

*Kuri*

Shite: No moon will reveal  
the black pearl's ascension.

Ji: The water of life receding as the black orb rises.  
A new filth on the old mound will not freshly show.  
Under the moonless weeds, dark,  
the wound lies hidden.  
A gaping mouth of green pain screams silently.

*Sashi*

Shite: Where you see a mound of earth  
—once stood a house.

Ji: Swamp soup of mosquito eggs  
—larvae floating dead.  
'Possums, rats scurry from a swollen shack  
A shack of tarpaper and pine and infinite hunger.

*Kuse*

Ji: Black tar of forgotten men  
rotting in the moonless swamp  
Hatred stewing in the heat and boiling in the cold—  
Where bodies are collected and Hell keeps count.  
The devil's son toys viciously  
with all who wander here.  
A wretched need craving, shrouded in vicious play.  
Haunted tales tell and re-tell his deadly mischief.

Shite: If you see a light in the distance.

Ji: If you see a light in the distance, do not follow it  
He will lead you to your death  
in the blackened swamp.  
Twelve graves shine with fresh darkness,  
the old house trembles  
Counting one and two children with no shoes  
And three, four are hanging on the door.  
Counting thick—come lay upon sticks.  
Counting more (and more to come) 'til none left  
To dig and delve and the last one, the last one is gone.

Shite: The demon born in this swamp mutilates his prey.

Ji: Thrown away by his mother's hand, he laughs at your  
fear.  
Now hiding his shame, feeding his terrible hunger.  
The youngest child given to the devil.  
Too many mouths to feed, too many children.  
Screaming at the hungry night, forsaken by God.

*Rongi*

Ji: Little lost boy, your words are too bereft of hope  
No one is truly forsaken of God's guiding light.

Shite: You could guild me home again-  
-just you follow this light

Ji: We cannot leave our circle,  
how will you find your home?

Shite: Come closer to me if you wish to see  
hell's hopeless land.

Ji: Fearful words for one so young,  
your face as cold as death.

Shite: Do not look at me but follow,  
follow my darkness home.

Ji: So cold and bitter!  
Have you never known a mother's love?

Shite: Barren was another's love- -my master is  
death.

Ji: Does no human part remain? Why appear to us?

Shite: You are but bodies to count.  
I hate your questions.

Ji: Child hidden in darkness, his lantern grows dim  
Now the lamp no longer shines-  
-Now he disappears  
The air, heavy with moisture,  
still holds his presence  
The witches tremble,  
a chilling wind whispers past.

[*Shite Exit.*]

Wakitsure: Where has he gone? Has he vanished  
into the night?

Waki: Come back to the circle. Stay calm, we are  
protected here. Let us make our evening  
devotion. We begin our search tomorrow.

Waki/Wakitsure:  
See us safe to sleep, dear goddess of  
protection.