

**VERSE VERSION**

Vol.12 No.1 June 2023

ISSN 2051-526X (print)

ISSN 2399-9705 (online)

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**Print ISSN 2051-526X**  
**Online ISSN 2399-9705**

# **Verse Version**

Vol.12 No.1 June 2023

Chief Editor  
**Zhang Guangkui**

Sponsored by  
**Shenzhen University**

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

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## English-Chinese Version

### Leaf Dew

Zhang Guangkui<sup>1</sup>

Dews on the leafage  
After the sun patrolling  
Into green soakage

---

<sup>1</sup> Zhang Guangkui (张广奎, 1967—) is a scholar in poetry studies and a keen practitioner of poetry performance at Shenzhen University, also a poet with several collections of Chinese and English poetry, among which *The Time* is a representative work in English, and 《年华》 is one in Chinese, as well as a good translator of poetry.

Translation:

## 叶露

张广奎 (张广奎 译)

叶上露水珠

白驹过隙变虚无

入青借绿宿

## Sheep in Fog<sup>1</sup>

Sylvia Plath<sup>2</sup>

The hills step off into whiteness.  
People or stars  
Regard me sadly, I disappoint them.

The train leaves a line of breath.  
O slow  
Horse the color of rust,

Hooves, dolorous bells--  
All morning the  
Morning has been blackening,

A flower left out.  
My bones hold a stillness, the far  
Fields melt my heart.

They threaten  
To let me through to a heaven  
Starless and fatherless, a dark water.

---

<sup>1</sup> Plath, S. *The Collected Poems*. New York: Harper and Row, 1981: 182.

<sup>2</sup> Sylvia Plath (1932 —1963) was an American poet, novelist, and short story writer. She is credited with advancing the genre of confessional poetry and is best known for two of her published collections, *The Colossus and Other Poems* (1960) and *Ariel* (1965), and also *The Bell Jar*, a semi-autobiographical novel published shortly before her suicide in 1963.

Translation:

## 雾中羊

西尔维娅·普拉斯（高子君<sup>1</sup>译）

群山侧移，隐入一片苍白。  
人或星，  
皆悲戚地凝望我；或许我令他们失望。

火车驶过留下一线白雾。  
哦，缓慢的  
马儿，皮毛涂染了铁锈的颜色，

蹄声仿若丧钟——  
整个清晨  
是越来越深的黑，

孤花遗弃在外。  
我的骨骼持守一种静止，远野  
融化我的心。

它们威胁我，  
要让我穿过一座天堂，  
可没有星，也没有父亲，黑水一汪。

---

<sup>1</sup> Gao Zijun, in Chinese 高子君, a postgraduate and translator at Shenzhen University. Her email address is xzl57813@126.com.

## **Sand and Foam**<sup>1</sup>

(Excerpt)

Gibran Kahlil Gibran <sup>2</sup>

I am forever walking upon these shores,  
betwixt the sand and the foam.

The high tide will erase my foot-prints,  
and the wind will blow away the foam.

But the sea and the shore will remain forever.

It was but yesterday I thought myself a fragment  
quivering without rhythm in the sphere of life.

Now I know that I am the sphere,  
and all life in rhythmic fragments moves within me.

---

<sup>1</sup> Gibran, K. *Sand and foam*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1995: 26.

<sup>2</sup> Gibran Khalil Gibran (1883—1931) was a Lebanese-American writer, poet and visual artist; he was also considered a philosopher.

Translation:

## 沙与沫

哈利勒·纪伯伦（高子君 译）

我时刻踏步在沙岸上，  
行走于沙土与泡沫中间。  
浪潮涌来抹去我的脚印，  
海风吹拂消去起伏的泡影。  
但是，海洋和沙岸却将永远存在。

仅仅就在昨天，我自认只是一片碎屑，  
在生命的苍穹中毫无节奏地颤动。  
如今我知道自己就是那苍穹，  
一切生命都是节奏分明的碎片，在我内心起舞。

## **The Sick Rose**<sup>1</sup>

William Blake <sup>2</sup>

O rose, thou art sick!  
The invisible worm,  
That flies in the night,  
In the howling storm,

Has found out thy bed  
Of crimson joy,  
And his dark secret love  
Does thy life destroy.

---

<sup>1</sup> Stevenson, W. H., ed. *The Blake Complete Poems*. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 2007: 166.

<sup>2</sup> William Blake (1757—1827) was an English poet, painter, and printmaker. Largely unrecognised during his life, Blake is now considered a seminal figure in the history of the poetry and visual art of the Romantic Age.

Translation:

## 病玫瑰

威廉·布莱克（于燕<sup>1</sup>译）

噢，玫瑰，你病了！  
悄无声息的虫蛾，  
在黑夜中飞翔，  
在风狂雨骤中，

找到了你的卧床，  
也成就了你的狂欢；  
他阴暗的爱情，  
正将你的生命摧残。

（张广奎 校译）

---

<sup>1</sup> Yu Yan, in Chinese 于燕, a postgraduate and translator at Shenzhen University. Her email address is 17320296986@163.com.

## Love's Secret <sup>1</sup>

William Blake

[Never seek to tell thy love,  
Love that never told can be;  
For the gentle wind does move  
Silently, invisibly.]

I told my love, I told my love,  
I told her all my heart;  
Trembling, cold, in ghastly fears—  
Ah! she did depart!

Soon as she was gone from me,  
A traveler came by  
Silently, invisibly—  
Oh was no deny.

---

<sup>1</sup> Stevenson, W. H., ed. *The Blake Complete Poems*. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 2007: 151.

Translation:

## 爱的奥秘

威廉·布莱克（于燕 译）

[切莫将爱意说出，  
爱情绝不可倾吐；  
一如那柔风轻拂，  
悄然，行迹全无。]

我将爱意表白，  
向她袒露心怀；  
胆颤心寒，魂飞天外——  
唉！她却转身离开。

她刚离去不久，  
偶遇一过客  
默默无言胜蜜语——  
无息之间芳心去。

## The Noble Nature<sup>1</sup>

Ben Johnson<sup>2</sup>

It is not growing like a tree  
In bulk, doth make Man better be;  
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,  
To fall a long at last, dry, bald, and sere:  
A lily of a day  
Is fairer far in May,  
Although it fall and die that night—  
It was the plant and flower of Light  
In small proportions we just beauties see;  
And in short measures life may perfect be.

---

<sup>1</sup> Palgrave, Francis Turner. ed. *The Golden Treasury*. 1st ed. London: Macmillan collector's library, 2018: 81.

<sup>2</sup> Ben Jonson, (1572—1637, London), English Stuart dramatist, lyric poet, and literary critic.

Translation:

## 高尚的天性

本·琼森（马艺博<sup>1</sup> 译）

不必长成一棵树干，  
使一个人卓尔不群，  
不必如橡树般求三百年屹立，  
到头来留下的也是败叶枯枝；  
只盛开一天的百合  
在五月中愈加明媚，  
纵使不到黑夜就开始枯萎零落——  
鲜花盛开的光辉不会停止闪耀  
渺小的美丽可以被我们欣赏；  
短暂的生命也能完美地绽放。

---

<sup>1</sup> Ma Yibo, in Chinese 马艺博, a postgraduate and translator at Shenzhen University. Her email address is 1445182229@qq.com.

## To the Moon<sup>1</sup>

Percy Bysshe Shelley<sup>2</sup>

Art thou pale for weariness  
Of climbing heaven, and gazing on the earth,  
Wandering companionless  
Among the stars that have a different birth,—  
And ever-changing, like a joyless eye  
That finds no object worth its constancy?

---

<sup>1</sup> Francis Turner Palgrave, ed. *The Golden Treasury*. 1st ed. London: Macmillan collector's library, 2018: 337.

<sup>2</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792—1822) was a British writer who is considered one of the major English Romantic poets. A radical in his poetry as well as in his political and social views, Shelley did not achieve fame during his lifetime, but recognition of his achievements in poetry grew steadily following his death, and he became an important influence on subsequent generations of poets.

Translation:

## 致月亮

珀西·比希·雪莱 (马艺博 译)

你苍白的脸色是否因疲乏而起  
终日累于攀上苍穹，守望大地，  
孑然一身，顾影自怜，  
在无尽星空中盘桓，—  
又波谲云诡，像一只低沉的眼  
找不到寄托值得长久眷恋？

## Grandmother

He Qiaoyi<sup>1</sup>

In childhood's tender memories, I roam,  
With warm wine's comfort, she'd welcome me home.  
Two osmanthus trees, by the door they'd stand.  
Her hands smoothed my childhood's wrinkles, so grand.

But alas, my dear grandmother has passed,  
Time merciless claimed her, a love too vast.  
Yet the cold wind returns, a mournful tone.  
Hometown moon, long left unrepaired alone.

---

<sup>1</sup> He Qiaoyi is a young active poet at University of Greenwich, living in Singapore. Her email address is 243860317@qq.com.

Translation:

## 奶奶

何莽一（何莽一 译）

记得小时候  
家里总会有温好的酒  
门前有两株长得不高的桂花树  
奶奶用一双手将我的童年，抚平褶皱

可是啊，最爱我的奶奶走了  
岁月将她回收  
可是啊，寒风卷土重来  
故乡的月亮，已年久失修

## Dandelion

Li Xiang<sup>1</sup>

I walked lonely as the naked  
Wind, blowing through trees and grass,  
When out of the blue I saw a wicked,  
A single white dandelion;  
Among the flowers, in the grass,  
Stiffened itself, not by million.  
Firmly as the prickly pear that enclosed  
And worshiped on the wasteland,  
It towers over the pressed  
Green of the dead earth;  
The only perceives my bland  
Touch, swaying its head as a wraith.  
The grass surrounding it danced; but it  
Transcends the wave of this green sea:  
A man could not but lament  
For such standing ghost;  
I stopped—and stopped—but much spree,  
As atman has found himself eg'ist.  
For oft, when on my seat I ponder  
In vacant and in pensive moods;  
It comes across my inner bier  
Which is the spirit of rebellion;  
And then my heart with pleasure abounds  
And stand firmly with the dandelion.

---

<sup>1</sup> Li Xiang is a young active poet in China. His email address is 2644193138@qq.com.

Translation:

## 蒲公英

李想（李想 译）

我赤裸地  
似一阵风，穿梭于林草之间，  
忽然之间我看到一枝俊美的  
孤独的白色蒲公英；  
在万花丛中，在绿林草里，  
鹤立鸡群、独树一帜。  
如被环绕的霸王树那般坚挺  
享受着周围荒原上的礼拜，  
它高耸于已然屈服的  
死亡之地那一抹绿；  
那唯一察觉了我无味的  
抚摸，幽灵般向我摇头晃脑。  
周围的绿草摇摆；但它  
远胜这绿海的波浪：  
男人禁不住伤感  
为这矗立的野鬼；  
我不由得驻足许久——许久，却欣喜万分  
只为灵魂找到了他的自我。  
我常在我的座位上深思  
沉溺于茫然以及惆怅；  
它再现于我的心中的灵柩  
它正是抗争的精灵；  
由此我心中充满欢愉  
并同蒲公英一同鹤立。

中秋

郭杰

我  
斟下

一杯酒

举头遥望

窗外的月亮

月亮缓缓升起

在碧澈的夜空里

映照着故乡的回忆

西风也这样凉爽

一缕微云绕上

月中的桂树

中秋今夕

嫦娥在

思念  
你

Translation:

## Mid-Autumn

Guo Jie<sup>1</sup> (Trans. Zhang Guangkui)

I  
Pour  
A cup of wine  
Lift my head and gaze at  
The moon outside the window  
She ascends gracefully and slowly  
In the silent night sky clean and clear  
Reflecting the memories of my hometown  
The west wind is refreshing and cool  
A wisp of faint cloud drifts around  
The osmanthus on the moon  
On this Mid-Autumn night  
The Goddess Chang'e  
Misses  
U

---

<sup>1</sup> Guo Jie, a distinguished scholar and professor in ancient Chinese poetry at Shenzhen University, and a very active poet in China.

## 菩萨蛮<sup>1</sup>

温庭筠

小山重叠金明灭，  
鬓云欲度香腮雪。  
懒起画蛾眉，  
弄妆梳洗迟。  
照花前后镜，  
花面交相映。  
新帖绣罗襦，  
双双金鹧鸪。

---

<sup>1</sup> 温庭筠 著；刘学锴 主编.《温庭筠全集校注》.北京：中华书局，2007：899.

Translation:

## **Pusaman<sup>1</sup>**

Wen Tingyun<sup>2</sup> (Trans. Zhang Guangkui)

Amidst the hills, bathed in a shimmering glow,  
Sideburns caress rosy cheeks aglow.  
In languid grace, she tends to her brows,  
A bit delayed, yet elegance she vows.  
A bloom adorns her lustrous hair,  
Reflections mirror her, a beauty rare.  
Embroidery on silk, so gossamer and fine,  
A pair of golden partridges, in flight, they shine.

---

<sup>1</sup> Pusaman, in Chinese 菩萨蛮, is an ancient tune of Chinese poetry.

<sup>2</sup> Wen Tingyun (温庭筠, 812—866) was a Chinese poet. He was an important Chinese lyricist of the late Tang dynasty.

## 小巷<sup>1</sup>

顾城

小巷  
又弯又长

没有门  
没有窗

我拿把旧钥匙  
敲着厚厚的墙

---

<sup>1</sup> 顾城 著；顾工 编。《顾城诗全编》。北京：三联书店，1995：522。

Translation:

## **Alleyway**

Gu Cheng<sup>1</sup> (Trans. Gao Zijun)

Alleyway  
Curved and long

No door  
No windows

An old key I hold  
Knocking on the thick wall old

(Rev. Zhang Guangkui)

---

<sup>1</sup> Gu Cheng (顾城, 1956—1993) was a famous Chinese modern poet, essayist and novelist. He was a prominent member of the “Misty Poets”, a group of Chinese modernist poets.

## 黑花之国

徐嘉佳

我是一朵小黑花，  
宁静而孤独。  
当春天来临，  
我就被摘走了。  
我可曾知道，  
他们用黑花汁当蜡笔？  
我哭了。  
我的眼泪浸黑了城市。  
人们看着波浪，  
投海自尽。  
麽哈哈！  
麽哈哈！  
这儿是黑之国。  
从此，这儿只有黑。

Translation:

## **The Black Land**

Xu Jiajia<sup>1</sup> (Trans. Xu Jiajia)

I am a little black flower.  
When Spring arrives, I am harvested by  
Human who ever knows that  
Black flower is not supposed to be made into pigments?  
I burst into tears.  
My tear-drops flood over the land and  
Make everything black.  
People on the beach,  
Look at the black waves,  
Killing themselves into the dark water.  
Mo-haw-haw!  
Mo-haw-haw!  
A land of me  
Only for black!

---

<sup>1</sup> Xu Jiajia is an active preteen poet in Shenzhen, China. Some of her poems even contain philosophical reflections, which is commendable for her age. Her email address is 121355329@qq.com.

## 早发白帝城<sup>1</sup>

李白

朝辞白帝彩云间，  
千里江陵一日还。  
两岸猿声啼不住，  
轻舟已过万重山。

---

<sup>1</sup> 李白 著；林宇宸 主编.《李太白集》. 桂林：漓江出版社，2020：350.

Translation:

### **Sailing from White King Town at Dawn**

Li Po<sup>1</sup> (Trans. Yu Yan)

From White King Town in rosy clouds I left at dawn,  
A thousand miles to Chiang Ling I was there in a day.  
Before the wailing of apes on both banks ceased,  
Past mountains the light boat was far away.

---

<sup>1</sup> Li Bai (李白, 701–762), also spelt as Li Po in English world, courtesy name Taibai, 太白), was a Chinese poet, acclaimed from his own time to the present as one of the greatest and most important poets of the Tang dynasty and in Chinese history as a whole. He and his friend Du Fu (杜甫, 712–770) were two of the most prominent figures in the flourishing of Chinese poetry under the Tang dynasty, which is often called the “Golden Age of Chinese Poetry”.

## 断章<sup>1</sup>

卞之琳

你站在桥上看风景，  
看风景人在楼上看你。  
明月装饰了你的窗子，  
你装饰了别人的梦。

---

<sup>1</sup> 卞之琳，《你站在桥上看风景》。北京：人民文学出版社，2022：18.

Translation:

## Fragment

Bian Zhilin<sup>1</sup> (Trans. Yu Yan)

On the bridge you look at the view,  
That viewer on the tower looks at you.  
The moon decorates your window with its beam,  
And you decorate another's dream.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bian Zhilin (卞之琳, 1910—2000) was a 20th-century Chinese poet, translator and literature researcher.

## 思念<sup>1</sup>

舒婷

一幅色彩缤纷但缺乏线条的挂图，  
一题清纯然而无解的代数，  
一具独弦琴，拨动檐雨的念珠，  
一双达不到彼岸的桨橹。

蓓蕾一般默默地等待，  
夕阳一般遥遥地注目，  
也许藏有一个重洋，  
但流出来，只是两颗泪珠。

呵，在心的远景里  
在灵魂的深处。

---

<sup>1</sup> 舒婷 著；薛子俊，李义洲责编。《舒婷的诗》[M]. 北京：人民文学出版社，2023：111.

Translation:

## Memory

Shu Ting<sup>1</sup> (Trans. Ma Yibo)

A colorful wall drawing lacking a line,  
An idiotic algebra issue solved by nothing,  
A one-stringed harp plucking the raindrop of the eaves,  
A pair of oars that can't reach the other shore.

Like a bud waiting in silence,  
Like the setting sun watching from a distance,  
Perhaps my memory hidden in an ocean,  
From which only two teardrops leaked out.

Ah, from my heart  
Into the depths of the soul.

---

<sup>1</sup> Shu Ting (舒婷, 1952—) is the pen name of Gong Peiyu (龚佩瑜), a modern Chinese poet associated with the Misty Poets. She began writing poetry in the 1970's and later had her works published.

## 夜雨寄北<sup>1</sup>

李商隐

君问归期未有期，  
巴山夜雨涨秋池。  
何当共剪西窗烛，  
却话巴山夜雨时。

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<sup>1</sup> 李商隐 著. 田松青 校点. 《李商隐诗集》. 上海: 上海古籍出版社, 2015: 26

Translation:

## Written on a Rainy Night to My Love

Li Shangyin<sup>1</sup> (Trans. Ma Yibo)

The date of return you asked is indefinite.

The rain kept falling tonight, watching the autumn pool filled.

Wondering the moment we cozed by the window, we trimmed the candle wick,

Talking about Bashan Mountain night rain as if you were here.

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<sup>1</sup> Li Shangyin (李商隐, c. 813—858), a poet of Tang dynasty, is noted for the imagist quality of his poems and his “no title” (无题) style of poetry. Li Shangyin has been frequently anthologized, and many of his poems have been translated into various languages, including several collections in English.

## English Poets Recommendation

### Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772—1834) was a prominent English poet, literary critic, philosopher, and one of the key figures in the Romantic movement. He is best known for his lyrical and imaginative poetry, as well as his influential critical writings. Coleridge's work had a significant impact on the development of English literature in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Born in Ottery St Mary, Devonshire, England, Coleridge was a precocious child with a deep love for literature. He attended Christ's Hospital School in London, where he formed a lifelong friendship with the poet Charles Lamb. Later, he entered Jesus College, Cambridge, but his academic pursuits were often interrupted by personal and financial difficulties.

Coleridge's most famous poems include “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” and “Kubla Khan.” “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” is a narrative poem that explores themes of guilt, redemption, and the supernatural. It is widely regarded as one of the greatest English poems of the Romantic era. “Kubla Khan” is a shorter work known for its vivid, dreamlike imagery and exploration of the creative process.

Coleridge was also a close friend and collaborator of William Wordsworth, and together they published the collection *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798, which is often considered the starting point of the Romantic movement in English literature. In addition to his poetry, Coleridge's critical writings, particularly *Biographia Literaria* (1817), are highly regarded for their contributions to literary theory and criticism. In this work, he discussed the concept of the “willing suspension of disbelief,” which has become a fundamental idea in the appreciation of literature.

Throughout his life, Coleridge grappled with personal challenges, including struggles with opium addiction and financial difficulties. Despite these obstacles, his literary contributions have left an enduring mark on English literature, and he remains a celebrated figure in the world of poetry and literary criticism. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's work continues to be studied and admired for its profound exploration of human experience and its enduring relevance in the field of literary studies.

The following poems are selected from *The Complete Poems* (Coleridge, S. T., *The Complete Poems*. William Keach, ed. London: Penguin Books, 2004.), and translated by Zhang Fanglin<sup>1</sup> at Guangzhou College of Commerce.

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<sup>1</sup> Zhang Fanglin, in Chinese 张芳林, is a young scholar at Guangzhou College of Commerce, whose research interest is English literature and translation studies. Her email address is zhang86915@126.com.

## Frost at Midnight

The Frost performs its secret ministry,  
Unhelped by any wind. The owl's cry  
Came loud--and hark, again! loud as before.  
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,  
Have left me to that solitude, which suits  
Abstruser musings : save that at my side  
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.  
'Tis calm indeed ! so calm, that it disturbs  
And vexes meditation with its strange  
And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,  
This populous village ! Sea, and hill, and wood,  
With all the numberless goings-on of life,  
Inaudible as dreams ! the thin blue flame  
Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not ;  
Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,  
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.  
Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature  
Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,  
Making it a companionable form,  
Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit  
By its own moods interprets, every where  
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,  
And makes a toy of Thought.

But O! how oft,

How oft, at school, with most believing mind,  
Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,  
To watch that fluttering stranger! and as oft  
With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt  
Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower,  
Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang  
From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,  
So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me  
With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear  
Most like articulate sounds of things to come!  
So gazed I, till the soothing things, I dreamt,  
Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams!  
And so I brooded all the following morn,  
Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye  
Fixed with mock study on my swimming book:  
Save if the door half opened, and I snatched  
A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,  
For still I hoped to see the stranger's face,  
Townsmen, or aunt, or sister more beloved,  
My play-mate when we both were clothed alike!

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,  
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,  
Fill up the intersperséd vacancies  
And momentary pauses of the thought!  
My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart  
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,  
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,  
And in far other scenes! For I was reared  
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,

And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.  
But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze  
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags  
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,  
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores  
And mountain crags : so shalt thou see and hear  
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible  
Of that eternal language, which thy God  
Utters, who from eternity doth teach  
Himself in all, and all things in himself.  
Great universal Teacher ! he shall mould  
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,  
Whether the summer clothe the general earth  
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing  
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch  
Of mossy apple-tree, while the night thatch  
Smokes in the sun-thaw ; whether the eave-drops fall  
Heard only in the trances of the blast,  
Or if the secret ministry of frost  
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,  
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

Translation:

## 午夜霜

霜执行着秘密任务，  
无须风的助力。小猫头鹰的叫声  
高亢—再听，又叫了！一样的高亢。  
小屋内的伙伴们，均已安睡。  
把我留给那份孤独，如此便适于  
深刻的沉思：与孤独相伴  
我轻轻抱着的婴儿平静地熟睡了。  
真正的平静！平静到足以干扰  
并妨碍深思，那陌生  
又完全的寂静。大海,山冈,树林,  
这个人口稠密的村庄！大海,山冈,树林,  
生活中有难以计数的无常，  
如梦般悄无声息！微弱的蓝色火焰  
依在快燃尽的火堆上，静静地；  
只有那淡烟，在火炉上飘着。  
仍在那舞动，唯一没有静下来的东西。  
我想，在大自然的宁静中，它的飘动  
貌似与醒着的我意气相投，  
让它成为一个友善的存在，  
它不起眼的摆动和奇形怪状，散漫自由的灵魂  
以自己的心情去解读，到处  
寻找自我的回声或镜像，  
并用来消遣思绪。

但是哦！多少次，  
多少次，在学校里，怀着最坚定的心，

预感着，我盯着那些栅栏，  
看那舞动的陌生人！重复多次  
眼睛睁着，已经梦见  
甜蜜的出生地，和那座古老的教堂塔楼，  
教堂的钟声，是可怜人唯一的音乐，从早到晚  
循环往复，在所有热闹的市集日子里，  
如此甜美，以至于它们打动并萦绕着我  
一种狂喜，落在我耳边  
很像即将有事发生的清晰声音！  
我就这样凝视着，直到那些安心的事，我梦见  
使我轻松入睡，睡眠延长了我的梦！  
于是我在接下来的整个上午沉思，  
导师那副严厉的面孔令我敬畏，我的眼睛  
假装锁定在书上学习：  
除非门半开，我抓紧时间  
匆匆瞥了一眼，我的心仍然猛跳，  
因为我依然希望看到那个陌生人的面孔，  
市民，或姑姑，或更心爱的姐妹，  
我们两个穿着同款衣服时的玩伴！

亲爱的宝贝，在我身旁的摇篮里熟睡了，  
他温柔的呼吸，在这深深的平静中听得到，  
充满了冥思遐想中四散的空隙  
与片刻的停歇！  
我的宝贝如此美丽！我的心为之振奋  
充满了温和的喜悦，这样看着你  
想着你将学到更多不同的知识  
去到更多不同的场合！而我成长在  
大城市，关进了幽暗的修道院，  
见不到佳人，除了天空和星星，

但是你，我的宝贝！你像一阵微风漫步  
在湖边和沙滩，游荡在古老的山崖峭壁之下，  
涌动在云层下，  
大部分的形象既是湖泊和海岸，  
也是悬崖峭壁：因此你会看见和听见  
可爱的形状和易懂的声音  
那是永恒的语言，上帝  
发声，来自永恒上帝的教导  
自己在万物之中，万物在自己之内。  
伟大的宇宙导师！他将铸造  
你的灵魂，通过给予和获取。

因而所有的季节对你而言都是甜蜜的，  
不管是夏天让整个地球变得  
郁郁葱葱，或者知更鸟坐在  
长满苔藓的苹果树秃枝上唱歌，  
两边有积雪，附近屋檐的雪  
在融化中冒水汽；是檐水滴下  
在狂欢恍惚时才听见声音，  
还是霜的秘密任务  
把檐水挂成一条条无言的冰溜溜，  
对着安静的月亮安静地闪着光。

## To Nature

It may indeed be phantasy, when I  
Essay to draw from all created things  
Deep, heartfelt, inward joy that closely clings;  
And trace in leaves and flowers that round me lie  
Lessons of love and earnest piety.  
So let it be; and if the wide world wings  
In mock of this belief, it brings  
Nor fear, nor grief, nor vain perplexity.  
So will I build my altar in the fields,  
And the blue sky my fretted dome shall be,  
And the sweet fragrance that the wild flower yields  
Shall be the incense I will yield to Thee,  
Thee only God! And you shalt not despise  
Even me the priest of this poor sacrifice.

Translation:

## 敬自然

当真是幻象，当我  
写的诗歌源自于万物时  
深沉的，由衷的，内在喜悦紧紧相拥；  
花叶的踪迹让我被谎言包围  
爱的教育和极度虔诚的教育。  
如此安好；假如大千世界环环相扣  
在虚假的信念之中，它带来的  
既非恐惧，亦非悲痛，更非徒劳的迷惘。  
因此我将在旷野建个祭坛，  
蓝天当作是回纹饰的穹顶，  
野花提供了甜蜜的芳香  
我会把香让给你，  
唯一的神！你不会瞧不起  
我这个祭司寒酸的奉献。

## **Pain**

Once could the Morn's first beams, the healthful breeze  
All nature charm, and gay was every hour-  
But ah!not Music's self, nor fragrant bower  
Can glad the trembling sense of wan disease.  
Now that the frequent pangs my frame assail,  
Now that my sleepless eyes are sunk and dim,  
And seas of pain seem waving through each limb-  
Ah what can all Life's gilded scenes avail?  
I view the crowd, whom youth and health inspire,  
Hear the loud laugh, and catch the sportive lay,  
Then sigh and think-I too could laugh and play  
And gaily sport it on the Muse's lyre,  
Ere Tyrant Pain had chas'd away delight,  
Ere the wild pulse throbb'd anguish thro' the night.

Translation:

## 痛苦

清晨的第一缕阳光，怡人的微风  
一切自然的魅力，时时愉快—  
啊哈！并非音乐本身，也非馥郁的树荫  
可以愉悦病得面无血色的颤抖感。  
因为频繁的剧痛攻击我的骨架，  
因为失眠的双眼低垂且暗淡无光，  
潮水般的痛苦似乎在用每只胳膊挥舞—  
毕生中高光时刻有益于什么？  
我见过众生，年轻，健康鼓舞人心，  
听见大笑，逮住嬉戏的女人，  
叹息思考，我也可以笑和玩  
喜气洋洋的消遣，在缪斯的里尔琴上  
在暴君痛苦之前，已将快乐驱逐，  
在狂野的脉搏跳动之前，彻夜悲痛不已。

## **Work Without Hope**

LINES COMPOSED 21ST FEBRYARY, 1827

All Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair —  
The bees are stirring—birds are on the wing —  
And Winter, slumbering in the open air,  
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!  
And I, the while, the sole unbusy thing,  
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,  
Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.  
Bloom, O ye amaranths! bloom for whom ye may,  
For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams, away!  
With lips unbrighten'd, wreathless brow, I stroll:  
And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul?  
Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve,  
And Hope without an object cannot live.

Translation:

## 没有希望的工作

作于 1827 年 2 月 21 日

大自然的一切看似都在运作，鼻涕虫离开了洞穴—  
蜜蜂在忙碌—鸟儿在飞舞—  
还有冬天，在户外沉睡，  
它微笑的脸庞露出春天的梦！  
至于我，当下，闲人一个，  
不用酿蜜，不用求偶，不用筑巢，不用鸣唱。

然而我知道不凋花在岸边摇曳，  
随着畅流的甘露找到了源泉。  
盛开吧，噢不凋花们！你们为谁绽放，  
你们不会为我绽放！富饶的小溪，溜走！  
嘴唇黯淡，眉毛凋谢，我漫步：  
你知道魔咒会让我的灵魂发呆么？  
没有希望的工作用过滤器吸取甘露，  
而没有目标的希望无法存在。

## **Domestic Peace**

Tell me, on what holy ground  
May Domestic Peace be found —  
Halcyon Daughter of the skies!  
Far on fearful wings she flies,  
From the pomp of sceptered State,  
From the Rebel's noisy hate;  
In a cottaged vale she dwells  
Listening to the Sabbath bells!  
Still around her steps are seen  
Spotless Honour's meeker mien,  
Love, the sire of pleasing tears,  
Sorrow smiling through her tears,  
And conscious of the past employ  
Memory, bosom-spring of joy.

Translation:

## 内在平静

告诉我，在多么神圣的土地  
内在平静才能够被找到—  
天空的宁静女儿！  
她展翅飞翔，胆战心惊，  
帝国的掌权，  
反叛者聒噪的憎恨；  
她栖身于小屋的凹槽里  
聆听安息日的钟声！  
静悄悄的脚步被看见  
一尘不染荣誉的谦恭风度，  
爱，陛下喜极而泣，  
泪水中滑过苦笑，  
过去的意识运用  
回忆，春天百花盛开的喜悦。

## **What is Life?**

Resembles life what once was deem'd of light,  
Too ample in itself for human sight?  
An absolute self — an element ungrounded —  
All that we see, all colours of all shade  
By encroach of darkness made? —  
Is very life by consciousness unbounded?  
And all the thoughts, pains, joys of mortal breath,  
A war-embrace of wrestling life and death.

Translation:

## 生命是什么？

把生命视为当初以为的光，  
绚丽多彩的光是人类视觉盛宴？  
一个绝对的本我——一个飘忽不定的元素——  
我们之所见，形形色色  
因吞噬了黑暗而组成？——  
这就是被意识解放的生命么？  
世人呼吸间所有的念头，痛苦，喜悦，  
一场对生死博弈的接纳斗争。

## **Answer to a Child's Question**

Do you ask what the birds say? The sparrow, the dove,  
The linnnet and thrush say, 'I love and I love!'  
In the winter they are silent — the wind is so strong;  
What it says, I don't know, but it sings a loud song.  
But green leaves, and blossoms, and sunny warm weather,  
And singing, and loving — all come back together.  
But the lark is so brimful of gladness and love,  
The green fields below him, the blue sky above,  
That he sings, and he sings; and for ever sings he —  
'I love my Love, and my Love loves me!'

Translation:

## 回复一个孩子的问题

你是问鸟儿在说什么？麻雀，鸽子，  
红雀和画眉鸟说，‘我爱与我爱！’  
冬天他们沉默不语 — 风如此猛烈；  
风说了什么，我不知道，但是它唱了一首响亮的歌。  
不过绿叶，和花朵，还有阳光和煦的天气，  
歌唱，热爱 — 全部一并归来。  
然而百灵鸟满怀欢乐和喜爱，  
俯身是绿野，抬头是蓝天，  
他唱啊，他唱啊；他不停地唱着—  
‘我爱我所爱，我所爱的也爱我！’

## The Visionary Hope

Sad lot, to have no hope! Though lowly kneeling  
He fain would frame a prayer within this breast,  
Would fain entreat for some sweet breath of healing,  
That his sick body might have ease and rest;  
He strove in vain! The dull sighs from his chest  
Against his will the stifling load revealing,  
Though Nature forced; though like some captive guest,  
Some royal prisoner at his conqueror's feast,  
An alien's restless mood but half concealing,  
The sternness on his gentle brow confessed,  
Sickness within and miserable feeling:  
Though obscure pangs made curses of his dreams,  
And dreaded sleep, each night repelled in vain,  
Each night was scattered by its own loud screams:  
Yet never could his heart command, though fain,  
Once deep full wish to be no more in pain.

That Hope, which was his inward bliss and boast  
Which waned and died, yet ever near him stood,  
Though changed in nature, wander where he would —  
For Love's despair is but Hope's pining ghost!  
For this one hope he makes his hourly moan,  
He wishes and can wish for this alone!  
Pierced, as with light from Heaven, before its gleams  
(So the love-stricken visionary deems)  
Disease would vanish, like a summer shower,  
Whose dews fling sunshine from the noon-tide bower!  
Or let it stay! Yet this one Hope should give  
Such strength that he would bless his pains and live.

Translation:

## 憧憬的希望

痛苦多，失去希望，尽管低得卑微  
他愿意在内心安排一次祈祷，  
愿意恳求一些疗愈的甜蜜呼吸，  
他生病的身体得以放松和休息：  
他的努力白费！胸中沉闷的叹息  
事与愿违，那令人窒息的负担揭露了真相，  
尽管上天安排了一切：就像囚徒的客人，  
有些皇家的囚犯在征服者的宴会，  
惴惴不安却故作淡定，  
温柔的眉宇间露出严肃坦白了一切，  
身体抱恙，心情糟糕：  
隐隐的悲痛令他的梦成为诅咒，  
令人恐惧的睡眠，夜夜无法抗拒，  
每晚都被自己凄惨的尖叫声惊醒：  
然而他的心不受控制，虽然勉强，  
深切的希望不再痛苦。

希望，是内心的幸福与骄傲  
消逝破灭了，却一直站在身边，  
虽然本质上发生了变化，幻想着哪儿可以——  
因为爱的失望是希望的憔悴灵魂！  
为了这个希望，他每小时都会呻吟，  
他希望，而且仅仅能够为此希望！  
看透了，天堂之光照下来，在此闪耀的光芒之前  
（因此以爱为动力的愿景认为）  
疾病会消失，如一场夏雨，  
正午阴凉中的水珠躲避了阳光的照射，  
那么留下它吧！而这个希望应该给予  
足够的力量去祝福痛苦和生活。

**Poetics:**

## **Ostranenie of Language: The Golden Key to the Mystery of Emily Dickinson's Poetry**

Chen Long<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This paper focuses on the remarkable feature of language ostranenie in American poet Emily Dickinson's poetry, which is featured by many factors such as its physiological factors, cognitive experience and the source of ideological influence. Then, the author further analyzes the four manifestations of "Ostranenie of Language": "Language Discharge", "Centrifugal Force", "Simplification and Purification" and "Intertextuality". This paper not only analyzes this poetic feature conveyed in a large number of poetry texts, but also comprehensively reviews the appearance and essence of the enigmatic features from the theoretical perspectives of comparative literature (Sino-western poetics and Daoist thought) and cognitive poetics, etc.

**Keywords:** Emily Dickinson; Ostranenie of Language; comparative literature; cognitive poetics

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The legendary American poet Emily Dickinson, unmarried in her whole life, handing down almost 1800 poems was unrecognized at her era, which always puzzled readers by her freely breaking the tradition, meters, grammar and the conventions at that time and her arbitrary treatment in frequent use of dashes, ellipsis and line breaks. All of these characteristics made it futile to try to guess her meanings of poetry, thus made her poetry full of mysteries. Critic John B. Picard said, “Emily Dickinson’s poetic strategy relies on ‘unexpected language’, wit, paradox, and irony, to reveal the naked soul in dramatic conflict with established convention.” (Felder 1996) In short, these “mysteries” demonstrate in her poems everywhere as the “unknown objects”, inscrutably weird imagery and her unique language styles. Regarding the characteristics of her poetry, summary of foreign studies shows three major points in general: highly compressed, compact, shy of being exposed, elliptical; suggesting either a quality of uncertainty or one of finality; her lyrics are her highly subjective. One-fifth of them begin with “I” - she knows no other consciousness. (Wilson 1963) In China, the summary research on her poetry is represented by Dickinson’s expert Professor Liu Shoulun’s book *Dickinson Studies*: Dickinson’s poems are known for her remote yet mysterious imagery and strange language style. A large number of religious and cultural allusions make the meaning of her poetry seemingly both rich and obscure but hardly understandable. The form of her poetry is unconventional while her concise, abrupt and powerful wordings are rare enough to be made by herself, dizzily full of colors, sounds and actions. Her improvisational usage of grammar, punctuation and syntax is extremely irregular while her rhyme and rhythm only follow her own rules, breaking the stability and consistency with traditional poetry. (Liu 2006)

The most remarkable feature of Dickinson’s poetic language style is her unequally ungrammatical making of wording and phrasing as inspirational as *God*. For instance, she deliberately left out the letter “e” in the word *sovereign* due to the initial letter of her name Emily. She created her own ways and skills to work out a unique poetics by keeping away from the traditions, and grasp the skills as she wished, such as omitting, compressing and mixing the words, borrowing / creating allusions, breaking the grammatical rules, as well as adopting language visualization. All of these innovative writing methods accord with the concept of “language ostranenie” (also known as “defamiliarization” to some extent) put forward by Victor Shklovsky, a literary theorist and critic of the former Soviet Union (Russian). In a bid to revive reader’s perception the use of distortion should

be used, achieved by the techniques that Shklovsky called estrangement (i.e., *ostranenie*) and impeded form, so “*ostranenie*” is a general theory related to defamiliarization, alienation and estrangement. This alienation from the standard view of an object or of a situation, allows one to see more possibilities present within it, thus, giving one more choice both in terms of cognition and aesthetic perception. In other words, when you see something familiar that is weird, it makes you question reality and see things in a way you’ve never experienced before. He argued that for art to reach an empathic effect, it needs to shift the borders of normality so that what’s normally recognized is seen in a different way. “*Ostranenie*” requires literature language’s staying phrases or words on their own. Being defamiliarized means breaking away the custom. Shklovsky pointed out that the daily language has to be distorted, deformed or defamiliarized by the writers to become a literature language, which only has a poetic function. In view of the ambiguity between the meaning and syntax of Dickinson’s poems, her “mentor” Thomas Wentworth Higginson commented that she almost always grabbed anything she wanted, but it stayed a little fragmented from the grammar dictionary. (Buckingham 1989) Professor Harold Bloom, a famous literature critic from Yale University, commented that Dickinson had always capitalized “I” to practice a uniquely concise and simple poetic art. “As what I constantly found, *ostranenie* is one of basic requirements for entering into the classics. Dickinson has the same quality of *ostranenie* as Dante or Milton.” (Bloom 2015) When facing the common problems faced by every poet: “how to re-express the ordinary objects”, she did not deliberately take the so-called “*extraordinary ways*”. In her poems, the language of poetry seems simple and ordinary, but in fact it is full of natural flavor, nonlinear leap of thought and sense of vitality. It brings along “surprise” everywhere. Her words are very common, but grafting and combination of languages are uncommon, which is contrary to the established grammar, rules and common sense, showing specious and the characteristic of “both A and B”. Her language of poetry is just the bridge to communicate her *inner heart* and *ego*. In this wholly new approach to the poetry of Emily Dickinson, David T. Porter, the scholar who focused on researching Dickinson, returned to Dickinson’s actual manuscripts and written words, finding there a poet less formal, more forthright, and more modern than most readers have recognized. Dickinson was always a figure who stood apart - apart from her community, her era, and the literary currents of her time. Her deliberate otherness still haunts us today. It is what makes her poetry so modern: her words are strangely chosen and oddly placed, and this accounts for the look and feel of her extraordinary manuscripts.

(Porter 1966) Shira Wolosky, the critic, sees through the orderly world she carefully described from her interruptive language and concepts, while David Porter also believed that readers should look for a distinctive style of modernism through the surface of her language strategies. (Liu 2006) Her poems often appear irregular and ignore grammatical rules, but the poet did not necessarily struggle to fully express all the contents she wanted to express, which were written for herself and did not intend to be published after all.

The characteristic of *ostranenie* among Dickinson's poems is based on her unique experience of growth and recognition, and her pluralistic life philosophy. When she grew up, Dickinson suffered from constant health problems, from cough to lung and eyes diseases. At the end of winter of 1848, her father Edward Dickinson suspended her a month from her school due to her terrible lung congestion and cough. After that, since only one semester in Mount Holyoke College, she had lived her rest life at home. The latest research shows that the main reason of her isolation from the outer world is her possible epilepsy. In her book *"Lives Like Loaded Guns: Emily Dickinson and Her Family's Feuds"* published in 2010, Ms. Lyndall Gordon, a South African British biographer and scholar demonstrated Emily's doctor's prescription for treating her epilepsy. The poet seldom went out because epilepsy was likely to happen at any time. Suffering from epilepsy was regarded as a shame in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century's America, therefore she had to give up her normal life but lived like a nun due to the culture background of the time. In the United States, it was banned to marry the epileptic patients in some states. (Gordon 2010) In such a terrible condition, her father deliberately restricted her readings in case of her suffering from reading too much. However, the potential poet was thirsty for knowledge and read and taught herself in various ways, and this kind of self-learning experience made her easily to break the shackles and fetters of traditional education and follow her inner voice at the ideological and cognitive levels. Born in a traditional Calvinism's family, Emily's thoughts and recognition in her adolescence was largely influenced by Calvinism instilled by the practice lawyer Benjamin Franklin Newton at her home and Ralph Waldo Emerson's Transcendentalism, especially the latter. The doctrines of Calvinism claims that people is saved by faith and advocates "God's reservation" that whether people would be saved or not is predetermined by God. However, along with the rise of Darwin's theory of evolution and the fall of the sect pressured from social change, as well as the increasing influence of Agnosticism and even Atheism,

Dickinson increasingly questioned the doctrines. Meanwhile, Transcendentalism made her not believe that the Bible is not the sole source of belief anymore. Transcendentalism focuses on spirit and feeling, advocates that people can directly understand truth and surpass feeling and rationality, and emphasizes that personal express is over the constraints of social custom while nature occupies a vital position thus the real poet should be the reader of nature. All of these paved the poet Emily Dickinson's base of thought by expressing her personality and undoubtedly giving play to her subjective initiative to break the Calvinist's theory of fatalism. In addition to these two cognitive foundations, studies generally show that she was influenced by many other factors of literature, thought and religion, including all kinds of traditions of Metaphysic of the 17th century, the New England, Naturism and Romanticism of poetry, as well as Existential thought, and the Christian Bible, etc. The scholar Patrick J. Keane gives a good summary of a variety of commentaries - some citing her Calvinist background, the Romantic tradition, Transcendentalism, others arguing that she is at heart a traditional believer, still others that she is a rebel. (Keane 2008) Recently, some scholars also believe that Dickinson is not unrelated to Chinese Daoism. In his book *The Art of Emily Dickinson's Early Poems*, David Porter covered a number of writers' comments on Dickinson's lack of a central theme. Porter wrote that the poems "have no inherent order of priorities or perception." Reading Dickinson in this regard provides a "special experience" that Porter described as a series of lacks with no center to the experience. (Porter 1966) "No order" and "no center", the features of Emily Dickinson's poetry, are described by Tom Patterson in the same line with Zhuangzi's Daoism thought. Patterson argues that "this pivoting center is in keeping with Daoism, where such a static center would invalidate the pivot of the Dao, for no center can encompass the circumference of a circle. One of the common problems voiced by readers of *the Zhuangzi* is that it has no discernable theme, no single message that one can use as a guide to follow through the book." (Patterson 2019)

It can be said that "ostranenie of language", the remarkable feature of Dickinson's poetry, is mainly subject to the poet's poor physiological condition, lonely and reclusive lifestyle, and the comprehensive influence of various ideological and literary traditions. Therefore, the language cognition of the concept and meaning to be expressed in her poetry is mixed and subjective, so she often embodied "self-centeredness" and "free use of language" in her poetry and the contradiction

between subject and object. She not only yearned for heaven, but also believed that human destiny is unknowable and uncontrollable. All of these traces of thoughts and poetic traditions are strangely reflected in her almost every poem. Professor Harold Bloom sighed in his book *The Western Canon* that “Dickinson was the most original cognitive writer among western poets since Dante, in addition to Shakespeare.” (Bloom, 2015) In the inventive work *Emily Dickinson: The Poet’s Grammar*, Cristanne Miller traces the roots of Dickinson’s unusual, compressed, ungrammatical, and richly ambiguous styles, finding them in different sources of the New Testament and the daily patterns of women’s speech. Dickinson wrote as she did not only because she was immersed in the great patriarchal texts of her culture, from the Bible and hymns to Herbert’s poetry and Emerson’s prose, but realized herself as a woman writer in an era that assumed the great serious poets were male. Miller observes that Dickinson’s language deviates from normal structure along definable and consistent route. (Miller 1989) American writer Jean McClure Mudge thought that we could explore the poet’s ideology starting from various physiological, psychological and cultural imageries reflected in Dickinson’s poetry (Mudge 1975) . Cognitive linguistic absorbs the research results of psychology about human categorization, attention and memory, also shows that language is closely related to other cognitive mechanisms. For example, meaning exists in human’s interpretation of the world. It is subjective and embodies “human-centered” thoughts, reflecting the detailed communication way, culture connotation and value between the dominant people and the world. This view verifies that the concept and meaning in Dickinson’s poetry is “the relationship between word and brain”, that is, her expression is the “word” reflected by her brain, which has nothing to do with word spelling, grammar, logic and all “traditions”. Take the poem titled “*The Saddest Noise, The Sweetest Noise*” as an example. When she expresses “expectation”, the bird signing reminds her of “the dead”, thus juxtaposition of “desolation” and “sweet”, “separation” and “expectation” at the same time produces the internal conflict. In the lines of “An ear can break a human heart” and “the ear had not a heart near”, the languages became defamiliarized because the “ear” representing hearing cannot “pierce the heart”, but these are the “words” captured by the poet in her brain at that time, regardless of grammar and collocation (for example, many words with “close” and “near” spatial relationship are used to visualize the time of “expectation”, and regardless of the structure, this original “internal conflict” is directly expressed: past death and future love; the temptation of “noise” and the relief of “silence”. The poet constructed this “conflict” as a

defamiliarized language with the beauty of contradiction, thus expressed the myth that birth is death and hope is despair. The senses of power and helplessness in her poems intertwine and even integrate together into one body, which also confirms the Dao of “Inaction”: only the beliefs that *being and non-being interdepend in growth* and *both opposite interdepend in completion* are the origin of the world, just like the local Daoism thought in China.

The first performance of “ostranenie of language” in Dickinson’s poetry is strange words and their odd disposal. Here, I call it “discharge of words”. Like the iconic characteristic of the patients of epilepsy, the sudden abnormal discharge of brain neuron, she suddenly used some words or metaphors in some inexplicable places, or unexpectedly paused and even broke lines like discharging, which shocks the readers and makes them hardly guess the poet’s actual ideas. In the poems of “*There Is A Solitude of Space*” (1696)<sup>1</sup> and “*So Give Me Back To Death*” (1653), the selection and disposal of the words such as “but these / Society”, “That polar privacy”, “It’s size is all that Hell can guess” empower her personal style. She often used the uncommon meaning of common words and wholly new collocations, both of which are not easy to understand. In the lines previously mentioned, “An ear can break a human heart” and “the ear had not a heart near”, the poet Dickinson inventively adapted conventional concepts such as listening (represented by “ears”) and feeling (“heart”) to suddenly release the electricity (i.e. discharge) through metaphor, at which the poet was the best - changing the daily languages into the poetic metaphors, kind of defamiliarized poetic language. As a core research field in cognitive poetics, the poetic metaphors create another kind of “reality” through the poet’s poetic expression because the change of our conceptual system will change the cognitive reality indeed. Dickinson conveyed her own cognition and experience by leveraging nature concepts containing universal meaning, such as ocean, mountain, grassland, flower, moss, bird, deer, horse, bee, insects, seasons, sun, wind and so on. Even if we more or less interact with the virtual space (i.e., an imaginative or supposed psychological space different from reality) created by these concepts, however, we are still puzzled by her concepts, perception and motivation. For instance, self-declared in her poem *A Wounded Deer - Leaps Highest* (181), as she wrote for her another poem’s title, there is a word that *fumbles* at your spirit. What makes fun

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<sup>1</sup>Dickinson’s poetry has no title, and all titles are numbered. Here, the title numbers follow the version of The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 1999 edited by R. W. Franklin. The same as below.

of the poet ironically is not the “*the Ecstasy of death*” “*like the insect*” but the words such as “*The Smitten Rock that gushes!*” or “*Hectic stings*” or “*‘you’re hurt’ exclaim*” even the poet herself doesn’t know when to discharge. The following titles “*Essential Oils Are Wrung –*” (772) , “*Fame Is A Fickle Food*” (1702) , “*My Life Had Stood A Loaded Gun*” (764) , as well as “*A Toad Can Die Of Light!*” (419) were created by herself originally, which are out of the ordinary, weird yet vivid. These vehicles of metaphors come out of her daily life, yet hardly understandable, containing the effects of discharging through Dickinson’s creation, which is also the highly respected feature of her poetry.

*A Wounded Deer – leaps highest – (181)*

A wounded Deer – leaps highest –

I’ve heard the Hunter tell –

’Tis but the extasy of *death* –

And then the Brake is still!

The *smitten* Rock that gushes!

The *trampled* Steel that springs!

A Cheek is always redder

Just where the Hectic stings!

Mirth is the Mail of Anguish –

In which it cautious Arm

Lest Anybody spy the blood

And “*you’re hurt*” exclaim!

The second expression of Dickinson’s feature of “ostranenie of language” is the centrifugal force of language, namely “heteroglossia” of words combination. According to the theory of Michael Bahkin, the USSR’s structuralism semiologist and literature theorist, the centrifugal force of language refers to *the miscellaneous and incomplete state of language*, which produces multiple meanings of a

single language. Professor Liu Shoulun points out that it is the centrifugal role of language and discourse fusion technique at which Dickinson was good that generates a distance between her and her peer and makes her works closer to the poetry works of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Since 1850, Dickinson began to use incomplete language images, tended to use the inharmonic vocabulary in tones and styles aiming to express the centrifugal phenomena. Her excellent language skills enable her to expand the meaning of words at will and string the words of totally different styles, which demonstrates astonishing attractiveness and mysterious colorfulness of her poems. (Liu 1997) If the high degree of relevance in phonetics, morphology, syntax and semantics that her poetry shows is centripetal force, her using dashes based on following the rhyme of the second and fourth sentences of each stanza of the church hymn, omitting the backbone of sentences such as predicate verbs, using nouns as verbs and inversion grammar work out the diversified and contradictory centrifugal forces for the dialogue of language and poetry, i.e. “*Nature spending with herself/Sequestered Afternoon*”, “*And thus, without a Wing/Or service of a Keel*” (excerpted from the poem *As imperceptibly as Grief* (935)). Such her verses and poems full of centrifugal force can be found everywhere. Professor Harold Bloom said that the literature originality of Dickinson’s works is astonishing. “The difficult words are the transcendent ‘beyond’, which empowers the conditional ‘end’ a different value meaning and reminds us of the word game between ‘end’ and ‘destination’.” (Bloom 2015) Here, we should pay a special attention to her usage of verbs because the characteristic of verbs is to provide a transitional form which upgrades the simple function of indication (noun representing things) to symbolic meaning (noun representing abstract meaning). Therefore, whether her deliberately omitting verbs to condense poetry and make obscure or highlight the verbs or morpheme like “verbs nature” (such as taking nouns as verbs) can maximize the “centrifugal effect” of Dickinson’s poetry language. A study by two Chinese scholars, Ms. He Zhongqing and Ms. Zhao Jing, shows that “Dickinson constantly gave the new meaning of words and largely used the verbs in poems, thus the various forms of colorful nature and her soul landscape in her heart jump onto the paper vividly with the help of verbs ... Many similar nouns should be taken as verbs in her poem, which are not only used to present actions but also raised dynamic scenarios up to concepts.” (Liu 1997) Moreover, through the quantitative modeling of Dickinson’s “death” metaphor, two scholars discovered that “unlike other poets, besides the subject predicate structure, Dickinson tended to use the genitive structure and verb object structure ... In Dickinson’s

“death” metaphor, the structures of subject predicate and verb object together account for a high rate 57.9%.” (He 2019)

The third manifestation of Dickinson’s “ostranenie of language” is “simplification and purification”, which is mainly completed by her habitual means of “omission”. Robert Frost, a famous poet who once taught at Amherst College, commented that Dickinson’s writing was kind of “nonsense” starting off by saying like “I’m coming!” Because a large number of ellipsis contrary to the traditional syntactic norms appear in her poetry, many places (not only the subject, but also the predicate verbs mentioned above) are unrecoverable, forming a semantic “blank”. The poet Dickinson consciously learned the way of abstraction and simplification, and pursued the highly concise and condensed everywhere. There is purification in addition to simplification in her poetic language, that is, through the “partial” technique, the concept of her works is integrated, making the subjects of her poems more purified, meaningful and poetic. The poets and artists pursuing self-creation need to enjoy solitude in the busy, complex and tense life. They are well aware of that solitude and quietness play dual roles in creation and work’s purification. Professor Bloom believed that the poet could treat solitude as her own objective of purification when she was intoxicated with new personalized depression power of “quasi-sublimity”, therefore she would constantly attack herself and modify her own models to seek purification.<sup>(19)</sup> Observing from the skill of language of poetry, some quatrains of Dickinson look like Jueju (绝句) of ancient China. Her way of simplification can make her words concise and her poetry refined, and leave ideas out of lines while the reader wanting more. “Purification” refines the thoughts, sharpens the form, structure and meaning, thus makes poetry “classic”. In terms of simplification and purification, Dickinson paid more attention to expressing naturally and by self, instead of intentionally “causing”, even deliberately ignoring traditions and rules. For example: “Our luxury! / Futile - the winds -” in the poem “*Wild Nights*” (269), “Putting up / Our Life – His Porcelain – / Like a Cup – ... That Oceans are – and Prayer – / And that White Sustenance – / Despair –” of “*I Cannot Live with You*” (706); and “Beauty - be not caused - It Is -” (654) (the poem’s title is just classic). Dickinson makes “abruptness” and “infinity” of meaning through simplification and leaves readers an endless imagination space, e.g., some words as “Futile-” “Putting up / Our Life” and “That Oceans are”. Simplification, often works together with purification at the same time, makes poetic often occur in

the last line of each stanza or poem, and always refers to something else or higher. Just like a famous classic Chinese poem written by Liu Yuxi (刘禹锡) in Tang dynasty: “leading poetry to the lofty sky.”

The last expression of Dickinson’s “ostranenie of language” works as “Intertextuality”, which means the different lines in parallel structure consists of the whole and sole meaning, but it may be very confusing to look at it alone. “Intertextuality” is a rhetoric often adopted in ancient Chinese prose and verse that one thing is separately divided into two or more lines, or two or several parts in one line, which are described respectively but in fact echo, elucidate and supplement each other. In Chinese, it is called that “written with each other, joining together for meaning”. The kind of characteristic of intertwined, infiltrated and supplemented context and meaning prevails in Dickinson’s short verses with parallel structure, and often with paradox, meaning that the whole texts working against while supporting each other. As Cleanth Brooks said, “in the poem creation, the poet ... links the logically irrelevant and opposite words in creation to make them interplay and inter-collide. It is the same in structure arrangement.” (Zhu 2014) Bloom also commented Dickinson “tended to adhere to the seemingly contradictory rhetoric as John Keats.” (Bloom 2015) These short poems are some examples. Quatrain “*Love – is anterior to Life – (980)*” has only 16 words yet convincingly illustrates the value and significance of *Love* in concise language, and bridges the time dimension of love and life / death with the value dimension of love and creation. In this poem, she evenly distributed four groups of seemingly contradictory words like “anterior” and “Posterior”, “Life” and “Death”, “Initial” (suggesting the beginning of computing) and “Exponent” (suggesting the period of computing), and “Creation” and “Earth” (meaning everything). With a philosophical and fascinating Intertextual arrangement, she depicted a quiet, broad mind that embraces all things, condensed the abundant *original force of love* into meaningful and concise words, which perfectly contains the author’s deep emotions of creation and all things in the world. Similarly, intertextuality is also obviously embodied in some short poems by reasoning as the main theme rather than emotional poems like “feeling sad about death”. The “semantic equivalence” deduced from the “structural parallelism” reads extremely similar to *confrontation* of Chinese ancient-style poetry. It is through the “intertextuality” of “semantic equivalence” that the poet brought about the ostranenie of language. In concise words, she expounded her perception of

abstract concepts about love, poetry, language, God, death and fame just like the metaphysical poetry fully containing dialectic connotation, which were popular in Jin (晋) dynasty in China. These verses show an amazing language characteristic similar to metaphysical poetry of paradox, i.e., “paradoxical intertextuality”, also verify the consistency between Dickinson and Daoism. “The Zhuangzi addresses the concept of monism demonstrating how from the pivot of the Dao, taking the rightness of whatever is before us as the present ‘this,’ also entails the taking in of the opposite positions, messages, and themes.” (Patterson 2019) In the poem titled *A word is dead* (278), the poet expressed the philosophy of poetry dies once it is spoken by intertextuality of “dead” and “live” in separate lines. And in the poem titled *If recollecting were forgetting* (9), two behaviors of remembering and forgetting become one integrated while lovesickness and mourning mix in her emotions. These kinds of intertextuality appear in both separate lines and within one line. The language featuring inter-conflict and inter-texts obtains a new perspective to interpret in today’s full development of cognitive linguistics, which believes that generating one language relies not on only one grammar because the judgment of grammar is gradual, changeable and context dependent. Dickinson’s poetic grammar obviously varies from the principles followed and emphasized by grammarians, which can be demonstrated by her learning experience and contexts of poetry.

*“Love – is anterior to Life –” (980)*

Love – is anterior to Life –  
Posterior – to Death –  
Initial of Creation, and  
The Exponent of Earth –

*“A word is dead” (278)*

A word is dead, when it is said  
Some say -  
I say it just begins to live  
That day

*"If recollecting were forgetting" (9)*

If recollecting were forgetting,  
Then I remember not.  
And if forgetting, recollecting,  
How near I had forgot,  
And if to miss, were merry,  
And to mourn, were gay,  
How very blithe the fingers  
That gathered this, today!

In conclusion, Dickinson's poems reconstruct some natural concepts without "consciousness" and daily experiences such as love, loneliness and death by all her four poetry characteristics of "Language Discharge", "Centrifugal Force", "Simplification and Purification" and "Intertextuality", skillfully express the poet's complete self-cognition, and create a poetic world of her own. Her original "defamiliarized" expression way of creating "concept" or "meaning" is exactly where her poetic lies. Poetry is not only a way for Dickinson to express her temperament and hide her mind, but also her supreme lifestyle and even her way of living. She once wrote in a letter: "Riddles are not my purpose. My poetry discusses the essence of life." She also said: "many people entrust their lives to God, but I entrust my life to poetry." With the help of the golden key of "ostranenie", it helps to open many mysteries of Dickinson's poetry.

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\*All quotes of Emily Dickinson's poems in this article are extracted from *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* published by The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press in 1999, edited by R. W. Franklin.

# Li Shijiang: A Journey Through Literary Transformation in His Short Story “Dumplings” and Beyond

Lei Yanni<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** Li Shijiang, a prominent contemporary Chinese writer, has traversed a remarkable literary journey characterized by evolving styles and thematic explorations. This article delves into his oeuvre, highlighting his transition from the passionate and satirical prose of his early years to the meticulous and patient narration of his later works. Focusing on his novella "Dumplings," first published in 2018, this analysis unveils the intricate interplay of bitter irony and meticulous description within its pages. "Dumplings" masterfully juxtaposes the harsh realities of life with the utopian world of classical Chinese culture, symbolized by the revered plum blossoms. Li Shijiang's poetic language, blending elements of his early fervor with his later introspection, serves as a captivating lens through which to explore the theme of escapism. As we dissect his literary journey, we gain insights into the dual worlds presented in "Dumplings" and his profound reflections on middle-age crisis. In the end, "Dumplings" emerges as a testament to Li Shijiang's growth and adaptability, encapsulating the essence of two contrasting worlds—the real and the utopian—in the realm of contemporary Chinese literature.

**Key words:** Li Shijiang; literary transformation; “Dumplings”

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Li Shijiang is an emerging and prominent young writer in contemporary China. He was born in Ningde, Fujian province in 1974. He is one among the post-1970s writers group and is one of the powerful and potential writers among them. In 1997 he graduated from Beijing Normal University. Since then he has written and published a lot. He published four works in Taiwan: *Free and Easy Wandering*, *More False than Love*, *Flesh* and *They Are All Terrific*. In mainland China, he has published more than ten novels, such as *The Golden Coach* (2022); *Free and Easy Wandering* (2005), which won him the prize of “Outstanding Young Talent” of Chinese Literature and Media Award of 2005; *Happiness, Longevity and Spring* (2007); *Chinese Department* (2010); *Three Brothers* (2013); *The Magical Aunt Feng* (2013); *Quite Unusual: Chinese Department Series No. 2* (2017). In 2014, he published a collection of short stories and novellas *The Old Man and Wine*. In recent years, he has also published in literary journals several crux novellas such as *Six Murderers*, *Two Murderers*, *Crime Culprit* and *Chinese Knots*. *Six Murderers* has been adapted to a film with the same title and it is to be on show. He also wrote and published several historical novels, such as *He Kun: Bosom Friend of the King* (2006), *Living like Cao Cao* (2007), *Cao Cao: My Life* (2012), *Three Lanes and Seven Alleys* (2010). Li Shijiang also writes poetry. Some of his poems are published in newspapers and poetry magazines. He is often classified as one important member in the “Lower-Half Body Poetry School”, which stresses oral language writing and rebellious spirit. Li Shijiang’s writing style changes a lot in his whole writing career. In his early period he has a passionate and satirical style in his direct flesh-writing and body-writing. In his later period, he consciously changes his writing style, writing in a meticulous and patient way, such as in *Happiness, Longevity and Spring*. Generally speaking, the early period mentioned in this essay indicates the years from 2000 to 2007. This essay focuses on his novella *Dumplings* which was first published in No. 8 of the journal *Youth Literature* in 2018.

Li Shijiang’s novella *Dumplings* (2018) describes in a minute way the escape from the real world into the utopian world of classical Chinese culture. This novella has its complicated time sequence and its intermittent use of stream of consciousness. Its style can be characterized as a mixture of bitter irony and meticulous description. *Dumplings* is founded on the opposition between the cruel reality and literary allusions to the Chinese romances, mostly three classical Chinese novels *A Dream of Red Mansions*, *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* and *A Journey to the West*. In

*Dumplings*, the theme of escape is presented through an original use of time and language, also via echoes from classical Chinese novels.

I hold the view that there are two worlds in the novella: the world of reality and the utopian world of classical Chinese culture. And the main symbol for the culture is plum blossoms, a special and lofty flower in traditional Chinese culture. Yu Yingshi in his essay *The Two Worlds of "Hung-lou meng"* says, "Two worlds in sharp contrast to each other are created by Ts'ao Hsueh-ch' in his novel *Hung-lou meng (The Red Chamber Dream)*, the two worlds which, for the sake for distinction, I shall call Utopian worlds which, for the sake for distinction, I shall call the "Utopian world" and the "world of reality." These two worlds, as embodied in the novel, are the world of Takuanyuan and the world that existed outside it. The difference between these two worlds is indicated by a variety of opposing symbols...Throughout the book mention of these two worlds constitutes a most important clue which, if grasped intelligently, will enable us to understand the significance that lies behind the author's creative intentions." (222)

The language in the novella *Dumplings* is very poetic. Thus when some parts of the paragraphs are broken and brought together into prose poems, the prose poems still have the charm. The following part analyzes the charm of the language used in *Dumplings*: A mixture of bitter irony and meticulous description.

In the early period of Li Shijiang's writing, his style is very unique: passionate, sarcastic, and direct flesh-writing or body-writing with intense focus on sexual desire and the satisfaction of primal human urges. Just as the award ceremony speech of the prize of "Outstanding Young Talent" of Chinese Literature and Media Award of 2005 has said, "The writing of Li Shijiang is a real language carnival. He is good at converting the repressed passion into narrative motivation, and interpreting the courage facing humble experiences as self-satirizing. His language is sharp and poignant and full of elation. His view on life is penetrating and piercing. And he can perfectly unite the playing style and sincere spirit. He has recovered the primitive way of novel writing: to find amusement in daily life and to describe the trivial matters splendidly and magnificently. His novel *Free and Easy Wandering* published in 2005 truly faces the abundant desires, the joy of rebellion, cold heart and

the unknown contentedness of a wanderer. And the novel has provided the epoch evidences for the wanderer's self-degradation. He has deeply dissected the texture and grain of life. And he has left a batch of forthright and unadorned soul specimens for the world where loftiness and dirtiness coexist. As a secret talent who has been veiled for many years, Li Shijiang, with his appearance, will forcefully subvert the ossified and outmoded order of contemporary Chinese novels.” (Editor 93)<sup>1</sup> However, Li Shijiang's language style has a big turning and change in his work *Happiness, Longevity and Spring* published in 2007. In this novel, he delineates patiently and minutely the life of the countryside in a village in the south-east coast. In his “Notes on Creative Writing (Preface)” in this novel, he says, “Patience, clumsiness, honesty and meticulousness, these are the qualities for writing a full-length novel I now can think of.” (Li, 2007:1)<sup>2</sup> Since then, he has multiple styles in his writings. This is also a big challenge for him. He is making progress in all these changes and challenges.

All through this novella *Dumplings*, there is the minute description of the small city, the narrator's hometown. It describes the scenes in Nanji Park, the cottage, the hill, the small shops and booths outside the gate of the park. The author seems to have a lot of patience in all these descriptions. The language style seems to have changed completely and it seems to be totally different from that of the author's early stage. But if scrutinized deeply it can be found that the Language of *Dumplings* has retained some of the characteristics of the early period: passionate, ironic and poignant. For example, in the first part, when the narrator meets Mr. Fu while bending down to pick up the fallen petals, it says, “The scene, to put it clearly, is like two bears who, bending down to look for food, when raising their heads, suddenly found themselves both on a narrow road” (Li, 2018: 25) .<sup>3</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> The original Chinese text here is: “李师江的写作是真正的语言狂欢。他善于把压抑的激情转化成叙事动力,把直面卑微经验的勇气解读为自我嘲讽。他的语言锋利毒辣,充满快意,他对生活的看法一针见血,而且能将游戏的风格和诚恳的精神熔于一炉。他恢复了小说写作的原始作风:从日常生活中发现趣味,把小事写得壮观、辉煌。他出版于 2005 年度的《逍遥游》,真实地面对了一个漂泊者丰盛的欲望、叛逆的快乐、寒冷的内心以及不为人知的自得,并为他的自我沉沦提供了时代的证据。他对生活肌理的深刻解剖,为这个高尚和污秽共存的世界留下了一批大胆率真、毫无修饰的灵魂标本。作为一个被遮蔽了多年的隐秘天才,李师江的出现,将有力颠覆中国当代小说僵化而陈旧的秩序。”

<sup>2</sup> The original Chinese text here is: “耐心、笨拙、诚实、细心,这是我目前能想到的要写好一个长篇的素质”。

<sup>3</sup> All the citations of the original text are based on the essay author's translation of the novella *Dumplings*. (李师江:《饺子》,《青年文学》8 (2018): 24-31).

comparison of two men with two bears is very sarcastic. And the author is also good at self-satirizing. When the narrator greets Mr. Fu and doesn't get his reply, it says, "I felt ashamed at my mindless greetings---as if when you greeted an environmentalist, you felt you yourself also an environmentalist. Such an illusion was really a shame" (25) . And the author is good at irony. When the narrator in his childhood wants to leave home and worries about the fish, it says, "I always thought that when I grew up and left home nobody would change water for these fish and take care of them. What should I do? The fact was that in order not to trouble me the fighting fish died before I grew up" (25-26) .And some similes in the text are very unemotional and indifferent where there should be some emotions. When once the narrator as an undergraduate makes love to a woman he happens to meet in the dancing hall, "Quite naturally, I hugged her and put her on a stone, just like putting a flat fish upon the frying pan" (26) . This simile is cold and calm enough and it indicates the narrator's seemingly indifferent attitude toward life. And when the narrator tells Mr. Fu he has divorced three times, it continues to say, "I spoke with such alacrity! My life seemed to be manipulated by my tongue. I could get away from any status of entanglement" (26) . It shows the narrator's impatience and doubtful thoughts about the relationship between real life and language. Later, at the end of the second part the narrator, with a more sincere attitude, tells Mr. Fu, "I haven't divorced for three times. I only tried to divorce with the same person for three times and I didn't succeed. Sorry for the former exaggeration" (29) .The former play of words makes the narrator have the illusion of running away from any trouble. The narrator's later correction shows the courage to face the truth in life. The narrator has realized that escape by way of language exaggeration is useless. Maybe this correction is the narrator's, or the author Li Shijiang's reflection on his former language style prevalent in his early period. Then no wonder this novella's language style is mainly minute and patient description. At the end of the first part, the narrator thinks of the nourishing effect of the petals, "Mr. Yu said that petals helped to comfort the heart and make people quiet and tranquil. I believe what he said, not from a medical perspective, but from a psychological perspective, or more loftily, from a religious perspective" (27) . The push from "medical", to "psychological", and finally to "religious" indicates the narrator's helplessness in facing life. And all this is stated in a bitterly ironic way, which is typical of Li Shijiang's early writings.

In fact, since his work *Happiness, Longevity and Spring* was published in 2007, Li Shijiang has

tried to adopt a more objective and patient way of narration. In this novel, Li Shijiang has continued to adopt the calm, objective and simple style of writing while retaining some characteristics of the writings in his early period which are passionate and ironic. The critic Zhang Ning, after reading *Happiness, Longevity and Spring*, comments that the post-70s writers' passion, anger and impulsion have been consumed and used up completely. And he thinks that they have entered too early into middle-age writing or even old-age writing. Li Shijiang does not agree with Zhang Ning's idea. He thinks Zhang Ning has misread his work *Happiness, Longevity and Spring*. He says, "Zhang Ning is accustomed to my style of holding strength in each sentence. And he is not used to my present modest style...I know, Zhang Ning thinks the sharpness and dash in my writing have disappeared completely. But I myself feel that when self-expressing narration turns to a description full of panoramic control, a larger creative power is rising from my inner heart" (Net 1).<sup>1</sup> In this novella, Li Shijiang's style, generally speaking, is a continuation of that in *Happiness, Longevity and Spring*. Meanwhile, this novella still keeps some language features such as the passionate and sarcastic tone in the early period. While in *Happiness, Longevity and Spring* Li Shijiang writes more about the daily routine and chores and events in the peasants' life (it is narrated in the third-person), in this novella, Li turns more frequently into the inner heart of the characters, especially the psychological activities of the first-person narrator "I". This transitional period from passionate writing to meticulous and patient description shows, the appearance of, just as Li Shijiang himself says, "a larger creative power". And this novella also shows Li Shijiang's in-depth thinking about middle age crisis with the meticulous description and intermittent appearance of bitter and ironic sentences.

In conclusion, in *Dumplings* the theme of escape is revealed through mixed styles, and echoes from classical Chinese novels. In the meticulous and patient description of *Dumplings*, one discerns several layers in the first-person narrator's emotions. The plot is pushed forward naturally by the narrator's emotions. Psychological life is described in the form of stream of consciousness. Time in the text appears first as a straight line but then reveals numerous branches moving back, thus uniting past and present organically. The language betrays a remainder from an earlier period marked by

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<sup>1</sup> The original Chinese text here is: "张柠看惯了我以前句句发力的语言, 对这次不露锋芒的写法不适应.....我知道, 张柠认为我的文字的锐意已经全消。可我自己觉得, 从自我表白的叙述转向全局控制的描写之后, 一种更大的创作力正在我内心产生。"

passion and irony, and adds to this a later period style marked by patience and meticulousness. The narrator of *Dumplings* is in the process of going through a difficult journey as a writer and man. And in this novel, two worlds are vividly presented: the world of reality and the utopian world of classical Chinese culture. The theme of escape in *Dumplings* has been presented wonderfully in the novella that reaches the level of a well-written modernist novel.

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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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China

Chief Editor: Zhang Guangkui

Cover Painter: Zeng Kun

Cover Designer: Dan Fei



ISSN 2051-526X



9 772051 526006