

*The Tale of Genji* — Murasaki no Ue's final poem exchange with Genji

**Seidensticker**

How pleased he was at what was in fact no improvement at all—and how desolate he must soon be!

"So briefly rests the dew upon the hagi.  
Even now it scatters in the wind."

It would have been a sad evening in any event, and the plight of the dew even now being shaken from the tossing branches, thought Genji, must seem to the sick lady very much like her own.

"In the haste we make to leave this world of dew,  
May there be no time between the first and last."

He did not try to hide his tears.

**Tyler**

With a pang she saw how happy her little reprieve had made him, and she grieved to imagine him soon in despair.

"Alas, not for long will you see what you do now: any breath of wind  
may spill from a hagi frond the last trembling drop of dew."

It was true, her image fitted all too well: no dew could linger on such tossing fronds. The thought was unbearable. He answered while he gazed out into the garden,

"When all life is dew and at any touch may go, one drop then the next,  
how I pray that you and I may leave nearly together!"

He wiped the tears from his eyes.

**Washburn**

She felt bad for him— he looked so happy whenever she was briefly feeling better that it moved her to imagine how devastated he would be when the end came.

How brief the moment when you see me sitting up  
As brief as the time that dew clings to bush clover  
Before being blown off and scattered by the wind

It was an apt comparison, for the dew clung precariously to the stems of bush clover in her garden that bent and sprang back with each gust of wind. Genji gazed out at the scene, and the melancholy desolation that accompanied this season was unbearable.

Our lives are like fragile dewdrops vying  
To disappear ... would that no time elapse  
Between the first one to go and the last



かばかりの隙あるをいとうれしと思ひきこえたまへる御気色を見たまふも心苦しく、つひに  
いかに思し騒がんと思ふに、あはれなれば、  
おくを見る ほどぞはかなき ともすれば 風にみだるる 萩のうは露  
げにぞ、折れかへりとまるべうもあらぬ、よそへられたる。をりさへ忍びがたきを、見出だし  
たまひても、  
ややもせば 消えをあらそふ 露の世に おくれ先だつ ほど経ずもがな  
とて、御涙を払ひあへたまはず。