



# Little Songs of the Geisha: Traditional Japanese Ko-Uta

*Liza Dalby*

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**A fascinating look into the world of the Geisha through the 400-year-old art of Ko-Uta, the traditional song form sung to three-stringed shamisen music. It is a vivid evocation of the romanticism of feudal Japan.**

Traditional Japanese ko-uta are the musical embodiment of the geisha in the intoxicating "flower and willow world." Literally, these are "little songs" sung by a geisha who accompanies herself on the three-stringed shamisen. Liza Dalby, fully trained in the arts of the geisha and fluent in Japanese, is a magnificent guide who brings alive the spirit of this delightful musical form.

*Little Songs of the Geisha* presents beautiful calligraphy and vivid translations of twenty-five ko-uta, to which Liza Dalby adds lively explanatory notes illuminating the puns and Japanese literary devices which might otherwise elude the Western reader. To draw out the fullest essence of the floating world, *Little Songs of the Geisha* offers an appendix with traditional musical notations for the shamisen as well as in standard Western form.

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