



*I turned to see a shore unlike anything I had ever known, and a child who beckoned me to come see this new land which opened before me.*

Wind carries petals  
Spring lotus blossoms alone  
On unknown Isles

My teachers are not requiring me to do my studies aboard this ship, but writing these haiku helps me collect my thoughts.

I miss my mother. I didn't know her for long but I still miss her. I don't even know my father and I've heard that I have brothers. I wonder what they are like. I bet they are brave, honest, and would play with me. I've been surrounded by tutors and handmaids all my life. I wonder what it would be like to have a real family.

I saw one of my Seppun guards steal a smile when a messenger arrived at my door. She is really tall and pretty. I think her name is Seppun Ryo. I like her. I wish someone would smile at me like that. So warm and friendly. What is it like to have a real friend? Back on land the courtiers pushed their kids into pretending to be my friends because I am important and now I know how I am important. My mother told me I am to be Empress of this new land. I don't understand why my mother couldn't come with me. The dragon said only one of us could go and she gave me up. I hate my mother. How could she abandon me again?

Ryo told me the seas were going to be rough today because we were going to be passing by a whirlpool. I asked if I could see it, but she told me it was too dangerous. If I'm going to be the Empress, they can't hide things from me forever.

Autumn leaves drift down  
They tumble through the gray sky  
Swirling in the wind

— From the journal of Hantei Botan  
Daughter of Emperor Hantei XXXVIII

