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VERSE VERSION

Chief editor: Zhang Guangkui

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# **Verse Version**

**Vol.6 No.4 December 2017**

**Chief Editor**

**Zhang Guangkui**

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# VERSE    VERSION

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# Contents

## English-Chinese Version

1. His Golden Locks Time Hath to Silver Turned.....George Peele (1-2)
2. SONNETS 65.....William Shakespeare (3-4)
3. Crown of Sonnets Dedicated to Love.....Mary Wroth (5-6)
4. Methought I Saw.....John Milton (7-8)
5. England! Awake! Awake! Awake!.....William Blake (9-10)
6. To Wordsworth.....Percy Bysshe Shelley (11-12)
7. The Splendor Falls.....Alfred, Lord Tennyson (13-14)
8. The Lost .....Jones Very (15-16)
9. Echo.....Edwin Arlington Robinson (17-18)
10. Grass.....Carl Sandburg (19-20)

## Chinese-English Version

1. Autumn Evening.....Du Mu (21-22)
2. Tune: Qingpingyue.....Yan Shu (23-24)
3. Season.....Xu Zhimo (25-26)
4. Maybe: A Funeral Song.....Wen Yiduo (27-28)
5. Improvised at Xiao Hong's Tomb .....Dai Wangshu (29-30)
6. You.....Yu Dagang (31-32)
7. Reef.....Ai Qing (33-34)
8. Twilight.....Bian Zhilin (35-36)
9. The Night.....Chen Mengjia (37-38)
10. Heavy Bell.....Yuan Kejia (39-40)
11. Dwelling upon the Ruins of Alhambra Palace.....Li Lei(41-42)
12. Nostalgia and Grief.....Li Lei(43-46)

## **Recommendation of English Poets and Poems**

### **Alfred, Lord Tennyson**

Introduction.....	(48)
1. III.....	(49-50)
2. IV.....	(51-52)
3. V.....	(53-54)
4. X.....	(55-56)
5. XI.....	(57-58)
6. XII.....	(59-60)
7. XVII.....	(61-62)

## **Recommendation of Chinese Poets and Poems**

### **Folk Songs of Northern Dynasties**

Introduction.....	(64)
1. Song of Qi Yu (1).....	(65-66)
2. Song of Mauve Horse.....	(67-68)
3. Song of Sparrow Twittering.....	(69-70)
4. Song of Across the Valley.....	(71-72)
5. Song of Willow Breaking (1).....	(73-74)
6. Song of Willow Breaking (2).....	(75-76)
7. Song of Youzhou Steed and Rider.....	(77-78)
8. Song of Chi'le.....	(79-80)

## **Poetics**

Poem-Singing: Fusion of Poems and Lyrics of Song.....	Wen Wei (83-90)
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**To our honourable**  
**poets, readers and translators**



## English-Chinese Version

### His Golden Locks Time Hath to Silver Turned<sup>1</sup>

George Peele<sup>2</sup>

His golden locks time hath to silver turned;  
Oh, time too swift, oh, swiftness never ceasing!  
His youth 'gainst time and age hath ever spurned.  
But spurned in vain; youth waneth by increasing.  
Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers but fading seen;  
Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green.

His helmet now shall make a hive for bees,  
And lover's sonnets turned to holy psalms,  
A man-at-arms must now serve on his knees,  
And feed on prayers, which are age his alms;  
But though from court to cottage he depart,  
His saint is sure of his unspotted heart.

And when he saddest sits in homely cell,  
He'll teach his swains this carol for a song:  
Blest be the hearts that wish my sovereign well,  
Cursed be the souls that think her any wrong!  
Goddess, allow this aged man his right,  
To be your beadsman now, that was your knight.

---

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 2005: 221.

<sup>2</sup> George Peele (1556-1596) was an English dramatist. Among his occasional poems are *The Honour of the Garter*, which has a prologue containing Peele's judgments on his contemporaries, and *Polyhymnia* (1590), a blank verse description of the ceremonies attending the retirement of the queens' champion, Sir Henry Lee.

Translation:

## 时光将他的金发转银

乔治·皮尔

时光将他的金发转银；

    啊，时光飞逝，啊，永不减速！

岁月践踏过他的青春，

    但践踏也是徒劳；青春因损而酷。

美貌、力量、青春，皆会凋谢；

责任、忠贞、情爱，长青不灭。

他的盔甲定会成为蜂巢，

    爱人的情诗终成神圣之诗，

曾经的斗士如今跪着祈祷，

    祷告是他的食粮他的救济；

他虽由辉煌走向低下，

他的圣人确信他内心无暇。

当他悲伤地坐在简朴的陋室，

    他教乡村青年合唱这首歌：

赐福那些祝福圣母之人，

    诅咒那些怨她不公之人！

女神啊，请给这位老人权利，

让他做您的祈福者，您的骑士。

（刘朝晖 译）

## SONNET 65<sup>1</sup>

William Shakespeare<sup>2</sup>

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea  
But sad mortality o'er-sways their power,  
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,  
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?  
O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out  
Against the wrackful siege of batt'ring days,  
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,  
Nor gates of steel so strong, but time decays?  
O fearful meditation! where, alack,  
Shall time's best jewel from time's chest lie hid?  
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?  
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?  
O, none, unless this miracle have might,  
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

---

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 2005: 263.

<sup>2</sup> William Shakespeare (1564-1616), an English poet, playwright, and actor, was widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist.

Translation:

## 第 65 首十四行诗

威廉·莎士比亚

黄铜石坚，陆地海潮，  
唯悲无常皆统。  
哀求若何姣颜，  
羸与花同。  
盛夏如蜜微风，  
怎敌追日围袭。  
如金汤，固岩崩，  
时蚀锻门铁衣。  
呜呼可惧冥思，  
时之珍，堪逃时之宝盒？  
何神掌，可挽迭瞬不辞？  
孰禁美之被夺，  
无人矣、除有魔法。  
然墨中，吾之爱尤炫光华。

（朱丽叶 译）



## **Crown of Sonnets Dedicated to Love 77<sup>1</sup>**

Mary Wroth<sup>2</sup>

In this strange labyrinth how shall I turn?

Ways are on all sides, while the way I miss:

If to the right hand, there in love I burn;

Let me go forward, therein danger is;

If to the left, suspicion hinders bliss,

Let me turn back, shame cries I ought return,

Nor faint, though crosses with my fortunes

kiss;

Stand still is harder, although sure to mourn.

Thus let me take the right, or left hand way,

Go forward, or stand still, or back retire:

I must these doubts endure without allay

Or help, but travail find for my best hire.

Yet that which most my troubled sense doth move,

Is to leave all and take the thread of Love.

---

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 2005: 351.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Wroth (1587-1651), was an English poet of the Renaissance. A member of a distinguished literary family, Lady Wroth was among the first female British writers to have achieved an enduring reputation.

Translation:

## 献给爱情的十四行诗 • 77

玛莉·若斯

在这怪诞的迷宫，我该如何转身？

路通各道，我却独独迷失我该走的路：

如向右，我将炽热浸浴爱河；

如让我径直向前，我将险境深陷；

如向左，种种疑虑将阻碍福光，

就让我转身，我应回去留下悔恨的泪水，

却未曾模糊我的视线，尽管与我的命运

吻合；

尽管会为之哀悼，但仍旧挺直背脊屹立不倾。

所以让我向右，或向左，

向前，或立定，又或后退：

我必须忍受这些疑惑而非放弃：

亦或求救，但艰辛的阵痛令我找到出路。

然心底深处那不安的思绪在游移，

该是放下这一切去牵起爱情的红线。

（邓宇萍 译）

## **Methought I Saw<sup>1</sup>**

John Milton<sup>2</sup>

Methought I saw my late espoused saint  
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,  
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,  
Rescued from Death by force, though pale and faint.  
Mine, as whom washed from spot of child-bed taint  
Purification in the Old Law did save,  
And such, as yet once more I trust to have  
Full sight of her in heaven without restraint,  
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.  
Her face was veiled; yet to my fancied sight  
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined  
So clear as in no face with more delight.  
But O, as to embrace me she inclined,  
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

---

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 2005: 419.

<sup>2</sup> John Milton (1608-1674) was an English poet, polemicist, and man of letters, and a civil servant for the Commonwealth of England under Oliver Cromwell. He was best known for his epic poem *Paradise Lost* (1667), written in blank verse.

Translation:

## 我仿佛看见

约翰·弥尔顿

我仿佛看见我最近去世的爱妻  
被送回给我，像赫克里斯当初  
从死亡手里夺回的亚尔塞斯蒂，  
虽苍白无力，却还给了她丈夫。  
她像古时洗身礼拯救的妇女，  
已洗涤干净原来产褥的血迹。  
她穿着她心地那样纯净的白衣，  
正如我相信我会无拘无束  
有一天在天堂里面遇见她那样。  
她虽然蒙着面纱，我仿佛看见  
她全身闪耀着慈爱，甜美，善良，  
比任何人脸上显露的都叫人喜欢。  
但她正俯身要和我拥抱时，我醒了，  
她走了，白天带来了黑夜漫漫。

（刘朝晖 译）



## **England! Awake! Awake! Awake!**<sup>1</sup>

William Blake<sup>2</sup>

England! awake! awake! awake!

Jerusalem thy Sister calls!

Why wilt thou sleep the sleep of death?

And close her from thy ancient walls.

Thy hills & valleys felt her feet

Gently upon their bosoms move:

Thy gates beheld sweet Zion's ways;

Then was a time of joy and love.

And now the time returns again:

Our souls exult & London's towers,

Receive the Lamb of God to dwell

In England's green & pleasant bowers.

---

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 2005: 747.

<sup>2</sup> William Blake (1757-1827) was an English poet, painter, and printmaker in the Romantic Age.

Translation:

## 英格兰！醒来！醒来！醒来！

威廉·布莱克

英格兰！醒来！醒来！醒来！

你的姊妹正呼叫耶路撒冷！

你为何被禁锢在死亡睡眠中饱受折磨？

将她挡在你古旧的城墙外。

你的山脊和山谷感受着她的步伐

在他们的胸前缓缓移动：

你的城门见证美妙的天国之路；

喜悦与爱正是当下感受。

如今旧日重现：

我们的灵魂欢呼雀跃，

一群上帝的羔羊到伦敦落脚

在英格兰青翠怡人的闺房。

（陈能颖 译）

## To Wordsworth<sup>1</sup>

Percy Bysshe Shelley<sup>2</sup>

Poet of Nature, thou hast wept to know  
That things depart which never may return;  
Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,  
Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.  
These common woes I feel. One loss is mine,  
Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone deplore;  
Thou wert as a lone star whose light did shine  
On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar;  
Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood  
Above the blind and battling multitude;  
In honored poverty thy voice did weave  
Songs consecrate to truth and liberty;—  
Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,  
Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

---

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 2005: 863.

<sup>2</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) was an English romantic poet. He is perhaps best known for such classic poems as *Ozymandias*, *Ode to the West Wind*, *To a Skylark*, *Music*, *When Soft Voices Die*, *The Cloud* and *The Masque of Anarchy*, which are among the most popular and critically acclaimed poems in the English language.

Translation:

## 致华兹华斯

珀西·比希·雪莱

大自然的诗人，你该痛心的知晓

事情在过去后将不再重来

童年和青春，友情和爱情一开始都曾闪耀

然后像梦一般逃走，空留遗憾。

我感受着这些寻常的悲伤。其一便是我本身，

你也能感受到，但只有我独自悲叹；

你如孤星独自灿烂

照耀在冬夜汹涌海面一叶轻舟上

你是磐石般坚韧的避难所

凌驾于盲从与纷争的人群之上；

你的声音在荣耀的贫乏中编织成歌

以献给自由和真理；——

背离了这些，你留给我的是悲伤，

到此为止，过去的你将一去不返。

（陈能颖 译）



## The Splendor Falls<sup>1</sup>

Alfred, Lord Tennyson<sup>2</sup>

The splendor falls on castle walls  
And snowy summits old in story:  
The long light shakes across the lakes,  
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,  
And thinner, clearer, farther going!  
O sweet and far from cliff and scar  
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!  
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
They faint on hill or field or river:  
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
And grow for ever and for ever.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

---

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 2005: 994.

<sup>2</sup> Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) was an English poet. He was regarded by his contemporaries as the greatest poet of Victorian England. A superb craftsman in verse, he wrote poetry that ranged from confident assertion to black despair. In 1842, Tennyson published three Arthurian poems, *Morte d'Arthur*, *Sir Galahad*, and *Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere*, which would later be incorporated into *Idylls of the King* (1859).

Translation:

## 光辉临降

阿尔弗雷德·丁尼生

城堡的墙壁盛满临降的光辉

在古老的故事里雪峰昭现：

长长的光波摇曳一湖湖莹水，

浩大的瀑布在光辉里飞流凌跃。

吹吧，号角，吹吧，让那回声恣意飞扬，

吹吧，号角，响应，回荡，远去，远去，远去。

听啊，听！多么缥缈、轻灵，

越来越缥缈，越来越轻灵，渐渐消逝！

啊，声音从远处峭壁的崖面飘来，多么清甜

隐约听到是仙境的号角吹响！

吹吧，让我们倾听幽紫山谷的应和：

吹吧，号角，响应，回荡，远去，远去，远去。

爱人啊，在高耸的碧空中号角声消逝远去，

在山丘、田野、河流处渐去：

我们的共鸣在灵魂间回荡，

声声的应和是不息的长鸣。

吹吧，号角，吹吧，让那回声恣意飞扬，

吹吧，号角，响应，回荡，远去，远去，远去。

（邓宇萍 译）

## **The Lost<sup>1</sup>**

Jones Very<sup>2</sup>

The fairest day that ever yet has shone,  
Will be when thou the day within shalt see;  
The fairest rose that ever yet has blown,  
When thou the flower thou lookest on shalt be.  
But thou art far away among Time's toys;  
Thyself the day thou lookest for in them,  
Thyself the flower that now thine eye enjoys,  
But wilted now thou hang'st upon thy stem.  
The bird thou hearest on the budding tree,  
Thou hast made sing with thy forgotten voice;  
But when it swells again to melody,  
The song is thine in which thou wilt rejoice;  
And thou new risen 'midst these wonders live,  
That now to them dost all thy substance give.

---

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 2005:1044.

<sup>2</sup> Jones Very (1813- 1880) was an American poet, essayist, clergyman, and mystic associated with the American Transcendentalism movement.

Translation:

## 失去

琼斯·维瑞

这是迄今为止闪耀过的最美好的一天，  
这一天就是你在那时将要看到的；  
这是迄今为止盛开过的最美丽的玫瑰，  
这些花就是那时你将要看清的，  
但你却远在时间的玩具之间；  
这一天你看清了自己在他们中；  
此时，你的眼睛正徜徉花中，  
但是此时你也正挂在自己的枝干上垂思。  
你听见鸟儿在发芽的树上鸣唱，  
你用已经被你遗忘的声音歌唱；  
但是当它再次飞扬成旋律，  
这歌就是属于你，你为此窃喜不已；  
你将在这些奇迹中获得新生，  
此时，请把你的所有向它们赠予。

（胡婷 译）

## Echo<sup>1</sup>

Edwin Arlington Robinson<sup>2</sup>

Come to me in the silence of the night;  
Come in the speaking silence of a dream;  
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as bright  
As sunlight on a stream;  
Come back in tears,  
O memory, hope, love of finished years.

Oh dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet,  
Whose wakening should have been in Paradise,  
Where souls brimful of love abide and meet;  
Where thirsting longing eyes  
Watch the slow door  
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live  
My very life again tho' cold in death:  
Come back to me in dreams, that I may give  
Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:  
Speak low, lean low,  
As long ago, my love, how long ago.

---

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 2005: 1128.

<sup>2</sup> Edwin Arlington Robinson (1869-1935), was an American poet who won three Pulitzer Prizes for his work.

Translation:

## 音回

克利丝汀娜·罗赛蒂

向我走来，穿过无言的静夜；  
    向我走来，穿过梦里叮咛的静寂；  
向我走来，带着圆柔的面颊和双眸  
    那明亮的眸光犹如淌过的莹莹溪水；  
    回来吧，眼眶盈满泪水，  
啊，往昔、希冀、在时光里老去得爱情。

啊，甜蜜的梦，如此甜蜜，这苦涩的甜蜜，  
    应在天堂醒来，  
这里，带着满是爱意的灵魂在等候、在颌首；  
    这里，有殷祈以盼的眼眸  
    望着那扇门  
缓缓打开，你走来，不再离开。

来我梦里吧，我便被赋予生命  
    我将于冰冷的死亡里重生：  
向我走来，回到梦里，我便被给予律动  
    因你跳动的脉搏而跳动，你的呼吸而呼吸：  
    我俩轻语相依，  
就如很久以前，我的爱人，很久很久以前。

（邓宇萍 译）

## Grass<sup>1</sup>

Carl Sandburg<sup>2</sup>

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz<sup>1</sup> and Waterloo.

Shovel them under and let me work—

I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg

And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.

Shovel them under and let me work.

Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:

What place is this?

Where are we now?

I am the grass.

Let me work.

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Fifth Edition). London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 2005: 1253.

<sup>2</sup> Carl Sandburg (1878–1967) was a Swedish-American poet, writer, and editor. He won three Pulitzer Prizes: two for his poetry and one for his biography of Abraham Lincoln.

Translation:

## 草

卡尔·桑伯格

在奥斯德立兹和滑铁卢让尸体堆积成山。

把他们埋掉然后让我干活——

我是草；我掩盖所有。

在盖茨堡让尸体堆积成山，

在伊普尔和凡尔登让也尸体堆积成山。

把他们埋掉然后让我干活。

两年，十年，然后旅客问乘务员：

这儿是哪里？

我们在何处？

我是草。

让我干活。

（陈能颖 译）



## Chinese-English Version

### 秋夕<sup>1</sup>

杜牧

银烛秋光冷画屏，  
轻罗小扇扑流萤。  
天阶夜色凉如水，  
卧看牵牛织女星。

---

<sup>1</sup> 蘅塘退士选编. 唐诗三百首. 四川: 四川出版集团巴蜀书社, 2006: 226.

Translation:

## **Autumn Evening**

Du Mu<sup>1</sup>

The painted screen's cool with silvery autumn candle.

I flutter my silk fan, chasing the fireflies ample.

The stone stairs at night are as chilly as water.

I lie down to look at lover-stars of the Altair and Vega.

(Trans. Zhang Guangkui)

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<sup>1</sup> Du Mu (杜牧, 803-852), was a leading Chinese poet of the late Tang dynasty. His courtesy name was Muzhi (牧之), and sobriquet Fanchuan (樊川). He is best known for his lyrical and romantic quatrains.

## 清平乐<sup>1</sup>

晏殊

红笺小字，  
说尽平生意。  
鸿雁在云鱼在水，  
惆怅此情难寄！

斜阳独倚西楼，  
遥山恰对帘钩。  
人面不知何处，  
绿波依旧东流。

---

<sup>1</sup> 上疆村民重编. 宋词三百首. 四川: 四川出版集团巴蜀书社, 2006: 248.

Translation:

## **Tune: Qingpingyue<sup>1</sup>**

Yan Shu<sup>2</sup>

Thick words on red paper  
Tell of the deep love of an adorer.  
Fish in water and swans in sky,  
In distress such a feeling is hard to deliver.  
  
The sunset saw me at the west window alone,  
Curtain hooks facing remote hills that shone.  
The lovely face was nowhere to be found,  
Green water flowing as always to the east bound.

(Trans. Liu Zhaohui)

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<sup>1</sup> “Qingpingyue” is one of the ancient Chinese tonal patterns with given cadence to which ci (a type of classical Chinese poetry) poems are composed accordingly.

<sup>2</sup> Yan Shu (晏殊, 991-1055), was a Chinese statesman, poet, calligrapher and a literary figure of the Song dynasty. He was given the posthumous title of Yuanxian (元献) as well as bestowed the title of Duke of Linzi.

## 季候<sup>1</sup>

徐志摩

他俩初起的日子，

像春风吹着春花。

花对风说：“我要”，

风不回话：他给！

但春花早变了泥，

春风也不知去向。

她怨，说天时太冷；

“不久就冻冰，”他说。

---

<sup>1</sup> 陈梦家编. 新月派诗选. 上海: 诗社, 1931: 28.

Translation:

## Season

Xu Zhimo<sup>1</sup>

The day they met first,  
Like spring breeze blowing spring flowers.  
The flowers ask breeze, “I want,”  
Breeze doesn’t reply: He gives!

Yet flowers have withered into mud,  
And breeze has gone nowhere.  
She complained that it was too cold;  
“It will freeze soon,” he said.

(Trans. Deng Yuping)

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<sup>1</sup> Xu Zhimo (徐志摩, 1897-1931), a noted Chinese poet in the 20th century. He wrote poems, essays and short stories. His most famous poems include “Farewell to Cambridge Again”, “One Night in Florence” and so forth.

## 也许——葬歌<sup>1</sup>

闻一多

也许你真是哭得太累，  
也许，也许你要睡一睡，  
那么叫苍鹭不要咳嗽，  
蛙不要号，蝙蝠不要飞，

不许阳光拨你的眼帘，  
不许清风刷上你的眉，  
无论谁都不能惊醒你，  
撑一伞松阴庇护你睡，

也许你听这蚯蚓翻泥，  
听这小草的根须吸水，  
也许你听这般的音乐，  
比那咒骂的人声更美，

那么你先把眼皮闭紧，  
我就让你睡，我让你睡，  
我把黄土轻轻盖着你，  
我叫纸钱儿缓缓地飞。

---

<sup>1</sup> 文鹏编. 中国现代名诗三百首. 北京: 北京出版社, 2000: 65.

Translation:

## Maybe: A Funeral Song

Wen Yiduo<sup>1</sup>

Maybe you cried too tired indeed;  
Maybe a sleep is for you in need;  
Let's then stop herons from coughing,  
Frogs from croaking, and bats from flying.

The sun mustn't open your eyes;  
The wind mustn't blow your brows.  
Whoever he is mustn't wake you up.  
The pine tree shade is to guard your sleep.

Maybe you listen to the worms ploughing  
And the grass roots water absorbing.  
Maybe such music you listen to  
Is more beautiful than human cursing.

So close your eyes tight.  
I'll let you sleep, let you sleep.  
I cover you gently with yellow earth.  
I fly joss paper slowly for your mirth.

(Trans. Liu Zhaohui)

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<sup>1</sup> Wen Yiduo (闻一多, 1899-1946), formerly also romanized Wen I-to, was a prominent Chinese poet and scholar who was assassinated by the Kuomintang.



## 萧红墓畔口占<sup>1</sup>

戴望舒

走六小时寂寞的长途，  
到你头边放一束红山茶，  
我等待着，长夜漫漫，  
你却卧听着海涛闲话。

---

<sup>1</sup> 文鹏编. 中国现代名诗三百首. 北京: 北京出版社, 2000: 118.

Translation:

## **Improvised at Xiao Hong's Tomb<sup>1</sup>**

Dai Wangshu<sup>2</sup>

I took a long lonely trip of six hours

To bring you a bunch of red camellia flowers.

I wait in patience, dark nights never ending;

You lie in silence, listening to sea waves chatting.

(Trans. Liu Zhaohui)

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<sup>1</sup> Xiao Hong (1911-1942) is one of the most outstanding female writers in the history of modern Chinese literature.

<sup>2</sup> Dai Wangshu (戴望舒, 1905-1950), also Tai Van-chou, was a Chinese poet, essayist and translator active from the late 1920s to the end of the 1940s. A native of Hangzhou, Zhejiang, he graduated from the Aurora University, Shanghai in 1926, majoring in French.

你<sup>1</sup>

俞大纲

我时常看见你，  
在我梦境里淹留，  
阿，只是一片影子，  
像白云般漂流。

在那溪涧里，时常  
闪动着你的星眸，  
一颗露珠上又有  
你眼角滴下的愁。

清风，或长虹里，  
我看见，我听见你：  
轻轻的你招呼我，  
在说，“我在这里”！

---

<sup>1</sup> 陈梦家编. 新月派诗选. 上海: 诗社, 1931: 191.

Translation:

## **You**

Yu Dagang<sup>1</sup>

From time to time I see you,  
In the dream indulging.  
O it is a wisp of shadow only,  
Like the clouds drifting.

In the stream, time after time  
Your eyes of stars are twinkling.  
Yet one more dewdrop  
Your sorrow is shedding.

In breeze, or in rainbow,  
I see, and I hear from you:  
Gently greet me,  
Saying, "I am here!"

(Trans. Deng Yuping)

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<sup>1</sup> Yu Dagang (俞大纲, 1908-1978), was regarded as a famous modern poet in China.

## 礁石<sup>1</sup>

艾青

一个浪，一个浪

无休止地扑过来

每一个浪都在它脚下

被打成碎末，散开……

它的脸上和身上

像刀砍过的一样

但它依然站在那里

含着微笑，看着海洋……

---

<sup>1</sup> 文鹏编. 中国现代名诗三百首. 北京: 北京出版社, 2000: 172.

Translation:

## Reef

Ai Qing<sup>1</sup>

A cluster of wave and another,  
Endlessly, rush and throw over.  
Each, beneath its foot, hither,  
Is smashed then scatters ever...

Its scarred face and the whole body,  
Seems like having been hack'd and hack'd.  
Nonetheless, it stands there steady  
And smiles at the sea...

(Trans. Zhu Liye)

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<sup>1</sup> Ai Qing (艾青, 1910- 1996), was one of the finest modern Chinese poets. He was born in Jinhua county, in eastern China's Zhejiang Province.

## 黄昏<sup>1</sup>

卞之琳

“我看见你乱转过几十圈的空磨，  
看见你尘封座上的菩萨也做过，  
你叫床铺把你的半段身子托住。  
也好久了，现在你要干什么呢？”

“真的，我要干什么呢？”

“你该知道的吧，我先是在街路边，  
不知怎的，走进了更加清冷的庭院，  
又到了屋子里，又挨近了墙跟前，  
你替我想想看，我哪儿去好呢？”

“真的，你哪儿去好呢？”

---

<sup>1</sup> 陈梦家编. 新月派诗选. 上海: 诗社, 1931: 177.

Translation:

## Twilight

Bian Zhilin<sup>1</sup>

“I saw you pulling a millstone round and round for nothing;

I saw you also did so to the dusty statue of Bodhisattva.

You let bed prop the half of your body.

So long! What are you going to do?”

“Be serious, what am I going to do after all?”

“As you know, I was on the street.

Then, into the more melancholy yard somehow.

And then, into the house, further, close to the wall.

Could you tell me where I can go?”

“Really, where can you go?”

(Trans. Zhang Guangkui)

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<sup>1</sup> Bian Zhilin (卞之琳, 1910-2000), was a 20th-century Chinese poet, translator and literature researcher. Bian was born in Haimen, Jiangsu Province, and liked to read classical and modern Chinese poems since he was very young.



## 夜<sup>1</sup>

陈梦家

我顶爱没有星那时的昏暗，  
没有月亮的影子爬上栏杆；  
姑娘，这时候快蹑进这门槛，  
悄悄的挨近我可不要慌张，  
让黑暗拥抱着只露出心坎。

挂着你流的眼泪不许揩干，  
透过那一层小青天朝我看；  
姑娘，你胆小，这时候你该敢  
说出那一句话，从你的心坎——  
没有人听见，也没有人偷看。

乘着太阳还徘徊在山背后，  
门前瞌睡着那条偷懒的狗；  
姑娘，你快走，丢下你的心走，  
不要记得，这件事像不曾有，  
好比一场梦，——你多喝了酒。

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<sup>1</sup> 陈梦家编. 新月派诗选. 上海: 诗社, 1931: 135.

Translation:

## The Night

Chen Mengjia<sup>1</sup>

I keen on the dimness without stars at night,  
Without moon shadow the rail climbing;  
Girl, it's the time to creep through this threshold,  
Quietly close to me and panic don't be,  
Hear to heart, allow darkness to embrace us.

Tears on your cheeks needn't wipe up,  
Through the blue sky look at me;  
Girl, though you're timid, now you shouldn't be  
Afraid of heartily saying that word—  
Because there's no one hear, and peep.

The sun's over the hill still leaving,  
The lazy dog in front of door cozily napping;  
Girl, go! Don't leave your mind.  
Don't remember, it never happened,  
It's a dream, —you just drunk.

(Trans. Hu Ting)

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

## 沉钟<sup>1</sup>

袁可嘉

让我沉默于时空，  
如古寺锈绿的沉钟，  
负驮三千载沉重；  
听窗外风雨匆匆；

把波澜掷给大海，  
把无垠还诸苍穹，  
我是沉寂的洪钟，  
沉寂如蓝色凝冻；

生命托蒂于苦痛，  
苦痛任死寂煎烘，  
我是锈绿的洪钟，  
收容八方的野风！

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<sup>1</sup> 陈梦家编. 新月派诗选. 上海: 诗社, 1931: 103.

Translation:

## Heavy Bell

Yuan Kejia<sup>1</sup>

Let me be silent in time and spatial,  
Like a heavy rusty bell in an old temple,  
Carrying three thousand years of load,  
And hearing the wind and rain outside.

Fling billows into the ocean.  
Give the infinity back to the heaven.  
I'm a huge bell in silence  
Like the frozen stillness of vast blues.

Out of Pain life stems;  
Pain suffers dead silence.  
I'm a huge rusty bell,  
Taking winds in from all-angle.

(Trans. Zhang Guangkui)

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<sup>1</sup> Yuan Kejia (袁可嘉, 1921–2008), born in Zhejiang, was a famous poet, translator and a specialist in British and American literature.

## 阿尔罕布拉宫的废墟

李磊

我说过一切辉煌都是废墟的重复  
威严的宫殿，女人与欲望  
还有心中想占有的一切  
不会比废墟活得更久  
那些梦想以及后辈的帝王  
在时间面前不堪一击

我说过夕阳之后的夜晚有些潮湿  
伟大的记忆只会被爱情记住  
曾经动人的音乐，完美的建筑  
催人泪下的爱与背叛，还有  
战斗与荣光，最终  
让一群蝼蚁和蛇虫无情占领  
有一只鸟飞过，也许是乌鸦  
黑色的翅膀使时光变得更深

我说过一切废墟最终都属于诗人  
在音乐和节奏里复活  
在叹息和感叹中纯粹  
废墟只是废墟，与爱无关  
与辉煌无关，只与时间有关  
告诉世界：曾经经历过的一切  
我们还会经历一遍

2017.11.18

Translation:

## **Dwelling upon the Ruins of Alhambra Palace**

Li Lei<sup>1</sup>

I assumed that all the ruins are repetition of glammers  
The stately palace, women and desires  
And everything we want to possess in our hearts  
Won't outlive any longer than the muted ruins  
Neither the dreams nor the kings of later generations  
Are no other than built on the beach the sand castles

I insisted the damp would be the evenings after sunset  
By love at the great memories'd be only remembered  
Once pleasant music, and perfect architecture  
Love and infidelity that'd moved us into tears, and  
The battles and the glorious victories , eventually  
Would've been captured by ants and worms, fiercely  
Maybe a bird, probably a crow, would fly above  
Its black wings were supposed to darken the old days

I argued that all the ruins would go to the hands of the poets  
They all would come back to life to the rhythmic music notes  
And they would be purified in the sighs and exclamations  
The ruins are just the ruins, nothing to do with love  
Nothing to do with glories, nor with the passed times  
Just tell the world: everything that has been once experienced  
For sure we will, one more time, from the beginning experience

November 18<sup>th</sup> , 2017

(Trans. Zhou Yuanxiao)

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<sup>1</sup> Li Lei(李磊), born in Hubei Province, China, is a very active contemporary poet and critic, also a renowned scholar of poetry studies. He teaches as a professor of English literature at Zhongkai University of Agriculture and Engineering in China.

## 乡愁与哀愁

### ——悼念余光中先生

李 磊

题记：余光中先生走了，终年 90 岁。中国伟大的诗人走了，一曲《乡愁》缠绕着整个中国，写尽了中国人爱和流浪的情怀。先生走了，但诗歌永恒。也唱支乡愁，痛悼余光中先生。

先生走了，把乡愁也带到天上

乡村只剩下哀愁，月光洒在

幽暗的土胚屋顶，剥蚀的

老墙淌着雨水，村头的槐树下

蜷缩着老人与狗，破落的乡村

我们还要乡愁有什么用

Translation:

## **Nostalgia and Grief**

### **—An Elegy to the poet Yu Guangzhong**

Li Lei

Notes: Now the poet Yu Guangzhong is gone. His life ends at the age of 90, forever! Now he, one of the greatest Chinese poet, is gone. Yet his poem Nostalgia has deeply touched the whole country, which fully expresses the love of Chinese people for their homelands and the bitter feelings of wanderers on thinking of their hometowns. Now Mr. Yu is no more but his poems will be immortal. Seized with bitter grief, here I would like to write poems too dedicated nostalgia in memory of Mr. Yu Guangzhong.

Now Mister you've gone, with nostalgia to the Heaven

Grief is the only thing left in the villages. The moonbeams

Shine on the dim crude roofs, and the endless raindrops

Trickle down the weathered walls. Under the locust trees

At the village's end are crouching an old man and dog.

Alas! Here and there are the dilapidated villages!

What do we have to be so nostalgic these days?!



先生说乡愁是一枚邮票  
把无尽的思念寄回家，可乡村  
已经很久没有邮车的到来  
池塘如一滴眼泪，流水  
带走了女人和绿色  
白雪覆盖田野，空洞的乡村  
我们还要乡愁有什么用

乡村只有哀愁，只有盼望  
远方的男人何时从白雪中归来  
正月的灶火何时再点亮  
乡村的窗棂，还有桃花般的姐姐  
不再远嫁他乡，哀愁的乡村  
何时再一次缠绕着先生的乡愁

2017.12.14

Translation:

Oh Mister, you said nostalgia is a small stamp.  
She's mailed your endless homesickness home.  
But no postal cars have visited the villages so long.  
The ponds are like a teardrop. The water waves  
Nibble away women and the hopes in green color.  
The fields are covered with snow. The barren villages  
What do we have to be so nostalgic these days?!

Only grief is tangible in the villages along with longings.  
When will men return against the snow from the distance?  
When will we see the fire again in the stove in Spring Festival?  
The window lattices, the sisters pretty as peach blossoms.  
No longer will they leave home so far away and marry.  
Oh Mister, the dole abandoned villages!  
When will they be tangled again, with your sober nostalgia?

December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
(Trans. Zhou Yuanxiao)

## **Recommendation of English Poets and Poems**

### **Alfred, Lord Tennyson**

## Recommendation of English Poets and Poems

### Introduction

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, (1809-1892) was Poet Laureate of Great Britain and Ireland during much of Queen Victoria's reign and remains one of the most popular British poets.

Tennyson excelled at penning short lyrics, such as “Break, Break, Break”, “The Charge of the Light Brigade”, “Tears, Idle Tears”, and “Crossing the Bar”. Much of his verse was based on classical mythological themes, such as Ulysses, although “In Memoriam A.H.H.” was written to commemorate his friend Arthur Hallam, a fellow poet and student at Trinity College, Cambridge, after he died of a stroke at the age of 22. Tennyson also wrote some notable blank verse including *Idylls of the King*, “Ulysses”, and “Tithonus”. During his career, Tennyson attempted drama, but his plays enjoyed little success. A number of phrases from Tennyson's work have become commonplaces of the English language. He is the ninth most frequently quoted writer in The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations.

The following poems are selected from *In Memoriam A. H. H.* (Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Translated by Zhu Liye. London: Leoman Publishing Co., Ltd, 2017) and translated by Zhu Liye.

### III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,  
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,  
O sweet and bitter in a breath,  
What whispers from thy lying lip?

“The stars,” she whispers, “blindly run;  
A web is woven across the sky:  
From out waste places comes a cry,  
And murmurs from the dying sun;

“And all the phantom, Nature, stands—  
With all the music in her tone,  
A hollow echo of my own,—  
A hollow form with empty hands.”

And shall I take a thing so blind,  
Embrace her as my natural good;  
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,  
Upon the threshold of the mind?

Translation:

三

友情残忍兮，  
女祭司嘶啼。  
甘苦吐耳语，  
死神殿中栖。

曰盲星肆飞，  
苍穹中织帷。  
帷破嘶声传，  
窸窣日薨辉。

幽幻大自然，  
祭曲绕舌尖。  
空洞回声喊，  
孤掌兴浪难。

闭目顺其然，  
开怀任忧蟠。  
逆血却沸天，  
若何溺心缘？

## IV

To Sleep I give my powers away;  
My will is bondsman to the dark;  
I sit within a helmless bark,  
And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,  
That thou shouldst fail from thy desire,  
Who scarcely darest to inquire,  
What is it makes me beat so low?"

Something it is which thou hast lost,  
Some pleasure from thine early years.  
Break thou deep vase of chilling tears,  
That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross  
All night below the darken'd eyes;  
With morning wakes the will, and cries,  
"Thou shalt not be the fool of loss."

Translation:

## 四

长眠弃剑戈，  
志皈依夜魔。  
航无舵之舟，  
吟无曲之歌。

余心已逝兮，  
无渴梦之机。  
孰敢问寻兮，  
何使余戚戚？

时而怨离伤，  
时而念韶光。  
瓶碎泪一汪，  
花散化悲霜。

愁笼未名乌，  
睡眼藏夜图。  
晨将惰志唤，  
勿做迷惘徒。



## V

I sometimes hold it half a sin

To put in words the grief I feel:

For words, like Nature, half reveal

And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,

A use in measured language lies;

The sad mechanic exercise,

Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,

Like coarsest clothes against the cold;

But the large grief which these enfold

Is given in outline and no more.

Translation:

## 五

半罪隐余胸，  
赋伤字句中。  
字显顺自然，  
意半现半朦。

心神不宁兮，  
揣迷言中栖。  
掣书如罌粟，  
疾笔使痛熄。

裹字如丧袍，  
虽鄙御寒啸。  
字衣中之恸，  
方诉便弥消。

## X

I hear the noise about thy keel;  
    I hear the bell struck in the night;  
    I see the cabin-window bright;  
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,  
    And travell'd men from foreign lands;  
    And letters unto trembling hands;  
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him; we have idle dreams;  
    This look of quiet flatters thus  
    Our home-bred fancies. O, to us,  
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,  
    That takes the sunshine and the rains,  
    Or where the kneeling hamlet drains  
The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring wells  
    Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine,  
    And hands so often clasp'd in mine,  
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

Translation:

十

耳入龙骨喧，  
敲钟荡夜渊。  
舱有窗微亮，  
舵有水手旋。

船渡夫归妻，  
载客异国夷。  
颤手接函笺，  
班轮哑生机。

人皆盼君归，  
谄媚非恻悲。  
乡俗多奇闻，  
愚昧将饴追。

苜蓿苦下栖，  
光沐雨露汲。  
或豪饮琼浆，  
跪向上帝祈。

咆哮若涌泉，  
吞君入海澜。  
常扣君双手，  
辗转纷扰间。

## XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,  
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,  
And only thro' the faded leaf  
The chestnut pattering to the ground;

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
And on these dews that drench the furze,  
And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold;

Calm and still light on yon great plain  
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,  
And crowded farms and lessening towers,  
To mingle with the bounding main;

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
These leaves that redden to the fall,  
And in my heart, if calm at all,  
If any calm, a calm despair;

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
And waves that sway themselves in rest,  
And dead calm in that noble breast  
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

Translation:

十一

深沉谧晨曦，  
暗涌苦楚栖。  
栗穿黄叶落，  
坠地响嗒嗒。

静浸高地宁，  
玉露润豆荊。  
蛛丝吐银华，  
转瞬又金青。

清静凝平原，  
秋荫拂尘喧。  
密田疏塔闲，  
渐融旷界间。

乡野透静恬，  
叶红晚秋颜。  
安然于余心，  
若安沮使然。

海宁银梦眠，  
寝波似摇篮。  
死寂溺丹田，  
欲释寂更攢。

## XII

Lo, as a dove when up she springs  
    To bear thro' heaven a tale of woe,  
    Some dolorous message knit below  
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go, I cannot stay;  
    I leave this mortal ark behind,  
    A weight of nerves without a mind,  
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,  
    And reach the glow of southern skies,  
    And see the sails at distance rise,  
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying, "Comes he thus, my friend?  
    Is this the end of all my care?"  
    And circle moaning in the air,  
"Is this the end? Is this the end?"

And forward dart again, and play  
    About the prow, and back return  
    To where the body sits, and learn  
That I have been an hour away.

Translation:

## 十二

身起如白鸽，  
入霄啼悲歌。  
噩耗相织结，  
搏命翅开合。

君飞余不留，  
朽躯魂后游。  
魄轻无心守，  
远留崖独愁。

过海平镜圆，  
绚彩至南天。  
高飞见远帆，  
徘徊泣天弦。

君已至此兮，  
问挂碍尽离？  
苍穹传低语，  
余挂碍尽离？

夜又笼前程，  
兴起船头登。  
兴尽返君处，  
时已过半更。



## XVII

Thou comest, much wept for; such a breeze  
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer  
Was as the whisper of an air  
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move  
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,  
Week after week; the days go by;  
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou mayst roam,  
My blessing, like a line of light,  
Is on the waters day and night,  
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars  
Mid-ocean spare thee, sacred bark,  
And balmy drops in summer dark  
Slide from the bosom of the stars;

So kind an office hath been done,  
Such precious relics brought by thee,  
The dust of him I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run.

Translation:

## 十七

恸泣唤君还，  
清风迫帆前。  
祷言荡气宇，  
笼君渡海澜。

冥中君飞旋，  
无垠天界穿。  
周始旦复旦，  
余期竟归全。

任君何处移，  
自此福常祈。  
似塔耀波光，  
夜守君还栖。

纵暴雨侵袭，  
海中神舟怡。  
夏夜星空漏，  
凝香琼露滴。

事宁人应息，  
君赐异宝稀。  
何敢望君尘，  
鰥竟伤亘弥。

(朱丽叶 译)

## **Recommendation of Chinese Poets and Poems**

### **Folk Songs of Northern Dynasties**

## Recommendation of Chinese Poets and Poems

### 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.

Folk songs of Northern Dynasties were written by the then Northerners. They mostly have rich and deep philosophical meanings, and their language is simple, but often conveying rough, bold and heroic affection. They are mostly collected in *Yuefu Poetry Collection*. Among them, *Song of Chi'le* (敕勒歌), one of the selections here, is the representative work of Folk Songs of the Northern Dynasties.

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

The following poems 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.

## 企喻歌（其一）

男儿欲作健，

结伴不须多。

鸛子经天飞，

群雀两向波。

Translation:

### **Song of Qi Yu<sup>1</sup> (1)**

If a true man is a hero,  
He wants company no.  
A pass of sparrow hawk  
Breaks the sparrow flock.

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<sup>1</sup> A name of tunes from *Yuefu Poetry Collection* of ancient China.

## 紫骝马歌辞（二首）

1

烧火烧野田。

野鸭飞一天。

童男娶寡妇。

壮女笑杀人。

2

高高山头树。

风吹叶落去。

一去数千里。

何当还故处。

Translation:

## **Song of Mauve Horse<sup>1</sup>**

1

Light a fire to burn the field wild.

Wild ducks fly into the whole sky.

A virgin boy marries the widowed.

A strong woman laughs to kill a guy.

2

A tree high on a hilltop.

Leaves fall into the winding air.

Long long away without a stop.

When can I go home over there?

---

<sup>1</sup> One of the old topics of Han Yuefu, Music Bureau of Han Dynasty in Ancient China.



## 雀劳利歌辞

雨雪霏霏雀劳利，  
长嘴饱满短嘴饥。

Translation:

### **Song of Sparrow Twittering**

Sparrows in the sleet twittering in a hurry,

The long beaks full, the short beaks hungry.

## 隔谷歌（二首）

1

兄在城中弟在外，  
弓无弦，箭无栝。  
食粮乏尽若为活？  
救我来！救我来！

2

兄为俘虏受困辱，  
骨露力疲食不足。  
弟为官吏马食粟，  
何惜钱刀来我赎！

Translation:

## **Song of Across the Valley**

1

Brother's in the city, I'm outside,  
Bow's no string, arrow's no end pointed.  
How can I live without food?  
Help! Help!

2

As your elder brother, I have been captured and insulted,  
Skinny, worn-out and have no enough food for living.  
Brother, you as an officer, even your horse has grain.  
Why are you so stingy to redeem me with money and sword?

## 折杨柳歌辞（其一）

上马不捉鞭，

反折杨柳枝。

蹀座吹长笛，

愁杀行客儿。

Translation:

### **Song of Willow Breaking (1)**

Mount a horse, a whip not,

Break a willow, instead.

Cross-legged, playing the flute,

Passers-by stop saddened.

## 折杨柳歌辞（其二）

腹中愁不乐，

愿作郎马鞭。

出入擐郎臂，

蹀座郎膝边。

Translation:

### **Song of Willow Breaking (2)**

With no happiness, sadness dwells in my heart,

I wish to be your whip, my dear husband,

And arm in arm we come in and go out,

Or, sit cross-legged on your near side.



## 幽州马客吟歌辞

快马常苦瘦，

剿儿常苦贫。

黄禾起羸马，

有钱始作人。

Translation:

### **Song of Youzhou Steed and Rider**

A speedy steed is often all skin and bones.

A lean man is usually in poverty.

Yellow cereal produces poor horse,

Wealth gives a person dignity

## 敕勒歌

敕勒川，阴山下，  
天似穹庐，笼盖四野。  
天苍苍，野茫茫，  
风吹草低见牛羊。

Translation:

### **Song of Chi'le<sup>1</sup>**

Chi'le Plain, on the bottom of Yinshan Mountain,

The sky is like a yurt, caging the vast open.

Blurred is the sky, boundless is the wild,

Grass's blown low, cattle and sheep appear and hide.

(Trans. Zhang Guangkui)

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<sup>1</sup> Chi'le, in Chinese pinyin read as "Chì Lě", one of the ethnic minorities of Ancient North-western China.

**To our  
honourable poetry scholars**

献给  
所有的诗歌研究者

## Poetics

### Poem-Singing: Fusion of Poems and Lyrics of Song

Wen Wei

**Abstract:** There is a growing trend for musicians to use poems as lyrics in their musical work in order to boost uniqueness. However, such fusion between literary world and popular music fails quite often. It was by chance that the author heard a song named “Night Song at Amalfi”, which coincides with a poem of the same name by the American female poet Sara Teasdale. After I listened to the song, it dawned on me that the lyric of the song was indeed a combination of “Night Song at Amalfi” and “Gifts”, which are two seemingly separated poems selected from *Love Songs*, a collection of poems by Teasdale. What makes it even more stunning is that the combination is seamless as if the poet deliberately wrote the poems as a complete entity. Therefore, after a relatively detailed description of the poems respectively, the author argues that the song “Night Song at Amalfi” is not just a simple mash-up of different poems, and that this kind of fusion enhances the reader’s role by re-creating classic poems and performing them as lyrics of the song.

**Keywords:** “Night Song at Amalfi”; “Gifts”; poem; lyric

### Introduction

Poetry has always been closely tied with music. In contemporary Chinese music industry, it is the case that composers have a slightly strong preference for adapting traditional Chinese poems into popular songs, to make songs either more romantic or elegant. It generates questions when I realize the phenomena: Is poem-singing a regional or a global trend? And what effects can it bring to the audience if poems become lyrics of songs and sung by singers/artists?

With these questions in mind, I made an attempt to probe into the relationship between poems and the poem-singing songs. It was by chance that I noticed a song named “Night Song at Amalfi”, whose name coincides with one of Sara Teasdale’s poems. Out of curiosity I listened to the song and was amazed by the ingenious splicing of “Night Song at Amalfi” and “Gifts”, poems both written by Sara Teasdale(August 8, 1884 - January 29, 1933), an American lyric poet. As a matter of fact, “Night Song at Amalfi” and “Gifts” are poems selected from her 1917 poetry collection called *Love Songs*, which helped her win the Pulitzer Prize in 1918.

“Night Song at Amalfi” depicts the puzzle of a maiden about the essence of love and her innocent act of asking the stars in heaven and the sea below:

*I asked the heaven of stars  
What I should give my love --  
It answered me with silence,  
Silence above.*

*I asked the darkened sea  
Down where the fishers go --  
It answered me with silence,  
Silence below.*

*Oh, I could give him weeping,  
Or I could give him song --  
But how can I give silence,  
My whole life long?*

From the poem, a young girl’s yearning for and puzzle about love is vividly revealed between the lines. The lyrical poem displays to its readers that a young girl travelled to Amalfi, a small town surrounded by sea in the province of Salerno in Italy, and walked alongside the sea all by herself on a tranquil night with a maze of thoughts about love. She first looked at the sky and asked the heaven of stars high above her what she should give to her love, but the heaven of stars answered her with silence. The girl was puzzled even more when she looked at the sea and saw fishermen catching fish in their small boat on the sea. She mustered up her courage to ask the sea which was darkened as the sun was slowly going down. And yet, silence



again, was the only answer. So she sighed with doubt lingering in her mind: one could give sorrow and happiness to her love, but , but how could one give silence to her love for a lifelong time? Through the ending of the poem, the poet provides no answer. The maiden came puzzled and left with doubt haunting in mind about the answer.

However, the 7<sup>th</sup> selected poem in Sara Teasdale's *Love Songs* named "Gifts" depicts another type of woman: a sophisticated and mature lady who has experienced different kinds of love and finally understands the essence of love.

*I gave my first love laughter,  
I gave my second tears,  
I gave my third love silence  
Through all the years.*

*My first love gave me singing,  
My second eyes to see,  
But oh, it was my third love  
Who gave my soul to me.*

The poem depicts a mature lady or probably an elderly woman who recollects her past memories and realizes that in different phases of life, she has encountered (at least) three different beloved ones, among whom the first one might be romantic and tends to speak sweet-and-honey words to her all the time, thus bringing her laughter. Her first love is so much fun that the girl, with her sweet and considerate character, would often sing to his love with passion and profound affection. As for her second love, they might have quarreled a lot due to their immaturity. The repeated quarrels and fights have eventually had a toll on the boy's heart and even induced him to tears. And it is her second love that leads to her introspection about the essence of love. It is evident that she has gained from her previous relationships so that in her third and possibly the last relationship, the girl has grown into an mature lady. This time, the lady cares less about romantic words, and she tries to be courteous to his love. As for the man, he is probably slow in speech but quick in action so that no sweet-and-honey words and no hurtful quarrels might have occurred. Anyway, they might not need much talk for they are in one way or another, spiritually connected with each other.

These two poems, though put in one poem collection, are seen as two separated poems for the female image in the two poems belongs to different stages of life, but Inga Hope, singer of the song with the identical title “Night Song at Amalfi” as Sara Teasdale’s poem seems to discover the inner connection between the seemingly irrelevant poems by combining Sara’s poems “Night Song at Amalfi” and “Gifts” into one piece of music. Is this simply a gimmick to draw attention from poetry lovers? Or is this fusion of poem and music cleverly and skillfully composed?

**1. “Night Song at Amalfi” Sung by Inga Hope: A simple mash-up of Sara Teasdale’s Poems “Night Song at Amalfi” and “Gifts”?**

Compelled by a strong sense of curiosity, I listened to the song and found the voice of Inga Hope so ethereal that it arouses a real sense of involvement:

*I asked the heaven of stars  
What I should give my love --  
It answered me with silence,  
Silence above.*

*I asked the darkened sea  
Down where the fishers go --  
It answered me with silence,  
Silence below.*

*Oh, I could give him weeping,  
Or I could give him song --  
But how can I give silence,  
My whole life long?*

*I gave my first love laughter,  
I gave my second tears,  
I gave my third love silence  
Through all the years.*

*My first love gave me singing,  
My second eyes to see,  
But oh, it was my third love  
Who gave my soul to me.*

The whole scene came to me as such: after witnessing the ups and downs in life, a middle-aged lady has finally come to see the philosophy of love. She has been puzzled by love at an early age, sticking to the belief that love is either about laughter or tears. Yet her experiences bear it out that “silence” is the best to give: love is neither putting too much energy into pleasing the other and saying sweet-and-honey words all the time nor quarreling with each other without understanding and tolerance. The “silence” in love, as she finally gets to understand refers to spiritual communication, which does not require much talk but is of great value in a mature relationship. The couple should be spiritually connected so as to be soulmates, and only in this way can their relationship be everlasting.

Some would say, it is just a simple mash-up of Sara Teasdale’s Poems “Night Song at Amalfi” and “Gifts”, however in my opinion, Inga hope, the singer sees through the combination between the seemingly irrelevant poems and combines them into a perfectly smooth continuity without awkward transitions. The combination of the two poems creates a consistent process of the growth of a female from a maiden to a mature lady and eventually to an sophisticated elder. The lyric of the song “Night Song at Amalfi” shows to the audience a review of past experience about love in different phases of life.

Poems and lyrics, according to Chen Ling, are different means of language expression. Only through the audience’s imagination can they fulfill their artistic form. In the meantime, Chen also pointed out that lyrics differ from poems in that poems emphasize more on individuality: poems focus more on personal feelings while lyrics are mirrors of common life. Therefore, the purpose of creating lyrics is to communicate and to attract as many audiences as possible, which means that lyrics uphold universality while poems stress individuality. Chen further stated that once a poem is created, the whole process is finished while on the other hand, even though a lyric is created, it needs to be combined with music so that together it can be appreciated by the audience as a beautiful song, and thus the whole artistic process can be drawn to an end. That is to say, without music, there cannot be a lyric as the lyric can never appear alone and be appreciated by audiences, because when lyrics are simply “lyrics” in the literary sense without being combined with music and rhythm and the appreciation of the audience, they are not “real” lyrics themselves. Despite the fact that Chen’s

opinion is to some extent, overgeneralized, we still can learn that there are scholars who hold the belief that there is a clear boundary between lyric and poem.

However, it is noteworthy that the song performed by Inga Hope with the same name “Night Song at Amalfi” has its distinct features which blur the boundary between poem and lyric. Since the two poems: “Night Song at Amalfi” and “Gifts” were created by Sara Teasdale in the written form and gained readers’ attention, they have thus become the finished products respectively. As for the lyric of the Song “Night Song at Amalfi”, a combination of the two poems, mixed with music and rhythm created by Inga Hope, is an unfinished product and awaits Inga’s own performance of the song and her transmitting it to the audience. And only after the lyric is displayed to the audience through the performance and gains their recognition and appreciation, can it be seen as a finished product. The attributes of the same two poems transform from those of a finished product to those of an unfinished one when their forms are shifted from “written poems” to a “verbal song”: “written poems” need reading while a “verbal song” needs listening. Compared with listeners of a song, readers of a poem can take in 10 lines at one glance or focus on the specific stanzas that they are particularly interested in, which depends more on their own initiative. However, listening to a song can be seen as more passive: while appreciating the song, the audience have to catch up with the song performer’s signals of sound. Under such circumstances, the audience are so constrained by the rhythm, music and the way the singer performs the song that they cannot “fast forward” or “rewind” to where they show interest in easily. As a result, their understanding of the lyric is based not only on the lyrics, but on the rhythm, the music, the sound of the singer, etc. Seen from this aspect, we can safely draw the conclusion that “Night Song at Amalfi” Sung by Inga Hope is not just a simple mash-up of Sara Teasdale’s Poems “Night Song at Amalfi” and “Gifts” in that the same poems are endowed with different attributes after they become a lyric performed by Inga Hope.

## **2. An Enhanced Character of Reader—The Re-creating and Performing Act**

Although it is mentioned above that the appreciation of a “verbal

song” is seen as a more passive means than that of “written poems” , we need to bear in mind that before Sara Teasdale’s Poems were combined and used as lyrics in the song “Night Song at Amalfi”, the adaptor and song performer Inga Hope apprehended the two poems respectively and saw the hidden relationship between the two songs and mix it together to create a new way of understanding with her own interpretation. Thus, “Night Song at Amalfi” and “Gifts” were given a brand new identity as a whole rather than separate ones. She even created a piece of music with unique rhythm to form a complete song with the newly-created lyric. From my perspective, what Inga Hope has done serves as the act of re-creating and self-performing. In this way, the two poems are connected out of the will of Inga, the reader of Sara Teasdale’s poems. Additionally, the audience of Inga, hearing her song with combined poems of Sara, generate their own understanding and interpretation. This time, the appreciation of the song is not only about the separated poems, but the so-called mash-up song sung by Inga, which unites “Night Song at Amalfi” and “Gifts” as a new entity.

In this case, reader’s role is privileged or even enhanced for both Inga Hope and her audience are involved in the act of reading, appreciating as well as re-creating. As she came upon the poems, she saw the “implicit connection” between the two poems, and then, as Terry Eagleton puts it in his work, she tended to “fill in gaps, draw inferences and test out hunches”, for “the text itself is really no more than a series of ‘cues’ to the reader, invitations to construct a piece of language into meaning” and the reader “will select and organize its elements into consistent wholes”, and thus “concretizes” literary work (Eagleton, 2012: 64-66). The act that Inga Hope took perfectly falls under what Terry Eagleton has been trying to show to the general public. Inga sees the hidden connection and bridges the gap between “Night Song at Amalfi” and “Gifts” by making assumptions, building up “complex inferences and anticipations”(Eagleton, 2012: 67) and uses her own interpretation to recreate an integrated new literary. As for the audience of Inga Hope, they interpret the lyric which is the re-creation and combination of “Night Song at Amalfi” and “Gifts”, and thus they interpret the lyric and the piece of music first through music and rhythm. It was after Inga Hope created the piece of music and rhythm that the audience can get down to appreciating the lyric. The audience can be seen as indirect readers of Sara Teasdale’s poems, although through the re-creation work as a song.

As a matter of fact, every literary text “is built out of a sense of its potential audience, includes an image of whom it is written for”. That is to say, every piece of literary work has its “implied reader”(Eagleton, 2012: 72-73). What Inga Hope has been doing (finding the hidden connection in different poems, recreating a lyric by combing them and perform the lyric with the assistance of music, rhythm and the singing) has enlarged the reader circle, which, in a way, helps to popularize poetry.

## **Conclusion**

Poems, in some scholar’s eyes, are less popular than lyrics for they have a relatively small number of audiences. However, poem-singing makes it possible that poems and lyrics enjoy the same mass audiences, and this new form also enhances the reader’s role in that poems are provided the opportunity to be not only read but performed. The fusion between literary world and popular music is conducive not only to promoting poetry to the general public, but also creating new angles for new styles of music.

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## About *Verse Version*

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*Verse Version*, a professional platform for worldwide communication of English and Chinese poetry, founded by Zhang Guangkui who is a scholar and poet, is a nonprofit quarterly journal publishing English and Chinese poetry with corresponding translations, as well as poetics and papers. As a comprehensive journal composed of both literary and academic elements, it pursues appropriate introduction and translation of English and Chinese poetry and aims to encourage studies relevant to poetry and poetics. The journal is registered with Print ISSN 2051-526X/Online ISSN 2399-9705 in the United Kingdom, published by LEOMAN PUBLISHING CO., LTD.

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