

Ame ni mo makezu — What's a Little Rain?

MIYAZAWA Kenji

translated by Noah S. Brannen

Ame ni mo makezu
Kaze ni mo makezu
Yuki ni mo natsu no atsusa ni mo makenu
Jōbu na karada o mochi
Yoku wa naku
Kesshite ikarazu
Itsumo shizuka ni waratte iru
Ichinichi ni genmai yongō to
Miso to sukoshi no yasai o tabe
Arayuru koto o
Jibun o kanjō ni irezu ni
Yoku mikiki shi wakari
Soshite wasurezu
Nohara no matsu no hayashi no kage no
Chiisa na kayabuki no koya ni ite
Higashi ni byōki no kodomo areba
Itte kanbyō shite yari
Nishi ni tsukareta haha areba
Itte sono ine no taba o oi
Minami ni shinisō na hito areba
Itte kowagaranakutemo ii to ii
Kita ni kenka ya soshō ga areba
Tsumaranai kara yamero to ii
Hideri no toki wa namida o nagashi
Samusa no natsu wa orooro aruki
Minna ni dekunobō to yobare
Homerare mo sezu
Ku ni mo sarezu
Sō iu mono ni
Watashi wa naritai.

What's a little rain,
A little wind, a little snow,
A little heat in summer,
If you're strong?
All I ask is to grow to be
A person
Who doesn't demand too much,
Never loses his temper,
Always wears a quiet smile,
Eats his three bowls of rice a day,
A little soup, a little vegetable,
And forgets about himself.
Let me look, let me listen,
And never forget what I see and hear.
From my hut in the grove by the field,
When I hear from the East,
There's a child that's sick,
Let me go and nurse him to health.
When I hear from the West
There's a weary farm woman,
Let me go and carry her plantings.
When I hear from the South
There's a man near death,
Let me go and quieten his fears. And
If there's quarreling and feuding in the North,
Let me help them to stop their bickering.
In time of drought
Let my tears wet the earth,
And share the anxiety of all
When the summer's unseasonably cold.
They may have no use for me,
Or no word of praise for me,
But at least
I won't get in the way.

MIYAZAWA Kenji (1896–1933) was born in Hanamaki-shi, Iwate-ken, where he spent his life in agricultural research. His natural poetical inclination, as well as avid research into folk literature of the Tōhoku, finds expression in his literary works such as *Kaze no Matasaburō*, *Ginga tetsudō no yoru*, as well as the above poem, which was written almost entirely in *katakana*.

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