

Wisteria

By Jeong Gwang-ho

Planting wisteria at home
Warps and twists everything,
And creates a debacle, they said.
When its leaves turn autumn colors
Your family will come down with jaundice
From hunger, they said.

Perhaps, it doesn't matter.
If only we cling to and hug one another,
Like a twisted wisteria vine.
If only it brings a fortune of riches,
Like a golden nugget.

Even if the truth bears no relation to
Those old folks' tales, now
Even if our greedy desires
Can never be met,
The green scent
Wafting amid leaves verdure,
With a yearning for that sensation
As I plant wisteria in the yard's narrow corner.

With a smile as rosy
As autumn leaves,
Bowed
And twisted,
Like an embracing heart,
May you carry on in that way.
So I hope
And keep watch over,
My home wisteria.

Translated by Kim Yong-hee and Daniel Svoboda