

Winning Poems in 2021 CFCP, Inc., Annual Contest

1. Fixed Forms, First Place

Our Lady of the Chronicles *Linked Haiku*

Murasaki Shikibu (978–c.1014)

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An offering of
White chrysanthemums for you,
Translucent sister.

My brother's lessons
Taught me Chinese. Father sighed,
"Pity you're a girl."

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Lake Biwa, widowed—
The full moon whispered to me
The Tale of Gingi.

Lord Michinagi,
My patron, brought me to court
To teach his daughter.

Though he pursues me,
He slights my book, and therefore
Cannot have my love.

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One courtesan's sleeves
Layered orange, green and mauve,
Presage her swift fall.

Clamorous cracked bell—
I wince, smile, and nod at some
Inelegant verse.

A drunken courtier
Mauls his concubine

At her frail protests.

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Red amaryllis,
Wilting in the heat of court,
Longing for winter.

Secluded, writing,
Dawn's first light taunts me. I rise
To tend my empress.

*

Robert Coats
Berkeley, CA