

Mado Kara Mieru
(Through The Window I See)

JAPANESE

Within every traditional Japanese haiku is a 'kigo'—a word associating the poem with a particular season. **Mado Kara Mieru** is a rondo of five such haiku (by Hattori Ransetsu, Yamaguchi Sodo, Kaga no Chiyo, and Masaoka Shiki); corresponding to spring, summer, autumn, winter and the return of spring. Each refrain is sung by a vocalist in a different stage of life—a child for spring, a young woman for summer, a middle-aged man for autumn, and an elderly man for winter. Following an extended instrumental 'transfiguration,' the return of the child's voice at the end signifies the return of spring, thus completing the cycle of life, death and rebirth as reflected through the changing of the seasons.

SPRING (Solo Girl)

Mado kara mieru
kagayaku ume ichirin
ichirin hodo no
sono atatakasa

Hattori Ransetsu (author):

Through the window, I see
one shining plum blossom
that warmth of
one blossom

SUMMER (Solo Soprano)

Mado kara mieru
mabushii me ni wa aoba
yama hototogisu
aa hatsugatsu

Yamaguchi Sodo:

Through the window, I see
radiant greenery for the eyes
a mountain cuckoo
ah, the first bonito

AUTUMN (Solo Alto)

Mado kara mieru
sawayaka akikaze no
yama o mawaru ya
ano kane no koe

Kaga no Chiyo:

Through the window, I see
the refreshing autumn wind
churns in the mountains
and that over there – a bell's voice

BRIDGE (Solo Soprano)

Yomei
ikubaku ka aru
koyoi hakanashi
inochi mijikashi

Masaoka Shiki:

My remaining days
how much more is there to live?
the night is brief
life is short

WINTER (Tenor & Bass Chorus)

Mado kara mieru
hieta yuki no ie ni
nete iru to omou
nete bakari nite

Masaoka Shiki:

Through the window, I see
cold snow all around the house
in bed I think
only of this

SPRING (Solo Girl)

Mado kara mieru
tanoshi ichihatsu no
ichirin shiroshi
kono haru no kure

Masaoka Shiki:

Through the window, I see
this cheerful iris
a lone, white flower
in this springtime dusk