ALTER PATER says somewhere of the old French poet du Bellay: “He has almost been the poet of one poem. It is a song which the winnowers are supposed to sing as they winnow the corn, and invoke the winds to lie lightly on the grain.

“One seems to hear the measured falling of the fans, with a child’s pleasure at coming across the incident for the first time in one of those great barns of du Bellay’s own country, La Beauce, the granary of France. A sudden light transfigures a trivial thing, a weathervane, a windmill, a winnowing flail, the dust in the barn door; a moment—and the thing has vanished because it was pure effect; but it leaves a relish behind it, a longing that the accident may happen again.”

To you, winds so fleet,
Who with winged feet
Run the world around.
And with murmur soft
Lift the trees aloft
Shadowing the ground.

I offer you the violets,
The lilies and the flowerets
And the roses here,
The fair crimson roses
The early morn discloses,
And the daisies dear.

Ah, with your sweet air
Fan this place so fair,
Linger here, I pray,
Where, throughout the morn
I throw my streams of corn
In the heat of day.

English by Lois Bennett.