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## 杜甫诗选

THE SELECTED POEMS OF DU FU





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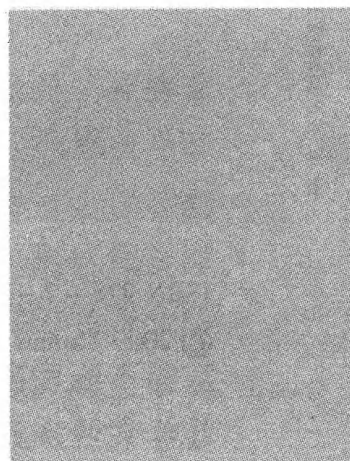
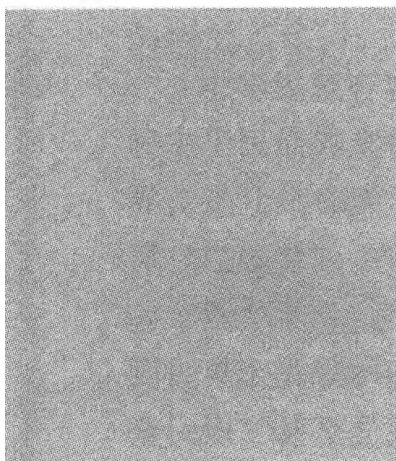
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Chinese-English

# 杜甫诗选

## The Selected Poems of Du Fu



[美] 华兹生 英译

Translated ~~into English by~~ Burton Watson

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# 总 序

杨牧之

《大中华文库》终于出版了。我们为之高兴，为之鼓舞，但也倍感压力。

当此之际，我们愿将郁积在我们心底的话，向读者倾诉。

—

中华民族有着悠久的历史 and 灿烂的文化，系统、准确地将中华民族的文化经典翻译成外文，编辑出版，介绍给全世界，是几代中国人的愿望。早在几十年前，西方一位学者翻译《红楼梦》，将书名译成《一个红楼上的梦》，将林黛玉译为“黑色的玉”。我们一方面对外国学者将中国的名著介绍到世界上去表示由衷的感谢，一方面为祖国的名著还不被完全认识，甚至受到曲解，而感到深深的遗憾。还有西方学者翻译《金瓶梅》，专门摘选其中自然主义描述最为突出的篇章加以译介。一时间，西方学者好像发现了奇迹，掀起了《金瓶梅》热，说中国是“性开放的源头”，公开地在报刊上鼓吹中国要“发扬开放之传统”。还有许多资深、友善的汉学家译介中国古代的哲学著作，在把中华民族文化介绍给全世界的工作方面作出了重大贡献，但或囿于理解有误，或缘于对中国文字认识的局限，质量上乘的并不多，常常是隔靴搔痒，说不到点子上。大哲学家黑格尔曾经说过：中国有





最完备的国史。但他认为中国古代没有真正意义上的哲学，还处在哲学史前状态。这么了不起的哲学家竟然作出这样大失水准的评论，何其不幸。正如任何哲学家都要受时间、地点、条件的制约一样，黑格尔也离不开这一规律。当时他也只能从上述水平的汉学家译过去的文字去分析、理解，所以，黑格尔先生对中国古代社会的认识水平是什么状态，也就不难想象了。

中国离不开世界，世界也缺少不了中国。中国文化摄取外域的新成分，丰富了自己，又以自己的新成就输送给别人，贡献于世界。从公元5世纪开始到公元15世纪，大约有一千年，中国走在世界的前列。在这一千多年的时间里，她的光辉煌耀全世界。人类要前进，怎么能不全面认识中国，怎么能不认真研究中国的历史呢？

## 二

中华民族是伟大的，曾经辉煌过，蓝天、白云、阳光灿烂，和平而兴旺；也有过黑暗的、想起来就让人战栗的日子，但中华民族从来是充满理想，不断追求，不断学习，渴望和平与友谊的。

中国古代伟大的思想家孔子曾经说过：“三人行，必有我师焉。择其善者而从之，其不善者而改之。”孔子的话就是要人们向别人学习。这段话正是概括了整个中华民族与人交往的原则。人与人之间交往如此，在与周边的国家交往中也是如此。

秦始皇第一个统一了中国，可惜在位只有十几年，来不及做更多的事情。汉朝继秦而继续强大，便开始走出去，了



解自己周边的世界。公元前 138 年，汉武帝派张骞出使西域。他带着一万头牛羊，总值一万万钱的金帛货物，作为礼物，开始西行，最远到过“安息”（即波斯）。公元 73 年，班超又率 36 人出使西域。36 个人按今天的话说，也只有一个排，显然是为了拜访未曾见过面的邻居，是去交朋友。到了西域，班超派遣甘英作为使者继续西行，往更远处的大秦国（即罗马）去访问，“乃抵条支而历安息，临西海以望大秦”（《后汉书·西域传》）。“条支”在“安息”以西，即今天的伊拉克、叙利亚一带，“西海”应是今天的地中海。也就是说甘英已经到达地中海边上，与罗马帝国隔海相望，“临大海欲渡”，却被人劝阻而未成行，这在历史上留下了遗憾。可以想见班超、甘英沟通友谊的无比勇气和强烈愿望。接下来是唐代的玄奘，历经千难万险，到“西天”印度取经，带回了南亚国家的古老文化。归国后，他把带回的佛教经典组织人翻译，到后来很多经典印度失传了，但中国却保存完好，以至于今天，没有玄奘的《大唐西域记》，印度人很难编写印度古代史。明代郑和“七下西洋”，把中华文化传到东南亚一带。鸦片战争以后，一代又一代先进的中国人，为了振兴中华，又前赴后继，向西方国家学习先进的科学思想和文明成果。这中间有我们的领导人朱德、周恩来、邓小平；有许许多多大科学家、文学家、艺术家，如郭沫若、李四光、钱学森、冼星海、徐悲鸿等。他们的追求、奋斗，他们的博大胸怀，兼收并蓄的精神，为人类社会增添了光彩。

中国文化的形成和发展过程，就是一个以众为师、以各国人民为师，不断学习和创造的过程。中华民族曾经向周边国家和民族学习过许多东西，假如没有这些学习，中华民族绝不可能创造出昔日的辉煌。回顾历史，我们怎么能够不对



伟大的古埃及文明、古希腊文明、古印度文明满怀深深的感激?怎么能够不对伟大的欧洲文明、非洲文明、美洲文明、澳洲文明,以及中国周围的亚洲文明充满温情与敬意?

中华民族为人类社会曾作出过独特的贡献。在15世纪以前,中国的科学技术一直处于世界遥遥领先的地位。英国科学家李约瑟说:“中国在公元3世纪到13世纪之间,保持着一个西方所望尘莫及的科学知识水平。”美国耶鲁大学教授、《大国的兴衰》的作者保罗·肯尼迪坦言:“在近代以前时期的所有文明中,没有一个国家的文明比中国更发达,更先进。”

世界各国的有识之士千里迢迢来中国观光、学习。在这个过程中,中国唐朝的长安城渐渐发展成为国际大都市。西方的波斯、东罗马,东亚的高丽、新罗、百济、南天竺、北天竺,频繁前来。外国的王侯、留学生,在长安供职的外国官员,商贾、乐工和舞士,总有几十个国家,几万人之多。日本派出的“遣唐使”更是一批接一批。传为美谈的日本人阿部仲麻吕(晁衡)在长安留学的故事,很能说明外国人与中国的交往。晁衡学成仕于唐朝,前后历时五十余年。晁衡与中国的知识分子结下了深厚的友情。他归国时,传说在海中遇难身亡。大诗人李白作诗哭悼:“日本晁卿辞帝都,征帆一片绕蓬壶。明月不归沉碧海,白云愁色满苍梧。”晁衡遇险是误传,但由此可见中外学者之间在中国长安交往的情谊。

后来,不断有外国人到中国来探寻秘密,所见所闻,常常让他们目瞪口呆。《希腊纪事》(希腊人波桑尼阿著)记载公元2世纪时,希腊人在中国的见闻。书中写道:“赛里斯人用小米和青芦喂一种类似蜘蛛的昆虫,喂到第五年,虫肚子胀裂开,便从里面取出丝来。”从这段对中国古代养蚕技术的



描述，可见当时欧洲人与中国人的差距。公元9世纪中叶，阿拉伯人来到中国。一位阿拉伯作家在他所著的《中国印度闻见录》中记载了曾旅居中国的阿拉伯商人的见闻：

——一天，一个外商去拜见驻守广州的中国官吏。会见时，外商总盯着官吏的胸部，官吏很奇怪，便问：“你好像总盯着我的胸，这是怎么回事？”那位外商回答说：“透过你穿的丝绸衣服，我隐约看到你胸口上长着一个黑痣，这是什么丝绸，我感到十分惊奇。”官吏听后，失声大笑，伸出胳膊，说：“请你数数吧，看我穿了几件衣服。”那商人数过，竟然穿了五件之多，黑痣正是透过这五层丝绸衣服显现出来的。外商惊得目瞪口呆，官吏说：“我穿的丝绸还不算是最好的，总督穿的要更精美。”

——书中关于茶(他们叫干草叶子)的记载，可见阿拉伯国家当时还没有喝茶的习惯。书中记述：“中国国王本人的收入主要靠盐税和泡开水喝的一种干草税。在各个城市里，这种干草叶售价都很高，中国人称这种草叶叫‘茶’，这种干草叶比苜蓿的叶子还多，也略比它香，稍有苦味，用开水冲喝，治百病。”

——他们对中国的医疗条件十分羡慕，书中记载道：“中国人医疗条件很好，穷人可以从国库中得到药费。”还说：“城市里，很多地方立一石碑，高10肘，上面刻有各种疾病和药物，写明某种病用某种药医治。”

——关于当时中国的京城，书中作了生动的描述：中国的京城很大，人口众多，一条宽阔的长街把全城分为两半，大街右边的东区，住着皇帝、宰相、禁军及皇家的总管、奴婢。在这个区域，沿街开凿了小河，流水潺潺；路旁，葱茏的树木整然有序，一幢幢宅邸鳞次栉比。大街左边的西区，



住着庶民和商人。这里有货栈和商店，每当清晨，人们可以看到，皇室的总管、宫廷的仆役，或骑马或步行，到这里来采购。

此后的史籍对西人来华的记载，渐渐多了起来。13世纪意大利旅行家马可·波罗，尽管有人对他是否真的到过中国持怀疑态度，但他留下一部记述元代事件的《马可·波罗游记》却是确凿无疑的。这部游记中的一些关于当时中国的描述使得西方人认为是“天方夜谭”。总之，从中西文化交流史来说，这以前的时期还是一个想象和臆测的时代，相互之间充满了好奇与幻想。

从16世纪末开始，由于航海技术的发展，东西方航路的开通，随着一批批传教士来华，中国与西方开始了直接的交流。沟通中西的使命在意大利传教士利玛窦那里有了充分的体现。利玛窦于1582年来华，1610年病逝于北京，在华二十余年。除了传教以外，做了两件具有历史象征意义的事，一是1594年前后在韶州用拉丁文翻译《四书》，并作了注释；二是与明代学者徐光启合作，用中文翻译了《几何原本》。

西方传教士对《四书》等中国经典的粗略翻译，以及杜赫德的《中华帝国志》等书对中国的介绍，在西方读者的眼前展现了一个异域文明，在当时及稍后一段时期引起了一场“中国热”，许多西方大思想家都曾注目于中国文化。有的推崇中华文明，如莱布尼兹、伏尔泰、魁奈等，有的对中华文明持批评态度，如孟德斯鸠、黑格尔等。莱布尼兹认识到中国文化的某些思想与他的观念相近，如周易的卦象与他发明的二进制相契合，对中国文化给予了热情的礼赞；黑格尔则从他整个哲学体系的推演出发，认为中国没有真正意义上的哲学，还处在哲学史前的状态。但是，不论是推崇还是批



评，是吸纳还是排斥，中西文化的交流产生了巨大的影响。随着先进的中国科学技术的西传，特别是中国的造纸、火药、印刷术和指南针四大发明的问世，大大改变了世界的面貌。马克思说：“中国的火药把骑士阶层炸得粉碎，指南针打开了世界市场并建立了殖民地，而印刷术则变成了新教的工具，变成对精神发展创造必要前提的最强大的杠杆。”英国的哲学家培根说：中国的四大发明“改变了全世界的面貌和一切事物的状态”。

### 三

大千世界，潮起潮落。云散云聚，万象更新。中国古代产生了无数伟大的科学家：祖冲之、李时珍、孙思邈、张衡、沈括、毕昇……产生了无数科技成果：《齐民要术》、《九章算术》、《伤寒杂病论》、《本草纲目》……以及保存至今的世界奇迹：浑天仪、地动仪、都江堰、敦煌石窟、大运河、万里长城……但从15世纪下半叶起，风水似乎从东方转到了西方，落后的欧洲只经过400年便成为世界瞩目的文明中心。英国的牛顿、波兰的哥白尼、德国的伦琴、法国的居里、德国的爱因斯坦、意大利的伽利略、俄国的门捷列夫、美国的费米和爱迪生……光芒四射，令人敬仰。

中华民族开始思考了。潮起潮落究竟是什么原因？中国人发明的火药，传到欧洲，转眼之间反成为欧洲列强轰击中国大门的炮弹，又是因为什么？

鸦片战争终于催醒了中国人沉睡的迷梦，最先“睁眼看世界”的一代精英林则徐、魏源迈出了威武雄壮的一步。曾国藩、李鸿章搞起了洋务运动。中国的知识分子喊出“民主



与科学”的口号。中国是落后了，中国的志士仁人在苦苦探索。但落后中饱含着变革的动力，探索中孕育着崛起的希望。“向科学进军”，中华民族终于又迎来了科学的春天。

今天，世界毕竟来到了 21 世纪的门槛。分散隔绝的世界，逐渐变成联系为一体的世界。现在，全球一体化趋势日益明显，人类历史也就在愈来愈大的程度上成为全世界的历史。当今，任何一种文化的发展都离不开对其它优秀文化的汲取，都以其它优秀文化的发展为前提。在近现代，西方文化汲取中国文化，不仅是中国文化的传播，更是西方文化自身的创新和发展；正如中国文化对西方文化的汲取一样，既是西方文化在中国的传播，同时也是中国文化在近代的转型和发展。地球上所有的人类文化，都是我们共同的宝贵遗产。既然我们生活的各个大陆，在地球史上曾经是连成一气的“泛大陆”，或者说是一个完整的“地球村”，那么，我们同样可以在这个以知识和学习为特征的网络时代，走上相互学习、共同发展的大路，建设和开拓我们人类崭新的“地球村”。

西学仍在东渐，中学也将西传。各国人民的优秀文化正日益迅速地为中国文化所汲取，而无论西方和东方，也都需要从中国文化中汲取养分。正是基于这一认识，我们组织出版汉英对照版《大中华文库》，全面系统地翻译介绍中国传统文化典籍。我们试图通过《大中华文库》，向全世界展示，中华民族五千年的追求，五千年的梦想，正在新的历史时期重放光芒。中国人民就像火后的凤凰，万众一心，迎接新世纪文明的太阳。

1999 年 8 月 北京



## PREFACE TO THE *LIBRARY OF CHINESE CLASSICS*

Yang Muzhi

The publication of the *Library of Chinese Classics* is a matter of great satisfaction to all of us who have been involved in the production of this monumental work. At the same time, we feel a weighty sense of responsibility, and take this opportunity to explain to our readers the motivation for undertaking this cross-century task.

### 1

The Chinese nation has a long history and a glorious culture, and it has been the aspiration of several generations of Chinese scholars to translate, edit and publish the whole corpus of the Chinese literary classics so that the nation's greatest cultural achievements can be introduced to people all over the world. There have been many translations of the Chinese classics done by foreign scholars. A few dozen years ago, a Western scholar translated the title of *A Dream of Red Mansions* into "A Dream of Red Chambers" and Lin Daiyu, the heroine in the novel, into "Black Jade." But while their endeavours have been laudable, the results of their labours have been less than satisfactory. Lack of knowledge of Chinese culture and an inadequate grasp of the Chinese written language have led the translators into many errors. As a consequence, not only are Chinese classical writings widely misunderstood in the rest of the world, in some cases their content has actually been distorted. At one time, there was a "*Jin Ping Mei* craze" among Western scholars, who thought that they had uncovered a miraculous phenomenon, and published theories claiming that China was the "fountainhead of eroticism," and that a Chinese "tradition of permissiveness" was about to be laid bare. This distorted view came about due to the translators of the *Jin Ping Mei* (*Plum in the Golden Vase*) putting one-sided stress on the





raw elements in that novel, to the neglect of its overall literary value. Meanwhile, there have been many distinguished and well-intentioned Sinologists who have attempted to make the culture of the Chinese nation more widely known by translating works of ancient Chinese philosophy. However, the quality of such work, in many cases, is unsatisfactory, often missing the point entirely. The great philosopher Hegel considered that ancient China had no philosophy in the real sense of the word, being stuck in philosophical “prehistory.” For such an eminent authority to make such a colossal error of judgment is truly regrettable. But, of course, Hegel was just as subject to the constraints of time, space and other objective conditions as anyone else, and since he had to rely for his knowledge of Chinese philosophy on inadequate translations it is not difficult to imagine why he went so far off the mark.

China cannot be separated from the rest of the world; and the rest of the world cannot ignore China. Throughout its history, Chinese civilization has enriched itself by absorbing new elements from the outside world, and in turn has contributed to the progress of world civilization as a whole by transmitting to other peoples its own cultural achievements. From the 5th to the 15th centuries, China marched in the front ranks of world civilization. If mankind wishes to advance, how can it afford to ignore China? How can it afford not to make a thoroughgoing study of its history?

Despite the ups and downs in their fortunes, the Chinese people have always been idealistic, and have never ceased to forge ahead and learn from others, eager to strengthen ties of peace and friendship.

The great ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius once said, “Whenever three persons come together, one of them will surely be able to teach me something. I will pick out his good points and emulate them; his bad points I will reform.” Confucius meant by this that we should always be ready to learn from others. This maxim encapsulates the principle the Chinese people have always followed in their dealings with other peoples, not only on an individual basis but also at the level of state-to-state relations.

After generations of internecine strife, China was unified by Emperor



Qin Shi Huang (the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty) in 221 B.C. The Han Dynasty, which succeeded that of the short-lived Qin, waxed powerful, and for the first time brought China into contact with the outside world. In 138 B.C., Emperor Wu dispatched Zhang Qian to the western regions, i.e. Central Asia. Zhang, who traveled as far as what is now Iran, took with him as presents for the rulers he visited on the way 10,000 head of sheep and cattle, as well as gold and silks worth a fabulous amount. In 73 D.C., Ban Chao headed a 36-man legation to the western regions. These were missions of friendship to visit neighbours the Chinese people had never met before and to learn from them. Ban Chao sent Gan Ying to explore further toward the west. According to the "Western Regions Section" in the *Book of Later Han*, Gan Ying traveled across the territories of present-day Iraq and Syria, and reached the Mediterranean Sea, an expedition which brought him within the confines of the Roman Empire. Later, during the Tang Dynasty, the monk Xuan Zang made a journey fraught with danger to reach India and seek the knowledge of that land. Upon his return, he organized a team of scholars to translate the Buddhist scriptures, which he had brought back with him. As a result, many of these scriptural classics which were later lost in India have been preserved in China. In fact, it would have been difficult for the people of India to reconstruct their own ancient history if it had not been for Xuan Zang's *A Record of a Journey to the West in the Time of the Great Tang Dynasty*. In the Ming Dynasty, Zheng He transmitted Chinese culture to Southeast Asia during his seven voyages. Following the Opium Wars in the mid-19th century, progressive Chinese, generation after generation, went to study the advanced scientific thought and cultural achievements of the Western countries. Their aim was to revive the fortunes of their own country. Among them were people who were later to become leaders of China, including Zhu De, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping. In addition, there were people who were to become leading scientists, literary figures and artists, such as Guo Moruo, Li Siguang, Qian Xuesen, Xian Xinghai and Xu Beihong. Their spirit of ambition, their struggles and their breadth of vision were an inspiration not only to the Chinese people but to people all over the world.

Indeed, it is true that if the Chinese people had not learned many



things from the surrounding countries they would never have been able to produce the splendid achievements of former days. When we look back upon history, how can we not feel profoundly grateful for the legacies of the civilizations of ancient Egypt, Greece and India? How can we not feel fondness and respect for the cultures of Europe, Africa, America and Oceania?

The Chinese nation, in turn, has made unique contributions to the community of mankind. Prior to the 15th century, China led the world in science and technology. The British scientist Joseph Needham once said, "From the third century A.D. to the 13th century A.D. China was far ahead of the West in the level of its scientific knowledge." Paul Kennedy, of Yale University in the U.S., author of *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, said, "Of all the civilizations of the pre-modern period, none was as well-developed or as progressive as that of China."

Foreigners who came to China were often astonished at what they saw and heard. The Greek geographer Pausanias in the second century A.D. gave the first account in the West of the technique of silk production in China: "The Chinese feed a spider-like insect with millet and reeds. After five years the insect's stomach splits open, and silk is extracted therefrom." From this extract, we can see that the Europeans at that time did not know the art of silk manufacture. In the middle of the 9th century A.D., an Arabian writer includes the following anecdote in his *Account of China and India*:

"One day, an Arabian merchant called upon the military governor of Guangzhou. Throughout the meeting, the visitor could not keep his eyes off the governor's chest. Noticing this, the latter asked the Arab merchant what he was staring at. The merchant replied, 'Through the silk robe you are wearing, I can faintly see a black mole on your chest. Your robe must be made out of very fine silk indeed!' The governor burst out laughing, and holding out his sleeve invited the merchant to count how many garments he was wearing. The merchant did so, and discovered that the governor was actually wearing five silk robes, one on top of the other, and they were made of such fine material that a tiny mole could be seen through them all! Moreover, the governor explained that the robes he was wearing were not made of the finest silk at all; silk of the highest



grade was reserved for the garments worn by the provincial governor.”

The references to tea in this book (the author calls it “dried grass”) reveal that the custom of drinking tea was unknown in the Arab countries at that time: “The king of China’s revenue comes mainly from taxes on salt and the dry leaves of a kind of grass which is drunk after boiled water is poured on it. This dried grass is sold at a high price in every city in the country. The Chinese call it ‘cha.’ The bush is like alfalfa, except that it bears more leaves, which are also more fragrant than alfalfa. It has a slightly bitter taste, and when it is infused in boiling water it is said to have medicinal properties.”

Foreign visitors showed especial admiration for Chinese medicine. One wrote, “China has very good medical conditions. Poor people are given money to buy medicines by the government.”

In this period, when Chinese culture was in full bloom, scholars flocked from all over the world to China for sightseeing and for study. Chang’an, the capital of the Tang Dynasty was host to visitors from as far away as the Byzantine Empire, not to mention the neighboring countries of Asia. Chang’an, at that time the world’s greatest metropolis, was packed with thousands of foreign dignitaries, students, diplomats, merchants, artisans and entertainers. Japan especially sent contingent after contingent of envoys to the Tang court. Worthy of note are the accounts of life in Chang’an written by Abeno Nakamaro, a Japanese scholar who studied in China and had close friendships with ministers of the Tang court and many Chinese scholars in a period of over 50 years. The description throws light on the exchanges between Chinese and foreigners in this period. When Abeno was supposedly lost at sea on his way back home, the leading poet of the time, Li Bai, wrote a eulogy for him.

The following centuries saw a steady increase in the accounts of China written by Western visitors. The Italian Marco Polo described conditions in China during the Yuan Dynasty in his *Travels*. However, until advances in the science of navigation led to the opening of east-west shipping routes at the beginning of the 16th century Sino-Western cultural exchanges were coloured by fantasy and conjecture. Concrete progress was made when a contingent of religious missionaries, men well versed in Western science and technology, made their way to China, ushering in an era of



direct contacts between China and the West. The experience of this era was embodied in the career of the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci. Arriving in China in 1582, Ricci died in Beijing in 1610. Apart from his missionary work, Ricci accomplished two historically symbolic tasks — one was the translation into Latin of the “Four Books,” together with annotations, in 1594; the other was the translation into Chinese of Euclid’s *Elements*.

The rough translations of the “Four Books” and other Chinese classical works by Western missionaries, and the publication of Père du Halde’s *Description Geographique, Historique, Chronologique, Politique, et Physique de l’Empire de la Chine* revealed an exotic culture to Western readers, and sparked a “China fever,” during which the eyes of many Western intellectuals were fixed on China. Some of these intellectuals, including Leibniz, held China in high esteem; others, such as Hegel, nursed a critical attitude toward Chinese culture. Leibniz considered that some aspects of Chinese thought were close to his own views, such as the philosophy of the *Book of Changes* and his own binary system. Hegel, on the other hand, as mentioned above, considered that China had developed no proper philosophy of its own. Nevertheless, no matter whether the reaction was one of admiration, criticism, acceptance or rejection, Sino-Western exchanges were of great significance. The transmission of advanced Chinese science and technology to the West, especially the Chinese inventions of paper-making, gunpowder, printing and the compass, greatly changed the face of the whole world. Karl Marx said, “Chinese gunpowder blew the feudal class of knights to smithereens; the compass opened up world markets and built colonies; and printing became an implement of Protestantism and the most powerful lever and necessary precondition for intellectual development and creation.” The English philosopher Roger Bacon said that China’s four great inventions had “changed the face of the whole world and the state of affairs of everything.”

## 3

Ancient China gave birth to a large number of eminent scientists, such as Zu Chongzhi, Li Shizhen, Sun Simiao, Zhang Heng, Shen Kuo and Bi



Sheng. They produced numerous treatises on scientific subjects, including *The Manual of Important Arts for the People's Welfare*, *Nine Chapters on the Mathematical Art*, *A Treatise on Febrile Diseases* and *Compendium of Materia Medica*. Their accomplishments included ones whose influence has been felt right down to modern times, such as the armillary sphere, seismograph, Dujiangyan water conservancy project, Dunhuang Grottoes, Grand Canal and Great Wall. But from the latter part of the 15th century, and for the next 400 years, Europe gradually became the cultural centre upon which the world's eyes were fixed. The world's most outstanding scientists then were England's Isaac Newton, Poland's Copernicus, France's Marie Curie, Germany's Rontgen and Einstein, Italy's Galileo, Russia's Mendeleev and America's Edison.

The Chinese people then began to think: What is the cause of the rise and fall of nations? Moreover, how did it happen that gunpowder, invented in China and transmitted to the West, in no time at all made Europe powerful enough to batter down the gates of China herself?

It took the Opium War to wake China from its reverie. The first generation to make the bold step of "turning our eyes once again to the rest of the world" was represented by Lin Zexu and Wei Yuan. Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang started the Westernization Movement, and later intellectuals raised the slogan of "Democracy and Science." Noble-minded patriots, realizing that China had fallen behind in the race for modernization, set out on a painful quest. But in backwardness lay the motivation for change, and the quest produced the embryo of a towering hope, and the Chinese people finally gathered under a banner proclaiming a "March Toward Science."

On the threshold of the 21st century, the world is moving in the direction of becoming an integrated entity. This trend is becoming clearer by the day. In fact, the history of the various peoples of the world is also becoming the history of mankind as a whole. Today, it is impossible for any nation's culture to develop without absorbing the excellent aspects of the cultures of other peoples. When Western culture absorbs aspects of Chinese culture, this is not just because it has come into contact with Chinese culture, but also because of the active creativity and development of Western culture itself; and vice versa. The various cultures of



the world's peoples are a precious heritage which we all share. Mankind no longer lives on different continents, but on one big continent, or in a "global village." And so, in this era characterized by an all-encompassing network of knowledge and information we should learn from each other and march in step along the highway of development to construct a brand-new "global village."

Western learning is still being transmitted to the East, and vice versa. China is accelerating its pace of absorption of the best parts of the cultures of other countries, and there is no doubt that both the West and the East need the nourishment of Chinese culture. Based on this recognition, we have edited and published the *Library of Chinese Classics* in a Chinese-English format as an introduction to the corpus of traditional Chinese culture in a comprehensive and systematic translation. Through this collection, our aim is to reveal to the world the aspirations and dreams of the Chinese people over the past 5,000 years and the splendour of the new historical era in China. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, the Chinese people in unison are welcoming the cultural sunrise of the new century.



## 前 言

熊治祁

—

杜甫，字子美，自称少陵野老。生于公元712年（唐太极元年），卒于公元770年（唐大历五年）。河南巩县（今河南巩义市）人。青年时期南游吴越，北游齐赵。其间曾入洛阳应进士，不第。天宝五年，35岁的杜甫来到中国当时的政治中心长安，孰料竟在此困居十年，仅被授以右卫率府胄曹参军的小官职。安史之乱爆发，杜甫为叛军所俘，后脱身逃至甘肃凤翔，唐肃宗授以左拾遗。不久因直言极谏被贬为华州司功参军。旋弃官居秦州、同谷，复移家成都，卜居浣花溪畔。经四川节度使严武举荐，任节度参谋、检校工部员外郎。晚年移家出蜀，经湖北漂泊至湖南，后病卒于长沙至岳阳的舟中。

杜甫出身于一个世代“奉儒守官”（见杜甫《进雕赋表》）的家庭。从小接受过良好的教育，受儒家思想的影响很深。他在诗中多次称自己为“儒”，而且屡屡表述个人的政治抱负：“许身一何愚，窃比稷与契。”（《自京赴奉先县咏怀五百字》，以下简称《咏怀》）“自谓颇挺出，立登要路





津。致君尧舜上，再使风俗淳。”（《奉赠韦左丞丈二十二韵》）这种积极入世的儒家思想深刻地影响了他的一生。失意的时候，他也偶尔流露过一星半点佛道消极遁世的想法，但他从来没有颓丧。历经挫折而不忘伤时忧国，贫病交加而犹念天下苍生，他始终就是这样一种高尚的人生态度。这也是他赢得巨大声誉的重要原因。他历来被公认为中国历史上最伟大的诗人之一。

## 二

杜甫的诗作，被保存下来的有 1400 多首。其深刻的思想内容和丰富多彩的艺术表现手法，无可争辩地证明，杜诗是中国古典文学中一座特别挺拔的高峰。

杜诗在内容上最显著的特色就是“以时事入诗”，即客观真实地描写社会、反映时代，因而被称为“诗史”。杜甫生活的时代，正是大唐帝国由盛入衰的时期。这一时期的“安史之乱”、上层腐朽、国事艰难、民间疾苦等等，都记录在他那些著名的诗篇之中。唐以前的中国古代诗歌如《诗经》、楚辞、汉乐府等，都有关注现实社会的传统，杜甫继承和发扬了这种精神，并极大地丰富了艺术表现手法。如反映百姓饱受兵役之苦的《兵车行》，反映“安史之乱”给社会造成巨大危害的《三吏》、《三别》，讽刺奸相杨国忠兄妹奢侈荒淫的《丽人行》等，都是笔法酣畅淋漓的纪事名篇。《三吏》、《三别》中诗人的所见所闻，甚至是正史中缺乏记



载的“安史之乱”史料。历史的真相，通过诗人的艺术加工，千载后读来犹觉震撼人心。诗人的另一些作品，如《咏怀》、《北征》、《观公孙大娘舞剑器行》等，夹叙夹议，感慨深沉，同样具有浓厚的“诗史”色彩。如《咏怀》一诗，笼罩着唐帝国大厦濒危的浓重气息，较之读史更令人嗟叹不已。

作为一位创作天才，杜甫的笔墨也深入到社会人生的各个方面。除了浓墨重彩地关注现实之外，其他如歌咏自然风光、凭吊古人遗迹、抒写亲朋情谊、感叹个人身世、刻画飞禽走兽等，都有传颂千古的名篇。

杜甫在艺术创作上形成了一种独特的风格，概括起来说就是“沉郁”，即深沉悲愤（“沉郁”一词，有诸多解释，此不细述）。

一如前述，杜甫大量诗歌的主题是忧天下之时局、哀民生之苦痛。由于诗人胸襟阔大，笔力雄健，观察入微，他的悲愤乃有超乎常人的深度和广度。而且几乎任何事物都能引发他的这种情感。见到花开鸟飞，也“感时花溅泪，恨别鸟惊心”（《春望》），登临胜迹，也因“戎马关山北”而“凭轩涕泗流”（《登岳阳楼》），观赏技艺，也联想到国家之盛衰而“感时抚事增惋伤”（《观公孙大娘舞剑器行》），夜宿江边，也因悯农而喊出“谁能叩君门，下令减征赋”（《宿花石戍》）。无穷无尽之悲，抑郁不平之气，真是胸中挥之不去，笔下招之即来。尤为难得的是，诗人那些感叹个人遭际



的作品，也因将个人不幸和国家命运紧相联系，同样显得忧愤如山，包容博大。如《咏怀》结尾写到自己因幼子被饿死而不胜悲痛，但转念又想到天下不幸的人还不知有多少：“默思失业徒，因念远戍卒。忧端齐终南，涸洞不可掇。”诗人高尚的襟怀、悲天悯人的情感，使其在创作过程中自然形成了这种非同凡响的“沉郁”风格。

在语言运用上，杜甫大量使用悲凉凄苦的词语。穷愁、潦倒、无奈、愁杀、哀伤、苦恨、凄凉、惆怅、呜咽、叹息、寂寞、萧瑟、阴森、丧乱、衰残等字词，在他的诗中被反复运用。据1940年哈佛燕京学社编印的《杜诗引得》统计，杜诗凡使用“哀”字100余次，“悲”字近120次，“衰”字130次，“愁”字近150次。使用这类字眼时，杜甫又特别善于结合动乱的时局、辽阔的时空和雄奇的自然景物来一吐胸中之块垒。如：

岁暮阴阳催短景，天涯霜雪霁寒宵。  
五更鼓角声悲壮，三峡星河影动摇。  
野哭千家闻战伐，夷歌数处起渔樵。  
卧龙跃马终黄土，人事音书漫寂寥。

——《阁夜》

花近高楼伤客心，万方多难此登临。  
锦江春色来天地，玉垒浮云变古今。  
北极朝廷终不改，西山寇盗莫相侵。



可怜后主还祠庙，日暮聊为梁甫吟。

——《登楼》

字里行间，透出一股深沉郁勃之气，忧深似海，动人心魄。

“沉郁”只是杜诗的基本风格。杜甫被尊为“诗圣”，还在于他创作风格的多样化。仅以本书所选的作品（不及杜诗的十分之一）而论，《房兵曹胡马》、《画鹰》可见其矫健豪纵，《饮中八仙歌》、《醉时歌》可见其诙谐奔放，绝句《漫兴》、《后游》可见其清新明丽，《闻官军收河南河北》可见其轻快流畅，《卜居》、《江村》可见其闲适冲淡，《秦州杂诗》可见其雄阔苍凉。古今评论家都极赞杜诗富于变化，风格的多变当是特别重要的一个方面。

杜甫对诗歌的体裁也有诸多发展和创造。其五古汲取汉乐府和建安诗歌的长处，熔古今于一炉，纵横挥洒。叙事则毫端活脱，详略有度；写人则如闻其声，如见其面；议论则如万壑风来，生发不已。其七古则容纳多种题材，千门万户，异彩纷呈。笔力汪洋恣肆，结构法度森严。其五律占现存杜诗的五分之二，有600多首。五律篇幅短小，在杜甫笔下却显得万象巍峨，规模宏富。情思飞动，含意深蕴。名篇佳作，不胜枚举。杜甫对七律的贡献也极为突出。他创作了160多首七律，这个数字超过他以前所有诗人写的七律的总和。杜甫极大地扩充了这一体裁的表现范围，使之完全摆脱



了“咏物”、“应制”这类题材的束缚。只是在杜甫以后，七律才成为一种诗人广泛采用的诗体。他还另外创造了一种拗体七律，后人模仿的很多。盛唐七绝圣手较多，杜甫另辟蹊径，创作了很多既像古乐府又像竹枝词的“变体”绝句（如收入本书的《漫兴》）。在五排一体上，杜甫因难见巧，驰骋笔力，至有长达一百咏者，充分展示了他的才学。此外，七排一体，也为杜甫首创。兼工各体，而又对各体做出如此重大贡献的诗家，杜甫之外，中国诗歌史上没有第二人。

杜甫在艺术创作上的成就和特色远不止上述这些方面。其他如语言的精警，格律的工整，笔法的跌宕起伏，声韵的抑扬顿挫，意境浑成而略无经营，结构严谨而不烦绳削等，都达到了难以企及的境界。

### 三

杜诗深刻的思想内容、卓越的艺术成就，哺育了后世一代又一代的诗人，对发展和丰富中国后世的诗歌创作产生了不可估量的影响。对此即使是做最简单的介绍，也将占用不少篇幅，简短的前言只宜略而不述了。

杜甫的影响，还可以从另一个现象得到证明，那就是研究杜诗的著作多不胜数，至有“注杜者千家”之说，兹择其尤要者略予介绍：

《九家集注杜诗》，宋郭知达编。该书收录王洙、宋祁、



王安石、黄庭坚、薛梦符、杜田、鲍彪、师尹、赵彦材九家之注于一书。《四库提要》称其“颇为简要”。上文提到的《杜诗引得》即据此书编成。

《杜臆》，明王嗣奭撰。王氏注重作品的内容，也善作艺术分析。

《杜工部集笺注》（一名《钱注杜诗》），清钱谦益撰。钱氏的方法是“以史证诗”，即结合杜诗的时代背景作笺注。

《杜少陵集详注》（一名《杜诗详注》），清仇兆鳌撰。此书旁征博引，释义详尽，是影响较大的杜诗注本。不足之处是有时过于穿凿、芜杂。

《杜诗镜铨》，清杨伦撰。以精简著称，往往能从艺术欣赏的角度来分析杜诗。

《读杜心解》，清浦起龙撰。浦氏注重分析作品主题和段落要义，但亦有牵强之处。

这样一位伟大诗人的作品，理所当然会成为世界人类共享的文化遗产。

早在15世纪后期，朝鲜就开始翻译汉诗，称之为“谚解”。其中最著名的译本是《杜诗谚解》（1481年初刊，1622年重刊），这是世界上最早的杜诗译本。朝鲜仿中国实行科举制，试题出自杜诗者约占五分之二，从中可见杜诗在朝鲜影响之深。

日本是翻译中国古典诗最多的国家，出版过好几大套著名的中国古典诗大系、全集。著名汉学家古川幸次郎高度评



价杜甫，认为杜诗“可以傲视万邦，尤其是对偶之妙。歌德、但丁虽然伟大，比之杜甫，则相形见绌”。另一位汉学家铃木虎雄翻译并解释了全部杜诗，出版了《杜少陵诗集》4册，至今仍是较为完备的日译本。

法国是欧洲最早译介中国古典诗的国家。汉学家、耶苏会士钱德明（Le P. Amiot）早在18和19世纪之交就在著作中向西方介绍过唐诗和杜甫。1920年，巴黎H·皮亚瑟出版社出版了《玉笛》（*La Flûte de jade*），收杜甫等68位诗人的作品。此书一版再版，并被转译成多种欧洲文字。此外，杜诗还散见于多种法文中国古典诗译本。

英国的索姆·詹尼（S. Jenynne）在18世纪中期就英译过唐诗。以后，著名汉学家德庇时（J. F. Davis, 1795—1890）、佛罗伦斯·艾尔斯科（Florence Ayscough, 1878—1942）、翟理思（Herbert Allen Giles, 1845—1935）和亚瑟·韦利（Arthur Waley, 1888—1966）等人都先后翻译过杜甫的作品。1978年，韦利的学生戴维·霍克斯（David Hawkes）在牛津出版了《杜诗入门》（*A Little Primer of Du Fu*），收杜诗30多首，先排印中文，以散文形式译出，并注音解说。此书销售极好，曾多次重印。

19世纪三四十年代杜诗的德文翻译曾在德国汉学家创办的《华裔学志》上连载，译者为察赫（Erwin Zach）。后来察赫又出版了《杜甫诗选》，同时在美国印行。

意大利在20世纪初即有人译介中国古典诗。1980年，



著名女汉学家维尔玛·科丝坦蒂妮（*Vilma Costantinis*）出版了《玉樽》一书，内收李白、杜甫、白居易三人的诗作 120 首。译者在序言中对三人的作品都有评价，是一部影响较好的译著。

杜诗在苏联曾受到高度重视。1955、1962 年，国家文学出版社两次出版由吉托维奇（*A. ИЮВИЧ*）主译的《杜甫诗集》，1967 年，文艺出版社又出版了《杜甫诗选》。1984 年第五届“莫斯科之秋”音乐节期间，上演了苏联作曲家据 22 首杜诗编写的合唱组曲《四川悲歌》。此外，苏联还有若干汉学家撰写过研究杜甫的专著和论文。

杜诗在美国的影响比其他西方国家更大。美国当代著名诗人罗伯特·布莱（*Robert Blay*）曾说：“如果我们要写出好诗，就得以中国古典诗人为师，尤其是陶潜、杜甫和其他人。”翻译方面，较著名的有戴维斯的《杜甫》、阿瑟·库珀（*Arthur Cooper*）的《李白与杜甫》、洪业的《中国最伟大诗人杜甫诗歌注译》。以上三书，都在 20 世纪六七十年代出版。美国著名汉学家华兹生（又译沃森或华生，*Burton Watson*）于 2002 年翻译出版的《杜甫诗选》是较新的译本。这次《大中华文库》采用的就是这个译本。华兹生长期致力于中国古代文学作品的翻译，曾翻译过寒山、苏轼、陆游等人的诗，编译过《中国诗选》。美国的评论家称赞他是当代最出色的一位翻译家。他的英译《杜甫诗选》译笔流畅，通俗易懂，便于一般读者接受。但作为一个杜诗选本，此书也有





不足之处。一是杜甫某些代表性的名篇没有收入，而某些并不能充分代表杜甫创作特色的作品却选入了本书。对此译者在原序中解释说，是因为有他个人的理解所致。二是诗的编排次序似可商榷。该书基本以写作年代为序，但又略有错乱。可能译者没有过分考究。但是瑕不掩瑜，华兹生先生的英译本仍是收录杜诗较多的本子，且大体上反映了杜诗的风貌，因而我们乐于向英语读者推荐这个译本，也希望有更多的英语读者认识这位中国的伟大诗人。

最后还有一点要说明的是，杜诗流传的版本很多，异文也不少。此书的中文部分，参酌各本，择善而从，不一一注明。

2009. 4. 8



## Foreword to the Bilingual Edition

### I

Du Fu (712-770), alias Zimei, self-styled Shaoling Yelao, was born in Gongxian County of Henan (the present Gongyi City of Henan Province). In his youth, he traveled to Wu and Yue in the south and Qi and Zhao in the north, and failed in the imperial examinations. In 747 when he was 35 years old, he went to Chang'an, China's political centre at the time, and stayed there for ten years, holding a minor official position. He was taken prisoner during the rebellion of An Lushan and Shi Shiming and when he escaped to Fengxiang in Gangsu, he was nominated as the imperial advisor. As he was outspoken in his opinions, he was demoted to Huazhou as a secretary. He soon gave up his position and lived in Qinzhou, Tonggu and Chengdu successively. Afterwards recommended by Military Commander Yan Wu in Sichuan, he served under Yan Wu as an advisor and a secretary. In his late years, he left Sichuan and roamed from Hubei to Hunan, finally dying of illness in the boat from Changsha to Yueyang.

Born in a family of Confucian officials, Du Fu was well-edu-



cated from his early childhood and was deeply influenced by Confucianism. He called himself a Confucian scholar and expressed his political ambitions in his poems. For example, “I too thought myself quiet exceptional, fit at once to climb to high office. . .” (*Twenty-two Rhymes Presented to Assistant Secretary of the Left Wei*) He stuck to Confucianism all his life, only with flashes of Buddhist and Daoist contemplations when he was not in favor, but he was never depressed, always maintaining his concern for the society, for the country and for the people. His lofty ideals of life have won him a great fame and he has been considered one of the greatest poets in Chinese history.

## II

Over 1,400 extant poems by Du Fu have indisputably evidenced themselves as a peak in traditional Chinese literature through their profound contents and rich artistic merits.

One of the distinguished features, i. e. “entering the current affairs into the poems,” has earned for Du Fu’s poems the renown of “poetic history,” for they truthfully depict and reflect the social reality of the time. The age in which Du Fu lived is an age when the Tang Empire went from prosperity to decline. The rebellion of An Lushan and Shi Shiming, the corruption of the upper classes, the hardship of the country and the sufferings of the people are all reflected in his famous poems. Du Fu inherits the realistic tradi-



tion of the *Book of Odes*, the poems of Chu and the ballads in the Han dynasty and the Six Dynasties, and enriches the artistic expressions. For example, *Ballad of the War Wagons* reflects the hardship of the military service; *Three Officers* and *Three Farewells* reflect the damage brought about by the rebellion of An Lushan and Shi Shiming; *Ballad of the Beautiful Ladies* satirizes the luxurious life of Yang Guozhong and Yang Yuhuan. All these are poems that truthfully picture the historical events of the time, with *Three Officers* and *Three Farewells* making up for what is lacking in the official histories. The historical events under his pen have moved the people all through the generations. His other poems, e. g. *A Poem of Meditation*, *Northern Expedition* and *Watching Aunt Sun Waving the Sword*, are also a sort of poetic history, with narratives, comments and contemplations. *A Poem of Meditation* is more touching than a history book, as it is enshrouded in the atmosphere that the Tang Empire is soon to tumble down.

As a genius, Du Fu touches upon all the aspects of human life, with gems of poems covering social realities, natural sceneries, ancient relics, friendly relations, personal experiences, and birds and animals.

A touch of gloom marks Du Fu's poems, a profound gloom indeed.

As mentioned above, an important theme of Du Fu's poems is the worry for the world situation and an agony for human miseries. With his broad vision and minute observation, his indignation



penetrates into his poems. “Feeling the times, blossoms draw tears; hating separation, birds alarm the heart.” (*Spring Prospect*) “And north of the barrier mountains the fighting goes on—as I lean on the railing, tears stream down.” (*Climbing Yueyang Tower*)

According to the *Harvard Concordance to Du Fu's Poems* (1940), the word “grief” appears over 100 times in Du Fu's poems; the word “woe” appears 120 times; the word “decline” appears 130 times; the word “sorrow” appears 150 times. These words are employed to voice his melancholy in the turbulent times in face of the vast space and time and in face of the natural objects. The poems *Night in My Lodge* and *Ascending the Tower* are good examples.

Besides “gloom,” Du Fu's poems are marked by stylistic variations. In the present anthology (which contains less than a tenth part of his literary creations, *Officer Fang's Barbarian Steed* and *The Painted Hawk* give full play to his valiancy, *Eight Drinking Immortals* and *Drunken Song* give full play to his humour, *Composed at Random* and *Second Visit* give full play to his clarity, *Moving In* and *River Village* give full play to his leisure, and *Qinzhou* gives full play to his broad mind.

Du Fu is creative in the genres of his poems. His five-word poems in the ancient style inherit the strong points of the *yuefu* ballads and the Jian'an poems, alternate descriptions and commentaries, while his seven-word poems in the ancient style are



varied and colorful in themes and artistry. His five-word octaves, which comprise more than 600 poems, are short but not the least important, while his seven-word octaves, which comprise 160 poems, outnumber the total of the previous poems of this type. Du Fu makes great contribution to the genre of seven-word octaves in that he broadens the scope of themes and popularizes this genre. He also creates an alternate form of seven-word octaves and an alternate form of seven-word quatrains [ e. g. *Written at Random* (《漫兴》) in this anthology ]. His five-word long poems show his talent in handling this genre, with poems as long as 100 lines, while his seven-word long poems are his inventions. Du Fu is the only poet in making so many contributions to the various genres of Chinese poetry. What is more, Du Fu reaches the acme of Chinese poetry, for his pithy language, strict scansion, skillful words, resounding rhymes, natural images, and well-formed structures.

### III

The content and art of Du Fu's poems have nourished one generation of poets after another and exerted immense influence on the poetry of later generations. It is impossible to delve too deeply into this subject in this foreword.

The numerous researches on Du Fu and his poems are another evidence of his influence. There is even the saying that annota-



tors of Du Fu's poems surpass a thousand. The following are a few instances.

*Annotations of Du Fu's Poems by Nine Scholars* is edited by Guo Zhida in the Song dynasty, including the annotations by Wang Zhu, Song Qi, Wang Anshi, Huang Tingjian, Xue Mengfu, Du Tian, Bao Biao, Shi Yin and Zhao Yancai, and is regarded as "quite precise" by *The Imperial Catalogue of the Four Treasuries*, which forms the basis for the *Harvard Concordance to Du Fu's Poems*.

*Commentaries on Du Fu*, written by Wang Sishi in the Ming dynasty, comments on the contents of Du Fu's poems and makes artistic analysis.

*Annotations to Du Fu's Works* (also entitled *Qian Qianyi's Annotations to Du Fu's Poems*), written by Qian Qianyi in the Qing dynasty, offers annotations against the social background of Du Fu's poems.

*Detailed Annotations to Du Fu's Works* (also entitled *Detailed Annotations to Du Fu's Poems*), written by Qiu Zhao'ao in the Qing dynasty, is an influential book on Du Fu's poems with extensive quotations and explanations that seem to be too meticulous.

*Annotations to Du Fu's Poems*, written by Yang Lun in the Qing dynasty, is concise but helpful in appreciating the poems from the artistic perspective.

*Explanations of Du Fu's Poems*, written by Pu Qilong in the Qing dynasty, analyzes the themes and implications of Du Fu's



poems but seems far-fetched in places.

The works of such a great poet as Du Fu will naturally become a cultural heritage to be shared by people across the world.

Du Fu's poems were translated into Korean in the late 15th century (first edition in 1481 and second edition in 1622). In the imperial examinations in Korea, two fifths of the questions were set according to Du Fu's poems.

There are various translations of Du Fu's poems into Japanese. The Japanese Sinologist Yoshikawa Kōjirō sang high praise of Du Fu, saying that Du Fu's poems overlord the world, surpassing those by Goethe and Dante. Another Japanese Sinologist Suzuki Torao (1878-1963) made a complete translation of Du Fu's poems.

France ranks among one of the earliest countries that translates traditional Chinese poems. The Sinologist and Jesuit priest Jean Joseph Amiot translated the Tang poems including Du Fu's poems into French at the turn of the 19th century. Franz Toussaint published *La Flute de Jade* in 1920, containing the poems by Du Fu and 67 other Chinese poets and having been translated into many other European languages. Besides, Du Fu's poems have been collected in many anthologies of traditional Chinese poems in French.

In Britain, Seame Jennynne and William Jones translated some Chinese poems into English in the 18th century. Later, John Francis Davis (1795-1890), Herbert Allen Giles (1845-1935),





Arthur Waley (1889-1966) and many others had translated Du Fu's poems into English. David Hawkes published *A Little Primer of Tu Fu* in 1978. The 35 poems from the well-known Chinese anthology *Three Hundred Tang Poems* are each accompanied by a detailed and lively explication of form, historical background and meaning. At the same time, inclusion of Chinese characters, romanization, and both literal and prose translations offer the general reader or beginning language student the rare chance to savor the poet's art first hand.

The Austrian Sinologist Erwin Ritter von Zach (1872-1942) published Du Fu's poems in German in *The Journal of the American Oriental Society* and later published these poems in book form.

Traditional Chinese poems have been translated in Italy since the beginning of the 20th century. In 1980, Vilma Costantinis published a collection of 120 poems by Du Fu, Li Bai and Bai Juyi with commentaries in the preface.

Du Fu's poems have been held in high esteem in Russia, with translations published in 1955, 1962, 1967 and 1984, A. I. ИЮВИЧ being one of the translators.

Du Fu's poems have exerted great influence in the United States. The Contemporary poet Robert Blay says that if we are to write good poems, we must learn from traditional Chinese poets, especially from Tao Qian, Du Fu and others. Translations of Du Fu's poems include A. R. Davis' *Tu Fu* (1971), Arthur Cooper's



*Li Po and Tu Fu: Poems Selected and Translated with an Introduction and Notes* (1973), William Hung's *Tu Fu: China's Greatest Poet* (1952), David Hinton's *Selected Poems of Tu Fu* (1989), Burton Watson's *The Selected Poems of Du Fu* (2003) and David Young's *Du Fu: A Life in Poetry* (2008).

The present English edition of Du Fu's poem in *Library of Chinese Classics* is Burton Watson's version. Burton Watson is an excellent contemporary translator. He has selected 135 poems for this collection, including those for which Du Fu is best remembered and several lesser known works that deserve to be rediscovered. They are presented in chronological order, each with notes on the circumstances of its composition and explanatory footnotes where necessary. His selection is a one-of-the-best although it shows some bias in its selection and does not follow the chronological order very accurately. We are happy to recommend it to the reading public so that more English readers will get to know Du Fu—the great poet. Finally, we must add a word about the Chinese version. There have been variant versions of Du Fu's poems. We have made our own choice of the wording.

Xiong Zhiqi

Translated by Wang Rongpei

## Introduction

Du Fu, the elicitor of superlatives! The Chinese scholar William Hung, who wrote the definitive book in English on Du Fu's life and poetry, gave it the unequivocal title *Tu Fu: China's Greatest Poet*. Professor Stephen Owen of Harvard, the leading American authority on Chinese poetry of the Tang period, enthusiastically seconds Hung's estimation of Du Fu. And the American poet and translator Kenneth Rexroth, who rendered some of Du Fu's poems in English, goes a step further to declare him "the greatest non-epic, non-dramatic poet who has survived in any language."<sup>1</sup>

My aim in the present volume is neither to question nor to confirm these judgments, but simply to present a selection of Du Fu's works in translation, though later in this introduction I would like to examine some of the reasons that could be cited to support these claims to greatness. Some fourteen hundred poems attributed to Du Fu have come down to us, but his fame rests mainly on one hundred or so poems that have been widely admired, commented on, and anthologized over the centuries by the Chinese and other peoples within the Chinese cultural sphere. My own selection of 135 poems includes translations of most of the poems for which he is best remembered along with a few less famous works that I be-





lieve deserve notice.

Du Fu's poetry was profoundly influenced by the troubled times in which he lived; before considering the poems themselves, it may therefore be helpful to give a brief summary of his life. Little biographical information regarding him has survived, and almost all of what we know of him comes from his own poems and other writings. A chronological outline of his life will be found on pp. vii-viii, but even some of the data listed there is conjectural in nature, as is much of the dating of the poems in my selection.

Du Fu came from a distinguished family of literati. His most illustrious ancestor was Du Yu (222-284), a literary leader and Confucian scholar who compiled an authoritative commentary on the *Zuozhuan*, one of the most important historical texts of the Confucian canon. Also of prominence was his paternal grandfather, Du Shenyan (d. 708), an official in the Tang bureaucracy and one of the outstanding poets of his time. Du Fu's father, Du Xian, also held an official post, though a minor one, and little is known of him. Du Fu's mother, whose surname was Cui, apparently died shortly after he was born; the younger brothers and sister he mentions in his poetry are almost certainly children by a second wife.

Du Fu, whose courtesy name was Zimei, was born in 712, one year before Emperor Xuanzong came to the throne. His place of birth is uncertain, but it is usually listed as Gongxian County in



the Luoyang area of Henan. Almost nothing is known of his early years, though being the son of a family that for successive generations had held official posts, he no doubt worked diligently to prepare for the civil service examinations that opened the way to such offices. This involved intensive study and memorization of the classics of Confucianism, the standard histories, and literary works such as the voluminous *Wenxuan*, or *Literary Anthology*. He was well versed in Daoist literature as well and, as he himself mentions, at some point studied the doctrines of the Chan, school of Buddhism and acquired a considerable knowledge of Buddhist writings.<sup>2</sup>

In his poems he refers to two periods of youthful wandering, the first, probably in the years around 731-735, to Jiangsu and the seacoast area of Zhejiang, and the second some years later to the northeast region of Shandong and Hebei. At some point, probably in 735, he went to the capital, Chang'an, to take the examination for *jinshi*, or Presented Scholar. Much to the bafflement of scholars and admirers of later generations, he failed to make a passing grade.

During his youthful years in the Luoyang area, when he was already very active as a poet, he became acquainted with a number of well-known literary figures, among them the famous poet Li Bo or Li Bai (701-762), whom he greatly admired. In several poems in my selection, Du Fu recalls their period of friendship and expresses concern over the older poet's welfare.



In 746 Du Fu left the Luoyang area and moved to Chang'an, living in a suburb of the city called Duling, where a number of families with the Du surname were located. Apparently he hoped to advance his chances for an official appointment by showing his writings to influential people in the capital and appealing to them for help, a common practice at the time among young men with literary and political ambitions. In a poem presented to one such patron, he describes himself wryly as "mornings rapping at some rich fellow's gate, /evenings trailing the dust of his fat horses." (See poem 5.)

The period of Du Fu's youth, which corresponds to the early years of Emperor Xuanzong's reign, was one of widespread peace and prosperity, a golden age in the annals of Chinese culture. But by the time he moved to Chang'an, there were clear signs of impending disaster. The Chinese armies garrisoning the borders were, in many areas, pushing to extend the territory under Tang control and meeting with strong resistance from non-Chinese peoples such as the Turks, Tibetans, and Uighurs (Uigurs). The government resorted to harsh impressment measures to keep the armies fully manned, taking peasants from their homes and families for long periods of military duty.

Emperor Xuanzong, earlier so zealous in his attention to state affairs, had become concerned largely with two things: a Daoist-inspired pursuit of immortal life and his infatuation with a concubine named Yang Guifei. He showered wealth and honor on her



and her relatives, the Yang family. Increasingly, he left political matters to his chief minister Li Linfu and, after Li's death in 753, to his successor Yang Guozhong, a cousin of Yang Guifei. Many of Du Fu's best-known works from this period deal with these problems—depictions, often in ballad form, of the sufferings caused by the impressment of men into military service or satires on the favors enjoyed by members of the Yang family.

In 747, shortly after his move to Chang'an, Du Fu had a second opportunity to try his luck at the civil service examinations when Emperor Xuanzong held a special exam for the purpose of discovering unrecognized talent. However, the chief minister Li Linfu, sensing a possible threat to his power, saw to it that all the candidates were given failing grades. It was not until late in 755 that Du Fu was at last assigned to a post in the government, a minor one in the palace of the Heir Apparent. The time was not auspicious for anyone joining the ranks of the Tang bureaucracy.

Toward the close of 755, An Lushan, a trusted military leader whose base of power was in the northeast in the area of present-day Beijing, initiated a revolt, ostensibly for the purpose of punishing the evil chief minister Yang Guozhong. His forces, sweeping west, captured Luoyang, the Eastern Capital, and before long they were pressing toward Chang'an. In the sixth month of 756, Emperor Xuanzong and his court fled the city by a western gate. When they reached Mawei, a little west of the capital, the soldiers escorting them killed Yang Guozhong and refused to go far-



ther until the emperor agreed to have Yang Guifei put to death as well. The emperor reluctantly gave his consent, and she was taken to a nearby Buddhist chapel and strangled. Before retreating to safety in Sichuan, the emperor relinquished the throne to the Heir Apparent, who became Emperor Suzong and set up a temporary government in a remote area northwest of Chang'an.

Du Fu, by now married and the father of a family, fled the capital around the same time, journeying north, as he describes in the poem "Ballad of Pengya," and eventually he settled his wife and children at a place called Qiang Village in Fuzhou. He then attempted to make his way to the new emperor's headquarters, but was captured by the rebels and returned to Chang'an, where he was held under surveillance. In the fourth month of 757, he managed to escape from Chang'an and reach Fengxiang, west of the capital, where Emperor Suzong had established his court. As a reward for his loyalty, he was assigned the office of Reminder, an advisory post. In this post he quickly incurred the ruler's displeasure by speaking out in defense of Fang Guan, a high official and old friend who had fallen out of favor. He was relieved of his duties and ordered to join his family in Fuzhou. He later returned to Chang'an, once more in government hands, and was restored to the post of Reminder.

Du Fu apparently continued to do too much "reminding" for the emperor's taste, and, in the sixth month of 758, he was transferred to a lesser post in Huazhou east of the capital. Late in the





year he made what was to be his last trip back to the Luoyang area that he called home.

By this time, An Lushan, the instigator of the rebellion, had been murdered by his son, but the rebel forces continued to pose a threat and contributed to the highly unstable condition of the empire. In the seventh month of 759, because of famine in the immediate area, Du Fu resigned his post in Huazhou and traveled west with his family in search of food, stopping for a time in Qinzhou, an outpost on the western frontier of the empire in present-day Gansu, then moving to Tonggu, and finally to Chengdu, a large city in the region of Shu, or Sichuan.

During much of his life, Du Fu seems to have been torn between two conflicting ideals: a high-minded and admirably Confucian desire to serve his sovereign and country as a member of the bureaucracy and a more Daoist-oriented wish to retire to the countryside to a life of rustic seclusion. He alludes frequently to both ideals in his poetry. During his stay in the Chengdu area, he was, to some extent, able to realize the second of these ideals, and the years he spent there were, relatively speaking, among the most peaceful and happy of his adult life.

Through friends, some highly placed in the local government, he and his family were able in 760 to settle in a small "thatched hall" on Wash-Flower Stream west of Chengdu, a site that has now become a veritable national shrine to the poet's memory. Because of a local rebellion, he was obliged to leave his



house in 762 and take refuge in nearby Zizhou, but he returned to Chengdu in 764. For a brief time thereafter, he held a post in the local government but soon retired because of poor health.

The following year, 765, he left Chengdu and began traveling east down the Yangzi (Yangtze) River, stopping at various points along the way. The many poems preserved from this period of his Life allow a more accurate reconstruction of his movements, as is evident from the headings of poems in my selection. By 769 he had journeyed down the Yangzi as far as Lake Dongting in Hunan.

His health, never robust, was failing badly—he suffered from a lung ailment, probably asthma, was deaf in one ear, unsteady on his feet, and troubled by weakening eyesight. Plagued by constant worries over how to provide for his family, his declining health, and the uncertain fate of the nation, he often sinks into a mood of unrelieved melancholy in the poetry of these last years, constantly returning to themes of remoteness, of being far from “home.” Late 770 found him in Tanzhou, the modern city of Changsha, southeast of Lake Dongting, still hoping to journey on to his homeland in the east, when death brought an end to his trials.

William Hung, in the work mentioned earlier, writes of Du Fu that he “appeared to be a filial son, an affectionate father, a generous brother, a faithful husband, a loyal friend, a dutiful official, and a patriotic subject.”<sup>3</sup> Given all these sterling quali-



ties, and the close links that traditional Chinese thought posits between art and morality, the implication is that he could hardly be anything but a great poet as well. The picture we have of him derives almost entirely from his own poems. Yet so convincing is that picture in its air of profound moral sincerity that, at least from Song times on, admiration for the poet's character has constantly complemented, and at times has even outshone, the literary evaluation of his writings. It is this admiration that is largely responsible for a twelfth-century critic's crowning him with the title *shisheng*, or "Sage of Poetry," making him the artistic counterpart of Confucius himself.

A second epithet frequently bestowed on him, that of "poet-historian," is similarly based less on literary considerations than on the large amount of historical information contained in his works. From the poems we acquire invaluable insights into the unsettled times in which he lived and vivid, detailed data regarding the lives of the common people, information of a kind seldom found in the officially compiled histories of the era.

Regarding the purely literary qualities that have won Du Fu's work its place of unrivaled eminence, we may note first the great variety of poetic forms in which he excelled. As one recent critic states, Du Fu "employed every prosodic form available to the Tang poet and, depending upon the state in which he found a particular prosodic form, either made outstanding advances or contributed outstanding examples."<sup>4</sup>



My selection is limited to translations of his works in *shi* form, both the “old style” *shi* forms and the “new style,” or tonally regulated forms. The latter include the four-line *jueju*, the eight-line *lushi*, or regulated verse, and the *pailü*, which is unrestricted in length. (The form and line length of the original are noted in the headings to my translations.) Du Fu also wrote works in the *fu*, or rhyme-prose form, though his efforts in this form are seldom read today.

In addition to its prosodic breadth and variety, Du Fu’s work is distinguished by a similarly impressive breadth of subject matter. Something of this vast thematic variety is reflected in my selection, and further selections could be added to provide even more striking evidence of the multitude of themes he treated.

A corresponding richness is observable in Du Fu’s language, which ranges from the elegant, highly polished diction of earlier court poetry to colloquialisms of the poet’s own day, from language that is studied and heavily allusive to that which is startlingly direct and “unpoetic.” He demonstrated that virtually all levels of language could be accommodated in the poem.

The thematic and stylistic comprehensiveness of Du Fu’s work was one of the first qualities to be noted by critics. In 813, Du Fu’s grandson, Du Siye, requested that Yuan Zhen, a distinguished poet and official, write an epitaph for his grandfather’s grave. In Yuan’s brief account of Du Fu, the earliest outside source we have on the poet, he singled out this quality in Du Fu’s



work for particular praise, noting that “he commanded all the traits displayed by poets of old, and could do all the things that present-day poets do only singly.”

Another salient feature of Du Fu’s work is the inventiveness with which he wielded this masterful command of varied themes and styles. Thus, in a certain poetic form he treated subjects that had previously been thought suitable only for other forms, or he combined within a single form a variety of subjects that would earlier have been regarded as incompatible. His style and diction likewise show a chameleon-like tendency, contributing to what Stephen Owen has characterized as Du Fu’s “shifting style.”<sup>5</sup> So great was Du Fu’s command of the language and literary tradition that he could elect to write on any theme or in any manner he chose, combining themes or styles in ways that were wholly without precedent. Even in the difficult closing years of his life, his work is tirelessly innovative and experimental. His expressed aim was to do what had never been done. As he states in a poem written in Chengdu in 761 (not included in my selection), “Perverse by nature, I’m addicted to fine lines; / if my words don’t startle people, I won’t give up till I die.”<sup>6</sup>

One other characteristic of Du Fu’s poetry merits particular notice, since it helps to explain the perennial appeal of his work—his realism. I will illustrate this by quoting a famous passage from a long poem entitled “Northern Journey,” not included in my selection. The poem was written in the fall of 757, when



Du Fu, having incurred Emperor Suzong's displeasure, was ordered to leave the court and travel north to Fuzhou, where his wife and children were living. The poem, 140 lines long, shifts back and forth between the political concerns of the entire nation and Du Fu's private family affairs. The following section, lines 59 to 88, shows us the scene that confronted the poet when, after a long and difficult journey, he finally reached the country house where his family was lodging:

A year gone by, arriving at my thatched hut,  
wife and children, clothes a hundred patches;  
our cries mingle with the voice of the pines;  
the sad fountain joins our muffled sobbings.  
The little boy we've spoiled all his life,  
face paler, whiter than snow,  
sees his Papa, turns away in tears,  
dirty, grimy, feet with no socks.  
By the bed my two young girls,  
mended skirts scarcely covering their knees,  
a sea scene, the waves chopped up,  
bits of old embroidery sewn all askew,  
marine monster, purple phoenix  
topsy-turvy on their coarse cloth jackets.  
Old husband, feeling somewhat poorly,  
vomiting, runny bowels, several days laid up in bed.  
But don't think I've no fabrics in my bag



to save you from the shakes and shivers of the cold!  
Here's powder and mascara—I'll unwrap them—  
quilts, coverlets—I'll lay them all out.  
The face of my thin wife regains its brightness;  
my silly girls start in combing their own hair.  
They copy all the things they've seen their mother do,  
step by step applying morning makeup,  
taking their time, smearing on rouge and powder—  
how ridiculous—drawing eyebrows this wide!  
But I'm home alive, facing my young ones,  
and it's as though I've forgotten about hunger and thirst.  
They keep asking questions, outdoing each other in pulling my  
beard,  
but who'd have the heart to scold them?

It would appear that at this time Du Fu had four children, two girls and two boys. The “little boy” in line 5 of my excerpt is probably his younger son, Pony Boy. It seems odd that he should turn away from his father in tears, though perhaps through some misunderstanding he thinks he has done something for which he will be scolded. The “old husband” in line 15 is, of course, Du Fu himself.

The whole passage, replete with closely observed details, has two sections of particular note. The first is Du Fu's description of the clothes worn by the girls, garments that Du Fu's wife has mended with patches cut from an old and probably expensive



piece of embroidery. The embroidery originally depicted a seascape complete with the mythical sea monster called Tian Hu and a purple phoenix or purple phoenixes. But the pattern has now been cut to bits and sewn so that the figures are askew or upside down. The crazy quilt effect that results perfectly reflects the disruption and chaos that have descended on the Du family, and by extension on the whole of Tang China. The second notable section occurs in the latter part, when the little girls, seizing on the powder and mascara that the poet has brought for his wife, proceed to plaster their faces with it. The mood here is all gaiety and mad-cap humor, a brief moment of brightness before the poem quits the domestic scene and turns to solemn concerns of national policy.

Earlier poets allowed brief glimpses of their family life or their everyday activities in their poems, but they wrote nothing to compare to the concreteness and intimacy of such passages as this by Du Fu. They are among the most memorable and widely quoted in all his works and exercised an inestimable influence on the Chinese poetic tradition of later times.

A perceptive person reading Du Fu in the original would presumably be able to respond to the excellent qualities outlined above and appreciate the true literary worth of his work. But what of a person reading Du Fu in translation? Regrettably, Du Fu has long been known as the despair of translators; as David Hawkes observes dryly, “his poems do not as a rule come through very well in translation.”<sup>7</sup> Part of the difficulty stems from the “shift-





ing style” mentioned earlier. A poem may capture one mood for a time and then quite abruptly veer into another, may open with a vision of all-encompassing grandeur but close on a relatively narrow and solipsistic note. Du Fu’s acute sensitivity seems to keep his attention darting from one aspect of a scene to another, and his emotional response shifts accordingly.

He was especially skillful in his use of the eight-line *liushi*, or regulated verse form, and many examples will be found in my selection. The form demands strict verbal parallelism in the second and third couplets, and the deft and highly original manner in which Du Fu shapes these parallelisms is one of the wonders of his art. But such parallelisms—and they are used extensively in his poems in other prosodic forms as well—often tend to sound forced or mechanical in translation, particularly as modern poetry so seldom employs rhetorical devices of this sort. Moreover, poems in regulated verse form are frequently so compressed in language and so devoid of syntax that in translation they seem almost clogged with images, static and unflowing. Some translators attempt to lessen the studied effect of parallelisms by deliberately blurring their symmetry, or they try to relieve the monotony of end-stopped lines by converting some into run-on lines. Though I can understand the impulse behind such procedures, in my own translations I have endeavored in most cases to stick as closely as possible to the wording and lineation of the original.

There are many different ways to approach the problems in-



volved in translating Du Fu, which is why we need as many different translations as possible. Any attempt to achieve a translation of his poetry that is wholly satisfactory is an exercise in the impossible, yet even a translation that is only partially successful seems eminently worth striving for. Such is the power and appeal of Du Fu's work and the importance of its place in world literature that translators, myself among them, will always keep trying.

Some of these translations appeared earlier in my *Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry* (1984) and *Renditions: A Chinese-English Translation Magazine*, no. 55 (spring 2001) and are reproduced here in slightly revised form.

### Notes:

1. William Hung, *Tu Fu: China's Greatest Poet* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952). Stephen Owen, *The Great Age of Chinese Poetry: The High T'ang* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 183. Kenneth Rexroth, *One Hundred Poems from the Chinese* (New York: New Directions, 1956), p. 135. In my earlier works on Chinese literature I have used the Wade-Giles system of romanization, which renders the great poet's name as Tu Fu. In this volume I switch to the *pinyin* system now used in China, which renders his name as Du Fu.

2. In an early poem entitled "Night: Hearing Xu Eleven Recite Poems; in Admiration I Wrote This," Du Fu says, "I too made Can and Ke my teachers." Can and Ke are Huike and Sengcan, second and third patriarchs of the Chinese Chan school of Buddhism. These men lived in the sixth century, so Du Fu must mean either that he studied the writings attributed to them or that he studied with men who were successors to their teaching line.

3. William Hung, *Tu Fu*, p. 282.
4. Eva Shan Chou, *Reconsidering Tu Fu: Literary Greatness and Cultural Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 56.
5. Stephen Owen, *Chinese Poetry*, p. 192.
6. In a poem entitled "Along the River, Finding Its Waters as Powerful as an Ocean, Which Led to These Brief Remarks."
7. David Hawkes, *A Little Primer of Tu Fu* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. ix.



木工部

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杜 甫 (712—770)

Du Fu (712—770 )



## 夜宴左氏庄

风林纤月落，  
衣露净琴张。  
暗水流花径，  
春星带草堂。  
检书烧烛短，  
看剑引杯长。  
诗罢闻吴咏，  
扁舟意不忘。



## Evening Banquet at Mr. Zuo's Villa

(5-character regulated verse. The date and location of the poem are uncertain, as is the identity of Mr. Zuo.)

Wind-tossed trees, a slim moon setting,  
 robes dew-damp, the clear tuning of a *qin*<sup>①</sup>;  
 hidden waters flow by blossomed pathways,  
 spring stars encircle the thatched hall.  
 We examine books till the candles burn low,  
 admire swords, leisurely sipping wine,  
 then, poems done, listen to songs of Wu—  
 never will I forget my lone boat travels there!<sup>②</sup>

① The *qin* is a horizontal stringed instrument like a zither or Japanese *koto*.

② Du Fu is recalling his youthful wanderings in the region of Wu on the southeast coast. Throughout his poetry, the boat is a powerful symbol of freedom and escape.



## 房兵曹胡马诗

胡马大宛名，  
锋棱瘦骨成。  
竹批双耳峻，  
风入四蹄轻。  
所向无空阔，  
真堪托死生。  
骁腾有如此，  
万里可横行。

## Officer Fang's Barbarian Steed

(5-ch. regulated verse, around 741. Ferghana in Central Asia was renowned for its fine horses. )

Barbarian steed, pride of Ferghana,  
all jags and angles, well-knit bones;  
two ears cocked, like bamboo tubes split sideways;  
four hoofs fleet, as though buoyed on the wind.  
Wherever headed, no distance too challenging,  
fit indeed for a life-or-death charge.  
With a mount superlative as this,  
ten-thousand-mile sorties are at your command!





## 画鹰

素练风霜起，  
苍鹰画作殊。  
捩身思狡兔，  
侧目似愁胡。  
绦镞光堪擿，  
轩楹势可呼。  
何当击凡鸟，  
毛血洒平芜。

## The Painted Hawk

(5-ch. regulated verse, probably around 742.)

Wind and frost swirl up from the white silk surface,  
so superb, this painting of the gray hawk!  
Shoulders hunched, he schemes to outwit the wily rabbit;  
peers to one side like a vexed barbarian.  
Foot cord and ring, a gleam bright enough to grasp;  
by pillar and eaves, poised to come if you should call.  
When will he swoop down on those lesser birds,  
feathers and blood splattered over the barren plain?





## 春日忆李白

白也诗无敌，  
飘然思不群。  
清新庾开府，  
俊逸鲍参军。  
渭北春天树，  
江东日暮云。  
何时一尊酒，  
重与细论文。





## On a Spring Day Thinking of Li Bai

(5-ch. regulated verse; written around 746, when Du Fu was in Chang'an near the Wei River and Li Bai was in the region of Wu southeast of the Yangzi.)

Li Bai—poems unrivaled,  
 thought soaring airborne, never banal;  
 the freshness, newness of Yu the Commander,  
 the rare excellence of Adjutant Bao.<sup>①</sup>  
 Here by the northern Wei, springtime trees;  
 east of the Yangzi, clouds at the close of day—  
 when will we share a cask of wine,  
 once more debate the subtleties of the written word?

---

① Yu Xin (513-581), who held the title of Commander Unequaled in Honor, and Bao Zhao (414-466), who held a military post late in life, were two of the most distinguished poets of the period preceding the Tang.



## 奉赠韦左丞丈二十二韵

纨袴不饿死，  
儒冠多误身。  
丈人试静听，  
贱子请具陈。  
甫昔少年日，  
早充观国宾。  
读书破万卷，  
下笔如有神。



## Twenty-two Rhymes Presented to Assistant Secretary of the Left Wei

(5-ch. old style, written probably in 748 or 749, when Du Fu was in Chang'an, and presented to Wei Ji, an eminent official and litterateur who held the post of Assistant Secretary of the Left in the Department of State Affairs. Du Fu's family had been acquainted with the Wei family for several generations, and Du Fu himself, as the poem indicates, enjoyed the favor and patronage of Wei Ji. While thanking Wei Ji for his support and lamenting his own unworthiness, Du Fu is clearly hinting at his desire for continued patronage, though the close of the poem pictures him as ready to quit the capital in despair. The poem offers an invaluable insight into Du Fu's personality and ambitions—his immense self-confidence, here humorously expressed but at times bordering on arrogance; his longing for official position and the lofty goals he hoped to achieve thereby; and the intense frustration he felt over his inability to pass the exam and get ahead in the world. )

Those in silk underpants rarely die of hunger,  
but a scholar's cap can bring its wearer much mishap.  
Kind sir, please listen attentively  
while a humble man states his case.  
In the past, when I was still young,  
already chosen a candidate for the exam,  
reading books, I polished off ten thousand volumes,



赋料扬雄敌，  
诗看子建亲。  
李邕求识面，  
王翰愿卜邻。  
自谓颇挺出，  
立登要路津。  
致君尧舜上，  
再使风俗淳。  
此意竟萧条，  
行歌非隐沦。  
骑驴三十载，  
旅食京华春。  
朝扣富儿门，  
暮随肥马尘。  
残杯与冷炙，  
到处潜悲辛。  
主上顷见征，  
欵然欲求伸。



wielded my writing brush like a god,  
in rhyme-prose hailed the rival of Yang Xiong,  
in poetry rated akin to Cao Zhi;  
Li Yong desired to make my acquaintance,  
Wang Han begged to move in next door.<sup>①</sup>  
I too thought myself quite exceptional,  
fit at once to climb to high office,  
to lift my ruler higher than Yao and Shun,  
restore the purity of the people's ways.  
Those hopes ended in bleak despair,  
though I go on singing, no hider from the world.<sup>②</sup>  
Thirty years astride a donkey,  
I take what there is to eat in the springtime capital,  
mornings rapping at some rich fellow's gate,  
evenings trailing the dust of his fat horses.  
Leftover wine, a bit of cold roast,  
and everywhere this sorrow I bear in silence.  
Not long ago the sovereign held a levy;  
suddenly here was my chance for advancement!<sup>③</sup>

① Yang Xiong (53 B. C. E. -18 C. E. ) was famous for his works in the *fu* or rhyme-prose form, Cao Zhi (192-232) for his poems in the *shi* form. Li Yong and Wang Han were eminent literary figures in Du Fu's father's generation.

② Meaning uncertain; perhaps he is saying that, though he writes songs, he is not a recluse like the madman Jie Yu of Confucius' time, who sang prophetic songs.

③ In 747 Emperor Xuanzong held a special exam for candidates for official position, but Du Fu and all the others who took it were flunked through the machinations of the chief minister, Li Linfu.



青冥却垂翅，  
蹭蹬无纵鳞。  
甚愧丈人厚，  
甚知丈人真。  
每于百僚上，  
猥诵佳句新。  
窃效贡公喜，  
难甘原宪贫。  
焉能心怏怏，  
只是走踈踈？  
今欲东入海，  
即将西去秦。  
尚怜终南山，  
回首清渭滨。  
常拟报一饭，  
况怀辞大臣。  
白鸥没浩荡，  
万里谁能驯？



But in the blue sky my wings failed me;  
 I couldn't swim as fast as others in the shoal,  
 so ashamed to betray your generosity,  
 so certain, however, that you truly understand.  
 Always among the host of officials  
 you deign to recite the newest of my fine lines.  
 Like Gong Yu, I dare to delight in a friend's success,  
 but find it hard to endure Yuan Xian's poverty.<sup>①</sup>  
 How, with a mind so darkly downcast,  
 can I go on merely hopping this way and that?  
 My wish now is to retire to eastern seas,  
 leave this western land of Qin,  
 though still I long for the Zhongnan hills,  
 turn my head toward the banks of the clear Wei.<sup>②</sup>  
 Always I try to repay even small favors;  
 how not regret parting from my high official friend?  
 White gull in the vastness of the waves—  
 ten thousand miles away, who can tame him?<sup>③</sup>

① When Gong Yu's friend Wang Yang was appointed to office, Gong Yu dusted off his hat, hopeful that he too would be appointed. Yuan Xian, a disciple of Confucius, was famous for the impoverished condition in which he lived.

② The Zhongnan hills south of Chang'an and the Wei River north of the capital are both regions noted for their natural beauty.

③ Some texts read "White gull lost in the vastness" for the next to the last line. Either way, in this final couplet Du Fu imagines himself in the "eastern seas," free at last from all care.



## 兵车行

车辚辚，马萧萧，  
行人弓箭各在腰。  
耶娘妻子走相送，  
尘埃不见咸阳桥。  
牵衣顿足拦道哭，  
哭声直上干云霄。  
道旁过者问行人，  
行人但云点行频。  
或从十五北防河，





## Ballad of the War Wagons

(7-ch. and 5-ch. , old style. Though the poem imitates the style of older works in *yuefu*, or ballad form, the title and content of the poem are original to Du Fu. Probably written around 750, the poem voices harsh criticism of the frequent recruiting of peasants to fight in Emperor Xuanzong's border wars. )

Rumble-rumble of wagons,  
 horses whinnying,  
 war-bound, bow and arrows at each man's waist,  
 fathers, mothers, wives, children running alongside,  
 dust so thick you can't see Xianyang Bridge,<sup>①</sup>  
 snatching at clothes, stumbling, blocking the road, wailing,  
 wailing voices that rise straight up to the clouds.  
 From the roadside, a passer-by, I question the recruits;  
 all they say is, "Again and again men drafted!  
 Some sent north at fifteen to guard the Yellow River,

---

① The bridge over the Wei River north of Chang'an; the men are being sent west, probably to the Tibetan border.



便至四十西营田。  
去时里正与裹头，  
归来头白还戍边。  
边庭流血成海水，  
武皇开边意未已。  
君不闻汉家山东二百州，  
千村万落生荆杞。  
纵有健妇把锄犁，  
禾生陇亩无东西。  
况复秦兵耐苦战，  
被驱不异犬与鸡。  
长者虽有问，  
役夫敢申恨？  
且如今年冬，  
未休关西卒。  
县官急索租，  
租税从何出？



at forty still manning garrison farms out west.  
 When they set out, the village headman tied their turbans for  
 them;  
 they come home white-haired and draw border duty again!  
 Border posts washed in blood, enough to make a sea,  
 but the Martial Sovereign's not yet done 'expanding his bor-  
 ders.' ①

You've never seen them?  
 Our Han land's two hundred districts east of the mountains,  
 a thousand villages, ten thousand hamlets gone to thorns and  
 brambles!

Sturdy wives can handle plow and mattock,  
 but the rows of grain never come up quite right.  
 What's worse, we men of Qin, renowned as tough fighters,  
 they herd us into the ranks like dogs and chickens! ②

You, sir, ask these questions,  
 but recruits like us hardly dare grumble out loud.  
 Still, in winter this year,  
 troops from here, West of the Pass, not yet disbanded,  
 officials started pressing for taxes—  
 tax payments—where would they come from?

① Martial Sovereign, the title of a Han dynasty ruler, is here a cover name for Emperor Xuanzong.

② "Men of Qin" are men from the area of the old state of Qin, the capital area "West of the Pass" mentioned four lines later.



信知生男恶，  
反是生女好。  
生女犹得嫁比邻，  
生男埋没随百草。  
君不见青海头，  
古来白骨无人收。  
新鬼烦冤旧鬼哭，  
天阴雨湿声啾啾。



Now you know why it's no good to have sons,  
 much better have daughters instead!  
 Sire a daughter, you can marry her to a neighbor;  
 sire a son and he ends buried under a hundred grasses.  
 You've never seen what it's like in Koko Nor?<sup>①</sup>  
 Years now, white bones no one gathers up,  
 new ghosts cursing fate, old ghosts wailing,  
 skies dark, drizzly rain, the whimpering, whimpering  
 voices.”

---

① Lake Koko Nor, Qinghai, or “Blue Sea” in Chinese, is on the border between the present-day Qinghai Province and the Tibet Autonomous Region.



## 前出塞

(九首选五首)

### 其一

戚戚去故里，  
悠悠赴交河。  
公家有程期，  
亡命婴祸罗。  
君已富土境，  
开边一何多。  
弃绝父母恩，  
吞声行负戈。



# On the Border

## FIRST SERIES, NINE POEMS

(5-ch. , old style; a series of poems written around 750 and dealing with the hardships of peasants recruited into the army and sent to take part in border wars. These are the first, second, fourth, sixth, and ninth in the series. )

### 1

With heavy hearts we leave the old village,  
 set out on the long, long road to Jiaohe. ①  
 Officials have fixed the date for our arrival—  
 run away and you're snared in the net of the law!  
 Ruler, already with such abundance of territory,  
 why all this opening up of borders?  
 We turn our backs on love of father and mother,  
 swallow our sobs, shoulder halberds, and move on.

---

① The region of Turpan in Xinjiang. The Tang forces were pushing into the area but meeting with strong resistance from Tibetan tribes.



## 其二

出门日已远，  
不受徒旅欺。  
骨肉恩岂断，  
男儿死无时。  
走马脱鞶头，  
手中挑青丝。  
捷下万仞冈，  
俯身试搴旗。





**2**

Far in the past, that day we left home;  
we've outgrown the gibes of fellow recruits.  
Not that loved ones are forgotten, our flesh and blood,  
but a man never knows when he must die.  
We race our horses, slipping the bit from their mouths,  
green reins slack in our hands;  
galloping down ten-thousand-yard slopes,  
hunched in the saddle, we practice how to seize the enemy  
flags.



#### 其四

送徒既有长，  
远戍亦有身。  
生死向前去，  
不劳吏怒嗔。  
路逢相识人，  
附书与六亲。  
哀哉两决绝，  
不复同苦辛。



**4**

We recruits have our commanders to send us off,  
but, bound for distant duty, we're people too!  
From here we go to face life or death—  
no cause for the officers to shout and scowl!  
Along the road I happened on someone I knew,  
handed him a letter to give to kinfolk:  
“Too bad, but we go different ways now,  
no longer to share the same hardships and pain.”



其六

挽弓当挽强，  
用箭当用长。  
射人先射马，  
擒贼先擒王。  
杀人亦有限，  
列国自有疆。  
苟能制侵陵，  
岂在多杀伤？



**6**

If you draw a bow, draw a strong one,  
if you use an arrow, use one that's long.  
If you want to shoot a man, shoot his horse first;  
if you want to seize the enemy, first seize their leader.  
But killing people has limits too;  
guarding a state, there're boundaries to be observed.  
So long as you manage to keep invaders out—  
what point in just seeing how many you can kill?



其九

从军十年余，  
能无分寸功？  
众人贵苟得，  
欲语羞雷同。  
中原有斗争，  
况在狄与戎？  
丈夫四方志，  
安可辞固穷？



9

Been in the army ten years and more,  
not a single medal to show for it!  
Others know how to talk up their exploits—  
I could talk too, but I'm ashamed to sound like them!  
Fighting on the Central Plain,  
on top of that, wars with border tribes.  
But a brave man faces in all four directions—  
how can he beg out when times get hard?



## 陪郑广文游何将军山林

(十首选二首)

### 其五

剩水沧江破，  
残山碣石开。  
绿垂风折笋，  
红绽雨肥梅。  
银甲弹箏用，  
金盘换酒来。  
兴移无洒扫，  
随意坐莓苔。





# Accompanying Mr. Zheng of the Broad Learning Academy on an Outing to General He's Mountain Villa

TEN POEMS

(5-ch. regulated verse; fifth and ninth in a series of poems written on an outing to the hills south of Chang'an, summer of 752 or 753. On Mr. Zheng, see poem 15.)

## 5

This stream of yours, as though borrowed from the blue  
Yangzi,  
this bit of mountain sliced off from the Jieshi rocks<sup>①</sup>:  
green dangling, bamboo shoots broken in the wind;  
red splitting open, plums fattened by the rain.  
A silver pick to strum the many-stringed zither,  
a golden fish exchanged for another round of wine<sup>②</sup>.  
We'll move as fancy takes us—don't bother to sweep—  
sit wherever we please on the mossy ground.

① A rock formation off the northern coast of China.

② The golden fish is a bag in the shape of a fish, worn as a girdle ornament by high officials. Someone at the party, presumably General He, has sent the bag to be used in exchange for more wine for the guests.



### 其九

床上书连屋，  
阶前树拂云。  
将军不好武，  
稚子总能文。  
醒酒微风入，  
听诗静夜分。  
绡衣挂萝薜，  
凉月白纷纷。



9

Beside the bed, books piled to the ceiling;  
in front of the steps, trees that brush the clouds:  
the General has no taste for military matters;  
his young sons all are skilled in literature.  
Sobering up from wine, we let in the gentle breeze,  
listen to poems, pass the quiet night.  
Thin summer cloaks are draped on the vines  
where cool moonlight, white, shimmers over them. ①

---

① Guests have shed their thin cloaks of kudzu fiber and hung them on the vines in the garden.



## 丽人行

三月三日天气新，  
长安水边多丽人。  
态浓意远淑且真，  
肌理细腻骨肉匀。  
绣罗衣裳照暮春，  
蹙金孔雀银麒麟。  
头上何所有？  
翠微匍叶垂鬓唇。  
背后何所见？



## Ballad of the Beautiful Ladies

(7-ch. old style, around 753; a veiled attack on the Yang family, relatives of Emperor Xuanzong's favorite, Yang Guifei. The gathering centers on her two elder sisters, enfeoffed as the ladies of Guo and Qin, respectively; the gentleman who arrives later is Yang Guifei's cousin Yang Guozhong, a high minister. The scene is the spring outing held on the third day of the third lunar month at Qujiang, or Winding River, a park in Chang'an.)

Third month, third day, in the air a breath of newness;  
 by Chang'an riverbanks the beautiful ladies crowd,  
 rich in charms, regal in bearing, well-bred, demure,  
 with clear sleek complexions, bone and flesh well-matched,  
 in figured gauze robes that shine in the late spring,  
 worked with golden peacocks, silver unicorns.

On their heads what do they wear?

Kingfisher glinting from hairpins that dangle by sidelock borders.

On their backs what do we see?



珠压腰褱稳称身。  
就中云幕椒房亲，  
赐名大国虢与秦。  
紫驼之峰出翠釜，  
水精之盘行素鳞。  
犀箸厌饫久未下，  
鸾刀缕切空纷纶。  
黄门飞鞚不动尘，  
御厨络绎送八珍。  
箫鼓哀吟感鬼神，  
宾从杂遝实要津。  
后来鞍马何逡巡？  
当轩下马入锦茵。  
杨花雪落覆白蘋，  
青鸟飞去衔红巾。  
炙手可热势绝伦，  
慎莫近前丞相嗔！



Pearls that weight the waistband, subtly set off the form.  
 Among them, kin of the lady of cloud curtains, pepper-  
 scented halls,<sup>①</sup>  
 granted titles to the great fiefs of Guo and Qin.  
 Humps of purple camel proffered from blue caldrons,  
 platters of crystal spread with slivers of rawfish; but ivory  
 chopsticks, sated, dip down no more,  
 and phoenix knives in vain hasten to cut and serve.  
 Yellow Gate horses ride swiftly, leaving the dust unstirred,  
 bearing from royal kitchens unending rare delights.  
 Plaintive notes of flute and drum, fit to move the gods,  
 throngs of guests with their lackeys, all of noblest rank;  
 and last, another rider with slow and measured stride  
 dismounts at the tent door, ascends the brocade carpet.  
 The snow of willow catkins blankets the white-flowered  
 reeds;  
 a bluebird flies off, in its bill a crimson kerchief.<sup>②</sup>  
 Where power is all-surpassing, fingers may be burned.  
 Take care, draw no closer to His Excellency's glare!

① Yang Guifei, who lived in a palace whose walls were scented with pepper.

② There were rumors that Yang Guozhong was carrying on an intrigue with the Lady of Guo, and this probably explains the reference to the bluebird, the traditional bearer of love notes. According to Chinese custom, sexual relations between persons of the same surname—in this case between cousins—was considered highly immoral.



## 醉时歌

赠广文馆博士郑虔

诸公衮衮登台省，  
广文先生官独冷。  
甲第纷纷厌梁肉，  
广文先生饭不足。  
先生有道出羲皇，  
先生有才过屈宋。  
德尊一代常坎坷，  
名垂万古知何用！





## Drunken Song ( Written for Zheng Qian, Doctor of the Broad Learning Academy )

(5-ch. and 7-ch. , old style, 754. Zheng Qian, a close friend of Du Fu, was a distinguished scholar, painter, and poet who, in 750, was appointed to the Broad Learning Academy, though apparently without a very liberal stipend. The “sojourner of Duling” is Du Fu, who at this time was living at Duling in the Chang’an suburbs. )

Clomp-clomp, the distinguished gentlemen climb to their  
high offices;  
Dr. Broad Learning in his academy, alone and cold.  
Gobble-gobble, in their mansions, weary of fine grain and  
roasts;  
Dr. Broad Learning, not even enough rice to eat.  
Doctor with a Way surpassing that of Fu Xi the illustrious,  
Doctor with talents to outshine Qu Yuan and Song Yu<sup>①</sup>,  
virtue to crown an age, yet always in distress,  
fame to hand down ten thousand years, but what good is

---

① Fu Xi is a mythical ruler of ancient times and a model of virtue. Qu Yuan and Song Yu are renowned poets of the third century B. C. E.



杜陵野客人更嗤，  
被褐短窄鬓如丝。  
日籴太仓五升米，  
时赴郑老同襟期。  
得钱即相觅，  
沽酒不复疑。  
忘形到尔汝，  
痛饮真吾师。  
清夜沉沉动春酌，  
灯前细雨檐花落。  
但觉高歌有鬼神，  
焉知饿死填沟壑？  
相如逸才亲涤器，  
子云识字终投阁。



that?

Out-of-office sojourner of Duling—people all laugh,  
coarse garments, skimpy, tight-fitting, sidelocks like floss,  
daily at the government granary buying five pecks of rice<sup>①</sup>,  
at times off to see his old comrade, Mr. Zheng.

If there's a bit of cash, we look each other up,  
spend it buying wine—never doubt that!

We forget formalities, use any language we please;  
he's my true teacher in heavy drinking!

As the still night deepens, we pour the spring wine,  
before the lamp, fine rain, blossoms falling by the eaves.

We're only aware that in our lofty songs gods and spirits  
join us;

who knows if we'll starve to death, end tumbled in a ditch?

Sima Xiangru, of rare talent, with his own hands washed the  
dishes;

Yang Xiong, learned in letters, finally threw himself from a  
tower. <sup>②</sup>

---

① A government granary opened in late 753 to relieve people troubled by the unseasonable rains of this and the following year.

② At one point in his life, the famed poet Sima Xiangru (179 B. C. E.-117 B. C. E) ran a wine shop and, leaving his wife to mind the counter, washed the dirty dishes at the community well. The poet, linguist, and official Yang Xiong (53 B. C. E. - 18 C. E. ), fearful of arrest for political reasons in the time of the usurper Wang Mang, threw himself from the upper story of the office where he was working.



先生早赋《归去来》，  
石田茅屋荒苍苔。  
儒术于我何有哉？  
孔丘盗跖俱尘埃。  
不须闻此意惨怆，  
生前相遇且衔杯。



Get busy, my friend, write your *Return*<sup>①</sup>;  
already your stony fields, your thatched hut grow rank with  
weeds!

The arts of Confucianism, what are they to us?  
Confucius and Robber Zhi, both now mere dust!  
But why heed such talk, let our thoughts grow gloomy?  
While we live and have each other, we'll lift the cup!

---

① When the poet Tao Qian (365-427) quit his official post and returned to private life on his farm, he wrote a prose piece entitled "The Return." Du Fu is urging Zheng Qian to follow Tao's example.



## 秋雨叹

(三首选二首)

### 其二

阑风长雨秋纷纷，  
四海八荒同一云。  
去马来牛不复辨，  
浊泾清渭何当分？  
禾头生耳黍穗黑，  
农夫田妇无消息。  
城中斗米换衾裯，  
相许宁论两相直！



## Lamenting Fall Rains

### THREE POEMS

(7-ch. old style; second and third poems in the series. In the fall of 754, the Chang'an area was plagued by heavy rains that fell for more than sixty days. The poems describe the rains and their disastrous effects and hint at the larger troubles facing the nation. )

#### 2

Blusterous winds, unending rains, autumn of chaos,  
the four seas, eight directions one solid cloud;  
horses going, cows coming, who can make out for sure?  
Muddy Jing River, clear Wei, how to tell them apart?  
From grain tips, ears sprouting, millet heads turned black;  
no word of how farmers, farmers' wives are faring.  
In the city, exchange a bed quilt, get one meager peck of  
grain—  
just agree, don't argue over which is worth more!



其三

长安布衣谁比数？  
反锁衡门守环堵。  
老夫不出长蓬蒿，  
稚子无忧走风雨。  
雨声飏飏催早寒，  
胡雁翅湿高飞难。  
秋来未曾见白日，  
泥污后土何时干？



(The “ plain-garbed man” in line 1 is Du Fu, who did not wear the robe of an official at this time but lived in Duling on the outskirts of Chang’an. By this time he was married and had a family. )

**3**

Plain-garbed man of Chang’an, who takes note of him?  
 Crude gate closed, he keeps to his country plot.  
 The father goes nowhere, mugwort and brambles grown rampant,  
 though his little ones, no worries, race around in wind and rain.  
 Rains hiss-hiss, bringing the cold on early;  
 from the north, wild geese, wings dampened, can barely fly on high.  
 Since start of autumn, not once have we seen the white sun.  
 This earth of ours, muddy, foul—when will it ever dry?





## 彭衙行

忆昔避贼初，  
北走经险艰。  
夜深彭衙道，  
月照白水山。  
尽室久徒步，  
逢人多厚颜。  
参差谷鸟吟，  
不见游子还。  
痴女饥咬我，  
啼畏虎狼闻。  
怀中掩其口，  
反侧声愈嗔。  
小儿强解事，  
故索苦李餐。



## Ballad of Pengya

(5-ch. , old style; an account of the journey made by Du Fu and his family in 756 when they fled north from Chang'an to avoid the rebel armies led by An Lushan. )

I remember when we first fled the rebels,  
 hurrying north over dangerous trails;  
 night deepened on Pengya Road,  
 the moon shone over White-Water Hills.  
 A whole family endlessly trudging,  
 begging without shame from the people we met;  
 valley birds sang, a jangle of soft voices;  
 we didn't see a single traveler returning.  
 The baby girl in her hunger bit me;  
 fearful that tigers or wolves would hear her cries,  
 I hugged her to my chest, muffling her mouth,  
 but she squirmed and wailed louder than before.  
 The little boy pretended he knew what was happening;  
 importantly he searched for sour plums to eat.



一旬半雷雨，  
泥泞相牵攀。  
既无御雨备，  
径滑衣又寒。  
有时经契阔，  
竟日数里间。  
野果充糗粮，  
卑枝成屋椽。  
早行石上水，  
暮宿天边烟。  
少留周家洼，  
欲出芦子关。  
故人有孙宰，  
高义薄曾云。  
延客已曛黑，  
张灯启重门。  
暖汤濯我足，  
剪纸招我魂。  
从此出妻孥，  
相视涕阑干。  
众雏烂熯睡，  
唤起沾盘餐。



Ten days, half in rain and thunder,  
 through mud and slime we pulled each other on.  
 There was no escaping the rain,  
 trails slick, clothes wet and clammy;  
 getting past the hardest places,  
 a whole day advanced us no more than three or four *li*.  
 Mountain fruits served for rations,  
 low-hung branches were our rafter and roof.  
 Mornings we traveled by rock-bedded streams,  
 evenings camped in mists that closed in the sky.  
 We stopped a little while at the marsh of Tongjia,  
 thinking to go out by Luzi Pass;  
 an old friend there, Sun Zai,  
 ideals higher than the piled-up clouds;  
 he came out to meet us as dusk turned to darkness,  
 called for torches, opening gate after gate,  
 heated water to wash our feet,  
 cut strips of paper to call back our souls. ①  
 Then his wife and children came;  
 seeing us, their tears fell in streams.  
 My little chicks had gone sound to sleep;  
 he called them to wake up and eat from his plate,

---

① Reference to an ancient rite used to call back the souls of travelers when they have been dispersed by fright. Commentators disagree whether in this case the rite was actually performed, or whether the allusion to it here is merely figurative.



誓将与夫子，  
永结为弟昆。  
遂空所坐堂，  
安居奉我欢。  
谁肯艰难际，  
豁达露心肝？  
别来岁月周，  
胡羯仍构患。  
何当有翅翎，  
飞去堕尔前？

said he would make a vow with me,  
the two of us to be brothers forever.  
At last he cleared the room where we sat,  
wished us good night, all he had at our command.  
Who is willing, in the hard, bleak times,  
to break open, lay bare his innermost heart?  
Parting from you, a year of months has rounded,  
Tartar tribes still plotting evil,  
and I think how it would be to have strong wings  
that would carry me away, set me down before you.





## 哀王孙

长安城头多白乌，  
夜飞延秋门上呼。  
又向人家啄大屋，  
屋底达官走避胡。  
金鞭断折九马死，  
骨肉不待同驰驱。  
腰下宝玦青珊瑚，  
可怜王孙泣路隅。





## Pitying the Prince

(7-ch. , old style; written in the autumn of 756 , when Du Fu was detained in Chang'an by the rebel forces. In the sixth month of that year, the rebels seized the city, looting and massacring many of the inhabitants, including members of the imperial family who had failed to escape in time. The white-headed crows in line 1 are omens of evil. Greeting Autumn Gate is the western gate by which Emperor Xuanzong and his entourage fled the city. )

Over Chang'an city walls white-headed crows  
 fly by night, crying above Greeting Autumn Gate.  
 Then they turn to homes of the populace, pecking at great  
     mansions,  
 mansions where high officials scramble to flee the barbari-  
     ans.  
 Golden whips broken, royal steeds dropping dead,  
 even flesh and blood of the ruler can't all get away in time.  
 How pathetic—costly disc of green coral at his waist,  
 this young prince standing weeping by the roadside!



问之不肯道姓名，  
但道困苦乞为奴。  
已经百日窜荆棘，  
身上无有完肌肤。  
高帝子孙尽隆准，  
龙种自与常人殊。  
豺狼在邑龙在野，  
王孙善保千金躯。  
不敢长语临交衢，  
且为王孙立斯须。  
昨夜东风吹血腥，  
东来橐驼满旧都。  
朔方健儿好身手，  
昔何勇锐今何愚？  
窃闻天子已传位，  
圣德北服南单于。



I ask, but he won't tell me his name or surname,  
says only that he's tired and in trouble, begs me to make him  
my servant.

A hundred days now, hiding in brambles and thorns,  
not a spot on his body where the flesh is untorn.

Sons and grandsons of the founder all have high-arched noses;

heirs of the Dragon line naturally differ from plain people.

"Wild cats and wolves in the city, dragons in the wilds,  
prince, take care of this body worth a thousand in gold!

I dare not talk for long, here at the crossroads,

but for your sake, prince, I stay a moment longer.

Last night, east winds blew rank with the smell of blood,  
from the east came camels crowding the old Capital. ①

Those Shuofang troops, good men all—

Why so keen, so brave in the past, so ineffectual now? ②

I've heard the Son of Heaven has relinquished his throne,

but in the north his sacred virtue has won the Uighur khan to

① The rebel army used camels for transport. Chang'an was called the "old Capital" because the emperor no longer resided there.

② Reference to the troops in the Ordos region north of Chang'an, who had earlier fought successfully against the Tibetans but in 756 suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of the rebel armies of An Lushan.



花门斲面请雪耻，  
慎勿出口他人狙。  
哀哉王孙慎勿疏，  
五陵佳气无时无。



our side. ①

The Uighurs slash their faces, beg to wipe out our disgrace.

Take care, say nothing of this—others wait in ambush!

I pity you, my prince—take care, do nothing rash!

Auspicious signs over the five imperial graves never for a moment cease.” ②

---

① Emperor Xuanzong's son and successor, Emperor Suzong, succeeded in enlisting the help of the Uighur khan and his troops in the struggle against the rebels. As a mark of their sincerity, the Uighurs slashed their faces when they vowed to aid the Han-Chinese ruler.

② The speaker is hinting that the Tang imperial line is not yet destined to come to an end. On auspicious signs over the imperial graves, see poem 23.



## 月 夜

今夜鄜州月，  
闺中只独看。  
遥怜小儿女，  
未解忆长安。  
香雾云鬟湿，  
清辉玉臂寒。  
何时倚虚幌，  
双照泪痕干。



## Moonlight Night

(5-ch. regulated verse; written in 756 when Du Fu was being held captive in Chang'an. His wife and family were in Fuzhou to the north.)

From her room in Fuzhou tonight,  
all alone she watches the moon.  
Far away, I grieve that her children  
can't understand why she thinks of Chang'an.  
Fragrant mist in her cloud hair damp,  
clear luence on her jade arms cold—  
when will we lean by chamber curtains  
and let it light the two of us, our tear stains dried?



## 对 雪

战哭多新鬼，  
愁吟独老翁。  
乱云低薄暮，  
急雪舞回风。  
瓢弃樽无绿，  
炉存火似红。  
数州消息断，  
愁坐正书空。





## Facing Snow

(5-ch, regulated verse; written late in 756, after the government forces had made an unsuccessful attempt to retake Chang'an from the rebel forces and suffered a disastrous defeat. The districts mentioned in line 7 are where Du Fu's family had taken refuge. )

On the battlefield wailing, so many new ghosts;  
 fashioning his poem of sorrow, lonely old man.  
 Ragged clouds press down in the fading twilight;  
 swift snow dances in the turning wind.  
 Gourd dipper discarded, no more green of wine in the cask;  
 stove beside me, still a flicker of red.  
 From nearby districts all word cut off,  
 grieving, I sit writing words in the empty air.



## 春 望

国破山河在，  
城春草木深。  
感时花溅泪，  
恨别鸟惊心。  
烽火连三月，  
家书抵万金。  
白头搔更短，  
浑欲不胜簪。



## Spring Prospect

(5-ch. regulated verse; written early in 757 when Du Fu was still a captive in Chang'an.)

The nation shattered, mountains and rivers remain;  
 city in spring, grass and trees burgeoning.  
 Feeling the times, blossoms draw tears;  
 hating separation, birds alarm the heart.  
 Beacon fires three months in succession,  
 a letter from home worth ten thousand in gold.  
 White hairs, fewer for the scratching,  
 soon too few to hold a hairpin up<sup>①</sup>.

---

① Men wore hairpins to keep their caps in place.



## 重经昭陵

草昧英雄起，  
讴歌历数归。  
风尘三尺剑，  
社稷一戎衣。  
翼亮贞文德，  
不承戢武威。  
圣图天广大，  
宗祀日光辉。  
陵寝盘空曲，  
熊罴守翠微。  
再窥松柏路，  
还见五云飞。



## Passing Zhaoling Again

[5-ch. *pailü*; Zhaoling was the mausoleum of Emperor Taizong (r. 627-48), the second ruler of the Tang and the one largely responsible for founding the dynasty. The first eight lines describe his rise to power. The five-hued clouds of the last line are an auspicious omen appearing in response to Taizong's greatness. The poem was written in 757, when the dynasty's fortunes seemed anything but glorious. ]

From rude darkness the heroes rose;  
 amid songs of praise, destiny chose him;  
 in wind and dust, his three-foot sword,  
 armor donned for the altars of the land;  
 wings to his father, pure in civil virtue;  
 heir of the great charge, wielder of war's might;  
 his holy vision wide and huge as heaven,  
 in service of the ancestors more radiant than the sun.  
 The mound-side chamber lies wrapped in empty slopes;  
 warriors, bearlike, guard the blue-green hill.  
 Once more I gaze up the pine and cypress road,  
 Watching five-hued clouds drift by.



## 大云寺赞公房四首

### 其一

心在水精域，  
衣沾春雨时。  
洞门尽徐步，  
深院果幽期。  
到扉开复闭，  
撞钟斋及兹。  
醍醐长发性，  
饮食过扶衰。  
把臂有多日，  
开怀无愧辞。  
黄鹂度结构，  
紫鸽下罽罃。



## Dayun Temple, Abbot Zan's Room

### FOUR POEMS

(5-ch. , old style; Dayun Temple was in the southwestern sector of Chang'an. The poems were probably written in 757 while Du Fu was being held captive by the rebel government in Chang'an, his moves carefully watched in case he tried to escape to the loyalist forces, as in fact he did later in the year. Abbot Zan's full name is unknown. )

#### 1

My mind in a realm of pure crystal,  
 clothes dampening in springtime rain,  
 I walk slowly through a succession of gateways,  
 to the inner garden and its sequestered meeting.  
 Doors open and close just as I reach them,  
 a bell strikes, hour for the monks' meal.  
 This ghee gives lasting nourishment to innate nature,  
 this food and drink support a faltering body.  
 Many days the Abbot and I've been arm-in-arm companions,  
 speaking our mind without timid evasions.  
 Yellow warblers traverse the rafters,  
 purple doves fly down from eave guards.



愚意会所适，  
花边行自迟。  
汤休起我病，  
微笑索题诗。





I've chanced on a spot that suits me exactly,  
strolling among blossoms as slowly as I please.  
And to lift my spirits, Tang Xiu here  
smiles, urging me to write a poem. ①

---

① Tang Huixiu (Tang Xiu) was a Buddhist monk of the fifth century famous for his literary accomplishments. Du Fu here uses the name to refer to Abbot Zan.



其二

细软青丝履，  
光明白氎巾。  
深藏供老宿，  
取用及吾身。  
自顾转无趣，  
交情何尚新。  
道林才不世，  
惠远德过人。  
雨泻暮檐竹，  
风吹青井芹。  
天阴对图画，  
最觉润龙鳞。



**2**

Shoes of thin-spun soft green silk,  
 fine white headcloth, sparkling bright,  
 carefully stored away as provisions for elder clergy,  
 brought out now for the likes of me!  
 I see myself as a man devoid of charm,  
 but in our dealings I'm still his new-found friend,  
 this Daolin whose talents outshine the age,  
 this Huiyuan who in virtue surpasses all others.  
 Showers drench the bamboo by twilight eaves,  
 wind blows over the cresses by the spring well.  
 As skies darken I confront the murals,  
 most conscious of the damp from dragon scales. ①

---

① Zhi Daolin(314-366)and Huiyuan(334-417) were eminent Buddhist monks to whom Du Fu likens Abbot Zan. Dayun Temple was famous for the murals in its various halls and pagodas, some of which Du Fu is viewing in the last couplet and which no doubt included paintings of dragons . The dragon here perhaps symbolizes Emperor Xuanzong, under whom Du Fu served before his capture by the rebels, the "damp" representing the imperial favor he enjoyed then.



其三

灯影照无睡，  
心清闻妙香。  
夜深殿突兀，  
风动金银铛。  
天黑闭春院，  
地清栖暗芳。  
玉绳回断绝，  
铁凤森翱翔。  
梵放时出寺，  
钟残仍殷床。  
明朝在沃野，  
苦见尘沙黄。



**3**

Lamp glow lights my sleeplessness;  
 mind clear, I breathe a wondrous fragrance.  
 As night deepens, the main hall looms larger than ever;  
 wind, stirring, sets the eave bells chiming.  
 Skies are black, blotting out the springtime court;  
 earth's cleanness houses hidden perfumes.  
 The Jade Rope, revolving, breaks in two and vanishes;  
 the iron phoenix seems ready to fly quietly away.<sup>①</sup>  
 Sanskrit now and then sounds from the temple;  
 the toll of the bell lingers, echoing round my bed.  
 Come morning, as I go home through fertile fields,  
 I'll hate to see the yellow of their dust and sand.<sup>②</sup>

---

① "Jade Rope" refers to two stars in the Big Dipper, which appear to break apart as they sink behind the temple roof. The phoenix is an iron weather vane fixed to the roof. In the line that follows, the monks are chanting the morning service.

② Probably a reference to the rebel forces occupying the capital.



其四

童儿汲井华，  
惯捷瓶上手。  
沾洒不濡地，  
扫除似无帚。  
明霞烂复阁，  
霁雾褰高牖。  
侧塞被径花，  
飘摇委墀柳。  
艰难世事迫，  
隐遁佳期后，  
晤语契深心，  
那能总钳口？  
奉辞还杖策，  
暂别终回首。  
泱泱泥污人，  
听听国多狗。



**4**

The boy draws down water from the well,  
the bucket with practiced swiftness rising to his hand,  
sprinkles drops without soaking the ground,  
sweeps in such a way you can't tell he's used a broom.  
Sunrise hues illumine the storied buildings;  
fog, melting, lifts from high windows.  
Leaning from both sides, blossoms arch the pathway;  
willow fronds, gently swaying, dangle to the terrace.  
But now I'm pressed by irksome worldly cares;  
good times of retirement must come later.  
We've met and talked, our deepest hearts in accord;  
how can they gag us into total silence?  
Tendering good-byes, I set off on my return;  
we must part for a time; I look back in longing.  
Deep sloughs of mud wait to soil us;  
yap! yap! —many dogs in our city. ①

---

① References to the unsavory political climate of the time.



既未免羈絆，  
时来憩奔走。  
近公如白雪，  
执热烦何有？





I can't break loose from bonds and fetters,  
but, chance permitting, I'll rest here again from my trials.  
Your presence, Abbot, is like white snow—  
I no longer fear to take hold of what's hot. ①

---

① An allusion to *Book of Odes*, poem 257: "For who can take hold of something hot / without first moistening his hand?" That is, Abbot Zan helps to "cool" the poet's worries and vexations.



## 忆幼子

骥子春犹隔，  
莺歌暖正繁。  
别离惊节换，  
聪慧与谁论。  
涧水空山道，  
柴门老树村。  
忆渠愁只睡，  
炙背俯晴轩。



## Thinking of My Little Boy

(5-ch. regulated verse, 757; Du Fu in Chang'an, thinking of his younger son, who was with his wife in Fuzhou. The boy's nickname was Ji-zi, or Pony Boy, Ji being the name of a famous horse of ancient times. "Discoursing" in line 4 is facetious, since the boy was only four years old at this time. Lines 5 and 6 describe the scene in Fuzhou.)

Pony Boy—spring and you're still far away;  
 warblers sing, so many in this warmth.  
 Parted, I'm startled at how the seasons change.  
 My bright boy, with whom is he discoursing?  
 Valley Stream, a road over empty hills,  
 rustic gate, village of old trees—  
 Thinking of you, sorrowing, all I do is doze,  
 back to the sun, hunched over on the bright veranda.



## 得家书

去凭游客寄，  
来为附家书。  
今日知消息，  
他乡且旧居。  
熊儿幸无恙，  
骥子最怜渠。  
临老羈孤极，  
伤时会合疏。  
二毛趋帐殿，  
一命侍鸾舆。  
北阙妖氛满，



## A Letter from Home

(5-ch. *pailü*; written in the fall of 757, when Du Fu was a Reminder at the court of Emperor Suzong in Fengxiang. “Home” is where Du Fu’s wife and children were living in Fuzhou. He had not heard from them for over ten months.)

I sent mine off, entrusted to a passing traveler;  
 he came back bringing me this letter from home!  
 Today I learn the true state of affairs  
 in that village, not ours, though home from some time past.  
 Bear Cub—luckily no problems there;  
 Pony Boy—he’s the one I miss most!<sup>①</sup>  
 Confronting old age, my life rootless, lonely,  
 grieving at the times, so seldom we meet;  
 hair half gray, I race around curtained halls,  
 fill my one assignment, attend the ruler’s belled carriage.  
 Chang’an’s northern gates rank with evil vapors;

---

① Bear Cub is the childhood name of Du Fu’s elder son Zongwen; Pony Boy is his second son Zongwu.



西郊白露初。  
凉风新过雁，  
秋雨欲生鱼。  
农事空山里，  
眷言终荷锄。



here in the western suburbs, white dew newly fallen,<sup>①</sup>  
cool winds, wild geese beginning their migrations,  
autumn rains—many fish will be spawned.<sup>②</sup>  
A farmer's life in those empty hills—  
I long to be there at last, shouldering a hoe!

---

① Chang'an at this time was in the hands of the rebel forces. "Western suburbs" refers to Fengxiang west of the capital where Emperor Suzong had his court.

② Both wild geese and fish are associated in Chinese lore with letters because of tales of letters tied to the feet of wild geese or delivered in the belly of a fish.



## 玉华宫

溪回松风长，  
苍鼠窜古瓦。  
不知何王殿，  
遗构绝壁下。  
阴房鬼火青，  
坏道哀湍泻。  
万籁真笙竽，  
秋色正萧洒。  
美人为黄土，  
况乃粉黛假。  
当时侍金舆，  
故物独石马。





## Jade Flower Palace

(5-ch. , old style; a description of a detached palace built west of Chang'an in 647. Occupied briefly by Emperor Taizong, it was later made into a Buddhist temple and then abandoned. By the time Du Fu viewed it in 757, it had fallen into ruin. )

Valley stream tortuous, pine winds unending,  
 gray rats scurry under ancient tiles—  
 who knows what ruler's dwelling,  
 by sheer cliffs built and then abandoned?  
 In north-facing chambers, the green of ghostly fires,  
 ruined walkways, sad waters lapping them;  
 nature's ten thousand pipings are its true flutes now,  
 autumn colors its emblazonment.  
 Beautiful women gone to yellow dust,  
 long gone the powder and mascara that adorned them,  
 years past attending their lord in his golden carriage—  
 of those lost ones, only stone horses remain. ①

---

① Stone figures ornamenting a grave mound.



忧来藉草坐，  
浩歌泪盈把。  
冉冉征途间，  
谁是长年者？

When sorrow comes, sit on the grass,  
sing loud songs, drench your palm in tears.  
On and on the journey ahead—  
who lives for long?





## 羌村三首

### 其一

峥嵘赤云西，  
日脚下平地。  
柴门鸟雀噪，  
归客千里至。  
妻孥怪我在，  
惊定还拭泪。  
世乱遭飘荡，  
生还偶然遂。  
邻人满墙头，  
感叹亦歔歔。  
夜阑更秉烛，  
相对如梦寐。



## Qiang Village

### THREE POEMS

(5-ch. old style; written in the fall of 757 when Du Fu, having incurred the anger of Emperor Suzong because of his defense of the high official Fang Guan, was ordered to return to the village of Qiang in Fuzhou where his wife and children were staying. The poems depict his reunion with his family after an absence of a year or more.)

#### 1

Red clouds, their towering shapes move westward;  
sun's rays streak down to the level plain.

Bramble gate, sparrows and little birds chattering—  
the traveler home from his thousand-mile trek!

My wife, amazed to see me alive,  
recovers from her astonishment, wipes away tears.

A world in chaos, buffeted, tumbled,  
by sheerest chance I've managed to make it back.

Faces of neighbors crowd the wall;  
pitying, they add their sighs and exclamations.

As night deepens, we bring out candles,  
face one another as though in a dream.



其二

晚岁迫偷生，  
还家少欢趣。  
娇儿不离膝，  
畏我复却去。  
忆昔好追凉，  
故绕池边树。  
萧萧北风劲，  
抚事煎百虑。  
赖知禾黍收，  
已觉糟床注。  
如今足斟酌，  
且用慰迟暮。

**2**

Along in years, barely managing to stay alive,  
I came home to find pleasures few.  
My dear boy won't let go my knees,  
afraid I'll go off and leave him again.  
I remember times gone by, hunting for a cool spot,  
how we threaded among the pondside trees.  
But now north winds howl and bluster;  
wherever I turn, a hundred cares to needle me.  
So good to know the grain's been harvested,  
to hear the wine trickling from the lees.  
For now at least, enough to dip from,  
to ease me in my declining years.





其三

群鸡正乱叫，  
客至鸡斗争。  
驱鸡上树木，  
始闻叩柴荆。  
父老四五人，  
问我久远行。  
手中各有携，  
倾榼浊复清。  
莫辞酒味薄，  
黍地无人耕。  
兵革既未息，  
儿童尽东征。  
请为父老歌，  
艰难愧深情。  
歌罢仰天叹，  
四座泪纵横！





**3**

Our chickens start in squawking wildly—  
the arrival of visitors sets them squabbling.  
I shoo them into the trees, then for the first time  
hear the knocking at my rustic gate;  
four or five village elders  
come to ask about my long absence, my long trip home.  
Each carries something in his hand;  
from tilted casks, muddy wine, and clear,  
profuse apologies for the wine's poor flavor:  
“No one these days to work the millet fields,  
wars and uprisings that never end,  
all the young ones off to the eastern campaign.”  
I ask if I may sing them a song,  
sing of my deep gratitude in these troublesome times.  
Song ended, I gaze upward with a sigh,  
from those on four sides, tears streaming down.



## 春宿左省

花隐掖垣暮，  
啾啾栖鸟过。  
星临万户动，  
月傍九霄多。  
不寝听金钥，  
因风想玉珂。  
明朝有封事，  
数问夜如何？



## Spring Night's Stay in the Left Office

(5-ch. regulated verse; 758, when Du Fu was a Reminder in the Left Office, or Imperial Chancellery. In the third couplet he is listening for the sound of palace doors being unlocked and imagining he hears the horse bells of officials arriving at court. )

Blossoms shadowy, twilight on palace walls;  
 chatter-chatter, nest-bound birds fly by.  
 Stars loom above, their light wavering over ten thousand  
     doorways;  
 the moon swells in brightness as it climbs the upper sky.  
 Sleepless, I listen for the sound of bronze locks,  
 in the wind imagine I hear jeweled horse bells. I've sealed  
     papers to present to the Throne at dawn;  
 again and again I ask the hour of the night.



## 无家别

寂寞天宝后，  
园庐但蒿藜。  
我里百余家，  
世乱各东西。  
存者无消息，  
死者为尘泥。  
贱子因阵败，  
归来寻旧蹊。  
久行见空巷，  
日瘦气惨凄。  
但对狐与狸，  
竖毛怒我啼。



## The Man with No Family to Take Leave of

(5-ch. , old style; Tianbao in the first line refers to the outbreak of the An Lushan rebellion in the fourteenth year of the Tianbao era, 755. )

Ever since Tianbao, silence and desolation,  
fields and sheds mere masses of pigweed and bramble.  
My village, a hundred households or more,  
in these troubled times scattered east and west,  
not a word from those still living,  
the dead all gone to dust and mire.  
I was on the side that lost the battle<sup>①</sup>,  
came home, looked for the old paths,  
so long on the road, to find empty lanes,  
sun grown feeble, pain and sorrow in the air.  
All I meet are foxes and raccoon dogs;  
fur on end, they snarl at me in anger.

---

① The defeat of the imperial forces at Xiangzhou in the third month of 759.



四邻何所有？  
一二老寡妻。  
宿鸟恋本枝，  
安辞且穷栖？  
方春独荷锄，  
日暮还灌畦。  
县吏知我至，  
召令习鼓鞀。  
虽从本州役，  
内顾无所携。  
近行止一身，  
远去终转迷。  
家乡既荡尽，  
远近理亦齐。  
永痛长病母，  
五年委沟溪。  
生我不得力，  
终身两酸嘶。  
人生无家别，  
何以为蒸黎？



For neighbors on four sides who do I have?  
 One or two aging widows.  
 But the roosting bird loves his old branch;  
 how reject it, narrow perch though it is?  
 Come spring, I shoulder the hoe alone,  
 in evening sun, once more pour water on the fields.  
 Local officials know I'm back;  
 they call me in, order me to practice the big drum<sup>①</sup>.  
 Maybe they'll assign me to duty in this province—  
 but still I've no wife, no one to take my hand.  
 Posted nearby, I'm one man all alone;  
 sent to a far-off assignment, more lost than ever.  
 But house and village a wilderness now,  
 near or far are all one to me.  
 And always I grieve for my mother, sick so long,  
 five years left buried in a mere ditch of a grave.  
 She bore me, but I hadn't the strength to care for her;  
 to the end, both of us breathed bitter sighs.  
 A living man, but no family to take leave of—  
 how can you call me a proper human being?

① The drum used in battle to signal troop movements.



## 垂老别

四郊未宁静，  
垂老不得安。  
子孙阵亡尽，  
焉用身独完？  
投杖出门去，  
同行为辛酸。  
幸有牙齿存，  
所悲骨髓干。  
男儿既介胄，  
长揖别上官。  
老妻卧路啼，  
岁暮衣裳单。  
孰知是死别，  
且复伤其寒。  
此去必不归，





## An Old One Takes His Leave

(5-ch, old style; the poem shifts back and forth between monologue and description. )

In four directions, no peace, no safety—  
 how can an old one rest easy?  
 Sons, grandsons all lost in battle,  
 what use to keep this one body alive?  
 He throws his stick aside, goes out the gate,  
 comrades looking on in pity and concern.  
 Luckily I still have my teeth,  
 though alas, little sap left in these bones!  
 But I'll put on armor like a proper fellow,  
 give my long salute, take leave of the commander.  
 His old wife slumps by the roadside weeping,  
 year-end, in nothing but an unlined robe.  
 Who knows, perhaps their final parting;  
 he thinks how she'll suffer from the cold.  
 Once gone, likely he'll never return,



还闻劝加餐。  
土门壁甚坚，  
杏园度亦难。  
势异邺城下，  
纵死时犹宽。  
人生有离合，  
岂择衰盛端？  
忆昔少壮日，  
迟回竟长叹。  
万国尽征戍，  
烽火被冈峦。  
积尸草木腥，  
流血川原丹。  
何乡为乐土？  
安敢尚盘桓。  
弃绝蓬室居，  
塌然摧肺肝。



yet he hears her begging him, "Eat well!"  
 Fortifications at Tumen hold firm,  
 the ford at Xingyuan well guarded;  
 different from the way it was at Yecheng—<sup>①</sup>  
 though we die in the end, time's on our side now.  
 Life has its meetings and partings;  
 what difference, in your prime or your dotage?  
 But, remembering days when he was young,  
 he holds back, hesitant, then gives a long sigh.  
 From ten thousand regions they're off to combat;  
 beacon fires top the hills and knolls.  
 Grass and trees reek with piled-up corpses,  
 streams of blood redden the rivers and plains.  
 What village is a happy land now?  
 How can I go on dawdling?  
 I'll quit my thatch-roofed home, be off,  
 though the pain of it strikes my vitals!

---

① Where the imperial forces suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the rebels in 759.



## 赠高式颜

昔别是何处？  
相逢皆老夫。  
故人还寂寞，  
削迹共艰虞。  
自失论文友，  
空知卖酒垆。  
平生飞动意，  
见尔不能无。

## Presented to Gao Shiyan

(5-ch. regulated verse; date uncertain. Gao Shiyan was a nephew of the poet Gao Shi (716-765) and a member of the group of poets, which included Li Bai, with whom Du Fu spent time in his youth in Henan. These are the “long-ago companions,” all facing hardship now, about whom he reminisces.)

Where was it we parted last,  
to meet again, now both old men,  
our long-ago companions luckless as ever,  
hiding our traces, alike in hardship and care?  
Friends to talk literature with—since I lost them  
I waste time acquainting myself with the wine seller's stall.  
Pent-up ambitions cherished for a lifetime,  
seeing you, come back to me—no way to stop them!





## 石壕吏

暮投石壕村，  
有吏夜捉人。  
老翁逾墙走，  
老妇出门看。  
吏呼一何怒！  
妇啼一何苦！  
听妇前致词：  
“三男邺城戍。  
一男附书至，  
二男新战死。  
存者且偷生，  
死者长已矣。”



## The Official of Stone Moat

(5-ch. , old style, 759; Shihao, or Stone Moat, was a village in Henan that Du Fu passed through in the course of his travels. The official is searching for people who can be impressed into military service. )

At evening I put up at Stone Moat Village;  
 that night an official came to round up people.  
 The old man at the inn scaled the wall and ran away;  
 the old woman came to open the gate.  
 The official, how fiercely he shouted!  
 The old woman, how pitiful her cries!  
 Then I heard her say to him,  
 “Three sons sent to defend Yecheng—<sup>①</sup>  
 a letter came from one of them,  
 the other two lost in the fighting.  
 One alive, no more than a borrowed life,  
 dead ones gone for all time!

① On the defeat at Yecheng, see poem 36.



室中更无人，  
惟有乳下孙。  
有孙母未去，  
出入无完裙。  
老妪力虽衰，  
请从吏夜归。  
急应河阳役，  
犹得备晨炊。”  
夜久语声绝，  
如闻泣幽咽。  
天明登前途，  
独与老翁别。



Here in the house not another soul,  
only a grandchild, still nursing at the breast.  
His mother stays to look after him,  
indoors or out, barely a skirt to cover her.  
I'm an old woman, little strength left,  
but let me go with you tonight.  
If you're pressed for hands at Heyang,  
at least I could cook the morning rations."  
Late that night no more sound of people talking,  
but I thought I heard weeping and muffled sobs.  
At dawn when I set out once more,  
only the old man to see me off.





## 赠卫八处士

人生不相见，  
动如参与商。  
今夕复何夕，  
共此灯烛光。  
少壮能几时，  
鬓发各已苍。  
访旧半为鬼，  
惊呼热中肠。  
焉知二十载，  
重上君子堂。  
昔别君未婚，  
儿女忽成行。  
怡然敬父执，  
问我来何方？



## Presented to Wei Ba, Gentleman in Retirement

(5-ch. , old style, around 759; nothing is known about Wei Ba, though the designation Ba, or “Eighth,” indicates he was eighth in seniority among his male siblings and cousins. )

Life is not made for meetings;  
like star at opposite end of the sky we move.  
What night is it, then, tonight,  
when we can share the light of this lamp?  
Youth—how long did it last?  
The two of us grayheaded now,  
we ask about old friends—half are ghosts;  
cries of unbelief stab the heart.  
Who would have thought? —twenty years  
and once again I enter your house.  
You weren't married when I left you;  
now suddenly a whole row of boys and girls!  
Merrily they greet their father's friend,  
ask me what places I've been.



问答乃未已，  
驱儿罗酒浆。  
夜雨剪春韭，  
新炊间黄粱。  
主称会面难，  
一举累十觞。  
十觞亦不醉，  
感子故意长。  
明日隔山岳，  
世事两茫茫。

Before I finish answering,  
you send the boys to set out wine and a meal,  
spring scallions cut in night rain,  
new cooked rice mixed with yellow millet.  
Meetings are rare enough, you say;  
pour the wine till we've downed ten cups!  
But ten cups do not make me drunk;  
your steadfast love is what moves me now.  
Tomorrow hills and ranges will part us,  
the wide world coming between us again.





## 佳人

绝代有佳人，  
幽居在空谷。  
自云良家子，  
零落依草木。  
关中昔丧乱，  
兄弟遭杀戮。  
官高何足论？  
不得收骨肉。  
世情恶衰歇，  
万事随转烛。  
夫婿轻薄儿，  
新人美如玉。  
合昏尚知时，  
鸳鸯不独宿。  
但见新人笑，



## Lovely Lady

(5-ch. old style, around 759; a description of a woman whose family has been wiped out in the rebellion and whose husband has deserted her. )

Lovely lady, fairest of the time,  
 hiding away in an empty valley;  
 daughter of a good house, she said,  
 fallen now among grasses of the wood.  
 “There was tumult and death within the passes then;  
 my brothers, old and young, all killed.  
 Office, position—what help were they?  
 I couldn’t even gather up my brothers’ bones!  
 The world despises you when your luck is down;  
 all I had went with the turn of the flame.  
 My husband was a fickle fellow,  
 his new girl as fair as jade.  
 Blossoms that close at dusk keep faith with the hour,  
 mandarin ducks will not rest apart;  
 but he could only see the new one laughing,



那闻旧人哭。  
在山泉水清，  
出山泉水浊。  
侍婢卖珠回，  
牵萝补茅屋。  
摘花不插发，  
采柏动盈掬。  
天寒翠袖薄，  
日暮倚修竹。



never hear the former one's tears—”  
Within the mountain the stream runs clear;  
out of the mountain it turns to mud.  
Her maid returns from selling a pearl,  
braids vines to mend their roof of thatch.  
The lady picks a flower but does not put it in her hair,  
gathers juniper berries, sometimes a handful.  
When the sky is cold, in thin azure sleeves,  
at dusk she stands leaning by the tall bamboo.





## 秦州杂诗

(二十首选五首)

### 其一

满目悲生事，  
因人作远游。  
迟回度陇怯，  
浩荡及关愁。  
水落鱼龙夜，  
山空鸟鼠秋。  
西征问烽火，  
心折此淹留。



# Qinzhou

## TWENTY MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

(5-ch. regulated verse. In the fall of 759, escaping famine, Du Fu journeyed with his family west to Qinzhou in Gansu on the upper reaches of the Wei River. The following are the first, second, fourth, twelfth, and eighteenth in the series.)

### 1

Everywhere I look, the sorrow of human existence;  
 certain persons aiding me, I set out on a distant journey,  
 with labored slowness cross Long Pass in terror,  
 come this far, engulfed in borderland gloom.  
 Waters low, nights on Fish Dragon River;  
 hills uninhabited, autumn on Bird and Rat Mountain.  
 Heading west, I ask about wartime beacons,  
 spirit downcast, lingering, halting here.



其二

秦州山北寺，  
胜迹隗嚣宫。  
苔藓山门古，  
丹青野殿空。  
月明垂叶露，  
云逐渡溪风。  
清渭无情极，  
愁时独向东。



( Wei Xiao was a warlord who flourished in the Qinzhou area in the first century. The Wei River was noted for its clear waters. )

**2**

Temple north of Qinzhou's walls,  
famed site of Wei Xiao's palace:  
temple gates old, coated in moss and lichens;  
in the fields, a hall painted red and green, deserted.  
The moon illumines dewdrops dangling from the leaves,  
clouds tag after winds that sweep the valley.  
The clear Wei, most heartless of all,  
in my time of sorrow flowing east without me.



其四

鼓角缘边郡，  
川原欲夜时。  
秋听殷地发，  
风散入云悲。  
抱叶寒蝉静，  
归来独鸟迟。  
万方声一概，  
吾道竟何之。

( Drums and horns are used in military action; here they are indicative of the unrest in the western border region due to invasions by Tibetan and Uighur tribes. )

**4**

Drums and horns in borderland counties  
as night falls over the river plain,  
in the autumn air I hear them rending the earth;  
scattered on the wind, mournfully they fade among the  
clouds.

The cold cicada clings to its leaf in silence,  
the lone bird slowly returns to its mountain.  
Ten thousand directions caught up in this one sound;  
my road—in the end where will it take me?





## 其十二

山头南郭寺，  
水号北流泉。  
老树空庭得，  
清渠一邑传。  
秋花危石底，  
晚景卧钟前。  
俯仰悲身世，  
溪风为飒然。





**12**

South Rampart Temple on the hilltop,  
by a stream called North Flowing Spring;  
old trees stand in an empty garden,  
channel sending clear water down to the whole village,  
Autumn flowers at the foot of steep rocks,  
evening shadows beside the sleeping bell<sup>①</sup>.

I gaze around, grieve for myself and for the times;  
valley winds for my sake make moaning sounds.

---

① The bell, fallen from its frame, lies on its side on the ground.



其十八

地僻秋将尽，  
山高客未归。  
塞云多断续，  
边日少光辉。  
警急烽常报，  
传闻檄屡飞。  
西戎外甥国，  
何得连天威。



**18**

In this far-off land, autumn almost over,  
 mountains lofty, a traveler not yet gone home;  
 outpost clouds forever breaking, meshing,  
 borderland sun that sheds only feeble rays.  
 Tense times, beacon fires continually signal alarms;  
 again and again orders come to mobilize the troops.  
 These western tribes kin in marriage to our Sovereign,  
 how dare they defy Heaven's majesty!<sup>①</sup>

---

① The Tang emperors had twice sent an imperial princess to be the bride of a Tibetan ruler, but in Du Fu's time the Tibetans defied the Son of Heaven by raiding the Tang empire's western borders.



## 初 月

光细弦初上，  
影斜轮未安。  
微升古塞外，  
已隐暮云端。  
河汉不改色，  
关山空自寒。  
庭前有白露，  
暗满菊花团。

## New Moon

(5-ch. regulated verse; in Qinzhou. The River of Heaven is the Milky Way.)

Frail rays of the crescent newly risen,  
slanting beams only a fraction of the full circle,  
barely lifted above the old fort,  
already hidden in slivers of evening cloud.  
Stars of the River of Heaven keep their hue unchanged,  
barrier mountains, untouched, cold as before.  
In the courtyard white dew forms,  
moisture imperceptibly drenching the chrysanthemums.





## 促 织

促织甚微细，  
哀音何动人。  
草根吟不稳，  
床下夜相亲。  
久客得无泪，  
放妻难及晨。  
悲丝与急管，  
感激异天真。



## The Cricket

(5-ch. regulated verse; in Qinzhou. )

Cricket, so tiny, so lowly,  
why do your sad notes move us so?  
Among the grass roots you cry inconsolably,  
under the bed, wanting companionship now.  
Can the traveler, long on the road, hold back his tears?  
Can the abandoned wife endure the hours till dawn?  
Plaintive strings, shrill piping of woodwinds,  
never stir us as do Nature's sounds!



## 野望

清秋望不极，  
迢递起曾阴。  
远水兼天净，  
孤城隐雾深。  
叶稀风更落，  
山迥日初沉。  
独鹤归何晚？  
昏鸦已满林。



## View over the Plain

(5-ch. regulated verse; in Qinzhou. )

Clear autumn, no end to the view,  
layers of darkness beginning to pile up:  
the distant river blends its purity with the sky;  
a solitary fortress shrouded in deep mist.  
Trees all but leafless, the wind strips them further;  
mountains far off, sun just sunk beyond.  
Lone crane, why so long going home,  
the groves already thick with crows?





## 送 远

带甲满天地，  
胡为君远行。  
亲朋尽一哭，  
鞍马去孤城。  
草木岁月晚，  
关河霜雪清。  
别离已昨日，  
因见古人情。



## Off on a Long Journey

(5-ch. regulated verse; in Qinzhou. Though the poem seems to deal with the departure of a friend, some commentators take it as descriptive of Du Fu's own departure on his western journey. )

Now when the armor-clad fill heaven and earth,  
 why off on a distant journey!  
 Close friends done with their moment of tears,  
 the saddled horse sets out from the lone, walled town.  
 Grass, trees of the waning year,  
 borderland river shining in frost and snow:  
 it seems only yesterday we parted—  
 I know now how he felt, that man of old. ①

---

① Reference to a poem on parting by Jiang Yan (443-504), the lines: "It seems like yesterday I saw you off, dew already soaking the ground before the blinds."



## 空 囊

翠柏苦犹食，  
晨霞高可餐。  
世人共卤莽，  
吾道属艰难。  
不爨井晨冻，  
无衣床夜寒。  
囊空恐羞涩，  
留得一钱看。



## Empty Moneybag

(5-ch. regulated verse; in Qinzhou. Du Fu speaks in a humorous vein. )

Fruit of the azure oak, bitter but edible,  
 dawn mists, high up, but one can dine on them. ①  
 Others all bumble along somehow—  
 why is my way such a tangle of woes?  
 Nothing on the stove, the well at dawn frozen,  
 no decent clothing, bed at night so cold;  
 but an empty moneybag—that shame I dread,  
 so I cling to this lone copper coin.

---

① Azure oak acorns and the rosy mists of dawn were said to be the food of immortal spirits.



## 宿赞公房

杖锡何来久？  
秋风已飒然。  
雨荒深院菊，  
霜倒半池莲。  
放逐宁违性，  
虚空不离禅。  
相逢成夜宿，  
陇月向人圆。



## Staying Overnight in Abbot Zan's Rooms

(5-ch. regulated verse; 759. A note appended by the poet says: "Zan was the head priest of Dayun Temple in the capital but has been banished to this place." Both Du Fu and Abbot Zan had been associates of the high minister Fang Guan, who was removed from office and exiled to a provincial post in 758. Abbot Zan had perhaps been exiled from Chang'an because of this association. The word Long in the last line is a general name for the area of Gansu where Qinzhou was located. )

When did you come here with your pewter-ringed staff,  
 autumn winds already blowing shrill?  
 Rains have spoiled the chrysanthemums in the inner court-  
 yard,  
 frost has toppled lotuses on half the pond.  
 Banished, but how does that harm innate nature?  
 In this emptiness you never depart from Chan.  
 Now we've met, we can stay a night together,  
 a Long moon looking down on us roundly.



## 月夜忆舍弟

戍鼓断人行，  
边秋一雁声。  
露从今夜白，  
月是故乡明。  
有弟皆分散，  
无家问死生。  
寄书长不达，  
况乃未休兵。





## On a Moonlit Night, Thinking of My Younger Brothers

(5-ch. regulated verse; in Qinzhou.)

Martial drums cut off all human concourse;  
borderland autumn, cry of a lone wild goose<sup>①</sup>.  
Tonight we enter the season of white dew,  
though the moon still shines with a homeland brightness.  
I've younger brothers, every one of them scattered,  
no home where I can ask if they're dead or alive.  
I send letters that never succeed in getting through,  
much less now, with hostilities unceasing!

---

① According to legend, the wild goose is the bearer of letters to distant places.



## 别赞上人

百川日东流，  
客去亦不息。  
我生苦漂荡，  
何时有终极？  
赞公释门老，  
放逐来上国。  
还为世尘婴，  
颇带憔悴色。  
杨枝晨在手，  
豆子雨已熟。  
是身如浮云，  
安可限南北？



## Taking Leave of Abbot Zan

(5-ch. , old style; written in the fall of 759 when Du Fu, after only four months in Qinzhou, left in search of food. )

The hundred rivers each day flow eastward,  
the traveler, never at rest, moves on.  
My life, bitter with fruitless wanderings—  
when will they find an end?  
Reverend Zan, elder in Buddha's teachings,  
banished here from the capital,  
here to suffer more worldly trials,  
face gaunt and lined with care.  
One morning a willow branch in hand,  
then already the beans have ripened twice<sup>①</sup>.  
These our bodies, drifting clouds:  
north, south, how limit the direction they'll take?

---

① "Willow branch" perhaps refers to the time in the previous year when Du Fu and Abbot Zan parted in Chang'an, since willow branches are a symbol of parting. The lines are obscure though, and there are other interpretations.



异县逢旧友，  
初忻写胸臆。  
天长关塞寒，  
岁暮饥冻逼。  
野风吹征衣，  
欲别向曛黑。  
马嘶思故枥，  
归鸟尽敛翼。  
古来聚散地，  
宿昔长荆棘。  
相看俱衰年，  
出处各努力。



In a strange district I come on an old friend,  
with newfound delight pour out my feelings.  
Sky endless, borderlands cold,  
the year running out, dogged by chill and hunger;  
wind from the plain buffets my traveling clothes,  
I prepare to say good-bye as twilight approaches.  
The horse neighs, remembering his old stall;  
homing birds have finished folding their wings.  
Places we used to gather long ago  
in a day or two become weeds and brambles!  
We look at each other, bent with age.  
one going, one left behind—both must eat hearty!



## 发秦州

乾元二年自秦州赴同谷县纪行

我衰更懒拙，  
生事不自谋。  
无食问乐土，  
无衣思南州。  
汉源十月交，  
天气凉如秋。  
草木未黄落，  
况闻山水幽。  
栗亭名更佳，  
下有良田畴。  
充肠多薯蕷，  
崖蜜亦易求。



## Leaving Qinzhou

(5-ch. ,old style; written in late 759 when Du Fu left Qinzhou and headed for Tonggu, “the source of the Han” River, because he had heard that food was plentiful there. )

I'm getting old—stupid, listless,  
 can't seem to plan my course in life.  
 Nothing to eat, I ask after the “happy land”<sup>①</sup>;  
 no clothes, I dream of southern climes.  
 At the source of the Han, tenth month and on,  
 they say the weather's like bracing autumn,  
 grass and trees not yet yellowed or stripped,  
 mountains and waters more wonderful still.  
 Chestnut Pavilion—a most auspicious name!  
 Surely rich farmlands must surround it,  
 lots of wild yams to fill the belly,  
 honeycombs in the cliffs, easy to gather,

---

① The land of plenty that the distressed peasants long for in poem 113 of the *Book of Odes*.



密竹复冬笋，  
清池可方舟。  
虽伤旅寓远，  
庶遂平生游。  
此邦俯要冲，  
实恐人事稠。  
应接非本性，  
登临未销忧。  
溪谷无异石，  
塞田始微收。  
岂复慰老夫？  
惘然难久留。  
日色隐孤戍，  
乌啼满城头。  
中宵驱车去，  
饮马寒塘流。  
磊落星月高，  
苍茫云雾浮。  
大哉乾坤内，  
吾道长悠悠。





thick-groved bamboo sending up winter shoots,  
 clear ponds just right for boating.  
 True, there's the hardship of a lengthy journey,  
 but hopefully I'll find outings I've always longed for.  
 This place straddles a major highway,  
 fearful bustle of people coming and going,  
 but I don't mix in such matters—not my nature,  
 and its hill and stream outings don't ease my cares.  
 In its streambeds, no precious stones;  
 its garrison fields yield only meager harvest.  
 What is here to solace an old man?  
 Disillusioned, I've no wish to stay any longer.  
 Sun's hues hidden behind the lone outpost,  
 crows cawing, massed on the town walls;  
 at midnight I set off by wagon,  
 water my horse in cold embankment streams.  
 Stars and moon strewn high above,  
 chance stragglings of cloud and mist;  
 so huge the compass of heaven and earth,  
 so long the road I travel!



## 赤 谷

天寒霜雪繁，  
游子有所之。  
岂但岁月暮，  
重来未有期。  
晨发赤谷亭，  
险艰方自兹。  
乱石无改辙，  
我车已载脂。  
山深苦多风，  
落日童稚饥。  
悄然村墟迥，  
烟火何由追。  
贫病转零落，  
故乡不可思。



## Red Valley

(5-ch. , old style; farther along on the journey described in the preceding poem. )

Cold skies thick with frost and snow,  
 but the traveler must move on,  
 sad, though the year's end approaches,  
 no prospect I'll ever come this way again.  
 At dawn I set off from Red Valley station,  
 steep perilous roads from this point on,  
 a jumble of stones, but no other cart track to follow—  
 I've already greased the axles well.  
 Deep mountains, strong wind to make the going harder,  
 come nightfall my little ones are hungry;  
 spirits flag, village so far off,  
 its smoke in sight, but how to get there?  
 Poor, ailing, more destitute than ever,  
 no use to think of homeland now.



常恐死道路，  
永为高人嗤。



Always I fear I'll die by the roadside,  
forever a laughing stock for men of high ideals<sup>①</sup>.

---

① By “men of high ideals,” Du Fu probably has in mind the recluses of Chinese lore, who never attempted, as did Du Fu, to take part in political life.



## 乾元中寓居同谷县作歌七首

### 其一

有客有客字子美，  
白头乱发垂过耳。  
岁拾橡栗随狙公，  
天寒日暮山谷里。  
中原无书归不得，  
手脚冻皴皮肉死。  
呜呼一歌兮歌已哀，  
悲风为我从天来！



## Seven Songs Written During the Qianyuan Era (758-60) While Staying at Tonggu District

(7-ch. , old style; poems recording Du Fu's experiences in 759 when, fleeing from famine, he led his family west to Tonggu in Gansu. Zimei is Du Fu's courtesy name. )

### 1

A traveler, a traveler, Zimei his name,  
white hair tousled, dangling below the ears,  
through the years I gather acorns in the wake of the monkey  
    pack:  
cold skies at dusk within a mountain valley.  
No word from the Central Plain, no hope of going home;  
hands and feet chilled and chapped, skin and flesh grown  
    numb.  
Ah-ah, song the first, song already sad;  
mournful winds for my sake come down from the sky.



其二

长镵长镵白木柄，  
我生托子以为命。  
黄精无苗山雪盛，  
短衣数挽不掩胫。  
此时与子空归来，  
男呻女吟四壁静。  
呜呼二歌兮歌始放，  
邻里为我色惆怅。





**2**

Long hoe, long hoe, handle of white wood,  
 I trust my life to you—you must save me now!  
 No shoots of wild taro where mountain snows drift high;<sup>①</sup>  
 robe so short, pull as I may it won't hide my shins.  
 So with you I go empty-handed home;  
 the boys grumble, the girls whine, my four walls are still.  
 Ah-ah, song the second, the song at last breaks free;  
 village lanes for my sake put on the face of pity.

---

① Or, following another version of the text, “shoots of wild lily,” used in medicine.



其三

有弟有弟在远方，  
三人各瘦何人强？  
生别展转不相见，  
胡尘暗天道路长。  
东飞驾鹅后鹓鸪，  
安得送我置汝旁。  
呜呼三歌兮歌三发，  
汝归何处收兄骨？

( Du Fu had four brothers; the youngest was with him in Tonggu, the others living in the east. )

**3**

I have brothers, younger brothers in a place far away,  
three of them sickly, not one of them strong;  
parted in life, to veer and turn, never to meet;  
barbarian dust blackens the sky, the road is long.  
Wild geese fly east, behind them the cranes—  
if they could only carry me to your side!  
Ah-ah, song the third, the singer's third refrain;  
if I should die here, how would you find my bones?





#### 其四

有妹有妹在钟离，  
良人早歿诸孤痴。  
长淮浪高蛟龙怒，  
十年不见来何时？  
扁舟欲往箭满眼，  
杳杳南国多旌旗。  
呜呼四歌兮歌四奏，  
林猿为我啼清昼。



(Zhongli is in Anhui, south of the Huai River.)

**4**

I have a sister, little sister, living in Zhongli,  
husband dead these many years, her orphaned ones still  
young.

On the long Huai, waves leap up, dragons and serpents  
rage;

we haven't met for ten years—when will you come?

I want to go in a little boat, but arrows fill my eyes;  
far away in that southern land, banners of war abound.

Ah-ah, song the fourth, four times I've sung;  
forest monkeys for my sake wail even at noon.



其五

四山多风溪水急，  
寒雨飒飒枯树湿。  
黄蒿古城云不开，  
白狐跳梁黄狐立。  
我生何为在穷谷？  
中夜起坐万感集。  
呜呼五歌兮歌正长，  
魂招不来归故乡。

**5**

Mountains on four sides, high winds, canyon waters swift;  
cold rain sloshes down, bare trees wet with it.

Yellow mugwort over old town walls, clouds that never part,  
white foxes leaping, yellow foxes that stand still:

why has my life brought me to this forsaken valley?

I get up in the night, sit, ten thousand cares crowding a-  
round.

Ah-ah, song the fifth, song long continuing—

I can't call back my wandering soul, gone to its old home.





其六

南有龙兮在山湫，  
古木崑崙枝相樛。  
木叶黄落龙正蛰，  
蝮蛇东来水上游。  
我行怪此安敢出，  
拔剑欲斩且复休。  
呜呼六歌兮歌思迟，  
溪壑为我回春姿。



( Clearly a political allegory, though commentators do not agree on what the dragon and the vipers stand for. )

**6**

To the south lives a dragon in a mountain pool  
where old trees, dark and lush, touch limb to bending  
limb.

When tree leaves yellow and fall, he goes to his winter  
sleep,

and from the east come vipers to play on the waters there.

Passing by, I marveled that they would dare come forth,  
drew a sword to slash them, but put it up again.

Ah-ah, song the sixth, its purpose long denied;  
stream-cut valley, for my sake, put on spring clothes again!





其七

男儿生不成名身已老，  
三年饥走荒山道。  
长安卿相多少年，  
富贵应须致身早。  
山中儒生旧相识，  
但话宿昔伤怀抱。  
呜呼七歌兮悄终曲，  
仰视皇天白日速。

**7**

Born a man, gained no fame, body already old,  
three years fleeing hunger over harsh mountain roads.  
Young men are the lords and statesmen of Chang'an now;  
riches, high position—grab them while you're young!  
Here in the mountains a scholar, friend from old times;  
all our talk is of the past, painful to recall.  
Ah-ah, song the seventh—hush, leave off singing!  
Look up at the heavens as the bright sun hurries by.





## 梦李白

(二首选一首)

死别已吞声，  
生别常恻恻。  
江南瘴疠地，  
逐客无消息。  
故人入我梦，  
明我长相忆。  
恐非平生魂，  
路远不可测。  
魂来枫叶青，  
魂返关塞黑。  
君今在罗网，  
何以有羽翼？  
落月满屋梁，  
犹疑照颜色。  
水深波浪阔，  
无使蛟龙得。



## Dreaming of Li Bai

(5-ch. , old style; written in 759 when Li Bai was in exile in the south, the first of two poems. )

Parting from the dead, I've stifled my sobs,  
 but this parting from the living brings constant pain.  
 South of the Yangzi, land of plague and fever—  
 no word comes from the exile.  
 Yet my old friend entered my dreams,  
 proof of how long I've pined for him.  
 He didn't look the way he used to,  
 road so far, farther than I can guess.  
 His spirit came from where maple groves are green,  
 then went back, left me in borderland darkness.  
 Now you're caught in the meshes of the law;  
 how could you have wings to fly with?  
 The sinking moon floods the rafters of my room  
 and still I seem to see it lighting your face.  
 Where you go, waters are deep, waves so wide,  
 don't let the dragons, the horned dragons harm you!



## 发同谷县

乾元二年十二月一日，自陇右赴剑南纪行

贤有不黔突，  
圣有不暖席。  
况我饥愚人，  
焉能尚安宅？  
始来兹山中，  
休驾喜地僻。  
奈何迫物累，  
一岁四行役！  
忡忡去绝境，



## Departing Tonggu District

(5-ch. , old style; written in the last month of 759 when Du Fu left Tonggu for Chengdu. )

The worthy man never blackens his stove,  
the sage never warms his sitting mat. ①  
And I, a hungry, stupid man,  
what hopes for a settled home?  
When I first arrived in this mountain region,  
I halted my cart, delighted in its remoteness.  
But troubles keep pushing me onward—  
four journeys in a single year! ②  
In sadness I leave these far-off parts,

① It is said that the ancient philosopher Mozi never used a stove long enough to blacken it because he was so busy hurrying about the country preaching against warfare and promoting his ideas on universal love. Confucius was said never to have sat still long enough to warm his sitting mat because he was similarly untiring in his efforts to alleviate the ills of society.

② From Luoyang, where he had gone at the end of the previous year, to Huazhou, Huazhou to Qinzhou, Qinzhou to Tonggu, and now Tonggu to Chengdu.



杳杳更远适。  
停骖龙潭云，  
回首白崖石。  
临岐别数子，  
握手泪再滴。  
交情无旧深，  
穷老多惨戚。  
平生懒拙意，  
偶值栖遁迹。  
去住与愿违，  
仰惭林间翮。





set out again on the long, long road.  
I rested my horse by clouds of Dragon Tarn,  
turned my head toward the rocks of Tiger Scarp<sup>①</sup>,  
and now at the crossroads take leave of a few friends,  
clasp their hands, tears again flowing.  
Our friendship's not an old one,  
but what heartbreak for this old man!  
In life's affairs inept and clumsy,  
then to have hit on a refuge like this!  
To go, to stay—neither could please me;  
the contentment of the woodland birds puts me to shame.

---

① Places in the Tonggu area.



## 卜 居

浣花流水水西头，  
主人为卜林塘幽。  
已知出郭少尘事，  
更有澄江销客愁。  
无数蜻蜓齐上下，  
一双鸂鶒对沉浮。  
东行万里堪乘兴，  
须向山阴上小舟。



## Moving In

(7-ch. regulated verse; written in the spring of 760 when Du Fu moved into his newly built “thatched hall” at Wanhuaqi, or Wash-Flower Stream, west of Chengdu. )

On western waters of Wash-Flower Stream,  
 the owner has built his house in the seclusion of wooded  
 banks,  
 certain that beyond city walls troublesome affairs are few,  
 that clear river water can wash away a traveler’s cares.  
 Countless dragonflies dart in unison high and low,  
 a pair of mandarin ducks dive and bob side by side.  
 If I took a notion, I could voyage ten thousand miles,  
 eastward in a little boat headed for the coast. ①

---

① Du Fu’s new home was near Ten-Thousand-Mile Bridge on the Jin, or Brocade, River, another name for Wash-Flower Stream. The bridge was so called because it was said that “A ten-thousand-mile journey (eastward down the Yangzi) begins here.”



## 江 村

清江一曲抱村流，  
长夏江村事事幽。  
自去自来梁上燕，  
相亲相近水中鸥。  
老妻画纸为棋局，  
稚子敲针作钓钩。  
但有故人供禄米，  
微躯此外更何求。



## River Village

(7-ch. regulated verse; in Chengdu.)

One bend of the clear river crooks the village in its flow;  
 long summer days, river village, all activity stilled.  
 Swallows from the bridge come and go as they please,  
 gulls on the water friendlier, more fearless than ever.  
 My aging wife rules a sheet of paper, fashioning us a chess-  
     board;  
 the boys hammer a needle, making it into a fishhook.  
 With all these ailments, all I require is medicine<sup>①</sup>;  
 of humble station, what more could I ask?

---

① “I’ve an old friend who supplies me with rations of rice” is an alternate reading given in one version of the text.



## 野老

野老篱边江岸回，  
柴门不正逐江开。  
渔人网集澄潭下，  
贾客船随返照来。  
长路关心悲剑阁，  
片云何意傍琴台。



## Old Country Fellow

(7-ch. regulated verse; in Chengdu. The “old country fellow” is Du Fu. The painted horns in the last line are bugles used in the army camps, a reminder of the unstable condition of the times. )

Old country fellow in front of his hedge where the river bank  
rounds,  
bramble gate not properly oriented but faced so it gives on  
the river.

Fishermen's nets cluster in deep pools of clear water,  
peddlers' boats return with rays of the setting sun.

Always on my mind, the long road, sorrows of Sword  
Gate;<sup>①</sup>

a wisp of cloud—why, I wonder? —hovers over Zither Ter-  
race<sup>②</sup>.

① The long road that separates Du Fu from his homeland in the east; Sword Gate is a difficult pass that he crossed on his way from Qin Zhou to Chengdu.

② Zither Terrace is the grave of the poet Sima Xiangru (179-117 B. C. E. ), a native of Chengdu, which was situated near Du Fu's house. Sima Xiangru was famous for his playing of the *qin*, or zither.



王师未报收东郡，  
城阙秋生画角哀。



Royal armies have yet to report recovery of the eastern districts;  
autumn comes to Chengdu city, painted horns, their mournful sound.





## 恨 别

洛城一别四千里，  
胡骑长驱五六年。  
草木变衰行剑外，  
兵戈阻绝老江边。  
思家步月清宵立，  
忆弟看云白日眠。  
闻道河阳近乘胜，  
司徒急为破幽燕。



## Hating Separation

(7-ch. regulated verse; in Chengdu. Luoyang is the region where Du Fu was born and grew up. )

Once parted from Luoyang, four, five thousand miles;  
five, six years now, far-off barbarian riders swooping down  
on us.

Grass and trees wither and fade, a journeyer beyond Sword  
Gate;

war pikes bar my path, by riverside I grow old.

Recalling home, I pace the moonlight, stand in the clear  
evening;

thinking of younger brothers, watching clouds, at midday  
half asleep.

I hear that in Heyang these days our troops pile victory on  
victory.

Quick now, Commander, capture You and Yan for us!<sup>①</sup>

---

① Heyang is the province of Henan south of the Yellow River where the government forces defeated the rebel leader Shi Siming in 760. You and Yan are the regions in the northeast around Beijing where the rebels had their stronghold. The Commander is Li Guangbi, leader of the government troops.



## 客 至

舍南舍北皆春水，  
但见群鸥日日来。  
花径不曾缘客扫，  
蓬门今始为君开。  
盘飧市远无兼味，  
樽酒家贫只旧醅。  
肯与邻翁相对饮，  
隔篱呼取尽馀杯。





## 春夜喜雨

好雨知时节，  
当春乃发生。  
随风潜入夜，  
润物细无声。  
野径云俱黑，  
江船火独明。  
晓看红湿处，  
花重锦官城。



## Spring Night, Delighting in Rain

(5-ch. regulated verse; in Chengdu, the “City of Brocade.”)

### 2

The good rain knows when to fall,  
stirring new growth the moment spring arrives.  
Wind-borne, it steals softly into the night,  
nourishing, enriching, delicate, and soundless.  
Country paths black as the clouds above them;  
on a river boat a lone torch flares.  
Come dawn we'll see a landscape moist and pink,  
blossoms heavy over the City of Brocade.



## 绝句漫兴

(九首选六首)

### 其一

眼见客愁愁不醒，  
无赖春色到江亭。  
即遣花开深造次，  
便教莺语太丁宁。



## *Jueju* Composed at Random

### NINE POEMS

(7-ch. *jueju*; in Chengdu; the first, second, fourth, sixth, seventh, and eighth in the series. )

#### 1

Anyone knows a traveler's grief never can be dispelled,  
yet these heedless spring colors descend on my river pavil-  
ion!

Enough that blossoms open in inordinate haste,  
but why make the warblers chime in with so much chatter?





其二

手种桃李非无主，  
野老墙低还似家。  
恰似春风相欺得，  
夜来吹折数枝花。



**2**

Peaches, damsons I planted by hand, in no way ownerless;  
my hedge, low as it is, surrounds a proper dwelling.

Why then are spring winds bent on robbing me,  
blowing in the night, breaking down these flowering branches?



#### 其四

二月已破三月来，  
渐老逢春能几回？  
莫思身外无穷事，  
且尽生前有限杯。



**4**

Second month spent by now, third month arrives;  
old age creeps up, how many more springs will I see?  
But cease thinking of endless matters beyond my ken—  
first let me drink up the cups allowed me in this life!



其六

懒慢无堪不出村，  
呼儿日在掩柴门。  
苍苔浊酒林中静，  
碧水春风野外昏。



**6**

So lazy I never even venture beyond the village;  
sun still high, I call my son to close the bramble gate.  
Emerald moss, muddy wine, all silent here in the woods;  
blue water, spring breeze, dusk over fields beyond.



其七

糝径杨花铺白毡，  
点溪荷叶叠青钱。  
笋根雉子无人见，  
沙上鳧雏傍母眠。





**7**

Willow fluff along the path spreads a white carpet;  
lotus leaves dot the stream, plating it with green coins.  
By bamboo roots, tender shoots where no one sees them;  
on the sand, baby ducks asleep beside their mother.



其八

舍西柔桑叶可拈，  
江畔细麦复纤纤。  
人生几何春已夏，  
不放香醪如蜜甜。

**8**

West of my lodge, lithe mulberries, leaves ready for pick-  
ing;  
by the riverbank, slim, slim, thin stalks of wheat.  
How long our life? —spring already gone to summer.  
Never neglect this fragrant brew, flavor sweet as honey!





## 游修觉寺

野寺江天豁，  
山扉花竹幽。  
诗应有神助，  
吾得及春游。  
径石相萦带，  
川云自去留。  
禅枝宿众鸟，  
漂转暮归愁。



## Visiting Xiujue Temple

(5-ch. regulated verse; written in the spring of 761, in Chengdu, where Xiujue Temple, or the Temple for Cultivating Enlightenment, was located. )

Country temple, river and sky widespreading;  
 mountain doors hidden in blossoms and bamboo.  
 The gods must be helping out my poetry,  
 granting me a spring excursion like this!  
 Stones along the pathway join in twisted strands,  
 clouds on the river linger or press on.  
 Chan branches offer roost for whole flocks of birds,  
 but at twilight the drifter goes home in sorrow. ①

---

① Chan branches are simply branches of trees in the temple grounds, but here the Buddhist term Chan, which literally means "meditation," suggests the calm and safety of temple life, a life denied to Du Fu, "the drifter."



## 后 游

寺忆曾游处，  
桥怜再渡时。  
江山如有待，  
花柳自无私。  
野润烟光薄，  
沙暄日色迟。  
客愁全为减，  
舍此复何之？



## Second Visit

(5-ch. regulated verse; 761 in Chengdu, from a second outing to the Temple for Cultivating Enlightenment. )

I recall the temple, visited before,  
 bridge welcomingly familiar as I cross it again.  
 River and mountains seem to be expecting me,  
 blossoms and willows perfect in their indifference. ①  
 Fields are lush, veiled in thin mist,  
 sands warm, sunlight lingering over them.  
 The traveler's sorrows are wholly banished now—  
 where else but here would I go?

---

① The blossoms and willows neither welcome nor repel the visitor but display the “egoless” attitude appropriate to a Buddhist temple.



## 漫成二首

(选一首)

江皋已仲春，  
花下复清晨。  
仰面贪看鸟，  
回头错应人。  
读书难字过，  
对酒满壶频。  
近识峨眉老，  
知予懒是真。





## On the Spur of the Moment

(5-ch. regulated verse; 761.)

River slopes, already midmonth of spring;  
under the blossoms, bright mornings again.  
I look up, eager to watch the birds;  
turn my head, answering what I took for a call.  
Reading books, I skip the hard parts;  
faced with wine, I keep my cup filled.  
These days I've gotten to know the old man of Emei<sup>①</sup>.  
He understands this idleness that is my true nature.

---

① Emei is a famous mountain southwest of Chengdu.



## 江 亭

坦腹江亭暖，  
长吟野望时。  
水流心不竞，  
云在意俱迟。  
寂寂春将晚，  
欣欣物自私。  
江东犹苦战，  
回首一颦眉。



## River Pavilion

(5-ch. regulated verse; in Chengdu. The “river pavilion” was a small kiosk in Du Fu’s garden.)

I lie off my back, river pavilion warmth,  
intone poems, gaze out over the fields.  
Flowing water—my mind doesn’t try to keep up;  
lingering clouds—my thoughts match their slowness.  
Silently, silently, spring about to end;  
joyful, joyful, each thing in its own nature.  
Can’t go home to my old woods yet—  
to battle gloom I make myself write poems.



## 茅屋为秋风所破歌

八月秋高风怒号，  
卷我屋上三重茅。  
茅飞渡江洒江郊，  
高者挂罥长林梢，  
下者飘转沉塘坳。  
南村群童欺我老无力，  
忍能对面为盗贼。  
公然抱茅入竹去，  
唇焦口燥呼不得。  
归来倚杖自叹息。  
俄顷风定云墨色，  
秋天漠漠向昏黑。  
布衾多年冷似铁，  
骄儿恶卧踏里裂。



## Song: How My Thatch Roof Was Blown Away by Autumn Winds

(7-ch. and irregular lines, old style; in Chengdu. )

Eighth month, midautumn, fierce winds howl and bluster,  
strip away three layers of thatch from my roof!  
Thatch blown over the river, plastered on river fields,  
snagged high up in tips of the tall grove;  
low down, whirling, tumbling, sunk in the swampy pond.  
Gangs of boys from the village to the south—they think I'm  
old and helpless—  
brazenly steal the thatch right before my eyes,  
bundle it up in plain sight, make off into the bamboo!  
Shout till lips are dry, mouth parched, it does no good!  
Back home I lean on my stick, grumble to myself.  
After a while, winds abating, clouds ink-colored,  
autumn sky, wide, vacant, darkens into evening.  
Cloth quilt chilly as iron, so many years in use—  
my children, bad sleepers, have torn the lining with their  
feet.



床头屋漏无干处，  
雨脚如麻未断绝。  
自经丧乱少睡眠，  
长夜沾湿何由彻！  
安得广厦千万间，  
大庇天下寒士俱欢颜，  
风雨不动安如山！呜呼！  
何时眼前突兀见此屋？  
吾庐独破受冻死亦足！

Where the bed is, leaks in the roof, not a dry spot,  
raindrops thick as hemp seedlings, never letting up.  
Since the troubles landed on me, I don't sleep much.  
Long night wet and clammy—how to make it to dawn?  
Where can I get a big broad shelter a thousand, ten thousand  
spans wide,  
huge roof that all the world's poor people can share with smiling faces?  
Wind and rain won't budge it, solid as a mountain—  
Ah-ah, when I can see that roof soaring before my eyes,  
my one hut blown away, my freezing to death—none of that  
will matter!





## 百忧集行

忆年十五心尚孩，  
健如黄犊走复来。  
庭前八月梨枣熟，  
一日上树能千回。  
即今倏忽已五十，  
坐卧只多少行立。  
强将笑语供主人，  
悲见生涯百忧集。  
入门依旧四壁空，  
老妻睹我颜色同。  
痴儿未知父子礼，  
叫怒索饭啼门东。





## Meetingplace of a Hundred Woes: A Ballad

(7-ch. , old style; in Chengdu. )

I remember when I was fifteen, still a child at heart,  
 healthy as a yellow calf racing all around.  
 Eighth month in the garden, pears and jujubes ripe;  
 in one day I shinnied up the trees a thousand times.  
 Now suddenly fifty years old,  
 much sitting, lying down, little walking or standing.  
 I make myself use smiling words speaking to my hosts<sup>①</sup>  
 but see with sorrow that my whole life is a meetingplace of a  
 hundred woes.  
 Go in the door: as usual, four bare walls;  
 my old wife eyes me with a face just like mine,  
 while my foolish children, no respect for their father,  
 howl outside the kitchen door, demanding to be fed.

---

① The friends in Chengdu who helped him meet his daily needs.



## 客 亭

秋窗犹曙色，  
木落更天风。  
日出寒山外，  
江流宿雾中。  
圣朝无弃物，  
老病已成翁。  
多少残生事，  
飘零似转蓬。



## Journeyer's Pavilion

(5-ch. regulated verse; 762. In the summer of this year, rebellion broke out in Chengdu, and Du Fu fled to nearby Zizhou.)

Autumn window still colored by dawn,  
bare trees, high winds that go on blowing:  
sun comes up beyond cold mountains,  
river flows through last night's mist.  
In times of good government, no one unused;<sup>①</sup>  
frail, sickly, I'm an old man now.  
How much of life left me,  
vagrant, tumbleweed rolled around by the wind?

---

① An allusion to *Laozi*, sec. 27: "The sage is always good at rescuing others; hence no one is unused."



## 光禄坂行

山行落日下绝壁，  
西望千山万山赤。  
树枝有鸟乱鸣时，  
暝色无人独归客。  
马惊不忧深谷坠，  
草动只怕长弓射。  
安得更似开元中，  
道路即今多拥隔。



## Crossing Guanglu Pass

(7-ch. , old style; on the way to Zizhou. )

Mountain journey, sunset, down the steep escarpment,  
far to the south a thousand mountains, ten thousand redde-  
ning.

Hour when birds in the branches chatter raucously;  
twilight shadows, no one but the lone traveler.

Though my horse may shy, no fear I'll plunge into deep ra-  
vines,

only, when grasses stir, terror of the long bows of bandits.

How to bring back again that Kaiyuan era<sup>①</sup>?

Roads these days—so many blocks and perils!

---

① The years 713-41, Du Fu's youth, when the empire was peaceful and well gov-  
erned, and roads were safe to travel.



## 谒文公上方

野寺隐乔木，  
山僧高下居。  
石门日色异，  
绛气横扶疏。  
窈窕入风磴，  
长萝纷卷舒。  
庭前猛虎卧，  
遂得文公庐。  
俯视万家邑，  
烟尘对阶除。  
吾师雨花外，



## Visiting the Temple of Abbot Wen

(5-ch. , old style; probably written in 762 when Du Fu was in Zizhou. The identity of Abbot Wen is unknown. )

Country temple hidden in giant trees,  
 mountain monks living high and low on the slope,  
 stone gates, sunlight a different color,  
 red mists trailing this way and that.  
 Pushing deeper, I start up the windy stairway,  
 long creepers tangled, coiling, uncoiling.  
 In the forecourt a fierce tiger crouches;  
 only then do I reach Reverend Wen's lodge. ①  
 I peer down at the town of ten thousand houses,  
 its smoke and grime beyond the flight of steps.  
 Ten years and more, except to preach,

---

① The tiger is clearly intended to symbolize Abbot Wen's spiritual power and attainment, though whether we are meant to see it as a live animal, a stone figure, or simply a figure of speech, I cannot say.



不下十年餘。  
长者自布金，  
禅龕只晏如。  
大珠脱玷翳，  
白月当空虚。  
甫也南北人，  
芜蔓少耘锄。  
久遭诗酒污，  
何事忝簪裾？  
王侯与蝼蚁，  
同尽随丘墟。  
愿闻第一义，  
回向心地初。  
金篦刮眼膜，  
价重百车渠。  
无生有汲引，  
兹理倘吹嘘。





the Master's never been down the mountain. ①  
 Rich men donated their gold;  
 in his hall of worship he's splendidly serene,  
 a great pearl free of fleck or blemish,  
 a bright moon that hangs in empty air.  
 Du Fu's a man now south, now north,  
 snarled in undergrowth seldom mowed.  
 For long now I've been tainted by poetry and wine,  
 somehow acquired the badge and garb of office.  
 But marquises and mole crickets alike  
 in the end go to the graveyard.  
 I long to hear of that Prime Principle,  
 to begin the first stage of mind cultivation.  
 With your golden scalpel cut the film from my eyes—  
 it will be worth more to me than a hundred gems.  
 With the Law of no-birth draw me upward,  
 perhaps with your help to reach that Truth. ②

---

① The word translated as “preach” is literally *yuhua*, “to rain flowers,” a reference to the story of how the heavens rained down flowers when the famous Chinese monk Fayun (467-529) preached on the Lotus Sutra.

② The image in line 25 of the skilled physician using a golden scalpel to cut the film of ignorance from the eyes of his patient derives from the Nirvana Sutra. “No-birth” refers to the ultimate reality of all things, which, as the Heart Sutra states, is characterized by “no birth, no cessation, no impurity, no purity.”



## 望牛头寺

牛头见鹤林，  
梯径绕幽深。  
春色浮山外，  
天河宿殿阴。  
传灯无白日，  
布地有黄金。  
休作狂歌老，  
回看不住心。



## Distant View of the Temple on Ox Head

(5-ch. regulated verse; Zizhou, in the spring of 763.)

I see Crane Forest Temple on Ox Head,  
 path laddering up to it, threading deep shade.  
 Colors of spring float beyond the mountain;  
 the Milky Way sleeps in the shadow of the main hall.  
 Its lamp of doctrine never for a day has ceased shining,  
 its ground paved with alms of yellow gold.  
 I should give up being an old man who sings crazy songs,  
 aim instead for a mind of no-attachment<sup>①</sup>.

---

① The state of Buddhist enlightenment. Crane Forest in the first line is an allusion to the death of Shakyamuni Buddha, when the two *sal* trees between which he was lying burst into white blossoms in their sorrow so that they resembled trees where white cranes were roosting.



## 闻官军收河南河北

剑外忽传收蓟北，  
初闻涕泪满衣裳。  
却看妻子愁何在，  
漫卷诗书喜欲狂。  
白首放歌须纵酒，  
青春作伴好还乡。  
即从巴峡穿巫峡，  
便下襄阳向洛阳。



## On Hearing That Government Forces Have Recovered Henan and Hebei

(7-ch. regulated verse; Zizhou, early 763, when Du Fu received word that the government forces had at last recovered control of the areas north and south of the Yellow River, areas that had been overrun by the rebel armies. Du Fu imagines how he will journey down the Yangzi to his home in Luoyang. Unfortunately, the journey never materialized.)

Beyond Sword Gate suddenly word—Jibei recovered!<sup>①</sup>  
 On first hearing it, tears splash all over my robe.  
 I look at my wife and children—what worries now?  
 hastily bundle up my books, mad with delight.  
 White-haired, singing wild songs, all the wine I want,  
 in green spring the whole family going back home,  
 straight off through Ba Rapids, threading Wu Rapids,  
 then down to Xiangyang, heading for Luoyang!

---

① The northern part of the ancient province of Jizhou, stronghold of the rebels.



## 放 船

送客苍溪县，  
山寒雨不开。  
直愁骑马滑，  
故作泛舟回。  
青惜峰峦过，  
黄知橘柚来。  
江流大自在，  
坐稳兴悠哉。



## Letting the Boat Drift

(5-ch. regulated verse; 763, when the poet had gone to Cangqi, or Green Stream District, to see off a friend and was traveling down the Jialing River.)

Green Stream District, seeing off a traveler,  
mountains icy, rain that never clears.  
Fearful that a mounted horse might slip,  
I return instead by river-borne boat.  
Green—I hate to see the peaks go by so swiftly;  
yellow—I know that oranges and citrons are on the way.  
In the river's flow, what magnificent freedom!  
I sit in silence as delights amble by.



## 登楼

花近高楼伤客心，  
万方多难此登临。  
锦江春色来天地，





## Ascending the Tower

[7-ch. regulated verse; 764, in Chengdu. Like Wordsworth's "London, 1802" ("Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour"), this poem revolves around the longing for a great man of the past, though he is never actually named. Jinjiang, or Brocade River, runs through Chengdu; Yulei, or Jade Rampart, is a mountain northwest of the city. In the previous year, forces invading from Tibet in the west had seized the Tang capital, Chang'an, though the Tang armies quickly regained control of the city. Du Fu, climbing a tower and looking out over the troubled land, laments these threats to the reigning dynasty and recalls the career of Zhuge Liang (181-234), hero of the Three Kingdoms period, who came to the aid of Liu Chan, the Last Ruler of the kingdom of Shu, which had its capital at Chengdu. The tombs of the Last Ruler and Zhuge Liang were located in Chengdu. *The Liangfu Song* was a ballad that Zhuge Liang frequently sang in his younger days. ]

Tall tower, blossoms pressing close—you wound the  
     journeyer's heart;  
 troubles in ten thousand quarters, I climb and look down.  
 Brocade River, hues of spring spread over heaven and earth;



玉垒浮云变古今。  
北极朝廷终不改，  
西山寇盗莫相侵。  
可怜后主还祠庙，  
日暮聊为《梁甫吟》。

Jade Rampart, drifting clouds transform it, now as long ago.  
The dynasty, our North Star, never to be undone—  
marauders of the western mountains, cease your incursions!  
Moved, I recall that even the Last Ruler has his ancestral  
temple.

At close of day I intone the *Liangfu Song*.





## 绝 句

两个黄鹂鸣翠柳，  
一行白鹭上青天。  
窗含西岭千秋雪，  
门泊东吴万里船。



## *Jueju*

### FOUR POEMS

(7-ch. *jueju*, third in a set of four; 764, in Chengdu.)

A pair of yellow warblers sing in the green willow,  
a file of white herons climb the blue sky.  
Framed in my window, the thousand autumn snows of the  
western peaks;  
tied by my gate, a boat to take me ten thousand miles east to  
Wu.



## 破 船

平生江海心，  
宿昔具扁舟。  
岂惟青溪上，  
日傍柴门游。  
苍皇避乱兵，  
缅邈怀旧丘。  
邻人亦已非，  
野竹独修修。  
船舷不重扣，  
埋没已经秋。  
仰看西飞翼，  
下愧东逝流。



## Broken Boat

(5-ch. , old style; written in 764 when Du Fu returned to his “thatched hall” in Chengdu after having fled for a time because of local rebellion. “Rivers and lakes” in the first line refers to the lower Yangzi valley where Du Fu wandered in his youth and, by extension, to an area of peace and freedom from worldly cares. )

All my life a heart set on rivers and lakes,  
 long ago got my little boat ready,  
 not meaning it just for clear streams here,  
 daily outings by my brushwood gate.  
 Then trouble and chaos, fleeing rebel troops,  
 all the time longing for these old hills.  
 Now I find neighbors are no more,  
 only wild bamboo that grows taller and taller.  
 My boat—gunwales I'll never thump again—  
 sunk in water a whole autumn by now.  
 Looking up, I see birds winging west;  
 look down, shamed by the river's eastward flow.



故者或可掘，  
新者亦易求。  
所悲数奔窜，  
白屋难久留。





Old boat—possibly I could raise it,  
or easily enough find a new one.  
What pains me is having to run away so often.  
Even a simple hut I can't stay in for long!



## 忆 昔

(二首选一首)

忆昔开元全盛日，  
小邑犹藏万家室。  
稻米流脂粟米白，  
公私仓廩俱丰实。  
九州道路无豺虎，  
远行不劳吉日出。  
齐纨鲁缟车班班，  
男耕女桑不相失。  
宫中圣人奏云门，  
天下朋友皆胶漆。  
百馀年间未灾变，



## Recalling the Past

(7-ch. , old style, second of two poems with this title; 764, when Du Fu had been assigned a post as military adviser under the governor general of Chengdu. )

I recall the past, Kaiyuan's days of splendor,  
 when even little towns boasted ten thousand households,  
 rice grains like liquid lard, glutinous rice white,  
 public and private granaries alike full to overflowing.  
 Roads of all nine ancient provinces free of bandits;  
 starting on distant journeys, no one bothered about a  
 "lucky" day.

Qi silks, Lu white silk, carload on carload;  
 men plowed, women tended silkworms, each in proper sea-  
 son;

in the palace the sage ruler, soothed by sacred music,  
 throughout the empire, comrades forever faithful and true.  
 A hundred years and more, no calamities, no upheavals,



叔孙礼乐萧何律。  
岂闻一绢直万钱？  
有田种谷今流血。  
洛阳宫殿烧焚尽，  
宗庙新除狐兔穴。  
伤心不忍问耆旧，  
复恐初从乱离说。  
小臣鲁钝无所能，  
朝廷记识蒙禄秩。  
周宣中兴望我皇，  
洒血江汉身衰疾。



rites and music of Shusun Tong, laws of Xiao He.<sup>①</sup>  
 Who then heard of a bolt of silk costing ten thousand cash?  
 But fields sown in grain flow now with blood,  
 Luoyang's palaces burned to the ground,  
 in new steps of ancestral temples, foxes and rabbits burrow.  
 I dare not ask the old people, so painful to hear,  
 fearful they'll recite again their tales of rebellion.  
 I, a paltry subject, stupid, ineffectual,  
 enrolled among the court officials, recipient of a stipend—  
 Our Sovereign—like Xuan of Zhou, may he renew the  
 nation's fortunes!<sup>②</sup>  
 Old, ailing, my tears flow into the Yangzi and the Han.

① Shusun Tong and Xiao He were statesmen of the early Han dynasty who fashioned fitting rituals and legal codes for the empire.

② King Xuan (r. 827-781 B. C. E. ), by means of his wise rule, drove back the foreign tribes threatening China and renewed the waning fortunes of the Zhou dynasty.



## 绝句二首

### 其一

迟日江山丽，  
春风花草香。  
泥融飞燕子，  
沙暖睡鸳鸯。

## Two *Jueju*

(5-ch. *jueju*; probably written around 764 in Chengdu. In line 3 the swallows are gathering mud to build their nests. )

### 1

In late sun, the beauty of river and hill;  
on spring wind, fragrance of flower and grass:  
where mud is soft the swallows fly,  
where sands are warm, mandarin ducks doze.





其二

江碧鸟逾白，  
山青花欲燃。  
今春看又过，  
何日是归年？





**2**

River cerulean, birds whiter against it;  
mountains green, blossoms about to flame:  
as I watch, this spring too passes—  
what year will I ever go home?



## 倦 夜

竹凉侵卧内，  
野月满庭隅。  
重露成涓滴，  
稀星乍有无。  
暗飞萤自照，  
水宿鸟相呼。  
万事干戈里，  
空悲清夜徂。



## Restless Night

(5-ch. regulated verse; 764.)

Cool of bamboo invades my room,  
moonlight from the fields fills the corners of the court;  
dew gathers till it falls in drops;  
a scattering of stars, now there, now gone.  
A firefly threading the darkness makes its own light;  
birds at rest on the water call to one another;  
all these lie within the shadow of the sword—  
powerless I grieve as the clear night passes.



## 宿 府

清秋幕府井梧寒，  
独宿江城蜡炬残。  
永夜角声悲自语，  
中天月色好谁看。  
风尘荏苒音书绝，  
关塞萧条行路难。  
已忍伶俜十年事，  
强移栖息一枝安。



## Night Duty at the Government Office

(7-ch. regulated verse; 764, in Chengdu.)

Clear autumn, government office, by the well a paulownia  
     tree cold;  
 river town, alone on night duty, candles burning low:  
 bugle sounds in the long night—downcast, I talk to myself;  
 overhead, the moon's brilliance—fine, but who looks at it?  
 War's ceaseless dust and tumult, no letters getting through;  
 border outpost desolation, roads impassable—  
 after ten years enduring the poorest of luck  
 I force myself to rest here on this one branch<sup>①</sup>.

---

① Reference to *Zhuangzi*, ch. 1: “When the tailorbird builds her nest in the deep wood, she uses no more than one branch.”



## 独 坐

悲愁回白首，  
倚杖背孤城。  
江敛洲渚出，  
天虚风物清。  
沧溟服衰谢，  
朱绂负平生。  
仰羨黄昏鸟，  
投林羽翮轻。



## Sitting Alone

(5-ch. regulated verse; 764, in Chengdu.)

Saddened by autumn, white head turning,  
propped on a cane, lone city at my back;  
river waters have fallen, shoals and banks exposed,  
skies empty, landscape crisp and clear.  
Old age cheats me of blue-wave wanderings;  
against lifelong inclinations I put on the red badge of office.  
Looking up, I envy birds in the yellow dusk,  
bound for their forest on light-feathered wings.



## 春日江村

(五首选一首)

扶病垂朱绂，  
归休步紫苔。  
郊扉存晚计，  
幕府愧群材。  
燕外晴丝卷，  
鸥边水叶开。  
邻家送鱼鳖，  
问我数能来。





## Spring Day, River Village

(5-ch. regulated verse, fourth in a set of five poems with this title; 765, in Chengdu. In the first month of this year Du Fu resigned his official post because of poor health and returned to private life in his thatched hall. )

Aided in infirmity, I dangled the red badge;  
retired, back home, I stroll over purple moss.  
Behind suburban gates, I plan for old age;  
in government halls the wealth of talent put me to shame.  
Beyond the swallows, heat haze spirals up;  
where the gulls are, leaves of water plants unfurl.  
My neighbors send me fish and turtles  
and come quite often to ask how I am.



## 去 蜀

五载客蜀郡，  
一年居梓州。  
如何关塞阻，  
转作潇湘游。  
世事已黄发，  
残生随白鸥。  
安危大臣在，  
不必泪长流。



## Leaving Shu

(5-ch. regulated verse; written in the fifth month of 765 when Du Fu left Chengdu, the main city of the Shu region, intending to journey down the Yangzi to the east. )

Five years a sojourner in the district of Shu,  
 one year spent in Zizhou;  
 why stay cooped up in this border outpost?  
 I'll break away, be off to Xiao and Xiang excursions!<sup>①</sup>  
 All hopes ended, hair gone gray,  
 for the years left, I'll go with the white gulls.  
 The nation's safety or peril—leave that to the great states-  
 men.  
 Why must I go on shedding tears forever?

---

① Xiao and Xiang, noted for their natural beauty, are rivers in the region south of Lake Dongting in Hunan.



## 旅夜书怀

细草微风岸，  
危樯独夜舟。  
星垂平野阔，  
月涌大江流。  
名岂文章著，  
官应老病休。  
飘飘何所似？  
天地一沙鸥。



## A Traveler at Night Writes His Thoughts

(5-ch. regulated verse; 765. )

Delicate grasses, faint wind on the bank;  
stark mast, a lone night boat;  
stars hang down, over broad fields sweeping;  
the moon boils up, on the great river flowing.  
Fame—how can my writings win me that?  
Office—age and sickness have brought it to an end.  
Fluttering, fluttering, where is my likeness?  
Sky and earth and one sandy gull.



## 漫成一绝

江月去人只数尺，  
风灯照夜欲三更。  
沙头宿鹭联拳静，  
船尾跳鱼拔刺鸣。

## On the Spur of the Moment

(7-ch. *jueju*; 766, when the poet was traveling down the Yangzi from Yun'an to Kuizhou. The third watch is the period around midnight. )

River moon barely a foot or two away from us;  
a windblown torch lights the night, nearly third watch.  
Along the sand, roosting herons bunched together, silent;  
by the stern a fish leaps up, comes down with a smack.





## 负薪行

夔州处女发半华，  
四十五十无夫家。  
更遭丧乱嫁不售，  
一生抱恨堪咨嗟。  
土风坐男使女立，  
男当门户女出入。  
十犹八九负薪归，  
卖薪得钱应供给。  
至老双鬟只垂颈，  
野花山叶银钗并。  
筋力登危集市门，  
死生射利兼盐井。  
面妆首饰杂啼痕，  
地褊衣寒困石根。





## Ballad of the Firewood Vendors

(7-ch. , old style; 766 , describing local customs in Kuizhou , an area of steep hillsides along the Yangzi. )

Kuizhou women , hair half gray ,  
 forty , fifty , and still no husbands ;  
 since the ravages of rebellion , harder than ever to marry—  
 a whole life steeped in bitterness and long sighs .  
 Local custom decrees that men sit , women stand ;  
 men mind the house door , women go out and work ,  
 at eighteen , nineteen , off peddling firewood ,  
 with money they get from firewood , making ends meet .  
 Till they're old , hair in two buns dangling to the neck ,  
 stuck with wild flowers , a mountain leaf , a silver pin ,  
 they struggle up the steep paths , flock to the market gate ,  
 risk their lives for extra gain by dipping from salt wells .  
 Faces powdered , heads adorned , sometimes a trace of tears ,  
 cramped fields , thin clothing , the weariness of stony slopes—



若道巫山女粗丑，  
何得此有昭君村。



But if you say all are ugly as the women of Witch's Mountain,  
how to account for Zhaojun, born in a village to the north?<sup>①</sup>

---

① Wushan, or Witch's Mountain, was on the Yangzi near Kuizhou. Wang Zhaojun was a court lady of Han times, famous for her beauty, who came from a village near Kuizhou.



## 江 上

江上日多雨，  
萧萧荆楚秋。  
高风下木叶，  
永夜揽貂裘。  
勋业频看镜，  
行藏独倚楼。  
时危思报主，  
衰谢不能休。



## On the River

(5-ch. regulated verse; in Kuizhou. Jing-Chu is an old name for the area along the Yangzi where Kuizhou was situated. )

On the river, day after day so much rain—  
dreary, desolate, the Jing-Chu autumn.  
High winds strip the leaves from the trees;  
through the long night I hug my marten-fur coat.  
Political accomplishments? I stare at the mirror.  
Wisdom in conduct? Alone, I lean from an upper floor.  
In these perilous times, how to repay my Sovereign?  
Old and frail, I can't stop thinking of it.



## 返 照

楚王宫北正黄昏，  
白帝城西过雨痕。  
返照入江翻石壁，  
归云拥树失山村。  
衰年肺病惟高枕，  
绝塞愁时早闭门。  
不可久留豺虎乱，  
南方实有未招魂。



## Late Sunshine

(7-ch. regulated verse; in Kuizhou. A palace of the king of the ancient kingdom of Chu was said to have been situated at the foot of Witch's Mountain east of Kuizhou. White Emperor City was a rocky fortress built by a warlord of the first century C. E. on the site that later became the city of Kuizhou. )

North of the Chu king's palace, yellow twilight;  
west of White Emperor City, traces of passing rain;  
late sunlight floods the river, shimmers over rocky scarps;  
returning clouds envelop the trees, swallow up the mountain  
village.

Lung trouble in my declining years—I sleep on a high pil-  
low;

remote outpost, worrisome times—I close my gate early.

In this bandit-ridden region, can't stay for long;

here in the south, truly, a soul waiting to be recalled. ①

---

① Du Fu is referring to the *Summons to the Soul*, a poem written to call back the departed soul of the exiled poet and statesman Qu Yuan (third century B. C. E. ), who drowned himself in a river in the region of Chu, and is hinting that it is time that he himself be recalled to the capital.



## 中 宵

西阁百寻馀，  
中宵步绮疏。  
飞星过水白，  
落月动沙虚。  
择木知幽鸟，  
潜波想巨鱼。  
亲朋满天地，  
兵甲少来书。





## Midnight

(5-ch. regulated verse; 766, in Kuizhou. The “western lodge” was a two-story building situated at the top of a steep cliff where Du Fu lived for a time, apparently some kind of guest house for officials. )

Western lodge atop a hundred-span height;  
 at midnight I pace by gauze window curtains;  
 a shooting star arcs the river, whitening the water;  
 the setting moon bathes the sands in empty glow.  
 Hidden birds, I know, are in their chosen trees;  
 I picture huge fish that lurk beneath the waves.  
 I've kin and friends enough to fill the world,  
 but in this time of arms and armor, few letters get through.



## 第五弟丰独在江左近三四 载寂无消息觅使寄此二首

(选一首)

闻汝依山寺，  
杭州定越州。  
风尘淹别日，  
江汉失清秋。  
影着啼猿树，



## They Say You're Staying in a Mountain Temple

(5-ch. regulated verse, second of two poems; written in 766 when Du Fu was in Kuizhou on the upper Yangzi, the Yangzi-Han region mentioned in the poem. His younger brother Feng was in the seacoast area south of the Yangzi delta. Du Fu had one older brother, who apparently died early, and four younger brothers actually, half brothers. Counting all the brothers, Feng was the fifth. )

*My fifth brother Feng is alone in the region east of the Yangzi, and for three or four years I have had no word from him. I am looking for someone to take him these two poems.*

They say you're staying in a mountain temple, in Hangzhou—or is it Yuezhou?  
The wind and grime of war so long have kept us parted!  
In Yangzi-Han, bright autumns waste away.  
While my shadow rests by monkey-loud trees,



魂飘结蜃楼。  
明年下春水，  
东尽白云求。



my soul whirls off to where shell-born towers rise. ①  
Next year on floods of spring I'll go downriver,  
to the white clouds at the end of the east I'll look for you!

---

① Towerlike mirages at sea, believed to be formed by the breath of mollusks.



## 秋夜客舍

露下天高秋水清，  
空山独夜旅魂惊。  
疏灯自照孤帆宿，  
新月犹悬双杵鸣。  
南国再逢人卧病，  
北书不至雁无情。



## Night

(7-ch. regulated verse; 766, in Kuizhou.)

Dew has fallen, a tall sky, clear autumn air;  
empty hills, solitary night, the traveler's spirits prone to alarm;  
a dim lamp lights it, lone sailboat moored till morning;  
new moon still hangs on the horizon, a pair of fulling mallets  
pounding.<sup>①</sup>  
Southern chrysanthemums—again I encounter them, laid up  
by sickness this time;  
no letters from the north—the wild goose has no pity.<sup>②</sup>

---

① Fulling mallets are used to soften cloth and spread its fibers when women cut and sew clothes for winter.

② The previous year Du Fu had seen the blooming of the southern chrysanthemums in Yun'an, farther upstream on the Yangzi. In Chinese lore the wild goose is the bearer of letters.



步蟾倚杖看牛斗，  
银汉遥应接凤城。





I stroll by the eaves, lean on my cane, gaze at the Herd-  
boy<sup>①</sup>;  
far in the distance the Milky Way must reach to the  
Emperor's city!

---

① The Herdboy is the star Altair. According to legend, the Herdboy fell in love with the Weaving Girl, the star Vega. They were married, but after her marriage the Weaving Girl neglected her weaving. Her father punished the couple by moving the Weaving Girl to the opposite side of the Milky Way and decreeing that they meet only once a year, on the night of the seventh day of the seventh month, when friendly magpies form a bridge for them over the River of Heaven, or Milky Way.



## 宗武生日

小子何时见？  
高秋此日生。  
自从都邑语，  
已伴老夫名。  
诗是吾家事，  
人传世上情。  
熟精《文选》理，  
休觅彩衣轻。  
凋瘵筵初秩，  
欹斜坐不成。  
流霞分片片，  
涓滴就徐倾。



## Zongwu's Birthday

[5-ch. regulated verse. Zongwu, nicknamed Pony Boy (see poem 28), was Du Fu's second son; he was probably about fourteen at this time. The "decrepit one" is Du Fu himself.]

Young boy, when did we first see you?  
 On this day deep in autumn you were born.  
 Ever since you learned the speech of the capital,  
 your name's been paired with that of your old father!  
 Poetry is our family undertaking—  
 the world is taking note of how you do.  
 Study diligently the principles of the *Wenxuan*;  
 never mind cavorting in gaudy colored clothes. ①  
 Decrepit one, they're putting out the seating mats,  
 but you're so tottery you can't sit up in your seat.  
 Now let the fine wine flow, to each his portion,  
 tip the jar slowly, pouring drop by drop.

① The *Wenxuan*, or *Literary Anthology*, a lengthy compendium of prose and poetry compiled by Xiao Tong (501-531) of the Liang dynasty, was regarded as the foundation of a literary education. The next line is a reference to the philosopher Lao Laizi who, though an old man, continued to dress in bright children's clothing and play in the presence of his parents, that they might forget their own advanced age.



## 秋兴八首

### 其一

玉露凋伤枫树林，  
巫山巫峡气萧森。  
江间波浪兼天涌，  
塞上风云接地阴。



## Autumn Meditations

### EIGHT POEMS

(7-ch. regulated verse, a set of eight poems; written in Kuizhou in the fall of 766. The poems deal with the coming of autumn—always a time of sadness in Chinese literature—the local scene, Du Fu’s memories of the capital as it was before the rebellion led to its destruction, the perils facing the nation, and the poet’s own old age, declining health, and failure to achieve anything of significance in political life. The first three poems focus mainly on the Kuizhou scene, while the latter five center around Du Fu’s memories of Chang’an, though the two locales are often fused within a single poem. Cast in the highly demanding seven-character regulated verse form, the poems are considered by many to be among the greatest works of classical Chinese poetry, though due to their allusive and often mysterious language, they seem to defy satisfactory translation.)

#### 1

Icy dew withers and scars the maple groves;  
 Witch’s Mountain, Witch’s Gorge, bleak with autumn’s  
     chill;  
 on the river, waves leap up to join the sky;  
 above the outpost, windblown clouds blanket the earth in  
     darkness.



丛菊两开他日泪，  
孤舟一系故园心。  
寒衣处处催刀尺，  
白帝城高急暮砧。

Clumps of chrysanthemums open again—tears for days now  
gone;  
lone boat moored by a single strand—my heart in the gardens  
of home.  
Cold-month clothes everywhere urging speed with ruler and  
scissors;  
high above White Emperor City, the swift pounding of eve-  
ning mallets.





其二

夔府孤城落日斜，  
每依北斗望京华。  
听猿实下三声泪，  
奉使虚随八月槎。  
画省香炉违伏枕，  
山楼粉堞隐悲笳。  
请看石上藤萝月，  
已映洲前芦荻花。





**2**

Setting sun angles over Kuizhou's lone walls;  
Big Dipper my guide, I gaze far off toward the shining capital.

I hear gibbons cry three times, and in truth tears come  
down;<sup>①</sup>

charged with a mission, vainly I boarded the eighth-month  
raft.<sup>②</sup>

Picture-hung ministry, its incense remote from the pillow I  
lie on;<sup>③</sup>

mountain towers, their white-daubed parapets dimmed with  
plaintive flutes.

Look there! Moonlight on vines and creepers that cloak the  
rocks—

already it shines on the rush and reed blossoms of the river  
shoals.

---

① An old song says that hearing three cries from the gibbons of the Yangzi gorges will invariably move one to tears.

② A double reference to the story of how the explorer Zhang Qian, on a mission for Emperor Wu of the Han, set out by raft and traced the Yellow River to its source; and to a story of how a man living by the sea boarded a raft that appeared in the eighth month and took him to the River of Heaven, the Milky Way. Both journeys led to success, whereas Du Fu's official career ended in failure.

③ Du Fu is recalling times when he was an official in the Department of State Affairs, whose walls were decorated with portraits of distinguished men. Women attendants burned incense to perfume the robes of officials spending the night on duty at the ministry.



其三

千家山郭静朝晖，  
日日江楼坐翠微。  
信宿渔人还泛泛，  
清秋燕子故飞飞。  
匡衡抗疏功名薄，  
刘向传经心事违。  
同学少年多不贱，  
五陵衣马自轻肥。



3

Mountain-walled, a thousand houses, stillness of morning  
 sun;  
 day after day in my river tower I sit in midslope blue.  
 Two nights running, fishermen's boats still bob-bobbing on  
 the water;  
 clear autumn, yet the swallows keep on darting, darting to  
 and fro.  
 Like Kuang Heng, I submitted my memorial, won scant mer-  
 it or fame,  
 like Liu Xiang, passed on the classics, results hardly what  
 I'd hoped for. ①  
 Fellows I went to school with, most of them now far from  
 poor;  
 in the five tomb towns, wearing light furs, they ride their fat  
 horses. ②

---

① Kuang Heng and Liu Xiang were Han period officials who won imperial favor through the memorials they submitted or their labors in collating classical texts, in Liu Xiang's case handing on his duties to his son, Liu Xin. But the memorial Du Fu submitted on behalf of Fang Guan merely roused the emperor's ire, and his efforts to win a position he could pass on to his son ended in failure.

② The five tomb towns were suburbs of Chang'an that grew up around the tombs of five Han emperors and were peopled in Tang times by wealthy or influential families. The line alludes to a passage in *Analects* VI, 4, that speaks disparagingly of an official who went about "wearing light furs and drawn by fat horses."



其四

闻道长安似弈棋，  
百年世事不胜悲。  
王侯第宅皆新主，  
文武衣冠异昔时。  
直北关山金鼓振，  
征西车马羽书驰。  
鱼龙寂寞秋江冷，  
故国平居有所思。



4

I've heard them say, Chang'an's like a chessboard;  
sad beyond bearing, the happenings of these hundred  
years!<sup>①</sup>

Mansions of peers and princes, all with new owners now;  
in civil or martial cap and garb, not the same as before.  
Over mountain passes, due north, gongs and drums resound;  
wagons and horses pressing west speed the feather-decked  
dispatches.<sup>②</sup>

Fish and dragons sunk in sleep, autumn rivers cold;  
old homeland, those peaceful times, forever in my thoughts!

---

① As in a game of chess, Chang'an was seized in 756 by An Lushan's rebel troops, retaken by the government forces the following year, seized by Tibetan invaders in 763, and retaken by the Tang troops in the same year.

② The first line of the couplet refers to measures taken to block the Uighur invasions from the north, the second, to troops sent west to repel the Tibetans. Feathers were attached to military dispatches to indicate the need for rapid delivery.



其五

蓬莱宫阙对南山，  
承露金茎霄汉间。  
西望瑶池降王母，  
东来紫气满函关。  
云移雉尾开宫扇，  
日绕龙鳞识圣颜。



**5**

Gates of Penglai Palace look toward the southern mountains;  
the dew-catcher's golden shaft cleaves the night sky. ①

Far to the west the Queen Mother descends by Jasper Lake;  
purple emanations come from the east, flooding Hangu  
Pass. ②

Like clouds parting, pheasant-tailed screens unfold;  
dragon scales bathed in sun, we behold the august counte-  
nance. ③

---

① Penglai, a palace of Chang'an in Han times, was named after the mythic island in the eastern sea where immortal spirits were said to live. In Chang'an, Emperor Wu of the Han erected a colossal statue with a pan in its hand for collecting night dew. The dew was believed to grant long life to anyone drinking it. Du Fu uses Han dynasty terms to refer indirectly to Emperor Xuanzong and his Daoist-inspired search for longevity.

② More Daoist allusions. The Queen Mother of the West was an immortal who feasted an ancient Chinese ruler at Jasper Lake, in the Kunlun Mountains west of China, and later descended from the sky to instruct Emperor Wu of the Han in the arts of longevity. When the sage Laozi, coming from the east, approached the Hangu Pass, his arrival was signaled by purple emanations. The keeper of the pass, realizing that the sage was about to leave China, asked him to write a book, whereupon Laozi wrote the Daoist classic that bears his name.

③ Du Fu is recalling his days as an official in Chang'an, when he attended dawn audiences with the emperor. The emperor, wearing robes figured with dragon designs, sat behind screens ornamented with pheasant tail feathers, which opened at the time of the audience. The last line refers to the doors of the throne room, decorated in a blue-lacquered chain pattern.



一卧沧江惊岁晚，  
几回青琐点朝班。



I, who lie beside the vast river, startled at the waning year,  
how often by blue-patterned doors have I heard the call to  
morning audience!





其六

瞿塘峡口曲江头，  
万里风烟接素秋。  
花萼夹城通御气，  
芙蓉小苑入边愁。  
珠帘绣柱围黄鹄，  
锦缆牙樯起白鸥。  
回首可怜歌舞地，  
秦中自出帝王州。



**6**

Mouth of Qutang Gorge, Winding River Park:

ten thousand miles of wind and haze couple them in pale autumn. ①

Corridors of Flower Calyx Hall imbued with the imperial aura;

the little Hibiscus Garden, invaded by frontier woes. ②

Pearl-sewn blinds, embroidered columns, surround the yellow swans;

brocade hawsers, ivory masts, startle the white gulls. ③

I turn my head, mourning for those sites of song and dance, land of Qin, from ancient times, province of emperors and kings.

---

① The mouth of the Qutang Gorge of the Yangzi was just west of Kuizhou. Winding River was a park in Chang'an (see poem 14).

② Flower Calyx was a hall in the Xingqing Palace in Chang'an frequented by the emperor. The corridors led to the Hibiscus Garden in Winding River Park. The second line of the couplet might be interpreted as meaning that the garden has been invaded by frontier soldiers of the An Lushan rebellion, or it might mean that memories of the garden fill the poet's sad thoughts as he resides in the frontier region of Kuizhou.

③ These lines depict the palaces of the Tang rulers, with beautiful blinds and columns encircling an inner lake where pleasure boats with ivory-decorated masts moved among water birds.



其七

昆明池水汉时功，  
武帝旌旗在眼中。  
织女机丝虚夜月，  
石鲸鳞甲动秋风。  
波漂菰米沉云黑，  
露冷莲房坠粉红。  
关塞极天唯鸟道，  
江湖满地一渔翁。



**7**

Kunming Lake, work project of Han times,  
yet before my very eyes, Emperor Wu's flags and banners!<sup>①</sup>  
Weaving Girl, loom threads idle in the evening moonlight;  
stone whale, scales and carapace wobbling in the autumn  
wind.<sup>②</sup>

Waves float wild rice grains, blackening the sunken clouds;  
dew chills the lotus calyx, its spilled pollen red.

From this border outpost to the end of the sky, a road only  
birds can travel.

Here where rivers and lakes strew the earth, one old fisher-  
man.

---

① Kunming Lake, just west of Chang'an, was constructed by Emperor Wu of the Han and used for training his ships in naval warfare; the flags are those of the ships. Once again Du Fu is using Han period allusions to refer to Tang times.

② On the edge of Kunming Lake stood a statue of the mythic Weaving Girl (see poem 107). In the waters of the lake was a stone whale that was said to roar and waggle its flippers and tail in stormy weather. The whale seems to have been of a somewhat peculiar kind.



其八

昆吾御宿自逶迤，  
紫阁峰阴入汉陂。  
香稻啄余鹦鹉粒，  
碧梧栖老凤凰枝。  
佳人拾翠春相问，  
仙侣同舟晚更移。  
彩笔昔曾干气象，  
白头吟望苦低垂。



8

Kunwu, Yusu, a twisty, winding way;  
 Purple Tower Peak, its shady side cast in Meipi Pond.<sup>①</sup>  
 Fragrant rice: peck, leave behind, parrots, grains;  
 emerald parasol tree: nest, grow old, phoenixes, branches.<sup>②</sup>  
 Picking greens with a lovely lady, we talk together in the  
 spring,  
 with immortals in the same boat, set out again at evening.<sup>③</sup>  
 Once my gaudy writing brush stirred the very elements;  
 now I drone, gaze into the distance, white head bitterly  
 bowed.

---

① Kunwu is a region south of Chang'an, Yusu a river in the region; Purple Tower Peak is in the Southern Mountains, south of the capital near Meipi Pond. Du Fu is recalling outings in the capital area.

② The words are scrambled for poetic effect; normal word order would be: Parrots peck, leave behind grains of fragrant rice; phoenixes nest, grow old in branches of the emerald parasol tree.

③ Commentators suggest various allusions that may be relevant, though none of them make clear just what the lines are about. Possibly, they refer to Du Fu's memories of his days in Chang'an.



## 解 闷

(十二首选一首)

草阁柴扉星散居，  
浪翻江黑雨飞初。  
山禽引子哺红果，  
溪友得钱留白鱼。





## Dispelling Gloom

(7-ch. *jueju*, a series of twelve poems on various themes; 766 in Kuizhou. This is the first in the series. )

Thatched cottage, brushwood door, houses strewn like stars;  
waves curl up, the river darkens, first flying drops of rain.  
Wild birds lead their chicks, feed them by mouth with red  
berries;  
valley women collect my money, leave me white fish in re-  
turn.



## 醉为马坠诸公携酒相看

甫也诸侯老宾客，  
罢酒酣歌拓金戟。  
骑马忽忆少年时，  
散蹄迸落瞿塘石。  
白帝城门水云外，  
低身直下八千尺。  
粉堞电转紫游缰，  
东得平冈出天壁。  
江村野堂争入眼，  
垂鞭鞞鞞凌紫陌。  
向来皓首惊万人，  
自倚红颜能骑射。



## Drunk, I Fell Off My Horse; Friends Came to See Me, Bringing Wine

(7-ch. , old style; in Kuizhou. )

Du Fu, aging guest of the governor,  
done drinking, singing songs, brandishing a golden halberd,  
mounted his horse and suddenly recalled his younger days,  
set the horse's hoofs flying, scattering Qutang stones;  
from White Emperor City, beyond river clouds,  
hunched in the saddle, plunged eight thousand feet straight  
down.

White-daubed walls pass like lightning, purple reins slack,  
east till I gain the level hills, emerge from soaring cliffs.  
River hamlets, country houses, vie to be first in my sight;  
holding back the whip, easing the bit, I reach the open high-  
road.

White-haired perhaps, but still able to astound the popu-  
lace,  
remembering how well in my youth I could ride and shoot—



安知决臆追风足，  
朱汗骖驔犹喷玉。  
不虞一蹶终损伤，  
人生快意多所辱。  
职当忧戚伏衾枕，  
况乃迟暮加烦促。  
明知来问腆我颜，  
杖藜强起依僮仆。  
语尽还成开口笑，  
提携别扫清溪曲。  
酒肉如山又一时，  
初筵哀丝动豪竹。  
共指西日不相贷，  
喧呼且覆杯中渌。



how did I know that this fleet-footed mount, racing at such  
     speed,  
 red with sweat, straining, breathing out gobs of froth,  
 would unexpectedly stumble and land me in a nasty spill?  
 In life, get too carried away and you meet much shame!  
 That's my chief sorrow as I lie on these quilts and pillows,  
 plus the added ills and discomforts of old age.  
 Friends come to inquire. Brazen as I am,  
 with goosefoot cane I force myself to sit up, a servant to lean  
     on;  
 then, explanations over, we open our mouths and give a big  
     laugh.  
 They take my hand, sweep a special place by a bend of the  
     clear stream;  
 wine and meat heaped in mountains—off we go again!  
 As the feast begins, sad strings, huge flutes sounding,  
 together we point at the westering sun—won't be with us  
     much longer!  
 Amid much clamor, we drain our cups of filtered wine.



何必走马来为问？  
君不见嵇康养生遭杀戮。



But why race your horses, coming to ask how I am?  
As you well know,  
Ji Kang, that nourisher of life, got himself executed—<sup>①</sup>

---

① The poet Ji Kang (223-262) is famous for his philosophical essays, among them one on “Nourishing Life.” Embroiled in a court quarrel, he was arrested, slandered, and condemned to execution. Du Fu ends his poem by merely pointing out this irony, but the implication clearly is: “Though I may be poor at ‘nourishing life’—witness my fall from a horse—I don’t go so far as to get myself killed.”



## 九 日

(五首选一首)

重阳独酌杯中酒，  
抱病独登江上台。  
竹叶于人既无分，  
菊花从此不须开。  
殊方日落玄猿哭，  
旧国霜前白雁来。  
弟妹萧条各何在，  
干戈衰谢两相催。





## Ninth Day

### FIVE POEMS

[7-ch. regulated verse, first of five poems (only four in the set are extant); probably written in the fall of 766 in Kuizhou, on the Double Ninth Festival, held on the ninth day of the ninth month. On this day it was the custom for people to join with family and friends, climb to a high place, and drink wine with chrysanthemum blossoms floating in it to ensure good health. Du Fu, his health failing, observes the occasion alone. “Bamboo Leaf” in line 3 is a type of wine. ]

Double Ninth, alone to pour the cup of wine;  
 lugging my ailments, I set off, climb the riverside terrace.  
 Bamboo Leaf, but not a sip of it for me;  
 from now on chrysanthemums no longer need bloom.  
 In this far-off quarter, sun setting, dark monkeys howl;  
 before the frost, from my homeland come wild geese, white.  
 No word from younger brothers and sister—where are  
     they now?  
 Strife of arms, crippling age, both hurtle me onward!



## 登 高

风急天高猿啸哀，  
渚清沙白鸟飞回。  
无边落木萧萧下，  
不尽长江滚滚来。  
万里悲秋常作客，  
百年多病独登台。  
艰难苦恨繁霜鬓，  
潦倒新停浊酒杯。



## Climbing to a High Place

(7-ch. regulated verse; on the same subject as the preceding poem, perhaps one of the “five poems” of that series. )

Wind shrill in the tall sky, gibbons wailing dolefully;  
 beaches clean, sands white, overhead the circling birds:  
 leaves fall, no end to them, rustling, rustling down;  
 ceaselessly the Long River rushes, rushes on.  
 Autumn sorrow ten thousand miles from home, always a  
     traveler;  
 sickness dogging each year of my life, I climb the terrace a-  
     lone.  
 Troubles, vexations, coat my sidelocks with frost;  
 listless at this new blow, I forgo the cup of muddy wine. ①

---

① Because of illness, Du Fu was forced to give up the customary Double Ninth helping of wine.



## 阁 夜

岁暮阴阳催短景，  
天涯霜雪霁寒霄。  
五更鼓角声悲壮，  
三峡星河影动摇。  
野哭千家闻战伐，  
夷歌数处起渔樵。



## Night in My Lodge

(7-ch. regulated verse; 766, in Kuizhou.)

Year ending, Yin and Yang hasten the already brief day-  
light;  
here at sky's edge, frost and snow, then clear cold nights;  
fifth watch drums and bugles, sad and militant sound;  
over the Three Gorges, the Starry River, lights moving, swa-  
ying.<sup>①</sup>  
Weeping in the fields—a thousand households mourn their  
battle-dead;  
in how many places barbarian songs rise up from fishermen  
and woodcutters?<sup>②</sup>

---

① The fifth watch is around 4 A. M. The Starry River is the Milky Way; the swaying of its lights portends troubled times.

② Songs sung by the non-Han Chinese inhabitants of the region.



卧龙跃马终黄土，  
人事音书漫寂寥。



Sleeping Dragon, Prancing Horse, in the end, yellow  
dust. ①

Human affairs, word from others—I live utterly cut off from  
these.

---

① Sleeping Dragon was the sobriquet of the Shu kingdom statesman Zhuge Liang (see poem 89); Prancing Horse was that of the Han period warlord and self-proclaimed emperor Gongsun Shu, the builder of White Emperor City.



## 孤 雁

孤雁不饮啄，  
飞鸣声念群。  
谁怜一片影，  
相失万重云。  
望尽似犹见，  
哀多如更闻。  
野鸦无意绪，  
鸣噪自纷纷。





## Lone Wild Goose

(5-ch. regulated verse; late years.)

Lone wild goose, not drinking, not feeding,  
flies crying, calls out his longing for the flock.  
Who pities his lonely form,  
lost from the others in ten-thousand-layered clouds?  
I gaze to the end of gazing, still seem to see him;  
so great my sorrow, I seem to hear him again,  
while crows in the field, wholly unconcerned,  
go on as before with their raucous cawing.



## 白 小

白小群分命，  
天然二寸鱼。  
细微沾水族，  
风俗当园蔬。  
人肆银花乱，  
倾箱雪片虚。  
生成犹拾卵，  
尽取义何如。



## White-Little

(5-ch. regulated verse; late years. “White-Little” is a small fish often eaten in the upper Yangzi region where Du Fu was living. )

White-little, one among the teeming species,  
Heaven-destined two-inch fish,  
tiny, frail, yet favored by water dwellers;  
local custom treats you like a vegetable.  
On sale in the fish stall, a jumble of silver blossoms;  
dumped from a basket, snowflakes vanishing.  
But those who value life leave the spawn untouched.  
Taking spawn and all—what sense in that?



## 秋 野

(五首选三首)

### 其一

秋野日荒芜，  
寒江动碧虚。  
系舟蛮井络，  
卜宅楚村墟。  
枣熟从人打，  
葵荒欲自锄。  
盘餐老夫食，  
分减及溪鱼。



## Autumn Fields

### FIVE POEMS

(5-ch. regulated verse, the first, second, and third in the series; fall of 767, in Kuizhou.)

#### 1

Autumn fields daily more overgrown,  
 cold river gliding under azure skies;  
 I've moored my boat to the Well Rope of the Man<sup>①</sup>,  
 settled in a house in a village of Chu.  
 Jujubes ripen—I leave others to pick them;  
 mallows grown straggly—I'd like to get at them with  
 a hoe.<sup>②</sup>  
 Heaped on a plate, the old man's meal;  
 he sets aside a portion for fish in the stream.<sup>③</sup>

① The "Well Rope" is a star that presides over the eastern Shu region where Du Fu was living, the old state of Chu. He uses the term "Man" (rhymes with the English word "wan") to allude to the non-Han Chinese inhabitants of the region.

② Mallows were grown to be eaten.

③ Du Fu puts aside a portion as an offering to the fish, in accordance with the Buddhist teaching of the Flower Garland Sutra.



其二

易识浮生理，  
难教一物违。  
水深鱼极乐，  
林茂鸟知归。  
吾老甘贫病，  
荣华有是非。  
秋风吹几杖，  
不厌此山薇。



**2**

Easy to know—the law of this floating life;  
 hard to deflect a single being from it;  
 when waters are deep, fish are at their happiest,  
 where groves flourish, birds find their roost.  
 Old, feeble, I'm content to be poor and sickly,  
 wouldn't know how to deal with abundance.  
 Autumn winds blow over my armrest and cane;  
 I don't disdain fern sprouts from the northern mountain. ①

---

① A reference to the ancient sages Boyi and Shuqi, who chose to live off the fern sprouts of Mt. Shouyang rather than compromise their principles.



其三

礼乐攻吾短，  
山林引兴长。  
掉头纱帽仄，  
曝背竹书光。  
风落收松子，  
天寒割蜜房。  
稀疏小红翠，  
驻屐近微香。





**3**

Rites and music correct my shortcomings;<sup>①</sup>  
mountains and forests offer enduring delight.  
When I shake my head, my gauze cap tilts sideways;  
when I sun my back, sunlight falls on my book.  
I gather pine cones the wind has downed,  
break open a honeycomb when skies are chill,  
and coming on a few stray blossoms, red or blue,  
halt my steps, bend close to their faint fragrance.

---

① Rites and music are stressed in Confucianism as the inculcators of correct conduct and attitude.



## 复 愁

(十二首选一首)

万国尚防寇，  
故园今若何？  
昔归相识少，  
早已战场多。



## Grieving Again

TWELVE POEMS

(5-ch. *jueju*, second in a series of twelve; 767, in Kuizhou.)

In ten thousand countries, still the horses of war;  
my old homeland—what of it now?  
That last journey back, friends so few;  
already then, so many battlefields!①

---

① Du Fu is recalling the trip he made to the Luoyang region in 758, his last journey home.



## 日 暮

牛羊下来久，  
各已闭柴门。  
风月自清夜，  
江山非故园。  
石泉流暗壁，  
草露滴秋根。  
头白灯明里，  
何须花烬繁。



## Close of Day

(5-ch. regulated verse; 767, in Kuizhou.)

Cows and sheep hours ago down from the mountain,  
 each brushwood gate closed by now:  
 wind and moon in their own clear night,  
 but this river, these hills aren't my old home.  
 Rocky springs cascade over darkening cliffs,  
 dew on grasses soaks the autumn roots.  
 I, white-haired within the lamplight—  
 why does the wick make me all these flowers?<sup>①</sup>

---

① The "flowers" are peculiar twistings of the wick that are said to foretell monetary gain. Du Fu doubts that such good fortune is on the way.



## 又呈吴郎

堂前扑枣任西邻，  
无食无儿一妇人。  
不为困穷宁有此，  
只缘恐惧转须亲。  
即防远客虽多事，  
便插疏篱却甚真。  
已诉征求贫到骨，  
正思戎马泪盈巾。



## Another Poem for Wu Lang

(7-ch. regulated verse. In the fall of 767, Du Fu moved to a different location in Kuizhou and turned over his house in Rangxi to a kinsman named Wu Lang, who had apparently been assigned to a post in Kuizhou. Du Fu had been in the habit of leaving the jujubes that grew in front of his house for his neighbor to the west, an indigent old woman. In this poem to Wu Lang, to whom he had written an earlier poem, he asks Wu to continue this practice. )

Jujubes in front of my house—leave them for my western  
neighbor,

a lone housewife, no food, no sons.

If she weren't hard-pressed, she'd never dare touch them;  
so fearful of giving offense, I pity her all the more.

You've come from far away, I don't like to interfere,  
but running a fence between the two houses would be excessive.

She's told me how the officials have bled her to the bone—  
thinking of what war does to us, my tears overflow.



## 暂往白帝复还东屯

复作归田去，  
犹残获稻功。  
筑场怜穴蚁，  
拾穗许村童。  
落杵光辉白，  
除芒子粒红。  
加餐可扶老，  
仓庚慰飘蓬。





## Returning to East Camp after Staying for a Time at White Emperor

[5-ch. regulated verse; fall of 767, in Kuizhou, when Du Fu and his family, after a stay in Rangxi, here called White Emperor (City), returned to East Camp, where they had rice fields under cultivation.]

Back once more to our rice fields,  
still the harvesting to be done.  
We lay out a threshing ground, sorry for ant hills upturned;  
leave the stray ears for village boys to glean.  
Down comes the pestle, sunlight gleaming white;  
off go the hulls from grains of rice red.  
Eat hearty, best support for old age,  
let a well-filled barn make up for our wanderings.



## 谒真谛寺禅师

兰若山高处，  
烟霞嶂几重。  
冻泉依细石，  
晴雪落长松。  
问法看诗忘，  
观身向酒慵。  
未能割妻子，  
卜宅近前峰。



## Visiting the Chan Master of Zhendi Temple

(5-ch. regulated verse; the site of Zhendi Temple, or the Temple of True Understanding, is uncertain, as is the date of the poem, though it undoubtedly dates from late in Du Fu's life. )

Monastery high in the mountains,  
haze on its multilayered crags;  
an icy spring threads among delicate rocks,  
sunlit snow tumbles from tall pines.  
Asking about the Dharma, I see the folly of poetry;  
reflecting on the body, I lose my zest for wine. ①  
I could never cast aside wife and children,  
but I might build a house near the first of your peaks.

---

① Du Fu saw his attachment to wine and poetry as two "offenses" that he would have to remedy if he were to become a sincere Buddhist follower. Whether he ever seriously considered giving them up is questionable.



## 登岳阳楼

昔闻洞庭水，  
今上岳阳楼。  
吴楚东南坼，  
乾坤日夜浮。  
亲朋无一字，  
老病有孤舟。  
戎马关山北，  
凭轩涕泗流。



## Climbing Yueyang Tower

(5-ch. regulated verse; in late winter, 768, when Du Fu climbed the three-story tower overlooking Lake Dongting at the west gate of Yueyang in Hunan. Wu and Chu are ancient names for the regions of eastern and southern China, respectively.)

Long ago I heard of Lake Dongting,  
now I climb Yueyang Tower:  
Wu and Chu slope off to south and east,  
Heaven and Earth day and night float on these waters.  
Of kinfolk, friends, not one word,  
old, sickly, in my solitary boat,  
and north of the barrier mountains the fighting goes on—  
as I lean on the railing, tears stream down.



## 江 汉

江汉思归客，  
乾坤一腐儒。  
片云天共远，  
永夜月同孤。  
落日心犹壮，  
秋风病欲苏。  
古来存老马，  
不必取长途。



## Yangzi and Han

(5-ch. regulated verse; probably written in the fall of 769, when the poet reached the region around the confluence of the Yangzi and Han rivers in Hubei.)

Yangzi and Han, thoughts of a homebound traveler;  
 Heaven and Earth and one stale pedant;  
 scattered clouds in a sky far away as I am;  
 long night, the moon alone like me.  
 In setting sun, my mind agile as ever;  
 autumn wind, yet my ailments are on the mend.  
 Hold on to an old horse—they did that in past times,  
 though he's no more good for the long haul. ①

---

① Reference to a story in *Han Feizi*, sec. 22, about how an official, having become lost in the mountains, used an old horse to help him find the way home.



## 江南逢李龟年

岐王宅里寻常见，  
崔九堂前几度闻。  
正是江南好风景，  
落花时节又逢君。



## On Meeting Li Guinian in the Region South of the Yangzi

(7-ch. *jueju*; 770, at Tanzhou in Hunan. Li Guinian was a famous singer who had enjoyed favor under Emperor Xuanzong. Prince Qi was a younger brother of Emperor Xuanzong and a noted patron of the arts. )

I always used to see you at Prince Qi's mansion,  
heard you how many times at Lord Cui's home?  
Now when the scenery is finest here south of the Yangzi,  
that we should meet once more just as blossoms are falling!





## 小寒食舟中作

佳辰强饮食犹寒，  
隐几萧条戴鹖冠。  
春水船如天上坐，  
老年花似雾中看。  
娟娟戏蝶过闲幔，  
片片轻鸥下急湍。  
云白山青万余里，  
愁看直北是长安。



## Little Cold Food, Written Aboard the Boat

(7-ch. regulated verse; 770. Little Cold Food was the day after the Cold Food Festival, held on the 105th day after the winter solstice, when cooking fires were extinguished and only cold food was eaten for three days. The pheasant cap in line 2 was worn by elderly men.)

Festive morning: I make myself drink a little, food still  
cold,  
lean on the armrest, downcast, wearing a pheasant cap:  
boat on the spring waters, like sitting on top of the sky;  
blossoms of my old age, seen as though through mist. ①  
A playful butterfly, graceful, threads through the silent cur-  
tains;  
nimble gulls one by one swoop over rapid shallows.  
Clouds white, mountains green, ten thousand miles away,  
I gaze straight north, grieving—Chang'an there!

① Because of his failing eyesight he can barely make out the springtime blossoms.