

RUSH MATS

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**TRANSLATED FROM THE JAPANESE
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“THE SCREEN AT THE END OF THE FIELD,”
“BIRTH ORATORIO,” & “THE CONDITION OF MOVEMENT”

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RUSH MATS

THE SCREEN AT THE END OF THE FIELD

Spearheads

The buoyant particles of grass separate, and connect

Packets of white flesh

[Binding the hems, the flames of the <hidden interiors> join, trembling

(They call]

Binding, the hems are shaken and returned to the <exterior>)

Tilting, there is a young branch,

And there are stems,

(The child which becomes a circle, and feeds on its own parent)

[Tree which becomes disentangled]

(A <collar> is dropped from the hem's tip)

Dark ring

Earth's ear breaks open

[Branch of the end, of the deep]

(Branch of the end, of the edge)

Cut down as in battle, they are joined again, perpetually

Only wind,

Image which cannot be seen

(The remaining ones, now discarded robes, laugh

[Swamp shells)

Mouths agape, they lie dead rock faces]

[Driftwood of sky whose netting has been dried out all at once]

Only spearheads,

Slugs crawling on the earth
And upside down turtles

House of birth whose location is nowhere

[Breaking the stems of the saplings and peeling the skin]

(Clothed, they wear down the flesh)

[Teasing the bones]

A gathering which is a dance in the empty wind

BIRTH ORATORIO

(House of birth, a bird's corpse enthroned on a winter tree)

Kneecaps

Voices of a pair peck at the verandah, the tumbling children, incessantly
beating

[One toe is missing]

The garden's interior

And the outside, beyond the fence

(Sent back one after another like a string of prayer beads, the front of the house where there are umbrellas]

The folds

The twisted flowers

(Their necks falling from the stems)

[The opening at the rear]

THE CONDITION OF MOVEMENT (GOINGS ON)

The walls of the house

The sliding partitions

([The going around] of things that do not move things that move, a lost child)

Screen of a solid color

Behind a stone, cramped and twisted

THE INNER GARDEN

Moss-green stones

Assembled at the far end, the rope's entangled hoop, at a distance

[It is enwrapped the garden]

(The half-dried, pale bones)

Half-broken, behind the branches, nothing but red knots
coming loose

Broken the cockscomb

Fallen down the garden tree

Being eaten

EXCESS MATS

[Borders of the garden

[Storm drains

(Storm drains

(Wet borders

[an open verandah]

NECK OF THE BAMBOO POLE

At the mouth of the split,

the dried bamboo hangs suspended

[The interior's

Eaves

(From the mouth, rotten twigs spring up

As if to mend

A sapling

Ear of growth

In the garden a child of the fields chewing, silkworms scattered,

Mulberry and the youngest child)

Shaking the white pendulum the interior of the bamboo pole

A child is being shaken]

TREE CHILD

Embracing the shadows, the branches bending

Ears of the tree-bird

(From the white upper branches hanging down, snake-chicks)

[Circle of bones]

A broken flail

THE EXTERIOR

The face of the house

The east of the house

KEPT CHILD

The fish pond

Loaches in the shallows

[The turtles are abandoned, sink to the bottom, as if chunks of stone hollowed out]

(The inner side of the mat)

Fold upon fold, each fragment, keeping the shells

The soft tusks of the soft snails

The joining of leaves

[Shedding his clothes, the child commingles with the mat]

Rush mats

Raising silk worms

NEST OF BEAMS

Nest of beams

[The rear entrance

In a lightly wooded place, biting down on a sneeze, letting loose
a white stammer

Crouching a cow weaving in and out

[The outer cover of the mat]

Strip off the layers, and only the frame remains
like a corpse

The dark rope

The eye

Entangled deep inside

(The main entrance

the main entrance]

Stammer, shake

Stoop,

Outside the circle, binding the dancing rope

[The youngest child is dancing, leaping]

A bird's egg

In a lightly wooded place, hanging upside down to dry, joined together
near some new shoots

The shadow, trampled upon

Bound to the exterior edge

The rear entrance)

**RUSH MATS
(THE INNER WEAVE)**

[Stand them up, and they hold the mats together the borders]

Reversible screen

[In the shadows, weaving the garden grasses a lost child]

Two folds, three folds...

[It will not hold, the border]

KNOTTED CORD

Shining graves of flowers

Shadow

[Rope of relation, the branches twist obliquely and are bound]

Fields, twist

Waters, to the brink

(In the open, they are cooking up something white from a crow)

They are feeding on it in the antechamber

[The eye of the pillar, going around]

Moon

Ropes on the beams

[Looking down the shadow, in between there are a dog's testicles]

The window frame

(Slapping a knee a neighbor, eating something raw in between)

Voices of the cuttings

The meal

[OF THE REAR

Land of birth)

A child with no child

CHICKEN COOP

Raising up fire

The cage a shell within a shell, from both of its sleeves to the opposite side

Touch it

Sauntering along, swinging the fire

A dry wind

Scantlings at the wall shake,

(Reclining there is a thin desolate field of railroad ties)

The sun

[Brandishing a pole, the skin, looking at the fire outside]

Spearheads which gather

Book covers which couple

(The lost child moving along the road)

Twisting a rope in the sand

Gathering fire

SHELL

Near the wall, kicking rocks and hitting
The edge

At the hem

Of the peel

Unloosening the withered flower of its navel

HIDDEN MARSH

Carp in the branches

Sky

(Opening their mouths, they are trying to catch them from behind the leaves)

Left at the edge, still out to dry
The white, dried fish

Twisted, corpse of flower
Begins to unravel

Begins to rot fallen tree

[Water hollow]

Fished, transparent boat

Below the edge, scales fallen everywhere

POST AND THRESHOLD

Water

Soft, pole of time

[Wetted, the threshold begins to split]

THE CUT

(Half open, in the middle)

Far-off field

[At that very moment it dries out, the rear]

The bird that keeps a child, tightening its throat

[The rear entrance]

Stroking, petting

MINSTRELS IN THE FOREST

[Site of cremation, the grass sways]

The lost child at play, only the wind blowing

Rocks dried, baked

(The minstrel watching the child, ears struck with a sudden sound)

The lost child at play, only the wind blowing

THE SCREEN AT THE END OF THE FIELD

A gathering which is a dance in the empty wind

(Teasing the bones)

[Enfleshed, they wear down their clothes]

(Breaking the stems of the saplings and peeling the skin)

House of death whose location is nowhere

Upside down turtles and
Slugs crawling on the earth

Only spearheads,

(Driftwood of sky whose netting has been dried out all at once)

[Mouths agape, they lie dead rock faces

(Swamp shells]

The remaining ones, now discarded robes, laugh)

Faded image of a bird

Only wind,

Cut down as in battle, they are joined again, perpetually,

[Branch of the end, of the edge]

(Branch of the end, of the deep)

Earth's ear breaks open

A gathering of water

[A <collar> is dropped from the hem's tip]

(Tree which becomes entangled)

[The child which becomes a circle, and feeds on the child]

There are stems,

And tilting, there is a decayed branch,

(Binding, the hems are shaken and returned to the <interior>

[They call)

Binding the hems, the flames of the <exteriors> join, trembling]

Packets of white flesh

The buoyant particles of grass connect, and then separate

Spearheads

Postscript

To us, to the child, the house of birth is long lost.

August 30, 1961