



Vol.6 No.2 June 2017

VERSE VERSION

Chief editor: Zhang Guangkui

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Vol.6 No.2 June 2017



LEOMAN PUBLISHING CO., LTD

Print ISSN 2051-526X
Online ISSN 2399-9705

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Sponsored by

Shenzhen University

LEOMAN PUBLISHING CO., LTD

**SUITE 108 CHASE BUSINESS CENTRE-CHD 39-41 CHASE SIDE
LONDON N14 5BP UNITED KINGDOM**

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Publisher: LEOMAN PUBLISHING CO., LTD: SUITE 108 CHASE BUSINESS CENTRE-CHD 39-41 CHASE SIDE LONDON N14 5BP UNITED KINGDOM

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Editorial Email Address: verseversion@gmail.com, verseversion@163.com

Website: <http://www.verseversion.uk>

Institutional Subscribers: GBP £ 6.00 per single number, postage not included.

Private Subscribers: All entitled to a reduced rate, with students to an extra reduction.

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To our honourable
poets, readers and translators

English-Chinese Version

My Galley¹

Sir Thomas Wyatt²

My galley charged with forgetfulness
Thorough sharp seas in winter nights doth pass
'Tween rock and rock; and eke mine enemy, alas,
That is my lord, steereth with cruelness;
And every oar a thought in readiness,
As though that death were light in such a case.
An endless wind doth tear the sail apace
Of forced sighs and trusty fearfulness.
A rain of tears, a cloud of dark disdain,
Hath done the wearied cords great hinderance;
Wreathed with error and eke with ignorance.
The stars be hid that led me to this pain;
Drowned is reason that should me consort, accompany
And I remain despairing of the port.

¹ Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2005: 127.

² Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542), was a 16th-century English ambassador and lyrical poet. He is credited with introducing the sonnet into English literature.

Translation:

航船

托马斯·怀亚特

我的这艘航船满载着遗忘，
惊涛中行进在茫茫冬夜里；
礁石密布，唉呀，可我的死敌，
亦即上帝，残忍地为我导航。
每划一桨就会闪出个念头，
告诉我死现在是善中之善；
疾风没完没了地吹着船帆，
吹走了无由的婉叹与殷忧。
一阵泪雨，一片蔑视的黑云，
都让旧绳索痛感无可奈何，
那错误和无知拧成的绳索。
引我赴苦海的星，你改消隐！
我本该有的理智已经溺亡，
而我对驶入港湾也已绝望。

(龙靖遥 译)

Love, That Doth Reign and Live within My Thought¹

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey²

Love, that doth reign and live within my thought,
And built his seat within my captive breast,
Clad in the arms wherein with me he fought,
Oft in my face he doth his banner rest.
But she that taught me love and suffer pain,
My doubtful hope and eke my hot desire
With shamefast look to shadow and refrain,
Her smiling grace converteth straight to ire.
And coward Love, then, to the heart apace
Taketh his flight, where he doth lurk and plain,
His purpose lost, and dare not show his face.
For my lord's guilt thus faultless bide I pain,
Yet from my lord shall not my foot remove:
Sweet is the death that taketh end by love.

¹ Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2005: 137.

² Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517-1547), was an English aristocrat, and one of the founders of English Renaissance poetry. He was a first cousin of both Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard, the second and fifth wives of King Henry VIII.

Translation:

爱，主宰着我，活在我的思绪里

亨利·霍华德，萨里郡伯爵

爱，主宰着我，活在我的思绪里，
在我受制的胸口建造他的位置，
身披铠甲，他与我争斗，
他的旗帜时常停留在我脸上。
可是她教会我爱，以及承受痛苦
教会我怀疑并希望着，延长我火热的欲望
坚定而羞愧地对待阴影和节制，
她微笑的优雅会直接转化成愤怒。
然后，懦弱的爱，飞快逃离到
心扉，它在那里清晰地潜伏，
他的目的丢失了，不敢现出他的面孔。
上帝的内疚如此明白无误，我等待痛苦，
然而我的脚不会远离我的上帝：
心怀爱意的死亡是甜美的。

(雷艳妮 译)

Sonnet of Black Beauty¹

Edward Herbert²

Black beauty, which above that common light,
Whose power can no colors here renew
But those which darkness can again subdue,
Do'st still remain unvary'd to the sight,

And like an object equal to the view,
Art neither chang'd with day, nor hid with night;
When all these colors which the world call bright,
And which old poetry doth so persue,

Are with the night to perish æd and gone,
That of their being there remains no mark,
Thou still abidest so entirely one,
That we may know thy blackness is a spark
Of light inaccessible, and alone
Our darkness which can make us think it dark.

¹ Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2005: 346.

² Edward Herbert (1582-1648), was an Anglo-Welsh soldier, diplomat, historian, poet and religious philosopher of the Kingdom of England.

Translation:

十四行诗 美丽黑

爱德华·赫伯特

美丽黑，平常亮光相形逊色，

你的威力任何他色不可增设，

虽然那些黑暗可以征服的颜色，

在视觉里确实从不改变。

艺术如同观感不变的器物，

既不随日光而变，也不随黑夜而隐；

所有世人称之为明亮的颜色，

古老的诗歌曾倾心赞美。

它们随黑夜消失远去，

其存在不曾留下印迹，

而你却一直完整脱俗，

让我们知晓你的黑是星火，

属于无人可及的光，唯独

自身的暗才会让人想起你的黑。

(刘朝晖 译)

Adam Posed¹

Anne Finch²

Could our first father, at his toilsome plow,
Thorns in his path, and labor on his brow,
Clothed only in a rude, unpolished skin,
Could he a vain fantastic nymph have seen,
In all her airs, in all her antic graces,
Her various fashions, and more various faces;
How had it posed that skill, which late assigned
Just appellations to each several kind!
A right idea of the sight to frame;
T’have guessed from what new element she came;
T’have hit the wav’ring form, or giv’n this thing a name.

¹ Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2005: 562.

² Anne Finch (1661-1720), was an English poet. Finch's works often express a desire for respect as a female poet, lamenting her difficult position as a woman in the literary establishment and the court, while writing of "political ideology, religious orientation, and aesthetic sensibility".

Translation:

亚当的困惑

安妮·芬奇

吾等初父，用辛劳之犁，
斩棘辟其道，其额现辛勤，
周身之肌肤粗糙无光，
曾见一位徒有其表之仙女而感困惑，
用她千变姿态，万种容妆，
尽所能地摆出架子，抚弄滑稽之优雅；
那伎俩如何习得，而后竟
一一为此指名！
突生一种想法；
猜猜她有何新做派；
戳穿她的虚伪，或赋予新的名讳。

(邓宇萍 译)

To the Muses¹

William Blake²

Whether on Ida's shady brow,
Or in the chambers of the East,
The chambers of the sun, that now
From ancient melody have ceas'd;

Whether in Heav'n ye wander fair,
Or the green corners of the earth,
Or the blue regions of the air,
Where the melodious winds have birth;

Whether on chrystal rocks ye rove,
Beneath the bosom of the sea
Wand'ring in many a coral grove,
Fair Nine, forsaking Poetry!

How have you left the ancient love
That bards of old enjoy'd in you!
The languid strings do scarcely move!
The sound is forc'd, the notes are few!

¹ Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2005: 732.

² William Blake (1757-1827), was an English composer, poet, and physician. He wrote over a hundred lute songs, masques for dancing, and an authoritative technical treatise on music.

Translation:

致缪斯

威廉·布莱克

无论是在艾达树木浓密的山顶，
或是在旭日下朝向东方的屋里，
那些向着太阳的屋子，现在已经
听不到那古时曲调的任何声息；

美丽的仙子！你们是徜徉于天堂，
或是世间那些绿草如茵的角落，
或是蔚蓝的天空中不同的地方，
它们是风起之地，那风美妙如歌；

你们或漫步在晶莹的石头之上，
那石头在茫茫大海的怀抱之间，
你们把茂密如林的珊瑚丛游赏，
美丽的九缪斯，诗歌被丢弃一边。

古时候的歌者是多么热爱你们，
你们竟把这亘古的爱弃之不理！
那无力的琴弦欲振却徒叹乏人，
纵然勉强发出音响，却不合旋律！

(龙靖遥 译)

A Red Red Rose¹

Robert Burns²

O my luve's like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June;
O my luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly played in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:
O I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve!
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

¹ Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2005: 759.

² Robert Burns (1759-1796), also known as Rabbie Burns, the Bard of Ayrshire, Ploughman Poet and various other names and epithets, was a Scottish poet and lyricist. He is widely regarded as the national poet of Scotland and is celebrated worldwide.

Translation:

红红的玫瑰

罗伯特·彭斯

啊，我的爱人如同红红的玫瑰
初开在宜人初夏；
啊，我的爱人如同甜美的曲子
弹奏得和谐又婉转。

你如此美丽，我的好姑娘，
我对你深深地爱恋；
我会永远爱你，亲爱的，
直至所有的海洋干枯。

直至所有的海洋干枯，
所有的岩石被太阳熔化，
我会依然爱你，亲爱的，
只要我尚存一息。

别了，我唯一的爱人，
让我们暂时道别！
我定会回来，亲爱的，
哪怕路途遥远！

(刘朝晖 译)

With Rue My Heart Is Laden¹

A. E. Houseman²

With rue my heart is laden

For golden friends I had,

For many a rose-lipt maiden

And many a lightfoot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping

The lightfoot boys are laid;

The rose-lipt girls are sleeping

In fields where roses fade.

¹ Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2005: 1177.

² A. E. Houseman (1859-1936), an English classical scholar and poet, best known to the general public for his cycle of poems *A Shropshire Lad*.

Translation:

我心中充满懊悔

A. E. 奥斯曼

我的心中充满懊悔

为了我所拥有的金色的朋友们，
为了很多有着玫瑰嘴唇的少女们
还有很多脚步轻快的少年们。

在宽阔的不宜跳跃的溪边

脚步轻快的少年们躺下了；
有着玫瑰嘴唇的少女们正在睡觉
在玫瑰凋落的田野里。

（雷艳妮 译）

In Flanders Fields¹

John MaCrae²

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

¹ Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2005: 1225.

² John MaCrae (1872-1918), was a Canadian poet, physician, author, artist and soldier during World War I, and a surgeon during the Second Battle of Ypres, in Belgium.

Translation:

在佛兰德斯战场

约翰·麦克雷

在佛兰德斯战场，罂粟盛开飞扬
在亡灵十字架间，排排竖立站开
铭刻我们的英灵之域；抬眼高空
云雀，依旧引吭高歌，昂然飞翔
虽伴于枪炮声中，却依稀能觅得。

我们已逝去成亡魂。然仅几天前
我们的生命犹在，盼念晨曦晚霞，
爱着人与被爱着，然我们现倒下，
在佛兰德斯战场。

我们毫不懈怠，与敌人继续战斗：
我们接过你们缓缓倒下双手中的
火炬；承接你们的信仰高高举起。
倘若你们背弃我们阵亡者的信仰
我们将不得安眠，纵使罂粟长盛
在佛兰德斯战场。

（邓宇萍 译）

Neither Out Far Nor In Deep¹

Robert Frost²

The people along the sand
All turn and look one way.
They turn their back on the land.
They look at the sea all day.

As long as it takes to pass
A ship keeps raising its hull;
The wetter ground like glass
Reflects a standing gull.

The land may vary more;
But wherever the truth may be—
The water comes ashore,
And the people look at the sea.

They cannot look out far.
They cannot look in deep.
But when was that ever a bar
To any watch they keep?

¹ Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2005: 1240.

² Robert Frost (1874-1963), was an American poet. His work was initially published in England before it was published in America. He is highly regarded for his realistic depictions of rural life and his command of American colloquial speech.

Translation:

既不远也不深

罗伯特·弗罗斯特

人们临沙而立
转身齐看一方。
他们背对陆地，
整天瞭望海洋。

所有过往船只
总会升高船体；
湿地犹如明镜
映出海鸥婷婷。

陆地变化多端；
真相始终如一——
水波拍击海岸，
人们观看潮汐。

他们无法观远，
看深也是虚妄。
可曾有过阻拦
妨碍他们观望？

(刘朝晖 译)

Oread¹

H. D.²

Whirl up, sea—

Whirl your pointed pines,

Splash your great pines

On our rocks,

Hurl your green over us,

Cover us with your pools of fir.

¹ Peter Jones, ed. *Imagist Poetry*. United States: Penguin Books, 1972: 76.

² H. D. (1886-1961), Hilda Doolittle, was an American poet, novelist, and memoirist known for her association with the early 20th century avant-garde Imagist group of poets such as Ezra Pound and Richard Aldington. She published under the pen name of H.D.

Translation:

山林女神

H. D.

翻涌吧，大海——
翻腾起你那尖细的松针，
溅起你那松针巨浪
拍打在我们的岩石上，
用你波涛绿浪倾覆我们，
用你冷杉旋涡淹没我们。

（邓宇萍 译）

Chinese-English Version

听蜀僧濬弹琴¹

李白²

蜀僧抱绿绮，
西下峨眉峰。
为我一挥手，
如听万壑松。
客心洗流水，
余响入霜钟。
不觉碧山暮，
秋云暗几重。

¹ 蘅塘退士选编. 唐诗三百首. 四川: 四川出版集团巴蜀书社, 2006: 111.

² Li Po (李白, 701-762), one of the most popular Chinese poets, was noted for his romantic songs on wine, women, and nature. His writings reflect the grandeur of the Tang Dynasty at the height of its prosperity.

Translation:

Listening to Shu's¹ Monk Jun² Playing the Lute

Li Po

The Shu monk was holding a Lvqi³ lute.

He'd come down from Mount Emei.

A renowned tune he fingered for me with ease,

Sounding like wind passing gills of pine trees.

The lingering music echoed with the chilling bell;

It cleansed my heart more than anything I could tell.

Green hills were immersed in the dusk tender

While autumn clouds went darker and darker.

(Trans. Liu Zhaohui)

¹ Shu is another name for Sichuan, now a province in the south-east of China.

² Jun is the name of the monk.

³ Originally the name of a lute possessed by Sima Xiangru in the Han Dynasty, Lvqi has been used to stand for any famous and precious lute.

临江仙¹

晏几道²

梦后楼台高锁，
酒醒帘幕低垂。
去年春恨却来时，
落花人独立，
微雨燕双飞。

记得小蘋初见，
两重心字罗衣。
琵琶弦上说相思，
当时明月在，
曾照彩云归。

¹ 上疆村民重编. 宋词三百首. 四川: 四川出版集团巴蜀书社, 2006: 267.

² Yan Jidao (晏几道, 1038-1110) was the son of Yan Shu who was a famous Chinese statesman, poet, calligrapher and a literary figure of the Song dynasty.

Translation:

The River Nymphs

Yan Jidao

In my dream those high-rises block all visits, and,
From drunkenness, I awake to find the blinds close.
Back to me come last years' spring sorrows, the deadly foes!
I stand alone, watching flowers dropping,
And in the rain flying the couple swallows.

I remember when I first met my dear Peggy,
She was in a silk dress with double hearts stitched close.
Playing the Pipa, she complained how love had brought her rough blows.
The bright moon was shining then, on the clouds
Which, colorful, were coming back in rows.

(Trans. Long Jingyao)

凭栏人·金陵道中¹

乔吉²

瘦马驮诗天一涯，
倦鸟呼愁村数家。
扑头飞柳花，
与人添鬓华。

¹ 何锐选注. 元曲三百首. 四川: 四川出版集团巴蜀书社, 2006: 522.

² Qiao Ji (乔吉, 1280-1345), also known as Qiao Jifu (乔吉甫) was a major Chinese dramatist and poet in[clarification needed] the Yuan Dynasty.

Translation:

Ping Lan Ren¹ • On Jinling Road

Qiao Ji

A lean horse wanders the world with poetry on its back,
Weary birds whine above with houses under.
The willow catkins fall onto my cheek,
And turn my temples silverer.

(Trans. Deng Yuping)

¹ “Ping Lan Ren” is one of the ancient Chinese tonal patterns with given cadence to which qu (a type of classical Chinese poetry) poems are composed accordingly.

灵奇¹

方令孺²

有一晚我乘着微茫的星光，
我一个人走上了惯熟的山道，
泉水依然细细的在石上交抱，
白露沾透了我的草履轻裳。

一炷磷火照亮纵横的榛棘，
一双朱冠的小蟒同前宛引领，
导我攀登一千层皑白的石磴，
为要寻找那镌着碑文的石壁。

你，镌在石上的字忽地化成
伶俐的白鸽，轻轻飞落又腾上；——
小小的翅膀上系着我的希望，
信心的坚实和生命的永恒。

可是这灵奇的迹，灵奇的光，
在我的惊喜中我正想抱你紧，
我摸索到这黑夜，这黑夜的静，
神怪的寒风冷透我的胸膛。

¹ 文鹏编. 中国现代名诗三百首. 北京: 北京出版社, 2000: 48.

² Fang Lingru (方令孺, 1897-1976) was a Chinese essayist and poetess.

Translation:

Magic

Fang Lingru

One night under the dim starlight,
I alone walk onto the familiar mountain path,
The spring water still flows slimly on stones in circles
The white frost wets my straw sandals and light clothes.

One phosphorescent light suddenly illuminates forked hazel thorns,
A pair of red-headed little snakes crawls forward,
and leads me climb up one-thousand-step white stone layers,
in order to look for the stone walls engraved with inscription.

You, the Chinese characters engraved on the stones suddenly turn into
Lively white doves, flying up and down;—
On the little wings is tied my hope,
firm confidence and everlasting life.

Yet the magic imprint, magic light,
In my surprise I am eager to embrace you closely,
I feel about the dark night, the stillness of the dark night,
Strange cold wind chills my breast.

(Trans. Lei Yanni)

别丢掉¹

林徽因²

别丢掉，
这一把过往的热情，
现在流水似的
轻轻
在幽冷的山泉底，
在黑夜，在松林，
叹息似的渺茫，
你仍要保存着那真！
一样是明月，
一样是隔山灯火，
满天的星，
只有人不见，
梦似的挂起，
你向黑夜要回
那一句话——
你仍得相信
山谷中留着
有那回音！

¹ 文鹏编. 中国现代名诗三百首. 北京: 北京出版社, 2000: 94.

² Lin Huiyin (林徽因, 1904-1955), a noted Chinese architect and writer in the 20th century, was considered to be the first female architect in China. Lin Huiyin wrote poems, essays, short stories and plays. Many of her works were praised for subtlety, beauty and creativity. Her most famous work is “You Are the April of This World—Ode to Love”.

Translation:

Discard Not

Lin Huiyin

Discard not,
The olden passion,
As the running water
The ethereality
In the bottom of the serenely cool spring,
In dark night, in the pinewood,
Like sighing uncertainty,
Still you should retain that sincerity!
Bright the same moon,
Over hills the same lights,
Stars in the sky,
Merely without people,
Like dream hanging,
Yet you should get back from the dark night
Those words—
You should believe
In the valley
That is still echoing!

(Trans. Deng Yuping)

老马¹

臧克家²

总得叫大车装个够，
它横竖不说一句话，
背上的压力往肉里扣，
它把头沉重地垂下！

这刻不知道下刻的命，
它有泪只往心里咽，
眼里飘来一道鞭影，
它抬起头望望前面。

¹ 文鹏编. 中国现代名诗三百首. 北京: 北京出版社, 2000: 50.

² Zang Kejia (臧克家, 1905-2004), was a Chinese poet. He was born in Zhucheng, Shandong Province.

Translation:

The Old Horse

Zang Kejia

Without uttering a single word,

He let the cart be loaded enough.

Pressure on the back cutting into his flesh,

He lowered his head with a heart not fresh!

Not knowing his fate for the next second,

He only swallowed his tears if he had any.

The shadow of a whip flashed across his eyes;

He raised his head looking far ahead.

(Trans. Liu Zhaohui)

春野¹

林庚²

春天的蓝水奔流下山

河的两岸生出了青草

再没有人提起也没有人知道

冬天的风那里去了

仿佛傍午的一点钟声

柔和得像三月的风

随着无名的蝴蝶

飞入春日的田野

¹ 文鹏编. 中国现代名诗三百首. 北京: 北京出版社, 2000: 158.

² Lin Geng (林庚, 1910-2006), was a modern poet, scholar of Chinese classical literature and literary historian.

Translation:

Spring Field

Lin Geng

The blue water of spring rushes down

On both sides of the river grows green grass

No one mentions or knows

Where the winter wind goes

It seems the bell rings a little near noontime

Soft as the wind in March

Together with the nameless butterfly

It flies into the spring field.

(Trans. Lei Yanni)

我爱这土地¹

艾青²

假如我是一只鸟，
我也应该用嘶哑的喉咙歌唱：
这被暴风雨所打击着的土地，
这永远汹涌着我们的悲愤的河流，
这无止息地吹刮着的激怒的风，
和那来自林间的无比温柔的黎明……
——然后我死了，
连羽毛也腐烂在土地里面。

为什么我的眼里常含泪水？
因为我对这土地爱得深沉……

¹ 文鹏编. 中国现代名诗三百首. 北京: 北京出版社, 2000: 170.

² Ai Qing (艾青, 1910-1996), is regarded as one of the great modern Chinese poets.

Translation:

I Love This Land

Ai Qing

Even if I were a bird,
I would also sing in a hoarse voice,
Of this land, which is being hit by storms,
Of the river, through which our sorrows are forever raging,
Of the wind, which is ceaselessly blowing in invincible fury,
Of the incomparably delicate dawn, which is roaming from the distant woods...
—And then I would die,
With even my feathers decaying in the earth.

Why are my eyes always brimming with tears?
Because I love this land so dearly...

(Trans. Long Jingyao)

一朵野花¹

陈梦家²

一朵野花在荒原里开了又落了。
不想到这小生命，向着太阳发笑，
上帝给他的聪明他自己知道，
他的欢喜，他的诗，在风前轻摇。

一朵野花在荒原里开了又落了。
他看见春天，看不见自己的渺小，
听惯风的温柔，听惯风的怒号，
就连他自己的梦也容易忘掉。

¹ 文鹏编. 中国现代名诗三百首. 北京: 北京出版社, 2000: 187.

² Chen Mengjia (陈梦家, 1911-1966) was a Chinese scholar, poet and archaeologist. He was considered the foremost authority on oracle bones and was Professor of Chinese at Tsinghua University in Beijing.

Translation:

A Wild Flower

Chen Mengjia

A wild flower bloomed and faded in the wild.

Who'd thought this little life would to the sun smile?

The intellect God gave him he himself knew too well.

His joy, and his poems, swung in the wind.

A wild flower bloomed and faded in the wild.

He saw the spring, but not his humble self.

He lived with the wind, be it soft or harsh.

He tended to forget a lot, including his dream.

(Trans. Liu Zhaohui)

风雨¹

芦荻²

风中大地卷来

雨中大地卷来

郊原如海

房舍如舟

我有年轻的舵手的忧怀

在大地的海上

¹ 文鹏编. 中国现代名诗三百首. 北京: 北京出版社, 2000: 200.

² Lu Di (芦荻, 1912-), also known as Chen Peidi (陈培迪) was a Chinese poetess.

Translation:

Wind and Rain

Lu Di

Winding is the land in the wind.

Winding is the land in the rain.

Like the sea, the vast plain,

Like the boats, houses and pavilions.

The sorrow of the young helmsman I have

On the sea of the land.

(Trans. Deng Yuping)

Recommendation of English Poets and Poems

John Milton

Introduction

John Milton (约翰·弥尔顿, 1608-1674) was an English poet, polemicist, man of letters, and civil servant for the Commonwealth of England under Oliver Cromwell. He wrote at a time of religious flux and political upheaval, and is best known for his epic poem *Paradise Lost* (1667), written in blank verse.

Milton's poetry and prose reflect deep personal convictions, a passion for freedom and self-determination, and the urgent issues and political turbulence of his day. Writing in English, Latin, Greek, and Italian, he achieved international renown within his lifetime, and his celebrated *Areopagitica* (1644), written in condemnation of pre-publication censorship, is among history's most influential and impassioned defences of free speech and freedom of the press.

William Hayley's 1796 biography called him the "greatest English author", and he remains generally regarded "as one of the preeminent writers in the English language", though critical reception has oscillated in the centuries since his death (often on account of his republicanism). Samuel Johnson praised *Paradise Lost* as "a poem which...with respect to design may claim the first place, and with respect to performance, the second, among the productions of the human mind", though he (a Tory and recipient of royal patronage) described Milton's politics as those of an "acrimonious and surly republican".

L'Allegro is a pastoral poem by John Milton published in his 1645 *Poems*. *L'Allegro* (which means "the happy man" in Italian) is invariably paired with the contrasting pastoral poem, *Il Penseroso* ("the melancholy man"), which depicts a similar day spent in contemplation and thought.

The following poem is selected from *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2005: 402) and translated by Deng Yuping.

L'Allegro

Hence loath'd Melancholy
Of Cerberus and blackest midnight born,
In Stygian cave forlorn
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy,
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings;
There under ebon shades, and low-browed rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
But come thou goddess fair and free,
In Heaven yclept Euphrosyne,
And by men, heart-easing Mirth,
Whom lovely Venus at a birth
With two sister Graces more
To ivy-crown'd Bacchus bore;
Or whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying,

Translation:

快乐的人

离开吧，令人厌恶的忧郁
你是狱犬和最漆黑的午夜所育，
在绝望的地狱之穴
充斥诡异的幽灵，和尖叫，或邪恶之物，
去寻觅某个阴暗的巢穴吧，
那里黑暗一片丰满他警惕的羽翼，
暗夜的黑鸦叫啼；
在其下是漆黑的影，和阴暗的石岩，
如你的头发一般凌乱粗哑，
于黑暗的辛梅里安的沙漠永居。
但请你来吧女神，你美丽而无拘
在天堂你名唤尤芙萝西妮，
人间视你为心灵舒适的欢乐，
诞生于优美的爱与美女神维纳斯
还有美惠三女神中两个姐妹
酒神巴克斯加冕常春藤桂冠
亦或是（如一些圣人所歌颂）
嬉游之风打动了春意浓浓，
西风之神和曙光女神在玩游，
有一次在午湖节上他与她相遇，

There on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful Jollity,
Quips and Cranks, and wanton Wiles,
Nods, and Becks, and wreathèd Smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter, holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it as ye go
On the light fantastic toe,
And in thy right hand lead with thee,
The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty;
And if I give thee honor due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew
To live with her and live with thee,
In unprovokèd pleasures free;

Translation:

在一片盛开的蓝色紫罗兰花，
和露珠洗涤过初放玫瑰花床上，
使她怀孕有了你，一个美丽的女孩，
那么活泼，欢欣，勃勃生姿。
山林女神，你快来，还有带来你
欢笑的故事和年轻的悦语，
妙语和打趣的话，和游戏中尽情笑欢，
点头，招手，和花似的莞尔，
似是在青春女神的脸庞绽开；
喜爱她笑着的脸上圆柔酒窝，
嬉戏打闹使人忧忘，
还有大笑开怀与他同行。
来吧，踮起脚尖，
迈开轻灵脚步起舞翩跹，
让你的右手
牵起山林女神，那甜美的自由；
如果我给你应有的敬意，
欢乐，请应允我加入你的行列
与她和你一起同住，
享受不被责备的自由欢愉；

To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good morrow,
Through the sweetbriar, or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine.
While the cock with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin,
And to the stack, or the barn door,
Stoutly struts his dames before;
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill.
Sometime walking not unseen
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate,
Where the great sun begins his state,

Translation:

听云雀一声鸣叫展翅高飞，
歌声划破了长闷的晚夜，
在云巅之上的角楼瞭望，
直至黎明绚烂升起；
然后为把悲伤驱散，
我在窗前向美好的清晨祝福，
透过野蔷薇，或者藤蔓，
又或者是那金银花蔓，
此时，金鸡欢快地报晓，
遣散了残留的稀薄黑暗，
它走到谷垛，或者谷仓门口，
挺胸气昂阔步到母鸡前；
经常可听见猎犬和号角
如何欢快地唤醒沉睡的清晨，
从白霜覆盖的山头一边
穿过高耸的林木，尖声回荡。
有时闲步即见
榆树篱墙，在碧绿的山岗上，
右边直对东方大门，
展现壮丽的太阳升起，

Robed in flames, and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the plowman near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale,
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures
Whilst the landscape round it measures,
Russet lawns and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray,
Mountains on whose barren breast
The laboring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide.
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighboring eyes.

Translation:

披着烈焰，和琥珀色的光芒，
让云层穿上绚丽彩服；
此时农夫即将耕耘，
口哨声贯穿犁好的土地，
挤奶女工快乐地歌唱，
割草工人磨起他的镰刀，
在山谷里的山楂树下，
还有牧羊人诉说着各自的故事。
我目之所及觅得新的欢乐
同时环视四周景色，
在红褐色草地和收割后的灰白田地，
牛羊边咀嚼着草边游荡，
在那荒芜的瘠峰
常常停留着孕雨的云朵；
色彩斑斓的雏菊修饰了草场，
小溪清浅，还有河流宽延。
塔楼和城垛伫立深藏
在高耸成峰的茂林里，
也许那儿有美人恬居，
是邻星凝望的北极星。

Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes,
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met,
Are at their savory dinner set
Of herbs, and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phyllis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or if the earlier season lead
To the tanned haycock in the mead.
Sometimes with secure delight
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round
And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid,
Dancing in the checkered shade;
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail;
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,

Translation:

近处，两颗古老橡树间，
一间屋舍的烟囱升起了炊烟，
科里登和塞西斯那里见面，
一起享用着美味晚餐
蔬菜，还有其他乡间食物，
都由巧手菲利斯精心烹饪；
然后，她匆匆离开她的居室，
跟塞斯媞丽一道去捆束麦子；
或者假如季节尚早
就去麦田上堆草垛。
有时候，无忧无虑的山地村民
带着无限欢喜迎接做客的人们。
当欢乐的铃铛在村庄里响起
还有悦耳的三玄琴奏起
迎来了年轻的男男女女，
在光阴交错的树荫下跳舞；
年轻的年老的都出来嬉戏
在一个阳光明媚的假期，
直至度过悠长白日；
随后一起去喝呛烈的棕色麦酒，

With stories told of many a feat,
How fairy Mab the junkets eat;
She was pinched and pulled, she said,
And he, by Friar's lantern led,
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat
To earn his cream-bowl, duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-laborers could not end;
Then lies him down the lubber fiend,
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength;
And crop-full out of doors he flings
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
Towered cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace high triumphs hold,

Translation:

说着那一个个故事，
说仙后麦布郊游野餐时；
她说，她以前被揉捏牵住，
他说，他被塔克修士的灯火吸引迷路，
又有的说，卖苦力的精灵汗流
换取别人赏赐的一碗乳酪，
他在夜里，于第一缕晨光闪现前，
在朦胧的身影里用连枷打完麦子
这抵得上十个工人的日头劳作；
然后这粗笨的精灵躺下，
那伸长的身子跟烟囱一般长，
他粗壮有力，在炉边烤火；
吃饱便夺门而出
赶在黎明公鸡的第一声啼叫前。
至此故事都讲完了，然后爬上床，
风儿像是耳畔轻语抚慰他们入眠。
有时高耸的塔楼城镇让我们向往，
人们熙熙攘攘，忙忙碌碌，
成群结队的骑士和英勇贵爵，
穿着和贵华服，举行盛典，

With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit, or arms, while both contend
To win her grace, whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With masque, and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.
And ever against eating cares
Lap me in soft Lydian airs
Married to immortal verse
Such as the meeting soul may pierce
In notes, with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out,

Translation:

贵妇小姐们，明眸顾盼
赏评竞技比拼，判谁最优
或智，或勇，又或智勇双全
赢得美人青睐，赞其非凡。
那里许门常顾
披一席橘黄长袍，手举明亮火炬，
游行，盛宴，狂欢，
假面之舞，还有古时戏剧；
此情此景为年轻诗人之梦
在仲夏夜常去的小溪边。
有时就去闻名遐迩的剧院，
如果琼生的戏剧在上演，
或者是最可爱的莎士比亚，想象力的孩子，
柔声颤唱原野乡间小调。
为了了却忧心的烦扰
让我投进吕底亚的柔和之曲
用不朽的诗行填词
恰如渗透灵魂的乐章
浸透着甜蜜
悠长绵延，曲转回肠

With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running;
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus' self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto, to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice.
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

Translation:

奏时纵情演绎，技法熟练，
唱时融化心弦，音转迷离；
解开所有束缚的链条
释放深藏的和谐之灵魂；
俄耳甫斯也会在
铺满伊利西安乐朵花床上
从金色的梦乡醒来倾听
如此秒音也会赢得
普路托侧耳并允许再次释放
曾半路折返阴间的欧律狄刻。
这些乐事假如你能赋予，
欢乐啊！我要与你同生。

(邓宇萍 译)

Recommendation of Chinese Poets and Poems

Folk Songs of Southern Dynasties

Introduction

The Southern and Northern Dynasties (南北朝) (420-589) refer to the period of more than 100 years from the decline of the Eastern Jin (东晋) (317-420) to the foundation of the Sui Dynasty (隋朝) (581-618). Folk Songs of the Northern and Southern Dynasties played an important role in both Chinese music and literature.

Respectively speaking, about folk songs of the Southern Dynasties, they are mostly love songs which reflect the sincere and pure love life of people. They are often sung by women with refreshing and touching appeal, which possibly has a direct relation with the beautiful environment and rich condition of the south. Most of the folk songs belong to the 4-line poems with 5 Chinese characters in each line, and popularly, pun is frequently used in folk songs. Among them, *Song of Xizhou* (西洲曲) is the representative work of Folk Songs of the Southern Dynasties, which is also one of the selections here.

In all, Folk Songs of the Southern Dynasties, like Songs of the Northern too, had great influences on poets of the Tang Dynasty (618-907).

The following selections are selected from *Poetry Appreciation Dictionary--Pre-Qin, Two Hans and the Southern and Northern Dynasties* (Wei Gengyuan, etc. ed. The Commercial Press, 2012) and translated by Professor Zhang Guangkui.

子夜歌（其三）

宿昔不梳头，

丝发被两肩。

婉伸郎膝上，

何处不可怜？

Translation:

Midnight-Song 3

Shoulder-length hair loosely hung
uncombed last night freely flung.
Mildly flexing her lover's knees among
She is everywhere tender with rhythm sprung.

子夜歌（其二十八）

夜长不得眠，
明月何灼灼。
想闻散唤声，
虚应空中诺。

Translation:

Midnight-Song 28

Sleepless night is too long;

Moonlights are hard shining.

A bur as if calling;

A reply to wind gone.

子夜歌（其三十五）

我念欢的的，

子行由豫情。

雾露隐芙蓉，

见莲不分明。

Translation:

Midnight-Song 35

So clearly I love you,
But you hesitate still.
You are in fog and dew,
Like lotus behind you.

子夜四时歌（秋歌）

秋风入窗里，
罗帐起飘飏。
仰头看明月，
寄情千里光。

Translation:

An Autumn Midnight Song

Autumn wind down into window slipping
Silk curtain accompanying with dancing.
Looking up at the moon distant and bright,
Binding love to far away to moonlight.

采莲童曲（其一）

泛舟采菱叶，

过摘芙蓉花。

扣楫命童侣，

齐声采莲歌。

Translation:

Song of Lotus Picking

Go boating for leaves of water caltrop,
Pick lotus flowers while at a by-drop.
Beat with oar to invite child mates nearby
To sing lotus-picking-song in group.

襄阳乐（其八）

女萝自微薄，

寄托长松表。

何惜负霜死，

贵得相缠绕。

Translation:

Song of Xiangyang (8)

Usnea despises her low origin,
Pinning all her life on the tall pine skin.
To bear the frost to face death is nothing,
But to tangle each other is something.

西洲曲

忆梅下西洲，
折梅寄江北。
单衫杏子红，
双鬓鸦雏色。
西洲在何处？
两桨桥头渡。
日暮伯劳飞，
风吹乌臼树。
树下即门前，
门中露翠钿。
开门郎不至，
出门采红莲。
采莲南塘秋，
莲花过人头。
低头弄莲子，
莲子清如水。

Translation:

Song of Xizhou

Thinking of plum blossom, I went to Xizhou.
Snap off a twig, post it to the north of the River.
The blouse is as pink as apricot,
And temples are as black as young crow.
Where is Xizhou?
Several paddlings away.
Shrikes are flying at sunset,
Wind is swaying tallow tree.
Under the tree is the door,
From the door appears inlay green.
The door opens, my darling isn't on the scene,
Out of the door I go to gather lotus red.
I gather lotus at Nantang Pond in autumn,
While lotus blooms are taller than my head.
I stoop to pick lotus seeds,
And seeds are as pure as water.

置莲怀袖中，
莲心彻底红。
忆郎郎不至，
仰首望飞鸿。
鸿飞满西洲，
望郎上青楼。
楼高望不见，
尽日栏杆头。
栏杆十二曲，
垂手明如玉。
卷帘天自高，
海水摇空绿。
海水梦悠悠，
君愁我亦愁。
南风知我意，
吹梦到西洲。

I put seeds into my sleeves,
And seeds' core are red to the heart.
Recalling my darling doesn't cause his appearing,
I Look up the messenger--swan geese flying.
The flying swan geese are all over Xizhou,
So I climb up to the top of green tower.
It's high, but I can't see my darling still,
All day I lean against the railing.
The railing has twelve bends,
The hands on it are like white jade.
Roll up the curtain, then the sky is high,
Like green sea water rippling.
The sea water sways beyond into my dream,
You are lovesick, I am homesick too.
The south wind understands me,
Blowing my dream again to Xizhou.

(Trans. Zhang Guangkui)

**To our
honourable poetry scholars**

献给
所有的诗歌研究者

Poetics of Blues: The Grey Theme of Carl Sandburg's

*Smoke and Steel**

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Abstract: The time of American poet Carl Sandburg was that of fast development of American industrial society and that of the two world wars. In the process of America's modernization, industrial development played a key role. On the other hand, industrial workers were both unselfish dedicators and victims worthy of sympathy during the course of American industrialization, on the other hand, this is also a tragic and miserable era of WWI and WWII when people's spirit and flesh were seriously twisted. Sandburg's poetry collection *Smoke and Steel* published in 1920 comprehensively reflects the grey theme during the mature period of American industrial development (1914-1945) and around the end of WWI. The poet composes the depressing blues of the people from the two angles of American industrial society and WWI.

Key words: Sandburg; *Smoke and Steel*; poetry; grey theme

Usually, the blues can mean a state of depression or melancholy, or a style of music evolved from southern Black American secular songs, and also can refer to a kind of rhyming verse. Herein, the poetry collection *Smoke and Steel* of Carl Sandburg (1878-1967) just shares the nature of the blues, exposing the reality of the then American society and the plight of the then people.

In the year of 1920, Harcourt, Brace and Howe, the company, published *Smoke and Steel*. As Sandburg's third book of poetry after the first two anthologies *Chicago Poems* and *Cornhuskers*, *Smoke and Steel* was in many ways the culmination of his work, reflecting his interior life as well as the emotional and social milieu of his times, a typical common person's soul and experience, and revealing in varied portraits of working people the problems of contemporary life and the universal themes —love, loss, joy, pain, death, war

* This article is one of the achievements of the research project--*Translation Literature and Translation of Literature* (No. GD16WXZ26) from Guangdong Planning Office of Philosophy and Social Science (China).

and so on.

However, what is the most striking theme of *Smoke and Steel*? One step after another, Carl Sandburg came to readers from *Chicago Poems* with a kind of pride, and then *Cornhuskers* with an air of romanticism, to *Smoke and Steel* with a grey theme like the blues of disillusionment of the world war and the society and soulful sympathy with the people. The pivotal book made Sandburg begin to turn his readers toward their shared history, collective fate and joint future.

In the book, the leading poem is “Smoke and Steel” in which images of “Smoke and Steel” originated from Sandburg’s travels to steel towns. One of them is Gary, Indiana that he most frequently visited when he worked as a reporter. The city was founded on land and purchased by the U.S. Steel Corporation in 1905. It was a real and highly industrialized steel city. In the poem Sandburg gives us a mixed vision like a dream:

The smoke changes its shadow
And men change their shadow;
A nigger, a wop, a bohunk changes.

A bar of steel—it is only
Smoke at the heart of it, smoke and the blood of a man.
A runner of fire ran in it, ran out, ran somewhere else,
And left—smoke and the blood of a man
And the finished steel, chilled and blue.

In fact, smoke and steel and steel workers are a combined mixture. Whether he is a “nigger”, a “wop” or a “bohunk”, they become part of steel. A bar of steel is made of “smoke and the blood of a man”. The industrialized product—steel has been infused with human energy, flesh and spirit. And it has been more than a kind of material. If we go back to the producing process, we will feel shocked at “the finished steel, chilled and blue” like a blue bloodsucker ghost wresting the blood of steel workers, and containing a blue mood, and blue music. In the following lines, Sandburg unmask this open secret to us:

And always dark in the heart and through it,
Smoke and the blood of a man.
Pittsburg, Youngstown, Gary—they make their steel with men.

In the blood of men and the ink of chimneys
The smoke nights write their oaths:

Smoke into steel and blood into steel;
Homestead, Braddock, Birmingham, they make their steel with men.
Smoke and blood is the mix of steel.

Usually what we can see is the only shining steel from appearance. Seldom can we find it agglomerates “the blood of a man”. The blood was left in the steel; the soul of workers was gone with the wind in the smoke, for “they make their steel with men” such as in Pittsburgh, Youngstown, Gary, Homestead, Braddock and Birmingham. He leads people to see clearly that “smoke and blood is the mix of steel”. Sandburg chose “Smoke and Steel” as the title; however, if it could be changed into “Soul and Steel”, it maybe better and direct (but franker). The smoke is the soul of steel workers and the steel is also the blood of them. These are part of the people and these are where the people’s contribution and sacrifice lies. Meanwhile, this blood-extracted fate is doomed if they do not want to go hungry:

The anthem learned by the steel is:
Do this or go hungry
Look for our rust on a plow.
Listen to us in a threshing-engine razz.
Look at our job in the running wagon wheat.

What can they do, if they don’t want to go hungry? The “rust on a plow” is part of the workers; the “threshing-engine razz” contains the workers’ mourning; “the running wagon” rolls and winds the workers’ soul, and the “anthem” is actually the blues.

At the end of “Smoke and Steel”, Sandburg reflects on the transience of the lives of men, and permanence of the people forged into a steel bar they leave behind. It’s the epilogue of the blues:

A pool of steel sleeps and looks slant-eyed
on the pearl cobwebs, the pools of moonshine;
sleeps slant-eyed a million years,
sleeps with a coat of rust, a vest of moths,
a shirt of gathering sod and loam.

The wind never bothers ... a bar of steel.
The wind picks only .. pearl cobwebs .. pools of moonshine.¹

The whole poem shows workmen wrest steel from fire; some even die in the process. Men and steel are simultaneously tools and symbols of the industrial society, for, as the quotation says under the subhead of this section,

“Their bones are kneaded into the bread of steel / Their bones are knocked into coils and anvils”. And many people’s sacrifice of lives accompanies modern cities’ civilization, with the blue smoke rising from the steel like a blue bloodsucker ghost singing the blues.

The theme and the sprawling symmetry of form in “Smoke and Steel” repeat the pattern that Sandburg established in “Chicago” in *Chicago Poems* and “Prairie” in *Cornhuskers*. Then the leading poem is followed by a series of dark portraits of working people under the burden of and overwhelmed by the society and their lives.

Similarly, in the poem “Crimson Changes People”, there is the despair of “a crucifix in your eyes,” and the “dusk Golgotha”, colored with dark blues:

DID I see a crucifix in your eyes
and nails and Roman soldiers
and a dusk Golgotha?...²

The crimson color in the title apparently implies Jesus’ tribulation and blood. Sandburg uses biblical quotation to show his disillusionment from the severe society. He is disappointed with the doomed fate of the ordinary people. Though he uses a question mark, he made sure that he saw “a crucifix”, “nails” and “Golgotha” in “your eyes”. Actually under the high pressure from the society, the people have no alternative, and they can but bear this suffering just like Jesus suffered. “Crimson Changes People” indicates suffering changes the people. The crucifixion on earth changes the people’s life attitude into a passive and tolerant one. And he wishes in heart “crimson” could change the people into action instead of tolerance. Or we can regard it as the blues or a lament for the people’s tribulation. Meanwhile in “Cahoots”, the poem contains a sense of cynicism with disillusionment:

Play it across the table.
What if we steal this city blind?
If they want anything let ‘em nail it down.

Harness bulls, dicks, front office men,
And the high goats up on the bench,
Ain’t they all in cahoots?

It is sure they are playing a game “in cahoots”. The mood of “Harness bulls, dicks, front office men”, especially the use of “dicks”, gains an insulting effect on these persons. By the way, “goat” can mean lecherous man. On the one hand, Sandburg regards them as “bulls, dicks” and “goats”; on the other hand, he’d

like to put harness on them. By all appearances he looks them down as the animals and the indecent for they are carving up the people's benefits:

Ain't it fifty-fifty all down the line,
Petemen, dips, boosters, stick-ups and guns—
what's to hinder?

Go fifty-fifty.
If they nail you call in a mouthpiece.
Fix it, you gazump, you slant-head, fix it.
Feed 'em....

Nothin' ever sticks to my fingers, nah, nah,
notin' like that,
But there ain't no law we got to wear mittens—
huh—is there?
Mittens, that's a good one—mittens!
There oughta be a law everybody wear mittens. ³

They are brazenly and openly partitioning the city, the people's benefits "fifty-fifty", half-and-half, and completely with "guns". "What's to hinder?" Nothing! That's because they have guns shamelessly. But they realize "mitten" is good for them to wear to insure "Nothing' ever sticks to my fingers". The poem is full of scorns and bitter mocks, putting up Sandburg's deep hatred for the upper class oppressing the lower class. "Bulls", "dicks", "goats" are their images; and "mittens" are their veils and instrument to hide evils and crimes. Like many other common people, and as one of them, Sandburg takes the guys as disgusting. But he takes himself as a fighter for the people, a champion for the interests of the people like American abolitionist John Brown (1800-1859) in his poem "Finish":

Death comes once, let it be easy.
Ring one bell for me once, let it go at that.
Or ring no bell at all, better yet.

Sing one song if I die.
Sing John Brown's Body or Shout All Over God's Heaven.

Death comes once, let it be easy. ⁴

And thereupon, when he died at the finish in 1967, there were the songs and the

poetry, as here outlined in the poem, and one bell for the eighty-nine-year singer and seeker to make his last wish and dream of dying like John Brown come true. Yes, death came only once and easily for him. But as we know, his whole life, like John Brown too, fighting and speaking for the people, was not a piece of cake, containing a spirit of backbone and perseverance. "Finish" becomes the blues of himself and his death.

Sandburg was forty-one when he had *Smoke and Steel* published, standing professionally and emotionally near the midway of his life and climax of his career and with his thought, philosophy and poetry having grown mature. In the book his most remarkable statement of disillusionment of the world war is in "Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind" with four cantos:

FOUR PRELUDES ON PLAYTHINGS OF THE WIND

"The past is a bucket of ashes."

THE WOMAN named To-morrow
sits with a hairpin in her teeth
and takes her time
and does her hair the way she wants it
and fastens at last the last braid and coil
and puts the hairpin where it belongs
and turns and drawls: Well, what of it?
My grandmother, Yesterday, is gone.
What of it? Let the dead be dead.

Tomorrow comes in the form of a woman taking her time. What does the woman symbolize? "The woman named To-morrow" symbolizes a society. "My grandmother, Yesterday, is gone," she says. "What of it? Let the dead be dead". And what does "Yesterday" mean? It represents social history. Since "My Grandmother, Yesterday, is gone", "Let the dead be dead": Let history be history and past. That has become lessons. This just makes the epigraph of the poem clear: "The past is a bucket of ashes" echoing Sandburg's "Prairie" in *Cornhuskers*:

I speak of new cities and new people.
I tell you the past is a bucket of ashes.
I tell you yesterday is a wind gone down,
a sun dropped in the west.
I tell you there is nothing in the world
only an ocean of tomorrows,

a sky of tomorrow....⁵

He leaves promise for tomorrow, calling the people to leave the past behind, seeing tomorrow beautiful. But whatever tomorrow is, Sandburg cannot conceal his disillusionment mood, and disillusionment is the keynote in the poem and in the book. Anyway he, as a member of the ordinary people, never forgets to remind his fraternal people of: "Tomorrow is a day" and will be beautiful.

In the second prelude, doors twisted on broken hinges suggest the spiritual and moral degeneration of societies smashed by war and some upper people's greed, and imply the destroyed relationship of the people and the society, the disharmony between the people and society, morality and social system:

The doors were cedar
and the panels strips of gold
and the girls were golden girls
and the panels read and the girls chanted:
 We are the greatest city,
 the greatest nation:
 nothing like us ever was.

The doors are twisted on broken hinges.
Sheets of rain swish through on the wind
 where the golden girls ran and the panels read:
 We are the greatest city,
 the greatest nation,
 nothing like us ever was.

In the prelude, it describes doors of cedar and panels of gold bearing the inscription: "We are the greatest city, the greatest nation, nothing like us ever was." It is chanted by golden girls with pride, and it is repeated four times including the following part in the third prelude. The haunting refrain, as in a song, highlights a tension feeling and unifies the tightly organized poem. When "Sheets of rain swish through on the wind, / "Strong men put up a city and got / a nation together":

It has happened before.
Strong men put up a city and got
 a nation together,
And paid singers to sing and women
 to warble: We are the greatest city,

the greatest nation,
nothing like us ever was.

And while the singers sang
and the strong men listened
and paid the singers well
and felt good about it all,
there were rats and lizards who listened
...and the only listeners left now
...are...the rats...and the lizards.

Is the nation really so great and strong in Sandburg's eyes? Why are the singers paid well to sing? Why were there only rats and lizards listening? Sure enough, Sandburg doesn't think so here. And the reason that the singers and women were paid to sing, unwilling to sing, is that an illusive and unreal prosperity lies in the country. To pay to sing is to satisfy the "strong men" themselves and meet the vanity of them. Here Sandburg's cynicism is shown again by the employment, for example, the "rats" and "lizards" here belong to the same group—"the strong men":

And there are black crows
crying, "Caw, caw,"
bringing mud and sticks
building a nest
over the words carved
on the doors where the panels were cedar
and the strips on the panels were gold
and the golden girls came singing:
We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation:
nothing like us ever was.

The only singers now are crows crying, "Caw, caw,"
And the sheets of rain whine in the wind and doorways.
And the only listeners now are...the rats...and the lizards.

The second half of the third prelude denotes the fate of the nation after war that sang of their own greatness. Black crows, always hinting misfortune, begin to nest over the doors that were cedar and gold. Singers have been substituted. "The only singers now are crows crying, 'Caw, caw,'" and "the only listeners

left are ... the rats ... and the lizards.” Black crows and rats predict the degeneration of civilization. And “sheets of rain” do not “swish” any more like before, but begin to “whine in the wind and doorways”, echoing the cawing of crows.

And the fourth prelude of the quartet depicts the symbolic dominance of the rats scrambling over the civilization of the nation:

The feet of the rats
scribble on the door sills;
the hieroglyphs of the rat footprints
chatter the pedigrees of the rats
and babble of the blood
and gabble of the breed
of the grandfathers and the great-grandfathers
of the rats.

And the wind shifts
and the dust on a door sill shifts
and even the writing of the rat footprints
tells us nothing, nothing at all
about the greatest city, the greatest nation
where the strong men listened
and the women warbled: Nothing like us ever was.⁶

According to Webster’s Dictionary, a “rat” can refer to a scoundrel, or untrustworthy person.⁷ Sandburg should have implied this level of meaning. It was these “rats”, the scoundrels, the untrustworthy persons that disordered the society and civilization. “Rats” are the starters of war. “Rats” are the destroyer of peace. “Rats” are the destructor of civilization. Sandburg’s “Four Preludes” captures the emptiness and fragility of the people’s contemporary life, and the abatement of hope, reflecting WWI’s deep negative influence on the people. But who made the people lost? Who were the chief criminals? They were these “rats”. And these “rats” were the killers and misleaders of the people; these “rats” were the makers of low tempo in the classic blues of “Smoke and Steel” and “Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind”.

Generally speaking, the grey mood, especially the mood of “Smoke and Steel” and “Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind”, dominates the whole book of *Smoke and Steel*. This disillusionment theme of “Smoke and Steel” came from Sandburg’s disillusionment about World War One. It was

Sandburg's consideration and contemplation on the side of the people. And it was Sandburg's social responsibility sense that made him have had such a deep speculation. It is sure, Carl Sandburg, as the people's poet, never unburdened the people's weight from his back and his heart. "Smoke" is the soul and the blues of the working class gone with the wind and in the history. "Steel" is forged with the flesh and bone of the working people. The "Four Preludes" is the blues music accompany of "Smoke and Steel". These all compose a classic blues symphony of modern industry and modern society, and a classic blues symphony of suffering and tribulation of the common folk, with the composer is Mr. Sandburg.

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