

Style and Substance

one hundred poems
from the chinese

Notes Two

colin john holcombe

ocaso press

Style and Substance:
One Hundred Poems
from the Chinese

Volume Four: Notes
on Poems 37 to 100

by

Colin John Holcombe

Ocaso Press 2024

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Volume Four: Notes on Poems 37 to 100
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The Yuan, or Mongol dynasty (1279-1368) was a great humiliation for China, and many of its poets no longer thronged the imperial courts but retired to the countryside to keep alive their customs and literary practices. Plays became popular, however, and these catered for the larger populace, not merely the literati and scholar class. The earlier poetry styles did survive, however, and were joined by a new style, the *Sanqu*, which was freer in form and based on popular songs and dramatic arias.

All genres continued to be written in the succeeding Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), which was otherwise a xenophobic and intensely conservative dynasty, with repressive internal government and rejection of things non-Chinese. Printed books became cheap and plentiful, however, giving poets a wide audience. Poets also formed themselves into societies and academies, as they had in previous dynasties, but the emphasis now alternated between recapturing old ground of the Tang and exploring the more easy-going styles of the Song.

In the succeeding Qing dynasty (1644-1911), China was again conquered by barbarians, the Manchus, but these new rulers rapidly became as Chinese as their subjects. The first emperors were long-lived and hard working, moreover, giving China a prosperity unequalled in the contemporary world. All reigns compiled records of their own and previous dynasties, but the Qing were particularly meticulous. Today the imperial records contain some 48,000 poems from the Tang, 200,000 poems from the Song, and a million or more from the following Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. The last group have only recently been properly documented, making generalizations somewhat provisional. Nonetheless, though there were revivals of Confucianism in Song and Ming times, and important developments in literary theory, the elevated splendor of Tang poetry at its best was not recaptured.

37. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: Wang Duanshu: Song of Suffering Calamity

Cai 17.6. [YHJ, gexing, 2a-3a]

	Traditional Chinese and(Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	難行 (<i>kǔ nán xíng</i>)		
1	甲申以前民庶豐 (jiǎ shēn yǐ qián mín shù	a	Jia shen year previously common people
2	fēng)	b	abundant
3	億昔猶在花錦叢 (yì xī yóu zài huā jīn cóng)	a	myriads formerly still in flower brocade
4	鶯囀簾櫳日影橫 (yīng zhuǎn lián lóng rì yǐng	b	cluster
	héng)		oriel sing curtain cage sun image across
	慵粧倦起香幃中 (yōng zhuāng juàn qǐ xiāng		lethargic toilet tired rise fragrant apartment
	wéi zhōng)		within
5	一自西陵渡兵馬 (yí zì xī líng dù bīng mǎ)	x	one since Xiling cross soldiers horse
6	書史飄零千金捨 (shū shǐ piāo líng qiān jīn shě)	c	book annals float wither thousand gold
7	髻髻蓬鬆青素裳 (jì bìn péng sōng qīng sù	x	abandon
8	shāng)		topnot temples dishevelled nature-coloured
	悞逐宗兄走村塋 (wù zhú zōng xiōng zǒu cūn	c	unadorned skirt
	yě)		delay pursue aim model elder-brother run
			village wilderness
9	武寧軍令甚嚴肅 (wǔ níng jūn lìng shèn yán	d	Wuning military order very strict respectful
10	sù)	d	ministry soldiers not allow citizen family
	部兵不許民家宿 (bù bīng bù xǔ mín jiā sù)		lodge-overnight
11		x	this time extra heart myriad measure worry
12	此際余心萬斛愁 (cǐ jì yú xīn wàn hú chóu)	d	river wind include face how dare cry
	江風括面焉敢哭 (jiāng fēng kuò miàn yān gǎn		
	kū)		
13	半夜江潮若電入 (bàn yè jiāng cháo ruò diàn	d	midnight river current like lightning enter
14	rù)	e	call son not come/wake power unexpected
15	呼兒不醒勢偏急 (hū ér bù xǐng shì piān jí)	h	urgent
16	宿在沙灘水汲身 (sù zài shā tān shuǐ jí shēn)	e	lodged on sand beach water draw body
	輕紗衣袂層層濕 (qīng shā yī mèi céng céng		light muslin clothes sleeve layer layer wet
	shī)		
17	聽傳軍令束隊行 (tīng chuán jūn lìng shù duì	f	hear transfer army order bunches ranks go
18	xíng)	f	cold dew approach body chicken not-yet cry
19	冷露薄身鷄未鳴 (lěng lù bó shēn jī wèi míng)	e	are these always follow not know stop
20	是此長隨不知止 (shì cǐ cháng suí bù zhī zhǐ)	f	horse neigh suspect be picture horn sound
	馬嘶疑為画角聲 (mǎ sī yí wéi huà jiǎo shēng)		
21	汗下成斑淚成血 (hàn xià chéng bān lèi chéng	g	sweat down accomplish spot finish blood
22	xuě)	g	firmament trap people bridge river exhaust
23	蒼天困人梁河竭 (cāng tiān kùn rén liáng hé	f	ill nature how endure suffer these feelings
24	jié)	g	heal-of shoe tread burst-open flesh skin split
	病質何堪受此情 (bìng zhì hé kān shòu cǐ qíng)		
	鞋跟踏綻肌膚裂 (xié gēn tà zhàn jī fū liè)		
25	定海波濤轟巨雷 (dìng hǎi bō tāo hōng jù léi)	x	Dinghai great waves rumble huge thunder
26	貪生至此念已灰 (tān shēng zhì cǐ niàn yǐ huī)	i	greedy life until these studies already ashes
27	思親猶在心似焚 (sī qīn yóu zài xīn sì fén)	h	think parent as-if in heart seem to-burn
28	願食鋒刃冒死回 (yuàn cān fēng rèn mào sǐ	i	hope eat sharp edge-of-blade brave death
	huí)		to-return
29	步步心驚天將暮 (bù bù xīn jīng tiān jiāng mù)	j	every step heart scared sky lead evening
30	敗舟錯打姜家渡 (bài zhōu cuò dǎ jiāng jiā dù)	j	failing boat mistake hit Jia family crossing
31	行資遇劫食不敷 (xíng zī yù jié shí bù fū)	k	travel resources meet robbery eat not
32	淒風泣雨悲前路 (qī fēng qì yǔ bēi qián lù)	j	enough
			sob wind sob rain grief ahead road
33	暗喜生從關上歸 (àn xǐ shēng cóng guān shàng	k	secret glad to-be past mountain-pass on-top
34	guī)	e	hold blush ashamed face what place rely-on
35	抱輶羞顏何所倚 (bào nǎn xiū yán hé suǒ yǐ)	x	wall delay creeper careless coarse half-on
36	牆延蔓草扉半開 (qiáng yán mǎn cǎo fēi bàn	e	open-door
	kāi)		my older sister leave home father die
	吾姊出家老父死 (wú zǐ chū jiā lǎo fù sǐ)		
37	骨肉自此情意疏 (gǔ ròu zì cǐ qíng yì shū)	l	blood relation since then affection distant
38	僑寓暫且池東居 (qiáo yù zàn qiě chí dōng jū)	l	emigrant reside for-time-being pond east
39	幸得詩書潤茅屋 (xìng dé shī shū rùn máo wū)	l	residence
40		x	fortunate get Book-of-Songs Book-of-
	僻徑無求顯者車 (pì jìng wú qiú xiǎn zhě chē)		History embellish thatch cottage

			rustic track not-have seek prominent-like carriage
41	曉來梨雨幽窗洒 (xiǎo lái lí yǔ yōu chuāng sǎ)	m	dawn come pear rain secluded window
42	暮借殘星補破瓦 (mù jiè cán xīng bǔ pò wǎ)	m	sprinkle
43	偶聽雲聲送落鴻 (ǒu tīng yún shēng sòng luò	n	evening borrow incomplete star repair
44	hóng)	n	broken roof-tile
	哀其悽惻如象同 (āi qí qī cè rú xiàng tóng)		accidental hear cloud sound carry fall goose
			sorrow that mournful sorrowful as-if imitate same

Before the Jiashen year, as I recall,
the common people had enough to eat,
Soft, wooded shades protected us, with all
the flowers rich-brocaded, fresh and neat.

We heard the oriole's plump tenderness,
as curtained sun glowed softly overhead.
There was no haste to rise and dress:
long hours I'd linger by the scented bed.

Then suddenly, with horses, soldiers spilled
across the boundary of the Xiling Hills,
at once were gold and lives and histories filled
with hazard of a thousand ills.

Though plainly dressed and with my hair unkempt,
I missed my chance when elder brother went
to hide in villages. From none exempt,
calamities are what my fortune sent.

The orders for the Wuning army were
for us civilians both strict and right:
10. no troops would help us or indeed transfer
to billeting and keep us safe at night.

And so I fled, my female heart beset
by myriads of mounting worries. I
felt the river wind blow in my face, but yet
could take no issue with it, nor dared cry.

Then midnight, I remember, and the tide
was dark, and rising swiftly, I would find.
I called my boy. Who would not stir. I tried
to put these urgent dangers out of mind.

So went the whole night there, on that bare beach
as water lapped and threatened, ever close:
through sleeves of gauze I felt the wetness reach,
then through the body's thin, deep underclothes.

At length we woke, and with the troops again
trudged on and with and as the orders came.
Dew-damp on that hard ground we bedded down,
got up at cockcrow, damp, went on the same.

And that whole days together: we never stayed
at one place long, or had that hard pace slowed.
20. It was a bugle sound when horses neighed,
an endless column on an endless road.

And so I fled, my female heart beset
by myriads of mounting worries. I
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could take no issue with it, nor dared cry.

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was dark, and rising swiftly, I would find.
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at one place long, or had that hard pace slowed.
20. It was a bugle sound when horses neighed,
an endless column on an endless road.

In perspiration drenched, with flooding tears,
which seemed to mingle with our very blood,
buffeted by Heaven we were, beset by fears
as roads and bridges showed a waste of mud.

There sick to death we were, and pressed by fate,
yet still the orders came, both prompt and curt:
my shoes were shredded: in that desperate state
my skin was sorely cracked, my bound feet hurt.

We went to Dinghai in the driving rain,

the waves were loud and fell as thunderclaps.
I clung to life and effort, hurt and pain,
when all turned ashes, to a large perhaps.

I'd fled to what? Had left my parents too
as prey to illness, hunger and attack,
and so, despite my fears, what blade could do,
at last, if wearily, I turned on back.

At dusk the sky seemed darker overhead,
my heart in every fearful step I'd take.
30. Our boat, much patched and leaky, was misled:
we came to Jiang Crossing by mistake.

There robbed of valuables, what things we had,
we lacked the cash for travel, even bread.
In wind and rain we went, and, more than sad,
surveyed and earnestly the road ahead.

All last, all hardships overcome, we came
to our once home, relieved to find the place.
But in the gladness there was also shame:
where could I put this much dishonored face?

We saw our house, with creepers overrun,
the door not locked but broken in instead.
My poor dear sister gone to be a nun,
our father nowhere, but a long time dead.

And so was kinship weakened, from this time on,
not close to those of whom we had been fond.
That sense of fitting place was also gone:
I lodge now on the east side of the pond.

The *Odes* and *History* — I still have those
to read within my all-too modest home.
40. I seek no carriages or splendid clothes
nor from this sanctuary expect to roam.

I have the rain for company, and flowers,
the dawn, the plum tree blossoms' simple truth.
At night I ask the stars' own kindly powers
to cover tiles still missing from my roof.

Sometimes I hear the trails of wild geese call
as from the clouds descending they have flown,

and then am saddened by them, those and all
who feel a sorrow kindred to my own.

Comment

I read 'elder brother' for 走, but have followed Grace Fong in accepting 'elder sister' because elder brother would have been expected to enlist rather than hide himself, and elder sister in fact reappears later in the poem.

The woman poet and critic Wang Duanshu was a native of Shaoxing, who wrote of her harrowing experiences in fleeing the advancing Qing troops in 1644-5. The original is in the heptasyllabic Unregulated Shi genre and fairly closely rhymed (abab xcxc ddx^d dehe ffe^f ggfg xihi jjkj kexe llx mmnn). I have echoed this feature in representing each heptasyllable line by two pentameters in stanzas rhymed abab. Lines 20 and 26 are rather free. The references are:

Jiashen year: year of the monkey, i.e. 1644.

Xiling Hills: on the border with Manchuria

Wuning: northwest Jiangsi province, bordering Hubei

Dinghai: on the northeast coast of China.

Jiang crossing: on the upper waters of the Yangtze.

The dangers recorded were real. Wang's father starved himself to death following Manchu victories, but many Han were simply massacred. Some 800,000 soldiers and civilians were killed over ten days in Yangzhou, for example, and similar carnage occurred in Jiading, Jiaxing, Kunshan, and Haining. It is against this background that Wang had to express her lived experiences, deeply felt emotions, desires, anxieties, and pleasures, thereby defining herself beyond the normative role of women in a Confucian society. {1}

Wang Duanshu belonged to the gentry class. Before her extended flight she would have known little of her countrymen, ninety percent of whom lived as farmers in small villages built of local materials

and housing around fifty families. The larger villages would have a market every other day and at least one street lined with shops selling local and non-local products, plus booths where doctors, fortune-tellers, barbers and letter writers offered their services. The gentry lived in towns, often as extended families, in houses set as extensive rooms off a central garden, with servants to do the menial chores. {3}

All classes celebrated the many festivals, though the New Year was the most important, where the extended family collected under one roof and made offerings to heaven and earth, to the god or goddess belonging to the family tradition, to departed ancestors, to living parents and grandparents. They also exchanged gifts and invitations with neighbors and business associates. The house would be specially decorated, there would also be feasts and fireworks, and a variety of entertainments organized by the more wealthy for their community: the dragon dance, music and opera. {3}

Town life had many amenities, not least an abundance of printed material: reference books, religious tracts, school primers, Confucian literature and civil service examination aids. Poetry could be published. There was also a sizeable market for fiction, often short stories in the colloquial tongue featuring palace inhabitants and ghosts, which sold well with women and the merchant classes. Full length novels also appeared, sometimes under a pseudonym, as was the erotic work Jin Ping Mei, translated as both *The Plum in the Golden Vase* and *The Golden Lotus*. Wood block printing allowed for illustration, often used to distinguish books with similar content. {3}

Many houses were richly furnished and decorated. Arts and handicrafts flourished, and the Ming was particularly celebrated for its porcelain, which was shipped by sea to Europe and across the land routes to the Middle East, greatly influencing the ceramic art of Persia and Turkey in subsequent centuries.

The Ming was a xenophobic dynasty, however, and life at court could be distinctly perilous. The two founding emperors of the Ming were markedly paranoid, and the first alone instigated an internal

investigation that lasted 14 years and brought about 30,000 executions. Two more investigations followed, resulting in another 70,000 executions of government workers, from high officials to guards and servants. {3}

To add to supposed internal threats were the Mongols, who had been chased out of China but were anything but docile. Indeed they managed to capture and hold prisoner for some years one of the Ming emperors, though, rather than pay the demanded ransom, the court promptly raised a half-brother to the dragon throne. {3}

The Ming fell to invading Manchu tribesmen in extended campaigns: the conquest was not completed till 1683, and cost 25 million lives. Treachery, warlord banditry and fierce resistance were frequent features but the dynasty was itself ailing. Support of the extended royal families had eaten into state revenues. Large armies had to be maintained on extended borders. The Little Ice Age shortened the growing season and depleted crops: in the ensuing famines troops were apt to leave their posts, and to roving gangs of the discontented were added floods, locusts, droughts and outbreaks of disease. In 1642, a group of rebels destroyed the dikes of the Yellow River and unleashed flooding that led to hundreds of thousands of deaths. As the social order broke down and smallpox spread, two competing rebel leaders, Li Zicheng and Zhang, took control of separate parts of the country and declared new dynasties. The Mandate of Heaven was clearly being withdrawn, and in 1644 the last of the Ming emperors took his own life. {3}

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Other Translations

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6. REGULATED SHI

6.1 Characteristics of Regulated Shi

The so-called 'recent-style' Shi poetry (Jintishi) was a more musical but heavily regulated poetry that reached its highest development in Tang times, but was also written in later dynasties. Jintishi took two forms: a full Lushi (eight lines) form and a so-called curtailed Jueju (four lines) form. These two forms were subdivided further. Lushi poetry was either pentasyllabic (Wulu: five to the line) or heptasyllabic (Qilu: seven characters to the line). Jueju poetry could also adopt two forms. Wujue had five characters to the line, and Qijue had seven characters to the line. Strict rules of organisation, metre, rhyme and tonal patterns applied to all four forms of Jintishi poems.

Regulated Shi is the most refined and artificial of Chinese poetry genres. The keywords for translation purposes are a rather studied air of refinement, melodious but also somewhat dissociated from reality, tight rhyming and much assonance to mimic the tone rules: in short, a highly-finished and self-conscious style of writing.

I have used different rhyme schemes here to suggest what is still possible in so constrained a style.

38. REGULATED SHI POETRY: JINTISHI: LUSHI: WULU: Meng Haoran: . Memories of Early Winter

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	早寒有懷 (zǎo hán yǒu huái)		morning cold exist mind
1	木落雁南渡 (mù luò yàn nán dù)	a	tree fall wild-goose south pass
2	北風江上寒 (běi fēng jiāng shàng hán)	b	north wind river on poor/tremble
3	我家襄水曲 (wǒ jiā xiāng shuǐ qū)	a	my home Xiang river bend
4	遙隔楚雲端 (yáo gé chǔ yún duān)	b	distant separate Chu cloud origin/end
5	鄉淚客中盡 (xiāng lèi kè zhōng jìn)	a	native-place tears visitor among
6	孤帆天際看 (gū fān tiān jì kàn)	b	use-up
7	迷津欲有問 (mí jīn yù yǒu wèn)	a	lonely sail sky real see
8	平海夕漫漫 (píng hǎi xī mǎn mǎn)	b	lost ferry-crossing/way wish have question
			level sea evening long long

Leaves fall. The geese fly south. The north wind blows
cold ripples on the water flats below.
My home is where the Xiang River flows
in hidden arc beneath the clouds of Chou.

My tears are now used up: why should I sigh
to see a lonely sail against the sky?
And, at that long-lost crossing, tell me why
that level sea and evening still hold the eye.

Comment

Most of Meng's poetry is set in the present-day Hubei province where he was born and raised. He was a nature poet, popular in later compilations of Tang poetry, where his work is thoughtful and reflective, but simpler and more open than the Buddhist-influenced poetry of his friend Wang Wei.

The poem here is typical of Meng's work, but has two lines that need explication. Line 4 is literally *distant separate Chu cloud origin/end* and is commonly translated as *hidden by the clouds of Chou*. Line 8 is literally *level sea evening long long* and is commonly translated as *the level sea and evening stretch far away*. No one

would want to quarrel with such interpretations, but what are they signifying?

The clue is the Xiang River, which drains into Lake Dongting, situated in the middle stretches of the Yangtze: it is classic Chu country, where Meng was born and raised. Thus the poem is a simple piece of nostalgia, I think, where the poet is remembering his childhood haunts. It is also a little sentimental, as, apart from a stay at Chang'an, Meng was never long separated from these haunts. But there we are: a translator can only work with what is given him. I have, however, made a little more the last line, adding a pathos and repetition of clouds in 'mist the eye'. The original is rhymed *abab abab* rather than my *aaaa bbbb*.

Drafts

Leaves fall. The geese fly south. The north wind sends
cold ripples to the water flats below.
My home is where the Xiang River bends,
which now is hidden by the clouds of Chou.

Here a foreigner, why should I sigh
to see a lonely sail across the sky,
but at that long-lost crossing tell me why
wide seas and evening forever are floating by.

I cannot visit what is gone, or cry
when one mute sail alone is true,
but, with that ferry-crossing, tell me why
that evening, sky, the sea are still in view.

Leaves fall. The geese fly south. The north wind lends
to river surfaces a wavering constancy.
My home was where the Xiang River bends,
which clouds of Chu obscure and hide from me.

I cannot visit what is gone, or cry
for that one sail that still seems genuine.
But with that ferry-crossing tell me why
those evening waters flow so deep within.

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39. REGULATED SHI POETRY:

JINTISHI: LUSHI: WULU: Meng Haoran :To Prime Minister Zhang by the Lake Dongting

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	望洞庭湖贈張丞相 (wàng dòng tíng hú zèng zhāng chéng xiàng)		to Dongting Lake bestow Zhang prime minister
1	八月湖水平 (bā yuè hú shuǐ píng)	a	eighth month lake water level
2	涵虛混太清 (hán xū hùn tài qīng)	a	contain emptiness mix vast clear
3	氣蒸雲夢澤 (qì zhēng yún mèng zé)	b	vapour evaporate cloud dream pool
4	波撼岳陽城 (bō hàn yuè yáng chéng)	a	wave shake Yue Yang city
5	欲濟無舟楫 (yù jì wú zhōu jí)	b	want cross not-have boat oar
6	端居恥聖明 (duān jū chǐ shèng míng)	a	end/carry reside shame sage bright
7	坐觀垂釣者 (zuò guān chuí diào zhě)	b	sit watch dangle angler
8	徒有羨魚情 (tú yǒu xiàn yú qíng)	a	only have envy fish emotion

The eighth month lakeside levels brim
with sky's vast emptiness. The clear light falls
in dreaming pools, and misty eddies swim
in waves to lap on Yueyang city walls.

I'd cross, but for a boat will have to wait,
though idleness undoes the sagest mind.
I sit and watch an angler dangle bait
and envy those to fish-like worlds confined.

Comment

The addressee of the poem, Zhang Juiling, held important posts under Emperor Xuanzong, including head of the imperial library, minister of public works, and commandant of various prefectures, but eventually fell out of favor and was dismissed. He was also a noted poet, with five of works included in the anthology of Three Hundred Tang Poems. Yueyang is a city on the eastern shores of Dongting Lake in northeast Hunan.

The poem is generally clear but lines 6 and 8 are open to interpretation. The word-for-word rendering of line 6 is end/carry reside shame sage bright: is this *A brilliant master is shamed with a life of ease* as 100tangpoets suggests, or *To live a quiet life may embarrass the wise ruler* as poetrychinese renders? Probably more the first as 聖 I means sage rather than ruler. Line 8 is more

difficult. The word-for-word rendering is *only have envy fish emotion*. 100tang poets has *And envy those the fish they catch..* Poetrychine has *be left with an envious feeling*. Both of course are correct, but I think Meng is really envying those who are content with a placid existence. The original is rhymed aaba baba

Drafts

The eighth month lakeside levels brim
with sky's vast emptiness. The clear light falls
in dreaming pools, and cloudy eddies swim
in waves to lap on Yue Yang city walls.

I'd cross, but for a boat will have to wait,
though torpor dims the brightest mind.
I sit and watch an angler dangle bait
and envy those to fish-like thoughts resigned.

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40. REGULATED SHI POETRY:

JINTISHI: LUSHI: WULU: Wang Bo: Seeing Off Assistant Prefect Du Tang

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	送杜少府之任蜀州 (sòng dù shǎo fǔ zhī rèn shǔ zhōu)		Send-off Du minor treasurer of post Sichuan province
1	城阙辅三秦 (chéng què fǔ sān qín)	a	city capital look-down-on Three Qin*
2	风烟望五津 (fēng yān wàng wǔ jīn)	a	wind mist gaze Five Ford**
3	与君离别意 (yǔ jūn lí bié yì)	b	together gentleman leave-long-journey wish
4	同是宦游人 (tóng shì huàn yóu rén)	a	share be imperial wanderer
5	海内存知己 (hǎi nèi cún zhī jǐ)	b	whole world be intimate
6	天涯若比邻 (tiān yá ruò bǐ lín)	a	distant realm, as next door
7	无为在歧路 (wú wèi zài qí lù)	x	not act at fork road
8	儿女共沾巾 (ér nǚ gòng zhān jīn)	a	children together weep

Seen from Chengdu walls it's Shaanxi nears,
while you, past mist and snow, on Sichuan gaze.

For all the sadness, in our spirit stays
the trust that through our endless travelling days
our country furthers its true friends' careers:
at the earth's far doors, we stay as neighbours.

So at this new-come parting of the ways
let's not be children now who'd show their tears.

Comment

Wang Bo wrote poetry from an early age but killing a servant ended his precocious career, and threatened that of his father, who was banished to Jiaozhi. It was returning from a visit to his father in 676 that Wang Bo was drowned at sea.

Wang Bo's brief output nonetheless influenced Tang poetry. He advocated 'self display' of the emotions, though these had to be appropriate, i.e. express the ideal of service to the state. By some commentators, he was thought frivolous, or even conceited, but his

stress on content and sense were a valuable antidote to poetry that aimed simply for formal perfection.

Shaanxi in the poem's text is given as 'Three Qin' and Sichuan as 'Five Fords'. Chengdu is in central Sichuan. The original is rhymed aaba baxa, the translation as abbb aaba. 'Three Qin' is Shaanxi and 'Five Fords' is Sichuan

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41. REGULATED SHI POETRY:

JINTISHI: LUSHI: WULU: Du Fu : Spring Prospect

QTS 7:22.2404

	Traditional Chinese and (pinyin)		
	春望 (chūn wàng)		spring gaze
1	国破山河在 (guó pò shān hé zài)	x	country broken mountain river
2	城春草木深 (chéng chūn cǎo mù	a	remain
3	shēn)	x	city spring grass wood thick
4	感时花溅泪 (gǎn shí huā jiàn lèi)	a	feel time flower shed tear
	恨别鸟惊心 (hèn bié niǎo jīng xīn)		hate separation bird startle heart
5	烽火连三月 (fēng huǒ lián sān yuè)	x	beacon fire span three month
6	家书抵万金 (jiā shū dǐ wàn jīn)	a	home letter equal ten-thousand
7		x	gold-tael
8	白头搔更短 (bái tóu sāo gēng duǎn)	a	white head scratch even shorter
	浑欲不胜簪 (hùn yù bù shèng zān)		simple be-about-to not able (hold) hairpin

But hills and streams of this bare land remain,
spring floods with grass and trees in thoroughfares.
The flowers, the time in prospect: both have tears,
and heart is homeless, like a startled bird.

Three months of warning beacons, distant fears:
much gold for news of home, but nothing's heard.
How can this scratched-at head of mine retain
that pin of office with these thinned white hairs?

Comment

One of Du Fu's most famous pieces, the poem shows the typical progression of regulated verse. The required opening (*qi*) sets the time, place and theme. What is human (land) is set against what is natural (hill and water). What is rendered bare by man is set against what is unbroken in nature. The contrast between human destruction and nature's luxuriance is again implied by the second line. The required second couplet (*sheng*) is more complicated. By turning away from the exterior world and omitting obvious subjects, Du Fu allows several interpretations, all equally valid. The third

couplet exhibits the required turning away (*zhua*), here from nature to the human world. The beacon fire (warning of nomad invasions) is contrasted with the wished-for message from home. The three months (a long time) is paralleled by much gold — which is linked to catastrophic events and so to a terribly long time. The final couplet rounds off (*he*) the poem by paralleling the poet's careworn appearance, ravaged by time and grief, with a country equally affected. It's part of the Confucian vision of unity in man, country and universe.

Volume Two provides a detailed analysis, but readers unfamiliar with traditional verse in this context may like to note how simple rhyme can echo, shape and deepen the themes. The original is rhymed *xaxaxaxa*, rather than the *abcd cdab* of the translation.

See Volume Two for a more extended treatment.

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42. REGULATED SHI POETRY:

JINTISHI: LUSHI: WULU: Du Fu: Restless Night

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Renering
	倦夜 (juàn yè)		dispirited night
1	竹凉侵卧内 (zhú liáng qīn wò nèi)	x	bamboo cool invade bedroom
2	野月满庭隅 (yě yuè mǎn tíng yú)	a	field moon fill courtyard corner
3	重露成涓滴 (zhòng lù chéng juān dī)	x	heavy dew turn trickle drop
4	稀星乍有无 (xī xīng zhà yǒu wú)	a	Sparse star suddenly tangible intangible
5	暗飞萤自照 (àn fēi yíng zì zhào)	x	dark fly glowworm self shine
6	水宿鸟相呼 (shuǐ sù niǎo xiāng hū)	a	water constellation bird mutually call
7	万事干戈里 (wàn shì gān gē lǐ)	x	ten-thousand things weapons-of-
8	空悲清夜徂 (kōng bēi qīng yè cú)	a	war li empty sad clear night reach/go

A smell invades my room of cold bamboo.
Outside are fields, half courtyard that the moon
lights up. I watch the drops collect from the clear dew,
and stars, still faintly glimmering, that soon

go out. The fireflies also drop from view.
Odd bird calls strike the water as though they're strewn
with countless thoughts of war: they pass on through
to sorrows emptying in the night's clear tune.

Comment

The poem was written in a small house on the outskirts of Chengdu, whence Du Fu had fled the disastrous An Lushan Rebellion. The moon is described as 野 (yě : field or outland)., which I have transposed as 'outside are fields', muting the implied contrast between inside and outside, with the latter invading the room with the cold smell of bamboo in the previous line. The second couplet is again paralleling aspects of the view. The heavy dewdrops with the twinkling stars: one forms as the others go out. The last is given by 有无 (yǒu wú: tangible, intangible) so that Du Fu is saying a little more than this. The stars are tangible in the sense they can be seen, but of course are far beyond means of grasping them. That approach and distancing, of being given and eluding us, is repeated in the next couplet: the fireflies emit their light (towards us) and the birds call to each other (i.e. away from us). The final couplet is

Du Fu's tour de force, where the simple bird calls seem threatening as though filled with thoughts of war. {3}

Just as these matters are given to the thoughtful reader of the Chinese, so, I hope, will this English rendering, if readers remember what poetry does in giving more than the plain prose sense: *lights up, goes out, strike strewn, fire dark, thoughts pass, night 's clear tune*. I have emphasized temporal matters: Du Fu's imagery is more spatial, but both imply the same: even the unfathomable sadness of the time will pass.

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43. Du Fu Thoughts while travelling at night

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word -for-Word Rendering
	旅夜書懷 (Lǚ Yè Shū Huái)		travel night write mind
1	細草微風岸 (xì cǎo wēi fēng àn)	x	slender grass tiny wind shore
2	危檣獨夜舟 (wēi qiáng dú yè zhōu)	a	danger mast alone night boat
3	星垂平野闊 (xīng chuí píng yě kuò)	a	star hang level space wide
4	月湧大江流 (yuè yǒng dà jiāng liú)	b	moon surge large river flow
5	名豈文章著？ (míng qǐ wénzhāng zhù)	a	name how literary-work succeed
6	官應老病休 (guān yīng lǎo bìng xiū.)	b	government-official should old ill
7	飄飄何所似？ (piāo piāo hé suǒ sì)	x	cease
8	天地一沙鷗 (tiān dì yī shā ōu)	a	float float what have similar heaven earth one sand gull

The shore's light wind is in the thin-stemmed grass;
and from the darkness looms the boat's one mast.
Around are stars, a stretch of river, smooth and vast,
and the moon, afloat on water flooding past.

How can the art of letters make one known?
I should retire: so aged and ill I've grown.
We're drifting, drifting as our flights have shown:
between the earth and heavens the sand-gull is alone.

Comment

In general, regulated verse has couplets arranged: non-parallel, parallel, parallel and non-parallel. Lines 1 and 2 are clearly non-parallel: 1 goes from small to large; 2 has no such direction. The two interior couplets are parallel, though in contrary directions, in both cases. The concluding couplets are non-parallel. Several points follow. First, the 危 (wēi) of line two, which is strictly translated as 'danger' refers to the mast, which is either perilous to the observer or at the mercy of the river. Second, the 湧 (yǒng) in line 4, which can mean 'bubble up' or 'rush forth', must mean 'bubble up' here, simply to preserve the mirror balance of lines 3 and 4. Third, the concluding line must have sense of upward movement, again to mirror the preceding line. Thus the sand-gull is not blown about, but soars imperially aloft. The poem is not about dejection, therefore, but depicts Du Fu's intention to stay above and unconcerned by events. The moon bubbles up or floats bobbing on the water,

stationary as the current swirls on past. Like the sand-gull, Du Fu will remain fixed in his purpose as An Lushan troubles encroach.

Other drafts:

The shore wind idles in the thin-stemmed grass,
and night is full around. A boat's one mast
and stars. The level river flows on past,
the moon buoyant on waters wide and fast.

A shore wind, light, in thin-stemmed grass:
the night in fullness, just the boat's one mast
and stars. The mighty Yangtze flowing past:
the moon brims on waters irascible / turbulent and vast.

How can the art of letters make one known
when duties show how old and ill I've grown?
We float and float as we have always shone:
from earth to heaven the sand-gull flies alone.

How can the art of letters make one known
when duties show how old and ill I've grown?
We float and float as we have always flown:
from earth the sand-gull gains the heavens alone.

How can the art of letters make me known?
One old and ill should now withdraw his name
and be what he resembles, time has shown
him floating like the sand-gull, high, alone.

The shore's light wind is in the thin-stemmed grass;
and through the darkness looms the boat's one mast.
And there are stars, a stretch of river, smooth and vast;
and the moon, buoyant on currents swirling past.

How can this writing make my purpose known?
Unfit for office, it is old I've grown,
and so I wait, suspended, on these wild thoughts flown:
from earth to heaven the sand-gull soars alone.

The shore's light wind is in the thin-stemmed grass.
The night full dark around: but boat's one mast
and stars. The mighty river issues past
but smooth the moon on waters wide and fast.

A shore wind, light, in thin-stemmed grass:
the night in fullness, just the boat's one mast
and stars. The mighty Yangtze floods on past:
a bobbing moon on waters dark and vast.

How can the art of letters make one known
when duties show how ill and old we've grown?
We float resembling ways we've always been:
from earth to heaven the sand-gull is alone.

How can the art of letters make me known?
One old and ill should now retire his name
and be what he resembles, fame has flown:
from earth to heavens the sand-gull floats alone.

Comment

Several points. I read 危 as 'danger' or 'to endanger', but no one else seems to. A similar problem is 湧, which dictionaries give as 'bubble up' but also 'rush forth', the latter clearly relating to the river, not the moon. Even Stephen Owen is not much help here:

Slender grasses, breeze faint on the shore,
Here, the looming mast, the lone night boat.
Stars hang down on the breadth of the plain,
The moon gushes in the great river's current.
My name shall not be known from my writing;
Sick, growing old, I must yield up my post.
Wind-tossed, fluttering—what is my likeness?
In Heaven and Earth, a single gull of the sands.

The matter is this: if we take the poem as a melancholy reverie, a vague lament on not receiving proper recognition, then most renderings will be correct. But I suspect Du Fu is saying more, by making each image count. The night around him is threatening. He is old and infirm. But just the moon continues to reflect from the waters, however dangerously fast they may be going, and sand gull soars between heaven and earth regardless, so Du Fu is continuing to write throughout the troubled times and indifference to his gifts. This attitude is part of his character, the blunt-speaking honesty that did not help his career, and indeed left him near starving at times.

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3. See Volume Two, Section 10.12

44. Du Fu: Thinking of Li Bai

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)	Word –for-Word Rendering
	天末懷李白 (tiān mò huái Lǐ Bái)	Sky end breast Li Bai
1	涼風起天末 (涼 風 qǐ tiān mò)	Cool wind rise sky end
2	君子意如何 (jūnzǐ yì rúhé)	what does gentleman think
3	鴻雁幾時到 (鴻 yàn 幾 時 dào)	swan goose when will come
4	江湖秋水多 (Jiānghú qiūshuǐ duō)	river lake autumn water many
5	文章憎命達 (wénzhāng zēng mìng 達)	Writing detest good fate
6	魑魅喜人過 (chīmèi xǐ rén 過)	demon enjoy people pass
7	應共冤魂語 (應 gòng yuānhún 語)	should common injustice soul language
8	投書贈汨羅 (tóu 書 贈 Mì 羅)	cast book give Miluo

Chang, Edward. How To Read A Chinese Poem: A Bilingual Anthology of Tang Poetry p. 59 has this rendering:

杜甫 天末懷李白
 涼○風○ 起△天○末△
 liáng fēng qǐ tiān mò
 cool wind rises from sky's edge
 君○子△ 意△如○何●
 jūn zǐ yì rú hé
 gentleman how do you feel
 鴻○雁△1 幾△時○到△
 hóng yàn jǐ shí dào
 swan geese when to arrive
 江○湖○ 秋○水△多●
 jiāng hú qiū shuǐ duō
 rivers and lakes autumn waters swell
 文○章○ 憎○命△達△
 wén zhāng zēng mìng dá
 writings detest good fate
 魑○魅△ 喜△人○過●
 chī mèi xǐ rén guō
 demons enjoy people passing by
 應○共△ 冤○魂○語△2
 yīng gòng yuān hún yǔ
 should share words with the grievous soul
 投○書○ 贈△汨△羅●
 tóu shū zèng mì luó
 drop a letter to the Miluo River

Thinking of Li Bai at a Remote Corner

Cool wind arises from the edge of the sky.
My friend, how do you feel?
When will the wild geese bring me your messages?
Autumn waters swell the rivers and lakes.
Writings often bring us bad fate.
Demons enjoy swallowing those who pass by.
Why not share your grievances with the ghost of Qu Yuan?
Drop in the Miluo River a poem to show your pain!

Early Draft

From the sky's far borders the cool winds blow.
I do not know if, friend, you sense the pull
that news from Hongyan come will undergo.
With autumn too the lakes and streams are full.

Writings have their fate, as well you know,
as demons devour the wayward traveler.
Why not share injustices and show
what letters dropped in the Miluo River were.

The pull/full rhyme is rather contrived, and it seems better to write:

From the sky's far borders the cool winds blow.
What are your thoughts, my friend? Should I infer
that Hongyan's swarm of geese and swans will show
what shadowy autumns lakes and streams incur?

Writings have their fate, as well you know,
as demons lure the hapless traveler.
Why not share injustices and show
what words you gave the Miluo River were.

Then, removing the repeated 'show', and making the implicit
content clearer:

From the sky's far borders the cool winds blow.
What are your thoughts, my friend? Should I infer
that Hongyan's flocks of coming geese bestow
a threat that autumn's rivers can recur?

All writings bring their fate, as well you know,
as demons lure the hapless traveler.
Why not share injustices and show
what words you gave the Miluo River were?

Or we can remove Hongyan altogether:

From the sky's far borders the cool winds blow.
What are your thoughts, my friend? Should I infer
that coming flocks of swans and geese bestow
a threat that autumn's lakes and streams incur?

Notes

The poem was written in the autumn of the second year of the Qianyuan period (759) of the Tang Emperor Suzong. Li Bai once exiled to Yilang because of the Yongwang Li Lin case, has been pardoned and is returning via Hunan. Several references need explaining. Line 1: end of the sky refers to the extent of Du Fu's concern for Li Bai. Line 2: the gentleman is indeed Li Bai. Line 3: The swan and geese (hóng yàn) also refers to an ancient Chinese saying: 'When will Hongyan arrive'. Line 4 not only refers to autumn rains but, metaphorically, to a road full of turmoil. Line 5: A thought both poets share, that literary talent brings dangers. Line 8: The Miluo River lies in the northeast of Xiangyin County, Hunan Province but it was also where Qu Yuan was unjustly exiled and died. A celebrated poem, whose lines were much quoted in subsequent dynasties.

Notes

Text Sources

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<https://so.gushiwen.cn/shiwen/38418ed36981.aspx>

Other Translations

[English Translations of Chinese Poetry](#)
[iStudy-China](#)
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Literary Criticism

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Audio Recordings

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45. Li Bai: Saying Farewell at Jingmen Ferry

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)	Word – for-Word Rendering
	渡荊門送別 (dù jīng mén sòng bié)	Crossing jing men man farewell
1	渡遠荊門外 (dù yuǎn jīng mén wài)	crossing distant jing men outside
2	來從楚國遊 (lái cóng chǔ guó yóu)	come from Chu country tour
3	山隨平野盡 (shān suí píng yě jìn)	mountain with flat wild most
4	江入大荒流 (jiāng rù dà huāng liú)	river enter great desolate flow
5	月下飛天鏡 (yuè xià fēi tiān jìng)	moon down fly sky mirror
6	雲生結海樓 (yún shēng jié hǎi lóu)	cloud raw knot sea tower
7	仍憐故鄉水 (réng lián gù xiāng shuǐ)	still pity therefore township water
8	萬里送行舟 (wàn lǐ sòng xíng zhōu)	ten-thousand li send ok boat

First Draft

This is an important but rather gnomic poem. A popular account give this analysis and rendering: {2}

李白 渡荊門送別

渡△遠△ 荊○門○外△1
 dù yuǎn jīng mén wài
 from afar on boat outside of Jingmen Mountain
 來○從○ 楚△國△遊●
 lái cóng chǔ guó yóu
 coming to tour the State of Chu
 山○隨○ 平○野△盡△
 shān suí píng yě jìn
 mountains follow to be ended in open field
 江○入△ 大△荒○流●
 jiāng rù dà huāng liú
 river enters wilderness and flows

Saying Good-bye Beyond Mount ThornGate

From a ferry faraway, to the rear of Mt. Jingmen,
 here we have come, to the former Chu State.
 The mountains fall behind as the open field begins;
 the river enters the wilderness and surges ahead.
 The moon descends like a flying mirror;
 the clouds emerge to form a sea tower.
 I still love the water from my hometown.
 For several thousand miles,

Which we can transpose into a rhymed version:

From Jingmen Mountain the ferry will convey
me on to Chu lands, whither I am drawn.
And now to open fields the mountains fall away,
still, entering wildernesses, the river presses on.

The moon is like a falling glass that shone
briefly, at intervals, through towering mist and spray.
Homeland waters, from these I'm never gone,
though distant the source, ten thousand mile today.

Other translations on the Internet are a little different:

Having fared forth leaving the Jingmen Mountains far behind, {3}
We have sailed into the region of Chu to roam its landscape.
Mountain scenes give place to open country and plains,
Waters of creeks and streams aggregate into a river of full spate.
The moon casts on the waters a reflection of a heavenly mirage,
In the sky at dawn, clouds gather to build a castle in the air.
How I cherish the waters from home,
That have carried our boat thousands of miles far and away.

Istudychinese {6}

Leaving Mount Thorn-Gate far away,
My boat pursues its eastward way.
Where mountains end begins the plain;
The river rolls to boundless main.

The moon, celestial mirror, flies;
The clouds like miraged towers rise.
The water that from homeland flows
Will follow me where my boat goes.

Li Bai {7}

Far, far beyond the Thorn Gate Gorge
I am travelling,
Revelling
in the vast land of Chu,
Where mountains lull into level fields
unfolding,
The River finds grandeur
through the boundless country.
In its limpid waters a divine moon
dives like a flying mirror.

Over the towering clouds the sun builds
its mirage of day-glory.
So far away am I, yet with me still
is the homeland water
Bearing my boat
all the way here.

Leaving Mount Thorn-Gate far away, {7}
My boat pursues its eastward way.
Where mountains end begins the plain;
The river rolls to boundless main.
The moon, celestial mirror, flies;
The clouds like miraged towers rise.
The water that from homeland flows
Will follow me where my boat goes.

Having fared forth leaving the Jingmen Mountains far behind,
We have sailed into the region of Chu to roam its landscape.
Mountain scenes give place to open country and plains,
Waters of creeks and streams aggregate into a river of full spate.
The moon casts on the waters a reflection of a heavenly mirage,
In the sky at dawn, clouds gather to build a castle in the air.
How I cherish the waters from home,
That have carried our boat thousands of miles far and away. {3}

We should start with a school text {8} that (machine translated)
makes clear that the 'ferry' is not crossing the river but a boat that
takes Li Bai through the Three Gorges of the Yangtze River. It's a
bit over-written, but I give it in full:

"Farewell Across Jingmen" is a poem written by the great poet Li Bai in the Tang Dynasty when he was a young man on his way out of Shu. This poem begins with the topic of long-distance travel, then writes about what you have seen, heard, and felt along the way, and then ends with thoughts. The whole poetic realm is lofty, the style is majestic, the image is magnificent, and the imagination is magnificent. It is won by its outstanding painting. The scene is majestic and magnificent, showing the author's young and long-distance travel, suave personality and strong homesickness.

"The mountains follow the plains and the fields" vividly depicts the unique scenery on both sides of the Yangtze River after the ship leaves the Three Gorges and crosses Jingmen Mountain: the mountains gradually disappear, and there is an endless low-level wilderness in front of you. With the word "follow", it turns quiet into movement, gradually changing and passing the positions of the mountains and Hirano, and truly expressing it. This sentence is like a set of moving pictures taken with a movie lens, giving people a sense of flow and space, and showing the trend of activity in the still mountains. "The river enters the great barren stream", which writes the momentum of the river rushing and pouring. Looking from Jingmen to the distance, it seems to flow into the remote wilderness of the desert, with few silhouettes in the sky and a lofty realm. The last sentence is written with the word "in", which shows the grandeur of the momentum, fully expressing the poet's great pride, full of joy and high-spirited passion, through the back of the paper, the language is appropriate. The poet's joyous and cheerful mood and youthful vigor are hidden in the scene. The two sentences of the couplet are not only magnificent because of the images of the vast wilderness such as "Hirano" and "Great Wilderness"; they are also very vivid because of the dynamic description. Of course, the river is flowing, but the mountain range is originally solidified. The dynamic feeling of "follow and do" is completely derived from the actual experience of the boat trip. After many days of walking through the steep and dangerous, mountainous Three Gorges area, I suddenly saw the magnificent scenery, and I was suddenly in a clear mood. It uses highly condensed language. The geographical changes of the poet's entire itinerary are written in an extremely general manner.

After writing about the mountains and flowing water, the poet used the technique of moving and changing the scenery to portray the close-up and long-term vision of the Yangtze River from different angles: "The sky mirror flies under the moon, and the clouds are born and the sea tower is formed. "The Yangtze River flows below Jingmen, the river twists and turns, and the flow rate slows down. At night, when the river is calm, looking down at the reflection of

the moon in the water, it is like a mirror flying from the sky; during the day, looking up at the sky, the clouds rise and change infinitely, forming a mirage-like spectacle. This is the wonderful beauty that can be seen from the high altitude of the vast plains in the Jingmen area and on the calm river. For example, in the Three Gorges of the lofty mountains, since noon and night, Xiyue, Xiashui Xiangling, and the river are rushing and surging, it is difficult to have the opportunity to see the water image of the "Flying mirror under the Moon"; in the space of the Three Gorges, which is hidden from the sun, there is no way to see the wonders of "Yunsheng Jiehai Tower". This combination uses the moon in the water as a round mirror to reflect the calmness of the river, and the clouds in the sky to form a mirage to set off the vastness of the river bank and the lofty sky. The artistic effect is very strong. The two joints of the neck and neck wrote out the fresh feelings of the people living in Shu when they first went out of the gorge and saw the vast plains extremely truly. The two sentences of the neck union reflect the calmness of the river, showing the vast banks of the river, the sky is high, and it is full of romanticism.

While admiring the scenery in the Jingmen area, Li Bai couldn't help feeling homesick in the face of the surging river flowing through his hometown: "I still pity the water of my hometown, and I will see off the boat for thousands of miles. The poet crossed Jingmen along the Yangtze River. The land of Shu where the river flows is the hometown where he was raised. How can he not be nostalgic and reluctant to give up when he parted for the first time? "But the poet didn't say that he missed his hometown, but that the water of his hometown reluctantly sent me all the way. With deep affection, he sent the boat thousands of miles away. Writing from the opposite side, he became more and more homesick and affectionate. The poem ends with a strong feeling of nostalgia and farewell, and the words are endless and the love is endless. The "farewell" in the title of the poem should be farewell to the hometown rather than farewell to friends. There is no farewell to friends in the poem. In the Qing Dynasty, Shen Deqian believed that "there is no farewell in

the poem, and the two words in the title can be deleted" ("Tang Poetry is not Cut"), which is not unreasonable.'

Clearly our first draft has missed the meaning: Li Bai is describing the scenery and his feelings on taking the boat from the Jinmen (Mount Thornhill) crossing. We need to rewrite. The original is rhymed xaxaxaxa, but we have agreed to render Regulated Shi as tightly rhymed:

Leaving Jinmen crossing far behind,
we cross the lands of Chu. The threatening hills
then fall away, to flat land, unrefined.
The river towers round us yet and fills

the air with spray and mist The moon, entwined
with water like a flashing mirror, spills
its light across ten thousand li, to find
the homewarding the very current wills.

The following is better verse:

Leaving Jingmen crossing far behind,
we tour the lands of Chu. The threatening hills
then fall away, to flat land, unrefined.
Yet round us still the towering river fills
the air with spray and mist. The moon, entwined
and twisting like a flashing mirror, spills
its light across ten thousand li, to wind
in home and promise as the water wills.

Text Sources

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2. Chang, Edward. How To Read A Chinese Poem: A Bilingual Anthology of Tang Poetry p. 80.

Other Translations

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4. [Chinese Poetry in English Verse.](#)
5. [Farewell at Thorngate Gorge](#)
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Literary Criticism

8. <https://baike.baidu.com>

46. REGULATED SHI POETRY:

JINTISHI: LUSHI: WULU: Li Bai: Leave Taking

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	送友人 (sòng yǒu rén)		
1 2	青山橫北郭 (qīng shān hèng běi guō) 白水遶東城 (bái shuǐ rào dōng chéng)	x a	blue mountain stagnant north city-wall white water spiral east city-wall
3 4	此地一為別, (cǐ dì yī wéi bié) 孤蓬萬里征 (gū péng wàn lǐ zhēng)	x a	this place one be depart lone fleabane ten-thousand li journey
5 6	浮雲遊子意 (fú yún yóu zǐ yì) 落日故人情 (luò rì gù rén qíng)	x b	float cloud travel thinking setting sun old friend feeling
7 8	揮手自茲去 (huī shǒu zì zī qù) 蕭蕭斑馬鳴 (xiāo xiāo bān mǎ míng)	x b	wave hand self now go neigh neigh part horse call

Blue mountains, stagnant: north, the outer wall:
the river, winding eastward: an inward blaze of white.
Here, at this place, we make one final parting.
Like tumbleweed whirling ten thousand li, a fall
bewildering as the clouds go scattered and wandering on.
So sets the sun on long acquaintance: light
and then darkness. We wave our farewells, horses starting
to neigh to each other, distantly, till each is gone.

Comment

As Jihee Han notes, {6} Li Bai scholars see '*Seeing Off a Friend*' as one of his best formal five-letter Lushi verses, in which Bai perfectly maintains the composition rule of harmony between 景 (the outside landscape) and correspondent 情 (the inside feelings and emotions) and evokes the poetic mood with perfect imagery. In the first four lines, he describes the setting, which are 山, 水 地 and 萬里, and the second four lines expresses correspondent feelings, which are 意 and 情. Moreover, he weaves each line correspondent to the next line for the aesthetics of balance: he arranges the blue (青), mountain (山), stagnant (橫), north (北), and outer wall (郭) correspondent to the white (白), river (水), moving (繞), east (東), and inner wall (城), respectively, in the subsequent line. He uses a number, once (一爲) in the third line, and then uses another

number, one person (孤 蓬) in the fourth line. He also employs a Yin-symbol of a cloud (浮雲) in the fifth line, and then introduces a correspondent Yan-symbol of the sun (落) in the sixth line. He also describes a movement of a waving hand (揮) in the seventh line, and then fills the empty space with a sound of hsiao (蕭). Finally, he builds up a flowing cadence by utilizing four tonal accents in each line and, simultaneously, makes the sound of the last letter in every even line (城, 征, 情, 鳴) to form an exact rhyme. Through perfect maneuvering of the formal rules of Lushi verse, Li conveys an unusually deep range of feelings, including sorrow, loneliness, emptiness, and even mourning.' {8}

Other drafts

Blue mountains, stagnant: north, the outer wall:
the river, winding eastward: inward blaze of white.
Here, at this place, we make one final parting.
Like tumbleweed whirling ten thousand li, a fall
bewildering as the clouds are scattered but drifting on.
So sets the sun on long acquaintance: light
and then darkness. We wave our farewells, horses starting
to neigh to each other, distantly, till we are gone.

A popular poem, well known to western audiences through Ezra Pound's translation. See Volume Two for an extended treatment.

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Literary Criticism

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8. See Volume Two.

47. REGULATED SHI POETRY:

JINTISHI: LUSHI: WULU: Wang Wei. Zhongnan Mountain

Cai 8.4. [QTS 4:126.1277]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for Word Rendering
	終南山 (zhōng nán shān)		Zhongnan Mountain
1	太乙近天都 (tài yǐ jìn tiān dū)	a	Tai-yi close heaven capital
2	連山到海隅 (lián shān dào hǎi yú)	a	link mountains to sea corner
3	白雲迴望合 (bái yún huái wàng hé)	x	white cloud hesitate gaze close
4	青靄入看無 (qīng ǎi rù kàn wú)	a	green-blue mist enter see not
5	分野中峰變 (fēn yě zhōng fēng	x	dividing line middle peak change
6	biàn)	a	overcast clear many ravine differ
7	陰晴眾壑殊 (yīn qíng zhòng hè shū)	x	wish seek person place lodge-for-
8	欲投入處宿 (yù tóu rén chù sù)	a	night
	隔水問樵夫 (gé shuǐ wèn qiáo fū)		after water ask wood-cutter

Taiyu can touch the high point of the sky:
from shore to shore encircle mountain chains.
White clouds are wavering but still enclose
green-bluish mists, which, entered, fade away.

What middle peak subtends is what we see
from sun and to sunless change the deep ravines.
In seeking quarters for the night, I cross
the stream and ask for woodsman's lodging there.

Comment

Wang Wei's poetry is one of exceptional quietness and of shifting perspectives — which can be material or mental, but are commonly both. Wang is here presenting himself as the enlightened traveler who has been walking the cloud wrapped slopes of Mount Taiyu (Zhongnan) but has now descended into the forests to ask for overnight shelter. The contrast is between the high point of the sky (literally capital 隅), which he has been observing as a high official and a request to the most humble and down-to-earth of commoners, a woodsman. There is a similar contrast between the mountain ranges that extend as from shore to shore, i.e. far as the eye can see, and Mount Taiyu that mounts to the sky, i.e. movement upwards and in horizontal directions. That movement is

repeated in the second stanza: down from the peak and across the stream.

Whether the journey is an actual one, or made in thought only, is open to conjecture. 'Middle peak' is probably an allusion to the middle way, which is either a variant of Buddhism that sees nothingness at all levels of perception, and/or the path taken by most Buddhists, who practise their devotions but, like Wang Wei himself, do not withdraw from the world to do so. As lines 5-6 indicate, what we see of the world depends on our viewpoint. Lines 3-4 illustrate the same thought: clouds opaque at distance dissolve into mists when we enter them.

Other drafts:

The Taiyi peak rough-shoulders to the sky,
from shore to shore are looped the mountain chains.
The clouds are wavering but still enclose
in thick blue mists, but entered, seem as not.

What middle peak commands remains our view:
from sun and to sunless change the deep ravines.
I cross the river, when a woodsman shows
to hear me ask of lodging for the night.

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48. Wang Wei: Autumn Evening

Wang Wei 王维 山居秋暝

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)	Word-for Word Rendering
	山居秋暝 (shān jū qiū míng)	Mountain live autumn dark
1	空山新雨後 (kōng shān xīn yǔ hòu)	Empty mountain new rain after
2	天氣晚來秋 (tiān qì wǎn lái qiū)	sky air night come autumn
3	明月松間照 (míng yuè sōng jiān zhào)	bright moon among pine trees
4	清泉石上流 (qīng quán shí shàng liú)	clear spring stone above flow
5	竹喧歸浣女 (zhú xuān guī huàn nǚ)	Bamboo noise return racoon female
6	蓮動下漁舟 (lián dòng xià yú zhōu)	lotus move down fish boat
7	隨意春芳歇 (suí yì chūn fāng xiē)	follow meaning spring fang rest
8	王孫自可留 (wáng sūn zì kě liú)	king sun/grandson since can keep

We need some help here. {9} Line 5: Raccoon girl: a woman who washes clothes. Line 7: Chunfang is spring grass. Rest is dry. Machine code translation of the rendering that follows is:

After a new rain, the green mountains are particularly clear,
 In the autumn evening, the weather is exceptionally cool.
 The bright moon scattered mottled still shadows through the pine forest,
 The clear spring flowed gently on the big stone.
 The laughter of the laundress returning home came from the bamboo forest,
 The shower has moved, and the fishing boat is going into the water to cast a net.
 Let the Fangfei of spring fade away at any time,
 In the autumn, the wanderer can linger and wander.

Edward Chang {1} has this rendering:

王維 山居秋暝 空○山○ 新○雨△後△
 kōng shān xīn yǔ hòu
 empty mountain after new rain
 天○氣△ 晚△來○秋●
 tiān qì wǎn lái qiū
 weather autumn arrives at night
 明○月△ 松○間○照△
 míng yuè sōng jiān zhào

bright moon shines through the pines

清○泉○石△上△流●

qīng quán shí shàng liú

clear spring flows over the rocks

竹△喧○歸○浣△女△

zhú xuān guī huàn nǚ

bamboos rustling washer girls return

蓮○動△下△漁○舟●

lián dòng xià yú zhōu

water lilies moving fishing boat goes

隨○意△春○芳○歇△

suí yì chūn fāng xiē

never mind spring plants withering

王○孫○自△可△留●

wáng sūn zì kě liú

noble friend of course can stay

Autumn Evening in a Mountain Retreat

After the rain, the empty mountain at dusk is full of autumn air. A bright moon shines between the pines; the clear spring water glides over the rocks. Bamboo leaves rustling— the washer girls bound home. Water lilies swaying— a fishing boat goes down. Never mind that spring plants are no longer green. I am here to stay, my noble friends!

Another rendering is: {4}

An Autumn Evening in my Villa by Wang Wei

In the empty mountains fresh after a shower,
Autumn thickens with oncoming dusk—
Tranquil moonlight glistening among pines,
Crystal water bubbling over pebbles.
The bamboo grove giggles
—girls are back from washing;
The lotuses rustle
— a sampan is about to emerge.
The year is insinuating autumn
into the vernal splendor—
But I wouldn't mind staying on, and on

Meter into Meaning {5} has :

Autumn Dusk in the Mountains – Wang Wei

The mountains are hollow after the refreshing rain,
The autumn weather arrives in a late fashion.
Through the pine trees, the bright moon shines,
Over the stones, the clear spring flows.
Amidst the bamboo, women return from their laundering,
Lotuses stir from the lowering of fishing boats.
Springtime lingers at its own accord,
Nobles thus are given the option to stay.

iStudyChina has:

Blank hills look pure as a recent rain refines,
As dusk is falling autumn is felt in the bones.
A silvery moon is shining through the pines,
The limpid brooks are gurgling o'er the stones.
Bamboos laugh out as girls from washing whirl,
The lotus stirs where boats out fishing curl.
The scents of spring may go; that's Nature's will.
This season here attracts the noble still.

These seem better:

The mountains after rain seem bare but near,
more prominent is dusk in the evening air.
Bright moon among the pine trees here,
and water quietly gurgles in its rocky lair.

The bamboos rustle, the washer girls appear;
the lilies drift in waters that the boatmen share.
Rest here on fresh spring grass till autumn's near:
good friend, stay here or wander anywhere.

Fresh rain. The mountains now looks thin and bare;
the sky around collects with evening air.
The bright moon shines from pine trees overhead,
and quietly stream runs through its rocky bed.

The bamboos rustle, the washer girls appear;
the lilies line the streams that fish and boatmen share.
Rest here until the fresh green grass is dead
or wander on, my noble mind one, instead.

Comment

There have been many translations of this well-known poem, varying largely with how the last two lines are interpreted. Their 隨意春芳歇 / 王孫自可留 are literally follow meaning spring grass dry / king sun/grandson since can keep/stay.

The original is rhymed xaxaxaxa, but we have decided to use tighter rhyming for Regulate Shi poems.

Text Sources

1. Chang, E. How To Read A Chinese Poem: A Bilingual Anthology of Tang Poetry p. 144
2. <https://so.gushiwen.cn/shiwen/44ba4afb80db.aspx>
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Other Translations

4. <https://www.en84.com/dianji/shi/201006/00002452.html>
5. [Meter to Meaning](#)
6. [iStudy China](#)

Audio Recordings

Literary Criticism

9. <https://www.gushiwen.cn/GuShiWen/47b428a239.aspx>

49. Wang Wei: Return to Mount Song

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)	Word-for-Word Rendering
	归嵩山作(guī sōng shān zuò)	Return Song mountain
1	清川帶長薄 (qīng chuān dài cháng báo)	Clear river bring long thin/infertile
2	車馬去閒閒 (chē mǎ qù xián xián)	cart horse go idle idle
3	流水如有意 (liú shuǐ rú yǒu yì)	flow water like have meaning
4	暮禽相與還 (mù qín xiāng yǔ huán)	twilight birds mutually and return
5	荒城臨古渡 (huāng chéng lín gǔ dù)	deserted city before ancient ferry
6	落日滿秋山 (luò rì mǎn qiū shān)	fall sun full autumn mountain
7	迢遞嵩高下 (tiáo dì sōng gāo xià)	far_away hand_over Song high fall
8	歸來且閉關 (guī lái qiě bì guān)	return come and close close

Edward Chang {1} has this analysis and translation:

On Returning to Mount Song

歸嵩山作

Returning to Mount Song

清○川○帶△長○薄△

qīng chuān dài cháng bó

clear stream with trees on both sides

車○馬△去△閒○閒●

chē mǎ qù xián xián

cart and horse go slow and carefree

流○水△如○有△意△

liú shuǐ rú yǒu yì

flowing water seemingly knows how I feel

暮△禽○相○與△還●

mù qín xiāng yǔ huán

evening birds go home with me

荒○城○臨○古△渡△

huāng chéng lín gǔ dù

desolate city overlooks old ferry

落△日△滿△秋○山●

luò rì mǎn qiū shān

setting sun fills the autumn mountain

迢○遞△嵩○高○下△

tiáo dì sōng gāo xià

far away under lofty Mount Song

歸○來○且△閉△關●

guī lái qiě bì guān

returning close from outside world

Along a limpid stream surrounded by grass and trees,

I ride on a carriage, slowly and carefree.

The flowing water seemingly knows how I feel;

at dusk birds come home with me.
A desolate town overlooks the old ferry.
The setting sun fully bathes the autumn mountain.
Far away under the lofty Mount Song,
I shall return home and shut myself away from the world.

Other translations:

Winding along the forest is a clear brook,
Riding leisurely along I am on a horse-drawn coach.
The gurgling waters seems to know where goes my mind,
Flying in dusk over me are birds on their way home.
There lies the ruins of a town and an old ferry crossing,
As the sun declines, a mountain of autumn landscape basks in its
afterglow.
Towards the foot of the soaring Mount Song over yonder
I make my return and I shall soon have my door to the worldly
closed {3}

The limpid stream is lined with green on green,
Both horse and carriage move at a leisurely pace.
The waters seem to flow at their own sweet will,
The birds at dusk all flock to their resting place.
An abandoned ferry, a ruined town: what a scene!
The sunset glow sets autumn hills ablaze.
Away at the foot of Songshan, quiet and still,
I will retire behind closed doors—there's my space! {4}

Additional Information

Reference 7 adds these notes:

Line 1. Songshan is one of the Five Yue Mountains, called Zhongyue, is located in the northwest of Dengfeng City, Henan Province. Qingchuan, the clear flowing water refers to Yishui and its tributaries. 'Qing' is a belt or surrounding. 'Thin' is a place with overgrown vegetation; the interlaced vegetation is said to be thin. Line 2. Go is to walk at leisure, calm and contented. Line 3 indicates mutual companionship. 4. Twilight birds are birds in the evening. Line 5. Deserted city refers to counties near Songshan, such as Dengfeng, which have been repeatedly abandoned. Indeed the whole country has been abandoned county. Before (lin) means in front of you and the crossing refers to the ruins of the ancient crossing. Line 8 refers to a Buddhist retreat behind closed doors.

The poem dates to the Kaiyuan Period of Xuanzong's rein, i.e. 713-741 AD. Wang Wei had two retreats, one in Jeju (now Jining City,

Shandong Province) and another in Songshan near Luoyang. The poem was written when he returned to Songshan from Chang'an (now Xi'an).,

Draft

The stream evades the mass of grass and tree.
My carriage continues, both calm and slow.
In companionship the river has thoughts for me
though birds at evening must their own nest know.
Desolate the city and its antique quay,
for all that heights flood with sun's afterglow.
Beneath Mount Song another way we see,
distant, cut off, where the mind may grow.

Closer to the implied meaning is:

Pure water infiltrates each grass and tree.
My horse and cart plod onward, quiet and slow.
In companionship the river brings its thoughts to me
though birds at evening to their nest must go.

Desolate the city and its old worn quay,
for all that mountains flood with sun's last glow.
Beneath Mount Song some other way I see:
distant, retracted, where the mind may grow.

Or:

Pure water navigates each plant and tree.
My horse and cart go onward, quiet and slow.
The stream communicates its thoughts to me
though birds at evening to their nest will go.

Desolate the city and this old worn quay,
for all that hills light up with sun's last glow.
Beneath Mount Song some other way I see:
distant, retracted, where the mind may grow.

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1. Chang, Edward. How To Read A Chinese Poem: A Bilingual Anthology of Tang Poetry p. 146
2. https://shicizhi.com/GUI-SONG-SHAN-ZUO_tangshi_1d20fe925150d21c

Other Translations

3. [English Translation of Chinese Poetry](#)
4. [iStudy China](#)

Audio Recordings

- 5.
- 6.

Literary Criticism

7. <https://www.arteducation.com.tw/shiwen/a496667a51c2.html>
8. [Frank Wilson Poetry Nook](#).

50. REGULATED SHI POETRY:

JINTISHI: LUSHI: WULU: Mei Yaochen (1002-69) Lament for the Deceased. Cai 15.2

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	悼亡 其一 (dào wáng qí yī)		lament deceased her/number one
1	結髮為夫婦 (jié fā wéi fū fù)	a	knot hair for husband woman
2	於今十七年 (yú jīn shí qī nián)	b	ah! today seventeen year
3	相看猶不足 (xiāng kàn yóu bù zú)	a	look at one another not enough
4	何況是長捐 (hé kuàng shì cháng juān)	b	how situation am forever contribute
5	我鬢已多白 (wǒ bìn yǐ duō bái)	x	my hair already much white
6	此身寧久全 (cǐ shēn níng jiǔ quán)	b	this body peaceful long-time whole
7	終當與同穴 (zhōng dāng yǔ tóng xué)	x	end be together-with like cavity
8	未死淚漣漣 (wèi sǐ lèi lián lián)	b	not-yet die tears ripple ripple

Since knots of hair pronounced us man and wife
altogether seventeen years have passed:
I could not gain enough of her in life
but now, in losing her, have seen her last.

With hair that's all too white about the head,
this body would be peaceful through the years
and share a tomb with her, but, not yet dead,
dissolves already to this flood of tears.

Comment

It was common for Chinese poets to write sequences of poems on a common theme, each from a slightly different perspective. Mei Yaochen wrote such a sequence for his wife, who died aboard a boat when the family was travelling back from a provincial posting. She was 37, and, as the poem tells us, had been married to Mei for 17 years.

Unlike well-known sequences by Pan Yue (247-300) and Yuan Zhen (779-831), which are rather formal and highly polished laments, with references to their renown virtue and social accomplishments, this poem is simple and direct, though not less powerful for the plain exposition.

In traditional weddings, still practiced today, the bride and the groom each cut a lock of their hair, which is then tied in a knot and formally kept in a bag. The original is rhymed abab xbx b, the translation abab cdcd.

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Other Translations

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3. Wikipedia writers (2020) Mei Yaochen.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mei_Yaochen
4. Jiang, F. (2021) Ancient Chinese Wedding Customs.

51. Wang Wei Responding to the Emperor's Call for Matching His Poem "Looking Down in a Spring Rain"

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)	Word-for-Word Rendering
	奉和聖制從蓬萊向興慶閣道中留 春雨中春望之作應制 (fèng hé shèng zhì cóng péng lái xiàng xīng qīng gé dào zhōng liú chūn yǔ zhōng chūn wàng zhī zuò yīng zhì)	Fenghe saint system from Penglai to Xingqing Pavilion Way among stay hope of make should system
1	渭水自縈秦塞曲 (wèi shuǐ zì yíng qín sāi qū)	Wei river self Lin Qin setqu
2	黃山舊繞漢宮斜 (huáng shān jiù rào hàn gōng)	yellow hill old around Han palace oblique
3	鑾輿迴出千門柳 (luán yú jiōng chū qiān mén liǔ)	Imperial carriage distant out thousand door willow
4	閣道迴看上苑花 (gé dào huí kàn shàng yuàn huā)	Pavilion road return look overhead garden flower
5	雲裡帝城雙鳳闕 (yún lǐ dì chéng shuāng fèng què)	Cloud inside imperial city twin phoenix tower
6	雨中春樹萬人家 (yǔ zhōng chūn shù wàn rén jiā)	rain middle spring tree ten_thousand people home
7	為乘陽氣行時令 (wéi chéng yáng qì xíng shí líng)	for ride positive air capable hour make
8	不是宸遊翫物華 (bù shì chén yóu 翫 wù huá)	no correct imperial tour play matter splendid

Edward Chang {1} has this analysis and translation:

渭△水△ 1 自△縈○ 秦○塞△曲△
wèi shuǐ zì yíng qín sāi qū
Wei River coils itself around the twisty Qin fortress
黃○山○2 舊△繞△ 漢△宮○斜●
huáng shān jiù rào hàn gōng xié
Yellow Hill used to circle Han Palace obliquely
鑾○輿○ 迴△出△ 千○門○柳△
luán yú jiōng chū qiān mén liǔ
imperial carriage out for distant trip pass numerous willows
閣△道△ 迴○看○ 上△苑△花●
gé dào huí kàn shàng yuàn huā
pavilion road turn back and look flowers in imperial garden

雲○裡△ 帝△城○ 雙○鳳△闕△
yún lǐ dì chéng shuāng fèng què
in the clouds capital city twin-phoenix palace
雨△中○ 春○樹△ 萬△人○家●
yǔ zhōng chūn shù wàn rén jiā
in the rain spring trees ten thousand families
為△乘○ 陽○氣△ 行○時○令△
wéi chéng yáng qì xíng shí líng

wèi chéng yáng qì xīng shí lìng
to follow spring air for seasonal inspection
不△是△宸○遊○翫△物△華●
bù shì chén yóu wàn wù huá
not to be a pleasure trip for enjoying splendid

Responding to the Emperor's Call for Matching His Poem "Looking
Down in a Spring Rain"

The Wei River coils itself around the stronghold of Qin.
The Yellow Hill slantingly embraces the former palace of Han.
The emperor's carriage passes through willows upon willows.
On the high road, his majesty looks back at the flowers in the
imperial garden.
The twin phoenix towers of the capital in the clouds stand tall;
spring trees of a thousand houses appear verdantly in the rain.
To comply with the law of nature, his Majesty is out to inspect in the
spring.
He is not on a pleasure outing just to enjoy the beautiful scenes.

Other Translations

In Response to the Emperor's Poem After Leaving the Paradise
Palace for Spring Inspection and Detained by Spring Rain along the
Pavilion Corridor towards the Tower of Merry Celebration {3}

The River of Wei flows and winds around the ancient Qin frontier,
Deep in the valley tilts the Yellow Mountain Palace from the Han
dynasty.
Through clusters of willowy arches the Emperor's carriage and
company march,
Along the corridor the Emperor turns around time and again to the
Royal Garden admire. In the clouds perched the capital's Double
Phoenix Tower,
Among rain and trees of spring spread tens of thousands of
households of the shire.
Today the Emperor rides in the force of prosperity obliging nature,
Mistake not this for an excursion of pleasure and sightseeing.

300 Hundred Tang Poems {4}

Comment

The poem is accurately set in Chang'an and dense with
topographical details that Chinese commentaries explain. We should
note the following, however: Xingqing Palace was in the southeast

corner of Miyagi. Pavilion Road. Weishui is the Wei River, the largest branch of the Yellow River in central Shaanxi. Qin Sai was on the outskirts of Chang'an; it was the land of Qin in ancient times. Huangshan is the Huanglu Mountain, in the north of present-day Xingping County, Shaanxi. Thousand gates refers to the heavy portals in the palace thickly bordered by weeping willows. Shangyuan refers to the royal garden. Shuangfeng Que refers to the Xiangluan and Qifeng Er Que on the east and west sides of the Hanyuan Hall of Daming Palace. Wuhua denotes beautiful scenery. The last two lines say that the emperor originally took advantage of this to conform to the season and promote all things with the sun, not just to enjoy the beautiful scenery.

First Draft

Above the coils of Wei the old
 Qin fortress holds our view,
enclosed by Yellow Hill, a palace
 of the Han here set askew.
The carriage of the emperor
 through willow gateway presses through,
and from Pavilion Road he sees
 how richly palace flowers grew.
Though cloud-bound was the capital
 the twin phoenix towers rose through.
As warm spring rain on trees, ten
 thousand families lived there too,
so on this seasonal inspection
 it seemed a prospering spring air blew:
not only this a pleasure trip
 but a splendid duty too.

The rhyming is a little contrived. Perhaps we should vary it more:

Above the coils of Wei the old
 Qin fortress comes in view,
enclosed by Yellow Hill, a palace
 of the Han still stands askew.
The carriage of the emperor
 through willow gateway hoves in sight,
and from Pavilion Road he sees
 the palace with its thousand flowers.

Though cloud-bound is the capital,
 there rise the double phoenix towers.
As warm spring rain on trees, ten
 thousand families accord their due.
A seasonal inspection it is, and where
 the prospering spring is fresh and bright:
not only thus a pleasure trip
 but a welcome duty too.

Text Sources

1. Chang, E. How To Read A Chinese Poem: A Bilingual Anthology of Tang Poetry p. 257
2. <https://so.gushiwen.cn/shiwen/96eec499eca2.aspx>

Other Translations

3. [English Translation of Chinese Poetry](#)
4. [300 Hundred Tang Poems](#)

Audio Recordings

- 5.
- 6.

Literary Criticism

7. [奉和圣制从蓬莱向兴庆阁道中留春雨中春望之作应制](#)

Reference

8. Map of Chang'an in Tang Dynasty. [Wikipedia](#).

52. REGULATED SHI POETRY: JINTISHI: LUSHI: QILU: Li
Shangyin: Brocaded Zither
Cai 9.8. [QTS 16:539.6144]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	錦瑟 (jǐn sè)		
1	錦瑟無端五十絃 (jǐn sè wú duān wǔ shí xián)	a	brocade zither for-no-reason fifty string
2	一絃一柱思華年 (yì xián yí zhù sī huá nián)	a	one string one pillar consider
3	莊生曉夢迷蝴蝶 (zhuāng shēng xiǎo mèng mí hú shè)	b	flowery/magnificent year
4	望帝春心託杜鵑 (wàng dì chūn xīn tuō dù juān)	a	Zhuang student dawn dream lost butterfly - Wang emperor spring/love heart/mind entrust stop cuckoo
5	蒼海月明珠有淚 (cāng hǎi yuè míng zhū yǒu lèi)	b	grey/blue/green sea moon bright pearl have
6	藍田日暖玉生煙 (lán tián rì nuǎn yù shēng yān)	a	tear
7	此情可待成追憶 (cǐ qíng kě dài chéng zhuī yì)	b	indigo field sun warm jade born mist
8	只是當時已惘然 (zhǐ shì dāng shí yǐ wǎng rán)	a	this feeling can/see stay become recall memory only is at-time when already perplexed at a loss thus

My rich brocaded zither flaunts,
for some odd reason, fifty strings
Each string a bridge: one thinks of rich
magnificence the season brings.
Zhuangzi's body, in a dream,
beheld itself a butterfly's:
in emperor Wang a fervent heart
departed on the cuckoo's wings.

In the grey-blue sea the moon is bright
but like a pearl in tears it lies.
The sun is warm in indigo
but jade dissolves to misty things.
Though feelings linger to become
the things that thoughts memorialize,
it was already at the time
mixed with more bewilderings.

Comment

Li Shangyin was a Chinese poet and politician of the late Tang Dynasty, writing in the difficult years following the An Lushan Rebellion.

This, his best-known poem, can be read as lament for a poet's wife, a veiled comment on an illicit affair, or complaint about a patron's neglect. The myths and legends involved are these: White-silk maiden played a fifty-string zither so mournfully that the sage-ruler Fuxi broke the zither into today's twenty-five-string instrument. The

poet Zhuanzi (369-286 BC) dreamt himself a butterfly, and couldn't decide on waking whether he was truly the poet or the butterfly. So that he could enjoy the favors of the official's wife, the emperor Wang sent an official to work on flood control, but was so mortified on the official's return that he left the kingdom and was changed into a cuckoo: the bird now symbolizes regret and sadness. Pearls were supposedly responsive to the waxing and waning of the moon, and ocean-dwelling maidens wept tears of pearl. The indigo fields were famous for their jade. {3} The original is rhymed aaba *baba* whereas the translation is aabc *baba*.

Text Sources

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Literary Criticism

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4. Translations can serve many purposes: for a brief review see: Patel, S. (2016) Found in Translation: Poetry and words. China Studies Visiting Students Program, XJTLU 2015-16.
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53. REGULATED SHI POETRY: JINTISHI: LUSHI: QILU: Li Shangyin: Sui Palace. Cai 9.6 [QTS 16:539.6161]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for Word Rendering
	隋宮 (suí gōng)		Sui palace
1	紫泉宮殿鎖煙霞 (zǐ quán gōng diàn suǒ yān xiá)	a	purple spring palace hall lock obscure red-clouds-of-sunset-or-sunrise
2	欲取蕪城作帝家 (yù qǔ wú chéng zuò dì jiā)	a	wish choose overgrown city regard-as emperor home
3	玉璽不緣歸日角 (yù xǐ bù yuán guī rì jiǎo)	b	jade seal not reason return sun horn/corner
4	錦帆應是到天涯 (jǐn fān yīng shì dào tiān yá)	a	brocade sail should to-be arrive sky border
5	於今腐草無螢火 (yú jīn fǔ cǎo wú yíng huǒ)	b	at today decay grass lack firefly light
6	終古垂楊有暮鴉 (zhōng gǔ chuí yáng yǒu mù yā)	a	finish ancient droop willow/poplar have/exist sunset crow
7	地下若逢陳後主 (dì xià ruò féng chén hòu zhǔ)	b	earth below if meet Chen later lord
8	豈宜重問後庭花 (qǐ yí chóng wèn hòu tíng huā)	a	how? should repeat ask rear courtyard flower

The Purple Spring has palace halls
now left behind in mist and haze.
Our emperor, though, would have those walls,
though overgrown, still serve his days.
Should indications not prevail,
nor seal of office prove its worth,
brocaded silks would onward sail
to the very ends of earth.

The former had the fireflies glow,
where grass returns the sunset's blaze:
and clumps of drooping willows show
the scattered crow's malignant gaze.
But if his met that Chen's last lord,
returned to earth with all he'd got,
he'd have the flower song restored
that was his favorite's, would he not?

Comment

The historical meditation was initiated by Li Shangyin, and this is one of his most celebrated, though somewhat complex. The emperor alluded to is the Sui Emperor Yang, who is famous for uniting China immediately preceding the Tang, but also for his material extravagances and vast expenditures on palaces and public works. Purple Spring is a river near Chang'an that gave its name to

Sui palaces that Wang would leave on his frequent excursions. The 'overgrown' refers to an earlier event, the Southern Dynasties prince who began an ill-fated rebellion in the Guangling area, commemorated by the poet Bao Zhao (414-466). Yang thus failed to learn from history. Brocaded silk is an allusion to Yang's sumptuous voyages on newly opened waterways. By legend, Yang also levied a tax of fireflies on his subjects, to be released as nighttime illumination, and ordered willows to be planted along the banks of waterways as a monument to his industry. Fireflies traditionally bred in grass. The last couplet refers to Yang's apocryphal visit to the former emperor of Chen, the last of the Southern Dynasties rulers, and his request to hear his favorite consort sing *Flowers of the Rear Courtyard*, another extravagance leading to Yang's and the Chen emperor's downfall. {3} A rather sardonic poem, rhymed aaba baba in the original (aabb aacc in the translation.)

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54. REGULATED SHI POETRY:
JINTISHI: LUSHI: QILU: Li He: Dreaming Heaven

Cai 9.4 QTS 12:390.4396]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	夢天 (mèng tiān)		dream heaven
1	老兔寒蟾泣天色 (lǎo tù hán chán qì tiān sè)	a	old hare cold toad weep heaven color
2	雲樓半開壁斜白 (yún lóu bàn kāi bì xié bái)	x	cloud tower half open wall slant white
3	玉輪軋露濕團光 (yù lún yà lù shī tuán guāng)	x	jade wheel roll/press dew wet ball/roll light
4	鸞珮相逢桂香陌 (luán pèi xiāng féng guì xiāng mò)	x	phoenix girdle-ornament each-other meet-by-chance cassia fragrance street
5	黃塵清水三山下 (huáng chén qīng shuǐ sān shān xià)	b	yellow dust clear water three mountain decline
6	更變千年如走馬 (gēng biàn qiān nián rú zǒu mǎ)	b	more change thousand year like go horse
7	遙望齊州九點煙 (yáo wàng qí zhōu jiǔ diǎn yān)	x	distant gaze Qi district nine spot mist
8	一泓海水杯中瀉 (yī hóng hǎi shuǐ bēi zhōng xiè)	a	one clear/deep ocean water cup in flood

The hare is old, the toad is cold:
the sky is by its color told.
The cloud-encumbered tower falls
half-open: whiteness slants the walls.
The jade-wheel moon is as the dew,
in rolling incandescent hue.
The phoenix carriage pendants meet
each other in the scented street.
Golden dust and water speak
of three Immortal Mountain peaks.
Changes that in centuries sigh
are like a horse that gallops by.
Gazing from the distance spoke
of Qi's nine spots of misty smoke.
What ocean stream is taken up
and drained within a single cup?

Comment

Strictly, this is unregulated Shi, but with many affinities with Qilu, though thinly rhymed (axxx bxxa). Explication is difficult: the whole piece is purposefully nebulous. We cannot tell if this is heaven in a dream or a dream in heaven. That ambiguity continues through the poem: is the tower of line 2 surrounded by clouds as hills would be in a Chinese painting, or built of clouds themselves? What is this whiteness that slants the walls? Jade wheel is the moon, which I have made clear by adding 'moon', as I have with 'phoenix girdle

ornaments': they were found on carriages, and I have added 'carriage' to the translation.

The importance of such riddling verse is two-fold. The poem gives a remarkably vivid and immediate experience that defamiliarizes the natural world. And, secondly, this density of meaning was useful to poets like Li Shangyin (813-858) and others of the Tang. Poems didn't have to yield their meaning immediately but needed imaginative effort from the reader. {2} To compensate for Chinese verse features that do not come across, and to pull the translation together, I have broken the seven character lines into tetrameters tightly rhymed aa bb etc. {2}

In short, a difficult poem : the hare and toad are denizens of the Moon Palace in Chinese mythology, etc. See Ashmore (2008), Qing Yang (2019) and the commentaries of https://fanti.dugushici.com/ancient_proses/20026 and https://mulberrypoems.blogspot.com/2011/08/blog-post_27.html

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55. REGULATED SHI POETRY: JINTISHI: LUSHI: QILU: Qin Taoyu: The Poor Girl: Late Tang

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	貧女 (pín nǚ)		goods female
1	蓬門未識綺羅香 (péng mén wèi shí qī	a	dishevelled home have-not know beautiful gauze
2	luó xiāng)	a	fragrant
3	擬託良媒益自傷 (nǐ tuō liáng méi yì zì	b	plan trust good matchmaker benefit self wound
4	shāng)	a	who love custom flow high style view
	誰愛風流高格調 (shuí ài fēng liú gāo		share pity time epoch frugal comb adornment
	gé diào)		
	共憐時世儉梳妝 (gòng lián shí shì jiǎn		
	shū zhuāng)		
5	敢將十指誇鍼巧 (gǎn jiāng shí zhǐ kuā	b	dare shall ten finger boast needle skillful
6	jìn qiǎo)	a	not hold double eyebrow contend draw length
7	不把雙眉鬥畫長 (bù bǎ shuāng méi dòu	x	bitter regret year year press gold thread
8	huà cháng)	a	for another person make marry dress garment
	苦恨年年壓金線 (kǔ hèn nián nián yā		
	jīn xiàn)		
	為他人作嫁衣裳 (wéi tā rén zuò jià yī		
	cháng)		

The girl from this poor, threadbare home,
has never owned a fragrant dress,
but hastes to marriage go-between
although the match will make her grieve.
She loves good things, and has acquired
an eye for fashion's rich excess.
But she, alas, will share hard times,
and, frugally, make do with less.

She'd thought that her ten-finger skill
would earn what talent should receive,
and hereabouts there's not a soul
who has what those fine brows profess,
yet she goes stitching year on year
the threads of gold in bitterness,
fashioning her sumptuous things
that others marry in and bless.

Comment

Qin Taoyu was a poet of the late Tang Dynasty, whose birth and death dates are unknown. He was born to a family of martial arts enthusiast, and his father was an army general. He was taken up by the powerful eunuch Tian Linz, and served as a staff member, a minister and a judge of salt and iron. After Huang Chao's rebellion took Chang'an, Qin went to Shu from Emperor Xi Zong, and was

awarded a scholarship in the second year of Zhonghe (882). Tian Linz also promoted him to be a minister of the Ministry of Public Works and a judge of the Divine Strategy Army. His marital status is not known but he was called "Qiao eunuch" by contemporaries. He is best known for *The Poor Girl* poem here. {2}

The Chinese read character in the face, and eyebrows are an 'organ of longevity' indicating health and vigor. Long eyebrows, for example, show the capacity for lots of friends. {3} The translation is rhymed abaa baaa, reasonably close to the aaba baxa of the original, though I have once again split the seven-character lines into tetrameters.

The poem can be translated as 8 hexameters:

This lass, who's never worn so fine a fragrant dress,
has put herself to marry though they're all quite poor.
The match cannot be happy when her learned finesse
of taste is never echoed in the clothes she wore.

Her own ten fingers boast such sewing skills, her head
has beauty's spread of brows not rivalled anywhere.
Through years of bitterness she'll ply the golden thread
in gowns that only others will afford to wear.

But a smoother poem is obtained by employing our usual tetrameters:

This girl from this poor, threadbare home,
 has never owned a fragrant dress,
but looks for marriage go-between,
 although the match must make her grieve.
She loves fine things, and has acquired
 an eye for fashion's proud finesse.
How pitiful she'll share hard times,
 and frugally make do with less.

She boasted her ten-finger skill
 would win what merit should receive,

and hereabouts there's not a soul
 who has what those fine brows profess,
but she goes stitching year on year
 the threads of gold in bitterness,
fashioning great marriage gowns
 that other women wear and bless.

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56. REGULATED SHI POETRY: JINTISHI: LUSHI: QILU Liu Changqing (708-85): Bidding Farewell Again in Jiangzhou

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	刘长卿 江州重别 (liú cháng qīng jiāng zhōu zhòng bié)		Liu constantly official Jiangzhou again depart
1 2 3 4	生涯岂料承优诏 (shēng yá qǐ liào chéng yōu zhào) 世事空知学醉歌 (shì shì kōng zhī xué zuì gē) 江上月明胡雁过 (jiāng shàng yuè míng hú yàn guò) 淮南木落楚山多 (huái nán mù luò chǔ shān duō)	x a a b	career how expect receive imperial-edict human affairs in-vain know learn drink sing river upon moon bright non-Han goose pass Huai south tree fall Chu Mountain many
5 6 7 8	寄身且喜沧洲近 (jì shēn qiě xǐ cāng zhōu jìn) 顾影无如白发何 (gù yǐng wú rú bái fā hé) 今日龙钟人共弃 (jīn rì lóng zhōng rén gòng qì) 媿君犹遣慎风波 (kuì jūn yóu qiǎn shèn fēng bō)	x a x b	trust oneself moreover like blue-green land near attend reflection not-have as-if white hair how today decrepit person common abandon ashamed sir as-if send caution wind wave

It comes a little late, I think, in my career
to hope preferment comes, or probe the reasons why.
I'll drink a bit and sing, will hope to find the year
with high Chu hills, and moonlight, how the wild geese fly.

Besides, there is the sea, Hai River, autumn leaves
that fall, a friend to one whose hair is largely gone.
I have that futile peace, for which no stranger grieves,
and am ashamed that prudence aids my travelling on.

Comment

Liu Changqing, courtesy name Wenfang, was a Chinese poet and politician whose life is not well documented. He was born in the city of Xuancheng though the family came from Hejian. Most of his youth was spent in the city of Luoyang. Liu obtained his jinshi title in the 750s, and he became governor of Suizhou in Henan province in 780.

Liu's poems were not much praised in his lifetime, but were recognised as representative of the period by later generations. He excelled in 5-character lines, and 11 of his poems were collected in the popular anthology 'Three Hundred Tang Poems'. {3}

Hai is the river now connecting Beijing to Tianjin and the Bohai Sea, i.e. northern China. Chu probably means south somewhere: the ancient lands of Chu occupied the lower Yangtze basin. Jiangzhou is

in present-day Guangxi Province. The original is rhymed *xaab xaxb*. I have here been able to render the seven-character lines as hexameters, and rhyme them simply *abab cdcd*.

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57. REGULATED SHI POETRY:
JINTISHI: LUSHI: QILU Lin Bu (967-1028): Small Plum
Tree in a Garden in the Hills No.1 Cai C15.1 [QSS
2:2.1217-1218]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word for Word Rendering
	山園小梅 (shān yuán xiǎo méi)		mountain garden small plum
1	衆芳搖落獨暄妍 (zhòng fāng yáo luò dú	a	many fragrant shake fall alone warm beautiful
2	xuān yán)	a	possess use-up wind feeling towards small
3	占盡風情向小園 (zhàn jìn fēng qíng xiàng	a	garden
4	xiǎo yuán)	b	sparse image/shadow across slanted water clear
	疏影橫斜水清淺 (shū yǐng héng xié shuǐ		shallow
	qīng qiǎn)		dark/hidden fragrant float move moon yellow
	暗香浮動月黃昏 (àn xiāng fú dòng yuè		muddle-headed
	huáng hūn)		
5	霜禽欲下先偷眼 (shuāng qín yù xià xiān tōu	a	frost bird want down first furtive-look
6	yǎn)	b	powder butterfly as-if know join break soul
7	粉蝶如知合斷魂 (fěn dié rú zhī hé duàn	x	lucky have tiny chant may mutually intimate-with
8	hún)	b	not have-to sandalwood board/shutter share gold
	幸有微吟可相狎 (xìng yǒu wēi yín kě xiāng		goblet
	xiá)		
	不須檀板共金樽 (bù xū tán bǎn gòng jīn		
	zūn)		

With warmth and beauty it alone
survives the other flowers' fall.
It fills the lapsing wind with thoughts
throughout the modest garden ways.
Sparse shadows on a water
clear and with no depth at all:
there's fragrance, darkness and the moon
here muddled in a golden haze.

The frost-afflicted bird approves
but first looks down and warily,
and, if they knew, heart-broken, pollen-
dusted butterflies would pine,
but happily it's chanted words
that make for mutual harmony:
no need to close up shutters, nor
to share a gold-rimmed glass of wine.

Comment

Lin Bu was a minor poet of the Northern Song dynasty who spent the later part of his life as a recluse by the West Lake in Hangzhou. His mastery of verse and solitude won him nationwide fame, but he steadfastly refused prestigious government posts to pursue his calling. {2-3}

Lin Bu created a new genre in poems (*yongwu shi*: poems on things) that not only described the outward appearance of things but also looked at their inner essence and significance. The plum tree, with its early white blossoms flowering among the snow, became a very popular theme, especially among the scholarly class that admired austerity and self-restraint. Plum blossom became a staple of the so-called bird-and-flower division of Chinese painting. The attitude is also typical of the Song dynasty, which shied away from the overt expression of highly wrought emotion in favor of the mundane and everyday aspects of life, which could accommodate a good deal of personal thought and reflection. {1}

The original is rhymed aaab abxb, and the translation is abab cdcd.

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58. REGULATED SHI POETRY:

JINTISHI: LUSHI: QILU Lu You (1125-1209) An Outing to Villages West of the Mountains. Cai C.15.6. [QSS 39:1.24272; JNSGJZ 1.102]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word for Word Rendering
	遊山西村 (yóu shān xī cūn)		walk mountain west village
1	莫笑農家臘酒濁 (mò xiào nóng jiā là jiǔ hún)	a	do-not laugh peasant home winter wine
2	豐年留客足鷄豚 (fēng nián liú kè zú jī tún)	a	muddy
3	山重水複疑無路 (shān zhòng shuǐ fù yí wú lù)	x	abundant year detain guest enough fowl pig
4	柳暗花明又一村 (liǔ àn huā míng yòu yī cūn)	a	mountain heavy river double suspect no road
			willow dark flower bright again one village
5	簫鼓追隨春社近 (xiāo gǔ zhuī suí chūn shè jìn)	x	pipe drum chase follow spring society near
6	衣冠簡朴古風存 (yī guān jiǎn pǔ gǔ fēng cún)	a	clothes hat simple ancient wind/style exist
7	從今若許閑乘月 (cóng jīn ruò xǔ xián chéng	x	from today seem/if allow leisure make-use-
8	yuè)	x	of moon
	拄杖無時夜扣門 (zhǔ zhàng wú shí yè kòu mén)		lean staff not time night knock door/gate

Don't demean the farmer's murky,
all-too-homely winter brew.
In good years pigs and chicken give
enough to serve the guest his due.
Though hills and cutback rivers show
it's hard to find a clear way though,
with shady willows, vivid flowers
another village comes in view.

Pipes and drummers follow on
and springtime's festival is soon.
Their clothes and caps are redolent
of styles in long-gone times before,
and if you grant me leave I'll take
advantage of the leisured moon:
and, leant on staff, will gladly come
at all hours knocking on your door.

Comment

Lu You was deeply involved in the Jurchen-Song Wars. He was born on a riverboat in 1125, a year before the northern capital fell to the Jurchen, and China became divided between the Jin Empire and the Southern Song. Lu's family fled south to safety, and Lu was brought up with his cousin Tang Wan, who was a quiet soul but loved literature. The two married when Lu was 20, and lived very happily, but when no children arrived, Lu was compelled by his mother find someone else. Though Wan married a nobleman, and Lu someone from the Wang clan, the heartbreak was obvious to both parties and forms a love story famous in China.

The poem was written in 1167, when Lu, dismissed from office for supporting the war against the Jurchen, which had not gone well, returned to the country. It's a simple poem, but well known, with lines 2-4 being particularly celebrated. Lines 3-4 are often taken in a wider sense, i.e. not only to find villages tucked away in the mountains, but a path through life generally. The original is rhymed aaxa xaxx, and the translation aaaa bcbc.

Lu is not a poet whose character and outlook comes over immediately in each piece, but someone much more discursive and non-committal, who was simply observing the world around him in the nearly 10,000 poems he wrote.{1}

Comment

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59. PRE-REGULATED SHI POETRY:

JINTISHI: JEJU : WUJUE: Xie Tiao (464-99): Jade Stairs

Resentment

Cai 7.2 . [XQHWJNBCS 2:1420]

Line	Traditional Chinese (Pinyin)	Rhy	Word-for-Word Rendering
	玉階怨 (yù jiē yuàn)		jade stairs lament
1	夕殿下珠簾 (xī diàn xià zhū lián)	x	evening palace-hall bead fall
2	流螢飛復息 (liú yíng fēi fùxī)	a	curtain
3	長夜縫羅衣 (cháng yè féng luó yī)	a	glow-worm fly return rest
4	思君此何極 (sī jūn cǐ hé jí)	a	forever night sew gauze dress think lord these what upmost

At evening, beaded curtains in the hall
are drawn. The fireflies, having flown, then fall.
I'm sewing at this flimsy dress till dawn,
with not forgotten hopes of you, my lord.

Comment

Xie Tiao was born in Yangxia County, Henan, into the Southern Qi kingdom in the Northern and Southern dynasties period. The family was nobility; his father was an assistant minister and his mother was a princess of the Songwen Empire. Xie seems to have been energetic and hard working as an official, but was eventually slandered, arrested and died in prison.

Nearly 200 of his poems survive. Most are pentasyllabic, and extol the beauties of nature, being famous for their details and vivid description. Poets of this Yongmang reign (483-493) of the Qi dynasty devoted themselves to creating euphony by balancing tones, devising rules that formed the basis of Regulated Shi poetry of the Tang dynasty.

This is a famous piece, written well before the Tang dynasty, but already showing that refined elegance we have met previously in Ban Jiezu's Song of Resentment (Poem 18). Xie Tiao's style in fact became the model for court poetry in the Liang dynasty (502-557).

The original is rhymed xaaa, but I here used assonance more and slant rhyme: xaaa.

Many renderings are possible:

Across the hall at evening the beaded curtains fall:
the glow-worms flicker, sink and so are less.
I'm up all night, sewing at some flimsy dress:
when will my longing for you ever have its rest?

Nightfall in the palace, all shuttered, in recess.
From flight, the fire-flies too return to rest.
I'm up all hours, sewing this thin dress,
with thoughts of you, my lord, first and repressed.

But I'd prefer the quieter:

At evening, beaded curtains in the hall
are drawn, the fireflies fallen on the lawn,
All night and sewing this thin dress till dawn,
with not forgotten hopes of you, my lord.

Or

At evening, beaded curtains in the hall
are drawn. The fireflies, having flown, then fall.
I'm sewing at this flimsy dress till dawn,
with not forgotten hopes of you, my lord.

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60. REGULATED SHI POETRY:

Du Fu 45 Eight Battle Foundations

Line	Traditional Chinese (Pinyin)	Rhy	Word-for-Word Rendering
	八陣圖 (bā zhèn tú)		eight array diagram
1	功蓋三分國 (gōng gài sān fēn guó)		achievement build three point country
2	名成八陣圖 (míng chéng bā zhèn tú)		name become eight array diagram
3	江流石不轉 (jiāng liú shí bù zhuǎn)		river flow stone not change
4	遺恨失東吳 (yí hèn shī dōng wú)		legacy hatred/regret lose east Wu

Edward Chang has this useful analysis and translation:

杜甫 八陣圖

功○蓋△ 三○分○國△

gōng gài sān fēn guó

merit surpasses three divided nations

名○成○ 八△陣△圖●1

míng chéng bā zhèn tú

fame established the eight-battle formations

江○流○ 石△不△轉△

jiāng liú shí bù zhuǎn

river flows stones not shifted

遺○恨△ 失△東○吳●2

yí hèn shī dōng wú

eternal regret lost the Wu country

1 A military tactic developed by Zhuge Liang, the prime minister of the Kingdom of Shu during the period of the Three Kingdoms.

2 Liu Bei, the ruler of Shu, rejected Zhuge Liang's advice.

His translation:

The Eight-Battle Formations

His meritorious services surpassed all in the three kingdoms.

His fame started from his eight-battle formations.

In the flowing river, the stones he laid remain unchanged.

It was an eternal regret that his plan to annex Wu had failed.

Draft

He, most meriting Three Kingdom fame,
brought his eight battalion wars across.

But water over held pebbles makes no claim
and, sadly, the country of the Wu was lost.
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61. REGULATED SHI POETRY:

JINTISHI: JEJU : WUJUE: Li Bai: Quiet Night Thoughts

Cai C.10.8

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for Word Rendering
	靜夜思 (jìng yè sī)		quiet night think
1	床前明月光 (chuáng qián míng yuè	a	bed front bright moon light
2	guāng) 疑是地上霜 (yí shì dì shàng shuāng)	a	suspect to-be ground upon frost
3	舉頭望明月 (jǔ tóu wàng míng yuè)	x	raise head gaze bright moon
4	低頭思故鄉 (dī tóu sī gù xiāng)	a	lower head think former native-place

Before my bed the moonlight shines, although
it may be frost on ground for all I know.
I raise my head but flinch from that full moon,
which speaks of home as heart was long ago.

Another possibility:

Before my bed the moonlight shines, although
it may be frost on ground for all I know.
I raise my head but flinch from that full moon,
which speaks of home as heart, and long ago.

Li Bai had the ability to make the most difficult things seem easy, as translators know to their cost with this little piece. It has proved refractory for many who naturally want to carry over the parallelism, between the moon in the sky and the earth down here, the present and the past, the chill of hoar-frost and the warmth of home remembered.

The poem is outwardly simple, of course, and taught schoolchildren across China. The original rhyme scheme is aaxa. If we want to preserve that parallelism, we can write:

Before my bed the moonlight shines, although
it may be frost on ground for all I know.
I raise my eyes to see the brilliant moon,
but lower them to home lost long ago.

But a stronger poem is made by making the last line less facile, as in the version chosen.

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62. REGULATED SHI POETRY:

JINTISHI: JEJU : WUJUE: Li Bai: Jade Stairs Lament

Cai C.10.10

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	玉階怨 (yù jiē yuàn)		jade stairs lament
1	玉階生白露, (yù jiē shēng bái lù)	a	jade stairs grow white dew
2	夜久侵羅襪 (yè jiǔ qīn luó wà)	a	night time invade gauze stocking
3	卻下水晶簾, (què xià shuǐ jīng lián)	x	yet/retreat lower water crystal
4	玲瓏望秋月 (líng lóng wàng qiū yuè)	a	curtain tinkle jewel gaze autumn moon

A white dew clothes the palace stairs: the night
will chill her fine silk stockings all too soon.
She sees through tear-gemmed curtains, out of sight,
the brimming spectacle of autumn moon.

Comment

Li Bai's *Lament of the Jade Stairs* is also in quatrains, and appears easy to translate. The bare words are: {15}

jade stair bears white dew
night long encroach silk stocking
withdraw lower water crystal blind
glittering, glittering gaze autumn moon

Which we could render as:

*The white dew falls on the jade-cut stairs,
and the long night pierces the stocking hose.
Behind the crystal curtain, retired, the hours are hers
as the moon denotes autumn in its glimmering haze.*

Only that's too glib. We are missing the emphasis on glittering (tears) and the reference to the poem by Xie Tiao (464-99) that Li Bai so admired. Through the moon, which is also a symbol for family reunion, there is even a reference to Ban Jieyu's poem noted previously. It is abandonment in a palace of opulence that the poem is evoking.

*The white dew falls on the jade-cut stairs,
and the long night chills her finest hose.*

*Beneath the jeweled curtain, out of sight,
she looks at the autumnal glittering, glittering moon.*

If we want rhyme we could write the following:

*White dew falls on the palace stairs, the night
to chill her fine silk slippers all too soon.
Beneath the tear-gemmed curtain, out of sight,
she looks on the autumn's how glittering moon!*

And so on: there are many possibilities.

White dew falls on the palace stairs, the night
to chill her fine silk slippers all too soon.
Beneath the tear-gemmed curtain, out of sight,
she looks on the autumn's glittering, glittering moon.

Another of Li Bai's poems that is well known and widely translated. The original is rhymed aaxa, rather than my abab, and follows the Wujue structure that is so difficult to convey in English, unless at the expense of naturalness and near-impossible rhymes. The word-for-word rendering is:

jade stairs grow white dew
night time invade gauze stocking
retreat under water crystal curtain
tinkle jewel gaze autumn moon

In lines 1 and 4 the sense of movement is down ('grow') and up ('gaze'). In lines 2 and 3 the sense of movement is horizontal ('invade' and 'retreat'). A palace setting is indicated by 'jade' and the subject by 'stocking', i.e. a woman of high status. 'Water' is an allusion to tears, which is picked up the tinkling of the jewel curtain. In China, the autumn moon is a symbol of harmony, abundance and good luck, and a time for family members to reunite — clearly not the case here: the woman, perhaps an imperial consort, has been abandoned. The 'jewel' applies to both the tears and the moon, hence my choice of 'brimming' as an epithet of moon.

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63. REGULATED SHI POETRY:
JINTISHI: JEJU : WUJUE: Wang Wei: Deer Stockade
Cai C10.6.

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	鹿柴 (lù chái)		deer stockade
1	空山不见人 (kōng shān bù jiàn/xiàn	a	empty mountain not see person
2	rén)	b	only hear person speech echo
	但闻人语响。 (dàn wén rén yǔ xiǎng)		
3	返景入深林, (fǎn jǐng rù shēn lín)	a	return bright/circumstance/scenery enter deep wood
4	复照青苔上。 (fù zhào qīng tái shàng)	b	repeat shine green moss above

Emptiness. Mountains. No one unless
in these low voices overheard.
Sense falling into forest depths,
green in sun-cast mosses overhead.

Comment

This much-translated poem is part of the famous Wang River Collection. {1-2} Although the extent has been questioned, {3} Wang Wei is generally seen as an adherent of Chan Buddhism, which accepts a Mahāyāna Buddhist notion of emptiness as the ultimate reality underlying the world as conventionally perceived. The Buddha called the world unreal because there is no inherent, unchanging self underlying the ceaseless flow of interdependent phenomena. That is not a nihilist view, nor does it see emptiness is another name for something really existing. The Middle Way School took this idea of emptiness a little further, emphasizing that this 'no-self' encompassed every level of reality, when emptiness and existence were in fact undistinguishable. Poets like Wang Wei reached this realization through an open-mindedness or meditation, where similar dualistic distinctions like subject-object, you-me and true-false also became unhelpful or even meaningless. {4}

Shenhui, a close friend of Wang Wei, believed that this Buddha-like nature could be perceived by the enlightened mind simply as it was, without intervening concepts or laborious devotional practices — a sort of unconstrained spontaneity that became known in Southern Chan circles as 'cultivation without cultivation.'

Li Bai, Du Fu, Bai Juyi and other poets were greatly influenced by Chan Buddhism, and that Buddhism in its turn was used by Chan adherents to appreciate such poetry, and to develop their own

powers of detached observation. By stilling the mind, poets and observers could allow the scenery around them to come forth in its saturate existence, or 'thusness', free of utilitarian purposes or even precise characterization. When employed most successfully by Wang Wei, there were no doctrinal points being made, but a simple acceptance of things as they were. Wai-lim Yip notes that "The state of stillness, emptiness, silence or quiescence is ubiquitous in all Wang Wei's poems. He is the quietest poet in Chinese and perhaps in all literary history. The 'voices' one hears in his poetry are those one hears in absolute silence." In consequence, because the poet does not obtrude, readers relive the experience and become poets themselves. Stephen suggests that Wang Wei sees himself in the Middle Way or neither being nor not-being, allowing his art to be an unusual mirror to nature. I do not find this argument convincing, nor see how it illuminates the poem. {4}

Traditional readings of the Deer Park Enclosure link the progress of a day with the return to childhood innocence that comes with retirement. {5}

Tanaka {6} notes the many interpretations. Paz: 'The translation of this poem is particularly difficult, for the poem carries to an extreme the characteristics of Chinese poetry: universality, impersonality, absence of time, absence of subject. In Wang Wei's poem, the solitude of the mountain is so great that not even the poet himself is present . . . 'This is nature poetry, but Buddhist nature poetry: does not the quatrain reflect, even more than the naturalistic aestheticism traditional in this kind of composition, a spiritual experience? ... An allusion to the Amida Buddha: at the end of the afternoon the adept meditates and, like the moss in the forest, receives illumination. Poetry perfectly objective, impersonal, far from the mysticism of St. John of the Cross, but no less authentic or profound than that of the Spanish poet. Transformation of man and nature before the divine light, although in a sense inverse to that of Western tradition. In place of the humanization of the world that surrounds us, the Original spirit is impregnated with the objectivity, passivity and impersonality of the trees, grass and rocks, so that, impersonally, it receives the impartial light of a revelation that is also impersonal. Without losing the reality of the trees, rocks and earth, Wang Wei's mountain and forest are emblems of the void.' Kobayashi. 'Sound that is transmitted through air from a distance. Reflection of the deeply inserted setting sun. This poetry expresses a profound and remote atmosphere in a mountain well.' Watanabe: 'This poetry is unrelated to real deer; rather, Wang Wei is conscious of the "Sarnath." The Sarnath is the first place for Gautama Buddha to culture a person practicing asceticism and is a holy place for Buddhists.' His conclusion was: 'The landscape of Wang Wei is scenery before humanization. The absence of people in the

landscape does not simply mean it is uninhabited. The human voice is there; it is only expressed that there is no human figure. Researchers indicate the influence of Buddhism in Wang Wei's poetry; however it is not a religious concept. It is rather the most realistic landscape of the Wang River Villa, which reflects the soul of Wang Wei.'

The poem is commonly seen through Buddhist notions of impermanence and emptiness. Interpretations have the first couplet seeing the world as it really is, and the second with light returning to purposefully illuminate the moss. {7}

I tend to think Wang Wei is again concerned with shifting perspectives in this much-translated piece. The rendering here respects the basic structure (4 lines of five characters), the rhyme scheme, and the extended parallelism of the original Chinese, but discloses these extra features

My (2010) reading was similar to the above explanations, but my rendering 'respects the basic structure (4 lines of five characters), the rhyme scheme, and the extended parallelism of the original Chinese, where:

Lines 3 and 4 repeat in reverse the meaning in lines 1 and 2: the world of the senses is an illusion. 'Overhead' repeats in reverse 'overheard'.

Presence contrasts with non-presence: clear in the first line, blurred in the second, more so in the third, and then sharply defined in the clear visual image of the fourth — achieved by sound patterning (e.g. diphthongs in line 2, 'e' sounds in line 3).

Ying alternate with yang elements. Permanence of mountain rising from impermanence (emptiness). That definite emptiness (no one) morphing into vague presence (voices). Dissolving again (sense is lost in darkness) and then regrouped in a definite image (suncast in mosses).

Vertical movement (looking up at mountain) pass to horizontal (voices heard followed by re-entering) and thence back to vertical (overhead).

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64. REGULATED SHI POETRY:

JINTISHI: JEJU : WUJUE: Wang Zhihuan (688-742):

Climbing Crane Tower

Cai C.10.5 [QTS 8:253.2849; QSTRJJ, 54–56]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	登鶴雀樓 (dēng guàn què lóu)		ascend crane bird tower
1	白日依山盡 (bái rì yī shān jìn)	x	white sun depend-on mountain
2	黃河入海流 (huáng hé rù hǎi liú)	a	finish
3	欲窮千里目 (yù qióng qiān lǐ mù)	a	yellow river enter ocean flow
4	更上一層樓 (gēng shàng yī céng lóu)	a	wish exhaust thousand li eye renew climb one story tower/pagoda

White sun behind the mountain, sets, is gone.
 Yellow River joins the ocean, also flowing on.
 To gaze the further thousand miles beyond
 needs climb to what one more floor looks down upon.
 Comment

Wang Zhihuan was a poet of the early Tang, famous for his jueju quatrains describing the frontier country. Only six poems survive, but all are minor classics.

Wang Zhihuan was born in Jingyang in Bingzhou (now Taiyuan in Shanxi) and is described as talented and generous. While in office, he married the third daughter of the magistrate of Hengshui County, but was later slandered and left government service. Nonetheless, he was appointed as lieutenant of Wen'an County in the last year of his life. He died at Wen'an, and was buried in his ancestral tomb at Beimang Mountain in Luoyang County.

The poems are deceptively simple, but commonly employ Buddhist concepts of impermanence, balance and enlightenment. Crane Tower, located in what is now Yongji in Shanxi Province, commanded a wide view of a bend in the Yangtze river. The first couplet sets the scene in the physical world. The second, which ostensibly says that further can be seen by climbing higher in the pagoda, is of course alluding to the Buddhist view of enlightenment. I have rhymed this poem as aaaa: the original is xaaa. {2}

To gaze a further thousand miles beyond
 needs gain what one more storey looks upon.

White sun has mountain to depend upon:
the sea the Yellow River enters, and is gone.
And what a further thousand miles have known,
you'll climb some storied tower of your own.

Comment

Zen masters use the analogy of climbing a nine-story tower to illustrate the cultivation of enlightenment.

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65. REGULATED SHI POETRY:

JINTISHI: JEJU : QJJUE : Du Mu: Dispelling Sorrow

Cai C10.16 Du Mu QTS 16:52:4.5998: QSTRJJ, 684-685

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	遣懷 (qiǎn huái)		dispel sorrow
1	落魄江南載酒行 (luò pò jiāng nán zài jiǔ xíng)	a	sink soul river south carry wine travel
2	楚腰腸斷掌中輕 (chǔ yāo cháng duàn zhǎng zhōng qīng)	a	Chu waist intestine break palm in light
3	十年一覺揚州夢 (shí nián yì jué yáng zhōu mèng)	a	ten year one wake Yang-zhou dream
4	贏得青樓薄倖名 (yíng dé qīng lóu bó xìng míng)	a	win obtain green/blue building ungenerous trusted name

In wine I sunk my soul: went south through river lands.
 Broke hearts of Chu girls dancing careless on my hands.
 Now, ten years on, I stir from Yangzhou dreams: it stands
 not well to be a heartless name with courtesans.

Comment

Du Mu was born in Chang'an into an elite family of declining fortunes. He passed the jinshi examinations at the age of 25, and held a succession of minor posts associated with literature and censorship. To avoid the factional disputes between Li Gan and Zheng Zhu, he asked to be moved to Loyang in 835, so avoiding the purge that followed the Sweet Dew Incident later in the year. Many positions in various places followed, but the Sweet Dew Incident (a failed attempt to limit the power of eunuchs) seems to have prevented anything very senior. The disappointment showed in Du Mu's work.

Du Mu, a major poet writing in the golden age of Tang poetry was skilled in many styles. He is best known for of sensual, lyrical quatrains featuring historical sites or romantic situations, and often on themes of separation, decadence, or impermanence. The style blends classical imagery and diction with striking juxtapositions, colloquialisms, or other wordplay. Du Mu also wrote long narrative poems. *Dancing careless on my hands* is an allusion to the great beauty Zhao Feiyan, who was light that she could dance on the emperor's palm. *Yangzhou* in the poem is a euphemism for the courtesan quarters.

I have rhymed this as aaaa: the original is aaaa.

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66. REGULATED SHI POETRY:

JINTISHI: JEJU : QJJUE : Li Bai: Sending Off Meng Haoran to Guangling at Yellow Crane Tower. Cai C.10.13

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	黄鹤楼送孟浩然之广陵 (huáng hè lóu sòng mèng hào rán zhī guǎng líng)		Yellow Crane Tower see-off Meng Haoran of Guangling
1 2	故人西辞黄鹤楼 (gù rén xī cí huáng hè lóu) 烟花三月下扬州 (yān huā sān yuè xià yáng zhōu)	a a	old man west leave Yellow Crane Tower mist flower three month down Yang-zhou
3 4	孤帆远影碧空尽 (gū fān yuǎn yǐng bì kōng jìn) 唯见长江天际流。(wéi jiàn cháng jiāng tiān jì liú)	x a	lone sail distant image blue air/empty finish only see long river(Changjiang) sky border flow

Old friend: from Yellow Crane Pagoda you have gone
by way of three-month's mists and flowers, to far Yangzhou.
The one sail fades into a vague blue dot below
the heavens of nothing but the long Jiang, flowing on.

Comment

A celebrated little piece by Li Bai on taking leave of his great friend Meng Haoran (Poems 10A 10B) on his 400 mile journey down the Yangtze to Yangzhou. Meng was some ten years older than Li, and in some ways a mentor to poets of the high Tang period.

Mist and flowers is an allusion to peach and cherry flowers, i.e. springtime. The Yellow Crane Tower (dating from 223 AD but rebuilt in 1981) stands in the present-day city of Wuhan, Hubei Province, and gives a splendid view of the river. It was one of the four great towers or pagodas of China, at a site seen as sacred by Daoists. Yangzhou is located in Jiangsu Province on the northern banks of the Yangtze river (called Changjiang in the poem). It was a wealthy area adjoining the earlier capital city of Nanjing.

The poem has seen many translations, some departing rather far from the text to make a decent poem: a practice that is no doubt contentious but should be judged by results. But for the added 'blent', this rendering is practically word-for-word, and the poetry is obtained by matching pause and thought in the flexible hexameter used to represent the seven-character lines. This is true free verse, with the rhythm varied by adding unstressed syllables to the six stress line. The original is rhymed aaxa: the translation is abba (*zhou* is pronounced 'djoe')

Other drafts:

Old friend: from Yellow Crane Pagoda you have gone —
by way of three-month's mists and flowers — to far Yangzhou.
The one sail fades and dwindles to a dot of blue,
then only, to the horizon, the Yangtze, flowing on.

Old friend: from Yellow Crane Pagoda you have gone —
by way of three-month's mists and flowers — to far Yang-zhou.
Blue mountains, the one sail dwindling to a dot below,
then nothing but sky, horizon and river, flowing on.

Old friend: from Yellow Crane Pagoda you have gone —
by way of three-month's mists and flowers — to far Yangzhou.
Blurred hills, the one sail dwindling to a dot of blue,
and then nothing but sky, horizon and river, flowing on.

Old friend: from Yellow Crane Pagoda you have gone —
by way of three-month's mists and flowers — to far Yangzhou.
Blent hills, the one sail dwindling to a dot of blue,
then only a river, to the horizon, flowing on.

Comment

zhou is pronounced 'djoe', and therefore doesn't rhyme with *blue*.

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67 REGULATED SHI POETRY: JINTISHI: JEJU : QJJUE : Li Bai:
Songs of Peace and Purity 2

Li Bai 李白 清平调 (二)

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)	Word-for-Word Rendering
	清平调 (二) qīng píng diào (èr)	Clear peace tune two
1 2	一枝紅艷露凝香 (yī zhī hóng yàn lù níng xiāng) 雲雨巫山枉斷腸 (yún yǔ wū shān wǎng duàn cháng)	One branch red gorgeous dew condense fragrant cloud rain Wu Shan in vain heart- broken
3 4	借問漢宮誰得似 (jiè wèn hàn gōng shuí dé sì) 可憐飛燕倚新粧 (kě lián fēi yàn yǐ xīn zhuāng)	Ask question Chinese palace who similar can Lian Fei rely on new makeup

Edward Chang {1} has this useful analysis and translation:

yī zhī hóng yàn lù níng xiāng
yún yǔ wū shān wǎng duàn cháng
jiè wèn hàn gōng shuí dé sì
kě lián fēi yàn yǐ xīn 粧

Song of Purity and Peace (2)

She is a red peony made more fragrant with dew.

His romantic encounter with the goddess of Wu Mountain was but
a dream after all.

May I ask who in the Han Palace was as beautiful as she?

Not even the lovable Zhao Feiyan— without her best makeup

李白 清平調 (二) 一△枝○紅○艷△露△凝○香●

yī zhī hóng yàn lù níng xiāng
a twig red peony more fragrant with dew

雲○雨△巫○山○1 枉△斷△腸●

yún yǔ wū shān wǎng duàn cháng
love affairs Wu Mountain heartbroken in vain

借△問△漢△宮○誰○得△似△

jiè wèn hàn gōng shuí dé sì
may I ask Han Palace who could compare

可△憐○飛○燕△2 倚△新○粧●

kě lián fēi yàn yǐ xīn zhuāng
lovable Feiyan dressed in her best

Other Translations

Song of Purity and Peace (2)

She is a red peony made more fragrant with dew.

His romantic encounter with the goddess of Wu Mountain was but a

dream after all.

May I ask who in the Han Palace was as beautiful as she?

Not even the lovable Zhao Feiyan— without her best makeup

Notes

1 The king of Chu dreamt that he had a romantic encounter with the goddess of Wu Mountain.

2 Zhao Feiyan (Flying Swallow), delicate and attractive, was the favorite concubine of the emperor Chengdi of the Han dynasty.

译文及注释



Brief analysis {7}

This poem was written by Li Bai when he was in the Hanlin Academy at Chang'an. Tang Minghuang and Yang Guifei were looking at peonies in the Agarwood Pavilion. Li Bai was commissioned to write this piece.

This poem is the second of the "Three Tunes of Qingping", which expresses Yang Guifei's beauty and favorability from the perspective of time. The first sentence writes not only color, but also fragrance, not only natural beauty, but also dewy beauty; the second sentence uses the story of King Chu to humanize the flowers in the previous sentence, pointing out that King Chu is heartbroken for the goddess; the last two sentences say that Zhao Feiyan has to rely on new makeup, where can you get the beautiful Yang Fei, who looks like a flower in front of you, without fat powder, it is natural and stunning.

Other Translations

A branch of crimson glamour, the peony appears embalmed in dew,
A reverie of a reunion on cloud nine of the Magic Mountains woefully illudes.

Who in the history of the Han Palace could her beauty compare with?

Perhaps only the lovely lady by the name of Dashing Swallow on her debut. {4}

Li Bai (701-762): To the Qing and Ping Tune (for Lady Yang), 2 of 3

1 Ablush, abloom, O peony, your fragrance dewdrops retain!

2 That nymph of mists and mizzles, was a rendezvous dreamt in

vain;

3 And who in the courts of old times, your beauty might match? I ask.

4 'Twas (pity!) the pretty Feiyan, while her new paint was yet to wane. {5}

Draft

Even one scarlet peony

becomes more fragrant with the dew

In vain the goddess of Wu Mountains

enticed and then more saddened grew.

So in this Palace hall I ask

who has received her honest due,

when even poor Feiyan had need

of powder for her youthful hue.

Because the original is fairly low on content words, it may be better to use hexameters:

The scarlet flower will grow more fragrant with the dew,
in vain and sad were charms of mountain goddess Wu
I'd ask if this great palace beauty has her due,
when Feiyan needed makeup for her youthful hue.

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68. REGULATED SHI POETRY: JINTISHI: JEJU: QJJUE: Bai Juyi
(772-846) Spending Time with Laozi

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	读老子 (dú lǎo zǐ)		spend-time Laozi
1	言者不如知者默 (yán zhě bù rú	a	word pertaining-to not-equal
2	zhī zhě mò)	b	be-aware-of one-who-is silent
3	此语吾闻于老君 (cǐ yǔ wú wén	a	this speech I hear from Laozi
4	yú lǎo jūn)	b	seem way Laozi is/am be-
	若道老君是知者 (ruò dào lǎo jūn		aware-of pertaining-to
	shì zhī zhě)		why oneself make-known
	缘何自著五千文 (yuán hé zì zhe		(particle) five thousand
	wǔ qiān wén)		language

Comment

Bai Juyi had a long and successful career as a Tang official, eventually serving as governor of three important provinces. His family was poor but scholarly, and Bai Juyi passed the jinshi examinations in 800. After some minor appointments, and demotions, he was made governor of Hangzhou, then of Sizhou, and finally of Henan, in which Luoyang is situated. The remaining thirteen years of his life saw various appointments, but most were nominal: he had effectively retired.

Bai wrote extended narratives but was best known for his low-key poems written in an easy style, many of them with political and social criticism. So much was the emphasis on ready comprehension that Bai would rewrite anything that couldn't be immediately understood by his servants.

This is a mischievous little piece poking fun at Laozi, Lao Tzu (etc., the name is spelled variously), the 'old man', who was a Chinese philosopher and writer, reputedly the author of the Dao De Ching, the founder of philosophical Daoism, and indeed a deity in religious Daoism. Until recently he was seen as a contemporary of Confucius, but western scholarship has brought his dates forward to the 4th century BC, and even doubted that the work comes from a single hand. It hardly matters for this poem, which is wondering why the master who distrusted lengthy expositions, and often preferred paradoxes, conundrums and pithy sayings, got around to writing so much. The original is rhymed *abab*.

The unaware will speak: the knowing stay
more silent — so the old man would convey.
Yet if Laozi truly knew the way
why would he have five thousand words to say?

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69. REGULATED SHI POETRY: JINTISHI: JEJU: QJJUE: Cheng Hao (1032-85) Autumn Moon

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	秋月(qiū yuè)		autumn moon
1	清溪流过碧山头 (qīng xī liú guò bì shān tóu)	a	clear/quiet rivulet flow cross blue-green
2	空水澄鲜一色秋 (kōng shuǐ chéng xiān yī sè	a	mountain top
3	qiū)	x	sky water limpid fresh one colour autumn
4	隔断红尘三十里 (gé duàn hóng chén sān shí lǐ)	a	partition/distant break red dust thirty li
	白云红叶两悠悠 (bái yún hóng yè liǎng yōu yōu)		white cloud red leaf both remote remote

Blue mountaintops and little rivulets. The sky
and water clear: one color all this autumn day.
The dust of thirty li collects as pinkish dye.
White cloud and tawny leaf: both distant, far away.

Comment

Cheng Hao is better known as philosopher and politician than poet, but, like all educated Chinese, could turn out charming pieces when required. Hao was born into a family of magistrates, passed the imperial examinations in 1057, and was successively appointed administrative clerk in Hu County, Shaanxi, administrative clerk in Shangyuan County (now in Nanjing), administrative director in Zezhou, minister of ceremony, Censor, tax and tariff official, ceremony minister to the military, and to various other positions.

But Hao was a good deal more than successful bureaucrat, and, with his younger brother, pioneered the Song revival of Neo-Confucian cosmology. This was a dualistic philosophy, dividing everything between the tangible and intangible. It was also a pantheistic philosophy, seeing everything intangible (god, human nature, feelings, actions, movement and even chance) as of a common unified and inwardly related nature. One well-known quote is: 'Outside dao there are no things and outside things there is no dao. . . Dao is the ruler of events we call god to emphasize the wonderful mystery of principle in ten thousand things. . . Dao is function, human nature and human destiny.'

A beautifully observed vignette of an autumn day. The translation is rhymed abab, the original is aaxa

Earlier drafts:

Below the blue-green mountain tops
the quiet rivulets convey
a sky and water fresh and clear:
one color all this autumn day.
And in the air's red dust of thirty
miles of separation stay
white cloud and tawny leaf
where both are distant, far away.

Blue mountaintops and quiet rivulets. The sky
and water clear: one color makes this autumn day
and dust of thirty li imparts a reddish tinge
to cloud and tawny leaf: both distant, far away.

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70. REGULATED SHI POETRY:JINTISHI: JEJU : QJJUE: :Lu
You (1125-1209) As Dawn Approached on an Autumn
Night. Cai C.15.5. [QSS 39:25.24780; JNSGJZ 25.1774]

	Traditional Chinese and /Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	秋夜將曉，出籬門迎涼有感 (qiū yè jiāng xiǎo, chū lí mén yíng liáng yǒu gǎn)		autumn night will dawn, go-out fence gate welcome cold there-is feel
1	三萬里河東入海 (sān wàn lǐ hé dōng rù	a	three ten-thousand li river east enter sea
2	hǎi)	b	five thousand ren high-mountain rise/on rub sky
3	五千仞嶽上摩天 (wǔ qiān rèn yuè shàng	a	leave-behind people tears use-up non-Han dust
4	mó tiān)	b	interior
	遺民淚盡胡塵裏 (yí mín lèi jìn hú chén lǐ)		south gaze imperial army/teacher again one year
	南望王師又一年 (nán wàng wáng shī yòu yī nián)		

For thirty thousand li, the river
flows on eastward to the sea.
The sacred mountain rises five
thousand ren to reach the sky.
Our people ever drop their tears
in dusts of foreign tyranny:
they for our army gaze on south,
and yet another year goes by.

Comment

Lu Yu learned swordplay, became immersed in war strategy and pledged his literary talents to the defence of the country from the Jurchen. He passed the imperial examinations on his second attempt, at the age of 29, but was prevented nobleman privilege from immediately assuming office. An honorary jinshi degree was conferred on him by the Xiaozong emperor in 1163, but his opposition to Jurchen appeasement seriously impeded his career. After several promotions and demotions, Lu retired in 1190 to live in his hometown Shaoxing (now in Zhejiang province). From here he traveled extensively, making observations on local events and customs that feature in his voluminous poems. He became friendly with Fan Chengda and adopted a rather bohemian life style.

Lu wrote some ten thousand poems, in the Shi and Ci genres. This piece is lamenting the failure of the Southern Song to rid the northern provinces of the Jurchen. In fact, after a good deal of bloodshed, these fierce tribesmen rapidly became Sinicized, forming the Jin dynasty (1115–1234) that ruled an extensive country until overthrown by the even more formidable Mongols. The river referred to is the Yellow River, which drains the heartlands of Chinese civilization, lost to the Jurchen in 1127. The mountain, again unspecified, is the Hua Mountain.

The original is rhymed abab

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71. REGULATED SHI POETRY: JINTISHI: JEJU : QJJUE:
:Fan Chengda: Reflections through the Seasons: Summer.
Cai C.15.10. [QSS 41:27.26004]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	四時田園雜興, 夏 (sì shí tián yuán zá xìng: xià)		four season farm field various feeling: summer
1	采菱辛苦廢犁鋤 (cǎi líng xīn kǔ fèi lí chú)	a	pick water-chestnut hard exhausting
2	血指流丹鬼質枯 (xuè zhǐ liú dān guǐ zhì kū)	a	abandon plow hoe
3	無力買田聊種水 (wú lì mǎi tián liáo zhòng shuǐ)	a	blood finger flow red ghost character dry-up
4	近來湖面亦收租 (jìn lái hú miàn yì shōu zū)	a	lack force buy farm depend-on plant water
			near come lake surface also collect taxes

Picking water-chestnuts is hard work,
where plow and hoe are left behind.
Our bloodstained fingers hurt so much
we scarce belong to humankind.
But having swapped the land for what
we might at last afford, we find
the issue from the nearby lake
will now be taxed in equal kind.

Comment

Fan Chengda was born into poverty, but, passing the jinshi degree in 1154, began a long career in service to the Southern Song state, becoming particularly known for his geographical treatises on southern China's topography and commercial products

Fan wrote in both the Regulated Shi quatrains and the Ci genres, but is best known for a series of sixty quatrains which he wrote in 1186, following retirement from high officialdom at the Southern Song Court. The poems show a great love of the rural life, à la Tian Qian, but also keen eye for detail that does not overlook the peasant's hard toil to meet the tax-collector's demands.

Unlike Lu You's poems, which sometimes sentimentalized rural life, Fan saw matters clearly: this poem is one of a series on the peasants' hardships. I have had to represent the original 7 character line by two tetrameters, end-rhymed on the second tetrameter as aaaa. The original is rhymed aaaa. {1}

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72. JINTISHI: LUSHI: WULU: MING-QING: Yan Liu (17-18th Century). On a Summer Day: Dwelling in the Mountains. Cai C17.13. [CGZ 1.20b]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	夏日山居 (xià rì shān jū)		summer day mountain residence
1	山靜偏宜暑 (shān jìng piān yí shǔ)	x	mountain calm lean appropriate hot-weather
2	松風入夢清 (sōng fēng rù mèng qīng)	a	pine wind enter dream clear
3	危岩飛雨色 (wēi yán fēi yǔ sè)	b	precipitous/danger cliff fly rain colour
4	古樹咽蟬聲 (gǔ shù yè chán shēng)	a	ancient tree choke cicada sound
5	刺繡年來課 (cì xiù nián lái kè)	b	prick embroider year come task
6	看雲物外情 (kàn yún wù wài qíng)	a	watch cloud thing outside feeling
7	不知塵市遠 (bù zhī chén shì yuǎn)	x	not know dust market far
8	聊為證無生 (liáo wéi zhèng wú shēng)	a	chat/just/idle to-be proof not born

A mountain calm appropriate to summer heat.

The wind through groves of pine trees kindles dreams: one sees
the rain clothe far-off, dangerous cliffs in sundry hues;
one hears the dry cicada sounds assail old trees.

For years embroidery has been my thin excuse
for watching clouds form distant patterns as they please,
beyond all feeling. Far are dust and markets, in retreat
the proofs of our rebirth disputing mind's own ease.

Comment

Little is known of the Yan Liu, but she belonged to the gentry class and lived in the seventeenth or eighteenth century, i.e. in the middle Qing dynasty. Her poems are simple reflections on everyday life, and many are styled on Buddhist themes reminiscent of Wang Wei (701-61). In this poem the speaker is sat at her embroidery, looking out at the scene around her, but is not troubled by notions of impermanence or rebirth that would have concerned the Buddhist poets of the Tang.

The poem is a reasonable stab at Wulu verse. It has the required rhymes (xaba baxa: abbb bbab in the translation) and tonal patterns. Also parallelism on the second and third couplets, in syntax at least. Yan has indeed borrowed Wang phrases: 松風入 (*pine wind enter: the wind through groves of pine trees* in the translation), 看雲 (*watch cloud: watching clouds* in the translation), 咽 (*choke or sob: assail* in the translation) It's a simple poem reflecting the ease and somnolence of summer days away from the dust and turmoil of city life. {1}

A mountain calm appropriate to summer heat.

The wind through groves of pine trees kindles dreams: one sees
the rain paints far-off dangerous cliffs in various hues,
one hears the dry cicada sounds envelop ancient trees.

For years embroidery has been my fond excuse
for watching clouds form distant patterns as they please,
beyond all feeling. Far are dust and markets, in retreat
are proofs of our rebirth, to trouble mind's own ease.

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73. JINTISHI: LUSHI: WULU: MING-QING : Gan Lirou (1743-1819). Night in the Boudoir. Cai C17.10 [YXLG 2.34b-35a]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	閨夜 (guī yè)		boudoir night
1	芳情傳翰墨 (fāng qíng chuán hàn	x	fragrant emotion transmit writing-brush ink
2	mò)	a	good friend skilled-at poem words/lyrics
3	良友擅詩詞 (拜璜) (liáng yǒu shàn	x	two-instruments/marriage harmony sound fragrant
4	shī cí)	a	rhyme/charm
	琴瑟鳴香韻 (qín sè míng xiāng yùn)		gem tinkling clasp jade disposition/appearance
	琳瑯捧玉姿 (如玉) (lín láng pěng yù zī)		
5	鐘聲敲竹靜 (zhōng shēng qiāo	x	bell sound strike bamboo calm
6	zhú jìng)	a	moon image on/climb screen/curtain late/delayed
7	月影上簾遲 (拜璜) (yuè yǐng shàng	x	desire indeed/unexpected thousand years occupation
8	lián chí)	a	deep night not yet sleep-soundly time
	欲竟千秋業 (yù jìng qiān qiū yè)		
	深宵未寐時 (如玉) (shēn xiāo wèi mèi shí)		

The ink transmits such fragrant sentiments
when my good friend is skilled in every word. (*Baihunag*)
and marriage harmonies are instruments
when jade-like are the tinkling phrases heard. (*Ruyu*)

A temple bell among the hushed bamboos:
how slow the moon on shutters seems to creep. (*Baihunag*)
Desire: a thousand years should have their dues.
How deep the night is now but not for sleep. (*Ruyu*)

Gan Lirou was a gentry woman living in present-day Jiangxi province in the high Qing, a period of peace and prosperity. She wrote an autobiography in poetry, arranging her carefully selected sequence of over 1,000 poems ('Drafts from the Pavilion for Chanting About Snow') is arranged in four chapters. The first, entitled 'Drafts After Embroidering', covers the period before marriage when she learnt the skills that would be expected of her. It was a happy period but interrupted by the deaths of her elder brother, and then of her only sister. After the three-year mourning period for her mother, Gan was married to Xu Yuelu, a match her parents had made. The second, entitled 'Drafts After Cooking' covers the ten years of a companionate marriage, when she served her parents-in-law in an exemplary fashion and gave birth to two sons and two daughters.

The poem follows the prescribed form for Wulu verse. The first couplet is non-parallel. The second and third couplets are parallel. The final couplet is non-parallel. The tone patterns are as follows: Level tones refer to flat and rising tones in Mandarin. Oblique tones

correspond to falling-rising and the short falling tone in Mandarin, plus the entering tones in middle Chinese (ending in p, t or k). The tonal patterns for the above poem are then:

- - - I I
 - I I - I
 - I - - I
 - - I I -

 - - - - I
 I I I - -
 I - - -I
 - - I I -

i.e. varied but not according to strict Tang rules. Couplets 1-2 and 5-6 were written by husband 'Baihuang' and the others by his wife 'Ruyu'.

Earlier drafts:

The ink transmits such fragrant sentiments,
 my good friend skilled in every note and word:
 marital the harmony of instruments
 that's in its tinkling jade-like looks conferred

A temple bell among the hushed bamboos
 the image of the moon is late upon the screen.
 Desire is in a thousand years of use:
 the night is dark but not yet time for sleep.

The ink is fragrant with rich sentiments
 when friend is skilled in every note and word:
 such marital harmony is in instruments
 if gems are in the dispositions heard.

A bell lingers in the quiet bamboos,
 and slow the moon on shutters seems to creep.
 In desire there is a thousand years of use:
 how deep the night is now but not for sleep.

The ink transmits such fragrant sentiments
 when my good friend is skilled in every word.
 and marital harmony is like instruments
 when jade-like are the tinkling glances heard.

A temple bell among the hushed bamboos:
 how slow the moon on shutters seems to creep.
 Desire despite a thousand years' taboos:

how deep the night is now but not for sleep.

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74. JINTISHI: LUSHI: QILU: WULU: MING-QING: Li Mengyang (1475-1531): Autumn Gaze. Cai C17.1. [MSBC, 717]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	秋望 (qiū wàng)		autumn gaze/full-moon
1	黃河水繞漢邊牆 (huáng hé shuǐ rào hàn biān	a	yellow river water wind Han border wall
2	qiáng)	a	river above autumn wind wild-goose several
3	河上秋風雁幾行 (hé shàng qiū fēng yàn jǐ xíng)	x	row/go
4	客子過壕追野馬 (kè zǐ guò háo zhuī yě mǎ)	a	visitor suffix cross moat chase feral horse
	將軍發箭射天狼 (jiāng jūn fā jiàn shè tiān		general army cover arrow shoot sky wolf
	láng)		
5	黃塵古渡迷飛輓 (huáng chén gǔ dù mí fēi wǎn)	x	yellow dust ancient crossing/ferry bewilder
6	白月橫空冷戰場 (bái yuè héng kōng lěng zhàn	a	fly cart
7	chǎng)	x	white moon across empty cold battle scene
8	聞道朔方多勇略 (wén dào shuò fāng duō yǒng	a	hear way Shuo Fang many brave plan
	luè)		only today who is Guo Feng yang
	只今誰是郭汾陽 (zhǐ jīn shuí shì guō fén yáng)		

The Yellow River winds along
the stout-walled limits of the Han.
Above the autumn wind and river
scattered lines of wild geese fly.
Pursued, invaders cross the moats
as only steppe-born ponies can,
The general with his bow and arrow
shoots the wild wolf in the sky.

To yellow dust at ancient fords
go chariots and warriors.
The moon stares down on battlefields
where all is cold and void again.
Shuofang has many plans
that brilliant victory confers,
but who is Guo Fenyang now
among our generals, that man then?

Comment

Li Mengyang was the leader of an important group of poets, the so-called 'Archaist school of Former Seven and Latter Seven Masters', who dominated sixteenth-century poetry at the Ming capital of Beijing. They looked to the past for style and inspiration. One famously remarked 'prose must be that of the Qin and Han, and poetry must be of the high Tang.' The demotic styles of the Yuan poetry were anathema, of course, and even the Song was thought too personal and discursive. What they sought was the grand, expansive vision, affective intensity and powerful imagery of the Tang, most particularly that of Du Fu.

This poem follows the prescribed rules Regulated Shi. The opening couplet conjures up the border distances in their historic setting, one emphasized by the flights of migrating geese. In the second couplet we picture the attack of steppe peoples, and the answering shot at the sky wolf (Sirius) leading them. The third couplet emphasizes the timelessness of these events and the fourth brings us to the present, with some doubts as to whether the inspiring Guo Ziyi (697-781) of the Shuofang commandery is to be found today. As expected of 'revival' work, the rules extend to the lines in detail. The two central couplets, lines 3-6, for example, are parallel but show syntactic, semantic and tonal contrasts.

The revival was not generally successful, however, and 17th century poets aimed once more at personal expression in simple language.
{1}

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75. JINTISHI: LUSHI: QILU: WULU: MING-QING: Gan
Lirou (1743-1819). Random Song. Cai C17.12. [YXLG
4.27a]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	偶吟 (ǒu yín)		accidental song
1	閑披牙軸啟窗扉 (xián pī yá zhóu qǐ chuāng fēi)	a	idle open ivory scroll open window door-leaf
2	捧卷臨風對夕暉 (pěng juàn lín fēng duì xī huī)	a	clasp scroll/painting face wind towards dusk
3	放眼看來天地小 (fàng yǎn kàn lái tiān dì xiǎo)	x	sunshine
4	回頭認到昨今非 (huí tóu rèn dào zuó jīn fēi)	a	release eye see come sky earth small
			turn head recognize arrive yesterday present wrong
5	理禪始覺心無垢 (lǐ chán shǐ jué xīn wú gòu)	x	manage meditation begin think heart/mind not-have dirt
6	書葉方知筆有機 (shū yè fāng zhī bǐ yǒu jī)	a	write page/period only then know pen/brush have pivot/chance
7	萬籟寂時人意靜 (wàn lài jì shí rén yì jìng)	x	ten-thousand sound silent time person idea
8	月移清影上屏幃 (yuè yí qīng yǐng shàng píng wéi)	a	quiet moon move clear image/shadow upon screen curtain

Idly, with an ivory scroll,
I let the window leaf unroll.
And with the work in hand I turn
where wind and sunset colors burn.
And find that eye that wanders free
will show how small the world we see.
And looking backwards all too plain
the errors past we make again.

Through meditating we may find
the undefiled and tranquil mind.
So the brush will hold a wealth
of poise in pausing on itself,
and in ten thousand sounds is sought
the quietness that is one's thought,
and so in absence moon has been
a shadowed presence on the screen.

Comment

Gan Lirou was a gentry woman living in present-day Jiangxi province in the high Qing, a period of peace and prosperity. Wife and husband both wrote poems to each other (and gave themselves courtesy names: Tuyu (Gan) and Baihuang (Xu). Her husband then

died when away from home and studying, and Gan was left to bring up her children and care for her mother-in-law. This third chapter is entitled 'Drafts by the One Who Has Not Died'. The fourth chapter, entitled 'Drafts by One Who Lives in Retirement with Her Son' when she was able to enjoy a leisurely old age with a son who was appointed to an official post after passing the jinshi examinations.

Whereas men's poetry was a normal expression of the educated classes, indeed expected, woman's poetry was not encouraged. Women poets therefore wrote privately, to describe their personal thoughts and situations, a field of study that is now being researched in some depth.

As is usually necessary with longer lines, I have broken the seven characters into tetrameters, and rhymed them: an approach that has its dangers but here produces an evocative little piece that is practically word for word nonetheless. The rules governing parallel and non-parallel sense in the lines are followed, but the tone patterns only very approximately. {1}

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76. JINTISHI: LUSHI: QILU: WULU: MING-QING: Widow Mengyue. Late Qing Recited While Sick Cai C17.14.
[GGZX 5.17a]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	病中詠 (bìng zhōng yǒng)		illness during sing
1	不覺指纖塵重 (bù jué zhǐ xiān xián chén	a	not feel finger delicate dislike dust heavy
2	zhòng)	a	how/which know shoulder thin clothes long
3	那知肩瘦訝衣長 (nǎ zhī jiān shòu yà yī cháng)	x	heart empty weak chew book-of-history
4	心虛淡嚼詩書味 (xīn xū dàn jiáo shī shū wèi)	a	book-of-songs taste
	室靜頻聞翰墨香 (shì jìng pín wén hàn mò xiāng)		room calm frequent hear brush ink fragrant
5	琴怪出弦音自古 (qín guài chū xián yīn zì gǔ)	b	zither strange produce string sound since
6	詩清下筆句多狂 (shī qīng xià bǐ jù duō kuáng)	a	ancient
7	病中滋味得真趣 (bìng zhōng zī wèi dé zhēn qù)	b	poem clear put-down brush sentence many
8	物外幽閑細細嘗 (wù wài yōu xián xì xì cháng)	a	wild
			illness middle/among nourish taste obtain
			true interest
			thing outside secluded idle thin/fine thin/fine
			taste

So frail my fingers are, the dust
itself seems heavy on the skin
Surprised at length of clothes
I hadn't known my limbs would shrink
Mind clear, I'll muse on *Odes* and *History*,
quietly let the thoughts sink in.
and in a tranquil chamber I
will often sense the smell of ink.

From ancient times the zither's made
unusual music with its strings.
and from the brush in poetry
so much of truth's wild candor springs.
Such is the mind's own nourishing
the flavor of this illness brings,
that in secluded idleness
I savor more the finer things

Comment

Widow Menyue was another Manchu poet who apparently lost her husband early. Her poems comment over a long life thereafter about a woman's everyday thoughts and duties.

A charming and thoughtful little poem that evokes the quiet domesticity of Menyue's world, where, far from feeling abandoned, she is content to muse (literally 'chew': 嚼 jiáo) on the Book of Odes (詩: shī) and Book of History (書: shū). That intellectual discernment fuses with the smell of ink and the motion of the brush as she

claims that her uninhibited poems are akin to zither music — an attitude that leads her to savor the finer things (細嘗:xì xì cháng: literally 'fine fine taste'.

I have again replaced the seven-character line by tetrameters, but here used end rhymes in an abab cccc scheme. The original is rhymed aaxa baba.

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77. JINTISHI: LUSHI: QILU: WULU: MING-QING: Lin Zexu (1785-1850):To My Family

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)	Word-for-Word Rendering
	示家人 (shì jiā rén)	show family person
1	力微任重久神疲, (lì wēi rèn zhòng jiǔ shén	a power small heavy-burden long spirit weary
2	pí)	a again exhaust wane ordinary use cannot-endure
3	再竭衰庸定不支 (zài jié shuāi yōng dìng bù	a if favourable country life death by-means-of
4	zhī)	a how reason disaster luck flee hasten it
	苟利国家生死以, (gǒu lì guó jiā shēng sǐ	
	yǐ)	
	岂因祸福避趋之; (qǐ yīn huò fú bì qū	
	zhī)	
5	謫居正是君恩厚, (zhé jū zhèng shì jūn ēn	x relegate reside is emperor favour deep
6	hòu)	a breed awkward than garrison soldier appropriate
7	养拙刚于戍卒宜。 (yǎng zhuō gāng yú shù zú	a drama at mountain wife speak story
8	yí)	a test recite forfeit-future/break-deliver venerable scalp
	戏于山妻谈故事。 (xì yú shān qī tán gù	
	shì)	
	试吟“断送老头皮”。 (shì yín “ duàn sòng lǎo	
	tóu pí”)	

I've long been tired of such a heavy
burden on this spirit's frame:
Another task would bring exhaustion,
an end to things in all but name.
And if it helped I'd give the life
on which my country has its claim,
immediately, avoiding nothing,
or be the very much to blame.

The imperial word I see as kind;
I'm pleased that my demotion came.
More clumsiness is surely not
so hard as play the soldier's game:
My wife was given some wild story
for this sheer mountain's fall from fame,
that to the chancellor I gave
a head now venerable but tame.

Comment

Lin was born in Houguan in present-day Fuzhou, Fujian Province near the end of the Qianlong Emperor's reign. His father was an official of the Qing government, and Lin proved a brilliant student. He was awarded the advanced jinshi grade in the official examinations in 1811, gained admission to the Hanlin Academy, and then rose rapidly through grades of the provincial service. He became Governor-General of Hunan and Hubei in 1837, where he

opposed the introduction of opium by the western powers, indeed writing to Queen Victoria on the matter.

Lin was an energetic opponent of the opium trade, and initially had the emperor's full backing. He arrested dealers, confiscated opium pipes and in 1839 obliged merchants to surrender nearly 1.2 million kg of the drug. When the First Opium War followed, and China was defeated by British Naval Forces, Lin was made the scapegoat and exiled to remote Xinjiang, where he made a study of Muslim customs. In 1843, believing China should nonetheless understand the outside world better, Lin compiled a geography of the world, an 'Illustrated Treatise on the Maritime Kingdoms'. Rehabilitated, Lin was appointed Governor-General of Shaan-Gan (Shaanxi-Gansu) in 1845 and of Yun-Gui (Yunnan-Guizhou) in 1847. These postings were less prestigious than his previous Canton one, however, and Lin's career never fully recovered from his moral if rather rigid stance. Lin was not primarily a poet, and the piece featured simply illustrates the wry dexterity with which Lin celebrated his dismissal. {1-3} The original's rhyme scheme is

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78. REGULATED SHI POETRY: Gao Qi (1336-1374)

Looking for Hermit Hu

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	寻胡隐君 (xún hú yǐn jūn)		seek Hu secret gentleman
1	渡水复渡水 (dù shuǐ fù dù shuǐ)	a	cross water repeat cross water
2	看花还看花 (kàn huā hái kàn huā)	b	see flower still see flower
3	春风江上路 (chūn fēng jiāng shàng	a	spring wind river above/on road
4	路) 不觉到君家。 (bù jué dào jūn jiā)	b	not aware until/arrive gentleman home

I cross the water, still the water flows.
I see the flower, and yet the flower is shown.
Along, above the road, the spring wind goes,
and, unaware, I reach the hermit's home.

Comment

Gao Qi, courtesy name Jidi, pseudonym Qingqiuzi, was an early Ming poet, born and raised on the shores of Wusong River, north of the town of Puli near Suzhou.

The first Ming emperor, uncultivated but by no means unintelligent, was paranoid from the first, quick to suspect disloyalty when none was intended. He scrutinised his court's correspondence, and punished supposed transgressions severely. One on whom his disfavour fell was Gao Qi, who had edited a history of the preceding Yuan dynasty, produced as was customary with a change of dynasty, if only to show how the Yuan rulers had forfeited the Mandate of Heaven. Gao survived this test (as most didn't) and was promoted to the post of Deputy Finance Minister, a post he unwisely declined, remarking that he had no competence in such matters. He retired from service in the time-honoured way of poets, to Blue Hill of Puli, and chose to teach students for a living. Such an affront to imperial wishes was not long overlooked. In 1374, Gao was accused of 'conspiracy in rebellion' and executed in the manner of traitors, his body being sliced into eight parts.

Though he came to an unfortunate end — as did many of the Yuan-Ming poets {2} — Gao was recognised as one of the great Ming poets, a master of Regulated Shi poetry. In the translation I have adopted a pentameter for the five character lines, and followed the original rhyme scheme: abab as abab.

I cross the water, still the water flows.
I see the flower, again the flower is shown.

Along, above the road, the spring wind goes,
and, unaware, I reach the hermit's home.

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79. REGULATED SHI POETRY: Gan Lirou (1743-1819) On the Full Moon, Written at Age Seven. Cai C17.7 [YXLG 1.1a]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	咏圓月七歲作 (yǒng yuán yuè qī suì zuò)		sing round moon seven year compose
1	誰使吳剛斧 (shéi shǐ wú gāng fǔ)	a	who send Wu Gang hatchet
2	分明削正圓 (fēn míng xiāo zhèng yuán)	b	divide bright cut exactly round
3	如何望未久 (rú hé wàng wèi jiǔ)	a	as-if how full-moon not-yet long
4	缺處又成弦 (quē chù yòu chéng xián)	b	missing place again finish curve/bow-string

Who saw to it that getting Wu Gang's axe
ensured the moon would make a perfect round?
Or soon from fullness that the moon backtracks,
and then is by the thinnest crescent bound?

Comment

An unpretentious little piece that illustrates what was expected of the educated classes. It was written by a young woman of high status in the long and prosperous reign of the Qian Long emperor (1736-95), when China was at the height of its powers. {1} The original is rhymed abab, which I have followed in the translation.

We noted Gao Qi's troubles in poem 78 above, but matters were hardly better in the early years of the succeeding Qing dynasty. An example is the case of Zihuang Tinglong. He was a rich merchant who, on his own initiative, hired scholars to prepare an unofficial but by no means flattering history of the Ming. It was presented to the first Qing emperor, who unfortunately found odd mistakes, minor and unintentional, often no more than the careless carrying over of Ming forms of address, but enough to initiate a witch-hunt. On authors, printers, those who had purchased copies of the work, officials who had not reported the matter, anyone vaguely connected, fell the imperial disfavour. All male members of the extended families concerned were executed and the female made slaves of Manchu household. {3}

Even the much lauded *Complete Library* of 1792, a compilation of 3,470 works and more than 360 million words, which preserved much poetry that would otherwise have been lost, also repressed and destroyed anything inimical to Manchu rule. Some 7,000 works are noted only by title, and all copies of some 10,000 works are estimated to have been destroyed. {3}

Who saw to it that sending Wu Gang's axe
ensured the moon was pared exactly round?
And, after fullness, soon the moon backtracks,
and ever ends with one thin crescent found?

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80. REGULATED SHI POETRY: Wang Shizhen (1634-1711) Qinhuai River: Miscellaneous Poems* Cai C17.3 [YYJHLS 1.226-227]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	秦淮雜詩 (qín huái zá shī)		Qinhuai mixed poetry
1	年來腸斷秣陵舟 (nián lái cháng duàn mò	a	year come intestine break Mo ling boat
2	líng zhōu)	a	dream wind Qin huai water above storied-building
3	夢繞秦淮水上樓 (mèng rào qín huái shuǐ	b	ten day rain silk wind flake inside
4	shàng lóu)	a	dense spring mist circumstance appear
	十日雨絲風片裏 (shí rì yǔ sī fēng piàn lǐ)		remnant/ruin autumn
	濃春煙景似殘秋 (nóng chūn yān jǐng sì		
	cán qiū)		

It's only memories the years revive
about us on this Moling boat,
where on the Qinhuai River here
the dream-wrapped buildings seem to float.
For ten days now a silk-soft rain
and flakes of wind, that might denote
the rich, lush mists of springtime, but
with autumn's ending clearly don't.

Comment

Wang Shizhen called himself many names but is probably best known as Wen Jian. He was a native of Xincheng (now Huantai County in Shandong Province) but claimed himself as coming from Jinan. Wang was a distinguished poet and literary scholar in the early Qing Dynasty. He was also an antiquarian, knowledgeable on old books and engravings. His calligraphy resembled that of the Jin Dynasty. During the period of the Kangxi emperor, Wang succeeded Qian Qinyi as the leader of the literary scene, and created the 'theory of divine rhyme in poetry'. {1}

His early poems were clear and lucid, but from middle age grew more expressive. Many poems show such a respect for previous forms that he was called 'Qingxiu Li Yulin'. This poem was written in 1661, when the author, a magistrate of Yangzhou, went to Wu County on official business. He visited Nanjing on his way back. The Qinhuai River runs through the south of Nanjing. The elegiac poem, the first of a group of some twenty (later reduced to fourteen) have long been famous. {1}

This work was inspired by Tang poetry, but employs the concept of shenyun (spirit and resonance). Intuitive percept is combined with a

personal tone and quiet imagery. The original is rhymed aaaa, the translation as aaaa. {1}

* Reflections on the southern Ming capital of Nanking, destroyed by the Manchus.

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81. REGULATED SHI POETRY: Yuan Mei: (1716-98)
Travelling in the Mountains. Cai C17.4 [YMOJ] 1.633]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for Word Rendering
	山行雜詠 (shān xíng zá yǒng)		mountain walk miscellaneous song
1	十里崎嶇半里平 (shí lǐ qí qū bàn lǐ píng)	a	ten li mountainous rugged half li flat
2	一峰才送一峰迎 (yì fēng cái sòng yì fēng yíng)	a	one peak now send-off one peak welcome
3	青山似繭將人裹 (qīng shān sì jiǎn jiāng rén guǒ)	x	green mountain appear cocoon take person
4	不信前頭有路行 (bú xìn qián tóu yǒu lù xíng)	a	wrap not believe front head there-is road walk

The first ten li are hard and steep;
for half a li the way is flat.
I leave a mountain peak behind
the next unrolls its welcome mat.
Round me like a thick cocoon
the verdant mountains wind and wrap.
And now I find no path at all,
and so am rather floored at that.

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7. QU POETRY

7.1 Characteristics of Qu Poetry

Sanqu, or 'singing poetry' flourish in the Yuan dynasty, and, like Ci poetry, began as folk songs, as verse set to various tunes. The form seems to have originated in north China, specifically in the areas conquered by the Jurchen, which became the rapidly Sinicized Jin empire. The tunes of Qu poetry are rather different from those of Ci poetry, however, and, most importantly, the language is colloquial, the living everyday speech of the Chinese and not the literary language. That said, the literati were usually the authors all the same, and indeed commonly wrote for the theatre, which was immensely popular in Yuan times. Guan Hanqing was one of the best and most productive of Yuan dramatists, in fact, and almost as well known were Wang Heqing and Ma Zhiyuan.

Terminology can be confusing. *Qu* poems can be a single song (*Xiaoling*) or part of a song suite (*santao*). The single song can be repeated or combined with others, sometimes making several dozen songs written to the same tune throughout. Being modelled to dramatic needs, the lines are of various lengths (commonly 3, 4 and 7 characters long) but all tend to be firmly end-rhymed. There are also tonal patterns, sometimes — like Ci poetry—deriving from regulated verse, and sometimes being quite novel, not found outside Qu poetry. These patterns adapt to the expression of the poem, rather than exist as a predetermined pattern into which the poem must fit, as is the case with regulated verse.

The essential keywords are thus everyday language, lines of varying length and the same end rhyme throughout the poem. Though the poems seem artless, and indeed must have the tang of everyday speech — brimming over with rough humor, pungent wit and a shameless raciness — they are in fact well ordered, like all things in pre-modern China. Even the tune may be maintained with 'padding words' or extrametrical syllables called *chenzi*.

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82. QU POETRY: Guan Hanqing: On Love Cai 16.7 [QYSQ 1:156]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	仙呂 一半兒 題情 (xiān lǚ yí bàn er tí qíng)		xianlu tune one half (suffix) subject passion
1	碧紗窗外靜無人 (bì shā chuāng wài jìng wú	a	green gauze window outside calm no
2	rén)	a	person
3	跪在床前忙要親 (guì zài chuáng qián máng	a	kneel at bed front hurry demand
4	yào qīn)	a	intimate
5	罵了箇負心回轉身 (mà liǎo gè fù xīn huí	a	curse finish class fail heart back turn
	zhuǎn shēn)		body
	雖是我話兒囑 (suī shì wǒ huà er chēn)		although is my word (particle)
	一半兒推辭一半兒肯 (yí bàn er tuī cí yí bàn er		annoyed
	kěn)		one half (particle) push dismiss one
			half (particle) consent

Not a soul outside, but in the cool
the gauze-green window curtains lent,
he knelt beside the bed, with you-
know-what this fool's intent.
At that I called him what a jerk,
and with my dander up I went
to turn my back on him, but felt
uneasy and as ill-content.
Though half of me would put him off,
the other half still breathed consent.

Comment

Guan Hanqing, with the sobriquet 'The Old Man of the Studio', spent much of his time in Dadu (present-day Beijing). He was a poet and a notable playwright, often described as among the most prolific and highly regarded dramatists of the Yuan period. Fourteen of the 65-odd plays he wrote are still extant. The language is convincingly idiomatic and often subtly reveals his character's feelings and motivations.

Qu poetry takes its meter from various song tunes, some of which define the poetry's theme and tone, but very often do not. Here the song requires any piece written to its tune end with 'half' . . . 'half', i.e. what is half set up in the first lines is half contradicted in the concluding section. The 43 Qu poems employing this tune that have survived all show this feature, and some 39 are on love and boudoir themes, where 'love' or 'springtime' or 'fallen flowers' feature.

Qu poetry employed the everyday tongue rather than the literary language, which will, I hope, be apparent in the non-literary diction employed in this Chapter 18 section. The poem here is tightly rhymed aaaaa, as is the translation.

Comment

A popular theme, where of the 43 of extant poems employing the tune of 'a half', some 39 express love and boudoir sentiments. Here the form sharpens the expression.

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83. QU POETRY: Guan Hanqing (1220-1307): On Not Admitting Age. Cai 16.11 [QYSQ 1: 172]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	[南吕宫]一枝花 不服老 ([nán lǚ gōng] yì zhī huā bù fú lǎo)		[south tone one] one branch flow not admit age
1	攀出牆朵朵花 (pān chū qiáng duǒ duǒ huā)	x	climb produce wall lobe
2	折臨路枝枝柳 (zhé lín lù zhī zhī liǔ)	a	lobe flower
3	花攀紅蕊嫩 (huā pān hóng ruǐ nèn)	x	break face road twig
4	柳折翠條柔 (liǔ zhé cuì tiáo róu)	b	twig willow
5	浪子風流 (làng zǐ fēng liú)	b	flower climb red pistil
6	憑著我折柳攀花手 (píng zhuó wǒ zhé liǔ pān huā shǒu)	b	tender willow break blue-green item yielding
7	直煞得花殘柳敗休 (zhí shā de huā cán liǔ bài xiū)	b	prodigal son wind blow lean/rely-on show my
8	半生來折柳攀花 (bàn shēng lái zhé liǔ pān huā)	x	break willow climb
9	一世裡眠花臥柳 (yí shì lǐ mián huā wò liǔ)	a	flower hand frank terminate (particle) flower damage willow wither rest half life come break willow climb flower
	梁州 (liáng zhōu)		one life in sleep flower lie/bed willow liang zhou (tune)
1	我是箇普天下郎君領袖 (wǒ shì gè pǔ tiān xià láng jūn lǐng xiù)	b	I am <i>classifier/one</i> throughout world
2	蓋世界浪子班頭 (gài shì jiè làng zǐ bān tóu)	a	playboy leader top world waster class head/chief
3	你道我老也 (nǐ dào wǒ lǎo yě)		you say I old too
4	暫休 (zǎn xiū)	b	for-time-being stop
5	占排場風月功名首 (zhàn pái chǎng fēng yuè gōng míng shǒu)	a	occupy row position wind moon achievement famous head/chief
	隔尾 (géwěi)		
1	子弟每是箇茅草崗沙土窩初生兒的兔羔兒乍向圍場上走 (zǐ dì měi shì gè máo cǎo gǎng shā tǔ wō chū shēng ér dí tù gāo ér zhà xiàng wéi chǎng shàng zǒu)	a	child/brother each be individual sogon grass mound sandy-soil nest/pit new born ('s) rabbit child/lamb ('s)
2	我是箇籠籠罩受索網蒼翎毛老野雞蹣跚的陣馬兒熟 (wǒ shì gè lóng lóng zhào shòu suǒ wǎng cāng líng máo lǎo yě jī zhān tà dí zhèn mǎ ér shú)	b	first towards enclosure on-top walk I am individual endure basket cover receive rope net dark-blue plume feather old pheasant (trudge) tread

			('s) disposition horse son ('s) familiar

Me, I've snapped a bloom from every wall,
 and road-side busted willows show my powers:
 my pistil in the plumpest red
 would make the greenest willow yield,
 5. and like the wind across the field
 how coyly come the dewy showers:
 a little pressure: all is sealed:
 so half my life's already spent
 9. in foreign willows, bedded flowers.

1. I am the world's undoubted rogue,
 and glad to know he has appealed.
 I am its ne'er do well, and pleased
 my sexual prowess is revealed.
 I am too old, you say,
 and decency says stop and yield,
 4. but mine's what wind and moon empowers.

Where you are little bunnies running
 mound to hole in sogon grass,
 dithering for hours and hours,

2. I am the rooster, caged, aware
 what cords would hold his dark plumes down
 from prowess on the battlefield.

Comment

These are fragments of Qu verse to show its character: the racy language, the close rhyme but still refinement and delicate allusion. The whole song suite is a libertine's monologue. {1}

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84. QU POETRY: Ma Zhiyuan: (1250-1321) Autumn Thoughts" (Tune Tianjingsha: 天淨沙)

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	秋思 (qiū sī)		autumn think
1	枯藤老樹昏鴉 (kū téng lǎo shù hūn yā)	a	dried-up vine long-standing tree twilight crow
2	小橋流水人家 (xiǎo qiáo liú shuǐ rén jiā)	a	small bridge flow water person home
3	古道西風瘦馬 (gǔ dào xī fēng shòu mǎ)	a	old road west wind thin horse
4	古道西風瘦馬 (gǔ dào xī fēng shòu mǎ)	a	sun sets in west, heart-broken person located
	夕陽西下，斷腸人在天涯 (xī yáng xī xià duàn cháng rén zài tiān yá)		end-of-world

Autumn Thoughts

The dried-up vines, long-standing trees and evening crows,
 a cottage, bridge that's small, where water flows:
 along the ancient road the west wind blows,
 and in the west the sun goes down
 on people saddened, far, where no one knows.

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85. QU POETRY: Zhang Yanghao (1270-1329) Meditation on the Past at Tong Pass Tune: Sheep on Mountain Slope Cai 16.4 [QYSQ 1: 437]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	[中呂]山坡羊 潼關懷古 ([zhōng lǚ] shān pō yáng tóng guān huái gǔ)		[zhong lu] mountain slope sheep pass mountain-pass/concern mind/heart ancient
1	峰巒如聚 (fēng luán rú jù)	a	peak ridge as-if assemble
2	波濤如怒 (bō tāo rú nù)	a	ripple great-wave as-if angry
3	山河表裡潼關路 (shān hé biǎo lǐ tóng guān lù)	a	mountain river exterior interior Tong Pass
4	望西都 (wàng xī dū)	b	road
5	意躊躇 (yì chóu-chú)	b	expect/gaze west capital
6	傷心秦漢經行處 (shāng xīn qín hàn jīng xíng chù)	a	meaning/desire hesitate-hesitate
7	宮闕萬間都做了土 (gōng què wàn jiān dōu zuò liǎo tǔ)	a	injure heart Qin Han pass/classics walk location
8		x	palace watchtower ten-thousand
9		a	room/between-gap all make finish dust/earth
10	興 (xīng)	x	rise
11	百姓苦 (bǎi xìng kǔ)	a	common-people/hundred clan hardship
	亡 (wáng)		die/flee/lose
	百姓苦 (bǎi xìng kǔ)		common-people/hundred clan hardship
1	贏 都變做了土 輸 都變做了土 (yíng / dōu biàn zuò liǎo tǔ / shū / dōu biàn zuò liǎo tǔ)	a	win all become achieve dust lose all become achieve dust/earth
2	疾 也是天氣差 遲 也是天氣差 (jí / yě shì tiān qì chāi / chí / yě shì tiān qì chāi)	x	sickness also is heavens/weather send/message slow also is heavens/weather send/message
1	君 乾送了 民 乾送了 (jūn / gān sòng liǎo / mín / gān sòng liǎo)	x	monarch in-vain deliver finish people in vain deliver finish
2	功 也是不長久 名 也是不長久 (gōng / yě shì bù cháng jiǔ / míng / yě shì bù cháng jiǔ)	a	glory also is not long period fame also is not long period

Together ridge and mountains thrust,
in time are all to wave and tempest lost.

Between the hills and river runs
the road across the high Tong pass
and on that western capital of late

5. I gaze and hesitate:

The Qin and Han: they both are past:

the towers, ten thousand rooms and palaces:
they are as dust.

Kingdoms rise:

the people suffer, first to last.

10. Kingdoms fall:

the people suffer, first to last.

Great realms are won,

but all achievements turn to dust:

Sicknesses the very sky will sow:

that destiny is heaven's too.

What emperors strive for, all is vain:

deliverance but ends in naught.
15. Glory too, that soon is past,
and fame as well: it will not last.

Comment

Zhang Yanghao hailed from Shandong and was a prolific writer essays, Ci and Qu poetry. Recommended to office, he was demoted and subsequently dismissed after angering superiors with his criticism of government policies. He was later reappointed to important posts like the Ministry of Rites, but worked himself to death in 1329 when put in charge of relief work for the drought-stricken central Yellow River basin.

The poetry shows a high order of artistry and an abiding concern for the common people's welfare. He is famous for both, but is probably best known for his 'Meditation on the Past at Tong Pass'.

With a little slant rhyme, the translation replicates the aaaabbaa xaxa ax xa rhyme scheme of the original.

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86. QU POETRY: Guan Yunshi (1286-1324): On Separation No. 4. (Tune Clear River) Cai C16.8 [QYSQ 1:370]

Traditional Chinese and (inyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
[雙調] 清江引 惜別 ([shuāng diào] qīng jiāng yīn xī bié)		[Shuang diao key] clear river reluctant part
1	若還與他相見時 (ruò huán yǔ tā xiāng jiàn shí)	a if yet and him each-other see when
2	道個真傳示 (dào gè zhēn chuán shì)	a path/speak this really pass on reveal
3	不是不修書 (bù shì bù xiū shū)	x not be not write letter
4	不是無才思 (bù shì wú cái sī)	a not be not talent think
5	繞清江買不得天樣紙 (rào qīng jiāng mǎi bù dé tiān yàng zhǐ)	a circle clear river buy not obtain sky like-this paper

So if we met again, or some such stuff,
 I'd show I'm not his blowsy bit of rough.
 Like the best of them, I'd craft a letter
 that no one reading it could long rebuff,
 but for paper,
 circling on the long Clear River,
 the sky itself is not enough.

Comment

Guan Yunshi was a Uyghur poet who attended the Hanlin Academy. He later gave up his official position and lived in seclusion, selling medicine in the city of Qiantang. His 79 poems, arranged in 8 sequences, are mostly about poetry, wine, pleasure, and the love of men and women. His mastery of Chinese allowed him to use individual speeches to enliven dramatic scenes, an accomplishment that sets him apart from other Sanqu writers.

The translation reproduces the line lengths and rhyme scheme (aaxaa) of the original.

If and when we meet again
 what clear intent I'd give him then.
 Not on paper would I write
 lest he think me none too bright,
 but like the circling river pen
 the words on heaven out of sight.

Or, better:

So if we'd meet, or some such stuff,
 I'd prove I'm not his bit of rough,

On fine paper I would write,
that no sharp thinking can rebuff,
but for paper on the long Clear River
the sky itself is not enough.

And, respecting line lengths:

So if we met again, or some such stuff,
I sure would show I'm not his bit of rough.
My talents more than equal to a letter
that not a toff like him could long rebuff,
but for paper,
 circling on the long Clear River,
 the sky itself is not enough.

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8. CI POETRY

8.1. Characteristics of Qu Poetry

From Tang times onwards, new music forms from central Asia flooded into China and became popular at all social levels. The lyrics to this banquet music (*Yanyue*) were often created and sung by women, both ladies of the court and of the entertainment quarters. They were taken up by the literati, becoming short lyrics (*Xiaoling*) or extended piece (*Manci*). The poems were written to popular tunes, hundreds of them, now largely lost but prescribing the number of characters to the lines, the placement of rhymes and pattern of tones. It was very far from 'free verse', therefore, but looser than regulated verse, and capable of accommodating colloquial elements, 'empty words' and a closer-knit syntax. Moreover, unlike regulated verse, which can only move from the present to the universal and back again, Ci verse can move more freely between past, present and imagined time, and accommodate snippets of dialogue or actual speech.

For translation purposes, Ci poetry is quietly musical, with some ghost of the catchy tunes they were once sung to. Tone patterns linger on, but they are not prescriptive, serving more to emphasize the tunes concerned. Rhyming is universal, often tight. Stanzas usually mark a change in meter, rhyme, setting or mood.

The piece immediately below was written by the last emperor of the southern Tang, one of the small kingdoms that flourished the Five Dynasties period between the Tang and Song empires. Li Yu was in fact taken prisoner by the Song emperor and murdered, but is credited with broadening the thematic range of Ci poetry, and making it more personal. The rhyme change usually coincides with a change in meter, setting or mood, moreover, an important feature known as *huan tou*. Note that all lines are rhymed, incidentally, unlike those in Unregulated Shi that generally rhymed only on the even-numbered lines. Tone patterns also apply, but are not shown because they cannot be duplicated in English.

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87. CI POETRY: XIAOLING. Li Yu : To the Tune 'Crows Call at Night'. Cai C12.1 Li Yu (937-78) [QWDC 4.450]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	烏夜啼 (wū yè tí)		crow night call
1	無言獨上西樓 (wú yán dú shàng xī lóu)	a	no word alone climb west pavilion
2	月如鉤 (yuè rú gōu)	a	moon like hook
3	寂寞梧桐深院鎖深秋 (jì mò wú tóng shēn yuàn suǒ shēn qiū)	a	lonely lonely wu-tong deep courtyard lock deep autumn
4	剪不斷 (jiǎn bú duàn)	b	cut not break
5	理還亂 (lǐ huán luàn)	b	order still confusion
6	是離愁 (shì lí chóu)	a	is leave sorrow
7	別是一般滋味在心頭 (bié shì yì bān zī wèi zài xīn tóu)	a	another is one sort taste/feeling in heart mind

I climb up, quiet and alone;
to linger in the west pavilion.
A silver hook now hangs the moon,

and in the courtyard round I see,
the ever lonely wutang trees
lock the autumn in their air.

Hurt, the heart, it does not break,
nor, smothered over, does it take
on the happiness it wore.
Parting, grief: all new flavors where
the heart feels other than before.

Comment

Li Yu (known before 961 as Li Congjia) was the last emperor of the Southern Tang dynasty before it was absorbed by the Song. Li Congjia was not the heir apparent and tried to remain inconspicuous by focusing on the arts. He loved poetry, painting and music, and was encouraged in these by his father, who was a noted poet. At the age of 17 he made a happy marriage with the lady Zhou Ehuang, who was also multi-talented in the arts. In 955, a year after Li Congjia's marriage, the Southern Tang was invaded by the Later Zhou dynasty, and lost its territories to the north. Its emperor was demoted to king. Palace coups removed opposition and the king himself abnegated on the grounds of ill health. Li Congjia became emperor, against a younger brother and courtiers who regarded Li too dissolute and weak to rule effectively. Li Yu reigned

from 961 to 976, but the prognostications were borne out by events. Li spent more time with Zhou Ehuang and then her younger sister than attending to state affairs, placating the Song with tribute and flattery. But the inevitable could not be delayed forever, and in 976 the Song annexed the Southern Tang, imprisoning its ruler and having him poisoned two years later.

The original is rhymed aaabbaa, the translation uses slant rhyme and internal rhyme more: end rhymes are aaxbbcc.

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88. CI POETRY: XIAOLING: Li Yu (937-78): To the Tune 'Beautiful Lady Yu'. Cai C12.7 [QWDC 4.444]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	虞美人 (yú měi rén)		Yu beautiful person
1	春花秋月何時了 (chūn huā qiū yuè hé shí liǎo)	a	spring flower autumn moon what time finish
2	往事知多少 (wǎng shì zhī duō shǎo)	a	past matter know much few
3	小樓昨夜又東風 (xiǎo lóu zuó yè yòu dōng fēng)	b	small house/pavilion yesterday night again east wind
4	故國不堪回首月明中 (gù guó bù kān huí shǒu yuè míng zhōng)	b	former country not endure circle head moon
5	雕闌玉砌應猶在 (diāo lán yù qì yīng yóu zài)	c	bright in
6	只是朱顏改 (zhǐ shì zhū yán gǎi)	d	engrave balustrade jade lay-stones must still exist
7	問君能有幾多愁 (wèn jūn néng yǒu jǐ duō chóu)	d	only is vermilion face change
8	恰似一江春水向東流 (qià sì yì jiāng chūn shuǐ xiàng dōng liú)		ask lord can be how-much many sorrow just like one river spring water toward east flow

Spring flowers and the autumn moon
when won't their terms be added to?
Matters past, how many, few?
Last night in the small pavilion
it was the east wind came again,
I could not bear to turn my head,
towards the moon-lit country then.
Carved balustrade and fine jade stairs
will still be there, the ones we knew,
and only youth's bright colors dim their hue.
I ask my lord how there could be
this load of sorrow so increased,
already heavy as the spring's
long flood of waters, flowing east.

Comment

Li Yu was a great devotee of Ci poetry, though his style is closer to the Tang. He had devoted much of his time to pleasure seeking and literature, and this is reflected in the early poems. A sadder tone prevailed after the death of his wife in 964, and the best-known poems were composed when Li was a prisoner of the Song, reflecting on past glories. He was poisoned by the Song emperor Taizong, in 978, after writing a poem lamented the destruction of his empire and the rape of his second wife Empress Zhou the Younger by the Song emperor.

Li Yu broadened the scope of Ci poetry to include history and philosophy, and introduced the two-stanza form that made great use of contrasts between longer lines of nine characters and shorter

ones of three and five. Only 45 of his Ci poems survive, but his story remains popular in Cantonese opera.

The original is rhymed *aa bb aa cc*. The translation follows this scheme and reflects the character length of lines.

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Literary Criticism

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89. CI POETRY: XIAOLING: Wen Tingyun: (813-870) To
the Tune "On the Water Clock at Night" [QWDC 2.210]
Cai C.12.4

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	更漏子 (gēng lòu zǐ)		water-clock night
1	玉鑪香 (yù lú xiāng)	x	jade burner fragrance
2	紅蠟淚 (hóng là lèi)	a	red wax tears
3	偏照畫堂秋思 (piān zhào huà táng qiū sī)	a	contrary reflect picture hall autumn consider
4	眉翠薄 (méi cuì bó)	x	eyebrow blue-green meager
5	鬢雲殘 (bìn yún cán)	b	hair-on-temples cloud injure
6	夜長衾枕寒 (yè cháng qīn zhěn hán)	b	night long/always coverlet pillow cold
7	梧桐樹 (wú tóng shù)	c	wu- tong tree
8	三更雨 (sān gēng yǔ)	c	third watch rain
9	不道離情正苦 (bú dào lí qíng zhèng kǔ)	c	not know/way leave feelings just/straight
10	一葉葉 (yí yè yè)	x	bitter one leaf leaf
11	一聲聲 (yì shēng shēng)	d	one voice/sound voice/sound
12	空階滴到明 (kòng jiē dī dào míng)	d	empty step drip till bright

From incense burner, worthy jade,
these tears of bright red tallow fall:
unwelcome comes
the painted autumn in the hall.

In time the brightest eyebrows fade,
and nebulous as clouds the hair:
unwarmed the quilt is left the long night through.

For all that wutong trees will pay their court,
and hard, unpausing is the third-watch rain:
there's worse, the bitterness of which I speak, the thought

of being lost to you, to gaze on ground
hear leaf on leaf, soft sound on sound,
till, emptily, the dawn comes round.

Comment

Wen Tingyun was born in Taiyuan around 812, a descendant of a prime minister in the early Tang Dynasty. He was interested in literature, but the death of his father brought hard times. Eventually, Wen spent more time in the women's quarters, often helping others to cheat the examinations. Belatedly, with the change of emperor, Wen was recommended in 866 for the post of Instructor of the State Sons' University. Unfortunately, to prevent

the unfair treatment he had suffered, Wen began to reform the examination system, making assessments fairer and more open, a move that damaged the interests of the powerful and caused Wen to be demoted. He died shortly afterwards.

The poem's abandoned woman theme is depicted first by the interior scene and then the exterior, both rather bleak. The 'tears' are an example of 'verse eyes': imputing human qualities to inanimate objects, and the 偏照 (piān : contrary or unbidden) in line 3, and 正 (zhèng: just or straight) in line 9 are empty words (*xuzi*) that lack referents but add to the emotional impact. The rhyme scheme of the translation is similar to that of original (the *huan tou* that comes in line 9), but not exact: abbaxx cxcddd in the translation and xaaxbb cccxdd in the original.

The Manci or longer Ci poem appears in the Song Dynasty, particularly with Lui Yong, who married the rhymed prose of Fu poetry with everyday spoken language. Many thought that his language excessively low for poetry, and Su Shih (1037-1101), the leading polymath of his age, wrote something closer to Shih, dignified but also sensitive to the finer aspects of real life.

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90. CI POETRY: XIAOLING: Wen Tingyun: (813-870) To the Tune "Southern Tune" [QWDC 2.210] Cai C.12.3 [QWDC 7.893]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	南歌子 其二 (nán gē zǐ qí èr)		south song number two
1	自從君去後 (zì cóng jūn qù hòu)	x	since from lord/you go/leave after
2	無心戀別人 (wú xīn liàn bié rén)	a	no heart love another person
3	夢中面上指痕新 (mèng zhōng miàn shàng zhǐ	a	dream in face on finger scar new
4	hén xīn)	x	gauze belt/ribbon together heart self bind
5	羅帶同心自綰 (luó dài tóng xīn zì wǎn)	a	by rough son tread break skirt
	被蠻兒踏破裙 (bèi mán ér tà pò qún)		
6	蟬鬢朱簾亂 (chán bìn zhū lián luàn)	x	cicada temples/hair vermilion screen
7	金釵舊股分 (jīn chāi jiù gǔ fēn)	a	confusion
8	紅妝垂淚哭郎君 (hóng zhuāng chuí lèi kū	x	gold hairpin old share divide
9	láng jūn)	x	red make-up droop tear weep young-woman
10	妾是南山松柏 (qiè shì nán shān sōng bó)	a	lord
	無心戀別人 (wú xīn liàn bié rén)		I-concubine am south mountain pine cypress no heart love another person

Since my lord has gone away
I have no heart to love another.
If nail marks on my face appear
they're only as such dreams uncover.
I thought the sashes tied
would serve to bind us close together.
5. A boy that on my dress has stood
has wrecked the bounty of my lover.

My hair's disordered, out of place,
the hair-pin broken,
and much confusion that
vermilion screens are made to cover,
and tears, such running tears,
the which the powders have to smother.
Your concubine is faithful as
the cypresses on Southern Hills.
10. She has no heart, my lord, to love another.

Comment

Wen did more than anyone to make Ci poetry popular in Tang times, and later generations saw him as the founder of the genre. The so-called 'Flowery School of Ci' concentrated on matters of the heart, boldly evoking love affairs between men and women, and was no doubt an escape from the troubled times.

The first line sets the theme and the implied reproaches. The 'boy' of line 5 is just someone mischievous: other manuscripts have 'monkey'. It's an intimate address, as shown by 郎君 (láng jūn: young-woman lord) used by a woman to her husband. Cosmetics were popular in all classes of wealthy women. Cypressess (and pines trees in the text) were emblems of integrity and faithfulness. {2}

The original is tied together with close rhyming: xaaxa xaaxa. The translation is similar, though with a slant rhyme rather than a non-rhyme in line 4: xaaaa xaaxa, where 'a' is a feminine rhyme adding some musical lift to the lines.

Earlier draft:

Since, my lord, you went away
I have no heart to love another
I dream that scratches on my face would say
sashes bind us close together
but someone broke my dress's sway.

Behind vermilion screens there's but confusion
my hair's awry, it's golden pin is broken;
My makeup streaked with tears, and, in conclusion,
your concubine of mountain cypresses has spoken:
to love another mere illusion.

Cicada hair vermilion screens must cover,
my golden pin in old divides is broken;
a makeup that the streaks of tears must smother:
your concubine of faithful pines has spoken:
I have no heart to love another

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91. CI POETRY: XIAOLING: Yan Shu: (991-1055) To the Tune "Silk Washing Stream" [QSC 1.89] Cai C.12.9

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	浣溪沙 (huàn xī shā)		wash stream sand
1	一曲新詞酒一杯 (yī qǔ xīn cí jiǔ yī bēi)	a	one song new lyrics wine one cup
2	去年天氣舊池臺 (qù nián tiān qì jiù chí tái)	a	last year sky/heavens weather old pond terrace/platform
3	夕陽西下幾時回 (xī yáng xī xià jǐ shí huí)	x	evening sun west descend what time return
4	無可奈何花落去 (wú kě nài hé huā luò qù)	a	not able cope/bear what flower fall go
5	似曾相識燕歸來 (sì cēng xiāng shí yàn guī lái)	a	seem once/already know swallow return come
6	小園香徑獨徘徊 (xiǎo yuán xiāng jìng dú pái huái)		small garden fragrant foot-path alone pace pace (irresolute back-and-forth)

A glass of wine and one new song, and its refrain,
the weather of last year upon this old pond terrace,
When will the westering sun return to heat again?
I cannot bear to think how fading blossoms fall,
but swallows come back, always, to this small plot known
for fragrant pathways, where I, pacing, pace alone.

Comment

Yan Shu was an infant prodigy, able to compose poems at five and passing the imperial examinations at fourteen. He became a noted poet, calligrapher and statesman of the Northern Song, rising smoothly in his career to become a member of the Hanlin Academy and prime minister to the emperor Renzong. His son was also a noted poet, and among Yan's pupils was the renowned poet, essayist and statesman Ouyang Xiu (1007-1072) {1}

Of the 10,000 Ci poems Yan reputedly composed, only 136 now remain, but these show a mastery of the Xiaoling in the Wanyue style, i.e. delicate and restrained. This poem has long been praised for its restraint, where 'not a word verbalizes complaint.' The first three lines are simple statements, not clearly related to each other, even in time: is this the present, or memories of a happier time? Then come the falling blossoms, a reference to time and beauty passing, in the outside world and the speaker's prospects. But the world goes on; the swallows will return, and the speaker will still be pacing the garden pathways thinking of what remains hidden from us.

The poem is rhymed axaxaa in the original and axaxaa in the translation.

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92. CI POETRY XIAOLING: Chen Weisong (1626-1682)

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	贺新郎 (hè xīn láng)		congratulate bridegroom
1	六年孤馆相偎傍 (liù nián gū guǎn xiāng wēi bàng)	a	six year lonely building each-other appearance cuddle close
2		a	most unforgettable
3	最难忘 (zuì nán wàng)	a	red fringe/flowers pillow side
4	红蕤枕畔 (hóng ruí zhěn pàn)	x	tears-in-the-eyes easy spread
5	泪花轻颺 (lèi huā qīng zhā)	x	bright thus all-life flower/spend candle/illuminate affair
	了尔一生花烛事 (le liǎo ěr yī shēng huā zhú shì)		
6	宛转妇随夫唱 (wǎn zhuǎn fù suí fū chàng)	a	meandering woman follow husband sing/call
7	只我罗衾寒似铁 (zhī wǒ luó qīn hán sì tiě)	x	only I gather quilt cold like iron/weapon
8	拥桃笙难得纱窗亮 (yōng táo shēng nán dé shā chuāng liàng)	a	hold peach mouth-organ scarce screen-window bright
9	休为我 (xiū wéi wǒ)	x	
10	再惆怅 (zài chóu chàng)	a	rest serve/because-of me again forlorn despair

Six years we have lived together:
 one house, one body, fonder yet
 of things that none forget.

I see the red-fringed pillow side,
 the tears, the reckless tears you shed.

May the tear-bright eyes I saw
 candle light the lives we led,
 that, if she wanders, you will stay
 the faithful husband, knowing yet

however cold our quilted bed,
 that now you cannot hear me play
 the pipes to welcome in the day:
 still I shan't regret,
 though here left desolate.

Comment

Chen Weisong was born to Ming royalty in Yixing, Jiangsu but became a Qing official when the Manchus replaced the Ming administration. He in fact passed the Qing examinations but subsequently became a prolific and noted poet, one of the greatest in Chinese history, mixing with many celebrated names in this Ming-Qing period. Chen wrote some 460 Shi poems and 1,629 Ci works.

Though Chen Weisong married and had children by wives and concubines, his deepest relationship was with boy-actor Yun Lang. The relationship was well known, indeed famous among contemporaries, and an artist by the name of Chen Hu painted a portrait of Yun after a bath. The picture inspired a collection of some 160 poems by almost eighty literary celebrities and officials of the period, including Gong Dingzi, Song Wan, and You Tong. The relationship continued after the wedding, and Yun remained Chen's primary partner until his death in 1675.

The poem has three sections. Lines 1-6 are reminiscence, line 7 asks the partner to be faithful to his new wife, and lines 8-12 return to the earlier theme of staying faithful to their memories. The short, broken lines need close rhyming for structure: aaaxx axaxa in the original and aaxaaaaxaa in the translation.

An initial draft:

It's six years that we've been together,
 in all things too a constant set,
which I can't forget.

On the red-fringed pillow side,
what tears, what reckless tears you shed.

May the tear-bright eyes I've known
 candle-light the life we led:
wherever she may go, still stay
 the faithful husband, cold though yet,

iron-cold the quilt of our once mutual bed,
and not again you'll hear me play
 the wood-pipes leading into day:
Don't think because of you
I rest, though deep in debt,
I'm lost and desolate.

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93. MANCI POETRY: Xin Qiji (1140-1207) To the Tune "Eight Beats of a Ganzhou Song" [QSC 1:43] Cai C.13.1

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	八聲甘州 (bā shēng gān zhōu)		eight sound Ganzhou
1	對瀟瀟暮雨灑江天 (duì xiāo xiāo mù yǔ sǎ	x	face howling pounding evening rain river sky
2	jiāng tiān)	a	one of wash clear autumn
3	一番洗清秋 (yī fān xǐ qīng qiū)	x	gradually frost wind bleak miserable
4	漸霜風淒慘 (jiàn shuāng fēng qī cǎn)	x	close/mountain-pass river cold fall
5	關河冷落 (guān hé lěng luò)	a	remnant shine on/replace/same-time storied-
6	殘照當樓 (cán zhào dāng lóu)	x	building
7	是處紅衰翠減 (shì chù hóng shuāi cuì jiǎn)	a	is place red decline blue-green decrease
8	苒苒物華休 (rǎn rǎn wù huá xiū)	x	pass pass thing magnificent stop/rest
9	惟有長江水 (wéi yǒu cháng jiāng shuǐ)	a	only have/is long river water
	無語東流 (wú yǔ dōng liú)		not-have speech/language east flow
10	不忍登高臨遠 (bù rěn dēng gāo lín yuǎn)	x	not bear ascend high face far
11	望故鄉渺邈 (wàng gù xiāng miǎo miǎo)	x	hope/gaze instance/old homeland
			vast/vague/far vast/vague/far
12	歸思難收 (guī sī nán shōu)	a	return think difficult receive/put-away
13	數年來蹤跡 (tàn nián lái zōng jì)	x	sigh year come footprint trace
14	何事苦淹留 (hé shì kǔ yān liú)	a	what matter/thing hardship/pain delay/flood
15	想佳人、妝樓顙望 (xiǎng jiā rén zhuāng lóu	x	remain
	yóng wàng)		wish/think beautiful person, makeup building
16		a	grand/stern want
17	誤幾回、天際識歸舟 (wù jǐ huí tiān jì shí guī	x	mistake several circle, sky border know
18	zhōu)	a	return boat
	爭知我、倚闌干處 (zhēng zhī wǒ yǐ lán gān		how know I, lean balustrade clean/dry place
	chǔ)		proper this concentrate worry-about
	正恁凝愁 (zhèng nèn níng chóu)		

I face the drench and drench of rain
on river and the evening sky
that, cooling, cleanses autumn's murk away,
but gradually the winds turn colder, frostier,
as are the waters in bare mountain passes.
5. The last brief lights on buildings stay,
but everywhere go reds to greens, the flowers fade,
all things magnificent now decay,
And only the waters of the long great river run
eastward, soundless, on their way.

10. I cannot bear to climb up some great height and see
the vague and distant vistas of my homeland, though
returning thoughts still make me pay
and heavily for misbegotten years.
So tell me why I should delay.
15. Perhaps there's someone beautiful,
who from a window watches boats
return from voyages, and thinks
mistakenly, that mine comes back today.
How could she know that in this person,
leant on balconies, how deep
is sorrow settled in his thoughts.

Comment

Xin Qiji was a soldier-poet who fought the Jurchen that had occupied China's northern provinces, where, in fact, he was born. His patriotism was inspired by his grandfather, and though he failed the imperial examinations twice at the capital (Jin capital: the Jurchens were rapidly Sinicised), he raised a small force to fight alongside the Southern Song led by Geng Jing. Some battles were won, but Geng Jin was betrayed by the traitor Zhang Anguo, and executed. With fifty men, Xin fought his way into the Jurchen camp, and brought Zhang Anguo back for punishment to the Southern Song emperor. The action won Xi a place at the Song court, but his aggressive approach to the Jurchen was at odds with the court's appeasement, and his 1161-81 appointments never came to much. He then improved the peasants' lot in the area he was administering, and attempted to raise his own army, for which he was promptly dismissed. He retired to Jiangxi, and perfected the Ci poetry for which he became famous. {1}

The poem falls into two parts. The first sets the scene, introduced by 'face' here translated as 'I turn', where the speaker's gaze is progressively deeper into the autumn setting: storm, winds mountain passes, balconies and fading flowers. The section ends with the speaker looking over the Yangtze river, which introduces the silent monologue of the concluding part, where the speaker is wondering if the woman is also gazing out over the same river and thinking of him. {2}

Whereas Shi poetry is structured by the couplet, Ci poetry is governed by the less definite strophe. The strophe is simply an indefinite number of lines that share a center of focus, and is therefore a more flexible device. Ci poems can thus describe matters from different viewpoints in time and character. The first part of the poem here features one viewpoint, and lines 10-11, 12-13, 14-15 and 16-18 each make up separate viewpoints. Viewpoints are assisted by rhyme, in the original and translation being xaxxaxaxxaxaxaxx. {2}

An earlier version:

I turn to face the howling autumn
rain and river and the sky:
the autumn will be clean
and brighter when they're gone.
But then come keener winds, that turn

the wide surroundings bleak and sad:
how cold the rivers in the mountain passes,
though light on balconies still briefly shone.
Bit by bit the red and green decays,
and flowers' magnificence is surely gone.
Only the Yangtze waters run
silently and eastwards on.

I cannot bear to climb and from that height
gaze out at homelands vague and far away,
for in my head return has always run:
I sigh at all wanderings through the years
and wonder what these hardships have done.
There's someone beautiful and from a window watching
boats returning, thinking my return's begun.
how could she know I lean upon this railing here,
and in the pain and heartache we are one.

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94. MANCI POETRY: Su Shi / Su Dongpo: To the Tune 'Prelude to the River Tune' C13.2 [QSC 1:280]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	水調歌頭 (shuǐ diào gē tóu)		water tune song style
1	明月幾時有 (míng yuè jǐ shí yǒu)	x	bright moon how much time exist
2	把酒問青天 (bǎ jiǔ wèn qīng tiān)	a	raise cup ask blue sky
3	不知天上宮闕 (bù zhī tiān shàng gōng què)	x	not know sky above palace watchtower
4	今夕是何年 (jīn xī shì hé nián)	a	today evening be what year
5	我欲乘風歸去 (wǒ yù chéng fēng guī qù)	b	I wish ride wind return go
6	又恐瓊樓玉宇 (yòu kǒng qióng lóu yù yǔ)	b	again afraid beautiful tower jade
7	高處不勝寒 (gāo chù bú shèng hán)	a	room/universe
8	起舞弄清影 (qǐ wǔ nòng qīng yǐng)	x	high place not stand/success cold
9	何似在人間 (hé sì zài rén jiān)	a	rise dance play clear shadow how see in person space
10	轉朱閣 (zhuǎn zhū gé)	c	circle vermillion pavilion
11	低綺戶 (dī qǐ hù)	b	lower beautiful door
12	照無眠 (zhào wú mián)	a	illuminate no sleep
13	不應有恨 (bù yīng yǒu hèn)	x	not should have regret
14	何事長向別時圓 (hé shì cháng xiàng bié shí yuán)	a	how matter always turn-toward leave when
15		c	circle
16	人有悲歡離合 (rén yǒu bēi huān lí hé)	x	person have sorrow joy leave join/union
17	月有陰晴圓缺 (yuè yǒu yīn qīng yuán quē)	a	moon have cloudy clear round/wax
18	此事古難全 (cǐ shì gǔ nán quán)	x	scarce/wane
19	但願人長久 (dàn yuàn rén cháng jiǔ)	a	this matter ancient difficult complete
	千里共嬋娟 (qiān lǐ gòng chán juān)		but wish person forever long thousand li share moon goddess

How many times, bright moon, have you been there?
I raise a glass and wonder at the deep blue sky,
would ask the glittering palaces, what year
the night down here assumes up there.
For I would ride the heavenly winds, would come and go,
were not that jade, ethereal universe I fear
too elevated and too cold for me.

I'd rise and dance about with my clear shadow, which
is different, surely, in this world below.
Here in crimson hall,
beneath the ornate door,
the moon must hinder my sleep —
not that I'd begrudge it more
propensity to steal away,
not show me when it's shining full.

We humans learn to meet and part, in joy and sorrow,
when moon, in all conditions, can but wax and wane.
Down here is difficult, it's never right,
I wish us both a long companionship across
a thousand miles of supernatural light.

Comment

Su Shi, who called himself Su Dongpo, came from an illustrious literati family, and at 17 passed the jinshi examination that opened the way to highest government office. For twenty years, 1060-80, Su Shi held various posts across China, often being commended for local improvements, but the reforming faction headed by Wang Anshi then contrived to have him exiled to Huangzhou in Hubei. Out of employment for the period 1080-86, Su Shi lived on a farm called Dongpo ('eastern slope'), meditated on Buddhist themes, wrote poetry and practised the calligraphy for which he became famous. With the change of government, Su Shi was recalled to the capital, but then exiled again, 1094-1100, to Huizhou and Hainan Island. A pardon came and a reassignment to Chengdu, but Su Shi died en route. Su Shi was married three times: to Wang Fu (1039-65), to Wang Runzhi (1048-93) and to Wang Zhaoyu (1062-95), writing for all them some of China's best known poetry. {1}

Su Shi, who called himself Su Dongpo, was one of China's most gifted writers, noted also for essays and calligraphy, but whose relations with the imperial were problematic. He could write beautifully in all genres, but here he is fusing the Shi and Ci styles. {2}

Ci poetry could be used for matters too intense and personal for Shi poetry. This poem starts with a personal voice that securely sets the scene, one that deliberately echoes Li Bai's *Questioning the Moon with a Wineglass in my Hand* (Poem 7E) and Qu Yuan's (340-278 BC) *Questions for Heaven*. Like Li Bai, Su would also ride the heavens, but with less confidence, fearing the vertigo and sleeplessness that might ensue, even in the most palatial surroundings (crimson hall, decorated door). Nonetheless, since down here is difficult, where men and meet in happiness or leave in sorrow, that life has affinities with the moon that can only wax and wane. {2} The original is rhymed xaxabbaxa xxaxaxxaxa, i.e. reasonably closely using only two rhyme words, but the translation, although similarly arranged (axaabax xbxcdcx xdx) needs four.

If we are freer with meaning and line lengths, we could write

How many times, bright moon, have you been there?
I raise a glass and wonder of the deep blue sky
and realms of glittering palaces what year
the evening has up there.
For I would ride the winds, and come and go,
were not that jade, ethereal universe I fear

both far too high and cold for me.
 I'd rise to dance with my own shadow
 but ask how different is the world below.
 And going round the crimson hall,
 beneath the decorated door,
 would leave me sleepless through the night;
 not that I'd begrudge the moonlight more
 propensity to fail but then return to full.
 Men too may meet and part, in joy and sorrow,
 where moon, in all conditions, can but wax and wane.
 Down here is difficult, it's never right,
 so for us both I wish a shared companionship,
 a thousand miles of supernatural light.

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95. MANCI: SONG Su-Shi (1037-1101) Dreaming of My Deceased Wife on the Night of the 20th Day of the First Month. Tune: River Town

	Traditional Chinese and Pinyin		Word for Word Rendering
	江城子·乙卯正月二十日夜记梦 (jiāng chéng zǐ · yǐ mǎo zhèng yuè èr shí rì yè jì mèng)		river town child: fifty-second year first-month twenty day night remember dream
1	十年生死两茫茫 (shí niǎn shēng sǐ liǎng máng máng)	a	ten year live die both boundless
2	不思量自难忘 (bù sī liáng zì nán wàng)	a	not think measure self difficult forget
3	千里孤坟无处话凄凉 (qiān lǐ gū fén wú chǔ huà qī liáng)	a	thousand li lonely grave not reside talk sad
4	纵使相逢应不识 (zòng shǐ xiāng féng yīng bù shí)	x	cold
5	尘满面鬓如霜 (chén mǎn miàn bìn rú shuāng)	a	even if each-other meet-by-chance respond not know dust fill face hair/temples as-if frost
6	夜来幽梦忽还乡 (yè lái yōu mèng hū huán xiāng)	a	night come remote dream suddenly return home
7	小轩窗正梳妆 (xiǎo xuān chuāng zhèng shū zhuāng)	a	small pavilion window proper wash and dress
8	相顾无言唯有泪千行 (xiāng gù wú yán wéi yǒu lèi qiān háng)	a	each-other look-after not speak only tears thousand row
9	料得年年肠断处 (liào dé nián nián cháng duàn chǔ)	x	expect get every year intestines/heart break reside
10	明月夜短松冈 (míng yuè yè duǎn sōng gāng)	a	bright moon night short pine harbour

The interval of ten years on
in life and death is limitless.
The past I do no brood on much,
but all the same do not forget
how far your grave: a thousand li,
and all too lonely, cold
unspoken of, and comfortless.
But if we met again, perhaps by chance,
I think you would not know the fret
that makes my face so full of earth,
or hair seem wisps of frostiness.

At night, in some far dreaming, I'm
returned back home, and see you yet
at some small window making up
or trying on a fine new dress.
And then we'd see each other, would
not speak but shed a thousand tears
of conjoined grief and happiness.
So, while the year on year must add
to what the sadnesses beget,
I see the darkness, moon, and pines
so small, that guard you, nonetheless.

Comment

Su Shi was one of China's most accomplished literary figures, leaving behind a great mass of still-read letters, essays and poems, plus paintings and calligraphy. Some 2,700 poems survive today. Most are in the Shi genre, but Su Shi is best remembered for his 350 Ci genre poems. He founded the Haofang School, which combined spontaneity, objectivity and vivid descriptions of natural phenomena, often on historical events or Buddhist themes. Su also wrote essays on politics and governance, which contributed to his periods of imperial disfavour.

Su Shi was married three times: to Wang Fu (1039-65), to Wang Runzhi (1048-93) and to Wang Zhaoyu (1062-95), writing for all them some of China's best known poetry.

It's difficult to find the right measure for this poem. The great majority of lines have 6 characters, but line 9 has seven characters, and lines 3 and 8 have nine apiece. It's possible to represent most lines as hexameters, if by hexameters we mean lines of varying rhythm that total six stresses: the true hexameter is the most unwieldy and unmusical of English metres and so quite unsuitable for Ci poetry. Rhyme is a further difficulty. The greatly gifted Su Shi employs the same rhyme throughout: aaaxa, aaaxa. English is not so lavish with rhyme, but we can break the long lines and use a similar ababa rhyme scheme. This has the merit of making words earn their keep: even the 'short' (短 : duǎn) is saying something.

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96. MANCI: SONG Li Qingzhao (1084-1151) Tune: One Beat Followed by Another, a Long Tune Cai C13.4 [QSC 2:932]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	聲聲慢 (shēng shēng màn)		sound sound slow
1	尋尋覓覓 (xún xún mì mì)	a	search search seek seek
2	冷冷清清 (lěng lěng qīng qīng)	x	cold cold clear clear
3	悽悽慘慘戚戚 (qī qī cǎn cǎn qī qī)	a	mournful mournful miserable miserable grief
4	乍暖還寒時候 (zhà nuǎn huán hán shí hòu)	x	grief
5	最難將息 (zuì nán jiāng xī)	a	sudden warm return cold time period
6	三杯兩盞淡酒 (sān bēi liǎng zhǎn dàn jiǔ)	x	most difficult recuperate
7	怎敵他晚來風急 (zěn dí tā wǎn lái fēng jí)	a	three cup two small-cup insipid wine
8	雁過也 (yàn guò yě)	x	how resist/rival it evening come wind rapid
9	正傷心 (zhèng shāng xīn)	x	wild-goose cross/pass also/ending
10	卻是舊時相識 (què shì jiù shí xiāng shí)	a	proper/right injure heart but is old time mutual know
11	滿地黃花堆積 (mǎn dì huáng huā duī jī)	a	full ground yellow flower pile-up accumulate
12	憔悴損 (qiáo cuì sǔn)	x	haggard sad decrease
13	如今有誰堪摘 (rú jīn yǒu shéi kān zhāi)	a	as-if now have who/also endure take/pick
14	守著窗兒 (shǒu zhe chuāng ér)	x	guard (progress particle) window (son/suffix)
15	獨自怎生得黑 (dú zì zěn shēng dé hēi)	a	alone oneself how life obtain black/dark
16	梧桐更兼細雨 (wú tóng gēng jiān xì yǔ)	x	wu tong more simultaneous fine rain
17	到黃昏、點點滴滴 (dào huāng hūn diǎn diǎn)	a	until yellow dusk drop drop drip drip
18	dī dī)	a	this next/order/sequence -nth
19	這次第 (zhè cì dì)	a	how one (measure) worry-about word finish
	怎一箇愁字了得 (zěn yí gè chóu zì liǎo dé)		get

Searching, searching, so to seek
the clear, the cold and desolate,
in mournful, mournful sadness, sadness, grief on grief.
Some warmth returns but soon will come redoubled chill,
where care for self itself must cease.
A double cup, or three, of thin, insipid wine
from evenings' drench of wind and rain brings no relief.
I think the wild geese' flight
must break the stoutest heart
with old acquaintances recalled, of which they speak.

The yellow flowers accumulate: each lies
as though to yet increase
the width of sadness. Who's to pick them now? Each tries,
within the space of window's lease,
alone, to think of things to do before the evening dies.
And all the time, on wutong trees, the small rain falls
until the drip on drip on drip from yellow skies
have sequences, for which
no single word we say for sorrow will suffice.

Comment

Li Qingzhao was born to a family of scholar-officials in 1084, at Zhangqiu in modern Shandong province. She was unusually outgoing for such a background, and was already well known for her poetry before her marriage to Zhao Mingchen in 1101. From his death she never fully recovered, though continuing to publish his work and write her own in poetry that describes a woman of high society, and which is known for its marked elegance. Her earlier poetry was often critical of government policies, as indeed was the work published after the flight to Nanking, when she was briefly married to an 'abusive, gold-digging and worthless shyster'. The later poetry, for which she is known throughout China, was introspective, sincere and deeply personal. {1}

This poem is celebrated for its relentless repetition of sorrow: the word or its equivalent appears six times in line three, is illustrated throughout the poem, and appears again in the final line. Lines 1-10 set the mournful scene. Lines 11-19 ask what she is to do with her time now, or the life left to her. {2}

Only Ci poetry would allow such focus on sorrow and the repetition of imagery associated with sorrow. Greatly assisting the poem is the tight rhyming: *axaxaxaxa axaxaxaxa* in the original, and *axaxaxaxa bababxbxb* in the translation. {2}

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97. MANCI POETRY: Xin Qiji (1140-1207): To the Tune
'Groping for Fish' Cai C.13.6 [QSC 3:1867]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	摸魚兒 (mō yú-er)		grope fish /
1	更能消、幾番風雨 (gèng néng xiāo jǐ fān fēng	a	even-more can spend how many-fold wind
2	yǔ)	a	rain
3	匆匆春又歸去 (cōng cōng chūn yòu guī qù)	x	hastily hastily spring again return go
4	惜春長恨花開早 (xī chūn cháng hèn huā kāi	a	cherish/begrudge spring always regret
	zǎo)		flower open early
	何況落紅無數 (hé kuàng luò hóng wú shù)		how situation fall red not count
5	春且住 (chūn qiě zhù)	a	spring for-time-being stay
6	見說道、天涯芳草迷歸路 (jiàn shuō dào tiān	a	appear speak way heaven end fragrant
	yá fāng cǎo mí guī lù)	a	grass confused return road
7	怨春不語 (yuàn chūn bù yǔ)	a	blame spring not speak
8	算只有殷勤 (suàn zhǐ yǒu yīn qín)	x	regard only eager diligent
9	畫簷蛛網 (huà yán zhū wǎng)	x	picture eaves spider web
10	盡日惹飛絮 (jìn rì rě fēi xù)	a	all day attract flying wadding/catkin
11	長門事 (cháng mén shì)	x	Long Gate matter
12	準擬佳期又誤 (zhǔn nǐ jiā qī yòu wù)	a	accurate plan beautiful time again
13	蛾眉曾有人妒 (é méi céng yǒu rén dù)	a	mistake/miss
			(moth eyebrow)/beautiful woman already
14	千金縱買相如賦 (qiān jīn zòng mǎi xiàng rú	a	have person envy
15	fù)	a	thousand gold even-if buy Xiang-ru
	脈脈此情誰訴 (mò mò cǐ qíng shéi sù)		rhapsody
			affectionate-lovingly this feeling who tell
16	君莫舞 (jūn mò wǔ)	a	lord don't dance
17	君不見、玉環飛燕皆塵土 (jūn bú jiàn yù huán	a	lord not see Yu- huan Fei- yan all dust earth
	fēi yàn jiē chén tǔ)		
18	閒愁最苦 (xián chóu zuì kǔ)	a	leisure worry-about most bitter-pain
19	休去倚危樓 (xiū qù yǐ wēi lóu)	x	don't go rely-on danger/unstable storied-
20	斜陽正在 (xié yáng zhèng zài)	x	house
21	煙柳斷腸處 (yān liǔ duàn cháng chù)	a	slant sun right in (that place)
			mist willow break intestines location

How many more must I outlast
of buffeting, the wind and rain?
Yet here, and all too brief, comes spring again.

So what is longed for most, the spring, is fastest lost,
and countless rich-hued blossoms fall away:
5. the springtime cannot stay.

The fragrant grass on heaven's rim, they say,
have urged it to delay.
So why no word still, pray?

I only see how diligent have been
the spiders' webs in painted eaves,

10. how catkins captivate the passing breeze.

A Tall Gate matter now
the stratagems you planned that were to error lost:
how much has beauty's moth-like lift of eyebrows cost?

A tender letter can be bought with gold, but how,
15. please deign to tell me, should the loving heart advance,
if, sir, you will not dance?

To dust the loveliest have gone,
the beautiful have lost all face,
and in unwanted leisure pace.
So do not trust what high walls crown,
20. for there it is the sun goes down
and saddened, musty willows take their place.

Comment

We have noted the military background of Xin Qiji in Poem 93, but here is something quite different, on the abandoned woman theme, a poem Xin wrote when transferred from Hubei to Hunan in 1179. Lines 1-5 lament the passing of spring. In lines 6-10 the woman urges the spring to delay, and introduces the notion of a response, which again appears in lines 11-13, now with the reason for her complaint: the envy of rivals. Then comes an allusion to the royal consort of the Emperor Wu (140-87 BC), who regained her lord's favor by getting the literati to write a poem on her behalf. But here it appears the ruse has failed: she has been slandered. The 賈 (zòng; even if) of line 14, denotes a helplessness. There is nothing more (lines 15-16) she can do. In lines 16 and 17 the tone changes, becomes peremptory: the 'sir' (君: jūn) is not respectful. Lines 17-18 are somewhat threatening. The same may happen to rulers, say lines 19-21: they too may be mourned only by saddened willows. Rhyme is again shaping the poem. The original rhymes aaxaaaaxxa xaaaaa aaxxa, a literary tour de force: the translation only achieves aabccccxdd ebbefgghhg. {2}

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98.MANCI POETRY: Xin Qiji : To the Tune 'Congratulating the Bridegroom' [QSC 3:1915] Cai C.13.5

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	賀新郎 (hè xīn láng)		congratulate bridegroom
1	甚矣吾衰矣 (shèn yǐ wú shuāi yǐ)	a	how much I decay how much
2	悵平生、交游零落 (chàng píng shēng jiāo yóu	x	regret all-one's-life, circle-of-friends wither
3	líng luò)	a	fall
4	只今餘幾 (zhǐ jīn yú jǐ)	x	only now remain how many
5	白髮空垂三千丈 (bái fà kōng chuí sān qiān	a	white hair empty hang-down three thousand
6	zhàng)	a	zhang
7	一笑人間萬事 (yí xiào rén jiān wàn shì)	x	one laugh person among ten-thousand thing
8	問何物、能令公喜 (wèn hé wù néng lìng	a	ask what thing can command public/duke
9	gōng xǐ)	x	like/happy
10	我見青山多嫵媚 (wǒ jiàn qīng shān duō wǔ	a	I see green/blue mountain so-many please
	mèi)		charm
	料青山、見我應如是 (liào qīng shān jiàn wǒ		expect green/blue mountain see me should
	yīng rú shì)		like this
	情與貌 (qíng yǔ mào)		feeling and appearance
	略相似 (luè xiāng sì)		plan appearance similar
11	一尊搔首東窗裡 (yì zūn sāo shǒu dōng	a	one cup scratch head east window interior
12	chuāng lǐ)	x	imagine Yuan ming Halting Cloud poem
13	想淵明、停雲詩就 (xiǎng yuān míng tíng yún	a	accomplish
14	shī jiù)	x	this time distinctive taste
15	此時風味 (cǐ shí fēng wèi)	a	river left deep drunk seek fame person
16	江左沉酣求名者 (jiāng zuǒ chén hān qiú	a	how know turbid wine wonderful
17	míng zhě)	x	essence/reason
18	豈識濁醪妙理 (qǐ shí zhuó láo miào lǐ)	a	turn/circle head call cloud fly wind rise
19	回首叫、雲飛風起 (huí shǒu jiào yún fēi fēng	x	not regret ancient people I not see
20	qǐ)	a	regret ancient people not see me wild that-
	不恨古人吾不見 (bú hèn gǔ rén wú bú jiàn)		is-all
	恨古人、不見吾狂耳 (hèn gǔ rén bú jiàn wú		know me who
	kuáng ěr)		two three son/child
	知我者 (zhī wǒ zhě)		
	二三子 (èr sān zǐ)		

How much, how very much, I have decayed.
Most friends, in life's poor carnival, have passed away:
how many not in good ground laid?
Ten thousand Zhang my white hair falls.

Adrift and shoddy

go our lives down here. I spurn the passing things that fade,
but what exists to make us happy, free from blame?
I look on long-appealing, fresh green mountains:

how beautifully they're
made.

Perhaps they find in me — who knows? —
a charming shade:

at heart and in the body
10. we are much the same.

At wine, I knock my head against the eastern window frame,
and think of Yuan Ming then,
his Halting Clouds laid out at last.
His mood is somewhat mine.
Unlike the southern Yangtze folk who only drink for fame

how could they know the essence of such thickened wine?

At this a summoned wind returns me to the ancient lore:
it's most regrettable I do not know the ancient people more,
nor they the dancing wildness of my past.

I doubt those knowing me
20. are more than two or three.

Comment

Xin Qiji was the most prolific writer of Ci poetry in the Song Dynasty, largely in the haofang style, but in a very free-ranging and sometimes confrontational manner. Some poems reflect on the dreams of youth, but his poems on the 'abandoned woman' theme are long, delicate and exceptionally restrained.

Here Xin is also confrontational, rather less than modest in declaring that he was born too late for the ancients to appreciate his work, and that only two or three among contemporary mediocrities can really know him. That boast (lines 17-18) in fact alludes to a similar one by Zhang Rong (444-497), and Xin simply adds 狂 (kuáng : arrogant) to the quotation. Yes, Xin sees himself as wild and arrogant, but with good reason. Though other folk (lines 14-15) crave fame, they have done nothing to deserve it, and while lines 11-13 refer to the poem by Tao Qian, Xin has not retired to the obscurity of the countryside. The poem is tightly structure by rhyme (axaxaaxaxa axaxaaxaxa in the original, but with more rhymewords in the translation: axabacxaa cxdcdeexff: English is not so generous), but the strength of the Ci genre comes in its ability to abruptly change tempo. In line 17 comes Xin's contempt for contemporaries, which carries through, ignoring the break in line 18, to the poem's ending in two brisk lines.
{2}

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99. MANCI POETRY: Attributed to Yue Fe (Song) but probably Ming (1502): Man Jiang Hong: Tune: River of Blossoms

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	滿江紅 (mǎn jiāng hóng)		full river red
1	怒髮衝冠, (nù fà chōng guān,) 憑欄處, (píng lán chǔ) 瀟瀟雨歇 (xiāo xiāo yǔ xiē)	x x a	anger hair rush hat lean-against railing stay deep deep rain stop
2	抬望眼, (tái wàng yǎn,) 仰天長嘯, (yǎng tiān cháng xiào) 壯懷激烈。 (zhuàng huái jī liè)	x x a	raise look-towards eye look-up sky long hiss/whistle strengthen heart/mind intense (pain)
3	三十功名塵與土, (sān shí gōng míng chén yǔ tǔ,) 八千里路雲和月 (bā qiān lǐ lù yún hé yuè.)	x a	thirty year service name dirt and dust eight thousand li journey mix/with month/moon
4	莫等閒白了少年頭, (mò děng xián bái liǎo shǎo nián tóu) 空悲切。 (kōng bēi qiè)	x a	no wait leisure white/blankest few year remaining empty sad absolutely
5	靖康恥, (jìng kāng chǐ) 猶未雪; (yóu wèi xuě;)	x a	jingkang humiliation still not-yet wipe-away
6	臣子恨, (chén zǐ hèn) 何時滅? (hé shí miè)	x a	subject/official regret/hate what time extinguish?
7	駕長車踏破賀蘭山缺! (jià cháng chē tà pò hè lán shān quē!)	a	drive long chariot tread broken Helan mountain vacant-post
8	壯志飢餐胡虜肉, (zhuàng zhì jī cān hú lǔ ròu,) 笑談渴飲匈奴血。 (xiào tán kě yǐn xiōng nú xuè.)	x a	mark strong hungry meal non-Han capture/barbarian flesh laugh talk thirsty Xiongnu blood
9	待從頭收拾舊山河, (dài cóng tóu shōu shí jiù shān hé) 朝天闕。 (chāo tiān què)	a a	stay join chief receive arrange mountain-and-rivers/whole-country audience-with-emperor deficiency

So livid at the barrier
was I that my plume of hair
repelled the very rain's intent.
Against the sky, I roared:
'Is this what serving thirty
heart-felt loyal years has meant:
my name and deeds to be as dust
eight thousand moonlit miles have sent?'

For youth must seize the hour, or find
how fast the idle years are spent,
nor let the Jingjiang victory stand
for shame our country underwent:
surely there is someone who
will purge us of this vile event?

Through the Helan pass I'd drive
my chariot till all assent,
I'd drink the Xiongnu blood, carouse and feast
until their bones were four ways sent,

and emperor in this land of ours, of hills and rivers,
recover what our customs meant.

Comment

Yue Fe (1103-1142) was one of the most famous heroes of Chinese history, who showed outstanding bravery and military skill in opposing and sometimes defeating the Jurchen, but who was treacherously imprisoned and poisoned by the pacifist faction under the vacillating Emperor Gaozong. Recent research suggests that the well-known poem above, 'Man Jiang Hong, to the tune River of Blossoms', traditionally attributed to him in fact dates to the Ming, and was probably written by Zhao Kuan, who had it engraved on a tablet at Yue Fei's tomb in 1502, when patriotic feelings were running high after General Wang Yue's victory over the Oirats near the Helan Pass in Inner Mongolia.

The humiliation of Jingkang took place in the Jingkang reign period of the Emperor Qinzong, who in 1127 was captured by the Jurchen and, together with his son, hauled off to captivity in Manchuria, thus marking the end of a unified China. {1-3}

The poem can be laid out in lines respecting the original. The translation's rhyme scheme of xxa xxa xa xa xa a xa xa is close to the original's xxa xxa xa xa xa xa a xa aa.

The translation can also be written in simple rhymed tetrameters, but not too successfully:

In thirty years of service there,
it is to dirt and dust I'm wed:
eight thousand miles of journey's wear
is but as those by moonlight led.
The shame of Jingkang today
still rankles, is not wiped away,
and, as for subjects, they delay
till time should weaken and decay.
Let's have our chariots surpass
the miles to Helan's mountain pass.
Let's fall on that barbarian flood
and feast on Xiongnu flesh and blood.
So will the hills and rivers be
as our emperor would decree.

Text Sources

<https://fanti.dugushici.com/mingju/12571>

[Wikisource](#)

Other Translations

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<http://dragonsarmory.blogspot.com/2018/07/a-war-poem-for-lost-homeland-yue-feis.html>

Literary Criticism

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Audio Recording

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100. CI POETRY: Wu Wenying: To the Tune 'Prelude to the Oriole's Song' Cai 14.3

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	鶯啼序 (yīng tí xù)		CORRECT THIS: TOO CLOSE TO CAI
1	殘寒正欺病酒 (cán hán zhèng qī bìng jiǔ)	x	remnant cold first-month deceived sick wine
2	掩沉香繡戶 (yǎn chén xiāng xiù hù)	a	close aloof-wood embroider door
3	燕來晚、飛入西城 (yàn lái wǎn fēi rù xī chéng)	x	swallow come late fly into west city
4	似說春事遲暮 (sì shuō chūn shì chí mù)	a	appear speak spring matter late evening
5	畫船載、清明過卻 (huà chuán zài qīng míng guò què)	x	paint boat carry Qing Ming cross-over
6	畫船載、清明過卻 (huà chuán zài qīng míng guò què)	a	however
7	晴煙冉冉吳宮樹 (qíng yān rǎn rǎn wú gōng shù)	x	clear mist gradually/softly drooping Wu
8	晴煙冉冉吳宮樹 (qíng yān rǎn rǎn wú gōng shù)	a	Palace tree
	念羈情游蕩 (niàn jī qíng yóu dàng)		read lodge feeling swim shake
	隨風化為輕絮 (suí fēng huà wéi qīng xù)		wind-borne change as light cotton-wadding/catkin
9	十載西湖 (shí zǎi xī hú)	x	ten year West Lake
10	(bàng liǔ xì mǎ)	x	near willow tie horse
11	趁嬌塵軟霧 (chèn jiāo chén ruǎn wù)	a	avail-oneself-of lovable dust supple mist
12	溯紅漸、招入仙溪 (sù hóng jiàn zhāo rù xiān xī)	x	trace red gradually recruit enter
13	錦兒偷寄幽素 (jǐn ér tōu jì yōu sù)	a	Immortal/Fairy Creek
14	倚銀屏、春寬夢窄 (yǐ yín píng chūn kuān mèng zhǎi)	x	Brocade child/Maid steal convey hidden element
15	倚銀屏、春寬夢窄 (yǐ yín píng chūn kuān mèng zhǎi)	x	lean on silver screen spring wide dream
16	斷紅濕、歌絃金縷 (duàn hóng shī gē wǎn jīn lǚ)	x	narrow
17	斷紅濕、歌絃金縷 (duàn hóng shī gē wǎn jīn lǚ)	a	break red wet song white-silk gold thread
18	暝隄空 (míng dī kōng)		dark dike empty
	輕把斜陽 (qīng bǎ xié yáng)		light hold slanting sun
	總還鷗鷺 (zǒng huán ōu lù)		always return gull heron
19	幽蘭旋老 (yōu lán xuán lǎo)	x	hidden orchid revolve venerable
20	杜若還生 (dù ruò huán shēng)	x	pollia/pear-tree seem return reborn
21	水鄉尚寄旅 (shuǐ xiāng shàng jì lǚ)	a	water home-village still lodge travel
22	別後訪、六橋無信 (bié hòu fǎng liù qiáo wú xìn)	x	leave after visit Six Bridges no-have letter
23	事往花萎 (shì wǎng huā wěi)	x	matter past flower wither
24	瘞玉埋香 (yì yù mái xiāng)	x	bury jade bury fragrance
25	瘞玉埋香 (yì yù mái xiāng)	a	how many (classifier) wind-and-rain
26	幾番風雨 (jǐ fān fēng yǔ)	x	long wave envy long-for
27	幾番風雨 (jǐ fān fēng yǔ)	x	remote mountain shame eyebrow-black
28	長波妒盼 (cháng bō dù pàn)	a	fisherman lamp distribute shadow spring
29	遙山羞黛 (yáo shān xiū dài)	x	river lodge-for-night
30	漁燈分影春江宿 (yú dēng fēn yǐng chūn jiāng sù)		remember then time
	記當時、(jì dāng shí)		
30	短楫桃根渡 (duǎn jí táo gēn dù)	a	short oar Peach Root cross
31	青樓彷彿 (qīng lóu fǎng fú)	x	green mansion/pleasure-house seem like
32	臨分敗壁題詩 (lín fēn bài bì tí shī)	x	face separation ruined wall inscribe poem
33	淚墨慘澹塵土 (lèi mò cǎn dàn chén tǔ)	a	tear ink dark dismal dust soil
34	危亭望極 (wēi tíng wàng jí)	x	precipitous pavilion gaze limit
35	草色天涯 (cǎo sè tiān yá)	x	grass color heaven/sky edge/limit
36	嘆鬢侵半苧 (tàn bìn qīn bàn zhù)	a	sigh temple invade half white-ramie/Chinese
37	暗點檢、離痕歡唾 (àn diǎn jiǎn lí hén huān tuò)	x	grass
38	暗點檢、離痕歡唾 (àn diǎn jiǎn lí hén huān tuò)		secret inspect-one-by-one parting trace
39	尚染鮫綃 (shàng rǎn jiāo xiāo)	x	pleased saliva
	顰鳳迷歸 (pín fèng mí guī)	x	still stain shark/silk raw-silk/kerchief
			droop phoenix lost/bewildered return
40	破鸞慵舞 (pò luán yōng wǔ)	a	broken phoenix-like/mirror lethargic dance
41	殷勤待寫 (yīn qín dài xiě)	x	solicitously wait/need-to write
42	書中長恨 (shū zhōng cháng hèn)	x	letter inside long/forever regret
43	藍霞遼海沉過雁 (lán xiá liáo hǎi chén guò yàn)	x	blue cloud/liao vast sea sink cross wild-
44	漫相思、彈入哀箏柱 (màn xiāng sī tán rù āi zhēng zhù)	a	goose
45	漫相思、彈入哀箏柱 (màn xiāng sī tán rù āi zhēng zhù)	x	unrestrained yearn bullet pluck enter sorrow
46	傷心千里江南 (shāng xīn qiān lǐ jiāng nán)	x	zither strings
47	怨曲重招 (yuàn qǔ chóng zhāo)	a	grieve wound/broken-heart thousand mile
	斷魂在否 (duàn hún zài fǒu)		river south
			complain tune repeat beckon
			break soul exist not

This wretched cold still lingers on,
and I have drunk enough of wine.
Behind me now I close a door
of finely fashioned aloe wood.
The swallows have come late this year
into the city's western wards:
the spring indeed is almost gone,
or so it would be understood.
5. Our Qingming festival of painted
boats has also slipped away
The mists round Wu's old palace trees
have thinned until there's nothing there.
I think somehow of travelers
unsettled, lifting with the wind,
as catkins do, so ever changing,
insubstantial as the air.

So went ten years. I tied my horse
10. at West Lake to the willows there,
and what I sought was scented dust,
or yielding vapor, as it were.
I followed petals to their source,
red petals to a fairy cove,
in secret one brocaded girl
would proxy what you felt for her.
A silver screen was your support:
the spring is vast, the dream but short.

15. What rouge-red tears your singing fan
and gold-thread fabric gown would earn.
The dykes fall empty at the dusk,
and though the sunlight touched us both,
but gulls and egrets will return.

Unnoticed, orchids soon grow old,
20. but pollias are hardier things.
Lingering at the water villages
I stay on here, as though again.
Six Bridges, which we parted at,
I visited, but nothing stirred.
All flowers wilt when love grows cold,
as jade and fragrance when interred.
25. How many bouts have wind and rain?
Like the water were your glances,
your brows light-brushed as distant hills.
Far lights of fishermen recalled

spring's swelling waters where we slept.
I still can see the oars
30. on which our Peach Root boat was rowed across.
In quarters of the courtesans
are poems always, much on parting,
like shadows on unpainted walls.
The ink is pale, perhaps with tears
diluted, or with earth and dross.

From high pavilions I must gaze
35. on green hills and the far horizons,
my hair has white the ramie brings.
I brood in secret on the trace
of parting tears and spent saliva:
they stain this handkerchief of silk.
A phoenix, lost, has drooping wings
40. nor dances in the shattered glass.
I need to write a letter full
of frank and unrequited sorrow,
but into the blue mists of the sea
fall flights of the migrating geese:
and, unrestrained, my longings pass
into the mournful zither's strings.
45. A thousand miles away, your soul
is in the south somewhere. With this
pent song I once more summon you:
is heart not sundered by such things?

Comment

Little is known for sure about Wu Wenying's life, suggesting he never passed the imperial examinations. Though adept at poetry and music, he probably remained a commoner employed on the clerical staff of various officials in (present-day) Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces, spending long periods in the cultural centers of Suzhou and Hangzhou. What is known from the poetry is not particularly edifying: references to the 'tears, slippers and delicate hands' of women who had given him their devotion in outings and banquets the poet was expected to commemorate in a subtle and delicate manner. {3}

Chinese marriages were preceded and celebrated by elaborate festivals, but, once married, the wife would see little of her own family: she virtually interned in her husband's house, where she was expected to be modest, chaste, faithful to her spouse and obedient to his parent's wishes. Morals were more lax in the cities,

but strictly enforced in rural districts, where erring wives and daughters could find themselves literally out on the street. Whatever men professed, however, it is to women departing from strict Confucian principles that much of the cultural richness of Song life derives. {4}

The translation broadly echoes the line lengths and rhyme schemes of the original. The latter are: original xaxaxaxaxx axaxaxxaxx
axxxaxxxxa xxaxxaxxxa xxxaxxa: translation xaxaxbabxx
cxcxdxxdxx exxxexxxxf xxfxxgxxgx xxxhxxh.

The best of Wu's 350-odd Ci poems surviving are carefully constructed, with a marked emphasis on musicality, elegant diction and indirect allusion. The *Prelude to the Oriole's Song* is indeed the longest Ci poem in existence, and richly orchestrated on several levels of meaning. It may have been Wu's attempt to weave unrelated romantic episodes into a larger narrative, one giving meaning to diverse phases of his life. Though the poem has four sections — lament for spring's passing, joy of union, pain of separation and a remembrance of the dead — the images are not logically arranged but spring up as though from some tangled and melancholy inner state.

The first section is set in the present. The Qingming festival is held on the 3rd, 4th or 5th of April. The late-come swallows indicate that spring is over. The clearing mists and catkins may allude to another poem, a Ci song. {3} The second section consists of flashbacks. On West Lake in Hangzhou there were always pleasure boats, often accompanied by singing girls and cooking galleys. All women used cosmetics extensively in Song times: wives, concubines, courtesans and the many grades of 'singsong' girl. One woman in particular seems to be remembered in this section, however, and is compared to well-known stories of encounters with fairy maidens. The sunset with its departing gulls and egrets rounds off the matter.

The third section is steeped in nostalgia and the pain of separation. The comparisons to water and hills are conventional epithets, but given a personal resonance here. These and the fishermen's lights recur in Wu's poetry, and have some special significance for him, as do poems written on unpainted or now decaying walls. The fourth section begins as does the first, where the poet has shut the door to the past. The woman met or entertained in pleasure houses is now somewhere else, though the poet broods of the images of separation: handkerchief, tears and saliva. The last line parallels the last line in the first section: the hopelessness of the inevitable.

Wealthy officials and merchants took concubines, which the wife had to accept and treat on near-equal terms. The larger cities had courtesans, who were often well educated, able to sing, play a musical instrument and compose poetry, and as such were invited to weddings, and to banquets of high officials, rich merchants and the nobility. Some lived in great luxury, and the most celebrated confined themselves to apartments out of bounds to all but the most wealthy and well connected. There were stories of young men squandering fortunes to gain entry, of finding apartments decorated with the most exquisite of paintings and calligraphy, and with vases of jade, gold and silver. Most courtesans were not so independent, however, and needed links to places of entertainment for business and protection. {4}

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