

# Cherry-Blossom Time

Sounds travel further now.  
Your laughter hovers  
over the orchard grass,  
crisp and luminous.  
It is flower-watching time.  
In one another's arms,  
the trees of the poets  
open their tight parcels  
of petal poems,  
their branches spread  
against the new space,  
in a rich brocade of  
red, green, and purple.  
This is a parasol  
planted by the shogun  
and by our poets,  
for all lovers to come  
in their own time,  
their shining springtime.

We could be in the snow  
or stuck in the clouds.  
There's nowhere else to go  
and no sense of home.  
From booths and tea-stalls  
the young carry blushes  
and the memory  
of their kissings  
like blossoms.  
On one elegant limb  
a lover or an old man  
(impossible now to tell  
in such thin light)  
has tied what looks like  
a charm, or toy, or hairpin  
which catches in the breeze  
and makes the music,  
the late evening music,  
of autumn insects,  
the mushi-kiki, mushi-kiki.

*John Whale*