新安吏

客行新安道，
喧呼闔點兵。
借問新安吏，
縣小更無丁。
府帖昨夜下，
次選中男行。
中男絕短小，
何以守王城。
肥男有母送，
瘦男獨伶俜。
白水暮東流，
青山猶哭聲。
莫自使眼枯，
收汝淚縱橫。
眼枯即見骨，
天地終無情。
我軍取相州，
日夕望其平。
豈意賊難料，
歸軍星散營。
7.1
The Officer of Xin’an

As I was traveling the road at Xin’an,
I heard the hubbub of conscripting troops.
And I asked the officer of Xin’an about it:

4 “The county’s small, no more grown men.
Last night a notice came from headquarters—
we are to pick the youths to go next.2
But the youths are far too short—
8 how can they guard the king’s city?”3
The plump young men have mothers to see them off,
the lean young men are alone and forlorn.
The silvery waters flow eastward at twilight,

12 in green hills there is still the sound of weeping.
Don’t let your eyes be wept dry—
cease your tears that flow so freely;
though eyes wept dry will be wept to the bone,
16 Heaven and Earth are ultimately heartless.
Our army had taken Xiangzhou,
sooner or later we expected to pacify them;
Who would have thought that the rebels were so hard to outguess?

20 our returning armies are encamped like scattered stars.

---

1 Original note: 收京後作。雖收兩京，賊猶充斥: “Written after the recapture of the capitals. Although the capitals have been recaptured, the rebels are still numerous.”
2 These are young men from eighteen years old to twenty-two.
3 Luoyang.
潼關吏

就糧近故壘，
練卒依舊京。
掘壕不到水，
牧馬役亦輕。
況乃王師順，
撫養甚分明。
送行勿泣血，
僕射如父兄。

士卒何草草，
築城潼關道。
大城鐵不如，
小城萬丈餘。
借問潼關吏，
修關還備胡。
要我下馬行，
為我指山隅。
連雲列戰格，
飛鳥不能踰。
胡來但自收，
豈復憂西都。
We went for provisions to old forts nearby,  
we stay by the former capital to train the troops.  
You don’t dig your moats down to the water-line,  
and service in pasturing horses is light.  
What’s more, the king’s army is obedient,  
and His kindly concern is quite clear.  
Don’t weep blood as we see you on your way—  
the Vice-Director is like a father or big brother.”

This and the following five poems are the famous “Three Officers” and  
“Three Partings,” dated to Du Fu’s return from Luoyang to Huazhou.

7.2
The Officer at Tong Pass
Such hustle and bustle as the troops  
build walls on Tong Pass Road.  
No iron can match the main wall,  
the lesser walls stretch thousands of yards up.  
I ask the Tong Pass officer:  
“When repaired, can it again withstand the Hu?”  
He invites me to get off my horse and walk  
as he points me to the mountain’s folds.  
“Ramparts form a line to the clouds,  
a bird in flight could not pass over.  
If the Hu come, just hold this fast,  
the Western Capital need worry no more.

---
1 Guo Ziyi.
丈人視要處，
窄狹容單車。
艱難奮長戟，
萬古用一夫。
哀哉桃林戰，
百萬化為魚，
請囑防關將，
慎勿學哥舒。

7.3

石壕吏

暮投石壕村，
有吏夜捉人。
老翁踰牆走，
老婦出門看。吏呼一何怒，
婦啼一何苦。聽婦前致詞，
三男邺城戍。
一男附書至，
二男新戰死。
存者且偷生，
死者長已矣。
The Officer at Stone Moat

At dusk I put up at Stone Moat village, a clerk was catching people by night. An old man went over the wall and ran off, his wife came out the gate to watch. How angrily the clerk shouted, and how bitterly the woman wept! I listened as the woman pleaded with him:

“My three sons were serving at Ye, from one son a letter just arrived, the other two just died in battle. The survivor has managed to get by with his life awhile, the dead ones are gone forever.

7.3
The Officer at Stone Moat

At dusk I put up at Stone Moat village, a clerk was catching people by night. An old man went over the wall and ran off, his wife came out the gate to watch. How angrily the clerk shouted, and how bitterly the woman wept! I listened as the woman pleaded with him:

“My three sons were serving at Ye, from one son a letter just arrived, the other two just died in battle. The survivor has managed to get by with his life awhile, the dead ones are gone forever.

The defeat of the loyalist armies at Ye in 759 put Luoyang in danger again, and work was undertaken on the fortifications at Tong Pass, the major line of defense on the road from Luoyang to Chang’an. Earlier, in 756, Geshu Han, the senior commander of the northwestern Tang armies, had led a large but hastily assembled Tang army to block An Lushan’s army’s advance on Chang’an. Under pressure from the court, Geshu Han took his army out of the fortifications and was caught in a tactically disastrous battle (Peach Grove). The Tang army was routed; the pass fell; and the way was open for An Lushan’s forces to advance rapidly on Chang’an.

1 Many of Geshu Han’s defeated troops jumped into the Yellow River.
室中更無人，
惟有乳下孫。
有孫母未去，
出入無完裙。
老嫗力雖衰，
請從吏夜歸。
急應河陽役，
猶得備晨炊。
夜久語聲絕，
如聞泣幽咽。
天明登前途，
獨與老翁別。

7.4

新婚別

兔絲附蓬麻，
引蔓故不長。
嫁女與征夫，
不如棄路旁。 嫁女與征夫，
結髮為妻子，
席不煖君床。 暮婚晨告別，
無乃太匆忙。
There is no one else in the house,
just a grandson who still is nursing.
With this baby his mother has not left,
she goes around with a tattered skirt.
Though as an old woman my strength is failing,
please let me go off with you tonight.
For the Heyang conscription to answer the crisis,
I can still prepare their morning meals.”
As the night drew on, the sound of talking stopped
and I seemed to hear sobbing choked back.
At daybreak I set out on the road ahead
and took leave of the old man alone.

7.4

Newlyweds Parted

Hare-silk attached to dandelions or hemp¹
indeed does not grow its vines very long.
If you marry a woman to a soldier on campaign,
it would be better to leave her by the roadside.
When my hair was tied up, I became your wife,
yet my mat never warmed your couch.
We were married at dusk, at dawn you said goodbye—
how can that not be too hurried!

¹ “Hare-silk” is a parasitic vine on plants. It was a standard figure for a wife’s
dependence on her husband. Dandelions and hemp are low and pliant; but the
dominant image here is the dandelion puff as a figure for the traveler or soldier on
campaign.
君行雖不遠，
守邊赴河陽。
妾身未分明，
何以拜姑嫜。
父母養我時，
日夜令我藏。
生女有所歸，
雞狗亦得將。
君今往死地，
沈痛迫中腸。
誓欲隨君去，
形勢反蒼黃。
勿為新婚念，
努力事戎行。
婦人在軍中，
兵氣恐不揚。
自嗟貧家女，
久致羅襦裳。
羅襦不復施，
對君洗紅妝。
仰視百鳥飛，
大小必雙翔。
人事多錯迕，
與君永相望。
Although you have not traveled far,
you have gone off to Heyang to guard the frontier.¹
My personal place is not yet clear,
12 how can I pay respects to my in-laws?
When my father and mother nurtured me,
they kept me in seclusion day and night.
When a girl is born, she will marry someone,
even dogs and chickens get mates to go with.
But you now go to a land of death,
and deep pain oppresses my innards.
I vowed to go off along with you,
20 but things took their course in such a hurry.
Don’t brood too much on your new bride,
do your best in serving on the campaign.
If a woman were in the army,
24 I’m afraid that the martial spirit would not stir.
I sigh that I am the daughter of a poor family,
and have long made these gossamer tunics and skirts.²
But no more will I wear the gossamer tunic,
28 considering you, I will wash away my rouge.
I look up and see all kinds of birds flying,
large or small, they always fly in pairs.
Human affairs have mostly gone awry,
32 but I will be on the watch for you always.

¹ Where Guo Ziyi was rebuilding his army after the rout at Ye.
² For the wedding trousseau.
垂老別

四郊未寧靜，
垂老不得安。
子孫陣亡盡，
焉用身獨完。
投杖出門去，
同行為辛酸。
幸有牙齒存，
所悲骨髓乾。
男兒既介胄，
長揖別上官。
老妻臥路啼，
歲暮衣裳單。
孰知是死別，
且復傷其寒。
此去必不歸，
還聞勸加餐。
土門壁甚堅，
杏園度亦難。
勢異鄭城下，
縱死時猶寬。
7.5

Parted When Getting Old

No quiet or calm in the land all around,
those getting old can find no peace.
Children and grandchildren have all died in the ranks,
why should I survive alone?
I throw down my cane and go out the gate,
those who go with me feel bitter pain for me.
Fortunately I have some teeth remaining,
that my frame shrunken and dry is what grieves me.
When a man puts on the armor and helm,
he gives a deep bow, leaving the chief magistrate.
My old wife lies weeping on the road,
her clothes too thin for the end of the year.
I know well that this is parting for good,
yet I still feel pained at how poor she will be.
Once I go, I will surely never return,
yet I still hear her urging me to eat well.
Earthgate Barrier’s walls are quite strong,¹
it will be hard for them to cross at Apricot Garden.²
The situation is different than it was by Ye,
so even though I will die, the time may be delayed.

---
¹ One of the defenses holding back a rebel attack from the northeast.
² One of the crossings of the Yellow River.
人生有離合，
豈擇衰老端。
憶昔少壯日，
遲回竟長歎。
萬國盡征戍，
烽火被岡巒。
積屍草木腥，
流血川原丹。
何鄉為樂土，
安敢尚盤桓。
棄絕蓬室居，
塌然摧肺肝。

7.6

無家別

寂寞天寶後，
園廬但蒿藜。
我里百餘家，
世亂各東西。
存者無消息，
死者為塵泥。
賤子因陣敗，
歸來尋舊蹊。
Human life has its partings and reunions,
frail old age has not been exempted.
I recall long ago when young and strong,
24 I linger, looking back, and at last heave long sighs.
All the domains have gone on campaign,
beacon fires cover the ridges and hills.
Plants and trees stink from piled corpses,
28 stream and plain are red with flowing blood.
What village is a “happy land?” —
how can I dare still hesitate?
I leave my ramshackle dwelling behind forever,
32 feeling hopeless, I am broken within.

7.6
Parted without a Family

It became lonely and still after the Tianbao,
gardens and cottages were left only in weeds.
In my village were more than a hundred homes,
4 in the turmoil of the age each went different ways.
No news from those who survived;
those dead became dust and mire.
When our lines were broken, I, poor fellow,¹
8 went back to seek out these familiar paths.

¹ Probably referring to the defeat at Ye.
久行見空巷，
日瘦氣慘悽。
但對狐與狸，
豎毛怒我啼。
四鄰何所有，
一二老寡妻。
宿鳥戀本枝，
安辭且窮棲。
方春獨荷鋤，
日暮還灌畦。
縣吏知我至，
召令習鼓鞞。
雖從本州役，
內顧無所攜。
近行止一身，
遠去終轉迷。
家鄉既盪盡，
遠近理亦齊。
永痛長病母，
五年委溝溪。
生我不得力，
終身兩酸嘶。
何以為蒸黎。
After traveling long I saw deserted lanes,  
the sunlight was thin, the atmosphere gloomy.  
Before me were only foxes and weasels,  
their hair stood on end and they howled at me in rage.  
Who were left of all my neighbors?—  
one or two old widows.  
Birds yearn for their native branches to roost for the night,  
how could I refuse to lodge here in poverty awhile?  
In spring I shouldered my hoe alone,  
at sundown I again would water my plots.  
When the county clerks learned that I had come,  
they sent out orders to train to the war-drums.  
Even if I went on service in my own prefecture,  
on reflection I realize there would be no one to take by the hand.  
Marching close to home, I would be all alone;  
if going off far, I would get even more lost.  
But since my hometown has been swept bare,  
near and far are in principle the same.  
I always feel pain that my mother, long sick,  
I left in a valley trench five years ago.¹  
She gained no strong right hand from bearing me,  
for both, all our lives, a bitter moan.  
If you have no family to part from in life,  
how can you be even one of the common folk!

¹ That is, he was not able to give her a proper burial.
夏日歎

夏日出東北，
陵天經中街。
朱光徹厚地，
鬱蒸何由開。
上蒼久無雷，
無乃號令乖。
雨降不濡物，
良田起黃埃。
飛鳥苦熱死，
池魚涸其泥。
萬人尚流冗，
舉目唯蒿萊。
至今大河北，
化作虎與豺。
浩蕩想幽薊，
王師安在哉。
對食不能餐，
我心殊未諧。
眇然貞觀初，
難與數子偕。
Sighing over the Summer Sun

The summer sun comes out to the northeast,\(^1\)
crossing the heavens it passes mid-route.\(^2\)
Its red beams penetrate the deep earth,
how can its steaming vapors be dispelled?
Heaven above has long been without thunder,
it must be that commands have gone awry.\(^3\)
When the rain falls, it does not moisten things,
and brown dust rises from good fields.
Birds in flight die from the heat,
fish in the pond dry up with the mud.
The myriad folk are still turning vagabonds,
when I raise my eyes, there are only the weeds.
By now north of the great River
people have transformed into tigers and wild dogs.\(^4\)
I imagine You and Ji across the vast expanse,\(^5\)
where is the royal army?!
Facing my food, I cannot eat,
my mind is not in balance at all.
Faint in the past, the early Zhenguan reign—
it is hard to have the likes of those men.\(^6\)

\textit{In the fourth month of 759 there was a drought and subsequent famine.}

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\(^1\) That is, its course is at its northernmost point.
\(^2\) The sun overhead at noon.
\(^3\) Misrule was commonly understood as the cause of bad weather.
\(^4\) That is, they have become rebels.
\(^5\) The base of the rebels.
\(^6\) That is, the ministers of the Zhenguan reign of Taizong in the early seventh century.
夏夜歎

永日不可暮，
炎蒸毒我腸。
安得萬里風，
4 飄飄吹我裳。
昊天出華月，
茂林延疏光。
仲夏苦夜短，
8 開軒納微涼。
虛明見纖毫，
羽蟲亦飛揚。
物情無巨細，
12 自適固其常。
念彼荷戈士，
窮年守邊疆。
何由一洗濯，
16 執熱互相望。
竟夕擊刁斗，
喧聲連萬方。
青紫雖被體，
20 不如早還鄉。
7.8

Sighs of a Summer Night

The sun won’t set on these long days,
a fiery haze poisons me within.
How can I get a wind from ten thousand leagues,
to blow my robes rippling?
The season’s skies bring forth the splendid moon,
the leafy forest invites its sparse rays in.
In mid-summer one hates how short the nights are,
I open the door to the porch to get a faint cool.
One can see fine filaments in its formless light,
birds and insects too fly up.
The nature of things, whether tiny or huge,
is indeed always to do what suits them.
I think on those soldiers shouldering pikes,
all year long guarding the frontier.
How can one dip them in water?—
in taking hold of what is hot they gaze toward each other.¹
All evening they strike the watch-kettles,
and uproar stretches in every direction.
Although the body wears purple and green,²
it would be best to go home as soon as one can.

¹ “Tender Mulberry” 桑柔 from the Classic of Poetry. “Who can take hold of what is hot? / do you not dip it in water?” 誰能執熱, 逝不以濯. This is proverbial for counteracting something painful or dangerous.
² The mark of nobility.
立秋後題

北城悲笳發，
鸛鶴號且翔。
況復煩促倦，
激烈思時康。

7.9

立秋後題

日月不相饒，
節序昨夜隔。
玄蟬無停號，
秋燕已如客。
平生獨往願，
惆悵年半百。
罷官亦由人，
何事拘形役。

7.10

貽阮隱居昉

陳留風俗衰，
人物世不數。
塞上得阮生，
迥繼先父祖。
North of the wall sad reed-pipes begin,  
storks and cranes screech and fly.  
Even more, weary of urgent pressures,  
I intensely long for a time of peace.

7.9
Written after the Beginning of Autumn

The days and months show us no leniency,  
last night the seasons in sequence changed.  
Cold cicadas cease not in their cries,  
avtumn swallows are already like sojourners.  
My lifetime desire, to go off on my own,  
depressed that my years are half a century.  
To quit office still comes from oneself—  
why am I trapped in service to my body?

In early autumn of 759 Du Fu made the radical decision to give up his  
minor post in Huazhou and to take the family to Qinzhou, northwest of Chang'an. Qinzhou was a hardscrabble land, on the ethnic margin between Han Chinese and the Qiang people. His reasons for choosing Qinzhou are uncertain; it may have been because he had a nephew living there. This was the beginning of the wanderings that would occupy the rest of his life.

7.10
Presented to the Recluse Ruan Fang

The ways of Chenliu have declined,¹  
there is no one of account in this age.  
But on the frontier I found Master Ruan  
who continues his ancestors far in the past.

¹ Chenliu County was the home of the Ruan family, famous in the third century.
遣興三首

貧知靜者性，
白益毛髮古。
車馬入鄰家，
蓬蒿翳環堵。
清詩近道要，
識子用心苦。
尋我草徑微，
褰裳蹋寒雨。
更議居遠村，
避喧甘猛虎。
足明箕潁客，
榮貴如糞土。

7.11–13

遣興三首

I

下馬古戰場，
四顧但茫然。
風悲浮雲去，
黃葉墜我前。
朽骨穴螻蟻，
又為蔓草纏。
In poverty one can tell the nature of the serene,
the white adds antiquity to your hair.
Horses and carriages enter your neighbor’s home,
but weeds and wild growth hide your wall.
Your pure poems approach the Way’s essentials,
I can tell how hard you work at them.
You came along my faint and grassy path
lifting your gown, you tread through cold rain.
You went on to discuss lodging in some farther village,
you accept fierce tigers to avoid the noise.
This is enough to show that for this sojourner at Qi and the Ying¹
glory and honor are like manure.

7.11–13
Getting Out What Stirred Me

I
I got off my horse on an old battlefield,
I looked all around, it was just a vast blur.
The winds were sad, the drifting clouds went off,
and yellow leaves dropped in front of me.
Rotting bones had holes made by ants,
and also they were wrapped by vines.

---
¹ *Xu You.
遣興三首

故老行歎息，
今人尚開邊。
漢虜互勝負，
封疆不常全。
安得廉頗將，
三軍同晏眠。

II

高秋登寒山，
南望馬邑州。
降虜東擊胡，
壯健盡不留。
穹廬莽牢落，
上有行雲愁。
老弱哭道路，
願聞甲兵休。

III

豐年孰云遲，
甘澤不在早。
This old man sighs now and then,  
8 people today still would expand the frontiers.  
Han and barbarian take turns in victory and defeat,  
the frontiers are never secure.  
How can we get a general like Lian Po\(^1\)  
12 that the grand army can all sleep late?

II

In high autumn I climbed the cold mountains  
and gazed south to Mayi.\(^2\)  
Allied barbarians strike the Hu to the east,  
4 now nothing of their youthful strength remains.  
Yurts stand forlorn in the vastness,  
above them the moving clouds grieve.  
The old and young weep by the roadside,  
8 wanting to hear that the fighting has stopped.  
What happened at Ye was a reversal,\(^3\)  
the dead were piled like hills.  
All the generals have received rushes and earth,\(^4\)  
12 with whom can one plan strategies for galloping on?

III

Who says that the abundant harvest is delayed? —  
it doesn’t matter if the sweet moisture comes early.

---

1 *Lian Po.*  
2 Between Chengzhou and Qinzhou.  
3 The defeat of the Tang armies besieging the city.  
4 That is, they were given fiefs—despite their shameful defeat.
耕田秋雨足，
禾黍已映道。
春苗九月交，
颜色同日老。
劝汝衡门士，
忽悲尚枯槁。
时来展材力，
先后无醜好。
但讶鹿皮翁，
忘机对芳草。

7.14

留花门

北门天骄子，
饱肉气勇决。
高秋马肥健，
挟矢射漢月。
自古以为患，
诗人厌薄伐。
修德使其来，
羁縻固不绝。
胡为倾国至，
出入暗金阙。
Autumn rains have been enough for plowed fields,
4 wheat and millet already shine by the road.
Spring’s sprouts meet late autumn,
on the same day their complexions turn old.
I urge you gentlemen whose gates are barred:¹
8 grieve not that you are still dried up.
In due time you will reveal the force of your talents,
sooner, or later, no matter whether fair or foul.
I am amazed only at Old Man in Deerskin²
12 who forgets all motive facing the fragrant plants.

7.14

Keeping Those of Huamen³

Heaven’s darlings of the northland,
stuffed on meat, their spirits brave and determined.
In high autumn their horses grow fat and strong,
they clasp their arrows and shoot the moon of Han.
From ancient times they have been thought to be trouble,
the poet was weary of “we go and smite.”⁴
Cultivated Virtue had them come,⁵
8 haltering and tethering indeed has not ceased.⁶
But why has the entire nation arrived,
coming and going, darkening the golden palace towers?

¹ A recluse.
² An immortal.
³ Huamen was an Uighur fortress and serves as their toponym.
⁴ A phrase used several times in the Classic of Poetry in poems on campaigns against non-Chinese peoples.
⁵ They submit to the Tang ruler because of his “cultivated virtue.”
⁶ The ruler’s taming the non-Chinese peoples.
中原有驅除，
隱忍用此物。
公主歌黃鵲，
君王指白日。
連營屯左輔，
百里見積雪。
長戟鳥休飛，
哀笳曙幽咽。
田家最恐懼，
麥倒桑枝折。
沙苑臨清渭，
泉香草豐潔。
渡河不用船，
千騎常撤烈。
胡塵踰太行，
雜種抵京室。
花門既須留，
原野轉蕭瑟。
On the Central Plain there are those to be driven off,
so one bides and endures, making use of these creatures.
A Princess sang of the yellow swan,¹
but our Lord had pointed to the bright sun.²
Lined camps are made in the Eastern Bulwark,³
from a hundred leagues one sees snowdrifts.⁴
The birds cease flying because of long pikes,
wailing pipes sob unseen in broad daylight.
The farmers are the most fearful
that their wheat be flattened, their mulberry branches broken.
The Sandy Park overlooks the clear Wei,
its springs are fragrant, its plants luxuriant and pure.
They cross the river without using boats,
a thousand horsemen always moving at a dash.
Hu dust has crossed the Taihang Mountains,⁵
that mixed breed has reached the capital.⁶
Since we have to keep the folk of Huamen,
the plains become increasingly dreary and bleak.

Du Fu’s ironic ambiguity about Suzong’s Uighur allies in “Journey North”
has here become outright hostility. Defeated with the rest of the imperial
army at Ye, the Uighur force returned to Chang’an and camped there.

---
¹ Han Wudi married a princess to the Khan of the Wusun, and she composed a song
in which she longed to become a yellow swan and fly back to her homeland. The
contemporary reference was Suzong’s daughter, the Ningguo Princess, married to
the Khan of the Uighurs, in return for which he sent three thousand cavalry to help
the Tang cause.
² A gesture of making a vow, in this case the pact with the Uighurs.
³ The area east of the capital.
⁴ The white banners of the Uighurs.
⁵ Shi Siming’s rebel troops advancing on Luoyang.
⁶ In autumn of 759 Shi Siming regrouped his army and again took Luoyang.
佳人

絕代有佳人，
幽居在空谷。
自云良家子，
零落依草木。
關中昔喪亂，
兄弟遭殺戮。官高何足論，
不得收骨肉。
世情惡衰歇，
万事隨轉燭。夫婿輕薄兒，
新人美如玉。
合昏尚知時，
鴛鴦不獨宿。但見新人笑，
那聞舊人哭。
在山泉水清，
出山泉水濁。侍婢賣珠迴，
牽萝補茅屋。
7.15
The Fair Lady

There is a fair lady, the fairest of the age,
who lives hidden away in a bare valley.
She says she is the child of good family,
lost and fallen among the trees.
Before, when ruin befell Guanzhong,\(^1\)
her brothers were slaughtered.
Needless to say she was of a high official’s family,
but could not get to gather their bones.
The age hates those fallen in fortune,
all things blow with a candle in the wind.
Her husband was a man of shallow feeling,
his new bride was lovely as jade.
Even the close-at-dusk can tell the time,\(^2\)
mandarin ducks do not spend nights alone.
He saw only the new bride smiling,
how could he hear the old wife weep?
In the mountains the spring water is pure,
leaving the mountains the spring water grows muddy.
Her maidservant returns from selling her pearls,
she pulls creepers to patch her thatched roof.

---
\(^1\) The capital region.
\(^2\) The mimosa tree, so called because its paired leaves fold together at dusk.
摘花不插髮，
采柏動盈掬。
天寒翠袖薄，
日暮倚修竹。

7.16–17

夢李白二首

I

死別已吞聲，
生別常悽惻。
江南瘴癘地，
逐客無消息。
故人入我夢，
明我長相憶。
恐非平生魂，
路遠不可測。
魂來楓林青，
魂返關塞黑。
君今在羅網，
何以有羽翼。
落月滿屋梁，
猶疑照顏色。
She plucks flowers but doesn’t stick them in her hair, picked cypress always fill her hands.¹
The weather is cold, her azure sleeves are thin, at twilight she rests by tall bamboo.

7.16–17
Dreaming of Li Bai

I
Parted by death, one says nothing, but parted in life leaves one always anxious. The southland is a place of pestilential vapors, from the exile there is no news. My old friend entered my dreams, aware that I think of him always. And I feared this was not the soul of one living, for a journey so far it cannot be fathomed. The soul came where maple woods were green, the soul returned through barrier passes black. Now caught in the snares of the law,² how is it you have these wings? Setting moonlight filled the rafters, and it seemed to still shine on his face.

---
¹ Cypresses seeds were famine food.
² For his participation, willing or unwilling, in the abortive rebellion of the Prince of Yong against Suzong.
夢李白二首

水深波浪闊，
無使蛟龍得。

II

浮雲終日行，
遊子久不至。
三夜頻夢君，
情親見君意。
告歸常局促，
苦道來不易。
江湖多風波，
舟楫恐失墜。
出門搔白首，
若負平生志。
冠蓋滿京華，
斯人獨憔悴。
孰云網恢恢，
將老身反累。
千秋萬歲名，
寂寞身後事。
The waters are deep, the waves stretch broad—
don’t let the dragons get you.

II

The drifting clouds move all day long,
for a long time the traveler has not come.
I dreamed of you repeatedly for three nights,
and your affection revealed your thoughts.
Saying goodbye, you always seemed pressed,
stressing that it was not easy to come.
There are many storms on the rivers and lakes,
and I fear the boat’s oars will slip and fall.
Going out the gate, you scratched your white hair,
as if having failed in your lifetime’s aims.
Caps and carriage awnings fill the capital,
yet this man alone is haggard and worn.
Who says the law’s net is widely meshed?—
getting old, you find yourself caught up.
Fame for a thousand, ten thousand years,
but what happens after death is a silence.

Although none of Du Fu’s friends were killed in the Rebellion, some like Zheng Qian were exiled because they had been given offices in An Lushan’s government. The Prince of Yong had been given the task of settling the rich lower Yangzi regions, on whose tax grain the dynasty was dependent. Li Bai found a patron in him, but the Prince foolishly declared himself a ruler, presumably of a new “Southern Dynasty,” and was quickly put down. Li Bai was sent to prison, and later released.
7.18

有懷台州鄭十八司戶

天台隔三江，
風浪無晨暮。
鄭公縱得歸，
老病不識路。
昔如水上鷗，
今為置中兔。
性命由他人，
悲辛但狂顧。
山鬼獨一腳，
蝮蛇長如樹。
呼號傍孤城，
歲月誰與度。
從來禦魑魅，
多為才名誤。
夫子嵇阮流，
更被時俗惡。
海隅微小吏，
眼暗髮垂素。
黃帽映青袍，
非供折腰具。
7.18

Thoughts on Zheng Qian (18), Revenue Manager of Taizhou

Mount Tiantai lies beyond Three Rivers, stormy there, whether it’s dawn or dusk.
Even if Master Zheng got to return, aged and sick, he could not tell the road.
He was once as a gull over waters, he is now a rabbit in the snare.
His fate depends on others, in misery he can only look around desperately.
There are mountain demons with only one foot and cobras as long as a tree is tall.
These cry out by the solitary city, with whom do you pass the months and years?
Those who fend off goblins have always been betrayed by their talent and fame.¹
You, sir, are of the type of Xi Kang and Ruan Ji,² even more hated by the ways of this age.
A minor clerk by the edge of the sea, your eyes dimming, your hair hangs white.
A yellow hat shining against a blue gown³ does not provide the accoutrements for waist-bending bows.⁴

---

¹ “Fending off goblins” is the function of those who serve in remote regions.
² *Ruan Ji* and *Xi Kang* were famous high-minded recluses of the third century; both tried to stay out of political struggles, but both were executed.
³ The yellow cap is a sign of old age; the blue gown indicates poverty, a student, or, in this case, a minor official.
⁴ Suggesting servility to the powerful.
遣興五首

平生一杯酒，
見我故人遇。
相望無所成，
乾坤莽回互。

7.19–23

遣興五首

I

蟄龍三冬臥，
老鶴萬里心。
昔時賢俊人，
未遇猶視今。
嵇康不得死，
孔明有知音。
又如壟底松，
用舍在所尋。
大哉霜雪幹，
歲久為枯林。

II

昔者龐德公，
未曾入州府。
It used to be with a cup of ale
I would be met by my old friend.
Now I gaze for you and nothing comes of it,
Heaven and Earth make their vast revolutions.

7.19–23
Getting Out What Stirred Me

I
The hibernating dragon slept through the winter months,\(^1\)
the old crane’s mind was on going ten thousand leagues.\(^2\)
Splendid and worthy men of olden days
are like what we see today in not finding their moment.
Xi Kang did not come to a fitting end,
but Zhuge Liang had one who understood him.
It is also like the pines below the slope,
whether used or ignored depends on seeking them out.
Great indeed, those trunks that know frost and snow,
but after many years, they become a forest of dead trees.

II
Long ago Pang Degong\(^3\)
ever once went to the prefectural seat.

---
1  *Zhuge Liang.
2  *Xi Kang.
3  *Pang Degong.
襄陽耆舊間，
處士節獨苦。
豈無濟時策，
終竟畏羅罟。
林茂鳥有歸，
水深魚知聚。
舉家隱鹿門，
劉表焉得取。

III

陶潛避俗翁，
未必能達道。
觀其著詩集，
頗亦恨枯槁。
達生豈是足，
默識蓋不早。
有子賢與愚，
何其掛懷抱。

IV

賀公雅吳語，
在位常清狂。
上疏乞骸骨，
黃冠歸故鄉。
Among the gaffers of old Xiangyang
this recluse’s standards were uniquely severe.
Of course he had plans to help the times,
but in the end he dreaded the nets and snares.
Where the woods are most leafy, the birds return,
where waters are deep, fish congregate.
The whole family hid out at Deergate—
how could Liu Biao get his hands on him?

III

Tao Qian, old fellow who avoided the common,¹
wasn’t necessarily able to achieve his Way.
When I look at the collection of poems he wrote,
he really hated his barren life.
How can sufficiency make a fulfilled life?—
his silent understanding indeed did not come early.
Having sons, whether worthy or fools,
how could his concerns so hang on them?

IV

Master He spoke Wu dialect with elegance,²
in his office, always madcap and wild.
He sent in a petition to beg for his bones,³
in a yellow grass hat he went back home.

¹ *Tao Qian.
² He Zhizhang (c. 659–c. 744), an eccentric who served in Xuanzong’s court.
³ Begging to return to his home so that he could be buried there.
爽氣不可致，
斯人今則亡。
山陰一茅宇，
江海日淒涼。

吾憐孟浩然，
裋褐即長夜。
賦詩何必多，
往往凌鮑謝。
清江空舊魚，
春雨餘甘蔗。
每望東南雲，
令人幾悲吒。

遣興二首

I

天用莫如龍，
有時繫扶桑。
頓纜海徒湧，
神人身更長。
His dashing temper cannot be brought back,
such a man now has perished.
In Shanyin a single thatched cottage,
the river and lakes grow daily more bleak and cool.

V

I sadly cherish Meng Haoran,1
wearing coarse homespun he went to the long night.2
Why need one’s poems be many?—
everywhere he surpasses Bao and Xie.3
On the clear river are only those fish of before,
in spring rain there is abundant sugarcane.
Whenever I gaze on clouds to the southeast,
it makes me heave several sad sighs.

7.24–25

Getting Out What Stirred Me

I

Nothing matches the dragon for working in heaven,
but sometimes they are tied to the Fusang Tree.4
Halting their reins, the sea churns in vain,
the god’s body is even taller.

1 A Tang poet (689–740).
2 The land of the dead.
3 Bao is the poet Bao Zhao; Xie could be any or all of the Xie’s famous in the fifth
century, especially Xie Lingyun and Xie Tiao.
4 The Fusang Tree is where the sun rises. This refers to the six dragons that pull the
sun carriage.
遣興五首

I

性命苟不存，
英雄徒自強。
吞聲勿復道，
真宰意茫茫。

II

地用莫如馬，
無良復誰記。
此日千里鳴，
追風可君意。
君看渥窪種，
態與駑駘異。
不雜蹄齧間，
逍遙有能事。

7.26–30

遣興五首

I

朔風飄胡雁，
慘澹帶砂礫。
長林何蕭蕭，
秋草萋更碧。
If one’s life cannot be preserved,  
the hero exerts his efforts in vain.  
Swallow your voice, say nothing more,  
the purpose of the One in Charge is vast and vague.

II

Nothing matches the horse for working on Earth,  
but if there are no good ones, who pays attention?  
Today it whinnies, crossing a thousand leagues,  
chasing the wind, it suits his lord’s purpose.  
Just look at the Wowa breed,\(^1\)  
their manner differs from worn-out nags.  
If you don’t mix them in with those that kick and bite,  
moving easily, they can accomplish much.

7.26–30  
Getting Out What Stirred Me

I

The north wind tosses the Hu wild geese,  
dreary, it carries pebbles and sand.  
How it whistles through the tall forest,  
autumn plants, lush, grow still greener.

---

1 A region in Gansu famous for its fine horses.
北里富薰天，
高樓夜吹笛。
焉知南鄰客，
九月猶緑緑。

II

長陵銳頭兒，
出獵待明發。
騂弓金爪鏑，
白馬蹴微雪。
未知所馳逐，
但見暮光滅。
歸來懸兩狼，
門戶有旌節。

III

漆有用而割，
膏以明自煎。
蘭摧白露下，
桂折秋風前。
府中羅舊尹，
沙道尚依然。
赫赫蕭京兆，
今為時所憐。
The northern wards are rich, permeating the heavens.  
they play flutes by night high upstairs.  
How would they know of the sojourner, their southern neighbor,  
still wearing coarse homespun in the ninth month?

II  
The pointy-headed lad of Changling\(^1\)  
waits until daybreak to go out hunting.  
A reflex bow, golden claw arrowheads,  
4 white horse kicking up light snow.  
I know not what he is chasing,  
I see only that the twilight fades.  
Coming back, two wolves hang from his horse,  
8 at his gate are banners and standards.\(^2\)

III  
The lacquer tree is useful and suffers harm,  
oil burns up for its brightness.  
The eupatorium is ruined under silvery dew,  
4 the cassia is chopped before the autumn wind.  
In the office they netted the former metropolitan governor,\(^3\)  
but the sanded road is still as it was.\(^4\)  
Once awe-inspiring, Xiao of the capital  
8 now is pitied by the times.

---
\(^1\) Someone with the indications of military prowess.  
\(^2\) The sign of the home of a general or military commissioner.  
\(^3\) Xiao Jiong had been a close associate of the minister Li Linfu and served as metropolitan governor in the capital, then fell from power.  
\(^4\) The “sanded road” is the road to the chief minister’s mansion. This survives after the person in power is gone.
猛虎憑其威，
往往遭急縛。
雷吼徒咆哮，
枝撐已在腳。
忽看皮寢處，
無復睛閃爍。
人有甚於斯，
足以勸元惡。

朝逢富家葬，
前後皆輝光。
共指親戚大，
緦麻百夫行。
送者各有死，
不須羨其強。
君看束縛去，
亦得歸山岡。
IV

The fierce tiger depends upon threatening power and always gets roped up tight. With a thunderous howl it roars in vain, the wooden braces are already on its paws. All at once you look at its pelt spread as bedding, the flash of its pupils is no more. For people it is worse than this, which is enough to warn the most evil men.

V

At dawn I met a rich man’s funeral cortège, from beginning to end, all splendid. Everyone noted the magnitude of relatives, a hundred fellows going in fine-threaded hemp.¹ Each of those accompanying will have his own death, one need not envy their strength. Look at him going off wrapped in cords,² he too will get to go off to the hills.

The preceding sets of “Getting Out What Stirred Me” are essentially undatable. They have been conventionally located among the Qinzhou poems, and as a result they have contributed to an understanding of Du Fu in Qinzhou. This is, however, one of the major problems in reading in a biographical context: undatable poems have to be placed somewhere, and where they land becomes part of the “poetic biography.”

At this point the Tibetans, taking advantage of Tang weakness, had been seizing Tang territory to the west and northwest. Qinzhou had become a point through which emissaries and armies passed. In the following series Du Fu takes stock of his decision to move the family to Qinzhou.

¹ Funeral clothing.
² The funeral of a poor man.
秦州雜詩二十首

I

滿目悲生事，
因人作遠遊。
遲迴度隴怯，
浩蕩及關愁。
水落魚龍夜，
山空鳥鼠秋。
西征問烽火，
心折此淹留。

II

秦州城北寺，
勝跡隗囂宮。
苔蘚山門古，
丹青野殿空。
月明垂葉露，
雲逐度溪風。
清渭無情極，
愁時獨向東。
7.31–50

Unclassified Poems from Qinzhou

I

Filling my eyes, things that make me grieve at life;
to rely on others, I made a far journey.
We hung back, fearful of crossing Long Heights;
reaching the barrier, sorrow swept over me.
The waters sink, night at Fish-dragon;¹
the hills deserted, autumn at Bird-rat.²
Journeying westward, I ask about beacon fires,
the heart snaps, lingering here.

II

The temple north of Qinzhou’s walls,
the splendid remains of Wei Xiao’s palace.³
With lichen and moss its mountain gate is ancient,
polychrome paintings, wilderness halls deserted.
The moon brightens the dew that hangs from its leaves,
clouds follow the wind as it crosses the stream.
But the clear Wei is heartless in the extreme,
heading east by itself in the times of my sorrow.⁴

---

¹ A river whose multi-colored fish were popularly believed to turn into dragons.
² A mountain in the region.
³ Wei Xiao (d. 33 A.D.) had been a regional warlord in the interregnum at the beginning of the Eastern Han.
⁴ Going to Chang’an, as the poet himself would like to do.
III

州圖領同谷，
驛道出流沙。
降虜兼千帳，
居人有萬家。
馬驕珠汗落，
胡舞白題斜。
年少臨洮子，
西來亦自誇。

IV

鼓角緣邊郡，
川原欲夜時。
秋聽殷地發，
風散入雲悲。
抱葉寒蟬靜，
歸山獨鳥遲。
萬方聲一概，
吾道竟何之。

V

南使宜天馬，
由來萬匹強。
III

The province’s map gives it charge of Tonggu, the post-station road leads to Drifting Sands.¹ Federate nomads join in a thousand tents, the inhabitants make up ten thousand households. The horses mettlesome, beads of sweat drip; doing Turkish dances, whitened foreheads incline. Young men, the lads of Lintao, even boast about coming from the west.

IV

Drums and bugles in this frontier district when it is almost night on the rivers and plains. In autumn I listen as the sounds shake the land, wind scatters their sadness into the clouds. Clasping leaves, the cold cicadas grow still; a single bird tarries, going back to the hills. From every direction the sounds are all of a piece, and where will my own journey lead?

V

The southern envoy found it suited for Heaven-horses, there were always more than ten thousand head.

¹ The Gobi Desert.
浮雲連陣沒，
秋草遍山長。
聞說真龍種，
仍殘老驌驎。
哀鳴思戰鬥，
迥立向蒼蒼。

城上胡笳奏，
山邊漢節歸。
防河赴滄海，
奉詔發金微。
士苦形骸黑，
旌疏鳥獸稀。
那堪往來戍，
恨解鄣城圍。

莽莽萬重山，
孤城山谷間。
無風雲出塞，
不夜月臨關。
屬國歸何晚，
樓蘭斬未還。
Drifting clouds, they perished in successive battle lines,
autumn plants now grow tall, all over the hills.
I have heard tell that of the true dragon-breed
there still remains an old charger.
He neighs mournfully thinking of battle,
and stands apart, facing the gray heavens.

VI
A Hu reed-pipe plays atop the walls,
beside the mountain Han standards return.¹
They go to the gray sea to defend the Yellow River region;
bearing a decree, they set out from Jinwei.
The soldiers suffer, their skeletons blacken,
banners sparse, their birds and beasts few.
How can one bear troops coming and going?—
I deplore how the siege of Ye came apart.

VII
Stretching vast, ten thousand folds of mountains,
a lone fortress in a mountain valley.
No wind, but clouds come out of the passes,
not night, the moon hangs over a barrier.
How late he comes back from the client kingdoms,²
nor has one returned from beheading the Loulan king.³

¹ An envoy or commander, either returning from meeting with the Tibetans or coming to collect more troops for the fighting in the east.
² *Su Wu. A Tang envoy is probably also thought of.
³ In the Han, Fu Jiezi took Chinese troops to the Loulan kingdom and beheaded its recalcitrant king.
霏尘一长望，
衰飒正摧颜。

VIII

闻道寻源使，
从天此路迥。
牵牛去几许，
宛马至今来。
一望幽燕隔，
何时郡国开。
东征健儿尽，
羌笛暮吹哀。

IX

今日明人眼，
临池好驿亭。
丛篁低地碧，
高柳半天青。
稠叠多幽事，
喧呼阅使星。
老夫如有此，
不异在郊坰。
I gaze long at the smoke and dust,
8 aged and wasted, my complexion is ruined.

VIII

They say that the envoy seeking the River’s source,
came back from Heaven along this route.¹
How far distant could he have been from the Oxherd?—
4 Ferghana horses keep coming to this day.
I gaze, but You and Yan are cut off—²
when will our own provinces be opened up?
Our regulars, marching east, are gone,
8 the Qiang flute plays mournfully at twilight.

IX

Brightening my eyes this day
is the fine station pavilion overlooking a pool.
Bamboo clumps emerald, lowering to the ground,
4 tall willows, green over half the sky.
In these thick folds the sense of seclusion is great,
then noisy shouting, as envoy stars are observed.³
If an old fellow like myself could have such a place,
8 it would be no different from living in the suburbs.⁴

¹ *Zhang Qian
² In northeast China, still in the hands of the rebels.
³ In the Eastern Han, Hedi sent two envoys to Chengdu, and two wandering stars
  were observed crossing into the astral region of Shu. Here we have court envoys.
⁴ Of Chang’an.
秦州雜詩二十首

X

雲氣接崑崙，
涔涔塞雨繁。
羌童看渭水，
使客向河源。

煙火軍中幕，
牛羊嶺上村。
所居秋草靜，
正開小蓬門。

XI

蕭蕭古塞冷，
漠漠秋雲低。
黃鵠翅垂雨，
蒼鷹飢啄泥。

蓟門誰自北，
漢將獨征西。
不意書生耳，
臨衰厭鼓鞞。

XII

山頭南郭寺，
水號北流泉。
X

Cloudy vapors stretch to the Kunlun Mountains,
frontier rains heavy with streaming torrents.
A Qiang lad observes the Wei’s waters,
the envoy heads off to Heyuan.¹
Smoky fires, tents of the army;
cattle and sheep, a village on the ridge.
Where I dwell the autumn plants are peaceful
now as I close my small ramshackle gate.

XI

Whistling winds, the ancient passes chill,
billowing autumn clouds hang low.
A yellow swan, wings drooping in the rain,
a gray hawk, starving, pecks in the mud.
Who now will go north from Ji Gate?—²
the Han generals only campaign in the west.
I had not expected that this scholar’s ears
would weary of war-drums in declining years.

XII

The southern suburban temple atop the mountain
has a stream called “Northward Flowing Spring.”

¹ A military district in the Longyou Circuit.
² In the northeast, in rebel hands.
老樹空庭得，
清渠一邑傳。
秋花危石底，
晚景臥鐘邊。
俛仰悲身世，
溪風為颯然。

XIII

傳道東柯谷，
深藏數十家。
對門藤蓋瓦，
映竹水穿沙。
瘦地翻宜粟，
陽坡可種瓜。
船人近相報，
但恐失桃花。

XIV

萬古仇池穴，
潛通小有天。
神魚人不見，
福地語真傳。
近接西南境，
長懷十九泉。
A deserted courtyard with an old tree gets it,
the clear channel runs throughout the whole town.
Autumn flowers at the base of a sheer rock,
evening sunlight beside a bell lying on its side.
In a moment I am saddened for the world I live in,
the breeze on the creek gusts, rustling for me.

XIII

I’ve heard of Eastern Bough Valley,
its depths hide several dozen families.
Vines cover the roof-tiles before their gates,
half-hidden in bamboo, waters bore through sand.
The thin soil turns out to be suited for millet,
on the sunlit southern slopes one may plant melons.
May the boatman let me know when we get close,
I only fear that I’ll miss this Peach Blossom Spring.¹

XIV

For all time the cave on Mate Pool Mountain²
secretly connects to There-is-a-little-Heaven.³
No one sees the sacred fish,
but word that it is a “Blessed Place” has been truly transmitted.⁴
Closely adjacent to the southeast border⁵
my mind is always on its nineteen springs.

¹ *Peach Blossom Spring.
² In Tonggu.
³ This is a Daoist sacred place on Wangwu Mountain in modern Shanxi.
⁴ That is, the cave on Mate Pool Mountain is a sacred place of Daoism.
⁵ Of Qinzhou.
何時一茅屋，
8 送老白雲邊。

XV

未暇泛滄海，
悠悠兵馬間。
塞門風落木，
4 客舍雨連山。
阮籍行多興，
龐公隱不還。
東柯遂疏懶，
8 休鐫鬚毛斑。

XVI

東柯好崖谷，
不與眾峰群。
落日邀雙鳥，
4 晴天卷片雲。
野人矜絕險，
水竹會平分。
採藥吾將老，
8 兒童未遣聞。
When in a single thatched cottage
will I live out old age beside white clouds?

XV
I have no chance to sail off upon gray seas,
I go on and on among war-horses.
Winds strip the trees at my frontier gate,
in a sojourner’s lodgings rains stretch to the hills.
In his journeys Ruan Ji was often stirred;¹
Pang Degong turned a recluse and did not return.²
At Eastern Bough I will follow an easy, carefree life
and stop tweezing white hairs from my temple locks.

XVI
Eastern Bough is a fine valley,
it does not congregate with other peaks.
The setting sun welcomes a pair of birds,
the clear heavens roll up a single cloud.
Rustics boast of how difficult and remote it is;
it happens to be equally divided between water and bamboo.
I will grow old there picking herbs,
I have not yet let my children know of this.

¹ *Ruan Ji.
² *Pang Degong.
XVII

邊秋陰易夕，
不復辨晨光。
簷雨亂淋幔，
4 山雲低度牆。
鸕鶿窺淺井，
蚯蚓上深堂。
8 車馬何蕭索，
門前百草長。

XVIII

地僻秋將盡，
山高客未歸。
塞雲多斷續，
4 邊日少光輝。
警急烽常報，
傳聞檄屢飛。
西戎外甥國，
8 何得迕天威。

XIX

鳳林戈未息，
魚海路常難。
XVII

Autumn on the frontier, shadows easily turn evening
one can no more distinguish the morning light.
Rain from the eaves streams wildly down the curtains,
mountain clouds cross low over the walls.
The cormorant peers into a shallow well,
earthworms crawl deep into the hall.
How dreary the wagons and horses look,
before my gate all the different plants grow tall.

XVIII

The place is remote, fall will soon end,
mountains high, the wayfarer has not gone home.
Frontier clouds usually break off, then continue,
the borderland sun sheds but little light.
Beacon fires constantly announce emergencies,
I’ve heard that army dispatches often fly through.
The Western Rong are a maternal nephew’s kingdom—
how can they violate Heaven’s authority?

Qinzhou, at the eastern edge of the Longyou Circuit, was kept abreast of
Tibetan incursions, which no doubt contributed to Du Fu’s decision to
move the family farther south.

XIX

At Fenglin the pikes have not yet rested,
the road to Yuhai was always hard.

---

1  The Western Rong is an archaic reference to the Tibetans. A Tibetan king had once
married a Tang princess, leading to the ideological position that the ruling house
bore the relation of “maternal nephew” to the Tang imperial house.
2  A barrier pass in Hezhou, separated from Qinzou by only one prefecture.
3  An area of conflict with the Tibetans.
候火雲峰峻，
懸軍幕井乾。風連西極動，
月過北庭寒。故老思飛將，
何時議築壇。

唐堯真自聖，
野老復何知。曬藥能無婦，
應門幸有兒。藏書聞禹穴，
讀記憶仇池。為報鴛行舊，
鷦鷯在一枝。

月夜憶舍弟
戌鼓斷人行，
邊秋一雁聲。露從今夜白，
月是故鄉明。
Recalling My Brothers on a Moonlit Night

Watch-fires where cloudy peaks tower,
4 an army deep in enemy territory, its camp well run dry.
Winds stir, stretching through the farthest west,
the moon is cold, passing over Beiting.¹
Old folks long for the Flying General—²
8 when will we discuss building an altar?³

XX

In his own right our Yao is truly a Sage,⁴
what does an old rustic know?
Could I do without a wife to sun-dry my herbs?—
4 and luckily I have a son to tend the gate.
I have heard of Yu's cave with its hidden writings,⁵
in reading accounts, I think back on Mate Pool.
Tell my old friends in the mandarin-duck ranks,⁶
8 the wren remains on his single branch.⁷

7.51

Recalling My Brothers on a Moonlit Night

The garrison drums stop people traveling,
fall on the frontier, the sound of one wild goose.
The dew will be white from this night on,
4 the moon is as bright as at home.

---
¹ In the area near Turfan.
² The Han general Li Guang, who successfully fought the Xiongnu.
³ To commission a general, following the example of Han Gaozu, who built a high altar to commission his general Han Xin.
⁴ Referring to Suzong.
⁵ Sage-king Yu found golden tablets in Weiwan Mountain and hid them in a cave.
⁶ Court ranks.
⁷ This is a positive figure for the recluse, the person who preserves his life by staying humble.
天末懷李白

有弟皆分散，
無家問死生。
寄書長不達，
況乃未休兵。

7.52

天末懷李白

涼風起天末，
君子意如何。
鴻雁幾時到，
江湖秋水多。
文章憎命達，
魑魅喜人過。
應共冤魂語，
投詩贈汨羅。

7.53

宿贊公房

杖錫何來此，
秋風已颯然。
雨荒深院菊，
霜倒半池蓮。
I have brothers, but all are scattered,
I have no family to ask if they still live.
I send letters but they never arrive,
even more as warfare has not ceased.

7.52
Recalling Li Bai at the Ends of the Earth

A cool breeze rises at the ends of the earth,
what are you thinking of, now, sir?
When will the swans and wild geese arrive?¹
on the rivers and lakes autumn floods are full.
In literature success is hated,
trolls take delight when a person errs.
You must be talking to that wronged soul,
presenting a poem for him into the Miluo.²

Du Fu’s stay in Qinzhou was somewhat lightened by the surprise appearance of Reverend Zan, with whom Du Fu had stayed when he was in rebel-held Chang’an.

7.53
Spending the Night in the Chambers of Reverend Zan³

How did you come here, supported by your tin scepter?—⁴
already the autumn winds are howling.
Rains lay waste to chrysanthemums deep in your garden,
the frost overturned the lotus over half your pool.

¹ Bearers of letters.
² The “wronged soul” is that of Qu Yuan, who drowned himself in the Miluo River.
³ Original note: “Zan was the abbot of the Great Cloud Temple in the capital; he was sent into exile here” 贊京師大雲寺主, 論此安置.
⁴ The tin scepter was part of the paraphernalia of a monk.
放逐寧逓性，
虚空不離禪。
相逢成夜宿，
隴月向人圓。

7.54

赤谷西崦人家

躋險不自喧，
出郊已清目。
溪洄日氣暖，
徑轉山田熟。
鳥雀依茅茨，
藩籬帶松菊。
如行武陵暮，
欲問桃花宿。

7.55–56

西枝村尋置草堂地夜宿贊公土室二首

出郭眄細岑，
披榛得微路。
Though banished, how could you stray from your nature?
in emptiness you do not depart from Chan.
Meeting you, I end up staying the night,
8 the moon facing us over Longtou is round.

7.54

Homes on West Mountain at Red Valley

Mounting the steeps, there is no noise,
leaving the area around the city has already cleared my eyes.
The creek bends, the sunlit air is warm,
4 the path turns, mountain fields ripening.
Wrens rest on the thatch,
hedges lined with pine and chrysanthemum.
It is as if walking in Wuling in the evening,
8 I’ll find out about spending the night in Peach Blossom Spring.¹

7.55–56

Seeking a Place to Put a Thatched Cottage in West Branch Village,
Staying Over in the Earthen Chamber of Reverend Zan

I

As I left town, I turned my eyes to a thin pinnacle,
pushing back undergrowth, I found a small path.

¹ *Peach Blossom Spring.
西枝村尋置草堂地夜宿贊公土室二首

溪行一流水，
曲折方屡渡。
贊公湯休徒，
好靜心跡素。
昨枉霞上作，
盛論巖中趣。
怡然共攜手，
恣意同遠步。
捫蘿澀先登，
陟巘眩反顧。
要求陽岡暖，
苦涉陰嶺涇。
惆悵老大藤，
沈吟屈蟠樹。
卜居意未展，
杖策回且暮。
層巔餘落日，
草蔓已多露。

II

天寒鳥已歸，
月出山更靜。
土室延白光，
松門耿疏影。
I followed along the current of a stream,
often crossing again its twists and turns.
Reverend Zan is the sort of Tang Huixiu,\(^{1}\)
he loves serenity, his mind’s traces are plain.
Recently he graced me with writing from above the auroras,\(^{2}\)
fully discussing the attractions of being in the mountains.
Cheerfully we took each other by the hand
and, following our inclination, walked far together.
Clasping vines, I was first to climb the rough ground,
I ascended the summit, then, confused, looked back.
I was looking for the warmth of a hill’s sunlit south side,
we had painfully crossed the gelid shadowy north side.
I stood depressed at a large old rattan vine,
I brooded by gnarled and twisted trees.
My intention to site a house had not been fulfilled,
using my cane I went back with you at twilight.
On the layered ridges the setting sun remained,
already there was much dew on the plants and vines.

II

The weather was cold, the birds had returned,
when the moon came out, the mountains were even more still.
The earthen chamber invited the white light in,
the gate of pine gleamed in its sparse rays.

---

\(^{1}\) The famous Southern Dynasties poet-monk Huixiu (fl. 464) was surnamed Tang.
\(^{2}\) From the realm of someone above the world.
寄贊上人

一昨陪錫杖，
卜鄰南山幽。
年侵腰腳衰，
未便陰崖秋。
By climbing and clambering we had tired out the short day,
the pleasures of chat we entrusted to the long night.
Brightly burning, kindling from the forest,
water drawn in darkness from a well below the rocks.
His Reverence is an old friend from the capital,
by accumulated merit he holds to natural endowments.
We used to roam, the likes of Zhidun and Xu Xun,\(^1\)
our elation went far to the rivers and lakes.
His fate went awry, exiled to this frontier,
yet his Way is broad, he preserves Qi and Ying.\(^2\)
Who would have thought that amid warhorses
I would again meet him, screened away from matters of the dust?
How can there be only one road to seek a secluded spot?—
there are many peaks, their colors afar.
Dawn’s light is just hazily appearing,
we will go on across the hilltop to the southwest.

Reverend Zan’s fall was almost as dramatic as Du Fu’s own. From Great
Cloud Temple in Chang’an, whose splendor was supported by imperial
patronage, he had been sent off to a loess cave in a temple in backwater
Qinzhou. He seems to have accepted this with equanimity—though unlike
Du Fu, he did not have a household to provide for.

7.57

To Reverend Zan

Just recently, in company with you and your tin staff,
I searched for a site in the seclusion of southern mountains.
The years creep upon me, waist and feet are weak,
so autumn on the shadowed north slopes won’t be right for me.

---

\(^1\) Zhidun and Xu Xun were famous fourth-century poets combining interest in the
landscape with philosophical reflection.

\(^2\) *Xu You.
重岡北面起，
竟日陽光留。
茅屋買兼土，
斯焉心所求。

近聞西枝西，
有谷杉黍稠。
亭午頗和暖，
石田又足收。

當期塞雨乾，
宿昔齒疾瘳。
裴回虎穴上，
面勢龍泓頭。

柴荆具茶茗，
徑路通林丘。
與子成二老，
來往亦風流。

7.58

太平寺泉眼
招提憑高岡，
疏散連草莽。
出泉枯柳根，
汲引歲月古。
To the north a layered hill rose up,  
where sunlight lingered all day long.  
A thatched cottage I’ll buy, along with the land,  
this spot is what my heart seeks.  
Recently I’ve heard that west of West Branch  
there’s a valley, thick with fir and millet.  
At noon it is especially balmy and warm,  
the stony fields also yield enough.  
At this moment the frontier rain has dried,  
my longstanding tooth pains have gotten better.  
I pace about above a tiger’s lair,  
its face on the edge of a dragon pool.  
Though ramshackle, it will be provided with tea,  
a path leads through to your wooded hill.  
We’ll become two old men together,  
even with some panache in our intercourse.

7.58

The Fountainhead at Taiping Temple

The monastery rests on the high hill,  
its scattered buildings stretch to the grassland.  
A spring comes out from the roots of a withered willow,  
they have drawn from it from time immemorial.
太平寺泉眼

石间见海眼，
天畔萦水府。
广深丈尺间，
宴息敢轻侮。
青白二小蛇，
幽姿可时睹。
如丝气或上，
爌熳为云雨。
山头到山下，
鑿井不盡土。
取供十方僧，
香美胜牛乳。
北风起寒文，
弱藻舒绀縷。
明涵客衣淨，
細蕩林影趣。
何當宅下流，
餘润通药圃。
三春湿黄精，
一食生毛羽。
Among the rocks one sees an eye of the sea, the watery precinct winds to heaven’s edge. Its breadth and depth, about a yard, dare anyone insult what lies at rest there? Two little green and white snakes, one can sometimes catch sight of their secluded forms. A vapor like a strand of silk may rise, then swelling out, become clouds and rain. From the mountain top to the mountain’s foot, they’ve dug wells and found only endless dirt. They take this spring to provide for monks from everywhere, more fragrant and sweet than cow’s milk. The north wind raises cold ripples, pliant water-plants spread azure threads. Brightly it contains the traveler’s robes clean, delicately sweeping the charm of the forest’s reflections along. When can I build a house downstream? — I’ll channel its lingering moisture into an herb garden. Throughout springtime it will soak my yellow elixir, once I eat that, I will grow wings.

---

1 Certain springs were believed to have been directly connected with the ocean, “eyes of the sea.”
2 In reflection.
3 Yellow elixir was a plant used in Chinese medicine.
4 Become an immortal.
7.59

東樓

萬里流沙道，
西征過北門。
但添新戰骨，
不返舊征魂。

樓角凌風迥，
城陰帶水昏。
傳聲看驛使，
送節向河源。

7.60

雨晴

天際秋雲薄，
從西萬里風。
今朝好晴景，
久雨不妨農。

塞柳行疏翠，
山梨結小紅。
胡笳樓上發，
一雁入高空。
7.59

East Tower

The road to Drifting Sands stretches ten thousand leagues, those on western campaigns pass through the north gate. It only adds to the bones of recent battles, it does not bring back the souls of former campaigns. The tower corners are remote, rising into winds, the wall’s shadow is dim along the waters. Word is passed around to go see the envoy who carries the standards toward the River’s source.¹

7.60

Rain Clears

Autumn clouds are thin on the horizon, winds come from the west across ten thousand leagues. This morning the sunny scene is fine, the long rains have not prevented farming. Soon the azure of frontier willows will grow sparse, mountain pears form small shapes of red. A Hu reed-pipe sounds forth from the tower and a single wild goose enters the high sky.

---

¹ An envoy to the Tibetans, figured as *Zhang Qian.
7.61

寓目

一縣蒲萄熟，
秋山苜蓿多。
關雲常帶雨，
塞水不成河。
羌女輕烽燧，
胡兒掣駱駝。
自傷遲暮眼，
喪亂飽經過。

7.62

山寺

野寺殘僧少，
山園細路高。
麝香眠石竹，
鸚鵡啄金桃。
亂石通人過，
懸崖置屋牢。
上方重閣晚，
百里見秋毫。
7.61
What Caught My Eye

Grapes ripen all over the county, there is much clover in autumn hills.
Clouds from the passes always bear rain, waters on the frontier don’t form rivers.
The Qiang girl disregards beacon alarms, a Hu lad guides his camels along.
I am pained by my eyesight in twilight years, I have had my fill of passing through death and strife.

7.62
Mountain Temple

Few monks remain in the wilderness temple, a tiny road goes high to its mountain garden.
A musk-deer sleeps among stone-bamboo, parrots peck at the golden peaches.
A tangle of rock allows a person to pass, on the hanging cliff cells are securely set.
In the highest precincts, evening in the tiered tower, for a hundred leagues I could see a wisp of autumn hair.1

---

1 A filament, the ability to see which was the mark of clarity of vision.
7.63

即事

聞道花門破，
和親事卻非。
人憐漢公主，
生得渡河歸。
秋思拋雲髻，
腰支勝寶衣。
群凶猶索戰，
回首意多違。

7.64

遣懷

愁眼看霜露，
寒城菊自花。
天風隨斷柳，
客淚墮清笳。
水靜樓陰直，
山昏塞日斜。
夜來歸鳥盡，
啼殺後棲鴉。
Immediate Matters

I hear that the Huamen Uighurs were crushed,
and the marriage alliance has turned out a failure.¹
People pity the Chinese princess
who got to return alive across the River.
With autumn thoughts, she let her cloudlike chignon loose,
hers precious clothes, too large for waist and limbs.
Yet the vile rebel hosts still seek battle,
looking back, things have often gone counter to what was wished.

Expressing My Cares

Sad eyes look on the frost and dew,
in the cold city chrysanthemums flower on their own.
Heaven’s winds follow broken willows,
a sojourner’s tears fall at the clear reed flute.
The waters are still, the tower’s shadow straight,
mountains dusky where the frontier sun slants down.
With nightfall the birds have all returned
and screech terribly at the late-roosting crows.

¹ The Uighurs were defeated together with the Tang armies around Ye, after which the Uighur prince fled to Chang’an. After that the Khan died, and the Ningguo Princess, his Tang imperial bride, was sent back, having born the Khan no children.
7.65

天河

常時任顯晦，
秋至輒分明。
縱被微雲掩，
終能永夜清。
含星動雙闕，
伴月落邊城。
牛女年年渡，
何曾風浪生。

7.66

初月

光細弦豈上，
影斜輪未安。
微升古塞外，
已隱暮雲端。
河漢不改色，
關山空自寒。
庭前有白露，
暗滿菊花團。
7.65

The Heavenly River

Most of the time it may be hidden or fully visible, but when autumn comes, it gets immediately bright. Even if covered over by faint clouds, in the long run it can be clear through the long night. Full of stars, it stirs by paired palace gates, moon’s companion, it sinks by a frontier fort. Oxherd and Weaver cross it every year, and when have storms ever arisen thereon?

7.66

New Moon

Its light so thin, how could it be half-full?—rays oblique, the orb not yet steady. Faintly ascending beyond ancient passes, already hidden by twilight clouds’ edge. The Star River does not change its color, the barrier mountains are cold on their own. There is white dew in the front yard, in darkness filling the chrysanthemums.
7.67

擣衣

亦知戍不返，
秋至拭清砧。
已近苦寒月，
況經長別心。
寧辭擣衣倦，
一寄塞垣深。
用盡閨中力，
君聽空外音。

7.68

歸燕

不獨避霜雪，
其如俦侶稀。
四時無失序，
八月自知歸。
春色豈相誤，
眾雛還識機。
故巢儻未毀，
會傍主人飛。
Beating Clothes

7.67

Beating Clothes¹

Even knowing he won’t return from the army, when fall comes, she wipes the cool pounding stone. Already the bitter cold months draw near, worse for a heart that has been through long parting. She does not avoid weariness from beating clothes, she will send them all deep into the frontier. She uses up all her womanly strength— just listen to those sounds in the sky.

7.68

Migrating Swallow

It is not just to avoid the frost and snow— its companions are growing fewer. The four seasons do not err in their sequence, in the eighth month by instinct you know to go. I’m sure you won’t fail to catch spring’s beauty, you will also know the right moment for having chicks. If by chance your old nest is not destroyed, may you someday fly beside the master of the house.

¹ Either beating the water out after washing or fluffing the padding for insulation in preparing clothes for winter.
促織
促織甚微細，
哀音何動人。
草根吟不穩，
床下意相親。
久客得無淚，
放妻難及晨。
悲絲與急管，
感激異天真。

螢火
幸因腐草出，
敢近太陽飛。
未足臨書卷，
時能點客衣。
隨風隔幔小，
帶雨傍林微。
十月清霜重，
飄零何處歸。
7.69

Crickets

The cricket is very tiny,
why do its sad sounds move people so?
At the foot of plants, their humming is unsteady,
under the bed they seem more intimate.
Can the longtime wayfarer be without tears?—
the spurned wife finds it hard to endure until dawn.
Mournful strings and the shrill pipes
stir one differently from the natural.

7.70

Fireflies

Originally emerging from rotting plants,¹
dare they fly close to the sun?
Inadequate light for poring over books,²
yet sometimes they can cast a spot on a traveler’s clothes.
Going with the wind, tiny beyond the curtain,
rain-soaked, faint beside the grove.
In the tenth month the clear frosts will weigh heavy—
swept along, where will they go then?

¹ Fireflies were believed to be spontaneously generated from rotting plants.
² *Ju Yin.
蒹葭

7.71

蒹葭

c摧折不自守，
秋風吹若何。
暫時花戴雪，
幾處葉沉波。
體弱春風早，
叢長夜露多。
江湖後搖落，
亦恐歲蹉跎。

7.72

苦竹

青冥亦自守，
軟弱強扶持。
味苦夏蟲避，
叢卑春鳥疑。
軒墀曾不重，
翦伐欲無辭。
幸近幽人屋，
霜根結在茲。
Reeds and Rushes

7.71

Reeds and Rushes

They snap, unable to protect themselves—
how the autumn wind blows them!
For a brief time their flowers bear snow;¹
here and there the leaves sink in the waves.
Their forms are frail when the spring breeze comes early;
when their clumps grow tall, much nighttime dew.
On rivers and lakes, they fall away later,
but one still then worries that the year is slipping away.

7.72

Bitter Bamboo

In the dark blue they protect themselves,
weak and frail things struggle for their support.
Their taste bitter, summer insects avoid them,
their clumps so low that spring birds distrust them.
Never valued for splendid buildings,
they would not refuse to be cut.
But if they chance to be near a recluse’s cottage,
their frosty roots take hold right there.

¹ Reed flowers are white.