream again
patiently to wait, to dream again.

To *Issai music*, enter Yoshitsune in full battle-dress. He stops in bare square. *At key moments, below, he turns to Monk, but otherwise faces audience.*

YOSHITSUNE (*sings*) The fallen flower returns not to the bough;
the shattered mirror never more will shine.⁹

And yet, enraged by wrongful clinging
back I come once more where demon souls,
of their own will, torment their flesh:

to the Ashura field of carnage
sweeps an angry wave,¹⁰
hardly shallow, karma of such power!

MONK (*barbaric*) Soon dawn will stain the sky,
and from this spot where I lie wakeful,
I see one approach, clad in armour.

Are you the Field Marshal of the Minamoto?
YOSHITSUNE I am Yoshitsune's phantom. Wrongful clinging, brought on by fury, has me roaming, still, the waves of the western ocean.

9. Based on a passage of the Zen classic *Dan'inroku* (Ch. *Ch'iun-feng-ku*). The original passage is a master's answer to the question, 'Does an enlightened person return to delusion?'

10. Several passages in Zeami's plays (for example the *ronji* of *Eguchi* or the *noriji* near the end of *Kamachi at Seki-dono*) similarly treat an individual as a wave on the surface of the sea. It is a Buddhist simile.

I have foundered in the sea of birth and death.
O foolish man! It is your mind
that displays for you the sea of birth and death.
Purest truth, the moon

YOSHITSUNE shines this spring night, unsullied:

MONK recalling the old days to present vision;

YOSHITSUNE how it was we fought between ship and shore,

MONK here at this place:

YOSHITSUNE I cannot forget

Yoshitsune's movements during the following passage show his mounting agitation.

CHORUS (*aguna*) the stalwart warriors

Yashima-bound and bow in hand
Yashima-bound and bow in hand,

true companions, who ever cleaved

to the path of war, yet went astray,

caught by the seas and mountains of birth and death;

back I come to Yashima shore, bitter at heart!

On all that happened, this, my clinging,

lingers; deep, the night tide floods in again

as in your dream I begin the tale.

as in your dream I begin the tale *Sits on a stool at centre.*

(*hurt*) There is no forgetting:

I left my home, the world where humans toil,
many long years ago,

yet as breakers pound the shore,

tonight, down the path of dreams,

I come to show you the Ashura Realm.

YOSHITSUNE (*zashi*) O how it does come back, that spring of old!

The moon, as now, was bright and clear,

CHORUS and that shore this same shore.

Minamoto and Taira stood, arrow to string,

fleet in formation, horses abreast.

Then, at each stride dashing seas up to our bridles,
we pressed the assault.

YOSHITSUNE (*kaikai*) That moment, as chance would have it,

Yoshitsune dropped his bow —

away it floated, rocked on the waves,

CHORUS for then the tide was on the ebb;

swiftly it drifted towards the open sea.

YOSHITSUNE I'll not let the enemy have my bow,

thought I, and braving the waves,

swam my horse nearly to the foe's ships.

CHORUS The enemy saw me, and, sailing close,

readied a gripping hook.

Though all but lost,

YOSHITSUNE I yet blocked the hook, broke it,

got back my bow,

and safely returned to the beach.

CHORUS (*zashi*) Kanefusa then made bold to protest:

You should never have done that, sir. Kagetoki meant precisely

this, at Watanabe. "Would you trade your life for a bow, even one

worth a thousand in gold?"

So, with tears in his eyes,

he reproached his commander.

Yoshitsune, listening, made this reply:

No, no, it is not at all that I clung to the bow.

(*zans*) Yoshitsune among all the warriors

of the Taira and Minamoto

takes up the bow for no selfish motive.

My full fame, however, is not yet half won;

and if, with his bow in the enemy's hands,

Yoshitsune were laughed at, called 'Little Lad',

the hurt would be more than a man can bear.

I might have been killed, I know, but could do nothing else.

Think how my glory hung in the balance!

As I live, I'll not let them have it, thought I,

for he who takes up the bow,

does he not leave his name to all who come after?

So I pleaded, and Kanefusa, yes, each man present,

shed tears of heartfelt assent.

YOSHITSUNE The wise man remains unconfused,

Stands, comes to stage front and begins to punctuate his words by stamping the beat.

CHORUS the brave knows no fear.

11. In the second lunar month of 1183, when Yoshitsune was about to set out from the harbour of Watanabe towards Shikoku in pursuit of the Taira, his lieutenant, Kajiwara Kagetoki, urged that 'reverse cars' be fitted to the Minamoto ships so that they could retreat more easily. When Yoshitsune angrily rejected the suggestion, Kagetoki accused him of hot-blooded rashness, as Kanefusa does here.

With valiant heart he holds to his good bow,
lest the foe rob him of it, and this he does
for honour's sake; but to life clings not, *To bear square.*
for, giving it up, he leaves to history
a glorious name, worthy of record.

YOSHITSUNE (*st*) Again, war cries from the Ashura Realm
and archers' yells shake the earth.

(QUASI-DANCE: *kakari*)

*Yoshitsune performs a vigorous kakari circuit of the stage, and is in bare square as
next resumed.*

YOSHITSUNE (*announced*) Who today is my Ashura foe? What? Noritsune,
Lord of Noto?¹² Ah! A great one, and well-tried, I know!

[*Now moves about, raining.*]

On the mind's eye bursts Dan-no-ura,
CHORUS (*chir-no-riji*) that mighty sea fight whence I now come
that mighty sea fight whence I now come
back to this world, back to birth and death.
The sea and mountains quake.

From the ships, war howls;

YOSHITSUNE ashore, shields like waves;

CHORUS glinting, moon-struck,

YOSHITSUNE the fire of swords;

CHORUS salt-side mirrored,

YOSHITSUNE helmet stars.¹³

CHORUS Water and sky,

sky running on in cloud billows,
thundering clash, counterclash,
the fleet's struggle, sally, retreat,
lift and plunge, rage on
until the spring night waves yield up dawn.
Foemen the eye saw were flocking gulls,
war howls the ear heard,

wind down the shore through tall pines rushing
wind down the shore through tall pines raging:
a morning gale, no more.
Facing side from bare square, Yoshitsune stamps the final beat.

12. During the battle of Dan-no-ura, Noritsune went looking for Yoshitsune, but when at last he managed to board Yoshitsune's ship, Yoshitsune leapt nimbly on to another. Knowing he could not follow, Noritsune stopped short and defied all comers. When three Minamoto warriors attacked him, he kicked one overboard, then clamped another under each arm and leapt into the waves.

13. 'Helmet stars' are the polished studs on a warrior's helmet.