

Tea Ceremony

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Harmony,
respect,
purity and
tranquility,
begin on this quiet Sunday afternoon
under a monsoon-seasoned sky just off the garden,
as water boils in a song and
macha is sifted and piled high like Mt. Fuji rising
in the black lacquered Natsume.

Delicate crowns of pink and orange lantana
tilt gracefully in the humble vase
and incense sends a languid trail
that shivers slightly,
then pivots sideways,
and rights itself again,
revealing invisible currents
meandering skyward,
leaving spicy traces
of woody quiet places.

Steaming water
sends clouds into waiting tea bowls
with red silk Fukusa
unfurling,
folding,
in slow legato —
a precisely paced
orchestrated dance
of Chawan,
Chasen,
Chakin and Chashaku
in genteel motions
echoing the ancient ritual, tethered to now,
in plays of water, silk, macha and clay.

The mind settles and opens
like a dry brittle leaf
soaked and softened by gentle rain,
and ears attune to hypnotic swells
of breezes threading through pine boughs,
and water bubbling over pebbles in spring.

When time unfolds just right,
macha greets the tongue like an Anam Cara,
knocking three times at the door and,
under the spell,
calms and graces the space
and slips discreetly away
through the low and narrow door,
leaving fragrance
in the air.