

Types & Shadows

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Two poems by Elizabeth A. Schultz, Oread MM, Lawrence, KS

THE RIVER TATE

At the end of the war,
The bombs fell
On the factories,
The green onion fields,
And the houses by the river.
With flames flourishing
Like pagodas, the people
Sought the river's sanctuary.
Still the bombs pursued
Them, and they burned,
Floating in their flamboyant
Shrouds until their corpses
Lost their light, sank,
Weighing the river
With dark putrefaction.
Years pass, and the river
Runs with slime, stench,
Awaiting its return
To ordinary loveliness.

from "Return to Japan"

DAYS OF RECKONING

Into the clear sky,
Fireballs, blasts of ash,
Rivets, computer bits,
And people like angels
Illuminated red-gold, in
Some ancient manuscript, soar
Through the scorched air.

Inside the flaming towers,
Others walk down the stairs,
Across corridors, keep on
Walking down the stairs,
Leaving their shoes behind,
Leaning on each other,
Keep on walking out into
The streets of rising ash.

Blackened, they are still
Dressed in suits and ties;
Blood seeps from their ears.
Like those seeking clarity
Amongst Hiroshima's ashes,
They stagger to the river,
Barefooted, thirsting.

September 2001

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