贈李八秘書別三十韻

往時中補右，
扈蹕上元初。
反氣凌行在，
妖星下直廬。
六龍瞻漢闕，
萬騎略姚墟。
玄朔迴天步，
神都憶帝車。
一戎才汗馬，
百姓免為魚。
通籍蟠螭印，
差肩列鳳輿。
事殊迎代邸，
喜異賞朱虛。
寇盜方歸順，
乾坤欲晏如。
不才同補袞，
奉詔許牽裾。
鴛鷺叨雲閣，
麒麟滯玉除。
17.1

Presented to Librarian Li (8) On Parting: Thirty Couplets

In bygone times you filled in the right in the Secretariat, in the entourage at a new reign’s beginning. A rebel aura offended the temporary capital, 4
stars of witchery descended on lodgings for attendance. 1
The six dragons peered from afar toward the Han palace, 2
ten thousand riders toured Yao Waste. 3
The Northland saw the return of Heaven’s Pace, 4
our holy capital remembered the imperial carriage. No sooner did horses sweat in one campaign than the common folk avoided becoming fish. On the registry, with a coiling dragon seal, 5
we were shoulder to shoulder lining the phoenix palanquin. What happened differed from the greeting at Dai Lodge, 6
your joy was unlike the reward of Zhuxu. 7
Then the rebels returned to allegiance, 16
Heaven and Earth were getting peaceful and calm. Untalented, I joined with you in repairing the dragon robes, 8
receiving a summons, I was permitted to tug the robe-hems. 9
Among egret ranks I was unworthy of the cloud towers, 20
you, the unicorn, lingered on the jade stairs.

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1 Where officials stayed overnight in the palace compound awaiting dawn court.
2 Xuanzong, with the six dragons of the imperial carriage, looks back on Chang’an after fleeing to Chengdu.
3 Referring to Xuanzong’s flight to Chengdu. “Yao Waste” was in Hanzhong, between Chang’an and Chengdu.
4 Suzong took the throne in Shuofang, the “Northland.” “Heaven’s Pace” is the fate of the dynasty.
5 This is taken to refer to Li, though it could be Du Fu as well, or both.
6 After Empress Lü was suppressed in the Han dynasty, the Prince of Dai was made Han Wendi.
7 After Han Wendi took the throne, Liu Zhang, the Count of Zhuxu, was rewarded for his part in the capture and execution of Empress Lü’s relatives.
8 Du Fu served with Li as a remonstrating officer, “filling in” (/repairing) what he saw were things overlooked in imperial deliberations.
9 *Tugging robe-hems.
文園多病後，
中散舊交疏。
飄泊哀相見，
24 平生意有餘。
風煙巫峽遠，
台榭楚宮虛。
觸目非論故，
28 新文尚起予。
清秋凋碧柳，
別浦落紅蕖。
消息多旗幟，
32 經過歎里閭。
戰連唇齒國，
軍急羽毛書。
幕府籌頻問，
36 山家藥正鋤。
台星入朝謁，
使節有吹噓。
西蜀災長弭，
40 南翁憤始撼。
對敭抏士卒，
乾沒費倉儲。
勢藉兵須用，
44 功無禮忽諸。
The poet of Wen’s Park, after much sickness;¹
the Courtier, his former friends estranged.²
Tossed along, mournful, I meet you,
with abundance of thoughts on how it used to be.
Windblown mist, Wu Gorges stretch far,
Chu palace’s terraces and kiosks are gone.
What strikes my eyes here does not make for discussing old times,
but your new writings still “rouse me.”³
Clear autumn withers the emerald willows,
on parting’s shores fall the red lotus.
There is news of many battle-flags,
what I have been through brings sighs for my home village.
Battles in succession, domains that are as lips to teeth,⁴
army emergencies, the feathered dispatches speed.
At headquarters he repeatedly asked you for plans,⁵
at your mountain home you were then hoeing medicinal herbs.⁶
A “Terrace Star” went to court to pay respects,⁷
from the Commissioner there was a recommendation.⁸
In western Shu disaster will be put to rest for a long time,
this old man in the south, for the first time relaxes his fury.
Responding to the emperor, tell him to reduce troops
greed wastes the supplies in storehouses.
The situation depends on the necessary use of soldiers,
but accomplishment is wanting, and ritual is overlooked.

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¹ “Wen’s Park” was Han Wendi’s tomb. The poet *Sima Xiangru was once in charge of it. Later he became sick.
² *Xi Kang, to whom Du Fu is comparing either himself or Li.
³ Analects III.8. Confucius said this of his disciple Zixia, which meant that Confucius could discuss the Poems with him.
⁴ That is, domains closely linked and mutually dependent.
⁵ Original note: “His Excellency the Minister, the Commander-in-Chief of Shanjian, first invited him to headquarters to take part in planning. The Minister went to pay his respects at court, and now Li is going to meet him” 
⁶ Original note: “Recently the Librarian has been staying on Qingcheng Mountain”
⁷ Du Hongjian, one of the high ministers of state.
⁸ Du Hongjian recommended Li.
御鞍金騕褭，
宮硯玉蟾蜍。
拜舞銀鈎落，
恩波錦帕舒。
此行非不濟，
良友昔相於。
去棹依顏色，
沿流想疾徐。
沈綿疲井臼，
倚薄似樵漁。
乞米煩佳客，
鈔詩聽小胥。
杜陵斜晚照，
潏水帶寒淤。
莫話清溪髮，
蕭蕭白映梳。

17.2

中夜

中夜江山靜，
危樓望北辰。
長為萬里客，
有愧百年身。
An imperial saddle, a gilded charger,
a palace inkstone, a jade toad.¹
As you dance obeisance, silver hooks descend,²
imperial grace in waves, a brocade horse-blanket unfurls.
This trip will not be without help to the country,
but closeness to my good friend will be in the past.
I look fondly on your countenance with the departing oars,
I fancy your speed along the river.
Overcome by illness, too weary to draw water or hull rice,
hard-pressed, like wood-gatherers or fishermen.
I trouble my fine guest begging for rice,
I copy poems heeding minor officials.
The evening sunlight slants on Duling,³
the Jue’s waters lined by cold mud.
Don’t tell of the hair of one by these clear creeks
that white-streaked locks shine against the comb.

17.2

Midnight

Midnight, the mountains and river calm,
from a high upper storey I gaze at the pole star.
Always I am a wayfarer across thousands of leagues,
embarrassed by this body of a hundred-year span.

¹ These are presumably gifts that Librarian Li will receive. The jade toad refers to the object that the Prince of Guangchuan recovered from the tomb of Duke Ling of Jin. The prince made it a water-holder for his inkstone.
² The “silver hooks” are elegantly written characters, picking up from the gift of the inkstone.
³ Du Fu’s home region south of Chang’an, where Li is going.
故國風雲氣，
高堂戰伐塵。
胡雛負恩澤，
嗟爾太平人。

17.3

垂白

垂白馮唐老，
清秋宋玉悲。
江喧長少睡，
樓迥獨移時。
多難身何補，
無家病不辭。
甘從千日醉，
未許七哀詩。

17.4

中宵

西閣百尋餘，
中宵步綺疏。
飛星過水白，
落月動沙虛。
My homeland, atmosphere of wind-driven clouds,  
in the high hall, dust of warfare.  
That barbarian chick betrayed imperial grace,¹  
alas, you folk of an age of peace.  

17.3  
Hanging White [Hair]  
Hanging white, Feng Tang is old,²  
clear autumn, Song Yu grieves.³  
The river noisy, always little sleep,  
the tower high, alone as time passes.  
Many troubles, what help am I?—  
no home, sickness never leaves.  
I would gladly spend a thousand days drunk,  
I’m not up to a “Sevenfold Sorrow.”⁴  

17.4  
The Middle of Night  
West tower, more than a hundred yards high,  
in the middle of night I pace its grillwork.⁵  
Shooting stars, white passing the waters,  
setting moonlight, formless stirring on stands.  

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¹ An Lushan.  
² *Feng Tang.  
³ *Song Yu.  
⁴ A poem topic, the most famous of which by the Jian’an poet *Wang Can laments the sack of Chang’an by Dong Zhuo’s generals.  
⁵ The “grillwork,” qishu 奇疏, refers to the window lattices. Du Fu is evidently referring to walking over the shadows cast by the window grillwork in the moonlight.
不寐

擇木知幽鳥，
潛波想巨魚。
親朋滿天地，
兵甲少來書。

17.5

不寐
瞿塘夜水黑，
城內改更籌。
翳翳月沉霧，
輝輝星近樓。
氣衰甘少寐，
心弱恨知愁。
多壘滿山谷，
桃源無處求。

17.6

送十五弟侍御使蜀

喜弟文章進，
添余別興牽。
數杯巫峽酒，
百丈內江船。
I know of the hidden bird, carefully choosing its branch,
I imagine the huge fish, sunken under the waves.
Friends and kin fill the whole world.
yet in the warfare few letters come.

17.5

Not Sleeping

Qutang Gorge, night waters black,
in the city the watch hours change.
Shrouded, the moon sinks in fog,
glowing, stars near the tower.
Energy failing, willing to have little sleep,
mind weak, it hates knowing sadness.
Many forts fill mountain valleys,
there's no way to seek out Peach Blossom Spring.

17.6

Seeing Off My Cousin (15), the Censor, On a Mission to Shu

Delighted that my cousin's writings make progress,
it adds to the tug of parting's inspiration.
Several cups of Wu Gorges ale,
a hundred-yard tow-rope, the boat on the Nei River.
未息豺狼鬥，
空催犬馬年。
歸朝多便道，
搏擊望秋天。

江月

江月光於水，
高樓思殺人。天邊長作客，
老去一沾巾。
玉露團清影，
銀河沒半輪。
誰家挑錦字，
滅燭翠眉顰。

月圓

孤月當樓滿，
寒江動夜扉。
委波金不定，
照席綺逾依。
The combat of wolves and jackals unceasing
merely hastens the years of this dog or horse.¹
Returning to court there will be many easy paths,
8 I look to the autumn skies for you to strike.²

17.7

River Moon

River moon, beams in the water,
in an upper storey longing kills one.
Ends of the earth, long a sojourner,
4 getting old, kerchief ever tear-soaked.
Jadelike dew, globes of clear light,
the Silver River half swallows its orb.
Who was it sewed the words in brocade,
8 her dark brows knit as she put out the candle?³

17.8

Moon Round

Lonely moon, full, facing the upper storey,
the cold river stirs on my door by night.⁴
Cast into waves, golden light unsettled,⁵
4 shining on the mat, figured work even more faint.

¹ A term of humility, referring to himself.
² The censor’s role is to punish official wrongdoing like a hawk striking his prey.
   Autumn is the season for the hawk to strike.
³ Su Hui wove a palindrome into an embroidery to be sent to her husband away in
   the army. This may be simply referring to a general case of a wife whose husband
   is off in service.
⁴ Through moonlight reflected in the water.
⁵ “Golden waves” was a standard figure for moonbeams.
未缺空山静，
高悬列宿稀。
故园松桂发，
万里共清辉。

夜

露下天高秋水清，
空山独夜旅魂惊。
疏镫自照孤帆宿，
新月犹悬双杵鸣。
南菊再逢人卧病，
北书不至雁无情。
步屧倚杖看牛斗，
银汉遥应接凤城。

草阁

草阁临无地，
柴扉永不关。
鱼龙回夜水，
星月动秋山。
Not yet waning, empty mountains serene,  
suspended on high, the constellations sparse.  
In the gardens of home pine and cassia flourish,  
8 I share its clear glow with them, thousands of miles away.

17.9

Night

Dew descends from Heaven’s heights, autumn waters clear,  
alone at night in the empty mountains the traveler’s soul is startled.  
Sparse lanterns shine on lone sails spending the night,  
4 the new moon still suspended there, paired pestles ring out.¹  
Encountering southern chrysanthemums twice, the person lying sick,  
letters from the north do not arrive, the wild geese are heartless.  
Walking under the eaves with my staff, I look at Oxherd and Dipper,  
8 I’m sure that far off the Silver River connects with Phoenix City.²

17.10

Thatched Pavilion

The thatched pavilion looks out where there is no land,  
its scrapwood gate is always unbarred.  
Fish and dragons turn back to night waters,  
4 stars and moon stir in the autumn hills.

¹ For fluffing the padding in clothes in preparation for cold weather.  
² The Milky Way links to the capital.
久露晴初濕，
高雲薄未還。
汎舟慚小婦，
飄泊損紅顏。

17.11
宿江邊閣
暝色延山徑，
高齋次水門。
薄雲巖際宿，
孤月浪中翻。
鸛鶴追飛靜，
豺狼得食喧。
不眠憂戰伐，
無力正乾坤。

17.12
吹笛
吹笛秋山風月清，
誰家巧作斷腸聲。
風飄律呂相和切，
月傍關山幾處明。
Spending the Night in a Pavilion by the River

Long dews first wet as the sky grows clear, high clouds, attenuating, have not yet returned. Sailing in boats embarrasses a young woman— being tossed along ruins a youthful complexion.

17.11

Spending the Night in a Pavilion by the River

The colors of darkness extend on the mountain paths, in a high study I lodge by the river gate. Filmy clouds spend the night on cliff’s edge, the lone moon heaves over in the waves. Cranes and storks serene, flying after one another, wolves and wild dogs howl, getting their prey. I do not sleep from worry over battles— I lack the strength to right the universe.

17.12

A Flute Playing

A flute is played in autumn mountains, breeze and moonlight clear, who is it that makes so artfully notes that break the heart? Modes major and minor waft in the wind, sharply affective in their harmony, the moon lies beside barrier mountains, several spots of brightness.¹

¹ Playing on the song title “Moon of Barrier Mountains,” “Guanshan yue” 間山月.
西閣雨望

胡騎中宵堪北走，
武陵一曲想南征。
故園楊柳今搖落，
何得愁中卻盡生。

17.13

西閣雨望

樓雨霑雲幔，
山寒著水城。
徑添沙面出，
湍減石稜生。
菊蕊淒疏放，
松林駐遠情。
滂沱朱檻溼，
萬慮傍簷楹。

17.14

西閣三度期大昌嚴明府同宿不到
問子能來宿，
今疑索固要。
匣琴虛夜夜，
手板自朝朝。
It can make Hu horsemen at midnight gallop off back to the north,¹ that melody of Wuling makes one think of the southern campaign.² The willows of my home garden have now lost their leaves— how can it be that in such sadness they will all come back to life?³

17.13
Gazing in the Rain From West Tower

Rain in the upper storey soaks the cloud draperies, mountain cold touches this river city.
The path extends, the surface of sand emerges, torrents diminish, edges of rock appear.
Chrysanthemum are dreary in sparse blossoming, pine forests halt feelings going afar.
Streaming with water, the vermilion railing is soaked,

17.14
In West Tower For the Third Time Expecting Magistrate Yan of Dachang To Come Spend the Night and He Doesn’t Come

I asked you to come and stay over, now I suspect earnest invitations were useless. The zither in its case lies idle every night, of course every morning the tablet is in your hand.⁴

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¹ This echoes a story of the Western Jin loyalist Liu Kun who was surrounded by non-Chinese invaders when he was governor of Bingzhou. In the night he climbed the battlements and played the reed pipe, filling the enemy army with so much homesickness that they withdrew.
² This refers to “Wu Creek Deep” 武溪深, a flute piece attributed to the Eastern Han general *Ma Yuan on his campaign to the south.
³ This refers to the song “Snapping Willows” 折楊柳.
⁴ Referring to Yan’s duties at the office.
西閣二首

金吼霜鐘徹，花催蠟炬銷。
早窓江檻底，雙影漫飄飄。

西閣二首

17.15–16

巫山小搖落，碧色見松林。
百鳥各相命，孤雲無自心。
層軒俯江壁，要路亦高深。
朱紱猶紗帽，新詩近玉琴。
功名不早立，衰疾謝知音。
哀世非王粲，終然學越吟。
Metal roars, a frosty bell pierces through,  
sparks speed the wax torch’s melting.  
Early morning ducks below my river deck,  
8 paired reflections bob in the water in vain.¹

17.15–16
West Tower

I

On Wu Mountain the leaves have fallen a little,  
emerald colors reveal a stand of pine.  
Each of all the different birds calls to its kind,  
4 the lone cloud has no mind of its own.  
The tiered railing looks down on a river cliff,  
the main road is high and deepset.  
Red cords of office, yet still in a plain gauze cap,  
8 new poems near my zither of jade.  
Deeds and fame were not established early,  
sick and failing, I have left true friends behind.  
In lamenting the age I am not Wang Can,²  
12 but in the end I copy the moan of Yue.³

¹ This plays on the scene at hand and the wild-duck slippers of magistrate *Wang Qiao.  
² *Wang Can.  
³ *Zhuang Xi.
II

懶心似江水，
日夜向滄洲。
不道含香賦，
其如錬白休。

經過凋碧柳，
蕭索倚朱樓。
畢娶何時竟，
消中得自由。

豪華看古往，
服食寄冥搜。
詩盡人間興，
兼須入海求。

17.17

西閣夜

恍惚寒山暮，
逶迤白霧昏。
山虛風落石，
樓靜月侵門。

擊柝可憐子，
無衣何處村。
II

My lazy heart is like the river’s waters,
heading toward gray isles day and night.
I don’t think that scented service is too lowly,¹
but I would rather retire, tweezing white hairs.
I have passed through the withering of emerald willows,
rustling in the wind by the crimson mansion.
When will I complete the marriage of my daughter²
and, with my diabetes, achieve some liberty?
I have observed how splendor passed in days of old,
taking potions, I will give myself to mystic quests.
My poems have exhausted all inspiration in the mortal world,
I must also go off to sea to seek it anew.³

17.17

Night at West Tower

The blur of twilight falls on cold mountains,
white fog casts a pall of trailing wisps.
The mountains formless, the wind makes rocks fall,
the building calm, the moon comes through the gate.
Striking the watch-rattle, a pitiable lad;
without enough clothes, what village is he from?

¹ In the Han, officials would scent their hands and mouths when presenting memorials.
² The Eastern Han recluse Xiang Ziping saw to the marriage of his daughter, then left home, showing no further concern for his family.
³ Probably referring to the isles of the immortals.
時危關百慮，
8 盜賊爾猶存。

17.18

月

四更山吐月，
殘夜水明樓。
塵匣元開鏡，
4 風簾自上鉤。
兔應疑鶴髮，
蟾亦戀貂裘。
斟酌姮娥寡，
天寒耐九秋。

17.19

宗武生日

小子何時見，
高秋此日生。
自從都邑語，
4 已伴老夫名。
詩是吾家事，
人傳世上情。
In the peril of the times a hundred worries concern me,
8 yet you brigands and rebels still survive.

17.18

Moon

At the fourth watch the mountains disgorge the moon,
in the last of night, the waters light up the tower.
Basically a mirror, appearing from a dusty case,
or windblown curtains raising their hook on their own.
I'm sure the Hare wonders about my crane-white hair,
but the Toad still loves my sable cloak.¹
I speculate on the widow Chang E,
8 the weather so cold, can she bear the ninth month?

17.19

Zongwu’s Birthday

When did my small son first appear?—
it was high autumn, born this very day.
Ever since he was talked about in the city
4 he was already paired with this old fellow’s reputation.
Poetry is what our family does,²
others just pass on the mood of the times.

¹ These are inhabitants of the moon.
² Probably referring to Du Fu’s grandfather Du Shenyan, Du Fu himself, and his expectations for Zongwu.
第五弟豐獨在江左，近三四載寂無消息，覓使寄此二首

熟精文選理，
休覓綵衣輕。
凋瘵筵初秩，
敧斜坐不成。
流霞分片片，
涓滴就徐傾。

17.20-21

第五弟豐獨在江左，近三四載寂無消息，覓使寄此二首

亂後嗟吾在，
羁棲見汝難。
草黃騏驥病，
沙晚鶺鴒寒。
楚設關城險，
吳吞水府寬。
十年朝夕淚，
衣袖不曾幹。
Become fully familiar with the *Anthology’s* principles,

don’t seek the triviality of brightly colored clothes.¹

A sick old wreck, I take my seat of first priority,

but, tottering, cannot sit upright.

The flowing rose cloud is apportioned wisp by wisp,²

pour it slowly trickling.

17.20–21

My Fifth Younger Brother Du Feng Is Alone in Jiangzuo: In the Past
Three or Four years I’ve Had No News of Him, and I Seek out a
Messenger to Send These Two Poems

I

Amazing that I survived the Rebellion,

lodging on travels, it is hard to see you.

The plants turn yellow, the fine steed is sick,

day grows late on the sands, the wagtails cold.³

Here in Chu is set the fastness of a barrier fort,

Wu swallows the breadth of watery precincts.

Ten years of tears from dawn to evening,

robe and sleeves, never dry.

---

¹ This may suggest the child’s clothes in which old *Laolaizi dressed to caper before
his still more aged parents and entertain them.

² Ale to celebrate the birthday.

³ *Sugarplum.*
II

聞汝依山寺，
杭州定越州。
風塵淹別日，
江漢失清秋。
影著啼猿樹，
魂飄結蜃樓。
明年下春水，
東盡白雲求。

17.22

聽楊氏歌

佳人絕代歌，
獨立發皓齒。
滿堂惱不樂，
響下清虛裏。
江城帶素月，
況乃清夜起。
老夫悲暮年，
壯士淚如水。
玉杯久寂寞，
金管迷宮徵。
II

I have heard you are staying in a mountain temple, if not Hangzhou, then certainly Yuezhou. War’s dust has lengthened the days of our parting, at Yangzi and Han I waste another clear autumn. My shadow cleaves to trees where the gibbons howl, but my soul wafts where ocean mirages form.¹ Next year when the spring waters come down, I’ll seek you in white clouds where the east ends.

17.22

Listening to Miss Yang’s Singing

The fair lady’s song, finest in the age, standing unique, she shows her gleaming teeth.² The whole hall grows despondent and unhappy as the echoes fall through the clear sky. The river city is swathed in pale moonlight, still more, this, rising in clear night. The old man grieves for his twilight years, the tears of men in their prime flow like water. The jade cups long lie silent, and the metal pipes lose the melody.³

¹ That is, down east where his brother is staying.
² Du Fu is adapting the opening of Li Yannian’s song introducing his sister to Han Wudi: “In the Northland is a lady fair/ she stands alone, the finest of the age” 北方有佳人, 絕代而獨立. It seems that Li Yannian’s figurative “she stands alone,” duli 獨立, becomes literal in Du Fu’s description of the scene of performance.
³ Literally “miss the notes gōng and zhī.” It seems that even the accompanying musicians are carried away by the sadness of the song.
勿云聽者疲，
愚智心盡死。
古來傑出士，
豈待一知己。
吾聞昔秦青，
傾側天下耳。

17.23–24

秋風二首

I

秋風淅淅吹巫山，
上牢下牢修水關。
吳檣楚柁牽百丈，
暖向成都寒未還。
要路何日罷長戟，
戰自青羌連百蠻。
中巴不曾消息好，
暝傳戍鼓長雲間。

II

秋風淅淅吹我衣，
東流之外西日微。
Don’t think that the listeners are worn out—
hearts of both wise men and simple have all died.¹
Outstanding men since time began
have not depended on just one understanding friend.
I have heard of Qin Qing long ago
that the ears of all the world bent to him.²

17.23–24

Autumn Wind

I
The autumn wind whistles blowing on Wu Mountain,
at Upper Lao and Lower Lao they’ve set up river barriers.
Wu masts and Chu rudders pulled by hundred-yard tow-ropes,
in warm weather they headed to Chengdu, in cold weather they’ve not
yet returned.
On the key roads what day ever are long pikes put away?—
fighting goes from the dark-robed Qiang all the way to the southern
Mon.
Never once from middle Ba is the news good,
darkness carries sounds of garrison drums among the white clouds.

II
The autumn wind whistles, blowing on my robes,
out beyond the eastward current the sun grows faint in the west.

¹ Again this suggests the universal effect of the music in the room. The death of heart
would seem to be a numbness and stupefaction, absorbed in the music.
² This refers to the story of Qin Qing in Liezi in which his moving music shook the
forests and the echoes stopped the clouds in their passage.
九日諸人集於林

九日明朝是，
相要舊俗非。
老翁難早出，
賢客幸知歸。
舊采黃花剩，
新梳白髮微。
漫看年少樂，
忍淚已沾衣。
Sky clear, a small city, the silk is pounded urgently,
rock ancient, a narrow path, travelers are few.
I know not for whose sake the bright moon is so fine,
sooner or later my lone sail will head off some night.
May the day come when with white hair I rest by the trees in my yard,
pool and terrace of my garden at home, are they the way they were or not?

17.25

On the Double Ninth Everyone Will Gather in the Grove

Tomorrow morning it will be the Double Ninth,
but invitations are not following my former custom.
This old fellow finds it hard to get out early,
I will be fortunate if my worthy guests know to go their own way.
Formerly we picked chrysanthemums in abundance,
recently I comb my white hair thin.
In vain I look on the pleasures of youth
and endure the tears that have soaked my clothes.
秋興八首

I

玉露凋傷楓樹林，
巫山巫峽氣蕭森。
江間波浪兼天湧，
塞上風雲接地陰。
叢菊兩開他日淚，
孤舟一繫故園心。
寒衣處處催刀尺，
白帝城高急暮砧。

II

夔府孤城落日斜，
每依北斗望京華。
聽猿實下三聲淚，
奉使虛隨八月槎。
畫省香爐違伏枕，
山樓粉堞隱悲笳。
請看石上藤蘿月，
已映洲前蘆荻花。
I

Jade-white dew withers and harms forests of maple trees, on Wu Mountain and in Wu Gorges, the atmosphere, bleak and dreary. Between river’s margins the waves churn level with sky, wind-driven clouds over passes touching earth in shadow. Chrysanthemum clumps twice have bloomed forth tears of another day, a lonely boat tied up once and for all a heart set on its homeland. Everywhere clothes for cold weather hasten ruler and blade, walls of White Emperor Castle high, pounding blocks urgent in dusk.

II

On Kuizhou’s lonely walls setting sunlight slants, then always I trust the North Dipper to lead my gaze to the capital. Listening to gibbons I really shed tears at their third cry,\(^1\) accepting my mission I pointlessly follow the eighth-month raft.\(^2\) The censer in the ministry with portraits eludes the pillow where I lie,\(^3\) hill towers’ white-plastered battlements hide the sad reed pipes. Just look there at the moon, in wisteria on the rock, it has already cast its light by sandbars on flowers of the reeds.

---

1 There was an old rhyme that a traveler in the gorges would shed tears when the gibbons cried out three times.  
2 “Riding the raft.  
3 The “muralled ministry” is where were located the commemorative portraits of officers, civil and military, who had done exceptional service to the dynasty. In the Han this was in the Secretariat, within which was located the Board of Works, to which Du Fu held an honorary appointment. During the Han a censer was carried when presenting a petition to the throne.
III

千家山郭靜朝暉，
日日江樓坐翠微。
信宿漁人還汎汎，
清秋燕子故飛飛。
匡衡抗疏功名薄，
劉向傳經心事違。
同學少年多不賤，
五陵衣馬自輕肥。

IV

聞道長安似弈棋，
百年世事不勝悲。
王侯第宅皆新主，
文武衣冠異昔時。
直北關山金鼓震，
征西車馬羽書馳。
魚龍寂寞秋江冷，
故國平居有所思。
III

A thousand homes of the mountain town are serene in the glow of
dawn;
day by day in my river tower I sit in an azure haze.
Out two nights, the fishermen still drift along;
in clear fall skies the swallows keep flying on as ever.
Kuang Heng advising on policy—deeds and fame both slight.
Liu Xiang passing on Classics—heart’s goal gone awry.¹
The young men I once studied with are now most not of low degree;
by Five Barrows their horses are plump and the mantles they wear are
light.²

IV

I have heard tell that in Chang’an it’s like playing chess,
a hundred-year span, the world’s troubles, grief beyond enduring.
Mansions of counts and princes all have new masters,
those in civil and army uniforms differ from olden times.
Straight north past fortified mountains kettledrums are thundering;
from wagon and horse on western campaigns winged dispatches rush.
Fish and dragons grow silent now, autumn rivers grow cold,
the life I used to have at home is the longing in my heart.

¹ Du Fu is here comparing his aims and contrasting his fate with two eminent Han
intellectuals. Kuang Heng was a famous Han statesman who rose to high position
precisely because of the policy positions he presented to the throne. In the same
way Liu Xiang (79–8 BCE) was an important and successful scholar of the Classics.
² Five Barrows, named for the tumuli of five Han emperors, had become in the Tang
a fashionable residential area just outside Chang’an. The rest of the line echoes a
famous passage in the Analects (V.25) in which the disciple Zilu, responding to a
request from Confucius that he state his wishes, said: “I wish for horse and carriage
and to be mantled in light furs, then to share them with my friends; and even if
they were to ruin them, I would not be distressed.”
蓬萊宮闕對南山，
承露金莖霄漢間。
西望瑤池降王母，
東來紫氣滿函關。
雲移雉尾開宮扇，
日繞龍鱗識聖顏。
一臥滄江驚歲晚，
幾回青瑣點朝班。
V

Palace towers of Penglai stand facing South Mountain,\(^1\) the metal stalk that catches the dew is high in the Milky Way.\(^2\) Gazing west to Onyx Pool the Queen Mother is descending,\(^3\) from the east come purple vapors and fill Han Pass.\(^4\) Pheasant tails shift in clouds, palace fans open sunlight circles dragon scales, I see the Emperor’s face.

By the gray river I lay once and woke, alarmed that the year had grown late—

how often did I, by the gates’ blue rings, take my humble place in dawn court’s ranks?\(^5\)

---

1 Penglai Palace, named after the island in the Eastern Ocean inhabited by the gods, was part of the Han palace compound. Tang palaces were commonly referred to by Han names.

2 The “stalk” is the bronze column erected by the Han Emperor Wu, on which a statue of an immortal held a pan to catch dew from which an elixir of immortality could be made.

3 Emperor Wu of the Han was once visited by the goddess known as the Queen Mother of the West. During her visit she gave him various magic herbs and told him all about the world of the gods. “That night, when the waterclock had reached the third mark, there were no clouds in the sky, but there was a rumbling like thunder, and at last the sky turned lavender. In a short while the Queen Mother arrived, riding a lavender coach, with Jade Maidens attending on either side; she wore seven kinds of hair ornaments and black obsidian, phoenix patterned boots, green vapors like clouds, and there were two bluebirds, as large as ravens, attending at the Queen Mother’s sides. When she descended from her coach, His Majesty greeted her bowing, and invited the Queen Mother to sit, asking for the herbs that conferred immortality” (The Tales of Emperor Wu).

4 Laozi, the Taoist sage and supposed ancestor of the Tang royal house, went through Han Pass off westward to become immortal. The attendant of the pass, seeing a purple vapor coming from the east, knew it was the sage coming and hurried out to greet him. Laozi gave him the Daode jing.

5 The reference here is to the palace gates which were painted with a pattern of blue chain-links. Beneath these gates the court officials assembled for the dawn audience with the emperor.
VI
瞿唐峡口曲江头，
万里风烟接素秋。
花萼夹城通御气，
芙蓉小苑入边愁。
珠帘绣柱围黄鹄，
锦缆牙樯起白鸥。
回首可怜歌舞地，
秦中自古帝王州。

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

VIII
昆吾御宿自逶迤，
紫阁峰阴入渼陂。
VI

From the mouth of the Qutang Gorge to the Twisting River’s side,1 thousands of miles of wind-blown fog connect pale autumn. Through the walled passage to Calyx Manor the royal aura passed, and into tiny Lotus Park the frontier’s sorrows entered.2 Beaded hangings and sculpted pillars surrounded brown swans, from brocade cables and ivory mast rose a white gull. The head turns with pity and love for those places of song and the dance: Qin since ancient times has been land of emperors.

VII

The waters of Kunming Pool are a deed of the days of Han, pennons and banners of Emperor Wu are right before my eyes. Loom threads of the Weaver Woman lie empty in the moonlit night, stone Leviathan’s fins and scales stir the autumn wind.3 Waves toss wild grass seed sinking in cloudy black, dew is chill on the lotus pod shedding powdery red. Fortified passes stretch to the skies, a way for only birds, lakes and rivers fill the earth, and one old man, fishing.

VIII

At Kunwu Hill the Yusu Brook winds around and away, where the shadow of Purple Tower’s crest falls into Lake Meipi.

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1 ‘That is, the distance from Kuizhou to Chang’an.
2 Calyx Manor was part of the Xingqing Palace complex in the eastern part of the city. Between there and Lotus Park by Twisting River directly to the south there was a walled passageway through which the emperor could pass privately.
3 At Kunming Pool there was a statue of the Weaver Woman constellation and of a stone Leviathan whose fins moved in the wind.
詠懷古跡五首

香稻啄餘鸚鵡粒，
碧梧棲老鳳皇枝。
佳人拾翠春相問，
仙侶同舟晚更移。
綵筆昔遊干氣象，
白頭吟望苦低垂。

17.34–38

詠懷古跡五首

I

支離東北風塵際，
漂泊西南天地間。
三峽樓臺淹日月，
五溪衣服共雲山。
羯胡事主終無賴，
詞客哀時且未還。
庚信生平最蕭瑟，
暮年詩賦動江關。
Singing My Feelings On Traces of the Past

I

Split apart from the northeast at the edge of dust of war,
drifting along in the southwest between Earth and Heaven.
By the Three Gorges’ towers and terraces I linger for days and months,
with the garb of the Five Creek Tribes I share these cloudy mountains.³
In serving his prince the Jie proved treacherous at last,⁴
the poet lamenting the times, not yet gone back.⁵
In Yu Xin’s life the most dismal time of all:
in twilight years his poems and fu stirred the River Pass.

---

1 Perhaps referring to foliage or flowers to be strung from the sash.
2 Once the poet Jiang Yan dreamed that the earlier poet Guo Pu (276–324) appeared
to him and asked for the return of his colored writing brush, which he claimed to
have left with Jiang for many years. When Jiang Yan woke up, he found that his
poetic talent had completely left him.
3 These are the indigenous non-Han peoples of the region around Kuizhou.
4 These were a northern people, believed to be descendants of the Xiongnu. The
precedent may be Shi Le, the Jie warlord, who wreaked havoc on the Western Jin,
or Hou Jing, who betrayed Liang Wúdi. Either precedent serves to refer to An
Lushan, though Hou Jing is more appropriate for Yu Xin.
5 *Yu Xin was the sixth-century poet who witnessed the destruction of the Liang.
Sent north to the Northern Zhou on a mission, he was detained there and never
returned south. His “Lament for the Southland,” “Ai Jiangnan fu” 哀江南賦
recounts the fall of the Liang. Yu Xin had a dwelling in Jiangling and was supposed
to have stayed in Song Yu’s former house. At this point Du Fu had not yet gone
downriver, so this is an imagined site.
II

搖落深知宋玉悲，
風流儒雅亦吾師。
怅望千秋一灑淚，
蕭條異代不同時。
江山故宅空文藻，
雲雨荒臺豈夢思。
最是楚宮俱泯滅，
舟人指點到今疑。

III

群山萬壑赴荊門，
生長明妃尚有村。
一去紫臺連朔漠，
獨留青冢向黃昏。
畫圖省識春風面，
環珮空歸月夜魂。
千載琵琶作胡語，
分明怨恨曲中論。
II

In the falling leaves I understand deeply the sorrow of Song Yu in both panache and scholar’s grace he too is my teacher. I gaze sadly, a thousand years, one spattering of tears, how desolate, different generations do not share the same time. His former house by the river and mountains, nothing but his literary flourishes, the overgrown terrace of “clouds and rain,” surely not thought up in dream. But saddest of all is that the Chu palace has been obliterated along with them, when the boatmen point it out, they are nowadays unsure.

III

Hosts of mountains, ten thousand ravines go off to Jingmen, where the Bright Consort grew up there still is the village. Once she left the Purple Terrace she went throughout the Northland desert, and left only the Evergreen Tomb alone facing the twilight. In the painting did one recognize her face of the spring breeze?—with pendant rings in vain her soul comes back in the moonlit night. For a thousand years the pipa speaks the language of the Hu, clearly her bitter resentment is told within the melody.

---
1 *Song Yu.
2 This refers to the preface to the “Poetic Exposition on Gaotang” attributed to *Song Yu. There we read how the King of Chu was visited in a dream by the Goddess of Wu Mountain. On taking leave, she told him that she was the clouds of dawn and the evening rain every day by the Terrace of Light (the “terrace” here).
3 That is, along with *Song Yu’s house.
4 *Wang Zhaojun.
5 Purple Terrace is the Han palace.
6 This vaguely refers to the *yuefu piece known as “Zhaojun’s Resentment”—though that is associated with the zither. The pipa was a Central Asian instrument.
蜀主窥吴幸三峡，
崩年亦在永安宫。
翠华想像空山里，
玉殿虚无野寺中。

古廟杉松巢水鶴，
歲時伏臘走村翁。
武侯祠屋常鄰近，
一體君臣祭祀同。

諸葛大名垂宇宙，
宗臣遺像肅清高。
三分割據紆籌策，
萬古雲霄一羽毛。

伯仲之間見伊呂，
指揮若定失蕭曹。
福移漢祚難恢復，
志決身殞軍務勞。
IV

The ruler of Shu went to spy on Wu, journeyed to the Three Gorges, the year he died he was still at his palace in Yong’an.¹
I envision the kingfisher insigniae within these deserted mountains, his marble palace hall lies illusory in a temple in the wilds.²
The fir and pines of the ancient shrine give nests to river cranes, during the year on fu and la festivals old villagers rush about.³
The Martial Count’s chapel is always close by,⁴ as one body ruler and minister are worshipped together.

V

Zhuge Liang’s great fame hangs over the universe, the revered minister’s image remains, stern in its lofty purity.
A land threefold divided, cut apart, twisted his plots and plans,⁵ for all time in the highest clouds one creature of feathers and down.
As with eldest and middle brother he meets Yi Yin and Lü Shang,⁶ if his power of command had been made firm, he would have outstripped Xiao He and Cao Shen.⁷
Fortune had shifted; Han rule was hard to restore, his resolve was set, but his body perished in service to his army labors.

¹ Liu Bei (the “ruler of Shu”) attacked Wu and was defeated and made his way back to Yong’an (Yufu, just west of Kuizhou), where he later died.
² Original note: “The palace building is now is a temple; his shrine is to the east of the compound” 殿今為寺, 廟在宮東.
³ There were three fu days in summer and early autumn, as designated intervals in the lunar calendar. The la festival, coming after the beginning of winter, was designated for a general sacrifice to the gods.
⁴ The Martial Count is *Zhuge Liang, Liu Bei’s advisor.
⁵ That is, the Three Kingdoms.
⁶ Yi Yin aided the Shang founding; Lü Shang aided the Zhou founding.
⁷ Xiao and Cao were instrumental in the Han founding.
寄韓諫議注

今我不樂思岳陽，
身欲奮飛病在床。
美人娟娟隔秋水，
濯足洞庭望八荒。
鴻飛冥冥日月白，
青楓葉赤天雨霜。
或騎騏驎翳鳳凰，
芙蓉旌旗煙霧落，
影動倒景搖瀟湘。
玉京群帝集北斗，
或騎騏驎翳鳳凰。
芙蓉旌旗煙霧落，
影動倒景搖瀟湘。
星宮之君醉瓊漿，
羽人稀少不在旁。
似聞昨者赤松子，
恐是漢代韓張良。
昔隨劉氏定長安，
帷幄未改神慘傷。
國家成敗吾豈敢，
色難腥腐食風香。
To Grand Master of Remonstrance Han Zhu

Today I am not happy, longing for Yueyang,
I want to rise and fly off there, but I lie sick in bed.
The Fair One, graceful and charming, lies off beyond autumn floods,
he washes his feet in Lake Dongting, gazes toward the eight far wilds around.
The swan flies in the dark skies, sun and moon are bright,
leaves of green maples redden, heaven rains down frost.
The hosts of gods in the Jade Capital gather at the North Dipper,
some are riding unicorns or cover phoenixes.
Flags and banners of lotus descend through mist and fog,
light stirs on their inverted reflections that toss in the Xiao and Xiang.
The Lords of the Starry Palace grow drunk on onyx brew,
few of the feathered folk are not there at their sides.
I seem to have heard in olden days of Master Red Pine,
perhaps he was of the Han reign, Zhang Liang of Han.
Before he had followed the Lius in settling Chang’an,
he had not changed his tent, but his spirit was gloomy and pained.
“How do I dare deal with the success and failure of dynasties?” —
it was hard to pretend he liked reeking meat, he would feed on scents in the wind.

1 That is, Han Zhu.

2 The song of the fisherman goes: “When the waters of Canglang are muddy, one can wash one’s feet.” This suggests becoming a recluse when the times are out of joint.

3 The capping phrase of “The swan flies in the dark skies” is: “how then can the fowler shoot it?”

4 Zhang Liang withdrew to be a recluse after helping Liu Bang found the Han. This suggests that Han Zhu withdrew from court. Zhang Liang’s native state of Han 韓 plays on Han Zhu’s surname.

5 Liu Bang said of Zhang Liang that he made his plans in a tent and determined victory a thousand leagues away.
周南留滯古所惜，
南極老人應壽昌。
美人胡為隔秋水，
焉得置之貢玉堂。

17.40–51

解悶十二首

I
草閣柴扉星散居，
浪翻江黑雨飛初。
山禽引子哺紅果，
溪女得錢留白魚。

II
商胡離別下揚州，
憶上西陵故驛樓。
為問淮南米貴賤，
老夫乘興欲東遊。

III
一辭故國十經秋，
每見秋瓜憶故丘。
Yet to linger so long in Zhounan was thought a pity in ancient times,¹ the Old Man of the Southern Pole corresponds to long life and prosperity.² Why then is the Fair One off beyond autumn floods?—how can I get to offer him as a tribute gift to the Jade Hall?³

17.40–51

Getting Rid of the Blues

I

Thatched pavilion, ramshackle gates, dwellings scattered like stars, waves roll, the river blackens, the rain begins to fall. A mountain bird brings its chicks to feed them red berries, the girl by the creek gets a coin and leaves a white fish.

II

A foreign merchant takes his leave going downriver to Yangzhou, I recall once climbing to the upper storey of the old post lodge at Xiling. In Huainan find out for me whether rice is dear or cheap—following his whim, this old fellow wants to go roaming east.⁴

III

Since leaving my native region I have ten times passed autumn, and whenever I see autumn melons I recall my native hills.

---

1 Sima Tan said this of himself when Han Wudi went to perform the Feng rite. Zhounan here is taken as the Luoyang region.
2 The “Old Man of the Southern Pole” is a star whose appearance marks an age of peace.
3 That is, to send Han Zhu back to court.
4 *Wang Huizhi.
今日南湖采薇蕨，
何人为觅郑瓜州。  

IV

沈范早知何水部，
曹刘不待薛郎中。
独当省署开文苑，
兼泛沧浪学钓翁。 

V

李陵苏武是吾师，
孟子论文更不疑。
一饭未曾留俗客，
数篇今见古人诗。 

VI

復憶襄阳孟浩然，
清诗句句尽堪传。
即今耆旧无新语，
漫钓槎头缩颈鳊。
These days by the southern lakes picking greens and bracken, who will go seek out for me Zheng of Melon Village?¹

IV

Shen Yue and Fan Yun recognized He Xun of the Waterways Bureau, Cao and Liu did not wait for Director Xue.² Alone in the Secretariat offices he began a garden of letters; he also drifted at Canglang emulating the old fisherman.

V

“Li Ling and Su Wu are my teachers”—³ of Master Meng’s discussion of letters there is no further uncertainty. He never once had a worldly guest stay for a meal, and in several works we see our time’s poems of the ancients.⁴

VI

I also recall Xiangyang’s Meng Haoran, line after line of lucid poems, all worth handing on. These days among the gaffers fresh phrases are no more, they merely fish by a log for the neck-contracting bream.

¹ Original note; “Now the Director of the Palace Library Zheng Shen” 今鄭祕監審. Zheng Shen was the nephew of Du Fu’s old friend Zheng Qian.
² The Qi and Liang literary men Shen Yue and Fan Yun discovered the poetic talents of He Xun, later Director of the Bureau of Waterways. The famous Jian’an and Wei poets Cao Zhi and Liu Zhen did not live to “discover” Du Fu’s contemporary Xue Qu, who was also Director of the same bureau.
³ Li Ling and *Su Wu were Western Han figures, believed to have written a collection of poems in the five-syllable line. This claim, apparently the opinion of the poet Meng Yunqing, situates Meng Yunqing as an admirer of early classical poetry.
⁴ Original note: “The Editor Meng Yunqing” 校書郎孟雲卿.
VII

陶冶性靈存底物，
新詩改罷自長吟。
熟知二謝將能事，
頗學陰何苦用心。

VIII

不見高人王右丞，
藍田丘壑漫寒藤。
最傳秀句寰區滿，
未絕風流相國能。

IX

先帝貴妃今寂寞，
荔枝還復入長安。
炎方每續朱櫻獻，
玉座應悲白露團。

X

憶過瀘戎摘荔枝，
青楓隱映石逶迤。
VII

To mold and fashion my spiritual nature what have I got?—
finished revising my new poems, I chant them long to myself.
Well versed in the two Xies I’m getting pretty good;¹
really trying to emulate Yin Keng and He Xun I concentrate terribly
hard.²

VIII

I do not see that lofty man Wang, Assistant Director of the Right,³
the hills and gullies of Lantian spread with wintry vines.
Most handed-on are his striking lines, the whole world is full,
his panache has not yet ceased, in the abilities of the Minister.⁴

IX

The Late Emperor’s Noble Consort now lies in mournful silence,⁵
and once again the lychees are entering Chang’an.⁶
From the hot regions they always follow the offerings of red cherries—
I’m sure the jade throne must grieve at these orbs of white dew.⁷

X

I recall passing Luzhou and Rongzhou and picking lychees,
half hidden among green maples, winding off into the rocks.

¹ These are probably the early fifth-century poet Xie Lingyun and the late fifth-
century poet Xie Tiao.
² He Xun was a poet of the beginning of the sixth century; Yin Keng was a poet from
the second half of the same century. Both were known for their stylistic polish.
³ The poet Wang Wei.
⁴ Original note: “The Assistant Director of the Right’s younger brother is the current
Minister, Wang Jin” 右丞弟今相國縉.
⁵ Lady Yang, the Noble Consort, Xuanzong’s favorite, blamed with her family for
the An Lushan Rebellion and killed during Xuanzong’s flight from Chang’an to
Chengdu.
⁶ This is based on the story that Lady Yang had a fondness for fresh lychees (having
come from Fuzhou, famous for its lychees). To please her Xuanzong had the
imperial courier system bring freshly picked lychees with all speed.
⁷ In this context the “jade throne” refers to the deceased emperor Xuanzong.
京中舊見無顏色，
紅顆酸甜只自知。

XI

翠瓜碧李沈玉甃，
赤梨葡萄寒露成。
可憐先不異枝蔓，
此物娟娟長遠生。

XII

側生野岸及江蒲，
不熟丹宮滿玉壺。
雲壑布衣鮐背死，
勞人害馬翠眉須。

17.52

洞房

洞房環珮冷，
玉殿起秋風。
The ones I used to see in the capital were lacking beautiful color—¹
the red berries’ sweetness or bitterness could be known by myself alone.

XI

The azure melon and sapphire plum are immersed in jade well tiles;
the russet pear and the grape are perfected by cold dews.
Too bad they had not from the start thought such vines and branches
rare—
this thing is so lovely always growing far away.²

XII

It grows off to the side on wild slopes and by river shores,
it will not ripen in the cinnabar palace compound, filling jade pots.
Commoners of cloudy valleys, blowfish-backed with age, die;³
they make people toil and harm horses to meet the demands of dark
brows.⁴

The following group of eight pieces all evoke memories of Xuanzong’s reign

17.52

The Deep Chambers

In deep chambers, her rings and pendants cold,⁵
through the marble halls rise autumn winds.

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¹ The lychee loses its flavor very quickly, thus the transported lychee is not as good
as the lychee freshly picked.
² That is, people in Chang’an find lychees particularly attractive because they grow
far away and are hard to import. They do not prize the fruits that grow close by,
however delicious.
³ The skin pattern on the back resembling the blowfish was a mark of great old
age. This refers to the story that during Xuanzong’s reign, lychee-bearing couriers
trampled an old man to death in their hurry to bring the fruits fresh to the capital
for Lady Yang.
⁴ That is, to satisfy the wishes of palace favorites such as Lady Yang.
⁵ This suggests the women’s quarters in the imperial palace and in the context of the
rest of the poem, Lady Yang, the Noble Consort.
宿昔

宿昔青門裏，
蓬萊仗數移。
花嬌迎雜樹，
4 龍喜出平池。
落日留王母，
微風倚少兒。
宮中行樂秘，
8 少有外人知。

秦地應新月，
龍池滿舊宮。
繫舟今夜遠，
清漏往時同。
萬里黃山北，
園陵白露中。

17.53
In the land of Qin there must be a new moon,
4 Dragon Pool is full in his former palace.¹
My boat, tied up, is far away this night;
the waterclock’s clear dripping, same as in times past.
Ten thousand leagues away, north of Mount Huang Palace,²
8 the imperial tomb-park lies in white dew.

¹ Dragon Pool was in Xingqing Palace, where Xuanzong lived before becoming emperor. It was so-called because a dragon appeared there, portending Xuanzong’s rise to the throne.
² Referring to Maoling, Han Wudi’s tomb, and, by extension, Xuanzong’s tomb.
³ Green Gate was the Eastern Gate of Chang’an in the Han, here referring to Xingqing Palace, in the eastern part of Tang Chang’an.
⁴ Lady Yang the Noble Consort, figured as the Queen Mother of the West, who visited Han Emperor Wu.
⁵ Wei Shao’er, the sister of Han Wudi’s empress, here probably a figure for the duchesses of Guo and Qin, Lady Yang’s sisters.
能畫
能畫毛延壽，
投壺郭舍人。
每蒙天一笑，
復似物皆春。
政化平如水，
皇明斷若神。
時時用抵戲，
亦未雜風塵。

斗雞
斗雞初賜錦，
舞馬既登床。
簾下宮人出，
樓前御柳長。
仙遊終一閑，
女樂久無香。
寂寞驪山道，
清秋草木黃。
17.54

Skilled At Painting

Skilled at painting, Mao Yanshou,¹
at toss-pot, there was House-retainer Guo.²
Whenever they enjoyed a smile from the ruler,
it was as if all things were spring.
Governance was as even as water
imperial wisdom made decisions as if god-given.
From time to time they held butting games,³
yet it never was mixed with the dust of war.⁴

17.55

Cock-Fighting

No sooner was the brocade prize awarded in the cock-fight
than the dancing horses had mounted their platform.
Beneath the curtains palace ladies came out,
in front of the building, royal willows stretched long.
Since at last such excursions of immortals concluded,
the women musicians have been long without fragrance.
Gloomy and still is the road to Mount Li,⁵
in clear autumn the plants and trees turn yellow.

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¹ The court painter of Han Yuandi, asked to do portraits of all the court ladies. Having failed to receive the expected bribe, he painted *Wang Zhaojun as ugly, on account of which she was married off to the Chanyu of the Xiongnu.
² A favorite of Han Wudi, who entertained the emperor by his skill at the game of toss-pot.
³ The actual practice of this game is uncertain, but was an amusement of the Han court.
⁴ That is, it never was such an obsession that it led to rebellion.
⁵ On Mount Li was Huaqing Palace and its hot springs, where Xuanzong often went for winter excursions.
歷歴

歷歴開元事，
分明在眼前。
無端盜賊起，
忽已歲時遷。

巫峽西江外，
秦城北斗邊。
為郎從白首，
臥病數秋天。

洛陽

洛陽昔陷沒，
胡馬犯潼關。
天子初愁思，
都人慘別顏。

清笳去宮闕，
翠蓋出關山。
故老仍流涕，
龍髯幸再攀。
17.56

Laid Out Clearly

Laid out clearly, what happened in the Kaiyuan reign, brightly visible before my eyes.
For no reason the rebels appeared,
and suddenly years have passed by.
The Wu Gorges lie past the western River,
Qin’s city is beside the North Dipper.¹
Let me be white-haired as a Gentleman in Attendance;²
I lie here sick counting the autumn days.

17.57

Luoyang

Some time ago Luoyang fell,
Hu horses broke through Tong Pass.
The Son of Heaven began to have worried thoughts,
faces of those in the capital grieved at separation.
Then the clear reed pipes left the palace gate-towers,³
the kingfisher canopy came forth from barrier mountains.⁴
The old folks still shed tears
that fortunately the dragon’s whiskers could be clung to again.⁵

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¹ Chang’an.
² *Feng Tang.
³ 'The flight of An Lushan’s troops from Chang’an.
⁴ 'The return of the emperors, Suzong and Xuanzong.
⁵ 'That is, Xuanzong’s return. When the Yellow Emperor was carried off to Heaven by a dragon, over seventy of his officials clung to the dragon’s whiskers and went off to Heaven with him.
驪山
驪山絕望幸，
花萼罷登臨。
地下無朝燭，
人間有賜金。
鼎湖龍去遠，
銀海雁飛深。
萬歲蓬萊日，
長懸舊羽林。

提封
提封漢天下，
萬國尚同心。
借問懸車守，
何如儉德臨。
時徵俊乂入，
草竊犬羊侵。
願戒兵猶火，
恩加四海深。
17.58

Mount Li

At Mount Li anticipation of an imperial visit is gone, at Flower Calyx Tower climbing for a view has ceased. Below the earth, no candles for dawn court, in the mortal world is the gold he gave as gifts. The dragon has gone far from Cauldron Lake, in the Mercury Sea the geese fly deep below. For ten thousand years the sun of Penglai Palace will ever hang over his old guardsmen.

1 The tower was in Xuanzong’s Xingqing Palace.
2 Cauldron Lake was so named because here the Yellow Emperor cast his sacred cauldron and then was carried off to Heaven by a dragon.
3 This refers to Qin Shihuang’s tomb with its seas and rivers of mercury and its golden statues of wild geese.
4 Those guarding Xuanzong’s tomb precincts.

17.59

Our Territory

Our territory, the Han world, ten thousand domains still of a single mind. I ask how can retiring to protect oneself compare to governing with the virtue of restraint? Superb talents are sometimes summoned to court, but plundering, the dogs and sheep invade. I wish they would restrain troops, which are like a fire, and have imperial grace penetrate the seagirt world deeply.
鸚鵡

鸚鵡含愁思，
聰明憶別離。
翠衿渾短盡，
紅觜漫多知。
未有開籠日，
空殘舊宿枝。
世人憐復損，
何用羽毛奇。

孤雁

孤雁不飲啄，
飛鳴聲念群。
誰憐一片影，
相失萬重雲。
望盡似猶見，
哀多如更聞。
野鴉無意緒，
鳴噪自紛紛。
17.60

Parrot

The parrot holds sad thoughts within,
so clever that it recalls separation.¹
Its azure jacket has been shortened to almost nothing,²
its red beak uselessly shows it knows much.
The day has never come when its cage was opened,
the branch where it used to stay remains in vain.
People of the age love it, and they harm it—
what good is the wonder of its feathers?

17.61

Lone Goose

The lone goose neither feeds nor drinks,
it flies crying out, voice longing for the flock.
Who pities that single outline?—
lost in ten thousand folds of clouds.
Gaze to the limit, as if still to be seen,
mournful cries many, as though heard again.
The crows of the wilderness pay it no heed,
their squawking is in multitudes.

¹ That is, the parrot’s intelligence makes it realize that it is separated from its parents or mate.
² That is, its wings have been clipped.
17.62

鷗

江浦寒鷗戲，
無他亦自饒。
卻思翻玉羽，
4 隨意點春苗。
雪暗還須浴，
風生一任飄。
幾群滄海上，
8 清影日蕭蕭。

17.63

猿

褦褦啼虛壁，
蕭蕭掛冷枝。
艱難人不免，
4 隱見爾如知。
慣習元從眾，
全生或用奇。
前林騰每及，
8 父子莫相離。
17.62

Gull

A wintry gull plays on the River’s shore, 
nothing else to do, free to do as it pleases. 
But then it longs to beat its jade-like wings 
and as it likes, to touch the spring sprouts. 
When snow darkens, then it must bathe again, 
when the wind rises, it gives itself to the gusts. 
How many flocks on the gray seas, 
their clear outlines daily more serene?

17.63

Gibbons

They cry out keening on the deserted cliff, 
in whistling wind they hang from cold branches. 
Men cannot escape hardships and troubles, 
it is as if you understand when to hide and appear.¹ 
In your habits you always follow the group, 
sometimes with remarkable ways to stay alive. 
Whenever you manage to leap in the woods ahead, 
father and son are never separated.

¹ Also the choice of being a recluse or serving.
17.64

麂

永與清溪別，
蒙將玉饌俱。
無才逐仙隱，
不敢恨庖廚。
亂世輕全物，
微聲及禍樞。
衣冠兼盜賊，
饕餮用斯須。

17.65

雞

紀德名標五，
初鳴度必三。
殊方聽有異，
失次曉無慚。
問俗人情似，
充庖爾輩堪。
氣交亭育際，
巫峽漏司南。
17.64

Roebuck

Forever parted from the Clear Creek Mountain, it is permitted to join the choicest viands. Lacking the talent to go with immortals and hermits, it dare not hate the kitchen. An age in turmoil cares little about things living their full span, its faint voice brought it to ruin. Officials in uniform and rebels are the taotie beasts that finish it off in a moment.¹

17.65

Cock

Recording its virtues, five terms were listed,² when it first crows, it is always three times. In this strange land it sounds somewhat different, missing its moment, unashamed it is already morning. As for local customs, the way people are here resembles you,³ but your sort can be sent to serve the needs of the kitchen. When humours cross at the nourishing junctures,⁴ in the Wu Gorges there is only the water-clock marker.

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¹ Taotie were legendary ravenous beasts.
² The Han Shi waizhuan notes that the chicken has five virtues: civil and military talent, courage, right, and fidelity.
³ In being untrustworthy.
⁴ That is, at the moment of sunrise and sunset.
17.66

黃魚

日見巴東峽，
黃魚出浪新。
脂膏兼飼犬，
長大不容身。
筒桶相沿久，
風雷肯為神。
泥沙卷涎沫，
回首怪龍鱗。

17.67

白小

白小群分命，
天然二寸魚。
細微霑水族，
風俗當園蔬。
入肆銀花亂，
傾箱雪片虛。
生成猶拾卵，
盡取義何如。
17.66

Sturgeon

Daily we see in the gorges east of Ba
sturgeon coming fresh out of the waves.
Their fatty oils also are used to feed dogs,
so big and long they cannot protect themselves.
The pole-scoop has long been the custom,¹
will wind and thunder permit you to become divine?²
When it curls on mud and sand, moistening itself with spittle,
it turns to marvel at those dragon scales.

17.67

“Little Whites,” Minnows

Little whites, each in the school is given a life,
a fish by nature two inches long.
Thin and small, they stick with their watery tribe,
by local custom, it goes with garden vegetables.
In the shops they are a tangle of silver flowers,
poured from a box, insubstantial flakes of snow.
Their lives are as when collecting the eggs—³
what sense of right is there in taking them all?

¹ Dongtong 洞桶 was probably the local term for some sort of fishing apparatus.
² When a carp transforms into a dragon, the moment is accompanied by thunder.
   Here the sturgeon is denied such transformation. Shen 伸, “to extend itself” [and
   become a dragon] is a variant.
³ Gathering even the eggs after a hunt has killed all the birds and beasts, hence a
   figure for rapaciousness that does not consider the future.
17.68

哭王彭州掄

執友驚淪沒，
斯人已寂寥。
新文生沈謝，
異骨降松喬。
北部初高選，
東堂早見招。
蛟龍纏倚劍，
鸞鳳夾吹簫。
歷職漢庭久，
中年胡馬騁。
兵戈闕兩觀，
寵辱事三朝。
蜀路江千窄，
彭門地里遙。
解龜生碧草，
諫獵阻青霄。
A Lament For Wang Lun of Pengzhou

Shocked that my like-minded friend has perished,
such a person has been lost to vast silence.
His recent writings, a living Shen or Xie, ¹
rare bones, Red Pine and Qiao the Prince come down to earth. ²
A high first appointment in the Northern District, ³
you were early summoned to the Eastern Hall. ⁴
Dragons wrapped around the sword you wore,
phoenixes were beside your panpipes. ⁵
Long you passed through office in the Han courtyard,
in your middle age Hu horses were arrogant. ⁶
As arms darkened the paired watchtowers, ⁷
through favor and disgrace, you served three rulers.
The roads of Shu were cramped by the riverbank,
the distance to Pengmen was far. ⁸
Untying your tortoise badge, the emerald plants grew, ⁹
you were blocked from criticizing the hunt in the upper empyrean. ¹⁰

¹ Shen is Shen Yue; Xie may be either Xie Lingyun or Xie Tiao.
² Red Pine and Qiao the Prince were famous immortals.
³ This is a sheriff appointment in one of the counties close to one of the capitals, an appointment superior to most entry-level appointments. “Appointment” here is xuan 選, literally “selection,” the complex and crucial process of assigning a post to someone who has passed the examination or otherwise qualified for office.
⁴ The Eastern Hall is the palace. This suggests an interview with the emperor, and probably a palace examination.
⁵ This refers to Xiaoshi, who married the daughter of the Duke of Qin and rode away with her on a phoenix. Wang Lun was married into the imperial household.
⁶ The An Lushan Rebellion.
⁷ The palace.
⁸ Wang Lun transferred from Yan Wu’s command in Chengdu to be prefect of Pengzhou.
⁹ It was a long time since he left his court office.
¹⁰ Being posted away from court, Wang could not perform the duties of remonstrating with the emperor.
顷壮戎麾出，
叨陪幕府要。
将军临气候，
猛士塞风飙。
井渫泉谁汲，
烽疏火不烧。
前筹自多暇，
隐几接终朝。
翠石俄双表，
寒松竟後凋。
赠诗焉敢坠，
染翰欲无聊。
再哭经过罢，
离魂去住销。
之官方玉折，
寄葬与萍漂。
曠望渥窪道，
霏微河汉桥。
夫人先即世，
令子各清标。
巫峡长云雨，
秦城近斗杓。
冯唐毛髮白，
归兴日萧萧。
Recently we felt that pennons had come forth gloriously,¹
I humbly accompanied you in an invitation to headquarters.
The General looked out on the atmosphere,²
his fierce soldiers blocked the blasts of wind.
The well was purified, no one drew from the well-springs;³
beacon fires grew sparse, their fires did not burn.
From his plans more free time was found,
leaning on armrests, we passed whole mornings together.
Suddenly a pair of tomb-markers of azure stone,
the wintry pine was finally last to wither.
How would I dare let the poems you presented me be lost?
I dip my writing brush, but become dispirited.
Weeping a second time, your passage is over,⁴
parted souls melt, one going, one staying.
No sooner did you go to your post than the jade broke,
a sojourner’s burial, wave-tossed with duckweed.
I look out into the expanse for the Wowa road,⁵
blurry, that bridge over the River of Stars.⁶
The Lady was first to leave the world,
your excellent sons are each standards of purity.
Clouds and rain last long in the Wu Gorges,
the city of Qin is near the North Dipper handle.
Feng Tang’s hair is now white,⁷
his impulse to go home grows bleaker with each passing day.

¹ Yan Wu came to be military commissioner in Chengdu.
² Figuratively, the military situation.
³ The army departed once the region was pacified.
⁴ Wang Lun’s coffin passing by Kuizhou.
⁵ The road by the Wowa River in modern Gansu was the route taken by the “horses of Heaven” when coming to China.
⁶ Like the Oxherd and *Weaver, Wang Lun will reunite with his wife in Heaven.
⁷ *Feng Tang.