天育驃騎歌

吾聞天子之馬走千里，
今之畫圖無乃是。
是何意態雄且傑，
駿尾蕭梢朔風起。

毛為綠縹兩耳黃，
眼有紫燄雙瞳方。
矯矯龍性合變化，
卓立天骨森開張。

伊昔太僕張景順，
監牧攻駒閱清峻。
遂令大奴守天育，
別養驥子憐神俊。

當時四十萬匹馬，
張公歎其材盡下。

故獨寫真傳世人，
見之座右久更新。

年多物化空形影，
嗚呼健步無由騁。
4.1

A Song for the Fleet-mount of the Imperial Stables

I have heard how the Son of Heaven’s horses can run a thousand leagues,
what I see pictured here today can be none other than such as these.
But what is the temper of this one, aggressive and outstanding?—
when its mettlesome tail whishes, the north wind rises.
Its coat is pale green, its two ears are yellow,
its eyes have purple flames, and its pair of pupils are square.
A dragon nature, tough and bold, it is sure to be transformed,
standing high apart, its heavenly bones mysteriously extend.

Long ago the Master of the Stables, Zhang Jingshun,
supervised pasture and had the colts broken, checking for the pure and superior.
He then ordered the Chief Slave to keep them for the Imperial Stables,
giving special care for the offspring of great steeds, touched by their divine superiority.

Back then there were four hundred thousand horses,
but Zhang sighed at how their talents were in every way inferior.
So he had the portrait of this one alone made to transmit to the world,
I see it hung to the right of my seat, and the longer I look, the fresher it grows.

As the years grew many, the creature passed on, with this mere outline left,
alas for its sturdy pace, it has no means to gallop.
驄馬行

如今豈無騕褭與驊騮，
時無王良伯樂死即休。

4.2

驄馬行

鈞公馬癖人共知，
初得花驄大宛種。
夙昔傳聞思一見，
牽來左右神皆竦。
雄姿逸態何巃嵸，
顧影騁嘶自矜寵。
隅目青熒夾鏡懸，
肉騘碨礌連錢動。
朝來久試華軒下，
未覺千金滿高價。
赤汗微生白雪毛，
銀鞍却覆香羅帕。
卿家舊賜公能取，
天厩真龍此其亞。
晝洗須騰涇渭深，
朝趨可刷幽並夜。
These days there are of course Yaoniao’s and Hualiu’s, but wanting a Wang Liang or Bole in our time, they simply die and are gone.

4.2

The Dappled Gray: A Ballad

The Duke of Deng’s mad passion for horses, was known by everyone, when he finally got a dappled gray steed, of the Ferghana breed. He had heard report of it earlier and longed to see it once; they led it in, and all those around were stirred with awe. A virile stance, a posture aloof, how high tall it loomed, it looked at its shadow, gave a proud neigh, vaunting the favor it enjoyed.

The slits of his eyes sparkled green, mirrors hanging on either side, flesh and bristle bulging, linked dapples stirred.

With the dawn they long tested him beneath the splendid balcony, I don’t think even a thousand silver pieces would make up its lofty price. A hint of crimson sweat appears in the snow-white hairs, they put back the silver saddle over a horsecloth of fragrant gossamer.

What the Chamberlain once presented the Duke was able to get, to only the true dragons of the Imperial Stud is this horse second. For daytime washing this must leap in the depths of the Jing and Wei, bounding off at dawn it can brush past night in You and Bing.

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1 Famous steeds of antiquity.
2 Wang Liang and Bole were famous connoisseurs of fine horses.
3 Original note: “Chamberlain of Ceremonials Liang was commanded to present this horse; Li Duke of Deng coveted it and took possession of it. He commanded Du Fu to compose this poem.”
4 Prefectures in the far northeast.
吾聞良駿老始成，
此馬數年人更驚。
豈有四蹄疾於鳥，
不與八駿俱先鳴。
時俗造次那得致，
雲霧晦冥方降精。
近聞下詔喧都邑，
肯使騏驎地上行。

4.3

魏將軍歌

將軍昔著從事衫，
鐵馬馳突重兩銜。
披堅執鋭略西極，
崑崙月窟東嶄巖。
君門羽林萬猛士，
惡若哮虎子所監。
五年起家列霜戟，
一日過海收風帆。
平生流輩徒蠢蠢，
長安少年氣欲盡。
I have heard that the very finest steeds grow perfected only when old, in a few years a horse like this will amaze folk even more. How could there be four hooves fleeter than a bird? — will it not show itself first in the company of the Eight Chargers?\(^1\)

The ways of the times are carelessly hurried, how could they get one like this? — only in the dark of cloud and fog could such an essence be sent down.
I have heard that recently a decree was proclaimed in the cities and towns,\(^2\)

how could one let such a unicorn walk on common ground?

4.3

Song for General Wei

The general used to wear a retainer’s tunic, his armored horse would charge with a double bit.
He wore the hard and grasped the sharp-pointed, seizing the far west, the Kunlun Mountains and moon-cave were towering cliffs to his east.\(^3\)
The Yulin Guard of our ruler’s gate has ten thousand warriors fierce, as terrible as roaring tigers, under your supervision.
In five years there rose from your home a line of frosty pikes,\(^4\)
in one day you crossed the sea then pulled down your wind-blown sail.\(^5\)

Your peers were ordinarily scuttling around for naught, the high tempers of Chang’ an youths almost melted away.

---

1 The famous horses of the Zhou King Mu, here referring to the imperial stud.
2 Seeking fine horses.
3 According to legend, the “moon-cave” was where the moon set. That is, he has passed to the west of these.
4 The mark of an official of the third grade or above.
5 The sea is evidently Kokonor.
魏侯骨耸精爽紧，
華嶽峰尖見秋隼。

星躔寶校金盤陀，
夜騎天騄超天河。
欃槍熒惑不敢動，
翠蕤雲旂相蕩摩。

吾為子起歌都護，
酒闌插劍肝膽露。 

鉤陳蒼蒼玄武暮，
萬歲千秋奉明主，
臨江節士安足數。

4.4

白水明府舅宅喜雨(得過字)

吾舅政如此，
古人誰復過。
碧山晴又濕，
白水雨偏多。
精禱既不昧，
歡娛將謂何。
Count Wei’s bones jut up high, his temperament is taut,
as over the sharp spire of Mount Hua one sees an autumn eagle.

Adorned with jeweled star-lines and golden trappings,
by night he drove the emperor’s team crossing the River of Stars.1
Comets and fire stars did not dare to stir,2
purple tassels and cloud pennons toss and rubbed each other.

On your behalf I rise and sing “Protector-General,”3
the ale done, you stick in your sword, your boldness revealed.

The Gouchen stars are in the vast blue, the Xuanwu stars are setting,4
ten thousand years, a thousand autumns you serve your wise prince,
the honorable warriors of the Linjiang Prince, how are they worth comparing?5

4.4
Rejoicing Over the Rain at the House of My Uncle, Magistrate of Whitewater County (I received the rhyme guo)

My uncle’s achievement in governing is such
that who could surpass it among the ancients?
The emerald mountains, sunlit and wet,
at Whitewater the rain was especially much.
Since he did not fail in concentrated prayer,
how great is our joy!

---
1. This probably refers to his role as guard commander on night patrol in Chang’an, with cosmic echoes.
2. These were signs of warfare.
3. A yuefu title.
4. The Xuanwu stars were a set of constellations in the north.
5. The Linjiang Prince was the deposed Heir Apparent of Han Jingdi (r. 156–141 BCE), who was eventually forced to commit suicide. “The Linjiang Prince” was a song made in sympathy. Lu Jue linked this with another song “Honorable Warriors,” which seems to have been understood as a single song.
湯年旱頗甚，
8 今日醉弦歌。

4.5

九日楊奉先會白水崔明府

今日潘懷縣，
同時陸浚儀。
坐開桑落酒，
來把菊花枝。
天宇清霜淨，
公堂宿霧披。
晚酣留客舞，
鳧舄共差池。
In the years of Tang the drought was quite awful, today we get drunk with music to strings.

4.5

On the Double Ninth Yang of Fengxian County Meets with Cui, Magistrate of Whitewater County

Today’s Pan Yue of Huai County, at the same time, Lu Yun of Junyi County. The host sets out “mulberry shedding ale,” the one coming holds a spray of chrysanthemum. Sky’s vault has been purified by clear frost, at the public hall the overnight fog lifts. Tipsy late in the day, the guest is detained to dance, wild duck slippers of both scattered about.

Given that Du Fu’s wife was surnamed Yang, the Republican scholar Wen Yiduo (1899–1946) speculated that this was a close relative of Du Fu’s wife. While there is no direct evidence of this, it would explain why Du Fu took his family to Fengxian and left them there, returning himself to Chang’an. Two months later he went back to Fengxian.

---

1 Tang was the first ruler of the Shang. This refers to the recent drought in the capital region.
2 Pan Yue and Lu Yun (262–303) were two famous writers of the Western Jin who both served as county magistrates. Here they refer to Yang and Cui.
3 An ale that matured when the mulberry trees shed their leaves, here referring to fine ale.
4 *Wang Qiao.
自京赴奉先縣詠懷五百字

杜陵有布衣，
老大意轉拙。
許身一何愚，
竊比稷與契。
居然成濩落，
白首甘契闊。
蓋棺事則已，
此志常覬豁。
窮年憂黎元，
歎息腸內熱。
取笑同學翁，
浩歌彌激烈。
非無江海志，
蕭灑送日月。
生逢堯舜君，
不忍便永訣。
There is a man of Duling in homespun clothes, as I age, my aims grow more inept. So foolish in what I swore to become!—

I secretly likened myself to Hou Ji and Xie. At last I proved to be too large to be useful, white-haired, and willing to endure hardship. When the coffin closes, the issue will be settled, but these aims ever look to fulfillment.

To the end of my years I worry for the common folk, I heave sighs, and my guts burn within.

I win mockery from old men, once fellow students, yet I sing out loudly, and with increasing fervor. It’s not that I lack aims to live on the rivers and lakes, to see days and months pass, aloof and serene. But I live in the age of a ruler like Yao and Shun, and cannot bear to just take leave forever.

---

1 Original note: “Composed at the beginning of the eleventh month in the fourteenth year of the Tianbao Reign” 天寶十四載十一月初作. The eleventh month began on December 8, 755; on the 16th news arrived that An Lushan had rebelled, though the emperor at first did not credit the report.

2 Duling was a region south of the capital, and Du Fu’s family home. “Homespun clothes,” literally “plain cloth clothes,” was the mark of a commoner; that is, someone with neither class rank nor official position.

3 Hou Ji was the creator of agriculture and Shun’s Minister of agriculture; Xie helped Yu in draining the great flood during the reign of Shun. On the face of things Du Fu is saying that he wants to become a great minister of state like these two ancient figures; however, Hou Ji was also the ancestor of the Zhou ruling house, and Xie was the ancestor of the Shang. Given his grief at the death of his son and his sense of failure as a parent at the end of the poem, the situation in which the poem was written, these associations of glorious futures hoped for and lost cannot be entirely suppressed.

4 Neire 內熱 (“burn within”) is a medical term, but one associated with zeal in service.
當今廊廟具，
構廈豈云缺。
葵藿傾太陽，
物性固莫奪。
顧惟蠅黠輩，
但自求其穴。
胡為慕大鯨，
輒擬偃溟渤。  
以茲悟生理，
獨恥事干謁。
兀兀遂至今，
忍為塵埃沒。
終愧巢與由，
未能易其節。
沈飲聊自遣，
放歌頗愁絕。
歲暮百草零，
疾風高岡裂。
天衢陰崢嶸，
客子中夜發。
霜嚴衣帶斷，
指直不得結。
凌晨過驪山，
御榻在嵽嵲。
Yet now the halls of State are fully complete,\(^1\)
in the building’s structure, no gaps at all.  
Like mallow and pulse, I bend to the sun—\(^2\)
none can rob a thing of its nature.  
But I turn to consider that ant-breed, 
seeking only their own little holes.  
Why should they aspire to be Great Leviathan\(^3\)
ever aiming to sprawl across the dark sea?  
Hereby I grow aware of life’s pattern.  
and I alone am ashamed to beg for favor.  
I have gone on thus persistently until now—  
I could not bear just to sink into the dust.  
In the end Chaofu and Xu You put me to shame,\(^4\)
for they could not alter their firm resolve.  
I drink deeply to banish such thoughts for the while,  
then burst into song, so terribly sad.  
It was year’s end, all the plants were dying,  
the high ridges, rent by the hard winds.  
The royal avenues lay sunk deep in shadow  
as the traveler set forth at midnight.  
The frost harsh, my coat’s sash snapped,  
my fingers were stiff, I could not tie it.  
At daybreak I passed by Mount Li,  
the royal couch lay there on its towering height.\(^5\)

---

1. The “halls of state,” literally “[palace] porch and ancestral temple,” was a standard figure for the structure of government, in which particular cai, “talent”/“timber” might be used.
2. That is, he looks toward the emperor.
3. The “Leviathan,” jing 鯨, is probably here simply a figure for greatness, but it is hard not to note that this was the standard figure for An Lushan, more “monstrous” than great.
5. Xuanzong made winter visits to Mount Li near Chang’an because of the hot springs there.
蚩尤塞寒空，
蹴蹋崖谷滑。
瑶池气鬱律，
羽林相摩戛。

君臣留欢娱，
乐动殷胶葛。
赐浴皆长纓，
与宴非短褐。

彤庭所分帛，
本自寒女出。
鞭撻其夫家，
聚敛贡城阙。

圣人筐篚恩，
实惠于邦国活。
臣如忽至理，
君岂弃此物。

多士盈朝廷，
仁者宜战慄。
况闻内金盘，
尽在卫霍室。

中堂舞神仙，
烟雾散玉质。
煖客貂鼠裘，
悲管逐清瑟。
Ill-omened auroras stuffed the cold sky,
they have trampled the slippery valley slopes.
Vapors surged swelling from Alabaster Pool,¹
where the royal guardsmen rub and clack.
There lord and courtiers linger in pleasures,
music stirs, thundering through empty space.
All granted baths there have long hat ribbons,²
no short homespun tunics join in their feasts.
Yet the silk bolts apportioned in the royal court
came first from the homes of poor women.
Whips flogged their menfolk,
gathering taxes to present to the palace.
His Majesty’s gracious gifts of baskets
are in fact to preserve the domains.
If the courtiers disregard perfect government,
it is not that our prince throws these things away.
Many officers are now filling the court,
it is fitting that kindly men tremble.
What’s more, I’ve heard golden plate of the Household
is now all in the homes of imperial in-laws.³
In the midst of halls goddesses dance,
diaphanous mists disperse over marble flesh.
Cloaks of sable warm the guests,
moving notes of flutes follow clear zithers.

¹ “Alabaster Pool” was where the Queen Mother of the West feasted King Mu of the Zhou, and it was a standard figure for extravagant feasting and pleasures on the part of a ruler, generally to the detriment of the polity. In this case the vapors rising are literal, since the pleasure palace on Mount Li was built around hot springs.
² The “long hat ribbons” mark great court officers.
³ Literally “the homes of the Wei’s and the Huo’s,” powerful in-law families of the Western Han.
勸客駝蹄羹，
霜橙壓香橘。
朱門酒肉臭，
路有凍死骨。
榮枯咫尺異，
惆悵難再述。
北轅就涇渭，
官渡又改轍。
群冰從西下，
極目高岑兀。
疑是崆峒來，
恐觸天柱折。
河梁幸未坼，
枝撐聲窸窣。
行旅相攀援，
川廣不可越。
老妻寄異縣，
十口隔風雪。
誰能久不顧，
庶往共飢渴。
入門聞號咷，
幼子飢已卒。
吾寧捨一哀，
里巷亦嗚咽。
Guests are urged to taste camel-hoof stew,  
frosty oranges weigh upon sweet tangerines.  
Crimson gates reek with meat and ale,  
while on the streets are bones of the frozen dead.  
Splendor and privation, a mere foot apart,  
so upsetting it is hard to recount further.  
My northward cart came where the Jing meets the Wei,  

at the official crossing I again changed my track.¹  
Massed ice floes were coming down from the west,  
looming high as far as the eye could see.  
It seemed as if the Kongtong Mountains had come,²  
I feared it would strike and break pillars of Heaven.³  
We were lucky the bridge had not yet collapsed,  
yet the sound of its crossbeams creaked and groaned.  
Travelers held hands to help each other over,  

if the river grew broader, we could not cross.  
My wife was in a different county,  
ten mouths separated from me by winds and snow.  
Who could go long without checking on them?  
I hoped to go share their hunger and thirst.  
When I came in the gate, I heard crying out,  
my young son had died of hunger.  
I could not suppress a wail of my own,  
when even the whole lane was sobbing.

¹ The situation here is far from clear. A “crossing” was a ferry point; later we see Du Fu on one of the bridges, clearly crossing on foot. We know that some of the Wei River bridges could accommodate vehicles but this does not seem like one of them. It is possible that he “changes his track” because no boats are crossing under flood conditions.

² Kongtong was a fabled mountain range in the Western Regions.

³ This alludes to the famous story of the rebel Gonggong battling with the mythic emperor Zhuanxu and breaking one of the pillars that supported Heaven.
所愧為人父，
無食致夭折。
豈知秋未登，
貧寢有倉卒。
生常免租稅，
名不隸征伐。
撫跡猶酸辛，
平人固騷屑。
默思失業徒，
因念遠戍卒。
憂端齊終南，
澒洞不可掇。

4.7

堂上不合生楓樹，
怪底江山起煙霧。
聞君掃卻赤縣圖，
乘興遣畫滄州趣。
畫師亦無數，
好手不可遇。
對此融心神，
知君重毫素。
What shamed me was my role as a father, 
lack of food had caused this infant’s death. 
I could not have known that before the harvest 
such calamity would befall our poverty. 
All my life I have been exempt from taxes, 
and my name is not registered for conscription. 
Considering what bitter things still happened to me, 
ordinary people must truly be desperate. 
I brood silently on those who lost livelihoods, 
then think of our troops in far garrisons. 
Reasons for worry are as great as South Mountain, 
a chaotic swirl that cannot be grasped.

In the tenth lunar month of 755 Du Fu took a low appointment as an administrator in one of the imperial guard units. In the eleventh month he went to see his family, whom he had moved to Fengxian County. At the time An Lushan had already risen in rebellion, but the news had not yet reached the capital. We do not know how much this poem came purely from its moment or was revised in hindsight, but the sense of crisis—before the real crisis was known—is clear.

4.7

Song for the Painted Landscape Screen of Liu Dan, Sheriff of Fengxian

Maple trees should not be growing in a hall—
amazing!—how these rivers and hills give off fog and mist. 
I’ve heard you wiped away all other pictures of the heartland, 
as on a whim you have painted the zest of gray isles. 
Painters are innumerable, 
but a skilled hand can’t be found; 
Facing this, heart and spirit fuse with it, 
and I know how you honor the brush-hair and silk.

---

1 Wyyh has the appended note: “Written at the house of Liu Dan, Sheriff of Fengxian”
豈但祁岳與鄭虔，
筆跡遠過楊契丹。
得非玄圃裂，
無乃瀟湘翻。
悄然坐我天姥下，
耳邊已似聞清猿。

反思前夜風雨急，
乃是蒲城鬼神入。
元氣淋漓障猶濕，
真宰上訴天應泣。
野亭春還雜花遠，
漁翁暝踏孤舟立。

滄浪水深青溟闊，
欹岸側島秋毫末。不見湘妃鼓瑟時，
至今斑竹臨江活。

劉侯天機精，
愛畫入骨髓。自有兩兒郎，
揮灑亦無比。
How could it just be only some Qi Yue or Zheng Qian?—
this brushwork surpasses by far Khitan Yang!¹
Can this not have been ripped from Xuanpu?  
¹ This must have spilled over from Xiao and Xiang.²
I find myself quietly sitting beneath Mount Tianmu,
in my ears I seem to already hear clear cries of the gibbons.

I think back to a night before when wind and rain blew hard—
it was, in fact, spirits and wraiths entering Pucheng.³
This screen is still wet from the swirling effluence of Primal Vapor,
He-In-Charge complained above, and Heaven must have wept.⁴
Spring returns to a wilderness pavilion, various flowers stretch far,
an old fisherman in darkness strides and stands upon his lone boat.

Canglang’s waters are deep, the blue dark is vast,⁵
overhanging banks, slanting isles, the tips of autumn hairs.⁶
I do not see the moment when Xiang goddesses play the zither,
but until today streaked bamboo are alive overlooking the river.⁷

Heaven’s workings are sharp in Master Liu,
his love of painting enters his bones and marrow.
He has two young sons
who also brandish the brush without peer.

¹ Qi Yue and Zheng Qian were well-known contemporary painters; Khitan Yang was a Sui painter.
² These lines refer respectively to the mountains (shan 山) and watercourses (shui 水) represented in the painting. Xuanpu was part of the Kunlun Range.
³ Pucheng is Fengxian.
⁴ “He-In-Charge” 真宰 here is the entity the controls all things of this world. The complaint and Heaven’s response follow from the theft of the forces of creation.
⁵ Canglang, the object of the famous song cited in Mencius and the “Fisherman” of the Chuci, is a place to live in seclusion, matching the “zest of gray isles” 滄州趣 above.
⁶ This is a figure for the tininess of the representation, also suggesting the fine hairs of the painter’s brush. It also evokes Zhuangzi’s famous passage on the relativity of things: “In all the world nothing is larger than the tip of an autumn hair, and Mount Tai is small.”
⁷ This refers to the two goddesses of the Xiang, the consorts of Shun, who permanently spotted the bamboo of the Xiang region with the tears on hearing of Shun’s death.
大兒聰明到，
能添老樹巖崖裏。
小兒心孔開，
面貌得山僧及童子。
若耶溪，
雲門寺，
吾獨胡為在泥滓，
青鞋布襪從此始。

4.8

奉同郭給事湯東靈湫作

東山氣濛濛，
宮殿居上頭。
君來必十月，
樹羽臨九州。
陰火煮玉泉，
噴薄漲巖幽。
有時浴赤日，
光抱空中樓。
閭風入轍跡，
曠原延冥搜。
沸天萬乘動，
觀水百丈湫。
Your older son is exceptionally clever,
skilled at adding old trees to ridges and slopes.
Your younger son’s mind’s apertures are clear—
he depicts a mountain monk and his servant lad.
Ruoye Creek,
Yunmen Temple,
why am I here alone in the mud and mire?—
green sandals and homespun stockings will begin from this point on.¹

4.8

A Companion Piece, Respectfully Offered, for Supervising Secretary Guo’s “Written on the Sacred Tarn East of the Hot Springs”

Over that eastern mountain, a vast blur of vapor,
the palace is set on its very top.²
Our ruler always comes in the tenth month,
planting his feathered standards, he watches over the Nine Regions.
Subterranean fires boil the jade springs,
spewing forth, they inundate secluded cliffs.
At times they bathe the crimson sun,
whose light embraces mansions in the void.³
Into Langfeng entered the tracks of his wheels,
Broad Wilderness invites his search for mysteries.⁴
With sounds bubbling to heaven, His Myriad Chariots stir⁵
to observe the waters in this hundred-yard-deep tarn.

¹ That is, inspired by the landscape, Du Fu is vowing to go off and lead the life of a recluse.
² This was Xuanzong’s pleasure palace by the hot springs on Mount Li, east of Chang’an.
³ This most likely describes the steam from the hot springs around the sun, but when Xuanzong bathed, the waters were said to “bathe the sun.”
⁴ Langfeng was one of the peaks of the Kunlun Mountains; Xuanzong’s trip to the sacred tarn is lightly compared to King Mu of Zhou’s visit to the Kunlun Mountains. Broad Wilderness lay beyond the Kunlun Mountains.
⁵ The Son of Heaven is conventionally the “Lord of Myriad Chariots.”
幽靈斯可佳，
王命官屬休。
初聞龍用壯，
擘石摧林丘。
中夜窟宅改，
移因風雨秋。
倒懸瑶池影，
屈注蒼江流。
味如甘露漿，
揮弄滑且柔。
翠旗澹偃蹇，
雲車紛少留。
簫鼓蕩四溟，
異香泱漭浮。
鮫人獻微絹，
曾祝沈豪牛。
百祥奔盛明，
古先莫能儔。
坡陀金蝦蟆，
出見蓋有由。
至尊顧之笑，
王母不遣收。
復歸虛無底，
化作長黃虯。
Such secluded divinity is here to be admired
the king ordains that his attendants be given leave.
I heard how at first the dragon acted with force,
16 riving the rock, ruining forested hills.
At midnight its lair-lodging changed,
its transfer went along with an autumn of storm.
In this Alabaster Pool reflections hang upside down,¹
20 bent pouring therein, the gray-green river’s current.
Its flavor is like a broth of sweet dew,
splashed, it is slippery and soft.
Kingfisher banners ruffle, waving aloft,
24 cloud carriages linger in masses awhile.²
Fifes and drums sweep over the sea-girt world,
strange aromas drift through the empty vastness.
The mermen present their subtle gossamers,
28 and invocators drown a yak.
A hundred auspicious signs rush to the ascendant brilliance,
no counterpart can match in bygone times.
On undulating slopes, a Golden Toad,
32 when it appears there is surely a reason.³
His Majesty looks on it and smiles,
the Queen Mother won’t send anyone to catch it.⁴
It goes back to a void without bottom,
36 and turns into a long yellow kraken.

¹ Jasper Pool was where King Mu feasted with the Queen Mother of the West, a figure Du Fu uses elsewhere for Xuanzong’s imagined revelries with Lady Yang the Noble Consort. Here it is a figure for the tarn.
² Comparing the imperial entourage to immortals, who ride in cloud carriages.
³ This perhaps refers to An Lushan. In response to the minister Yang Guozhong’s claim that An Lushan planned to rebel, An Lushan made a court appearance.
⁴ If the Toad is An Lushan, the emperor restored his favor to the general, who then returned to his command and prepared his rebellion. The Queen Mother [of the West] was often used for Yang the Noble Consort.
後出塞五首

飘飄青琐郎，
文彩珊瑚鈎。
浩歌lös水曲，
清絕聽者愁。

4.9–13

後出塞五首

I

男兒生世間，
及壯當封侯。
戰伐有功業，
焉能守舊丘。
召募赴薊門，
軍動不可留。
千金買馬鞭，
百金裝刀頭。
閭里送我行，
親戚擁道周。
斑白居上列，
酒酣進庶羞。
Wind-tossed, the Gentleman of the Blue Chain-Patterned Gate,\(^1\)
the flash of his writing are coral hooks.
He loudly sings his “Melody of Clear Water,”
so perfectly clear, listeners are melancholy.\(^2\)

\(\text{This poem is taken as a response to a prodigy near the Huaqing Palace complex on Mount Li where Xuanzong wintered. This seems to have been composed just before An Lushan’s rebellion. We cannot be sure about the precise identification of the Golden Toad, but at the time Chang’an was abuzz with gossip about court politics and the hostility between An Lushan and the Minister Yang Guozhong. Popular lore later made Lady Yang the Noble Consort a protector [even lover] of An Lushan, but since she was closely tied to Yang Guozhong, this seems unlikely.}\)

\(\text{4.9–13}\)

Going out the Passes: Second Series

I

When a man-child is born into the world,
he should be ennobled when reaching his prime.
In battle one can accumulate deeds of merit,
so how could I keep the hills of home?
Called for the muster, we set out for Ji Gate,\(^3\)
when the army moves, I cannot stay.
I buy a horse-whip for a thousand in silver,
adorn my sword-hilt for a hundred.
The neighborhood sees me on my way,
kinfolk crowd all around the road.
Those with white-streaked hair take their places in front,
tipsy from ale, they offer me delicacies.

---

\(\text{1 An archaic Han reference to the office of Supervising Secretary Guo.}\)
\(\text{2 Suggesting that Guo’s original poem contained similar references to the current political situation.}\)
\(\text{3 The central region of An Lushan’s command.}\)
少年別有贈，
含笑看吳鉤。

II

朝進東門營，
暮上河陽橋。
落日照大旗，
馬鳴風蕭蕭。
平沙列萬幕，
部伍各見招。
中天懸明月，
令嚴夜寂寥。
悲笳數聲動，
壯士慘不驕。
借問大將誰，
恐是霍嫖姚。

III

古人重守邊，
今人重高勳。
豈知英雄主，
出師亙長雲。
六合已一家，
四夷且孤軍。
The young men have a different gift—
with a smile I examine a Wu scimitar.

II

At dawn we advance to East Gate Camp,¹
by dusk we mount the Heyang Bridge.
The sinking sun shines on the great banners,
horses neigh in the whistling winds.
Ten thousand tents ranged in the level sands,
each squad and company has the roll called.
In mid-sky hangs the bright moon,
the orders are strict, the night is still.
Then from the sad pipe several notes stir,
men in their prime are sad and not boastful.
Let me ask: who is general in command—
it’s probably Swift Commander Huo Qubing.²

III

The ancients valued guarding the frontiers,
people today value great rewards.
How could one have known that our warrior ruler
would send forth armies continuously as long clouds?
All corners of the world are already one family,³
yet we are an army surrounded by barbarians.

¹ This was a camp set up outside Upper East Gate in Luoyang.
² *Huo Qubing.
³ This is a cliché of dynastic unification, referring to the ruling house.
遂使貔虎士，
奮身勇所聞。
拔劍擊大荒，
日收胡馬群。
誓開玄冥北，
持以奉吾君。

IV

獻凱日繼踵，
兩蕃靜無虞。
漁陽豪俠地，
擊鼓吹笙竽。
雲帆轉遼海，
粳稻來東吳。
越羅與楚練，
照耀輿臺軀。

主將位益崇，
氣驕凌上都。
邊人不敢議，
議者死路衢。

V

我本良家子，
出師亦多門。
Thus we troops, like tigers and leopards, are made to rouse ourselves and bravely do as told. Drawing swords, we strike the great wilderness and daily bring in herds of Hu horses. We vow to open the land north of Xuanming, and offer it to our lord.

IV

Daily lines of men bring word of triumphs, the two marches are quiet and offer no worries. Yuyang is a place of roughnecks and men-at-arms where they beat the drums and play the reed organs. Sails like clouds turn on the Sea of Liao as supply rice comes in from Eastern Wu. Yue’s gossamer and the white silk of Chu shine gloriously on varlets and churls. The commanding general’s position is ever more exalted, his arrogant temper flaunts the Capital. People on the frontier do not dare dispute him— those who dispute die on the highway.

V

I was the child of good family, I have gone on campaign in many different situations.

---

1 Xuanming was the god of the north and here refers to northern lands.
2 That is, they tell the emperor of victories.
3 The frontiers with the Xi and Khitan.
4 An Lushan’s headquarters.
將驕益愁思，
身貴不足論。
躍馬二十年，
恐辜明主恩。
坐見幽州騎，
長驅河洛昏。
中夜間道歸，
故里但空村。
惡名幸脫免，
窮老無兒孫。

蘇端薛復筵簡薛華醉歌

文章有神交有道，
端復得之名譽早。
愛客滿堂盡豪翰，
開筵上日思芳草。
安得健步移遠梅，
亂插繁花向晴昊。　　千里猶殘舊冰雪，
百壺且試開懷抱。
垂老惡聞戰鼓悲，
急觴為緩憂心搤。
The general’s arrogance increases sad thoughts,
4 personal glory is not worth considering.
For twenty years now I have charged forward
and fear betraying my ruler’s kindness.
Now I see Youzhou’s cavalry\(^1\)
8 gallop afar, darkening the Yellow River and the Luo.
At midnight I go home by back roads,
and my old village has been left deserted.
I am fortunate to escape an evil name,
12 but poor and old, I have no descendants.

4.14
At the Feast of Su Duan and Xue Fu, a Song of Drunkenness as a Note to Xue Hua

There is divine spirit in literary works, in friendship there is a Way,
Duan and Fu have achieved this, their fame for both came early.
The hall is full of cherished guests, all bold men of the writing brush,
4 they hold a feast on New Year’s Day, longing for fragrant plants.
How can one get sturdy runners to transport distant plums?—
we would randomly stick dense sprays in hair facing the clear sky.
For a thousand leagues still remain the old ice and snow,
8 so let us try out these hundred pots to open up our hearts.
Getting old I hate to hear war-drums’ sad sounds,
the swiftly passing cups serve to relax anxious hearts pounding.

---

1 A region of the northeastern command, here standing for An Lushan’s troops.
少年努力縱談笑，
看我形容已枯槁。
座中薛華善醉歌，
歌詞自作風格老。
近來海內為長句，
汝與山東李白好。
何劉沈謝力未工，
才兼鮑照愁絕倒。
諸生頗盡新知樂，
萬事終傷不自保。

氣酣日落西風來，
願吹野水添金杯。
如澠之酒常快意，
亦知窮愁安在哉。
忽憶雨時秋井塌，
古人白骨生青苔。
如何不飲令心哀。

4.15

晦日尋崔戢李封

朝光入甕牖，
尸寢驚弊裘。
The young men should try their best to freely chat and laugh—
take a look at my appearance, already withered up.
Among the guests is Xue Hua, fine at “songs of drunkenness,”
in the lyrics of such songs he shows a maturity of style.
Recently in the world he has been writing in long lines—
you are as good as Li Bai from East of the Mountains.
He Xun, Liu Xiaobiao, Shen Yue, and Xie Tiao—their force is not as
good at this;¹
your talent equals Bao Zhao’s overwhelming melancholy.²
All present experience fully the joys of new acquaintance,
amid myriad troubles we lament at last that we cannot preserve it.
The mood tipsy, the sun is setting, the west wind comes,
I wish it would blow wilderness waters to add to our golden cups.
Ale as much as the River Sheng always cheers me up,
I know that then utter sadness, would be nowhere to be found.
At once I recall the rainy season, how autumn wells caved in,
there white bones of the ancients grew with green moss.
How then can one not drink up and leave the heart to lament?

4.15
On the Last Day of the Month Going to Find Cui Ji and Li Feng
When dawn’s light entered my pot-rim window,³
sleeping like a corpse, I woke suddenly under my worn-out cloak.

¹ Famous poets of the late fifth and early sixth centuries, excelling in five-syllable line
   poetry, but not in the seven-syllable line, the “long line.”
² A fifth-century poet who excelled in the “long line.”
³ A window made from the broken rim of a large pot was a standard mark of a humble dwelling.
晦日尋崔戢李封

起行視天宇，
春氣漸和柔。
興來不暇懶，
今晨梳我頭。
出門無所待，
徒步覺自由。
杖藜復恣意，
免值公與侯。
晚定崔李交，
會心真罕儔。
每過得酒傾，
二宅可淹留。
喜結仁里歡，
況因令節求。
李生園欲荒，
舊竹頗修修。
引客看掃除，
隨時成獻酬。
崔侯初筵色，
已畏空尊愁。
未知天下士，
至性有此不。
草牙既青出，
蜂聲亦暖遊。
I got up and went to look at Heaven’s vault,
the spring weather was getting gradually balmy and gentle.
Elation came, I had no time to be lazy,
this morning I combed my hair.
I went out my gate, dependent on nothing,1
on foot, I felt I could do as I pleased.
I let my fancies free, staff in hand,
thus avoiding encounters with dukes and grandees.
I formed a late friendship with Cui and Li,
our accord is indeed rarely matched.
Whenever I stop by, I get to have ale,
in both homes I may linger on.
I rejoice to make friends in such a kindly neighborhood,
and even more I go seek them out on this fine holiday.
Master Li’s garden has almost run wild,
his former bamboo stand quite tall.
He has it swept clean to bring his guest in,
then in due time we toast each other.
When a party starts, Master Cui’s look
is of one already worried the cups will run dry.
I didn’t know if other gentlemen of the world
have natures as perfect as this.
The sprouts of plants have come out green,
the sounds of bees also roam in the warmth.

1 That is, without needing a horse and carriage.
思見農器陳，
何當甲兵休。  
上古葛天民，  
不貽黃屋憂。  
至今阮籍等，  
熟醉為身謀。  
威鳳高其翔，  
長鯨吞九州。  
地軸為之翻，  
百川皆亂流。  
當歌欲一放，  
淚下恐莫收。  
濁醪有妙理，  
庶用慰沈浮。

4.16

白水縣崔少府十九翁高齋三十韻

客從南縣來，
浩蕩無與適。  
旅食白日長，  
況當朱炎赫。  
高齋坐林杪，  
信宿遊衍闃。
I long to see farming implements arrayed—
when will the clash of arms be over?
The folk of Getian in ancient days¹
 did not give worries to the Yellow Awning.²
But nowadays the ilk of Ruan Ji³
get utterly drunk and care only for themselves.
The august phoenix soars on high,⁴
long Leviathan swallows up the Nine Regions.⁵
Earth’s axis is turned over thereby,
and all the rivers flow in confusion.
I am ready to break loose in song,
if tears fall, I’m sure I won’t be able to stop them.
In thick brew there is a fine truth,
I hope thereby to console these ups and downs.

4.16
The High Studio of Old Cui (19), Assistant Magistrate of Whitewater County: Thirty Couplets

A traveler came from the county to the south,⁶
swept on in the vastness, with nowhere to go.
Dining as a guest, the days stretched long,
even more with summer’s red light blazing.
I sit at the treetops in your high studio,
staying a couple of nights, carefree outings are tranquil.

¹ A legendary emperor of high antiquity, under whose rule the people had no worries.
² The awning of the emperor’s carriage, hence metonymically, the emperor.
³ *Ruan Ji. The image is one of enjoying oneself in troubled times.
⁴ The phoenix, with its august deportment, was an auspicious omen. The implications are uncertain here, but it seems that this implies that the phoenix does not show itself in these times.
⁵ The rebel An Lushan.
⁶ Fengxian County.
清晨陪躋攀，
傲睨俯峭壁。
崇岡相枕帶，
曠野懷咫尺。
始知賢主人，
贈此遣愁寂。
危階根青冥，
曾冰生淅瀝。
上有無心雲，
下有欲落石。
泉聲聞復息，
動靜隨所擊。
鳥呼藏其身，
有似懼彈射。
吏隱適性情，
茲焉其窟宅。
白水見舅氏，
諸公乃仙伯。
杖藜長松陰，
作尉窮谷僻。
為我炊雕胡，
逍遙展良觀。
坐久風頗愁，
晚來山更碧。
In the clear morning I join you for a climb,
jauntily peering down from a sheer cliff.
The lofty hills lie resting against each other,
I feel the broad moors are but a few feet away.
Now I realize that my worthy host
has given me this to dispel lonely melancholy.
By sheer stairways giving root to the dark skies,
layers of ice give off trickling rills.
Above are clouds that go without will,
below there are rocks ready to fall.
The stream’s sound heard, then quiet again,
moving or still, according to what it strikes.
Birds cry out, hiding their bodies,
seeming to fear the slings and arrows.
Being a hermit-clerk suits your nature,
and your hideaway is here.
At Whitewater I meet my uncle,
of senior gentlemen, indeed an immortal elder.
He leans on his staff in a tall pine’s shade,
serves as sheriff in a remote valley.
He cooks up wild rice for me,
then rambling free, unfolds these fine sights.
After sitting long, the winds are very melancholy,
as it gets late, the mountains are still more green.
相對十丈蛟，
欻翻盤渦坼。
何得空裏雷，
殷殷尋地脈。
煙氖藹嶧崒，
魍魎森慘戚。
崑崙崆峒顛，
迥首如不隔。
前軒頽反照，
崢絕華岳赤。
兵氣漲林巒，
川光雜鋒鏑。
知是相公軍，
鐵馬雲霧積。
玉觴淡無味，
胡羯豈強敵。
長歌激屋樑，
淚下流衽席。
人生半哀樂，
天地有順逆。
慨彼萬國夫，
休明備征狄。
猛將紛填委，
廟謀蓄長策。
Facing us, a ten-yard kraken
in a flash flew, splitting a whirlpool.¹
From where did we get this thunder in a clear sky,
rumbling, we trace it to the veins of earth?²
Mist and haze occlude vertiginous heights,
            thick with goblins gloomy and dreary.
The summits of Kunlun and Kongtong³
            seem not far removed as I turn my head.
At the front balcony evening’s sunshine sinks down,
and towering to the utmost, Mount Hua turns red.
War’s atmosphere floods forests and ridges,
the river glints mixes with blade-tip and arrowhead.
I know it’s the Minister’s army,⁴
            armored horses massing like a fog.
The jade goblet is bland and without savor—
how can the Hu be stronger foes?
My long songs stir the roof-beams,
tears fall, flowing onto my seat.
            Human life is half sorrow, half joy,
in this world things go well and things go awry.
I am distressed that men from ten thousand domains
in this glorious age prepare to campaign against the Di folk.
Fierce commanders mass in droves,
court planners formulate far-reaching policies.

---
¹ It is unclear whether Du Fu is imagining a real dragon or a small waterfall.
² This is obscure, but it may be the rumbling of the waterfall that seems like thunder from underground.
³ Two ranges of mountains in the northwest.
⁴ The hastily assembled army of Geshu Han, sent to oppose the march of An Lushan’s army on the capital.
東郊何時開，
帶甲且未釋。
欲告清宴罷，
難拒幽明迫。
三歎酒食旁，
何由似平昔。

4.17

三川觀水漲二十韻
我經華原來，
不復見平陸。
北上唯土山，
連天走窮谷。
火雲無時出，
飛電常在目。
自多窮岫雨，
行潦相豗蹙。
蓊匌川氣黃，
群流會空曲。
清晨望高浪，
忽謂陰崖踣。
恐泥竄蛟龍，
登危聚麋鹿。
When will the eastern marches be recovered?—
56 men can’t take their armor off for the while.
The clear feast will soon be declared at an end—
hard to resist darkness and light pressing on.
Repeatedly sighing over my ale and food,
60 how can times be as peaceful as they used to be?

Having taken his family north to Fengxian, Du Fu went on to Whitewater County, where his maternal uncle was sheriff. By this point An Lushan’s forces were on the march toward Chang’an. Soon afterwards Geshu Han’s hastily assembled army was crushed by An Lushan’s forces, Xuanzong fled Chang’an, and the rebels occupied the city. Du Fu left Whitewater County, taking his family to safety farther north. This flight is retrospectively described in the “Ballad of Pengya” (5.30). In “Seeing Off My Remote Cousin, Case Reviewer Wang Li, on a Mission to the Southern Seas” (23.22) he gives a further account of that desperate flight.

4.17

Watching the Flood at Three Rivers: Twenty Couplets

Ever since I passed through Huayuan,
I saw level land no more.
To the north there was only Earthgate Mountain,

4 I hurried through barren valleys stretching to heaven.
Fiery clouds constantly appeared,
bolts of lightning were ever in my eyes.
Since there was much rain on the barren peaks,

8 the run-off crashed roaring together.
A welling confluence, the river vapor yellowed,
and all the streams converged in the empty bends.
In clear dawn I gazed on the high waves

12 and immediately thought that the southern slopes would collapse.
Fear of being mired sent dragons into hiding,
climbing perilous spots, the deer congregated.

---

1 Original note: “Composed in the seventh month of the fifteenth year of the Tianbao, when fleeing the rebels” 天寶十五年七月中避寇時作.
枯查卷拔树，
礧磈共充塞。
聲吹鬼神下，
勢閥人代速。
不有萬穴歸，
何以尊四瀆。
及觀泉源漲，
反懼江海覆。
漂沙圻岸去，
湫壑松柏秃。
乘陵破山門，
回斡裂地軸。
及關豈信宿。
應沈數州沒，
如聽萬室哭。
穢濁殊未清，
風濤怒猶蓄。
何時通舟車，
陰氣不黲黷。
浮生有蕩汩，
吾道正羈束。
人寰難容身，
石壁滑側足。
Leafless logs, rolling, torn up trees,
 heaps of rocks joined to block it up.
 Its sounds blew down gods and spirits;
 its force shows how swiftly the human world changes.
 Were there not a place for the myriad springs to go,
 how could we honor the Four Great Drains?1
 But when I watched the streams and springs flood,
 I instead worried that River and sea had spilled out.
 Swirling sands, bounds and banks depart,
 scouring valleys, left bald of pines and cypresses.
 Rising over hills, it smashes gates of mountains,
 whirling around, it splits earth’s axis.
 Where the Luo converges, it will go to the mighty River,
 it will hardly be two nights before it reaches the Pass.
 I expect it will drown several prefectures,
 and it is as if I can hear ten thousand homes weeping.
 Foul and turbid, not clear at all,
 the rage of wind-blown billows still accumulates.
 When will boats and wagons get through
 and the shadowy vapors not be so black?
 In this life adrift one is sometimes swept along,
 but now my own course is constrained.
 In the human realm it is hard to find space for oneself—
 a stone cliff, slippery, with feet set at an angle.

---

1 The major rivers of China, cut out by Yu to drain the great flood.
雲雷屯不已，
艱險路更跼。
普天無川梁，
欲濟願水縮。
因悲中林士，
未脫眾魚腹。
舉頭向蒼天，
安得騎鴻鵠。

4.18

今夜鄜州月，
閨中只獨看。
遙憐小兒女，
未解憶長安。
香霧雲鬟濕，
清輝玉臂寒。
何時倚虛幌，
雙照淚痕乾。
Clouds and thunder do not cease to mass,
my path is even more cramped by danger and trouble.
Under all Heaven there are no river bridges,
I wish the waters would shrink so I could cross.
Thus I grieve for gentlemen in the woods:
they will not escape the bellies of the many fish.
I lift my head and face the gray heavens—
how can I get to ride a great swan away?

After a brief rest at Pengya, Du Fu continued with his family north to Fuzhou and Qiang Village. On his way he passed Three Rivers, the confluence of the Huachi, the Hei, and the Luo. The flooding he witnessed was an apt counterpart of the times.

4.18

Moonlit Night

The moon tonight in Fuzhou\(^1\)
she alone watches from her chamber.
I am moved by my children far off there
who don’t yet know to remember Chang’an.
Fragrant fog, her coils of hair damp,
clear glow, her jade-white arms are cold.
When will we lean at the empty window,
both shone upon, the tracks of our tears dried?

Du Fu managed to get his family to the relative safety of Qiang Village in Fuzhou, which soon fell to rebel forces moving on from conquered Chang’an. Suzong took the throne on August 11, 756, but was initially trying to gather support, and didn’t yet have a headquarters. We don’t know exactly what happened except that by the time Du Fu wrote “Moonlit Night,” he was in rebel-held Chang’an, and it was autumn. He may have been captured and sent back to Chang’an (or Duling, just outside the city,

\(^1\) Du Fu’s wife and children were left in Fuzhou, while Du Fu himself returned to rebel-held Chang’an.
哀王孫

長安城頭頭白鳥，
夜飛延秋門上呼。
又向人家啄大屋，
屋底達官走避胡。
金鞭斷折九馬死，
骨肉不待同馳驅。
腰下寶玦青珊瑚，
可憐王孫泣路隅。
where he would have been registered), but he was clearly not interned and
had freedom of movement in the city.

4.19

Lament for the Prince

Atop the walls of Chang’an, white-headed ravens by night flew crying out over Welcoming-Autumn Gate. They then went towards peoples’ homes and pecked on great roofs, successful officials under those roofs ran off fleeing the Hu. The gilded riding crop snapped, the nine horses died, he did not wait for his flesh and blood to gallop away with him. A precious jue ring at his waist of blue coral, a pitiable young prince weeps at the roadside.

---

1 This poem was written when Du Fu was trapped in Chang’an after it had fallen to An Lushan’s forces. On An Lushan’s orders, his soldiers were killing as many members of the Tang royal house as they could find in the city.
2 This line alludes to the thousands of white-headed ravens that were said to have perched on Redbird Gate in Jiankang after Hou Jing overthrew the Liang. A children’s song took these as an omen of his eventual defeat. The comparison would be between the two rebels, Hou Jing and An Lushan.
3 Xuanzong led his entourage through “Welcoming-Autumn Gate” in the palace compound when escaping from Chang’an before An Lushan’s army reached the city.
4 Clearly the white-headed ravens are birds of ill omen. Commentators differ, however, on how to interpret the significance of these lines. The Song exegete Zhao Yancai takes line four as the general flight of court officials from the city when the birds of ill omen peck on their roofs. Others have taken these lines as referring specifically to the mansion of the minister Yang Guozhong, who was widely held responsible for bringing about the rebellion.
5 The “gilded riding crop” and the “nine horses” are metonymy for the emperor and his entourage. The line suggests the urgency and speed of the imperial flight from the city.
6 Xuanzong did bring with him some members of his immediate family; but many members of the very large imperial clan, particularly those living in mansions outside the palace compound, were left behind. By using the term “flesh and blood” (literally “bones and flesh”), Du Fu is probably referring to the fact that Xuanzong did take the favorites in his harem, along with Yang Guozhong and his immediate family.
問之不肯道姓名，
但道困苦乞為奴。  
已經百日竄荊棘，
身上無有完肌膚。  
高帝子孫盡高準，
龍種自與常人殊。  
豺狼在邑龍在野，
王孫善保千金軀。  
不敢長語臨交衢，
且為王孫立斯須。  
昨夜東風吹血腥，
東來橐駝滿舊都。  
朔方健兒好身手，
昔何勇銳今何愚。  
竊聞天子已傳位，
聖德北服南單于。  
花門剺面請雪恥，
慎勿出口他人狙。  
哀哉王孫慎勿疏，
五陵佳氣無時無。
Asked, he is unwilling to state his name,  
he says only that in his misery he begs to be my slave.  
Already for a hundred days he has hidden in thorns and brambles,  
nowhere on his body is the skin unmarred.

Gaozu’s descendants all have high-bridged noses,¹  
the dragon-spawn is naturally distinct from other men.  
Wolves and jackals are in the city, the dragon is in the wilds,  
Prince, take good care of your body worth a thousand in gold.  
I dare not talk a long time right by the crossroads,  
but because of you, my prince, I will stand here a little while.  
Last night the east wind blew with the stench of blood,  
camels coming from the east fill the former capital.²  
Troopers of the Northland, skilled and experienced,  
how bold and sharp they were before, now how inept they seem!³  
I have heard that the Son of Heaven abdicated the throne,  
Imperial Virtue made the Southern Khan to submit to us in the north.⁴  
At Huamen they slashed their faces, seeking to expunge this shame—  
take care not to divulge this; others lie in ambush.  
Alas, my Prince, do not be careless—  
auspicious vapors of the Five Barrows are never absent.⁶

¹ The “high-bridged nose” was the mark of the Han imperial house and a marked characteristic of the founder Gaozu. Du Fu is here claiming to recognize the distinctive physiognomy of the imperial Li clan of the Tang, for which the high-bridged nose is a figure.
² The east wind marks the season as spring, but it is unclear why the stench of blood should be carried from the east, unless the reference is to the great slaughter at Tong Pass months earlier. An Lushan used camels to transport his plunder from Chang’an to his base at Luoyang.
³ This refers to Geshu Han’s troopers from Shuofang (“the Northland”) and other Northeastern commands who were so badly defeated at Tong Pass.
⁴ This refers to Xuanzong’s abdication in favor of Suzong and the alliance Suzong made with the Uighur Khan (anachronistically figured as the Xiongnu Chanyu).
⁵ The face-slaicing echoes a gesture of determination for vengeance made by the Xiongnu. Huamen Fort is here taken as the place where the alliance is cemented between Suzong and the Uighurs.
⁶ This refers to the Tang imperial tombs, whose auspicious vapors betoken the restoration of Tang rule.
悲陳陶

孟冬十郡良家子，
血作陳陶澤中水。
野曠天清無戰聲，
四萬義軍同日死。
群胡歸來血洗箭，
仍唱夷歌飲都市。
都人迴面向北啼，
日夜更望官軍至。

悲青坂

我軍青坂在東門，
天寒飲馬太白窟。
We assume that this poem too was composed shortly after Du Fu got back to Chang’an, because in late August of 756 An Lushan had ordered the execution of the Tang princes, princesses and their husbands. As Chen Yixin notes, this act may not have been a purely political action, but rather retaliation for Xuanzong’s execution of An Lushan’s own son, held hostage in Chang’an. This prince has managed to escape.

4.20

Grieving Over Chentao

Early winter, young men of good families from ten districts,
their blood was the water in Chentao’s marshes.
The moors were vast, the sky clear, no sounds of battle—
forty thousand loyalist troops died on the very same day.
Bands of Hu came back, blood washed their arrows,
still singing Khitan songs they drank in the capital market.
The capital’s citizens turned their faces weeping toward the north,
day and night they keep looking for the royal army to come.

In mid-autumn of 756 the minister Fang Guan 房琯 (697–763) led the imperial army in its three divisions against An Lushan’s forces. The northern and central divisions received a crushing defeat at Chentao. Fang Guan employed the ancient technique of putting many of his troops in oxcarts; rebel general An Shouzhong responded with the modern and common-sense technique of setting fires, alarming the oxen, who turned and threw the Tang battle array into disorder.

4.21

Grieving Over Greenslope

Our army was at Greenslope, right at the eastern gate,
the weather cold, they watered their horses at pools on Mount Taibai.
避地

黃頭奚兒日向西，
數騎彎弓敢馳突。
山雪河冰野蕭瑟，
青是烽煙白人骨。
焉得附書與我軍，
忍待明年莫倉卒。

避地

避地歲時晚，
竄身筋骨勞。
詩書遂牆壁，
奴僕且旌旄。
行在僅聞信，
此生隨所遭。
神堯舊天下，
會見出腥臊。
Blond-heads and Xi lads daily moved farther west,¹
several riders bent their bows and dared to charge in attack.
Snow on mountain, ice on river, wind whistling on the moors,
the green is the smoke from beacon fires, the white, human bones.
How can I get to send a letter to our army—
hang on and wait until next year, don’t be hasty and rash.

Greenslope (Qingban) was the site of the second battle between Fang Guan’s army and the rebels, this time with the southern division of the imperial army. This also resulted in defeat. Although Du Fu speaks as if he were a witness, he was behind enemy lines in Chang’an at the time.

4.22

Refuge

Place of refuge, the year grows late,
hiding oneself away, bone and muscles labor.
Poems and Documents, consequently walled up,²
servants and slaves for the while hold banners.
There is only gossip about the temporary court,
in this life I follow what I encounter.
Our former world was that of sage-king Yao—
may the time come when we are out of this stench.³

¹ The “blond-heads” was a subgroup of the Khitan people. The Xi was one of the Northeastern tribes against which An Lushan’s army had originally been stationed. Over time the Northeastern command, like other northern armies, seems to have had acquired a considerable admixture of non-Chinese. Non-Chinese cavalry, furthermore, joined An’s invading armies as confederates.
² This refers to the story of hiding the Classics in the wall of Confucius’s house when Qin supposedly ordered the burning of all the Classics in private hands. These were recovered in the Western Han and became the “old script” Classics.
³ The rebel occupation of Chang’an.
4.23

對雪

戦哭多新鬼，
愁吟獨老翁。
亂雲低薄暮，
急雪舞迴風。

瓢棄樽無綠，
爐存火似紅。　
數州消息斷，
愁坐正書空。

4.24

元日寄韋氏妹

近聞韋氏妹，
迎在漢鐘離。
郎伯殊方鎮，
京華舊國移。　
春城回北斗，
郢樹發南枝。　
不見朝正使，
啼痕滿面垂。
4.23

Facing the Snow

Weeping over battle, many fresh ghosts,
reciting in sorrow, one old man alone.
Tumultuous clouds lower toward twilight,
urgent snow dances in whirling winds.
Ladle tossed aside, no green in the cup,\(^1\)
the brazier remains, there seems the red of fire.
News has been cut off from several prefectures,
I sit in sorrow, just now writing words in air.\(^2\)

4.24

On New Year’s Day, To my Sister Married into the Wei’s

I’ve recently heard that my sister with the Wei’s
was received in Hanzhongli.\(^3\)
Her husband is elsewhere with a military command,
the capital has moved from Chang’an.
The city in spring, the North Dipper turns round,\(^4\)
Ying’s trees sprout on their south-facing branches.
I don’t see the New Year’s envoys to court,\(^5\)
tracks of tears hang, filling my face.

---

1. The “green” is the dark color of the lees.
2. “Writing in air.
3. “Received” here is the technical term for welcoming a bride to her new home.
4. That is, the stars return to their spring configuration.
5. Before the fall of the capital to the rebels, every spring on the fifteenth of the first month envoys from the provinces would come to offer their congratulations to the emperor.
4.25

春望

國破山河在，
城春草木深。
感時花濺淚，
恨別鳥驚心。
烽火連三月，
家書抵萬金。
白頭搔更短，
渾欲不勝簪。

4.26–27

得舍弟消息二首

1

近有平陰信，
遙憐舍弟存。
側身千里道，
寄食一家村。
烽舉新酣戰，
啼垂舊血痕。
4.25

View in Spring

The state broken, its mountains and rivers remain,
the city turns spring, deep with plants and trees.
Stirred by the time, flowers, sprinkling tears,
hating parting, birds, alarm the heart.
Beacon fires stretch through three months,
a letter from family worth ten thousand in silver.
I’ve scratched my white hair even shorter,
pretty much to the point where it won’t hold a hatpin.

4.26–27

Getting News of My Brother

I

Recently I had word from Pingyin
I was moved that my brother survives far away.
He leaned in distress a thousand leagues off,
lodged for meals in villages of a single household.
Beacon fires are raised, recent thirst for battle,¹
tears stream down previous tracks of blood.²

¹ That is, overcome by the fervor of battle.
² These are probably the traces of bloody tears, produced by the depth of his suffering.
不知臨老日，
招得幾人魂。

II

汝懦歸無計，
吾衰往未期。
浪傳鵲鸎喜，
深負鵲鴒詩。
生理何顔面，
憂端且歲時。
兩京三十口，
雖在命如絲。

4.28

憶幼子
驥子春猶隔，
鶯歌暖正繁。
別離驚節換，
聰慧與誰論。
澗水空山道，
柴門老樹村。
憶渠愁只睡，
炙背俯晴軒。
Recalling My Baby Son

In these days as I approach old age, I know not
how many souls I will succeed calling back.¹

II

You are fearful and do not anticipate return;
I, grown frail, have not planned to go to you.
Baseless, the saying that magpies bring good news,²
I have deeply betrayed the Poem on wagtails.³
I have no pride in the way I live,
sources of care continue for years.
In the two capitals, thirty family members,
though we survive, our fate is like a thread.

4.28

Recalling My Baby Son⁴

In spring Jizi is still parted from me,
songs of orioles now are thick in the warmth.
Since parting I am shocked by the season’s change,
with whom can I talk about how clever you are?
Water of a stream, road in deserted mountains,
ramshackle gate, a village with old trees.
Recalling him, I’m so sad I can only sleep,
sunning my back on the porch under clear skies.

¹ “Calling back the soul” was a ritual for the dead.
² The call of the magpie was supposed to portend the return of a loved one from whom one had been separated.
³ *Wagtails.
⁴ Original note: “His name is Jizi, and he is currently separated from me in Fuzhou” 字驥子，時隔絕在鄜州.
4.29

一百五日夜對月
無家對寒食，
有淚如金波。
斫卻月中桂，
清光應更多。
仳離放紅蕊，
想像顰青蛾。
牛女漫愁思，
秋期猶渡河。

4.30

遣興
驥子好男兒，
前年學語時。
問知人客姓，
誦得老夫詩。
世亂憐渠小，
家貧仰母慈。
鹿門攜不遂，
雁足繫難期。
4.29

Facing the Moon on the Night of the Hundred and Fifth Day¹

Without my family I face cold food,
with tears like those metallic waves.²
If you cut down the moon’s cassia,³
4 I’m sure it would have even more clear light.
In separation the red blooms open,
I imagine her image, knitting dark brows.
Oxherd and Weaver have sad longings for naught,
8 but they can still cross the River of Stars at a date in autumn.

4.30

Expressing What Has Stirred Me

Jizi is a fine boy,
last year was when he learned to speak.
He asked the names of our visitors
4 and was able to recite his old man’s poems.
I pity his being so young in the turmoil of the times,
the household poor, he looks to his mother’s love.
I didn’t succeed in taking him to Deergate,⁴
8 and I can’t expect something tied to a wild goose’s foot.⁵

---
¹ Cold Food Festival occurred one hundred and five days after the winter solstice.
² Referring to the moonbeams.
³ This may refer to Wu Gang who is perpetually trying to chop down the moon cassia, which heals immediately.
⁴ *Pang Degong.
⁵ 'That is, a letter.
塞蘆子

天地軍麾滿，
山河戰角悲。
儻歸免相失，
見日敢辭遲。

4.31

塞蘆子

五城何迢迢，
迢迢隔河水。
邊兵盡東征，
城內空荊杞。學明割懷衛，
秀巖西未巳。迴略大荒來，
崤函蓋虛爾。延州秦北戶，
關防猶可倚。焉得一萬人，
疾驅塞蘆子。岐有薛大夫，
旁制山賊起。近聞昆戎徒，
為退三百里。
Heaven and Earth are filled with army signal banners, among mountains and rivers battle bugles mourn. If only I get back and don’t lose him, I wouldn’t ever put off the day to see him.

4.31

Blocking Luzi Pass

How far away are the five fortress cities,1 far, far, beyond the Yellow River’s waters. The frontier troops have all gone east on campaign, in the fortresses are only hawthorns and briars.

Shi Siming has carved off Huaizhou and Weizhou,2 Gao Xiuyan has not ceased moving west.3 If they come bending around the Great Barrens,4 the loss of Yao and Han Passes would be nothing by comparison.

Yanzhou is the northern door to Qin, one can still rely on its defense. How can we get ten thousand men, to gallop swiftly to block Luzi Pass? At Mount Qi there is Grand Master Xue,5 who controlled the mountain rebels rising all around. I have heard that recently the likes of the Kunyi and Quanrong, have withdrawn three hundred leagues because of him.6

---

1 Five fortresses to the north, the forts of the Shuofang Command, left poorly defended because the troops were being used by Suzong for his counterstrike.
2 One of An Lushan’s subordinate generals, then besieging Taiyuan.
3 Gao Xiuyan was a subordinate of Geshu Han who surrendered to An Lushan.
4 The Great Barrens refers to the commands north and northwest of Chang’an.
5 Xue Jingxian, the governor of Fufeng.
6 This refers to the rebel attack on Fufeng, which was beaten back by Xue Jingxian. The Kunyi and Quanrong were non-Chinese peoples of antiquity, here referring to rebel troops.
哀江頭

芦關扼兩寇，
深意實在此。
誰能叫帝閽，
胡行速如鬼。

哀江頭

少陵野老吞聲哭，
春日潛行曲江曲。
江頭宮殿鎖千門，
細柳新蒲為誰綠。
憶昔霓旌下南苑，
苑中萬物生顏色。
昭陽殿裏第一人，
同輦隨君侍君側。
軾前才人帶弓箭，
白马嚼齧黃金勒。
翻身向天仰射雲，
一箭正墜雙飛翼。
明眸皓齒今何在，
血污遊魂歸不得。
清渭東流劍閣深，
去住彼此無消息。
Luzi Pass can hold back both marauders, a profound thought is truly in this. Who can cry out to the Emperor’s gatekeeper?—¹

the Hu move as swift as demons!

Shi Siming was besieging Taiyuan; and were Taiyuan to fall, Luzi Pass was the only obstacle to Shi Siming striking directly at Suzong’s headquarters. Thus blocking Luzi Pass had a distinct urgency for Du Fu. The Qing critic Pu Qilong astutely called it a “rhymed petition to the throne” discussing the particulars of military policy—though, of course, in occupied Chang’an Du Fu had no access to the throne.

4.32

A Lament at the Riverside

An old rustic from Shaoling weeps, swallowing back the sound, on a spring day he walks unseen by the Twisting River’s bends. The palace halls beside the river have their thousand gates locked, for whom do fine willow fronds and new reed shoots turn green? I recall in the past the rainbow banners coming down to the Southern Park, and in the park all the myriad things took on a bright complexion. She who was foremost in the halls of the Palace of Shining Light,² went with her lord in the same palanquin, attending at his side. Before the palanquin palace ladies carried bows and arrows, white horses chewed and gnawed at the bits of yellow gold. They bent their bodies, faced the heavens, shot upward into the clouds and one arrow brought tumbling down a pair of flying wings. Those bright eyes and gleaming teeth—where are they now?—blood stains her wandering soul, she cannot get to return. The clear Wei flows eastward, Sword Tower Mountain is far removed,³ one went and another stayed, and there is no news.

¹ That is, convey Du Fu’s military advice to Suzong.
² Lady Yang Yuhuan, the Noble Consort.
³ Chengdu, where Xuanzong was staying.
大雲寺贊公房四首

人生有情淚沾臆，
江草江花豈終極。
黃昏胡騎塵滿城，
欲往城南望城北。
Whoever has human feeling tears will soak his chest, 
the river plants and river flowers will go on forever. 
The dust from Hu horsemen fills the city at dusk, 
and about to go off to South of the City, I gaze to the city’s north.¹

Sometime in the spring of 757 Du Fu paid a visit to Twisting River Park at the southeastern corner of Tang Chang’an. In the apparent emptiness of the park, he recalled the spectacle of Xuanzong’s visits to the imperial palaces there. Here he expresses pity for Lady Yang the Noble Consort. Xuanzong’s guards killed her relative, the hated minister Yang Guozhong. Worried about the consequences if the Noble Consort remained Xuanzong’s favorite, they demanded her death as well. Being in no position to oppose his only military escort, Xuanzong reluctantly agreed. The Noble Consort’s death has turned Du Fu’s disapproval into nostalgic pity.

4.33–36

Reverend Zan’s Chambers in Great Cloud Temple

I

The mind lies within a realm of crystal, 
while my clothes are soaked by spring rain. 
I pace slowly through the series of gates, 
in a deep courtyard plans for seclusion are realized. 
Every door I come to opens and closes again, 
the struck bell means that meal time is now. 
The ghee always brings forth the [Buddha] nature,² 
with food and drink he goes overboard taking care of my frailty. 
We have clasped arms for many a day, 
so we unburden our feelings with no polite phrases. 
Yellow orioles cross over the structures, 
purple doves descend to the door’s grillwork.

¹ Du Fu was living to the south of the city; north was the direction of Suzong’s temporary capital and the headquarters of the imperial army.
² The refinement of ghee from cream was a standard figure for Buddhist wisdom.
愚意會所適，
花邊行自遲。
湯休起我病，
微笑索題詩。

II
細軟青絲履，
光明白氎巾。
深藏供老宿，
取用及吾身。
自顧轉無趣，
交情何尚新。
道林才不世，
惠遠德過人。
雨瀉暮簾竹，
風吹春井芹。
天陰對畫畫，
最覺潤龍鱗。

III
燈影照無睡，
心清聞妙香。
夜深殿突兀，
風動金銀鐺。
My mind here finds what suits me,
I naturally walk slowly beside the flowers.
This Tang Huixiu makes my illness better¹
and with a smile asks me for a poem.

II

Fine and soft, green thread slippers,
shining bright, white cotton kerchief.
Treasured deep away, to provide for aged monks,
you take them out to use for my person.
Considering myself, I feel ever more that I lack charm,
how then does our friendship stay so fresh?
Daolin’s talent is not of the common age,²
Huiyuan’s virtue surpasses others.
Rain streams from the bamboo by the twilight eaves,
the wind blows the celery by the spring well.
In the sky’s darkness we face the paintings
I especially feel that the dragon’s scales are moist.³

III

Lamplight shines on sleeplessness,
the mind is clear, I smell wondrous scents.
Deep in the night the halls jut high,
the wind stirs the metal chimes.

¹ A Southern Dynasties monk, known for his literary skills.
² The fourth-century monk Zhidun.
³ There were five dragons painted by Wu Daozi in Great Cloud Temple. Dragons were responsible for rainstorms. The line suggests that the painted dragons had been doing their work bringing the rain in the preceding lines, and having returned to their walls, were still wet.
天黑閉春院，
地清棲暗芳。
玉繩迥斷絕，
鐵鳳森翱翔。
梵放時出寺，
鐘殘仍殷床。
明朝在沃野，
苦見塵沙黃。

IV

童兒汲井華，
慣捷瓶上手。
沾灑不濡地，
掃除似無帚。
明霞爛複閣，
霽霧搴高牖。
側塞被徑花，
飄飄委墀柳。
艱難世事迫，
隱遁佳期後。
晤語契深心，
那能總鉗口。
奉辭還杖策，
暫別終回首。
The heavens are black, closing the spring courtyard,  
the place is pure, here unseen fragrances lodge  
The Chain of Jade breaks off afar,¹  
the iron phoenix darkly soars.²  
Sanskrit chants sometimes come from the temple,  
the bell’s reverberations still shake my couch.  
Tomorrow at dawn I will be in the fertile wilds,  
pained to see the brown of dust and sand.

IV

A lad draws water from the well’s sparkling,  
the pitcher is in his nimble, practiced hand.  
He sprinkles it without soaking the ground,  
he sweeps up as if he had used no broom.  
Bright auroras flash on the layered towers,  
lifting fog draws up over the high window.  
Flowers blanket the path, stuffing it full,  
swaying in breeze, willows dangle on the pavements.  
Hardship and trouble, the world’s affairs press on me,  
the sweet time for withdrawal is postponed.  
Talking face to face suits the depths of the heart,  
how can one always feel gagged?  
Taking my leave, again I take staff in hand,  
parted but a moment, I finally turn my head.

¹ A constellation.  
² A weather-vane.
泱泱泥汙人，
狺狺國多狗。
既未免羈絆，
時來憩奔走。
近公如白雪，
執熱煩何有。

4.37

雨過蘇端

雞鳴風雨交，
久旱雨亦好。
杖藜入春泥，
無食起我早。
諸家憶所歷，
一飯跡便掃。
蘇侯得數過，
歡喜每傾倒。
也復可憐人，
呼兒具梨棗。
濁醪必在眼，
盡醉攄懷抱。
紅稠屋角花，
碧委牆隅草。
Spreading everywhere, mud mires me,
many dogs bark fiercely in the capital.¹
I am not yet able to avoid entanglements,
when the time comes, I will rest from this running.
Being near you is like being near white snow—
what irritation do I feel taking hot things in hand?

4.37

Stopping By to See Su Duan in the Rain²

The rooster crowed, wind mixed with rain,
but after long drought, the rain is good.
Staff in hand, I went into springtime mud—
having nothing to eat got me up early.
I recalled the various households I have visited,
after a single meal my tracks were swept away.³
But I have gotten to stop by Master Su’s place several times,
and he is always utterly overcome with delight.
He is surely a man to be cherished—
he calls to his son to prepare pears and dates.
Thick brew is always in his eyes,
utterly drunk, he gives vent to his emotions.
Red and thick, the flowers at the corner of his roof,
emerald and trailing, the plants at the corner of his wall.

¹ That is, the rebels.
² An original note: “Duan served ale” 端置酒.
³ That is, he didn’t visit them any more or they didn’t invite him.
親賓縱談謔，
喧鬨慰衰老。
況蒙霈澤垂，
糧粒或自保。
妻孥隔軍壘，
撥棄不擬道。

4.38

喜晴

皇天久不雨，
既雨晴亦佳。出郭眺西郊，
肅肅春增華。
青熒陵陂麥，
窈窕桃李花。
春夏各有實，
我飢豈無涯。
干戈雖橫放，
慘澹鬥龍蛇。
甘澤不猶愈，
且耕今未賒。
丈夫則帶甲，
婦女終在家。
Intimate with a guest, he chats and jokes freely,
his boisterousness comforts one frail and old.
Even better, we receive this gift of streaming rain,
with grain I may survive.
My wife and children lie beyond military forts—
let us drop that question, I won’t speak of it.

4.38

Rejoicing in Clearing Weather

Long did august Heaven not send rain;
having rained now, clear skies too are fine.
I went out of the suburbs and viewed the west meadow,
where spring briskly enhanced its flowering splendor.
Green sparkling, the wheat on the mound slopes,
demure, the blossoms of peach and plum.
In spring and summer each forms fruit—
how can my hunger not have a limit?
Though pike and shield are plied wildly
and sadly serpent and dragon clash,
is not the sweet moisture still better?—
the plowing is now not something remote.
Though the husband is off wearing armor,
the wife remains at home in the end.

1 Referring to the grain as well as the fruits.
2 The struggle between the imperial army and the rebels.
力難及黍稷，
得種菜與麻。
千載商山芝，
往者東門瓜。
其人骨已朽，
此道誰疵瑕。
英賢遇轘轅，
遠引蟠泥沙。
顧憤昧所適，
回首白日斜。
漢陰有鹿門，
滄海有靈查。
焉能學眾口，
咄咄空咨嗟。
Though her strength may not be up to millet,

she still can plant vegetables and hemp.

A thousand years ago, mushrooms on Mount Shang,¹

in times past, the melons of East Gate.²

The bones of these men have rotted away,

but who can pick fault with such a Way?

When men grand and worthy meet rocky roads,

they take themselves far, and coil in mud.³

On reflection, I am ashamed that I don’t know where to go,

as I turn my head, the bright sun is sinking.

In Hanyin there is Deergate Mountain,⁴

on the gray-green sea, there is that divine raft.⁵

How could I imitate what the crowd says? —

I mutter in shock and sigh helplessly.

¹ *Four Graybeards.
² *Shao Ping.
³ Like the dragon, withdrawing from sight.
⁴ *Pang Degong.
⁵ *Riding the raft.