

## Verse

### Mother

I am always aware of my mother,  
ominous, threatening,  
a pain in the depths of my consciousness.  
My mother is like a shell,  
so easily broken.  
Yet the fact that I was born  
bearing my mother's shadow  
cannot be changed.  
She is like a cherished, bitter dream  
my nerves cannot forget  
even after I awake.  
She prevents all freedom of movement.  
If I move she quickly breaks  
and the splinters stab me.

—Nagase Kiyoko (translated from the Japanese  
by Kenneth Rexroth and Atsami Ikuko). Nagase Kiyoko was born in Okayama  
Prefecture in 1906.