
DIGITAL ACCESS TO SCHOLARSHIP AT HARVARD
DASH.HARVARD.EDU

HARVARD LIBRARY


Learning to Write Naturally: the Problem of Southern Song Poetry in the Late Twelfth Century

Link
http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:40046571

Terms of use
This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material (LAA), as set forth at
https://harvardwiki.atlassian.net/wiki/external/NGY5NDE4ZjgzNTc5NDQzMGIzZWZhMGFlOWI2M2EwYTg

Accessibility
https://accessibility.huit.harvard.edu/digital-accessibility-policy

Share Your Story
The Harvard community has made this article openly available.
Please share how this access benefits you. Submit a story

Learning to Write Naturally:
The Problem of Southern Song Poetry in the Late Twelfth Century

A dissertation presented
by
Chen ZHANG
to
The Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the subject of
East Asian Languages and Civilizations

Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

May, 2017

© 2017 Chen Zhang
All rights reserved.

Stephen Owen Chen Zhang

Learning to Write Naturally:
The Problem of Southern Song Poetry in the Late Twelfth Century

Abstract

I inquire into the nature of poetic experience by studying six leading poets in the late twelfth century. The questions they address with their prolific writing are also central to poetic (and literary) endeavors in general: what is the place of poetry among their political, intellectual, and cultural commitments; how to achieve individual freedom under a weighty textual tradition; and how to reconcile naturalness and craft, spontaneity and method. The poets reckoned with the changes in foundational concepts such as Nature, self, and vital force (*qi*) in the Neo-Confucian movement. They accepted the importance of studying ancient models, but rejected a difficult writing process in favor of spontaneity and speed. They were aware of the inherent contradiction between learning and spontaneity, and sported precarious solutions such as *sunyata* ("awakening," borrowed from Chan Buddhism). The poets sketched scenes complete with image, feeling, and movement, in a smooth language with casual simplicity. They were also forming a theory on how to incorporate colloquial language into poetry, seeking to justify attention to the "common" (*su)* without impairing the "proper and elegant" (*ya)*. The result was a peculiar blend of "new" language with the vocabulary and sentence patterns that echo past writing. I argue that they gave new meaning to the term *shiren* (poet), and that being a *shiren* in the late twelfth century meant a persistent, moment-by-moment engagement with the moving of inner sensibility through the taming of poetic language.

Table of Contents

1. Title Page i
2. Copyright page ii
3. Abstract iii
4. Table of Contents iv
5. Front Matter
Dedication vi
Acknowledgement vii

6. Body of Text

i. Introduction: The Problem of Southern Song Poetry 1
1) Introduction
2) Lodge: Phenomena and Words
3) Encounter: Humans and Phenomena
4) Barriers
5) The Problem of Southern Song Poetry
6) The Unreachable – A Conclusion

ii. Chapter One: The Late-Twelfth-Century Poetry-Addict 49
1) The Long Introduction
2) Explaining Poetry
3) A Portrait of the *Shiren*
4) The Long Conclusion
5) The Short Conclusion

iii. Chapter Two: Making the Best of Jiangxi: Yang Wanli, Han Biao and the Regulated Poem 105
1) Introduction
2) From Yang Wanli to Han Biao
3) Conclusion

v. Chapter Three: Quatrains Sets in the Late Twelfth and Early Thirteen Centuries 159
1) Introduction: Asking the Questions and the Inevitable Flashback to Du Fu
2) Stylistic Expectations for the Quatrain in the Late Twelfth Century
3) Two Genres of Journal Quatrain Sets
a) Travel Diary Quatrains: Poetry of Discovery
b) Interlude: Solitary Musings over Solitary Musing Poems
c) Moments-in-Leisure Quatrain Sets: The Building of a Poet's Universe
4) Conclusion

v. Chapter Four: Poetry of the Everyday and Every Day: The Unremarkable Poetic Realm 248
1) Introduction: The One Lu You?
2) On Pervasive Qi and Complete Poetry

3) Resolving the Conflict between Vital Force and Poetry: The Unremarkable Poetic Realm
4) The Donkey-rider: Conclusion and Afterthought

vi. The Conclusions 310

7. Bibliography 316

to Xin Qiji

poet and a good sport

Acknowledgement

It will take all 300 pages of this dissertation to complete my note of gratitude to my committee, Professors Stephen Owen, Wai-yee Li, and Xiaofei Tian, for making it possible for me to finish this project. Only with the combination of inspiration, understanding, and guidance that they have provided over the years was I able to overcome the difficulties in thinking and writing. For one who must have been a very trying student, they were always there when I had questions or needed to talk over a point, and they remained warm and supportive through the end.

A ship sailing over the smooth ocean guided by the bright pole star is a beautiful scene. I wish I could use it to describe the relationship between me, the ocean of learning, and my advisor, Professor Owen. Sadly, I have been more like a diver than a ship, a diver who was in constant danger of drowning. Or Du Fu's broken boat. Or the stray migrating goose. Fortunately for me, Professor Owen has been every bit the pole star. He has a knack of pointing out the right direction, and he makes sure that I did not lose the light of my own inner star.

I am indebted to Professor Michael Fuller from the University of California, Irvine, and Professor Shengli Feng from the Chinese University of Hong Kong for the generous use of their time in reading and talking over the later chapters. I am grateful to them for pushing me to think beyond my scope and to take on the hard questions.

I fondly remember our dissertation group meetings, with Chengjuan Sun, Jinghua Wangling, Zeb Raft, Yue Hong, Jascha Smilack, Qiulei Hu, and Huicong Zhang. The early inspirations for this dissertation came from those meetings.

To someone who pledged her soul at an early age to poetry, writing a dissertation on poetry was not working, but being and becoming. I thank Tsong-han Lee, both for his love and companionship in my growth through the first two chapters, and for the life lessons on loss and suffering, which enabled me to make the essential conceptual leap to write the rest.

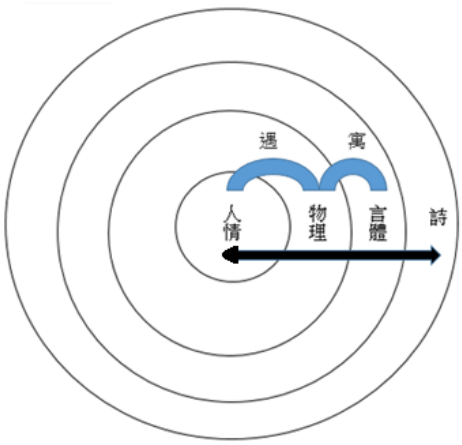
To my friends, Anne K. Ng, Shirley Liu, Seijeong Chin, Sukhee Lee, and Guanglin Liu, I owe heartfelt thanks for being there when the ground collapsed under my feet. They let me know that I was not alone, and it meant the world.

I thank my parents for their understanding through the long hours when I retreated behind locked doors instead of doing the right thing of spending time with them. I have learned to better balance work and family, and they can expect to get more of their daughter in the future.

My committee and mentors have gone over the drafts thoroughly, providing valuable feedback and suggestions, and I, in turn, have done my best to correct and improve. I take responsibility for the errors that remain, but Time, Miserly Graduate School Time, is solely responsible for the flaws.

Introduction: The Problem of Southern Song Poetry

A poem is the imprint of a chance encounter between human sensitivity and the world of phenomena captured in a distinct form of writing whose moving power predicates on unobstructed movement to and from the encounter core. The relationship between the spiritual content of poetry and poetic language is analogous to the way a liquid taking on the shape and color of the container vessel that it fills. A history of traditional Chinese poetry is the changing relationship that a constantly-reimagined human participant bears to the gradually densifying body of poetic language in the ongoing practice of poetry-writing – in the writer-subject's efforts to overcome the latter's constrictions, to subsume its semi-autonomous patterns in the realization of feeling without being subsumed in return.



I. Introduction:

After the rain, the foliage green forms a shade. 雨餘木葉綠成陰,
One day of leisure is worth ten-thousand in gold. 一日身閒直萬金.

Dissatisfied with myself for not having eliminated all my habits: 習氣自嫌除未盡,
Birds chirping and flowers falling still touch my heart. 鳥啼花落尚關心.

-- Lu You 陸游, "Late Spring, Composed in the East Garden 晚春東園作."[1]

When birds chirping and flowers falling touch the heart, we have the pre-text of a poem. This moment of encounter when the external world becomes relevant ("touches") – when it moves (*gan* 感) or arouses (*xing* 興) the mind/heart – is the origin of poetry to which one may trace from the canonical statement that "poetry speaks of the resolve." Liu Xie 劉勰 does exactly that in the "Elucidating Poetry" chapter in *Wenxin Diaolong* 文心雕龍, "Humans are endowed with the seven emotions; responding to phenomena they are moved. Moved by phenomena and chant out one's resolve – there is nothing unnatural in this. 人稟七情, 應物斯感. 感物吟志, 莫非自然."[2] Here, Liu Xie gives voice to the dominant conception of poetry in the tradition, that poetry is the product of an entirely natural process where *qing* – human's innate capacity to emotions – is moved in response to the external world, and its movement becomes manifest in language.

Conceiving of poetry as natural has not freed it from the inevitable questions of expression and presentation that arise as soon as it ends up in language, but it is important to set up in the beginning a pre-text Form of poetry – call it the Poetry of Encounter to distinguish it from the mimetic model – whose presumed immanence in poems of words on the one hand, and whose undefined relationship to them on the other, call for an experimental separation of the

[1] Lu You, Qian Zhonglian 錢仲聯, annot., *Jiannan shigao jiaozhu* 劍南詩稿校注, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2005), 7:4175. Hereafter *JNSGJZ.*

[2] Zhang Deng 張燈, annot., *Wenxin Diaolong yi zhu shu bian* 文心雕龍譯注疏辨, (Shanghai: Fudan daxue, 2015), 41.

two, so as to allows us to follow out the channels of poetry's affective power, as well as the problems in its writing and reading that this Encounter model necessarily entails.

The encounter gives meaning to, rather than being represented by, the intelligible traces of the particular encounter that make up the poem's content. Encounters entail coming together (*hui* 會 *or he* 合) or the failure thereof, and possibly followed by separation. Reading and understanding a poem is also a kind of encounter. The path that links the moment of encounter with the poem about encounter is open in both directions, as we often see it traversed freely in traditional poetic discourse, in the assumption that much is revealed in the convergence or blockage or separation about the nature and condition of the two participants in the encounter ("*wu* 物" phenomena and "*wo* 我" the subject). But at the same time, what can be revealed can also be hidden. Poetic experience, then, is both the moment of encounter itself, and the subsequent attempts to retrace the unfolding of the encounter.

It became common to identify the writer with the human subject in the encounter from very early on.[3] During the formative stage of *shi* poetry, its main writers in the court literary circles at the end of Han composed some of their poems in their own voice. The Han exegetical tradition for *The Classic of Poetry* and *Chuci,* soon adopted as the dual founts of *shi* poetry, had already supplied historically relevant authors for both bodies of texts. It was comparatively easy for *shi* poetry to merge with the two forebears to establish the predominant mode of writing and reading where the writer is identified as the subject. The mode was even adapted into the grey

[3] Asami Yoji argues that the idea of authorship in reading poetry emerged with the Han exegesis of *The Classic of Poetry*. Asami, Jin Chengyu 金程宇 and Chika Okada 岡田千穗 transl., "Guanyu shi yu 'benshi,' 'benyi,' yi ji 'shichen' 關於詩與'本事,' '本意,' 以及'詩讖'," in *Juli yu xiangxiang: Zhongguo shixue de Tang Song zhuanxing* 距離與想像: 中國詩學的唐宋轉型, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2005), 355-369.

areas of unknown or uncertain authorship, or into genres that assume an artistic distance between the writer and subject. This narrowed view of the encounter poetics, within which we refer to the writer and subject indiscriminately as "the poet" and treat the poem as the verbal manifestation of what moves inside him, makes a convenient anchor for much of the discussion in this dissertation.

That said, the rich exegetical tradition surrounding *The Classic of Poetry* contained accounts of poetry's ritual functions and social significance that can never be completely incorporated into the narrowed encounter model. The Hymns and many of the Major Odes were performance texts enacted with music and dance at ancestral sacrifices and formal banquets. It was argued that through the Airs, one may observe the moral temperament of a populace in a given era. Many poems from both the "Airs" and the "Odes" were read as criticism of the ruler or the society's depravity. These accounts predate the literati-centered *shi* tradition, which came to draw on them in important and interesting ways. To say the least, they kept alive *yuefu* poetry as a written genre beyond its function as performance texts for the state's Music Bureau. *Yuefu* remained popular except for the Song, which witnessed a lull in composing new *yuefu* while the old ones were comprehensively anthologized. Poets were free to come up with new titles, but for the most part, writing *yuefu* meant writing new poems for an existing title, which usually came with a setting (of the title's original performance), a story, or a persona. In many ways, the values and functions of poetry as embodied in *The Classic* were found to continue in *yuefu*. It proved a useful platform for social realism and archaism, while the often-absent music component somehow kept alive the idea that poetry should bring about social harmony. Poets who nursed a soft spot for personal drama also delighted in writing *yuefu.* The line between

yuefu and ancient-style *shi* poetry was not always clear: the rationale behind *yuefu* belongs to a broader idea of poetry that also informed the poetics of personal encounter.

During the Qing, an era of synthesis in many areas including poetics, the anthologist Wang Yaoqu 王堯衢 revived and expanded on an old concept – "the sound of the mind" – as his definition for poetry:[4] "The human mind is the most open and spiritual. When what moves in the mind comes out and makes sounds, it always exhausts all the extraordinary variations, and thus form patterns 夫人心至虛至靈, 由心而動, 出而成聲, 莫不極奇極變, 以成文章." This broad definition allowed him to extend the beginning of the poetic tradition to a nebulous body of sung verse culled from ancient texts other than *The Classic of Poetry.*[5] It also justified his collection of ancient verse to be published alongside a selection of Tang poetry as *Gu Tang shi hejie* 古唐詩合解, soon to become one of the most popular poetry anthologies. The state of affairs in poetics by Wang's time, in addition to the expected situation resembling different streams issuing from the same source, was not unlike common mushrooms sprouting in pandemonium to be randomly picked and eaten by schoolboys. A few thousand years' worth of poetry furnished abundant material for selective presentation and marketing for mass consumption. Many of the instructional publications and popular poetic practice were looked upon as vulgar by the elite,

[4] In the "Inquiry About Gods 問神" chapter of Yang Xiong's 揚雄 *Fayan* 法言. See *Yang Zi Fayan jijie* 揚子法言集解, (Shanghai: Guangyi shuju, 1136), 15. In this chapter where Yang Xiong discusses the function of spoken and written language in making manifest and communicating the hidden and unfathomable in Heaven, Earth, and the mind, he structures his definition of language in a binary: "The spoken word is the sound of the mind; writing is the drawing of the mind. 言, 心聲也, 字, 心畫也."

[5] Wang Yaoqu, compil., *Gu Tang shi hejie* 古唐詩合解, (Jinzhang shuju lithograph printing, 1909).

but the trend was only going to escalate over the next few generations. Wang's preface was one of the earlier endeavors to make some order out of the streams and mushrooms.

Poetry as unmediated expression is a very old idea that clung tenaciously to traditional Chinese literary thought. The assertion is certainly not unique among literary cultures; of more interest are the ideas that went into its construction and the subsequent effect in shaping the poetry-writing practice. Wang's exposition of it draws from another old idea traceable to Zhuang Zi, that human utterance is of the same nature as wind whistling through hollows. The idea captures the physical aspect of utterance in the image of the human body, identifying the latter with all things in nature endowed with open hollows. Writers for centuries have invoked this naturalistic image of natural expression because it naturally eludes the necessity for logical self-defense. Since all the beauty and patterns (*wenzhang*) one finds in literary writing are put down as partaking in Nature's patterns, individual expression already implies a model for social and cosmic harmony. The lure of this utopian vision is planted not only in theories about vocal expression but also in those concerning the visual arts, such as painting and calligraphy, in terms of channeling a vital energy (*qi*) through the artist's body.

By virtue of being sung to music in its earliest forms, poetry has the advantage over prose and the visual arts in adopting the naturalistic view of expression. One feels the stubborn sway of this vision when one finds writers near the end of the tradition speak of poetry as an art of sounds rather than patterned linguistic signs. This was long after poetry had become a silent art: the music component had been lost many times over; even the musicality of poetic language had become a mere phantom, existing only in obsolete tonal and rhyming categories increasingly disconnected from the live spoken language. And yet there was no danger of the phantom disappearing: those were vibrant and expanding poetic communities that constantly claimed the

authority of its presence. We have a rather quaint situation where dead sounds were made to silently resound through the collective memorization of old texts and production of the new. Even in the eighteenth century, "the sound of the mind" was still a more literal than metaphorical characterization of poetry.

The set of widely shared ideas and assumptions that led Wang Yaoqu to reiterate "the sound of the mind" is the basis for a broader idea of poetry as one among many forms of aesthetic expression: like the other art forms, poetry grants knowledge to the human inner realm by assuming and building on a categorical sameness of the latter with the external world of phenomena; except poetry does that uniquely by capturing the movement at moments when the inner is encountered by the outer. Doing so involves description and narration, or such devices as metaphors and metonymy as shared by other forms of speech. By visual and tactile images, it may also evoke the other arts. But ultimately, traditional discussions on the nature and functions of poetry overwhelmingly center on the moments of moving: what moved inside, how it moves others, and – taking a twist at some point – how may the movement be stilled. This is, if I may use the word, the "internal" characteristic of poetry, which remained relatively stable while the broader structures of determinants that poetry shares with other aesthetic forms, namely understandings of human and cosmic order, have undergone significant shifts over the ages. At the center of my diagram of poetry, "human feelings" refer to the human inner realm as it has the capacity to be encountered, both as the human subject in the broad idea of poetry, and in the narrowed model where the poet unites the writer and subject.

One relies on the belated poem to access the fleeting moment of movement that produces noise. Through the moment, one may get to know the human inner realm and the external world of phenomena - not separately on their own, but in the manner they come into contact. This

moment is represented by “Encounter” in my diagram. “Encounter” postpones the question of knowability: if neither the inner realm nor the external world can be known on their own terms, at least the moment of their convergence may be captured.

The postponed question returns in the wherewithal to capture that movement, represented by the next point of convergence in my diagram, “Lodge.” There is a large area of overlap between positing language as the medium or as the lodge (vessel) of meaning, but a significant difference is that the latter assumes a more substantive link between the system of sounds/symbols and the system of referents – more substantive than the arbitrary-construct idea in the modern theories on language. The early Chinese philosophers framed their challenge on the capacities of language in a way that the emphasis is on asserting the arbitrariness of categories, relational statements, and true-false statements within each of the two structured systems (of language and referent), and not so much on the arbitrary relation between the systems. In later poetic discourse, there are two places where meaning can take lodge – things in the phenomenal world, or words. With natural patterns and literary writing sharing the same word (*wenzhang*), there were frequent crossovers between the two systems: literary writing can be a “thing,” and things have their patterns. Moreover, poetic language accumulated its own pattern over time, acquiring a degree of determinacy over meaning that arguably, it has a tangible effect in shaping poetry.

Thus, in the above diagram, “Lodge” is represented by the joining of language and the world of phenomena. In traditional poetics, “Lodge” is where one delegates the role of human effort and human agency. The assumption in the encounter poetics of natural and unmediated

expression comes with its own set of questions concerning the role of human art.[6] I will begin from the "lodge" to frame my discussion of the encounter, leading into the questions about art as they took shape in the late 12th century.

II. Lodge: Phenomena and Words

To the question whether language adequately presents intent, Wang Bi 王弼 asserts the importance of "image" (*xiang* 象) as the middle link in a generative chain:[7]

> Image is that which manifests intent; words are that which elucidate images. None better than image to adequately [manifest] intent, and none better than words to adequately

[6] My diagram overlaps in the key areas with the tripartite structure of traditional Chinese poetry that Chen Bohai lays out in *Zhongguo shixue zhi xiandai guan* 中國詩學之現代觀 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2006). Chen's structure doubles as three steps of the poetic process: poetry starts from "Intent" (*yi* 意), the vital source of poetry; the intent finds expression in "Image" (*xiang* 象), which he takes to represent the nature of aesthetic appreciation; and in the last step, poetry takes on textual form in "Language" (*yan* 言). I agree with Chen that many underlying assumptions in the seemingly disorganized writings surrounding poetry point to the existence of "a logic internal to traditional poetic discourse," and that we may start to reconstruct that logic by identifying the key elements that have served as constant points of reference. Chen's primary interest is in establishing a comparative perspective between a traditional Chinese poetics of "moving and arousing" (*ganxing lun* 感興論) – and what he regards as the essential features of Western poetics. This is where I differ. Chen presents the poetics of "moving and arousing" as a finished model whose flaw becomes visible only when placed in comparison with the Western poetics of mimesis and representation. His goal is to take traditional Chinese poetics to the "next stage" of development by absorbing ideas from the West, and proposes to have it complement the shortcomings in the Western literary and philosophical tradition. I present the model of encounter poetics as an honored but problematic ideal: the generations of poets' quixotic insistence on realizing it made it timeless, and their changing solutions to overcome the difficulties made its history. Therefore, I take to diagram and explain the structure of the encounter poetics as a starting point from which to understand the complex changes in the poetic tradition.

[7] In "Elucidating Images 明象" in his commentary on the *Zhou Yi.* The section is fully translated in Rudolph Wagner, *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy in China: Wang Bi's Scholarly Explanation of the Dark,* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003), 80-82.

> [elucidate] images. Words arise from images, so images are seen through words; image arises from intent, so intent is seen through images. Intent is fully [captured] through image, and images become manifest through words. Thus, words are that by which images are elucidated, and on grasping the image, one forgets the words; image is that in which intent is contained, and on grasping the intent, one forgets the image. This is like the trap by which one catches the rabbit, on getting the rabbit, one forgets the trap; or the fish weir, being that by which one catches fish, on getting the fish, one forgets the weir. Thus, words are the trap of images, and images are the weir of intent.
> 夫象者, 出意者也. 言者, 明象者也. 盡意莫若象, 盡象莫若言. 言生於象, 故可尋言以觀象. 象生於意, 故可尋象以觀意. 意以象盡, 象以言著. 故言者所以明象, 得象而忘言, 象者所以存意, 得意而忘象. 猶蹄者所以在兔, 得兔而忘蹄. 筌者所以在魚, 得魚而忘筌. 然則言者, 象之蹄也, 象者, 意之筌也.

Wang Bi brings together Confucius' explanation of the relationship between text and hexagrams in the *Yijing* and Zhuang Zi's trap-weir metaphor as a way of reconciling radically different positions on the un/importance of using texts to grasp the sages' understanding.[8] In the meaning-image-words chain, Wang Bi provides the main terms by which later poets discussed the centrality of imagery in poetry, using the same word *xiang*. In modern Chinese scholarship, the term for poetic imagery is the compound *yixiang* 意象, often used with the nuances it picked up through the Ming and the Qing to designate the subjective transformation of perceived phenomena in the poet's mind.[9] Since it is not the object of this section to explore the continuity

[8] See Tang Yongtong 湯用彤, "Yan yi zhi bian 言意之辯," in *Wei Jin xuanxue* 魏晉玄學, *Tang Yongtong quanji* 湯用彤全集 edition, (Taipei: Foguang 2001), 6: 30-58.

[9] Xin Yanjun traces the history of *xiang* from its earliest usages to Liu Xie's first coinage of the compound *yixiang*, and changes to its subsequent usages through the Ming and the Qing. Her understanding of *yixiang* is closer to symbolism in the theoretical framework that Susanne Langer provides in *Philosophy in a New Key.* Xin Yanjun 辛衍君, *Yixiang kongjian: Tang Song ci yixiang de fuhao xue chanshi* 意象空間: 唐宋詞意象的符號學闡釋 (Shenyang: Liaoning daxue, 2007). Geng Jianhua 耿建華 takes the projectionism line and defines *yixiang* as "the concrete vehicle for the poet's subjective feelings and intent 詩人情志的具象載體." See Geng, *Shige de yixiang yishu yu piping* 詩歌的意象藝術與批評, (Jinan: Shandong daxue, 2010).

between mind, imagery, and meaning, on which studies on *yixiang* tend to focus, but that between phenomena and language, I will avoid the compound *yixiang* and start from the *xiang* in Wang Bi's formulation, while adding an older generative sequence: from phenomena to image. *Xiang* breaks down the usual contradistinctions between sign and symbol, fact and knowledge, inner and outer, etc., by its sheer range of usages from shapes and figures in the phenomenal world to pictorial or symbolic representations of these figures, from the accuracy of mirror images to the abstraction of ideograms. Phenomena gives rise to images and so, according to Wang Bi, does intent. The words conceived from and explaining images may lead us to either, which may or may not be the same thing depending on our progress to sagehood. Poetry-writing is the ongoing practice of negotiating the phenomena-image-words continuum within the possibilities and limitations set forth by the discursiveness of poetic language.

To explain this, I must be more poetic than the genre of dissertation usually allows, and devise a metaphor of my own: that of a leaf. The metaphor begins from Du Mu's poem, "A Chance Composition in the Qi'an Prefectural Office 齊安郡中偶題:"[10]

Autumn's every sound perturbs the parted one's heart.	秋聲無不攪離心,
In the Dream Wetland reeds, the rain of Chu falls heavily.	夢澤蒹葭楚雨深.
All on its own, it drips on the large parasol leaves over the steps.	自滴階前大梧葉,
What has this to do with you, that moves you to this mournful chant?	干君何事動哀吟.

The start of the poem puts us right in the meeting of the parted one and the sounds of autumn. The heart is moved to the Cloud-Dream Wetland, which is near Huangzhou by broad poetic association, the site of other memorable encounters by past royalty. However, only one particular

[10] Du Mu, Feng Jiwu 馮集梧 annot., *Fanchuan shi jizhu* 樊川詩集注, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1998), 210.

encounter, that of the king of Chu's dreamed rendezvous with a goddess, would evoke the image of the *Shijing*-reeds and the erotic "rain of Chu." All this is in Line 2, really a bit of suggestion-overload, and indeed it occurs to him immediately afterward that the rain noisily dripping over leaves is an event of nature that happens on its own, that it has no inherent relevance to his present state of mind, much less being the "rain of Chu." The poet ends up withdrawing from the encounter, but its imprint remains in the poem – the tangible, stable (or as stable a text as could be desired) record of the plasticity in the structure of the Encounter.

While the large parasol leaves lead their independent existence in the world, they become temporarily relevant to the heart that hears them when autumn rain makes a splattering sound. For a time, the sound serves as the lodging place for the heart's feelings. In this first instance, the holder of spiritual content is also incorporeal, because it is not the leaves themselves but the sound they make with the rain. They can, however, materialize into a more literal bearer of emotions, as in the following story:

> When Gu Kuang was in Luoyang, in his time off, he went on an outing with three poet friends to the Park. From a flowing stream by which they sat, they picked up a poem inscribed on a large parasol leaf:
>
> *Ever since I entered the deep palace,*
> *Year after year I see no spring.*
> *Let me just write on a leaf*
> *And send it to someone with feeling.*
>
> The next day, Gu Kuang also wrote on a leaf, and place it in the waves from the upper stream. His poem went:
>
> *When the flowers fall in the deep palace, even the orioles lament –*
> *The Shangyang palace girl's heartbreaking moment.*
> *The imperial walls do not forbid the east-flowing water.*
> *Having written the poem on a leaf, to whom did you want it sent?*
>
> Ten-some days later, a dude came into the Park in search of spring, and picked up another poem-on-a-leaf, which he showed to Gu Kuang. The poem went:
>
> *One leaf leaves the forbidden walls with a poem.*
> *Who answered it, you alone with feeling?*
> *Sighs for myself! Better are the leaves in the waves*

Tossing, and going where they please while they ride on spring.

顧況在洛，乘間與三詩友游於苑中，坐流水上，得大梧葉題詩上曰：「一入深宮裏，年年不見春。聊題一片葉，寄與有情人。」況明日於上游，亦題葉上，放於波中。詩曰：「花落深宮鶯亦悲，上陽宮女斷腸時。帝城不禁東流水，葉上題詩欲寄誰？」後十餘日，有客來苑中尋春，又於葉上得詩，以示況。詩曰：「一葉題詩出禁城，誰人酬和獨含情？自嗟不及波中葉，蕩漾乘春取次行。」[11]

This is one version of many similar stories floating around in the Tang about a man finding a lady's poem-on-a-leaf, and some of them have happy endings in marriage. A lot has been said about repressed desires and chance romance in these stories, but our focus here is on the leaf: being the bearer of longing, it is not without its own color and appended meaning. The leaves in these stories are usually red (though probably not in the Gu Kuang anecdote, being set in spring), and hence, associated with autumn. Poets transform with ease the visual of red-leaves-floating-on-water into the imagery "flowing red" (*liuhong* 流紅) and delight in its double meaning, which also refers to the water carrying away fallen flower petals at the end of spring. In the numerous poetic settings for "flowing red (leaves)," the seasons switch between spring and autumn; the gendered voice with which they are inscribed, between male and female; the leaves' identity does not have to be *Firmiana simplex*. The only thing that remains constant is their being leaves. "Flowing red" or not, they may bear different kinds of emotions:

The clear frost dyes the persimmon leaves –	清霜染柿葉,
The unattended garden holds fine interests.	荒園有佳趣.
Stay, linger – keep me company late in the year;	留連伴歲晚,
Don't leave me like the flowing red.	莫作流紅去.

[11] In Chapter One, "Moved by Feelings (Qinggan 情感)" in Meng Qi 孟棨, *Ben shi shi* 本事詩, published with *Xu Ben shi shi* 續本事詩 and *Ben shi ci* 本事詞 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1991), 9.

This is Fan Chengda 范成大 writing about his garden, titled "After the frost, on plants and trees in the garden - twelve quatrains 霜後紀園中草木十二絕."[12] At the merest dalliance with the absent imagery, "flowing red," there is nothing heavy-hearted about his bidding the leaves to stay on the trees a while longer. But the association is there: time passes; beauty and pleasure do not last; the poet cannot help but entreating them to stay, even if meaning is only in the entreaty itself.

Sometimes, when a poet takes up the brush to inscribe on a red leaf, he finds it already full of old imprints:

Drunkenly Inscribed on a Red Leaf	醉題紅葉
When I pick up the brush to leisurely write on the red leaf,	拾筆閒題紅葉時,
My drunken countenance turned toward it, we suit each other well.	醉容相向亦相宜.
In the frontier fortress, winds are strong and must have blown off all.	塞垣風勁應吹盡,
In the river country where frost is slight, I imagine they are half-withered.	江國霜微想半衰.
I am fed up listening to the night rain splattering them all over the stairs,	嫌聽滿階鳴夜雨,
But used to watch them overlooking the water and brightening the sparse hedge.	曾看臨水映疏籬.
Spring will not permit this to last:	春光不許長如此,
Soon it will free the cold-weather plums and tender willow branches.[13]	旋放寒梅嫩柳枝.

Even a *yongwu* (poems on things) poem needs an encounter, leading to some relevance between an assumed subject and the thing. Tian Xi's 田錫 poem is an accidental version of *yongwu.* It starts from his intention to write *on* a red leaf, and turns into a poem *about* red leaves in different settings – the northern frontier, the southland, on the steps, and by the hedge. He maintains

[12] *Quan Song shi* 全宋詩 (Beijing: Beijing daxue, 1991), 72 vols., 41:26046. Hereafter *QSS.*

[13] *QSS* 1:458.

varying levels of engagement with the leaves from imagining to seeing and hearing, but the meaning of those lines derives as much from past encounters as from their relevance to him.

While new imprints turn leaves into leaves of poetry, failure to make an imprint achieves the same. As Zhang Yan 張炎 writes, “When I don’t have one word to write, even the falling leaves are sorrowful. 一字無題處, 落葉都愁.”[14] Though uninscribed, these are not leaves of nature but of poetry, expecting to be inscribed with the poet’s sorrow, and are sorrowful when words fail him. Last, but not least, I end the allegory on Yang Wanli’s poem, “Red Leaf 紅葉:”[15]

The poet’s belly is filled with limpid sorrow.	詩人滿腹著清愁,
He spits it out as a thousand poems and still wouldn’t stop.	吐作千詩未肯休.
Having written all over the wall, there’s no place to continue.	寫徧壁間無去處,
Then grabbing a red leaf, he forces himself to write on autumn.	却將紅葉强題秋.

There have been too many plays on the rhyme and logos of sorrow and autumn (and inscribing both on red leaves at that) for it to impress one more time, but Yang Wanli’s poem is seeking to break up these entrenched poetic associations. No mediation is needed for one full belly’s worth of sorrow to be spitted out into a thousand poems. Only when he runs out of room to write does he turn to the red leaf. Another poem about autumn on a red leaf is always possible, but as he tells us, it would be “forced.”

The self-confirming continuity of the textual tradition in which poetry participates makes it such that at the poet’s encounters with phenomena, he is increasingly likely to encounter material for poetry, which includes the phenomenal world as he has the capacity to perceive it

[14] “To the Tune *Ganzhou* 甘州” (first line: "I remember the frontier pass, site of my austere tour on snow. 記玉關踏雪事清游"). Huang Yu 黃畬 annot., *Shanzhong baiyun ci jian* 山中白雲詞箋, (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji, 1994), 28.

[15] *QSS* 42:26207.

and the accidental incursions of appended meaning from the legacy of past writers. Represented by the leaves, which can appear in poetry as simply leaves in nature, "things as they are" remained a live possibility for poets to discover and reclaim. But at the same time, the cosmic pattern within which poets encounter phenomena had been from the very beginning understood through and made manifest by the attributed words of the sages, and continually revisited in the textual presentations of subsequent writers' intuitions and rationalizations. Within this changing pattern that involves both phenomena and writing, poetic language gained in scope, sophistication and density. Literary figures accrued in the writing about objects and events, and new genres and styles are recognized and consolidated in the deployment of figures. On the other hand, the distinctive and stable metric forms (isometric lines for *shi* and prescribed patterns for *ci)* through which these changes are realized give coherence to this fluctuating content, and justify the viewing of it as a collective entity with an internal logic, which I named "the body of poetic language."

The second layer of meaning to the metaphor of the leaf is the tangible quality in the body of poetic language and its effect in shaping poetry in practice. There can be varying levels of accretion in meaning on the leaves, the symbolic and/or literal bearer of inscriptions. Their human relevance – such as the sound they make in rain or wind, their color, and of their seasonal or geographical setting – are written into lines on their surface that become hard to distinguish from their natural veins. They fall in as "nodes" of meaning with the imprints of new encounters, drawing attention to themselves and demanding a portion of the poet or the reader's skill to negotiate them. Although poetic language on the whole gradually became more saturated and specialized, at times even threatening to absorb all the effort in the poetic endeavor, it was an open-ended system in practice, and the changes were far from linear. The poet has choice to

mutely reject the overwritten lines, or to be like Yang Wanli in trying to separate poetic language from the object.

Thus, in the Northern to Southern Song, when writers were redefining the human in the Encounter, the other participant – perceived phenomena – was also undergoing change both from the active reimagining of world order in the larger context of moral and intellectual commitments and also from the internal logic that drives developments in the body of poetic language. The latter's relevance to the Song was a serious challenge on originality of which writers were acutely aware. The objects of their encounter belonged to such a densely re-inscribed pattern that it was increasingly probable for the language used to describe the encounters to resonate with (sometimes to duplicate) a previous text, with or without the writer's intention.

Du Renjie 杜仁傑, writing from the 13th century in a postface to Yuan Haowen's poetry, sums up the challenge posed by the innumerable usage of numerable expressions:

> Let us just discuss the writers in the Han, the Six Dynasties, the Sui, the Tang, and the previous Song Dynasty. In these thousands of years, what object was not written about, and what matter was not discussed? There are only so many unique words. After many hands dragging them left and right, arranging them in this way and that, they have been kneaded and twisted into a complete mush. Only the ones who do not walk in others' footsteps and form their own styles are successful.
> 姑以兩漢而下至六朝及隋唐前宋諸人論之, 上下數千載間, 何物不品題過, 何事不論量了, 大都幾許不重複文字, 凡經幾手左撏右撦, 橫安豎置, 搓揉亦熟爛盡矣. 惟其不相蹈襲自成一家者為得耳.[16]

[16] *Yuan Yishan shi jianzhu* 元遺山詩箋注, 6 vols., based on 1260 edition of *Yuan Yishan quanji* 元遺山全集, *Sibu beiyao* reprint, (Shanghai: Shanghai zhonghua, 1920- 1936), 1:3a-b.

While the Song writers had their own statement of the same problem – "All the good expressions in the world have been used by Du Fu,"[17] – they were also busy charting sources for Du Fu's expressions. Two paths were open to those who did not wish to "walk in others' footsteps" in writing, both leading to (or from?) the poet's individuating nature. The first was absolute originality: to be the first to say something impressive by drawing inspiration from one's inner core. The Song writers were more inclined to explore the second path: circumstantial originality, which shifts the issue somewhat from originality to skill. Zhang Jie 張戒 voices this position in a *shihua* entry on the hackneyed expression "whinny-whiny" (*xiaoxiao* 蕭蕭), "not only is its invention difficult, but it also involves skill to hit the target."[18] He cites the *Classic of Poetry* as the first usage, along with two pre-Han to end-of-Han examples, to explain what he means by "hitting the target": like a seal making its imprint on mud, the expression depicts the mood and the scene to perfection. He concludes that, "the poet's skill is only in a moment's feeling and taste; indeed, no method or formula can be prescribed in advance."

Zhang Jie makes no attempt to hide his dislike for Su Shi and Huang Tingjian in his *Talks on Poetry in the Cold Season Hall,* but responding to the same concerns on poetic language, his position has more in common than what has been recognized with the two writers whom he denounces as poetry's destroyers. He gives no advice on how to be absolutely original, and pretty much accepts using old expressions as inevitable. The final criterion is whether the

[17] "… and all the common ones have been used by Bai Juyi." The remark is attributed to Wang Anshi and quoted in various Song *shihua.* See Hu Zi 胡仔, *Tiaoxi yuyin conghua* 苕溪漁隱叢話, (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1962), 2 vol., 1:90.

[18] He starts with two expressions, "whinny-whiny" and "easy-breezy" (*youyou* 悠悠*)* and focuses on the first. Chen Yingluan 陳應鸞, *Suihan Tang shihua jiaojian* (Chengdu: Bashu, 2000), 24-25.

expression is right on target in depicting the scene of the poem. "Skill" is bit of a misnomer when only retrospective appreciation of the effect, but no advance practical training, is possible. In entrusting it to "a moment's feeling and taste," Zhang Jie is taking the line of all his predecessors in the Song (except for Huang Tingjian) to keep the poetic process at least partially outside of conscious control. Using used expressions is acceptable and even expected. When in one way or another it depicts an encounter perfectly, the new moment takes possession of the expression, and the poet achieves a circumstantial originality. Within the increasingly predictable patterns of poetic language, unpredictability is preserved in the accidental nature of encounters and in the poet's (ideally) unfathomable inside – allow it to encompass a mass of entangling concepts including mind, heart, spirit, thought, and force.

While Huang Tingjian was also cited for his advice to never force a poem without a concrete setting, he was not content to leave it to chance.[19] For him, the most important transformation is the "remolding" of ancients' words, which is only possible through intensive methodical studying. He was the first to devise a program for mastering poetic language by assimilating it into the task of mastering canonical texts. Learning the canon properly not only upgrades one's soul but also one's language abilities. (The often-cited catch-phrases are "transform iron into gold 點鐵成金" and "turn the ancient expressions into my own stuff 轉古語為吾家物.")[20] Huang Tingjian managed to preserve the basic terms of the encounter poetics

[19] "Writing (poems and essays) should not be forced out of nowhere. Let it arise depending on the setting, and it will be naturally well-done. 詩文不可鑿空強作, 待境而生便自工爾." An often-quoted statement in *shihua*. See for example, *Tiaoxi yuyin conghua,* 1:320.

[20] Huang Tingjian's poetics has been thoroughly studied in both Chinese and English scholarship. See Qian Zhixi 錢志熙, *Huang Tingjian shixue tixi yanjiu* 黃庭堅詩學體系研究 (Beijing: Beijing daxue, 2003); Zhang Chengfeng 張承風, *Huang Tingjian shilun* 黃庭堅詩論 (Chengdu: Bashu, 2013); and David Palumbo-Liu, *The Poetics of Appropriation: The Literary*

with his program, though it all but killed the unpredictability in poetic experience. It took immediate effect in provoking Zhang Jie's objection that "no method or formula can be prescribed in advance," but in the long term, generations of poets were to feel the weight of his proposition in the question – "can poetry be learned?" – and the challenge that a positive answer puts to naturalness, freedom, genuineness, and immediacy.

III. The Encounter – Humans and Phenomena

The three examples in this section represent three kinds of encounters, or rather, three ways in which the encounter relates to the poem, each establishing an interpretative paradigm by which poetry is traditionally read and understood.

In the early fifth century, when classical *shi* poetry was still young, a poet looked out from his pond-side mansion and came up with a line:

The pond's embankment grows spring grass.[21]

The poet reportedly claimed spiritual aid for this line,[22] which many poets found wonderful for the next fifteen hundred years, and for almost as long tried to articulate what was so wonderful

---

Theory and Practice of Huang Tingjian, (Stanford: Standford UP, 1993). In Chapter 2-4 of *Drifting Among Rivers and Lakes,* Michael Fuller discusses Huang's redefinition of poetry and the "Jiangxi" poets' appropriation of his poetics, mapping their positions on the key issues of language, self, and the world in the field of cultural production. Fuller, *Drifting Among Rivers and Lakes: Southern Song Dynasty Poetry and the Problem of Literary History* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2013), 58-181.

[21] Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385-433), "Ascending the Pond-side Mansion 登池上樓." In Huang Jie 黃節, annnot., *Xie Kangle shi zhu* 謝康樂詩注, (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1958), 35.

[22] *Shipin* has the following account: "Fine expressions would occur to Kangle (Xie Lingyun) every time he was with Xie Huilian. Later, in the west hall of his Yongjia office, having thought over a poem for a whole day to no avail, he snoozed and saw Huilian [in a dream]. Then immediately he got '*The pond's embankment grows spring grass*.' So he used to say, 'The spirits helped me with it. These are not my own words.' 康樂每對惠連, 輒得佳語, 後在永嘉西堂, 思

about it. The upshot of their comments is that precisely because there is not much in the line – it lacks deep meaning and clever rhetorical moves – it is the epitome of poetry born from the natural process:

> The contents of the heart and the eyes blend into each other harmoniously, so as soon as the words come out, they are rounded like pearls with a jade-like luster. The essential thing is: depending on the feelings of each, have them join up with the scenery. 心中目中與相融浹, 一出語時即得珠圓玉潤, 要亦各視其所懷來,而與景相迎者也.[23]

This appreciative comment is worded prettily, but it boils down to the ubiquitous formula in poetic chemistry, "feelings and scene blend together." Of special interest here is the small step separating where the chemistry takes place and the worded line. But first, to salvage the "contents of the heart" from the rest of the poem:

> a) The horned dragon hides in deep waters, while the wild geese soar into the clouds, and their cries resound into the distance. The poet feels that as a recluse, he has failed the dragon's standard, and as a statesman, that of the geese.
>
> b) He has been laid-up in illness and missed out on the seasonal changes in nature. Now, raising his eyes to the distant hills for the first time, he finds that early spring has driven away the last of winter's wind, and the old gloom is replaced by a new sun.

Here one arrives at *the* line, and one reads, "on the pond's embankment, there grow spring grasses."[24] Here is the moment of the encounter - one comprehends the blues in the convalescent,

---

詩竟日不就, 寤寐間忽見惠連, 即成池塘生春草. 故嘗云, 此語有神助, 非我語也." In Zhong Rong, Cao Xu 曹旭 ed., *Shipin jizhu* 詩品集注, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1994), 284.

[23] Wang Fuzhi's 王夫之 comment in *Jiangzhai shihua* 薑齋詩話. Dai Hongsen 戴鴻森 annotated edition, (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1981), 50.

[24] One goes on to finish the couplet with, "The garden willows has changed in the chirruping birds," and three more couplets to finish the poem.

underachieving (in his own regard) poet's feelings as he opens up to the new spring's bright colors. Here, also, is where things take an unexpected turn. The line needs the rest of the poem, because on its own, it gives no indication about the poet's feelings, which is the basis for latecomers to comprehend the perfect "blending together" at the moment of encounter. And yet, having fulfilled its function, the rest of the poem has been kept out of the line's final significance. Admirers continue to remark on the immediacy and perfect naturalness with which the line evokes the image of the new spring grass by the pond, while the experience that makes this image compelling – the Encounter itself – is not fully related in the line. While the lack of artifice renders the line transparent,[25] fascination is with transparency itself, and not, as may be reasonably supposed, with the full view to which this transparency grants access.

"*The pond's embankment grows spring grass*" stands as the inimitable monument to the Poetics of Encounter. We begin from it, both because of the slight distance between the perfect encounter and the perfect line to relate it, and because the said distance is filled seamlessly not by language's mediumistic faculty, but by nature's course.[26] The line came to the poet outside of and when his conscious effort failed (one can almost say it is spontaneous were it not for the effort leading it up to it.) Thus, it is "so by its own accord," or as I previously translated the term,

[25] Although, as one critic pointed out, compared to "*Green, green, grass by the river*," this line is not without artifice. Thus, it is perhaps better to describe it as "transparent" rather than "natural." Xie Zhen's 謝榛 observation, "The pond's embankment grows spring grass" has both "sight" (the scene) and "sound" (the enunciation of the words. E.g. it has to be "the pond's embankment," not "by the pond" or "over the pond.")

[26] This is probably not the place to delve into a long discussion of the language-image-intent triad, but it is worth noting that the debate on whether language can exhaustively present intent coincided with the formative stage of classical *shi*.

"natural." Here, to clarify the basic structure of the paradigmatic Poetry of Encounter, I will reiterate Liu Xie's statement:

> Humans are endowed with the seven emotions; responding to phenomena they are moved. Moved by phenomena and chant out one's resolve – there is nothing unnatural in this.

The stable part of the structure is the original encounter between the bestirred human feelings and phenomena. This part is more immutable than engravings in metal and rock, so to speak, and has remained the assumed point of reference – as the origin of poetry – through all the complex developments in poetic discourse. At the moment of encounter, Poetry happens in its pre-text form. The encounter and the worded poem, however, are two different things, in spite of the fact that they are often talked of indiscriminately; their relationship is more plastic and will take some formulation. *"The pond's embankment grows spring grass"* has commanded fascination for so long because it embodies the ideal (and in some sense unrepeatable) situation: one assumes that nature's course bridges the distance between them so perfectly, so "naturally" that they are perceived as one. Strictly speaking, the line is not the worded counterpart of the encounter experience but its stopping point, a kind of container vessel where it happens to end up. It is by virtue of it being "where the resolve goes 志之所之," that poetry can "speak of the resolve." Poems of words are also the imprint made by the fleeting moments of the heart's encounters in their trajectory. Then, in their turn, they can be encountered and read, but their readability is of a different sort than how language art is taken to be in the western literary tradition, that is, as arranged signifiers of meaning.

Thus, the basic structure of the Poetry of Encounter is as follows: human feelings are moved at the encounter with phenomena, the resolve "goes" (ideally following a natural course),

ends up in poems of words, and thereby leaves an imprint. I have painstakingly and hair-splittingly expounded on this concept, which students of classical Chinese poetry may consider elementary knowledge, because traditional commentaries on the aesthetic and epistemological aspects of poetry all devolve upon how the distance is bridged between the Encounter and the imprint, making it absolutely necessary to clarify at the beginning the key relationships in the structure. The differences in the ways in which such distance is perceived and bridged translates into differences in voices, genres, and styles on the one hand, and on the other, chronographic changes in poetry, by which a history of poetry is possible.

The next example dates from almost two centuries later than "*The pond's embankment grows spring grass*." Another poet, also observing seasonal change, wrote the following:

I dwell in the woods in a long illness.	林居病時久,
Water and trees are serene, aloof, and pure.	水木澹孤清.
Reclined in leisure, I view the transformation of phenomena.	閑臥觀物化,
Dim and distant, my thoughts on non-life:	悠悠念無生.
Verdant Spring had just bourgeoned	青春始萌達,
When Red Heat already reached its full.	朱火已滿盈.
Death and decline now at this point arrived,	徂落方至此,
Moved to sighs, when will I be appeased? [27]	感歎何時平.

The poem is one of thirty-eight under the same title, "Moved by What I Encounter 感遇." It is among the four poems of the set selected to represent the overarching theme, "viewing phenomena and voicing one's feelings." Time moves swiftly in these poems, wherein the poet recounts his viewing of the Transformation – the relentless cycle of birth, death, and all the changing stages in-between. Also in his view are the workings of "The Great Wheel," which he

[27] Chen Zi'ang 陳子昂, Peng Qingsheng 彭慶生 annot., *Chen Zi'ang ji jiaozhu* 陳子昂集校注, 3 vols., (Anhui: Huangshan shushe, 2015), 1:66.

outlines with a harrowing clarity the risings and fallings in human history in the same pattern of movement as the cosmic forces. The thirty-eight poems have been thoroughly glossed to identify all the people and creatures (mythical or otherwise) that partake in the great cosmic pattern in the poet's vision, but the answer to the crucial question – "what did he encounter?" – remains elusive. If in the above poem, we can still identify an object of encounter in the surrounding woods while tentatively bridging the gap between their sereneness and the poet's dim and dark vision by drawing on the first line ("a long illness"), the same cannot be said for most other poems in the group, where the lack of circumstantial detail is the norm.[28]

Rather than letting them stand as the poet's undated musings, traditional readings of this set of poems betray a strong urge to locate an original encounter in historical and/or biographical reality, even though the devised answer – that the poet is upset at various events during the Empress's rule – is profoundly unsatisfactory for some of the poems. This interpretative problem of the lost encounter – when we have lost access to the historical circumstances that are assumed to give origin and meaning to the poem – is not uncommon in traditional Chinese poetry. And yet, the space left by the lost encounter is never a true void. A common solution has been to devise a generic encounter; wherein contemporary events stir the feelings in a politically marginalized poet (the Chinese phrase is *buyu* – to "not encounter" one's time). This generic encounter occurs outside of the poem and relates to it by allegory. The word used to capture this variant in the structure of the encounter is the homophonic *yu* 寓, or "to lodge":

> "Moved by What I Encounter" means having something move at heart and lodging it in words, to unfold his intent. It also means being moved by it at heart, and encountering it in sight; the feelings rise on the inside and are entrusted to words, like the "lodged-sayings" of Zhuang Zi.

[28] The idea was first proposed by Zhu Heling 朱鶴齡. Chen Hang 陳沆 interpreted many poems according to it. Their critical commentary is included in Peng's edition of Chen's poems.

感遇云者, 謂有感於心, 而寓於言, 以攄其意也. 又云感之於心, 遇之於目, 情發於中而寄於言, 如莊子寓言之類是也.[29]

While a lodge is also a kind of stopping place, it underlines the accidental and separable nature of the relationship that the poem bears to the (sometimes assumed) original Encounter. There may still be an encounter internal to the poem, but it will belong to a latter moment in relation to the assumed original one, and will be read by it.

To all the readers of "Moved by What I Encounter," it remained eminently clear that "moved" means being moved on the inside, and "encounter" means encountering something external, but a primal encounter needs to be assumed, and an allegorical relationship has to be devised between the encounter and the poem, for the basic inside-to-outside structure to remain constant. On the one hand, poetry is still firmly rooted in a moment of individual feeling, in the innate human faculty to be moved and to respond; while on the other, the allegorical distance between the Encounter and the poem infinitely expands the time and space possible in poetry, thus letting the individual write this encounter-based poetry about things far beyond their immediate surroundings.

Traditional readings place "Moved by What I Encounter" between "Chanting What is in My Heart"[30] from near the beginning of the classical *shi* tradition and the "Ancient Airs"[31] at the

[29] During the course of their transmission, this set of "Moved by What I Encounter" poems picked up a variant title, with the character for "encounter" being replaced by "lodge."

[30] I refer to Ruan Ji's 阮籍 "Chanting What Is in My Heart 詠懷" poems. Fan Qin 范欽 and Chen Dewen 陳德文, ed., *Ruan Sizong ji*, published as *Ruan Ji ji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1978), 83-136.

[31] Li Bai's 李白 fifty-nine "Ancient Airs 古風." In Qu Tuiyuan 瞿蛻園 and Zhu Jincheng 朱金城, annot., *Li Bai ji jiaozhu* 李白集校注, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1980), 2 vol., 1:91-190.

first peak of Tang poetry, as an important benchmark of the chanting-what-is-in-my-heart genre. While it is not easy to define this genre by content – the poet enjoys perfect freedom to write of anything from personal narrative to history and philosophy – the allegorical streak sets it apart from the other genres.

There is yet a third way by which the poem relates to the encounter – the autobiographical. In 759, the 47-year-old Du Fu, destitute with his wife and children in Qinzhou, was moved by his sick horse:

> *The creature is insignificant, but its meaning, not shallow,*
> *I brood long, moved and stirred.*[32]
> 物微意不淺, 感動一沉吟.

It is agreed that this encounter has a Du Fu stamp: "Every time Mr. Du encounters useless and abandoned things, he talks of them in a way that relates to his own nature and feelings 杜公每遇廢棄之物便說得性情相關."[33] In the autobiographical relationship, we take one more step based on the encounter's circumstantial particularity to the particularity of the individual. Elements of the encounter as recorded in the poem and fragments of knowledge about the poet cohere to form a readable pattern.

Although my examples happen to follow a chronological order, the three ways in which the poem relates to the encounter – natural, allegorical, and autobiographical – do not follow the same order. The reader may also have noticed that they are hopelessly entangled. The

---

[32] Qiu Zhao'ao 仇兆鰲, ed., *Du shi xiangzhu* 杜詩詳注, (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1979), 5 vol., 2:621. Translation by Stephen Owen, *The Poetry of Du Fu,* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 9 vol., 2:182-83.

[33] Shen Hanguang's 申涵光 comment, included in Qiu's *Du shi xiangzhu* edition. Similar comments were also made about his other poems.

autobiographical bridging may be arrived at naturally, while an allegory may very well hold parallels to the poet's life. The three relationships, with the potential to function as three interpretative paradigms, can be separately discussed in theory, but are rarely independent from one another in the writing and reading of a poem. I end the section on a Du Fu poem to gather the three threads in one place. It shows how a recovered Encounter achieves this sort of power by revealing much about its two participants, human and phenomena, and the problems that accompany the revelation:

The Four Pines[34]	四松
When I first transplanted my four pines,	四松初移時，
they were just over three feet tall.	大抵三尺強。
It has been three years since I left them,	別來忽三載，
they stand here ranged, now as tall as men.	離立如人長。
So long as I make sure they are not uprooted,	會看根不拔，
I won't worry about their branches withering.	莫計枝凋傷。
Luckily their secluded colors are flourishing,	幽色幸秀發，
and their sparse boughs too rise proudly.	疏柯亦昂藏。
The little hedge that I planted	所插小藩籬，
gave them some protection from the start.	本亦有堤防。
If in the end they had been damaged by something bumping them,	終然捩撥損，
I would be put to shame by their thousand needles yellowed.	得吝千葉黃。
Dare I just act as master of my own grove	敢為故林主，
when the commons do not yet enjoy good health?	黎庶猶未康。
Having fled the rebels, just now I return,	避賊今始歸，
with spring plants filling my empty cottage.	春草滿空堂。
Observing things, I sigh at their decline,	覽物歎衰謝，
but when it comes to these trees, they console my gloom.	及茲慰淒涼。
The cool breeze rises for me,	清風為我起，
spreading over my face like faint frost.	灑面若微霜。
They are enough to keep my appearance company as I age,	足以送老姿，

[34] Qiu, 3:1116-18. Owen's translation. *The Poetry of Du Fu*, 3:356-59.

so I'll wait for their canopies to spread.	聊待偃蓋張。
My own life has no roots or stem,	我生無根蒂，
and it's unclear if I can accompany you.	配爾亦茫茫。
Having these feelings, I'll just write a poem,	有情且賦詩，
let the world forget all traces of me as I forget the world.	事迹可兩忘。
Don't boast how a thousand years from now	勿矜千載後，
brooding you will coil into dark vaults of heaven.	慘澹蟠穹蒼。

Having been uprooted from home and drifted around as a refugee, Du Fu sees his own life a sad contrast to the pines. He imagines that they will live on long after he is dead and forgotten, till they "coil into dark vaults of heaven." And so, "having these feelings, I will *just* write a poem" (emphasis mine). Du Fu's lasting fame and towering status, of course, render these last few lines darkly ironic. The poem's enduring imprint preserves that moment's feelings, and his readers would know how they have changed from an earlier moment to which the start of the poem refers, when Du Fu had worried about the fate of the four saplings from afar.[35] His narrative accords with the natural patterns of the growth of pines, though it is not the focus of this poem. It has been said that Du Fu "lodges his intent in the object,"[36] making it allegorical. One reads from the circumstances of the encounter both an autobiographical account of his insecurity in the past three years, as well as the military insurrection and unrest within which his insecurity is embedded. His question – "Dare I just act as the master of my own grove / when the commoners do not yet enjoy good health?" – is appreciated for the poet's concern for the common people's sufferings that he typically exhibits in poems about his own hardship.

[35] In the poem, "Written from Afar on My Thatched-Roof House on the Other Side of Yangtze 寄題江外草堂." Qiu, 3:1013.

[36] Qiu observes that, "He lets his intent take lodge in things without dwelling on things: from this we see his untrammeled heart. 寓意於物, 而弗留意於物, 可見公之曠懷矣." In Qiu, 3:1118.

An encounter is but a fleeting moment, and the poem, its enduring imprint. Assuming one or all the above three ways adequately bridge their distance, one would achieve a recovered version of the encounter. The disproportionate amount of knowledge promised by the recovered encounter predicates on the reader's willingness to accept the claim that "the making of poetry goes hand in hand with a person's life"[37] and his ability to reach through to an organic part of the poet's nature and feelings, and perhaps also grasp the principles of the phenomenal world captured at the moment of encounter.

The open access that the encounter grants is the spring for poetry's moving power, but it is also the cause for caution against excessive emotions or indulging the wrong kind. For the most part in the Northern Song, writings about the spiritual content of poetry was part of the shared discourse on the relationship between writing and the Way in the debate over ancient-style prose (*guwen*), and later, of the Neo-Confucian redefinition of all the foundational concepts including Nature, feelings, the Way, and principles (*li* 理). Within the unchanging structure of the Encounter, the content of poetic experience underwent a transformation as writers reimagined the human participant: how might he cultivate his psyche so as to keep his feelings correct and in moderation, and how might he approach phenomena in a way that lets him write superior poetry. Mainly owing to the poetry produced under these changes, which ascribe value to the everyday as well as the plain and bland ("unremarkable" in Chapter 4), the common definition of "Song poetry" – an inflated body of writing with a diminutive stature against its Tang counterpart – is possible. The poetic encounters at the Neo-Confucian end of the spectrum,

[37] "詩之作與人生偕者也," from Su Manqing 蘇舜卿, "Preface to Shi Manqing's [Yannian] Poetry Collection 石曼卿詩集敘. In Huang Qifang 黃啟方, ed., *Bei Song wenxue piping ziliao huibian* 北宋文學批評資料彙編, (Taipei: Chengwen, 1978), 141. Hereafter *BSZLHB.*

envisioned as Way-ward minds observing phenomena in tranquility, even run over to the anti-poetic.

Another uniquely Song spin on admonishing against poetic mischief was that it lacked the sense of the Way, or that it may lead one to the wrong kind of principles. Su Che, for instance, pronounced famously that "the Tang people were skilled in writing poetry but inferior in learning the Way 唐人工於為詩, 而陋於聞道."[38] And Zhu Xi, whose deep admiration for the "Moved by What I Encounter"[39] poems inspired him to write twenty "Moved while Dwelling in the Studio 齋居感興," found fault with the earlier poet's pretention to unrealistic heights in his Buddhist and Taoist views and what he regarded as "not having an excellent understanding of principles 不精於理." In the preface to his new set, he emphasizes that his own poems are easy to understand because they are immediate to daily practice, "both to admonish myself and to show likeminded friends."

The vocabulary and arguments used in redefining the human participant in poetic encounters were borrowed from discussions on writing (*wen*) and the Way in the broad intellectual sphere. Aside from citing Confucius' comment that the *Poems* can "move Heaven and Earth and affect ghosts and spirits," there was nothing to distinguish poetry from other forms of writing. But at the same time, the special mechanism of poetic language was demanding more attention: poetry manuals containing structural analyses of couplets had been around since the middle of Tang; and examples of poetic craft were noted down in "remarks on poetry" (*shihua*

[38] Su Che is referring to certain Tang poets' bitter complaints about life's difficulties. His remark is quoted in Song *shihua*. For example, see Ruan Yue 阮閱, compil., Zhou Benchun 周本淳, ed., *Shihua zonggui* 詩話總龜, 2 vols., (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1987), 2:126.

[39] Zhu Xi's version was 感寓.

詩話), a rising genre in the Song. Language technique had gained a place in poetic discourse, but poets had yet to integrate it into their understanding of the writing process.

IV. Barriers

"Unobstructed," observes Wang Guowei, is where the marvelousness lies in *"The pond's embankment grows spring grass."* He then gave more examples, including one of Ouyang Xiu's *ci* lyric about spring, grass, separation, and sorrow. It is free of obstructions, he remarks, until "*On Xie's pond, by Jiang Yan's shores*," whereupon it becomes "obstructed/obstructive."

Wang's comment will be taken in the spirit in which it was uttered: an intuitive description of poetic experience based on a most refined sensibility. It will not bear rationalizing into general principles by which to assess poetry's merits and demerits. Nevertheless, the perfect continuity of this pair of terms with the poetics of Encounter is such that they are the logical terms to borrow by which to reground the issue of immediacy – which, like originality, also looms large in the Southern Song – in the conceptual framework of traditional Chinese poetry.

In the diagram that charts my understanding of how poetry moves, barriers occur at the juncture of phenomena and the body of poetic language. The clear-cut case of being obstructive is in using allusions. A little later than "*The pond's embankment grows spring grass,*" Zhong Rong 鍾嶸 questioned whether poetry, whose spiritual content is human nature and feelings, should value the use of allusions:

> When chanting of one's nature and feelings, what is the value in using allusions? … Looking over the superior expressions of the past and present, most of them are not patchwork of borrowed words, but are direct discoveries … Recently, Ren Fang, Wang Yuanchang, and others of their sort do not value marvelous expressions, but compete in the new use of allusions. This is increasingly so with writers since then that it became a custom. No sentence is without an empty expression, and no phrase without an empty

> word. So much constriction and patchwork have worm-eaten literary writing to the extreme.
> 至乎吟詠情性，亦何貴於用事？… 觀古今勝語，多非補假，皆由直尋。… 近任昉、王元長等，詞不貴奇，競須新事，爾來作者，浸以成俗。遂乃句無虛語，語無虛字，拘攣補衲，蠹文已甚。[40]

Using allusions is to cite past examples and talk in borrowed expressions. Though related by category, allusions are extrinsic to the main subject of a piece of writing. By this definition, they are indeed foreign to the poetics of encounter, because they displace the locus away from the poet's nature and feelings. To use a concrete example: "*The pond's embankment grows spring grass*" and Ouyang Xiu's use of it as an allusion. It takes two steps from "*Over Xie's pond"* to "*The Pond's embankment,"* and then to the poet's feelings, which are more obscured than revealed in the intermediary step. In this sense, Ouyang Xiu's line is "obstructed/obstructive" because, in Wang Guowei's words, the poet's feelings are not brought immediately before us.

The validity of Zhong Rong's point notwithstanding, the role of past writing is often not so clear-cut in poetry as the use of allusions. A "Palace Poem 宮詞" by Song Bai, below, contains an imagery of a pearl curtain that embodies the potential of past writing to either obstruct or adjoin:

Lightly, lightly the spring snow sprinkles over the dew pan.	春雪輕輕灑露盤,
Outside the pearl curtain, a curvy railing of jade.	真珠箔外玉勾欄.
The fairy lady has not yet risen – a palace maid, still young,	仙娥未起宮娃小,
Reported by mistake, "the dawn moon is cold over the west tower."[41]	錯報西樓曉月寒.

[40] Preface to the "Middle Grade" section. *Shipin jizhu,* 174-81.

[41] *QSS,* 1:281.

The dew-catching pan would be held by a bronze statue of an immortal, raised high into the sky to collect the elixir for eternal life. The ingenuous palace maid, a persona of Song Bai's ingenious creation, is fooled by the pearl curtain obstructing her vision, and mistakes the snow-covered pan for the moon. It tells her that it is still dawn and chilly, so her lady should stay in bed.

It is tempting to let the lady have her beauty sleep and let the poem pass as palace trivia, but for the fact that Song Bai stated an ambitious agenda for his one hundred palace poems in the preface: to celebrate Song imperial splendor (but not to the point of excess) and harmony (i.e. no complaints, especially from the women). Pertaining to the poem in question, it is a pointed reversal of the sorrowful moon-gazing scene in past palace poems. Of which, Li Bai's "The Jade Stairs Grievance 玉階怨" is perhaps the most famous depiction:

The jade stairs grow white with dew.	玉階生白露,
As the night lengthens, it seeps into her gauze socks.	夜久侵羅襪,
But to let down the crystal curtains –	卻下水精簾,
Luminous, she gazes at the autumn moon.	玲瓏望秋月.

The lady in Li Bai's poem has long stood for the lonely, neglected palace women for whom autumn nights abound with reminders about the sadness of their abandoned status. Hence, "grievance" in the title. The most striking word in the whole poem, "luminous," beautifies what is in reality a blinding pain. There is also the barely perceptible subtext of a silk fan, made round like the moon. The female personae in the palace poems often find their fate reflected in the fan, which is cherished in the summer but cast aside in autumn. Such grievance, of course, cannot exist under the enlightened ruler of a new-born dynasty. Thus, Song Bai has his lady sleep soundly through the spring night instead of suffering from insomnia in autumn; the cold moon turns out to be an innocent misperception; the round object in the sky is a pan to catch dew, a

figure for imperial grace; and instead of the crystal curtain, we have a pearly one, which fuzzes up the vision a bit, perhaps, but just as lovely and more temperate.

The relation in which Song Bai's poem stands to Li Bai's highlights the differences of which we must be aware in talking about issues such as originality and immediacy between traditional Chinese and western literary discourse. There is no term that quite describes this relationship. To put it simply, Song Bai's poem is a new imprint made deliberately over an old one; and to read it, the two must be read together. Each of the imprint independently hold meaning, and neither exists in isolation from the broader textual tradition.[42]

In the crystal/pearl curtain, we encounter an analogy of the role of past texts in poetry. As the filter of the view beyond, its material may illuminate (like the crystal), or it may blur (the pearls), or it may move in as a view on its own. But are we sure that the crystal curtain is not obstructive when its luminosity is literally between the girl and the moon? Likewise, is the pearl curtain truly blurring if our focus shifts to the scene within the boudoir? It is from these constantly shifting inward/outward perspectives and changing objects that we must judge the immediacy of a poem.

"*The pond's embankment grows spring grass"* is one such curtain. Its status as the unrepeatable, eternally-fresh penta-syllabic moment did not prevent (or perhaps inspired) echoes, among which, "*Greened all over, the grass on the pond's embankment,"* the punchline to a *ci*

[42] Xie Tiao's 謝朓 (464-499) "Jade Stair Grievance" belongs to yet an older layer of imprints: "In the twilight palace, let down the pearl curtain. / The roving fireflies flicker, then expire. / Through the long night sewing a gauze tunic, / How I long for you here evermore! 夕殿下珠簾, 流螢飛復息. 長夜縫羅衣, 思君此何極." A curtain filtering nature's light source is common to all three poems, around which three different scenes are structured. The curtain in Xie Tiao's poem is made of pearl. It would probably fail to keep out all the fireflies for the lady, to whom the night feels endless as she sews, longing for her lover. Hong Shunlong 洪順隆, *Xie Xuancheng ji jiaozhu* 謝宣城集校注, (Taipei: Taiwan Chung Hwa, 1969), 194.

lyric by Han Biao 韓淲 (1159-1224), was praised in the Qing dynasty for being almost as good as the earlier line:

In the apricot rain, east wind is chilly.	杏花雨裏東風峭.
Flowers did not finish blooming like normally.	不比尋常開了.
Fluttering hither from the branches – so many!	枝上飛來多少.
Old age is upon Spring and me.	人與春將老.
From the mountainous city, lights and flutes are remote.	山城燈火笙簫杳.
In a dream, I arrive at the isles of immortals.	夢到十洲三島.
I awake by the silk-screened window to a clear dawn.	睡覺綺窗清曉.
Greened all over, the grass on the pond's embankment.[43]	綠遍池塘草.

At the last line, a convalescent poet's joy in discovering early spring in "*The pond's embankment grows spring grass*" moves in as the backdrop to the new encounter with the end of spring. From brooding on old age to dreaming of going to the realm of immortals, the awakening to greenness opens up visions of nature's life cycle continuing after all the red apricot petals are gone.

The same line, encountered elsewhere, takes a horrifying turn as the beginning to Wang Jingwei's 汪精衛 (1883-1944) lyric:

Greened all over – the grass on the pond's embankment.	綠遍池塘草.
Still more, all night – forlorn! the wind and rain,	更連宵、淒其風雨,
myriad red petals to oblivion.	萬紅都渺.
The widows' and orphans' countless tears,	寡婦孤兒無窮淚,
I reckon, are known to the green mountain,	算有青山知道.

[43] To the tune, "Thinking of an Old Friend in the Peach Blossom Spring 桃源憶故人." In Zhou Duwen 周篤文 and Ma Xingrong 馬興榮, eds, *Quan Song ci pingzhu* 全宋詞評注, (Beijing: Xueyuan, 2011), 10 vols., 6:864.

long stained into an ink-wash painting.[44]	早染出、龍眠畫藁.
One sheet of spring waves flowing sunlight's shadow;	一片春波流日影,
having crossed the long bridge, I still circle the level dike.	過長橋、又把平堤繞.
Behold the new graves:	看新塚,
So many are added!	添多少.

Seeing the grass thriving as usual has not led to happy visions of nature's beauty continuing after the flowers, but to numerous new graves of casualty from the second Sino-Japanese War that left the widows and orphans to disfigure the spring landscape with their tears. The abrupt shifts between familiar poetic imagery of spring and the unfamiliar present lend the lyric most of its moving power. The use of the well-known line, "*Greened all over – the grass on the pond's embankment,"* does not detract from the immediacy of the encounter because it is a part of it.

By the Southern Song, lines of past encounters form an organic part of new poetic experience, as seen in the first two couplets in Yang Wanli's "Postscript to *Jiannan shigao*: Two Poems 跋劍南詩稿二首:"[45]

This poet of the current era is a latter Lu Yun.[46]	今代詩人後陸雲,
Heaven has lent the poetry book to this poet.	天將詩本借詩人.
He retraced Zimei's journey of old,	重尋子美行程舊,

[44] A more literal rendering would be, "The stains [of their tears] produced early on a draft of Longmian's painting." Longmian refers to the Song dynasty painter Li Gonglin, known for his horse paintings and ink-wash landscapes.

[45] *QSS,* 42*:*26338. The poem is in *Chaotian ji*, a collection of Yang Wanli's poems when he resided in Lin'an in 1186. The first edition of *Jiannan shigao* was printed in Yanzhou in 1187. Yang must be commenting on a manuscript version here. See Xin Gengru 辛更儒, ed., *Yang Wanli ji jianjiao* 楊萬里集箋校, 10 vols., (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2007), 3:1021-22.

[46] Lu Yun is not the most flattering comparison for a poet: Yang Wanli is following a social etiquette here to compare the object of his praise with a personage of the same surname. Lu Ji may be the better poet of the Lu brothers, but only Lu Yun's name fits the rhyme scheme.

Collecting all of Lingjun's plaintive lines anew. [47] 盡拾靈均怨句新.

V. The Problem of Southern Song Poetry

Literary works are everyday matters.
Wind-bamboo are old age necessities.
文章平日事, 風竹暮年須.[48]

"Literary works are matters of all time," said Du Fu grandiloquently. Without intending to score over him, I am sure, Chen Shidao 陳師道 said, "Literary works are everyday matters." By the Southern Song, the groundwork was laid for everyday poetry, but it made poetry problematic: poetry of that era has been criticized for being prosaic in every sense of the word. Its language is said to be prose-y; it contains many clichés; its style is mostly anti-ornamental; and the search for the poetic in everyday matters sometimes devolves into mundane trivia. To some critics in the Qing, "it stinks." As the most salient feature of that era's poetry, being prosaic grew out from the convergence of two courses of change that had previously been kept separate: on the one hand, assuming that poetry is the natural extension of the human, improving poetry was equated with improving the human participant, which in turn translated into daily commitment in learning the Way; and on the other, the heightened awareness of the tangible impact of poetic language and the attempts to regain control over it. The turning point came with a synthesis of the two into a self-consistent and attainable program of study, for which Huang Tingjian was single-handedly responsible.

---

[47] *Ru Shu ji* 入蜀記,

[48] From "Sitting Alone 獨坐." Chen, Ren Yuan 任淵 and Mao Guangsheng 冒廣生, annot., *Houshan shi zhu bujian* 後山詩注補箋, (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1995), 2 vol., 1:146.

Crediting Nature (both as human's individuating nature and the self-existing world) as the generative fountain of poetry persist throughout the tradition, and the Song was no exception. Huang Chang 黃裳 talks of it as a part of Nature's flutes;[49] Su Shi says of his writing that it is "like thousands of tons of spring water that can burst forth from anywhere on the ground 吾文如萬斛源泉, 隨地而出." Either by choice or by necessity, the natural view of poetry does not engage the third circle in my diagram, the body of poetic language. Before Huang Tingjian, Tian Xi came close to the problem of engaging the past writers in the creative process in his "Letter to Assistant Editorial Director Song [Bai] 貽宋小著書."[50] He starts by defining the basic terms:

> Skilled or unskilled as endowed by nature – this is *Nature*; affected by phenomena and swift in moving – this is *feeling.* To study the tenets of the "Appended Words" and thoroughly understand the subtle language of the *Way of the Mean* – the Way is that which remains so by itself through all its operations.
> 稟於天而工拙者, 性也；感於物而馳騖者，情也。研系辭之大旨，極中庸之微言，道者，任運用而自然者也.

Writing is a process of tuning in with the Way:

---

[49] From the "Preface to the Collected Works of Various Poets 諸家詩集序." In *BSZLHB,* 210. "The words of Creation arise on being moved. Is it not like the myriad flutes singing in the wind, or all kinds of insects singing the season? Now the multitude fissures are different; when they happen to encounter [the Giant-Lump-that-is-earth] exhaling breath, they are moved. Then there will be splashing, whistling, shouting, inhaling, crying, howling, and erupting – the sounds they make are never the same. The order in which sounds are initiated and the volume in which responses are made match what each takes in and follow the ways they are moved. It falls in step with the music of bamboo flutes, accords with the categories of living things, and harmonizes upward with the Primordial Void – then we have the Flutes of Nature.
造化之辭有感而後作, 其猶萬籟之鳴風, 百蟲之鳴時歟! 今夫眾竅不同, 適遇噫氣而有感, 則有激者、嗃者、叱者、吸者、叫者、嚎者、突者, 其聲之作, 未嘗同也, 唱聲後先, 和聲小大, 各稱其所受, 適其所感, 邂逅比竹之聲, 按乎有生之類, 上合乎太虛, 始有天籟。"

[50] *BSZLHB,* 79-80. Song Bai was the Assistant Editorial Director from 963-965.

> If, when using the brush and connecting the thoughts, you accord your feelings with Nature and your Nature with the Way, like how Heaven and Earth come into being from the Way and the myriad creatures are born from Heaven and Earth, then regardless of what operations to which It is put, Nature is realized, and regardless of the shape It takes, patterns are lodged therein. Like the breeze ruffling water's surface and producing no fixed pattern, or the clouds floating in the Great Void, never in a constant shape, your writing will have voice and breath. Now wouldn't that be spot on!
> 若使援毫之際，屬思之時，以情合於性，以性合於道。如天地生於道也，萬物生於天地也。隨其運用而得性，任其方圓而寓理。亦猶微風動水, 了無定文, 太虛浮雲, 莫有常態, 則文章之有聲氣也, 不亦宜哉.

Tian Xi likens writing without voice and breath to embroidered brocade, whose rich colors and patterns lack the life of nature's spring scene. Then follows a list of examples of creatures living out their Nature:

> Cinnamon grows from the earth, but does not owe its spicy aroma to the earth; thoroughwort flourishes in the spring, but does not owe its fragrance to spring. Humans worry when their bodies are hurt, while the lizard (?) gains courage when its gall is taken. The tortoise's exoskeleton is conveniently outside, while the eel is content with an internal one. Grass rot and [phosphorescent] light glows; living creatures age and monsters emerge. Pines thrive long on solid trunks, while the bamboo does not wither for being hollow. The *zou* and *lin* are humane by nature;[51] tigers and leopards are violent at heart. Are these not examples of Natures of things being thus on their own?
> 桂因地而生, 不因地而辛, 蘭因春而茂, 不因春而馨, 人傷體則憂, 蚹去膽則勇, 龜殼便於外, 鱓骨樂於裏, 草腐而輝光, 生物老而妖怪出, 松以實而久茂, 竹以虛而不凋, 騶麟之性仁, 虎豹之心暴, 得非物性自然哉.

In the same way as creatures existing on their own natures, the great writers of the past excelled in different genres or styles. With a brief apology for his ineptitude to exclusively honor one model, Tian Xi delves into a dreamy account of his writing process. Regardless of the genre he takes:

[51] *Zouyu* 騶虞 is a legendary equine with a sense of right; it shows itself when moved by perfect virtue. *Lin* 麟 is the legendary humane chieftain of beasts.

> Wedded like the duo generative vapors and in perfect harmony, the mind mingles with words. I let them be like Han or take the aspect of Liu, or vaguely resembling Yuan and Bai, or seeming to be Li and Du; or simple, cadenced, hasty, or brisk; or take flight, bounce, go high or low – just let a single thought furl and unfold in the realm of pre-differentiation, let it pass in and out over the threshold of all the worthies, and let it take lodge where it will. Make it so that the shapes of phenomena are not fettered by my Nature, and the resplendence of writing is not constricted by natural genuineness. Then I stop the brush to read it, and purify my spirit to contemplate. I don't know – does writing have me? Or I writing?
> 氤氳吻合, 心與言會, 任其或類於韓, 或肖於柳, 或依稀於元白, 或髣髴於李杜, 或淺緩促數, 或飛動抑揚, 但卷舒一意於洪濛, 出入眾賢之閫閾, 隨其所歸矣. 使物象不能桎梏於我性, 文彩不能拘限於天真, 然後絕筆而觀, 澄神以思, 不知文有我歟, 我有文歟.

The writing process is one of mind's meeting with words, envisioned in the way that the *yin* and *yang* vapors mingled to make the myriad things that inhabit the phenomenal world. Tian Xi's vision, however, was left unexplored, and when Huang Tingjian took to internalize language, he had in mind a much limited body of canonical texts and normative values.

Modern scholarship has long recognized Huang Tingjian's instrumental role in shaping Southern Song poetry. In the most in-depth and sophisticated narrative hitherto offered, Michael Fuller characterizes Huang's shift as the inward turn of aesthetic experience:

> In his poetry and poetics, Huang Tingjian crafts meaning not through the ordering of patterns in the world in which the writer participates but in a second-order shaping of fragments of the human engagement with the world drawn from the millennia-old cultural tradition. The domain of aesthetic experience for Huang was not the world itself but the record of human responses, values, and commitments. Intuitions of order in poetry were largely intuitions *about* poetry, about ways in which the words, texts, and intentions of the past writers could be organized to capture the experience of the present moment, about the way in which the present could be seen as part of the vast continuity of the human tradition.[52]

[52] Fuller, 61.

The poetry thus produced is a "meta-poetry of experience." Fuller devotes the major part of his book to follow out the ways in which writers of the subsequent generations understood and responded to Huang Tingjian's aesthetic vision, charting the complex and shifting positions by the writers' understandings along three poles: the self, the world, and the textual tradition. His conclusion, that the new aesthetic order had coalesced by the end of the Southern Song, follows from his analyses of the deep shifts in the understanding of the selfhood, knowledge, and textual meaning that broadly ground the mutually shaping worlds of poetry and *Daoxue*.

My main disagreement with Fuller is in his drawing the inward-outward divide along the lines of the text versus the world. He sees the phenomenal world and the textual tradition as two separate centers of meaning. In his reading of poems, he often describes the inclusion of past texts as the "emptying out" of meaning from the present moment. Poems of immediate personal encounters that resonate strongly with earlier texts, such as Chen Shidao's "Parting from My Three Children," pose a difficult question for him: "the locus of meaning in the poem is uncertain: does it derive from the textual tradition or from human experiences in the world?" (100-101)

In the circular diagram, I charted my understanding of how a poem happens based on the dominant conception of poetry, within which to think about the dynamics of continuity and change in poetry as an autonomous form that, while sharing in the broad discourse on writing and meaning, developed its own internal logic of change. With the basic structure of the Encounter as its core, and the stable metric forms as the distinctive surface, the body of *shi* language, which later came to be shared by *ci* lyrics, could no longer be passed off as a natural step in the process, but an object for writers to study and master. The precise time when the conceptual core of the Encounter began to take a hold in *ci* lyrics is controversial, but it had

happened by the early Southern Song, when *shi* poetics had so far permeated *ci* so as to force it to redefine itself along the lines of music and emotional content. In addition to the changes in the writers' understanding of selfhood, the world, and the textual tradition that Fuller analyzes in *Drifting*, the poets' response to and their efforts to regain control over the tangible impact that the body of poetic language exerts over the poetry-writing practice was also part of the force that drives the changes in poetics.

Huang Tingjian's method to internalize the body of language deviates from the usual scheme of poetry practice. His solution soon took on the shape of a problem – the problem of Southern Song poetry – of how to reclaim naturalness, originality, and immediacy after the irreversible barrier. Lǚ Benzhong 呂本中 "live method 活法" caught on with *shi* and *ci* writers alike. In this oxymoronic phrase,

The rest of the dissertation will examine the poets' different approaches in four chapters. Chapter One introduces the concept *shiren* – a term used by the leading poets from that era to style themselves, a laden term that the generic translation "poet" fails to capture. The chapter portrays a *shiren*'s many faces and the new place and definition he gave to poetry by elucidating the common assumptions at work displayed in an amorphous group of poems that talk about writing poetry. Chapter Two studies the influence of poetic form by tracing the intertwining values of the Late Tang and the Jiangxi school through the poetry of two case studies, Yang Wanli and Han Biao. Chapter Three studies the quatrain (*jueju*) as it was practiced by the *shiren*. Through a close reading of quatrain sets, I argue that the genre's mixed origins and its versatility made it the most convenient ground for the *shiren*'s redefinition of poetic language and expression. Through a case study of Lu You, Chapter Four brings together previous chapters the

building of the largest poetic collection that is said to have captured the entirety of the world of experience.

VI. The Unreachable – A Conclusion

As I take up the brush (figuratively speaking) to pen the conclusion, the poem "Distant Waters 遠水" comes to mind:

Rippling by the empty sandbank.	蕩漾空沙際,
Void, luminous, they merge with the distant skies.	虛明入遠天.
The light of autumn shines through infinitude.	秋光照不極,
A bird's umbra takes off into boundless space.	鳥色去無邊.
Their force pulls, the long clouds severed.	勢引長雲斷,
The waves condense, a sheet of snow spreading.	波凝片雪連.
The islet, remote and unreachable,	汀洲杳難到,
In all eternity covered by dark green mist.[53]	萬古覆蒼煙.

The poem is built on paradoxes; the biggest one of all is that this "poem on things" (*yongwu*) has constructed something without any positive "thingness" to it. The "distant waters" presented in this poem is a negative entity: lacking in concrete shape and color, and being out of reach, our knowledge of it is wholly contingent on our perception of other things. Perception then turns into misperception, when in line 6, we must judge the snow as visual trickery for them to be a description of the waves. "The islet" in line 7 gives us the only bit of solid ground upon which to perceive the water's "distance."[54] It is also the only moment we have something approaching

[53] This poem is not well-anthologized as the one with Ma Dai's most famous couplet (cf. n. 57). Gao Bing 高棅 includes it in *Tang shi shiyi* 唐詩拾遺, with a few variants. I use the version in *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華, 163:8b, (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1965), 2:780.

[54] In the first couplet, the view moves from the near into the distance. The "empty sandbank" in Line 1 lets one see the ripples up close, but the "distance" begins in Line 2.

mood: a wistful longing for the unreachable. But even this seemingly stable anchor cannot prove its empirical existence: if the islet is unreachable and covered in mist, how do we know that it is there?[55] The poem ends on this epistemic paradox, baffling all attempts to identify a real human perspective.

"Distant Waters" destabilizes the nexus of relationships in the encounter poetics between humans, the world of phenomena, and literary writing. Successful writing should "embody a thing" (*tiwu* 體物) – in other words, to thoroughly depict the bodily form of things. In fifth-century literary criticism, this concept applied specifically to *fu* on things (including natural phenomena), and it later informed the development of *yongwu* poetry in the Tang. From the perspective of Song poets, the Late Tang represented a pinnacle in the skillful depiction of bodily forms. Too skillful, in fact, that it must be prohibited before they could produce new *yongwu* poems.[56] Ma Dai 馬戴, the author of "Distant Waters," wrote in the typical Late Tang *yongwu* style as it was perceived in the Song. The couplet that won him popular acclaim came from "Sunset, Not Happy, I Gaze Far 落日悵望." Few people knew the whole poem, but everybody talked of the couplet:

> *The hidden sun descends in the tall trees:*
> *A distant fire burns into the autumn mountain.*

[55] After the 8th century, it would not be common sense but the common poet's sense through which one knows that there must be an islet in the mist. It would be a very specific sort of islet, with dense vegetation giving the mist a distinctly grey-green hue.

[56] Ouyang Xiu has the credit of launching the practice to "prohibit the use of form-depicting language" among his circle. See Zhang Gaoping's 張高評 chapter "Baizhan ti yu Song shi zhi chuangyi zaoyu 白戰體與宋詩之創意造語," in *Chuangyi zaoyu yu Song shi tese* 創意造語與宋詩特色, (Taipei: Xin wenfeng, 2008), 117-86. Zhang Hongsheng 張宏生 does a critical study of the genre in "Jin tiwu zhi zuo yu qi xiandao 禁體物之作與其先導," in *Zhongguo shixue kaosuo* 中國詩學考索, (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu, 2006), 53-71.

微陽下喬木, 遠燒入秋山.[57]

The metaphor of distant forest fires for fading sunlight in the woods works by visual misperception in the same way that the snow metaphor works for distant waves. The ingenuity of the metaphor places Ma Dai perfectly within the tradition of "embodying things." The other poems on water from the same section as "Distant Waters" in the *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華 bear up this claim. The common tropes used to depict the form and movements of water such as shores, the sky, birds, cloud, and snow, show that Ma Dai is brandishing his craft within expectations.

There is one important difference. We expect a yongwu poem to deliver a riddle of the thing poeticized. It necessarily involves any amount of craft and superimposed human meaning, but the bottom line is that the "embodied" thing is identifiable with a thing in the world of experience. This cannot be said for "Distant Waters," with its paradoxical ending making the solution of the riddle inconceivable in the world of experience. As an artistic construct, it cannot be encountered, and thus makes it impossible for the artist to double as the subject in an encounter. The poem is an outlier to the poetics of encounter not for its craft, but for being utterly inconceivable within the encounter model.

Artistic creativity – of which this outlier of a poem was a product – had always been the precariously contained force in a poetics founded on the inherent harmony of human and natural patterns. Arguments that seek to naturalize art are as old as poetic criticism itself. Under the appellations of skill and craft, art could be made to look transparent, artistic effort could be

[57] This is the version quoted in various Song *shihua*, and the one Fang Hui quotes in his notes. Fang had to check Ma Dai's collection to find the "correct" version, which he uses in *Yingkui lüsui*: "Distant colors are hidden in the autumn mountains 遠色隱秋山." *Yingkui lüsui huiping* 瀛奎律髓彙評 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1986), 2:1277. Hereafter *YKLSHP*.

minimized, or else regulated away from the moment of "unmediated" expression. The times when art broke free from containment were rare, but they did exist. The figure of the poet-artist taking shape during the last century of the Tang is an amalgam of various kinds of craft. Taken to perfection, his artistic creation can rival natural patterns: "Your pen repairs Creation, divesting heaven of merit. 筆補造化天無功."[58] Usually, the craft is life-consuming. It seems that the most menacing aspect of artistic creation to the integrity of encounter poetics is not in obstructing natural expression, but in its capacity to supplant the vitality of the latter with a force that is feared to be ultimately self-deadening.

It was far more common in the poetic tradition to regulate and naturalize the force of artistic creation rather than all-out celebration. Charting the ways in which it was done through the ages will give us a different history of Chinese poetry than the one I presented before the conclusion. The late 12th century derived a unique solution: in reassessing Late Tang craft with the legacy of Huang Tingjian, the poets did not reject craft and skill, but displaced them away from art's demesne. In a much-tamed form, art was assimilated into the cultivation of the poets' individuating nature. Interestingly, the force of artistic creation made its way intact into ci to build the ideal of the perfectly crafted lyric. Presenting a different model that harmonizes music, poetry, and human feeling, it was to meet with pure adulation from some and deep abhorrence in others in the Qing.

Ironically, it is the outlier poem that provides the perfect analogy to the source of meaning in the encounter poetics. The Encounter that affirms simultaneously human feeling and

[58] Li He 李賀 (790-816) addressed this poem to Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) and Huangfu Shi 皇甫湜 (777-835), "They Visited in Their High Officials' Carriage 高軒過." Li He, Wang Qi 王琦 ed., *Li Changji geshi* 李長吉歌詩, published in Yang Jialuo 楊家駱 ed., *Li He shi zhu* 李賀詩注 (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1991), 154.

its unity with the world of phenomena exists like the islet eternally shrouded in mist. The knowledge (or faith) of its existence provides us the anchor from which to engage perceptually and emotively a world like the waters stretching into and viewed from an undefined distance. Before the islet enters our awareness, the water is an open field of co-relations between such metamorphosing elements as light and color, shape and momentum. And yet, as "Distant Waters" compellingly presents, fluctuating as our perception or misperception of these waters may be, there is a beauty to its patterns, a beauty so embracing that it can even blend the islet into its folds.

Chapter One

The Late-Twelfth-Century Poetry-Addict

I. Long Introduction:

"So, I rarely write poetry,"[59] said Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107) to a student, who duly wrote it down and included it in the analectic *Er Cheng yishu*. Cheng Yi stuck out a mile even for a *lixue* 理學 (the Learning of Principles) scholar, since poetry-writing was simply taken for granted as a part of literati culture, expected at many occasions in their social life and at court. Perhaps owing to larger and more important issues at stake, no one called him bizarre for being poetry-negative,[60] but being an oddity against a common cultural practice was precisely what Cheng Yi relied on to make his point. The true opposite of Cheng Yi was not simply to participate and excel in poetry production, but to exhibit a level of dedication beyond the usual social expectations so that, when styling themselves as "poets" (*shiren* 詩人), they added more nuances to the term and molded it into a new collective identity.[61] It took over a hundred years

[59] "某所以不常作詩." Context makes it clear that *buchang* 不常 means "rarely," rather than the usual "not often," especially since Cheng Yi's initial statement was, "I never (*su bu* 素不) write poetry." Cheng Yi 程頤 and Cheng Hao 程灝, *Er Cheng yishu* 二程遺書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2000), 291.

[60] The person most likely to do so (Su Shi) used the word "treacherous" (*jian* 姦) instead. Their dispute reflects major philosophical differences and political factionalism, of which Ronald Egan outlines the main points in *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi,* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1994), 93-98.

[61] Before the mid-9th century, *shiren* primarily referred to a poet in or writing in the legacy of the *Classic of Poetry*. From Meng Jiao and Han Yu's generation onwards, *shiren* picked up the sense of "one who paid special attention to *shi* poetry" (but not necessarily excluding other forms of writing). This meaning remained stable through the Northern Song.

after Cheng Yi for these poets to appear and become active, and the changes they wrought to the meaning of poet and poetry is the subject of this dissertation.

I focus on six leading poets over two generations. The first generation, Yang Wanli, Lu You, and Fan Chengda, have enjoyed wide readership and attracted a lot of scholarly attention,[62] while the second generation, represented by Zhang Zi 張鎡 (1153-after 1211), Zhao Fan 趙蕃 (1143-1229), and Han Biao 韓淲 (1159-1224), also prominent cultural figures in their day, soon dropped into obscurity after their death. Despite this disparity in reception, both generations were operating under the same concept of poetry that was, viewed in the history of traditional Chinese poetry as a whole, unique and unimitated even by their admirers in the Qing. Much of their period of activity overlaps with the four decades of peace between the Song and Jin, effective from the treaty of 1164 until Han Tuozhou 韓佗胄 reinitiated the northward expedition in 1206. This period of peace coincides with the modern period division of Song poetry as the "Restoration Era" (*zhongxing* 中興).[63] My starting point, however, is not to let the period define

[62] There is one book-length study in English for each of the three poets: J. D. Schmidt, *Yang Wan-li* (Boston: Twayne, 1976); J. D. Schmidt, *Stone Lake: The Poetry of Fan Chengda, 1126-1193* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992); and Michael S. Duke, *Lu You* (Boston: Twayne, 1977).

[63] Most scholars fix the start of "Restoration Era" poetry at the first year of Xiaozong's reign (1162 or 1163 depending on how one counts), with the exception of Han Liping, who takes the death of Qin Gui 秦檜 (1156) as the starting point. Disagreement over the ending year is minor, with scholars marking it variously by the death of Han Tuozhou in 1207 (Xu Zong), the Jiading peace treaty in 1208 (Han Liping), Lu You's death (1210), and the publication of *Jianghu ji* in 1209 (Mu Zhai). See Xu Zong 許總, *Song shishi* 宋詩史 (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1992); Mu Zhai 木齋, *Song shi liubian* 宋詩流變 (Beijing: Jinghua, 1999); and Han Liping 韓立平, *Nan Song zhongxing shifeng yanjin yanjiu* 南宋中興詩風演進研究 (Shanghai: Huadong shifan, 2013).

the poets, but to let the study of the poets add to our understanding of the existing period division.

Lu You was not the only person from the latter part of the 12th century who produced overwhelmingly large number of poems. It was a common practice of the people who called themselves "poets" at that time. They also liked to count and recount the number of poems in their collections, hardly hiding their self-satisfaction, and felt guilty in those less productive days – according to their standard. They nosed around every nook and corner for topics they could write on, though it did not prevent their poetry from becoming repetitive, the unfortunate but inevitable result of their writing habits.

Number, however, was only one of their concerns, one of much lower priority than, say, the process and the actual effort involved in writing. These overly-productive poets had their own understanding of *shi* 詩, "poetry," different than the way it had been used previously. It is this idea of poetry that drove their writing and bound them together as the poets of a single era. The problem is, when it comes to the climactic moment of presenting the grand idea, I find that it cannot be put into a single statement. And it would be wrong to do so. This grand idea was assumed knowledge and tacitly accepted in those poets' casual references to poetry-writing in about every other poem, versed in as many forms as allowed by their creativity. But no poet at that time ever gave it a coherent statement, which is in itself a statement. [64]

[64] We are dealing with what Stephen Owen calls the "greatest force" that is felt to move in poems, in this case also the living force of poetry, the reason why it existed in the late twelfth century. It spoke through the mass of poems that have become a deadly weight after a thousand years – a weight that can only be lifted by awakening the voice of that force. See Owen, *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics: Omen of the World.* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 11.

This said, I propose to give an account of what and where poetry was to the leading poets of the latter part of the twelfth century, reconstructed from the number – or a numberless amount – of gestures made within the poems to acknowledge, to describe, and often to dramatize the act of poetry-writing. Such gestures had, of course, been made before, but here they are brought to the foreground. They became a necessary part – many a time the "eye" – of the poem.[65] Reading from these gestures, it seemed that the world was a storehouse for poetry. Their lines would have us believe that poetry was everything and everywhere. Everything in the world existed for the purpose of being written into poetry, which was exactly what the poet lived for. Stephen Owen writes of poets as the omen-reader for whom the latent patterns of the landscape are like omens. A poet of the omenscape does not necessarily boast of it, but a poet with a storehouse of poetry – a storehouse that belongs to him, exists for him and with him standing on the center of the roof – is often very garrulous about his possession. The poetry produced by the omen-reader is as grand and somber as the word sounds. The omen-reader lives on in our period, and the omenscape is as real as ever. But at the same time, we also begin to encounter another type of poet - the Owner of the Storehouse – seeker, collector, and organizer – someone delightfully mundane. It will be my task for the rest of this chapter to fill in the details in their self portrait as "poets" and how they relate to the world of their creation.

IA. Introducing the "*shiren"*

In the discussion that follows, the generic term "poet" is no longer accurate to refer to a particular group of writers. "Poet" in the literary discourse on traditional Chinese poetry could mean anyone who wrote a poem. But in our period, the group of people that emerged calling

[65] The eye (*yan* 眼) is an especially well-chosen word that becomes the pivot of an entire line or a poem.

themselves "poets" had a clear and much more specific identity. In addition to being a common activity of the literati, poetry also became a subject of study and an art to be learned and mastered, and "poets" designated an exclusive group of people who dedicated their energy in acquiring that art. One could be a man of letters but not a poet – a distinction Lou Yao 樓鑰 duly made in "Colophon to Dai Shizhi's [Fugu] Poetry Scroll 跋戴式之詩卷":

> People famous for their poetry abound in the Tang. In recent years, scholars are many but poets are few. One can still prosper through writing prose, but to master poetry is like acquiring the skill of slaughtering dragons. That is why few people favor it.
> 唐人以詩名家者衆, 近時文人多而詩人少, 文猶可以發身, 詩雖甚工反為屠龍之技, 故好之者寡. [66]

The distinction between poets (*shiren*) and scholars (*wenren*) does not mean one group wrote more or better quality poetry than the other. However, it does mean that they wrote different kinds of poetry with different attitudes. For the *shiren*, poetry is not just a means of self-expression but an art with an end unto itself. "Passionate" or "devoted" are pathetic understatements for the length to which they can go to build up their poetic corpus. Sadly, "poet" is a much too diluted term for them, and potentially confusing when I will also be using it in the general sense. "Poets" with a capital "P" and "professional poets," each emerging from a different time and context than the one we are dealing with here, are also misleading. Therefore, I decided to use the original Chinese term in *pinyin*, and call them "*shiren.*"

IB. A rough sketch of the *shiren* – what they did not do

Shiren is a role. It may be one's favorite or, in a few cases, the only role one wishes to adopt, but it never carried the grandeur one sometimes associates with Poet with an uppercase "P." A

[66] Lou Yao, *Gonggui ji* 攻媿集, in *Congshu jicheng* 叢書集成 (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1934), ser. 1, 13:1033.

poet's presence is felt in the words he speaks, in the things he sees, in the actions he performs, but he has never to call attention to himself by saying, "look at me: I'm writing a poem." A *shiren* does exactly that. He catches himself right in the act of writing and puts that self-image under spotlight. Attention is shifted from the things he is writing about to the process of making them into poetry – for even the quickest *shiren* considered it a process requiring some effort. If it had been done in the Du Fu way things would be different – Du Fu did not write about writing poetry so often, and when he did, the act always stood in for some larger significance. But when a *shiren* in this period writes that "I am writing a poem," he probably refers to that very poem and no more. It was an anticlimactic moment indeed in the history of Chinese poetry when poets habitually stated the obvious.

Consider the following two poems, the first by Wang Zhi 王質 (1135-1189), and the second by Zhang Zi 張鎡 (1153-1221):

Feeling Something[67]	有感
The Big Dipper far beyond the balustrade.	北斗欄干外,
Floating clouds directly above my planted staff.	浮雲拄杖中.
High sky heightened by a thousand towering cliffs.	天高千障立,
The tranquil moon stilled in a void-like river.	月静一江空.
In the universe thrusts a duster being waved.	宇宙横揮麈,
Between Heaven and Earth falls a tumbling weed.	乾坤落轉蓬.
Singing wildly and raising my cup – what else is to be done	浩歌聊舉酒,
But to weep tearlessly for the heroes.	無泪哭英雄.

The poem is a universe unto itself, centered on the poet's self-image. The first couplet sketches out a space with the poet's location positioned against Big Dipper and floating clouds, using the two prepositional words, "beyond" and "middle (translated as "directly above")," thus creating a

[67] *QSS,* 46: 28829.

vast space with himself as the anchoring point. The second couplet expands this space even further with a hidden causality: the sky seems higher than usual because they seem to be supported by the towering cliffs; because the river is so still that it looks empty, the reflection of the moon does not move at all, while its moonbeams illuminate the river, making it seem like "a void." The causality also serves to make the adjectives "high" and "tranquil" rather subjective observations from the poet's viewpoint. The third couplet contains two images that are both redundant and opposite. Both lines use the general term "universe" to reinforce the vast, empty space, suddenly disrupted by an image standing in for the poet.[68] While he still retains some agency in line 5 with the duster (a reference to the elite of the Wei and Jin, who waved around dusters while talking on abstruse topics), the "tumbling weed" in line 6 falls in helplessness. This leads to the only thing the poet could think of doing in the last couplet – singing, drinking, and weeping. The images used in this poem are either very simple or very general, but the physical reality of these objects does not matter. The power of the poem comes from how they are positioned against each other.

The poem fits in perfectly with Owen's model of the omenscape. In his words, it is an artifice of patterns (*wen*) coming into being, and the reader gets to know the poet as it is made manifest through his mind. The poet does not assert his agency in crafting the poem, and his presence is all the more powerful for it. Lastly, I might add that this poem is written by a 12th century poet, which goes to show that the poetry of the omenscape always lives on in the poets who chose to write in it. So that when I introduce the next poem by Wang's near contemporary Zhang Zi, the reader cannot accuse me of pitting Song *shi* against Tang *shi*:

[68] This is Du Fu's signature move. One can make an argument here that the Song poets revived the omen-reader by writing in the style of Du Fu (or the Du Fu that they knew).

On the Tenth Day of the Fourth Month, My Colleagues Invited Me on an Excursion to the West Lake (Ten Quatrains)[69]	四月上澣日同寮約遊西湖十絶
At daybreak, the air was dense with a misty drizzle,	清曉溟濛雨氣濃,
Once out of the pass, sunny hues assumed a fresh green color.	出關晴色便葱蘢,
Layers of clouds, just for the pleasure of the *shiren*,	層雲特為詩人喜,
Are adding four or five extra peaks over the mountain top.	添起山頭四五峯.

One can almost hear this little poem cry out at the injustice of being paired up with Wang Zhi's "Feeling Something." What chance does this modest poem have to compete with him, speaking of no more than some minor official enjoying himself on his day off, "quotidian" in every sense of the term?

Despite the glaring difference, some things have not changed. The poet is still the central figure in the universe, he is still reading patterns, and the way he reads them still reflect something about him. But he does not seek to construct a timeless world like Wang Zhi, a world to encompass heaven and earth, and past and present. Nor does he seek the grandeur of the lone prophet, an icon in that timeless world. His merely wants to express his delight in finding some solid-looking clouds capping a mountain. It was a world specific and limited to the time and location of his being. He is still at the center and not without dignity, for the clouds are putting on a performance just to make him happy, but this is the difference between a blatantly theatrical dignity of a *shiren* and the true grandeur of a poet of the omenscape.

IC. Another rough sketch of the *shiren*– what they are not:

The *shiren* wrote of the strenuous effort they put in to refine their craft. They talked of how they made poetry a daily exercise, how they embarked on journeys to "seek poetry" (*xunshi* 尋詩), how carefully they evaluated and revised their poems, and how they burned all their

[69] *QSS* 50:31651.

substandard works. They enjoy invoking the image of "painstaking composition" (*kuyin* 苦吟) in their poetry, but tempered or transformed the idea of suffering and disease associated with *kuyin* poets in the eighth and the ninth centuries. Meng Jiao's poetry is filled with images of suffering in his personal life.[70] Jia Dao aimed for perfection in his couplets. In a well-known story, he knocked into Han Yu's horse because he was so absorbed in choosing between the words "push" and "knock." The poetry craftsman Li He 李賀 also looms large in their accounts of compositional practice. Li He was famous for riding out everyday on his donkey to look for poetry. Whenever a line came to him, he would write it down and put it in a silk pouch. In the evening, he would empty the pouch and complete the poems under lamplight. Every line he wrote had to be unusual, startling, and great. The most striking description of his composition process is that "he would not stop until he spits his heart out."[71]

The Song poets generally grieved less than their Tang predecessors,[72] and the *shiren* in our period were an especially contented lot. For the *shiren*, writing poetry did not bring pain and

---

[70] Stephen Owen points out the ambiguity in the location of suffering realized in the changing sense of the term *kuyin* "chanting from personal bitterness" to "painstaking composition." Meng Jiao's suffering comes from the painful events in his personal life, such as the death of his child. In the ninth century, the locus of suffering shifted to pains resulting from devotion to poetry. See Owen, *Late Tang: Chinese Poetry of the Mid-Ninth Century (827-860),* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2009), 123; also *The End of the Chinese Middle Ages: Essays in Mid-Tang Literary Culture* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996), 67-75

[71] This is Li Shangyin's portrait of him in "A Short Biography of Li He 李賀小傳," which soon became the cultural memory of Li He en block.

[72] As the overall mood of their poetry suggest. Yoshikawa Kojiro observes that the Song poets attempted to transcend sorrow and attained a level of serenity unseen in the Tang. It is a generalization and simplification, but true. See his *Sōshi gaisetsu* 宋詩概說 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1960.) Translated by Burton Watson as *An Introduction to Song Poetry* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1967), esp. 28-38.

tragedy. Pleasure was to be found regardless of how good one's poetry was, or how slowly one could produce it. The fear of imperfection, if there truly was any, did not impede their writing. Even Zhao Fan, by far the most complaint-prone *shiren* and one who always lamented his ineptitude at poetry, did not let it stop him from enjoying writing. Zhao Fan often conceded his inferiority in poetry – *not* from false modesty – to an ancient model or a better contemporary, or else said poetry was too hard for him. But the fact remains that twenty-seven *juan* of poetry survive from his once much larger collection. He sincerely felt the incompetence he claimed, and he embraced it. In the end, it did not matter that he could not write a perfect poem. He was happy *because* his imperfection allowed him to enjoy the process. As in the following two poems:

After a meal, as I stood alone at the temple gate, there was quite a scene of leaves falling. I wanted to round it up in poetry, but it really took a lot of thought. I got only two poems.[73]	飯後獨立寺門 頗見搖落之境 欲收以詩大費 弹壓僅得二首
In composing poems, I have not reached far.	作詩無遠到,
Standing long and still, I have deep thoughts.	佇立有深思,
[Let me] gather what's interesting about mountains and streams	集此溪山趣,
To enrich my eyes and ears.	充吾耳目資,
From discourse on poetry by Yao, Shun, and Lü Ziwei[74]	唐虞紫微論,
To poems by Su Wu, Li Ling, and Du Fu,	蘇李少陵詩,
My heart is still in some vast space,	落落心雖在,

[73] *QSS* 49:30650-511.

[74] Ziwei is Lü Benzhong's style name and the eponymous work *Ziwei's Remarks on Poetry* 紫微詩話. It is rather shocking to see Lü Benzhong's name inserted after the legendary rulers Yao and Shun, and among the fountainheads (Li and Su) and *the* model of classical poetry (Du Fu). While structurally, the couplet elevates Lü, who is credited with creating the lineage of the Jiangxi school of poetry and but a recent predecessor to Zhao Fan, the form's petiteness prevents Zhao from outlining the poetic tradition beyond a truncated (and a little haphazard) list of names. It is very hard to say whether Zhao Fan is making a strong claim here for the orthodoxy of the Jiangxi school.

But I feel lost – my energy is exhausted.	茫茫力已疲.
I rise and gaze out, I seem to get something,	起望若有得,
But to speak it would take too many words.	欲言殊費辭,
In the dark search, I exhaust my vital organs,	冥搜累肝腎,
Concentrating my imagination, it is seen in my beard and eyebrows.	凝想見鬚眉,
Who can surpass me in this happiness?	此樂誰能愈,
Poor as I am, I have no doubt about myself.	雖貧自勿疑,
It's hardly a grave error for me personally,	是身寧大謬,
And I have nothing to pass on to my sons.	無事及諸兒.

Only a *shiren* would say something like, "I *only* wrote two poems about not being able to write a poem," for these poems are not about the scene of falling leaves as the title leads us to expect, but about how "it took a lot of thought." Zhao Fan originally had high aspirations for his poem. Just uttering the word *yaoluo* 搖落, clumsily translated here as "leaves falling," triggers endless associations: autumn wind, desolation, Song Yu's discourse on the boundless sorrows in autumn, Du Fu's poem on Song Yu, and so the chain continues. Zhao Fan had wanted to "round it up" (*shou* 收) in his poem(s)-to-be.

The two poems he ended up writing did not turn out as he planned. They are vivid portraits of him racking his brain for good lines, but at best only remotely related to *yaoluo* in the feeling of loss at the end of the first poem. The adjectives "*luoluo*" (the manner of being vast and empty) and "*mangmang"* (expansive, directionless) are appropriate ones for autumn leaves falling in all directions, here transferred to describe Zhao Fan's frustrated attempt in writing. The attempt leads to serious reflection in the second poem on his choice of being a *shiren*. Although he has some scruples about passing this addiction onto his children, the answer to the rhetorical question in line seven is an unequivocal "no," for he decides that there is no higher happiness

than looking for a poem (even when he is freshly daunted), and that he has no doubts even if it kept him poor.

Li He's model of "poetry-seeking" also took an easy-going turn at the hands of the *shiren*. Yang Wanli, for example, decided to be playful about it. Just as he was about pluck the white hairs from his mustache, he heard a smart, flattering voice saying,

Plucking White[75]	鑷白
"Put down the mirror! Don't pluck out the white in your mustache!	莫把菱花鑷白髭,
Better leave them there to keep you company in chanting poetry.	勸君留取伴吟詩,
If you want to add new lines to your silk pouch,	錦囊若要添新句,
Why take away the white floss that embroiders its mouth?"	繡口如何減素絲.

It goes without saying that the voice came from Yang Wanli himself. The punch line depends on the pun *xiukou* 繡口 – just as white floss is essential to the embroidery on the silk pouch, a poet's eloquent lips cannot lose the white hairs that adorn them. Which brings us back to the occasion that inspired this quippy poem: Why did the *shiren* feel the need to pluck out white hairs in the first place? Perhaps because of the hard work he put into writing poetry had turned the hairs white. This is not explicit in the poem, but his contemporaries would hear an echo of it after reading many similar complaints. One could, of course, choose to read this poem in a melancholy vein by pointing out that white hair usually signifies old age, fatigue, grief, and so on. But to do so one has to gloss over the poet's hearty amusement at his own cleverness, which really gives life to this poem.

So Li He's famous silk pouch became the reason why Yang Wanli did not pluck out his white hairs. For the rest, "seeking poetry" was made easy by how readily the world supplied

[75] *QSS* 42:26235.

them with material for poetry and therefore did not extract their life or happiness as price. It is quite unnecessary to list here all the poems that refer to the world as a storehouse full of poetry. They will receive more attention in the following sections, and I will also come back to the silk pouch. For now, it is time to explain what the *shiren* is by looking at how he asked and answered the following questions: Where and what is poetry? What do I do or should do as a *shiren*?

****

II. Explaining poetry

IIA. "Where is poetry?" – from reading the perfect line that was never written

"I got up and casually sought a line of poetry –
The line is where the mountain is, right in my eyes."
起來聊覓句, 句在眼中山.

Eight hundred years earlier, Tao Qian gazed on the South Mountain and said, "There is some true significance in this, / But when I want to expound it, I have forgotten the words." Eight hundred years later, Yang Wanli saw a mountain and said, "I got up and casually sought a line of poetry - / The line is where the mountain is, right in my eyes." Where Tao Qian saw "true significance," Yang Wanli saw "a line of poetry." There is some true meaning in this.

Tao Qian's line points to a truth that would cease to be true once it is put into language. Yang Wanli points to a line of poetry that could capture his experience at that moment perfectly, except it never did or will actually materialize into a line. It would not be so strange if Yang Wanli had said "poetry" (*shi* 詩) instead of "line" (*ju* 句). The former could stand in for something ineffable, but the latter by definition does not exist but in language. Yang Wanli ended his poem there without giving us the line that resided in the mountain in his eyes. The

move is a familiar one in his time, leading the reader back to the preceding lines for poetry, which is what we will do now:

Rain on Spring Festival Day, to the same topic as Uncle Changying the Assistant Magistrate[76]	和昌英主簿叔社雨
Sadness – because spring already deserted me,	愁已春相背,
But some poetry debt is still left unpaid.	詩仍債未還,
The sound of rain is just right for napping –	雨聲宜小睡,
Just let the bamboo gate remain securely fastened.	竹户且深關,
I dream of fishing in the snow next to the [white] gulls.	夢釣鷗邊雪,
Aging, I forget how I look in the mirror.	衰忘鏡裏顏,
After waking up, I casually sought a line of poetry,	起來聊覓句,
The line is where the mountain is, right in my eyes.	句在眼中山.

In another period, the title does not deceive us as to the content of a poem. If it says, "Rain on Spring Festival Day," then that would be what the poem is about. This particular one, however, turned out to be what the poet experienced when he sought a poem about the rain on Spring Festival Day. It began when he realized that he still owed some poems to people, his uncle in particular, and ended in his finding a line of poetry in a mountain before his eyes. It is the rain on Spring Festival Day that reminds him of time passing, a sadness that may be avoided a while by taking a nap but still creeps up on him in the dream, just as insidiously as the sound of the rain. He had fallen sleep listening to the rain in a deeply secluded space enclosed by the bamboo gate. His dream was an ostensibly pleasant one where he fishes and forgets about his old age. But this very claim suggests that what he ostensibly forgets still haunts him; his dreamscape, too, is bleak and snowy. In short, the middle two couplets describe the mood of the rain as he experiences it.

[76] Yang Changying's given name was Fushi 輔世. He obtained his *jinshi* degree in the same year as Yang Wanli, as noted in the commentary to the *Yang Wenjie Gong shiji* 楊文節公詩集 edition of his poetry. See *QSS* 42:26094.

When he wakes up to find a line of poetry waiting for him, the aftermath of the rain still lingers in the mountains that it had washed over. Indeed, the sound of rain can be heard throughout the poem, but only one aspect of the rain mattered – how it colored the poet's experience of the passing of spring and how it induced him to embark on a dream journey to find a poem. To put it in another way, the poem is about the transformation of spring rain into poetry through a poetic mind.

To the *shiren* of this period, that is what poetry is and where it exists: material for poetry is to be found everywhere, and poetry comes into being when the *shiren* encounters the material and tries to make it into a poem – a tangible poem rather than something idealistic. "Rain on Spring Festival Day" does not make this statement; it is a rather delightful, unpretentious little poem. But it reflects this operating principle, as did Zhao Fan's two poems we have seen in the last section. A perfect line or poem is always gestured toward, but whether it comes into being is not critical. A *shiren* sometimes finds that a predecessor's line best describes a landscape or an object, but his own poem will be stubbornly about how he receives the line. This is one thing that does not change in this period. If we follow Yang Wanli's career after the "Rain on Spring Festival Day," written relatively early in his life, we find that when he wrote "Looking at the rain-washed mountains when I got up in the morning" in his old age, he still ended his poem the same way: "I decided that there's an expression for this, / but what a pity it wasn't very-well worded. / Even if I can get it perfectly right, / It would not be as rich as the mountain hues. 判斷有一語, 可惜語不工, 正使語工著, 不如山色濃."[77]

[77] The last four lines of an ancient-style poem, "Looking at the rain-washed mountains when I got up in the morning 雨後曉起看山." This is the rest of the poem:
When I rose in the morning and went out of my bramble gate,
I discovered that the mountain on the other side of the water has been switched.

Thus, if the *shiren* seems unable to leave a poem alone without announcing his presence in it, it is because his presence is the crucial part of the poetic experience. In the following poem, what appears to be a casual description of the scenery is clinched into poem in the figure of the *shiren*:

On the old county road: two poems (II)[78]	舊縣道中二首 (二)
Green trees line a smooth shore,	緑樹依平岸,
Smooth waters reflect the green grass.	平波映緑蕪,
Though parted down the middle by a road,	中分雖有路,
The water extends far in four directions into a lake.	四極却成湖,
Boats pass by intermittently in twos and threes –	艇子時三兩,
Could there be a fishing village nearby?	漁村定有無,
Who will write the inscription for this scene as	誰其為題作,
"The Picture of Meng Jiao in Search for Poetry"?	東野覓詩圖.

The first six lines are bland at best and clumsy for a fastidious reader. They represent a weakened version of the omenscape: signs are read, images are noted down, and a pattern emerges through the poetic mind in the form of parallel couplets. Indeed, Zhao Fan does it so well that the first

---

It's still the old one if you look at it closely,
but its color is different from yesterday.
Even if it *did* rain last night,
the rain couldn't possibly be that effective.
[It must be] because the master of clouds lifted all the mountain peaks
And placed them in the blue water.
The sand and earth are all tinted with green,
And grass and trees gained a more luscious hue.
Otherwise, close as they are to autumn decline,
How else could they have reverted to a spring-like beauty?
Indeed, [the others] don't know the meaning of this,
And took it to tantalize the old poet.
晨起出蓬户, 換却隔水峰, 細看只舊山, 色與昨不同, 雖經夜來雨, 未必有許功, 雲師挈衆巇, 置在藍水中, 沙土俱綠浮, 草樹添青蔥, 不然近秋衰, 那得還春容, 此意殊不識, 要將調詩翁. *QSS* 42:26654.

[78] *QSS* 49:30638.

two lines are not merely parallels but perfectly symmetrical – an attempted play at rhythm that fell flat. There is no personality in this voice. It sounds detached and dull, and the poet seems to be fixated in one spot as his eye wanders aimlessly. The most interesting bit about him is the faint curiosity he betrays at observing the passing boats in the third couplet. Despite all the "greens" in the first two lines, the scene he paints is colorless, a shadowy background for something more prominent, which is indeed what it becomes for the figure of the *shiren* in the last couplet. He steps back and views the scene, now with himself in the spotlight and so like Meng Jiao that anyone can easily mistake one for the other. Instead of saying "I am like Meng Jiao in search of poetry," he appeals to another person to note this scene as a picture of Meng Jiao in search for poetry. In doing so, depth in perspective is created. The scene is no longer two-dimensional. It now has a spectator, and that spectator is himself.

This double position allows Zhao Fan to make poetry and appreciate poetry at the same time. Creating the double position is not merely an attempt on cleverness but a necessary move to make these lines "poetry." The scene he depicts in the first six lines becomes poetry when and only when a Meng Jiao is present and intending to make it so. In other words, the *shiren must* have a double: one as an organic part of the scenery giving it a poetic quality and another to make a poem out of it. In the numerous poems from this period like the one above, the *shiren's* self-portrait is an organic part of the poem, and very often the reference to writing poetry or the image of the poet comes at the end and literally "makes" a poem. The poetry-writing act is brought to the foreground, examined, and presented as poetry. It is also one of the *shiren*'s favorite moves to dramatize it:

To the tune *Mo shan xi*:[79]	驀山溪
The Bamboo Path to the Looming Cloud Pavilion just completed	停雲竹逕初成[80]
Wine cup in hand, let my thoughts wander far –	一尊遐想,
Thus I feel Yuanming's mood ever more.	剩有淵明趣,
There is a "Looming Cloud" on the mountaintop	山上有停雲,
Overlooking the "light drizzles" below.	看山下濛濛細雨,
The wild flowers and chirping birds	野花啼鳥,
Are unwilling to come into my poem,	不肯入詩來,
As if mocking	還一似,
This old man for having no place in his poem to fit them.	笑翁詩, 自沒安排處.

It is not for lack of examples in *shi* poetry that I quote a lyric by Xin Qiji 辛棄疾 (1140-1207), but because no one was better than Xin Qiji at staging little – or grand – dramas. *Shi* and *ci* shared many common themes in this period, and dramatizing the act of poetry-writing is one of them. Xin Qiji did not insist on a strict distinction between the two forms as he casually referred to his lyric as "*shi*" in this stanza.[81] He is, after all, notorious for "writing *ci* in the manner of *shi*" 以詩為詞. The "*shi*" here is not used in the broadest sense; it is a historically specific statement referring to the *shi* written in Xin Qiji's time with its particular set of questions and themes.

[79] Deng Guangming 鄧廣銘, annot., *Jiaxuan ci biannian jianzhu* 稼軒詞編年箋注, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1993), 413.

[80] The first stanza goes: "The running water under a small bridge / Seems to flow down to the stream below. / I summoned my old friend to come / And accompany this gentleman's walking stick through wind and mist. / We threaded narrow passageways. / Now and then we passed over a minor crag. / Crossing the water at an angle / And half hiding the mountain, / The bamboos were planted to form a path. 小橋流水, 欲下前溪去, 喚起故人來, 伴先生風煙杖屨, 行穿窈窕, 時歷小崎嶇, 斜帶水, 半遮山, 翠竹栽成路."

[81] Xin Qiji make frequent references to *shi* in his *ci*, and it is not always clear whether they are self-referential to the *ci* lyric or playing on the perceived genre distinctions. A different interpretation of the last line may be, "because the flowers and birds refuse to come into my *shi* poem, I write this *ci* lyric."

Coming back to Xin Qiji's lyric, one smiles indulgently at his typical enthusiasm to *be* Tao Yuanming and the swiftness with which he flits out of the guise. He is thinking of Tao's poem, "Looming Cloud," which begins with "Dark and overcast are the looming clouds; / lightly drizzling is the seasonal rain 靄靄停雲, 濛濛時雨."[82] Wine cup in hand, Tao had gazed upon the clouds and rain while thinking of his old friends. Having conveniently named his pavilion "Looming Cloud," Xin Qiji was able, in the first half of the stanza, to enumerate happily all the essentials in Tao's opening stanza – the clouds, the rain, the wine cup, and most importantly, the poet lost in his thoughts. Indeed, it would have recalled Tao's entire poem to any reader's mind, Tao Yuanming being one of the most thoroughly read poet in the Song. Somehow, by recreating the exact setting of Tao Yuanming's poem and doing exactly what Tao had done, he feels the "mood" of being Tao Yuanming. What exactly that "mood" is, he leaves it up to Tao's poem to describe. Xin Qiji could be missing a good friend of old, feeling sad and dejected, or he could be thinking about Tao Yuanming, the poet he admired but would never meet – it is open to Xin Qiji's interpretation of Tao and the reader's interpretation of Xin. Xin Qiji's poem does not seek to repeat what an old poet had so eloquently expressed. Rather, it is about how the mood is set up by a new poet to materialize and how he makes it a part of his *own* poem.

This he does in the second half of the stanza. It seems that he is not only trying to be Tao Yuanming but also writing a poem about it. And what makes it interesting for him is the difficulty. Birds and vegetation do figure in Tao's poem, but they had been blooming tree branches in his garden and "returning birds" coming to rest on his courtyard tree – not exactly the wild flowers and chirping birds Xin Qiji sees and hears. And quite literally, they will not "fit"

[82] For the whole Tao Yuanming poem in translation, see James Hightower, *The Poetry of T'ao Ch'ien* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970).

into the small space left at the end of the poem. They were made even more different by Xin Qiji himself, who does something that Tao Yuanming would never do – imagining they are deliberately staying away from his poem and even laughing at him for his inability to finish it. Here, at last, Xin Qiji shows his true colors: his own glaring personality is the real reason why he could not uphold the guise as Tao Yuanming, and fully embracing that fact, he turns it into a bit of dignified self-mockery.

With so many good reasons, though unmentioned, for wanting to be Tao Yuanming, Xin Qiji discovers at the end that he could not escape from his own personality, because the poem can only be finished in his own voice. On the most basic level, the poem is about self-discovery through the little drama of poetry-writing. Similar moments abound in the *shiren's* poetic corpus, where self-discovery centers on the act of writing poetry itself instead of on what one sees and hears. A ready example would be Zhao Fan's two poems quoted in the introduction: an unsuccessful attempt at writing a poem about autumn is the focus of Zhao Fan's reflection on his life as a *shiren*.

IIB. What is poetry? – a tentative answer to "what is 'unlike poetry'?"

"I strain to depict the spring wind, and the result is unlike poetry."
強寫春風不似詩

In addition to being predisposed to find and write poetry, something else is required to make someone a *shiren*, just as something else is required to make what he writes "poetry." Once upon a time, the *shiren* Han Biao had every intention to write a poem, but pondering over the finished product, decided that it was "unlike poetry":

To the same rhyme as Dong Jingxian (III)[83]	次韻董景先
My heart's feeling is here, but no expression is right [for it],	心情雖在語皆非,
I strain to depict the spring wind, and the result is unlike poetry.	強寫春風不似詩.
A rain shower on a petite building, a light, light mist;	一雨小樓煙淡淡,
Evening sun all over the mountain, the thick, dense trees.	滿山斜日樹離離.

In the beginning, Han Biao wants to render his "heart's feeling" into poetry. Like Yang Wanli, whose poem I quoted at the beginning of the last section, Han Biao does not seek to forget verbal expression altogether, but he has the problem of finding the right one. He alludes to a previously-written poem, in which he "strained to depict the spring wind." Clearly, he found it "unlike poetry" because it is a forced literal description, a last-resort attempt at putting his feelings into words by turning to a clichéd motif. Knowing a *shiren*'s habits, Han Biao probably burned that poem, and he finished the present one with the existing enigmatic couplet. Had it appeared in a different context, it may be no more than a beautifully-written parallel couplet. But here, the couplet is suggestive, but not conclusive of what his "heart's feeling" is. If anything, it suggests the *moderation* of all feeling to the point of imperceptibleness. It is supposed to be a description of the scene as it is, so to speak, from a cool, detached eye. But at the same time, nothing is more inviting to the reader to decipher the feeling behind it that must forever elude a conclusive explanation. We do not even know for sure whether the couplet is the right expression for his "heart's feelings" mentioned at the beginning, and therefore it is a feeling that we may never share. What we *do* share, however, besides the scene itself, is the hide-and-seek in which Han Biao found himself at the beginning, from the reader's end, perhaps, but essentially the same annoyingly delightful experience and feeling. If I may employ the omenscape metaphor again, under the omenscape, the effectiveness of poetic expression rested on the association between

[83] The third poem of a set of three. No biographical information is available for Dong Jingxian. The name appears once in Han's collection and cannot be found anywhere else. *QSS* 52:32726.

imagery and feeling – not a one-on-one correspondence, but at least readable. But in the world of Han Biao, the obvious poetic parallels – automatically associating feeling with "spring wind," for example – is precisely what he calls "unlike poetry." The *shiren*'s new wisdom is that poetry is in the process of writing itself – it is the scintillating experience of trying to catch a burgeoning expression and accepting that it must some time fall short of adequacy. The last couplet marks the passage of time: the weather changes through rain and mist and finally the setting sun while he keeps trying to write on spring breeze. Finally, a poem emerges from his failure to write one. Thus, a *shiren* is more than someone predisposed to make material into poetry; he must also be sensitive to the subtle workings in the process of writing, for the result of a strained or clichéd depiction may very well be "unlike poetry."

This may be a tentative answer to what is "unlike poetry," and subsequently, what poetry is for the *shiren*. We find Zhao Fan concurring after his own fashion in the following poem:

On the twentieth, my colleagues and I made a date to visit the lake region. I arrived first in the rain and chanced to write two poems[84]	二十日同官相約過 水鄉蕃雨中先至偶 成二詩
I make a date with the guests, and the guests arrive.	約客客來至,
I look for poetry, and poetry chances to emerge.	尋詩詩偶生,
Autumn resembles the color of [frost-]stricken willows;	秋如驚柳色,
Rain hasn't changed the lotus[-beating] sound.	雨未改荷聲,
The flavor of rivers and lakes is faint and elusive.	渺渺江湖趣,
My pact with the gulls and egrets is far in coming.	悠悠鷗鷺盟,
Although my sentiments can be strong and boundless,	意雖能浩蕩,
My brush indeed lacks the power of conquest.	筆迺欠縱橫.

Zhao Fan again failed to meet his own expectations in this poem. He has strong and boundless sentiments, but he is not satisfied with the power of his brush to express them adequately. To be

[84] *QSS* 50:30548.

fair, the middle two couplets are not as bad as Zhao Fan claims. Lines three and four form structurally sophisticated parallels that can only come from a skilled hand. A contemporary reader would have said that each line packs three layers of meaning, which is an impressive achievement for a pentasyllabic line. The color of willows is the first layer, the color of stricken willows is the second, and to equate the color of stricken willows to autumn makes the third. The same thing goes for line four. They successfully portray a season of decline by focusing on a single image of desolation. The mood of decline in nature gives rise to a strong wish to retire and live on the rivers and lakes, presented as an elusive goal in lines five and six.

Although the middle two couplets can be said to form a poem on their own, they are framed by the narrative of looking for poetry. If there is anything wrong with those lines – there is according to Zhao Fan – it comes from the awareness of a distance between imagery and the kind of sentiments they are supposed to represent. Frost-stricken willows and rain-beaten lotus leaves are the usual tropes for autumn decline, as are gulls and lakes for a life in retirement. Any reader would have gleaned from those lines a "strong and boundless" yearning to lead the life of a recluse, but for Zhao Fan, they still fall short of adequate expression. Like Han Biao, Zhao Fan points to something truly poetic that somehow can no longer be equated with stock imagery and tropes. It creates a distance between stock poetic imagery and mood – a distance that only a *shiren* can bridge first by being aware of it. In this poem, the distance is bridged by the narrative of writing the poem. It resembles a framed picture in which the frame fills in what the picture is lacking. To come back to Han Biao's line, "I have hold on my heart's feeling, but no expression is right for it" – it is by realizing and trying to bridge this distance that prevents something from being "unlike poetry."

IIC. Materials for poetry – thinking about things in terms of poetry

"Since the beginning of the year, material for poetry has been so different –
My vision is immersed in mulberry and hemp."
年来詩料別, 滿眼是桑麻.

As seen in the examples above, the *shiren* often made poetry-writing the subject of their poems, but even more frequent are the instances where they make a casual reference to writing poetry, sometimes with a line, sometimes a word. Just to give one example by Han Biao:

Playing at *go*	弈棋[85]
Green leaves fresh in their first bloom, the summer is still young.	綠葉初新暑尚輕,
In the lighted part of the grove where trees are sparse, fleeting orioles are visible.	林疎明處見流鶯,
Bowls of tea have been passed around, and taps of *go* begin to sound.	茗盂過手棋聲起,
I rub my sleepy eyes and finish yet another line of poetry.	睡眼挼挲句又成.

Han Biao does not seem very interested in the game itself or of winning. Under the pleasant shades of trees in early summer, the sound of *go* pieces tapping the game board soothes him. Not wanting to doze off, he rubs his eyes, and, as if it is most natural thing to do, finishes writing another line of poetry. The last phrase, spoken in the most offhand manner, suggests that the thought of poetry never leaves the poet's mind even when he is supposed to be engaged in other activities, and that it always awaits to turn them into occasions for poetry and to score "yet another" line.

The casual manner and frequency of references to poetry-writing in this period, references similar to the last line in Han Biao's poem, calls attention to poetry as a way of thinking and understanding the world. In addition to the poems focusing on poetry-writing, these offhand

[85] *QSS* 52: 32750.

references are more telling of how the *shiren* thought about other things *in terms of* poetry. Consider the last couplet of the following poem by Lu You:

Leaning on my staff	倚杖[86]
I stood leaning on my staff outside my bramble gate	倚杖柴門外,
And lingered until sunset.	踟蹰到日斜,
Children were gathering bamboo shoot husks;	兒童拾筍籜,
Women were selling tender buds of tea.	婦女賣茶芽,
Fishing boats pass by, lightly touching the shore;	掠岸過漁艇,
From the other side of the hedge, the sound of a spinning wheel can be heard.	隔籬聞緯車,
Since the beginning of the year, material for poetry has been so different –	年来詩料別,
My vision is immersed in mulberry and hemp.	滿眼是桑麻.

The retired official's vision of a rustic life is an old topic for poetry, which fact Lu You underscores by using one of Wang Wei's lines word for word as the opening. However, no mater how often "mulberry and hemp," women and children in the countryside or the spinning wheel, had been made material for poetry, a poem about rustic life would never be the place to speak of them as such. Writing bucolic poems bespeaks a poet's desire for naturalness and simplicity; therefore mulberry and hemp, or any other elements of villagers' lives must be presented as real, i.e. as having an independent existence apart from the poet's mind. It is the poet who is drawn to them, and not the other way around. Furthermore, their significance as an emblem of the bucolic ideal far outshines their practical function as "material for poetry" that the latter must be negligible, not worthy of mention. A poet may use mulberry and hemp as material for his poem, but he must not speak of them in those terms. To do so is as good as admitting to the artificiality of his vision, while the point of his poem is to convince one of the opposite.

[86] *JNSGJZ,* 4:2149.

What others before him did not say, Lu You said it along with the other *shiren* in his time, and perhaps with more complex sentiments. His poem was written in the third year of Chunxi reign era (1176). He had just returned from Sichuan to live in his home in Shanyin. The last couplet refers to this change in his life. Instead of serving as an official in a border province, he now leads a retired life in the countryside. The growth of mulberry and hemp bespeaks the changes in scenery "since the beginning of the year" as well as the change in the course of his life, but he speaks of these changes as "materials for poetry being different." By this time, "material for poetry" (*shiliao*, or *shicai* 詩材) had become an accepted term that Lu You could use it here as a figure of speech. While *shicai* had been used to mean "poetic talent" before this time, and *shiliao* had hardly appeared in poetry at all, both terms became popular among the *shiren* to designate the raw material that one can make into poetry.

Here, Lu You uses the term in such a way, but not without a hint of irony. Always aspiring to a more active life, Lu You did not wholly embraced the role of *shiren* as some of his contemporaries did, but sometimes presented it as an involuntary option. In his belief, he was good at poetry, but he was made a *shiren* by being shunned from more important roles. Here, Lu You may be hinting at it again: instead of serving the country, he is left to write poems about the delights of the countryside – not that the delights are lacking. I would not push for the ironic reading because the hint is very elusive – barely audible only if one comes to this poem after reading his other ones from this period in life. It makes perfect sense to read the poem as a straightforward celebration of the countryside. But ironic or not, "a change in material for poetry" was used to cover the crop growth and the changes in a poet's life.

To look beyond Lu You's poem, many phenomena from celestial to mundane were also spoken of as "material for poetry," such as rain, plum blossom, moving clouds, and mountains,

to name just a few. It was used as a category by which one could order his knowledge and understanding of things. It was also a specialized category, for the fact that what can be material for poetry could no longer be taken for granted. What was better left unmentioned in the past, the *shiren* of this period took delight in emphasizing. It is no coincidence that this change came about when "poets" became a specialized – and what they themselves considered to be a superior – group. Yang Wanli voices this sentiment in a beautiful quatrain, but without the pretentiousness it might suggest:

Crossing the Yang'er Ferry	過楊二渡[87]
Can one look for Spring's footsteps, Spring who leaves no trace?	春跡無痕可得尋,
Haven't you looked into Spring's heart with the eye of poetry?	不將詩眼看春心,
The willows next to the oriole and the plants next to the gulls	鶯邊楊柳鷗邊草,
Are getting greener and thicker day after day.	一日青來一日深.

The most common usage of "the eye of poetry" (*shiyan* 詩眼) is to mean the punch word of a line, but it makes more sense here to understand it as "the poetic eye" with the possibility of a double innuendo. "Spring's footsteps" are invisible to anyone who does not look with a poetic eye, even if he tries to seek her traces. Only a poetic eye sees the subtle changes in the shade and thickness of the greenery. The observation may be trivial, but only through this can one look into "the heart of spring." The *shiren*, with his mind bent on poetry, has a kind of special lens through which he enjoys a privileged and exclusive vision into the heart and spirit of things, which of course is poetry. Poetry is both the means and the end of that special knowledge. One cannot miss the conviction reflected in Yang Wanli's poem and his delight in the discovery made in the

[87] *QSS* 42:36529.

last line, which precludes any such question, "what is the big deal of seeing the grass getting greener and thicker?"

Scholars have noted that the Song dynasty poets greatly expanded the topics for poetry, especially into what is commonplace and trivial. A mundane event like watching a mosquito, for example, would have been inconceivable as the subject of a Tang poem. New topics are either applauded or derided according to their worth. New details of countryside life are celebrated as refreshing and original, while mosquitoes are understandably rated among the frivolous and the vulgar. But from the perspective of "the poetic eye," extension of topics is only the natural result from the new notion of poetry, frivolous or not. So long as poetry was a special category of knowledge to be recognized by the privileged group of *shiren*, literally anything could be material for poetry to the poetic eye. Thus, if the phrase "looking for poetry" (*mishi* 覓詩 or *xunshi* 尋詩) hitherto suggested that poetry is hard to get, the *shiren* in this period, when they used the phrase, sometimes meant the opposite. The distinction between looking for "material for poetry" and looking for ways to arrange them into a poem was not always made or significant. What signified for the *shiren* was the act of *xunshi* as an activity of taste, and not the result, as the result was preconditioned by the *shiren's* consciousness. Excursions to *xunshi* usually end in ready encounters with poetry, which sometimes consisted of the activity itself. The following poem by Yang Wanli expresses the typical *shiren*'s enthusiasm to find the world filled with material for poetry:

On an excursion to the Tianzhu Mountain in the rain on Cold Food Festival Day with my colleagues, I got sixteen quatrains to present to Lu Wuguan [Lu You] [88]	寒食雨中同舍人 約游天竺得十六 絶句呈陸務觀

[88] *QSS* 42: 26335. Ninth poem in the set.

When making poetry in the city, in vain I tug at my beard till it breaks.	城裏哦詩枉斷髭,
Everything in the mountains is a topic for poetry.	山中物物是詩題,
I want to get the Tianzhu Mountain over with in a few lines,	欲將數句了天竺,
For there'll be even more poetry beyond the Tianzhu mountain.	天竺前頭更有詩.

Yang Wanli is delighted in discovering that "everything in the mountains is a topic for poetry" that he can hardly keep up. Expecting even more poetry ahead, he dashes off a few lines about Tianzhu Mountain to "get it over with." Addressed to Lu You, who presumably is staying in the city, his tone is positively gloating. The necessity to write a different poem suggests that this is not the kind of poetry that could be generalize into any mountain-visiting poem, but is specific to the *shiren*'s experience every step of the way. Incidentally, how he made the choice of writing sixteen short poems instead of a single long one is also interesting, but it belongs in a different chapter on quatrains. Suffice it to say here that when the *shiren* is predisposed to find poetry, every moment is potentially a poem.

IID. Conclusion to Part II

To conclude, I quote a quatrain by Zhang Zi:

Returning from Xishan: three poems written in my boat[89]	自錫山歸舟中三首
A timely wind hit the middle of my sail granting me passage home.	帆腰風便得歸程,
At the far end of the sky, layers of clouds dim and brighten.	天末層雲暗又明,
Light-colored chicks and deep-colored grass –	淺色雞兒深色草,
Don't know who bid you to urge my poem to completion.	知誰教汝喚詩成.

Layers of light and shadow in the clouds found unexpected parallel in the palette of colors on the riverbank, which the *shiren* distinguished as chicks playing in the grass. The last line suggests

[89] *QSS* 50:31641.

that he had already begun a poem, yet uncompleted. The discovery of chicks playing in the grass makes allows him to finish the poem, but the fact that he had an unfinished poem suggests that the discovery is not haphazard, but conditioned by his predisposition to look for poetry. The poem is as much about how he discovered the scene the as about the scene itself. The process of writing this poem agrees with the seemingly paradoxical statement by Zhao Fan, "I look for poetry, and poetry chances to emerge."

This is a good place to sum up the layers in this period's notion of poetry as we so far discussed. Poetry is preconditioned by the *shiren*'s disposition to find it and emerges in the encounter between the poetic mind and materials for poetry. The encounter is often brought to the foreground and dramatized as crucial part of the poetic experience and also central to the *shiren*'s self-definition. In addition to its traditional function of expressing feelings and aspirations, displaying the sensibility in the nature of poetic expression also became an indispensible part for a true poem. Poetry is an exclusive form of knowledge for the privileged *shiren*. That knowledge includes insights otherwise undetectable to a non-poetic eye, as well as a new category for organizing existing ones. The image of the *shiren* living in this world of poetry yet remains obscure, and this is what we turn to in the next part of the chapter.

****

III. A portrait of the *shiren*

IIIA. Another Long Introduction

"Autumn clouds have always been a poet's 'thing'."
秋雲總是詩家物.

The *shiren's* conception of poetry and how they conceived their role as poets are essentially two sides of the same coin. In this section, I will be referring to the arguments made in the last section, but placing the emphasis on the *shiren's* agency in making poetry. With the knowledge that the world is full of material waiting to be made into poetry, the *shiren* presented himself variously as a collector, a master, a commander, and an artist. As something elegant and special, it is also a role that requires constant assertion, reflection, and renewal.

A *shiren* likes to proclaim that "such-and-such belongs to the poet," or that "such-and-such exists to be gathered into poetry." But before going into the specifics of these representations, it is necessary to recognize what lies behind them: an understanding of the fine filaments of reciprocity between a *shiren*'s consciousness and the world around him. Zhang Zi explores the *shiren's* role with regard to its workings in the following poem:

My Studio on South Lake[90]	南湖書齋
Deep in the rain, my sadness adrift among the falling tree flowers.	雨深愁入樹花飄,
At far end of the horizon, it clears to reveal the empyrean sky.	盡際翻晴現帝霄,
Blue-grey peaks soar when the power of my vision is bold,	目力壯時蒼岫長,
A sporting fish leaps out of the water where my heart's feeling is at leisure.	心情閒處戲魚跳,
Autumn clouds have always been a poet's "thing".	秋雲總是詩家物,
The night market has now spread onto the local bridge.	夜市今連里陌橋,
Instead of coming to take me along, the boatman	船子不來同載我,
Startles the kingfishers to fly out of the flowering orchids.	却驚翡翠出蘭苕.

The first four lines each conveys a different mood, three of which are named by a single word, sadness (*chou* 愁), heroic spirit (*zhuang* 壯) and leisure (*xian* 閑) in lines one, three, and four, respectively, which incidentally appear in the same position in each line. The second line

[90] *QSS* 50:31596.

does not name the mood, but serves to clear up the gloom in the first line. However, where the syntactical structure of the lines denotes the mood definitively, it obscures the relationship between poet, mood, and imagery. As this is one of the instances where translation creates more problems than it solves, I will have to take on the lines one by one.

Line one speaks of three images, rain, sadness, and tree flowers, all three of which could be either the subject or object of one or more of the three predicates, *shen* 深 (deep, somber), *ru* 入 (enter into), and *piao* 飄 (fluttering or floating). These predicates join the imageries together in an unspecified manner. To be more specific, both rain and sadness have the quality of *shen*. "A deep sadness" is self-explanatory, and as for the rain, *shen* describes the sense of depth it creates by obscuring the vision, which effect would be intensified by the image of tree flowers falling in the rain. It could be a sadness deep in the rain or one caused by the "deep rain;" all we know and need to know is that rain and sadness share the quality *shen*, and that they mutually occasion and reinforce each another in this quality. The same could be said about the word *piao* 飄. Translated variously as falling and drifting, it can be understood as the movement of the tree flowers (or catkins, depending on the season), sadness, and rain. Like the word *shen*, it serves the same impressionistic function to be intensified by more than one image.

The verb *ru* presents a different problem. There is no question that it takes "tree flowers" as the object, but to say that "my sadness enters into the tree flowers" could mean different things in translation. It could be a sadness for the falling flowers in the rain, or a sadness related to the falling flowers, like the season's passing, or, the falling flowers are a visual manifestation of the poet's sorrow inspired by an unknown source. The line does not require one to choose, as the translation does, only one version; it merely requires the visualization of the human emotion,

sadness, *blending in* (*ru*) with the natural imageries in every way, as all of the possible translations suggest.

The second line directs the line of vision to the horizon, where the sky begins to clear, and so does the sadness accordingly. A clear sky in the horizon also makes the next image of the lofty blue-grey peaks physically and subjectively possible. Lines three and four each consists of two parallel phrases joined by the conjunctions "when" (*shi* 時) and "where" (*chu* 處), but they do not merely operate on the literal level. Literally, distant mountain peaks would appear larger when one enjoys "good eyesight and a clear view" (a literal explanation of the phrase *muli zhuang* 目力壯); in poetry, heroic spirit is one of the emotions that gazing at mountain peaks could inspire. But grammatically, the order is reversed: when a heroic spirit impregnates the vision, mountain peaks appears loftier than usual. The next line works in a similar way. A leisurely heart allows one to notice a leaping fish, which in turn heightens the feeling of leisure.

So far no significant event or action has taken place in the poem, nor is it guided by a narrative or a single mood. Although the images are neatly arranged from the near and specific to the distant and back again, the range of emotions follow so closely upon one another that they are more likely a range of *possibilities* that Zhang Zi experienced in his South Lake studio than what actually took place in one setting. Sadness, heroic spirit, and leisure each could be the mood for a different poem, but here Zhang Zi passes through them easily in a single one. If we take the first two lines as a unit, so far the poem consists of three paratactic units, and they all describe the subtle working of a *shiren*'s consciousness on the world around him and how it is reciprocated. The *shiren* does not only describe but also how he is conscious of its workings. The voice here is not of a sad man (*chouren* 愁人), nor of a heroic man (壯士), nor of a leisurely man (*xianren* 閒人), but the voice of a *shiren*, who is familiar with and inhabits all three.

Having dealt with the complexities, Zhang Zi then puts it simply, "autumn clouds have always been a poet's 'thing'." While the phrase *shijia wu* simply means "the property of a poet," embedded in the line is the familiar compound *yunwu* 雲物, used in poetry to refer to the color and shape of clouds or nature's scenery. Zhang Zi was not the first or the only scholar who claimed celestial spectacle as personal property, but in the context of the poem the statement means more than a claim to possession. When scholars like Su Shi claimed the wind and the moon, he meant them as nature's inexhaustible source of enjoyment. But here, autumn cloud is metonymic of the natural imagery available to the *shiren*, including the ones he used in the first four lines of this poem – imagery as the vessel and marker of poetic moods to which he is so sensitive as a "poet" (*shijia*).

Line five cannot be read alone when it is paralleled to line six, apparently a haphazard observation – or a thought – of the night market. Yet, it is also a perfect pairing of human activity with a celestial phenomenon, of what is transitory with the everlasting, and of the poet's position as a spectator with his ownership of the autumn clouds. Moreover, his desire to go to the night market leads to the image of the last couplet that happens to recapture the theme of the poem – the boatman startles the kingfisher birds to fly from the flowering orchids. It is a strong echo of a line from Guo Pu's poem, "The kingfishers play in orchid flowers; they enhance each other in beauty and color 翡翠戲蘭苕, 容色更相鮮." The image was first used by Du Fu as a metaphor for beautiful poetry (ornamentally pretty as opposed to grand or majestic).[91] The latter poem appears in Song editions of Du Fu's poetry, so Zhang Zi is certain to have read it and is also using Guo Pu's image as a metaphor for poetry. But in light of the rest of the poem, the

[91] See Du Fu, "Playful Compositions: Six Quatrains 戲為六絕句," fourth poem of six. Qiu, 2:900.

emphasis lies on the second part of the metaphor, "they enhance each other." Kingfishers and flowering orchids are similar in color and prettiness, and their mutual dependence is analogous to the theme of this poem – the way in which human sentiments and natural imagery occasion and intensify each other in the making of poetry. The *shiren* is made to observe the spectacle of the birds being made to fly out of the orchids and thereby distinguishing themselves, and made aware of the relationship between poetic emotion and imagery. The identity and voice of the *shiren* rests precisely on this awareness.

There are many statements in the *shirens'* poetic corpus like Zhang Zi's "Autumn clouds have always been a poet's 'thing'," though few of them appear in a context like this poem. They are easily taken as claims to possession, but as Zhang Zi's poem shows, the objects are "possessed" – forgive the pun – in a way very specific to this period's *shiren.* They are not only entitled to enjoy the delightful scenes in nature but also entitled to employ a *shiren's* unique understanding of their poetic potentials and to exercise a *shiren*'s agency to make them into poetry. In short, a *shiren* takes possession of the materials first in the spirit of an artist, and only then may other representations follow, as owner and collector. It is in this spirit that Zhao Fan would say, "Materials for poetry stir the entire countryside, / But upon close inspection, I find that they lack management 詩材動鄉邑, 點檢欠經營."[92] Or as Zhang Zi says, "Only now have I gotten hold of autumn colors, / let them come swiftly into my poems to develop their brilliance 秋色此行方到手, 快來詩內發精明."[93]

IIIB. The artist and his double

[92]From "Setting Out Early from Jiande 早發建德." *QSS* 49: 30581.

[93] From "Going Out of the City on a Short Trip to Wuxing 暫往吳興出城." *QSS* 50: 31622.

"*Straight and slanted are several lines of vocal writing.*
The sky is drop-dead impressive for knowing how to write poetry."
橫斜數行有聲字, 服殺虛空解作詩.

Using the word "artist" calls to mind other art forms, namely painting and calligraphy. The close relationship between poetry and painting has been noted in almost every book on Song poetry.[94] There is also a book-length study by Li Xi. One of his main sources of text, *Shenghua ji* 聲畫集, a collection of poems on paintings, was compiled by Sun Shaoyuan 孫紹遠 in the 12th century, which falls roughly in our period. However, Li Xi's objective is to study the background, techniques and poetic/artistic theories involved in "poems on painting" (*tihua shi* 題畫詩) as a genre, which includes both poems inscribed on paintings and poems about paintings/painters. The relationship between poetry and painting from the perspective of the *tihua shi* genre has received ample treatment in Li Xi's book, but it is not directly relevant to the purpose of this chapter. This section seeks to elucidate the ways in which knowledge of painting techniques influenced the *shiren*'s awareness as an artist in the process of writing poetry. In order to do so, I will focus on a different group of poems – poems that can hardly be called a genre because they concern a variety of topics, but share a common trope of making use of the knowledge of painting techniques. Poems like this one by Yang Wanli:

Cold-weather sparrows come and go on the shadows of plum-blossom branches on my east window. [95]	東窻梅影上有寒雀往來
There is no need to trace the plum blossoms and the cold-weather partridges.	梅花寒雀不須摹,

[94] See Li Xi 李栖, *Liang Song tihuashi lun* 兩宋題畫詩論, (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju), 1994.

[95] *QSS* 42: 26235.

The sun has already done a sketch by casting their shadow on the window.	日影橫窻作畫圖,
The cold-weather partridges can fly and the flowers can dance,	寒雀解飛花解舞,
Take a look: there has never been such a painting in the past or the present.	君看此畫古今無.

Every reader would agree that this poem is "just like a painting," but it is not included in any anthology of *tihua shi* because the painting is imaginary. A common trope to praise the painting in *tihua shi* is to declare how "like" the painting is to the real thing, but in poems like this, the trope is reversed. The effectiveness of such kind of poems depends on the reader's familiarity with the types of painting to which they refer. Yang Wanli's poem provides the barest information on the painting's subjects, and it is up to the reader to arrange them in the popular pattern of a "bird and flower" painting. A reader who has never seen one of those paintings would not know that the plum tree branches must be sparse and rigid, that the partridges must be the right number and placed in proper balance, and so on and so forth. In other words, far from declaring that "nature is the perfect art," Yang Wanli uses the common knowledge of a genre painting to reconstruct a scene in nature.

The technique of referring to an imaginary painting is widely used by Yang Wanli and his contemporaries. The following poem by Zhao Fan shares the title of a popular genre painting, "Wild Geese Descending on Smooth Sandbank":

Wild Geese Descending on Smooth Sandbank	平沙落鴈[96]
Tufts and tufts of rush reeds by the water,	叢叢水邊蘆,
One by one the wild geese alight by the rapids.	鴈鴈灘頭泊,
I don't know the art of painting,	我不解丹青,
But I can sketch a likeness with this small poem.	小詩亦可貌.

[96] *QSS* 49: 30920.

Again, the poem enumerates the subjects of the imaginary painting, but provides no spatial layout. No color, either, but color is less consequential because a real "Wild Geese Descending on the Smooth Sandbank" painting usually involves minimal color. The first half of the poem is far from being a satisfactory "likeness," but the title of a painting fills in the deficiency.

In addition to being familiar with the appearance of paintings, a *shiren* also relies on practical knowledge of painting material and techniques:

On the day of the full moon in the third month, I took a boat onto the West Lake in a light drizzle (four poems) [97]	三月望日微雨汎舟西湖四首
It's not as if Heaven begrudges us one sunny day,	非是天慳一日晴,
But the *shiren* is entitled to its many faces when it's cloudy.	晦陰多態屬詩人,
Clouds swirl like in a painting of contrasting ink-splashes.	雲翻畫樣烘濛墨,
Ripples form on the waves like embossed silver cusps.	波捲紋頭起突銀.

"Contrasting" (*hong* 烘), "ink-splash" (*mengmo* 濛墨) and "embossed silver" (*tuyin* 突銀) are specialized terminology describing different painting techniques. However, for all their references to painting, it would be an injustice to stop at observing that the three poems above (last one is by Zhang Zi) "resemble paintings" because they do not seek merely to provide pictorial representations of nature. The presence of the poet, albeit borrowing the identity of a painter, figures prominently in all three poems. Their agency as an artist trying to transform a natural scene into art is as important as the scene itself. These poems are essentially the same type as the ones I quoted in Part I, except that they borrow from a different art form.

There is consensus among scholars of literati paintings that spirit is valued higher than likeness. A literati painting conveys lofty sentiments, while mere likeness is the specialty of an

[97] The second poem of set of two. *QSS* 50: 31652.

artisan (*jiang* 匠). The *shiren* used the same hierarchy to claim precedence for poetry over painting: "True paintings exist in this world, / The poet acts on its origin; / True poetry exists in this world, / And a painter picks up the remainder. 世間有真畫, 詩人干其初, 世間有真詩, 畫工掇其餘"[98]; "[The effect] cannot be achieved even through the best of paintings, / but can perhaps be accomplished by uttering a startling line of poetry. 得意寫圖那辦此, 驚人吐句或能之";[99] "Li Cheng ponders how to paint this scene – / But it can only be done in poetry. 李成覷着如何畫, 却是詩中畫得成."[100] All of the above lines hint at a kind of representation that is only possible in poetry. The question that remains for us is what exactly is the manner of representation and what they seek to represent.

The obvious part of the answer is that they seek to portray a poetic mood or a lofty spirit. While this is an interesting topic that will receive more attention in a following chapter, it is not directly relevant here. The relevant part is that they represent the consciousness and agency of the *shiren* as an artist. The three poems above by Yang Wanli, Zhao Fan, and Zhang Zi did not allot the artist's hand to an unobtrusive role. On the contrary, they emphasize the *shiren's* presence. In Yang Wanli's poem, an artist's consciousness is projected unto the sunlight, the partridges, and the plum flowers; Zhao Fan's poem is really about his desire to take down a

---

[98] From Zhang Zi, "Ma Fen was well-known between the Zhenghe and Xuanhe eras (1111-1126) for painting flower and bamboo. His grandson, Ma Yuan, attained Fen's way of brushwork and the highest of his grandfather's skill in both landscape and portrait paintings. I once had him portray me in a scene in the woods. I felt something and wrote this poem to show to friends afar. 馬賁以畫花竹名政宣間其孫遠得賁用筆意人物山水皆極其能余嘗令圖寫林下景有感因賦以示遠."*QSS* 50:31545.

[99] From Zhao Fan, "In the rain on the nineteenth 十九日雨中." *QSS* 49: 30685.

[100] From Yang Wanli, "After the rain, I went out to the creek 雨後至溪上." *QSS* 42: 26626.

likeness of the gulls alighting on the sandbank, and Zhang Zi thinks that the many faces a cloudy day has to offer belongs to the *shiren*. Often the artist's agency is attributed to a non-human subject, which becomes the artist's double:

When My Boat Passed by the Xie Pond	舟過謝潭[101]
Every now and then I down a cup or two of emerald-colored liquor,	碧酒時傾一兩杯,
The moment I closed the shutters of my boat, I open them up again.	船門纔閉又還開,
Because no one sees the ten thousand folds in the fine mountain,	好山萬皺無人見,
They were all pinched out by the setting sun.	都被斜陽拈出來.

The almost clichéd occasion of a poet facing a mountain was made unusual by the poet's personifying the afternoon sun highlighting the crags.

As the supreme artist, the sun and other natural objects were also capable of writing poetry. I mentioned above that the *shiren* must have a double, one as an organic part of the scenery giving it a poetic quality and another to make a poem out of it. The *shiren* cast his double in many forms. Sometimes he appears incredibly narcissistic, capable of seeing an image of himself in everything he encounters. Both concrete objects and abstract forces were personified to have a *shiren*'s consciousness and presence – someone who was either ready to enter into a poem or in the process of writing a poem, either urging the *shiren* to write a poem or reciting a poem he just finished. That nature inspires poetic emotions is an old idea, but now it is expressed in new terms of personifying natural objects with a poetic turn of mind. Just to give a few examples, Zhang Zi writes thus of the floating duckweeds: "they are said to be without feeling, but seem full of feeling, / for they refuse to turn back until they've made it into my poem 無情卻似多情物, 不到

[101] By Yang Wanli. *QSS* 42: 26270.

詩中不肯迴."[102] Han Biao's ends a poem about thinking of his friend with, "The morning breeze fanned a poem over / In the form of a plum tree branch, radiant with numerous jade pieces 曉風吹詩來, 梅枝粲羣玉."[103] And Yang Wanli writes on a trip, "The river and mountains are not without intent – / They invite me to seek new poems. 江山豈無意, 邀我覓新詩."[104]

The quatrain is a place to exhibit wit and humor, the ability to transform a hackneyed topic to something innovative. The idea that anything in the universe could potentially be a poet or artist occasioned many witty figures that usually made the punch line for a quatrain or, in this case, an extended metaphor that took up the whole poem:

Watching the Wild Geese	看鴈[105]
Where is this flock of wild geese headed in this clear morning,	曉晴羣鴈欲何之,
Just when the blue sky resembles a piece of paper?	正是青天似紙時,
Straight and slanted are several lines of vocal writing.	横斜數行有聲字,
The sky is dead impressive for knowing how to write poetry.	服殺虛空解作詩.

Finally, *shiren* and artist were joined together in a supreme moment when Yang Wanli happened to look in a pond and saw an "organic" portrait of himself:

Seated on the Lotus Bridge at Dusk	荷橋暮坐[106]
The pond, like a willow-patterned brocade tapestry spread out,	池似平鋪柳錦横
With lotuses as the warp, and waterweeds the weft,	荷花為緯藻為經
For no good reason weaves a portrait of the poet,	無端織出詩人像

[102]"Observing Duckweed on the South Lake 南湖上觀萍." *QSS* 50: 31658.

[103] "Thinking of [Xu] Siyuan 懷斯遠." *QSS* 52:32439.

[104] "Resting from My Journey at Fengshan 豐山." *QSS* 42: 26137.

[105] By Zhang Zi. *QSS* 50:31650.

[106] Second from a set of three. *QSS* 42:26193.

Who stands alone on the suspended arch to pluck the Pole Star. 獨立飛橋摘斗星

Again, the return of the centralized lone poet figure with a lofty aspiration, reading patterns in the universe – all recast in a deliberately clever metaphor tantamount to parody. In a poem like Wang Zhi's (see the introduction to this chapter), a poet is also a lone prophet and a tragic hero, but in this poem, he is just a *shiren*. He does not aspire to the grandeur of a prophet, but he delights in the sensibility of an artist. Not only could he read the patterns woven by lotuses and waterweeds, he also displays a *shiren's* heroics by plucking the Pole Star. He is the center of a universe that consists of artistic forces, and he commands them all.

IIIC. The collector and his pouch

"*Without Wei Yan's dab hand at painting,*
I just gather them all into lines of poetry for my pouch."
我無韋偃丹青手, 只向囊中句裏收

One can hardly miss a practical and material side to this period's notion of poetry. As individual pieces, poetry represents the encounter between the *shiren* and the outside world; as collections, poetry is the *shiren*'s diary, travelogue, and quite literally, personal property. While literati poetry has always been read autobiographically, this period's poetry is distinguished by a turn for factual details and the *shiren'*s conscious effort to recreate autobiographical record. Thus, in addition to the poet's personality and lofty aspirations one usually expects from a personal anthology, the reader could also expect to glean mundane details of his everyday life.

Poetry circulated in collections. We find many poems in the *shirens*' corpus either requesting/borrowing a poetry collection from a friend, accompanying the presentation of a collection, or written in reply to a gift of poetry collection. The most famous case is of course Yang Wanli, who started to divide his poems into mini-anthologies in the late 1180s and

arranging them in chronological order, with each collection representing one stage of his life and/or poetic development. Information on how these collections circulated can still be found in the exchange poems between him and his close associates. Yang Wanli's own prefaces also record in great detail how his friends requested to see his collections and how they responded. The following pair of poems by Yang Wanli and You Mou are typical examples of social poetry accompanying the exchange of a mini-collection within poetic circles in their time. (I present the poems in the original format as they appeared in *Chengzhai ji* 誠齋集. The first one is by You Mou, and the second is Yang Wanli's response.)

I happened to present *Xigui ji* and *Chaotian ji* to You Yanzhi, who very kindly returned a seven-word poem. In order to thank him, I wrote a poem to him in the same rhyme.

Years after "*Returning West"* you come to "*Pay Respect to the Emperor*," [107]
Having added six hundred poems to your silk pouch.
They're like the Chuiji Jade,[108] but worth three times as much,
Or the Night Illuming Pearl, perfectly round like the moon.
Everyone commends you as the Poet Immortal from the Phoenix Pond;[109]
The Jilin merchant will circulate your poetry for sure.[110]
I am like Cen Shen and Gao Shi
To have my name mentioned in a collection like Du Fu's.[111]
[Small script]: Yanzhi's poem.

Liangxi returned from the heavenly Mirror Lake.

[107] Incorporating the titles of Yang's two poetry collections, *Xigui ji* ("Poems on Returning West") and *Chaotian ji* ("Paying Respect to the Emperor").

[108] The city of Chuiji is famous for producing beautiful jade in the Spring and Autumn Era.
[109] Meaning the imperial court. The Poet Immortal alludes to Li Bai.

[110] This is the honorable destiny of Bai Juyi's writings. It was said that a Jilin (Thai) merchant sold them to the Thai minister for one gold a piece.

[111] Cen Shen 岑參 and Gao Shi 高適 are Du Fu's contemporaries. Being fine poets in their right, they failed to measure up to Du Fu's standard in later poets' view. Therefore, it was their honor to be mentioned in Du Fu's poetry.

His brush swept the lake's radiance into grand compositions.
Poured out from the silk pouch, they are still wet with rain,
Brilliant like marbles rolling on the tray.[112]
How can I live up to the poetic method you credited me with?
I mock my nonsense writings; how dare I casually pass them around?
There's no need to ask others for prefaces,
Because I can just crown my obsolete collection with your wonderful words.
[Small script]: Elder You's sobriquet is Liangxi. He recently returned from paying respect to the Imperial Mausoleum.
偶送西歸朝天二集與尤延之蒙惠七言和韻以謝之
西歸累崴却朝天, 添得囊中六百篇, 垂棘連城三倍價, 夜光明月十分圓, 競誇鳳沼詩仙樣, 當有雞林賈客傳, 我侪岑參與高適, 姓名得入少陵編. [延之詩]
梁溪歸自鏡湖天, 筆捲湖光入大篇, 傾出錦囊和雨濕, 炯如柘彈走盤圓, 許分句法何曾付, 自笑蕪辭敢浪傳, 兩集不須求序引, 祇將妙語冠陳編. [尤丈號梁溪居士新歸自朝陵所][113]

The two poems are fairly straightforward compliments using conventional metaphors and allusions for good poetry. Needless to say, such kind of exchange was not limited to well-known poets but extended to many others whose poetry is non-extant. The poetry-exchange practice also occasioned poems requesting to see a collection, expressing one's happiness in acquiring a collection, or presenting a collection to a friend or a patron. Poems like this had existed before, but in this period, they multiplied. Poetic collections were viewed as a prized personal possession that found the perfect metaphor in Li He's silk pouch.

Yang Wanli and You Mou's poems are typical in alluding to the silk pouch. It was mentioned before that Yang Wanli gave Li He's pouch a playful turn, but not everyone had

[112] A popular metaphor in the Song dynasty for good poetry. The copyright belongs to Xie Tiao 謝朓 (464-499), who said to Shen Yue 沈約 (441-513) that "a good poem is beautifully rounded and rolls like a marble." The metaphor became the trademark of the Jiangxi school when Lü Benzhong used it to illustrate the "live method."

[113] *QSS* 42:26388.

Yang's peculiar sense of humor. For most people, "the pouch" was the standard figure of speech to talk about poetry collections, and sometimes contrasted with the salary bag (*huannang* 宦囊). We have already come across some of the verbs to describe poetry-writing: "collect" (*shoushi* 收拾 or just *shou* 收), "arrange" (*anpai* 安排), "inspect" (*dianjian* 點檢), "manage" (*jingying* 經營), and "cut and mold" (*jiancai* 剪裁). "Collect" appears most often and usually in conjunction with "the pouch." To take Zhao Fan as an example, when he wanted to compliment his poet friend at parting, he wrote, "I heard that you were going to transfer to the Yangzi River route, / This way up the river is formidably long. / Though you don't have to worry about having nothing to present on your return, / For you'll have collected rivers and mountains in a single silk pouch. 聞道君行欲轉江, 江行此路不勝長, 雖然不患無歸遺, 收拾江山一錦囊."[114] When he is awed by You Mou, Yang Wanli, and Lu You's poetry collections, he writes thus about his own, "Furthermore, the stuff inside my tattered pouch, / when I want to reach for them, makes me feel embarrassed. 何况破囊中, 欲探還自忸."[115] And when he almost could not finish a poem on Intertwined Dragons Mountain, he was able to convince himself otherwise by thinking, "I was about to put down my brush and fail Dr. Mulberry, / but I'd hate for my silk pouch to miss out on this mountain. 試將閣筆罷楮生, 又病囊中此山少."[116] Examples like this are endless.

---

[114] "Seeing off Chen Qingbo: three poems 送陳慶伯三首." *QSS* 49: 30925.

[115] "Presented to Examiner You Mou: four poems 贈尤檢正四首." The fourth poem. *QSS* 49: 30430.

[116] The mulberry tree was used to make paper. Dr. Mulberry was a friend of Mr. Hair Tip – the names Han Yu came up with for paper and writing brush, respectively, in "The Biography of Hair Tip." The poem is "Passing the night in the Daguan Temple on Helong Mountain, using the same rhyme as Zhang Cheng Daming's poem on the wall 宿合龍山達觀寺用張澂達明壁間韻."

Now it is more understandable why Yang Wanli had been in such a hurry to get Tianzhu Mountain over with so he could write more about what was ahead. It was not enough to write only one poem about his feelings on the journey; it was necessary that he collect *all* the beauty that the journey offered into his poems every moment of the way. In a similar poem to "Tianzhu Mountain," Yang Wanli observes that the mountains hues dyed his brush in rainbow colors, making him feel "urgent to copy those colors and put them in the poetry tube 染得筆頭生五色, 急將描取入詩筒."[117] When he found a mountain beautiful and wanted to write about it, he also says it in terms of "the pouch," "My dreams in the night and thoughts in the day are filled by natural scenery; / They come and go on all sides, too much for me to respond to. / Without Wei Yan's dab hand at painting, / I just gather them all into the lines of poetry for my pouch. 夜夢晝思都是景, 左來右去不勝酬, 我無韋偃丹青手, 只向囊中句裏收."[118] Both poems betray this sense of urgency when he encounters an overwhelming body of materials for poetry, and this is typical of the *shiren's* "collector impulse," the desire to gather all into personal possession.

Naturally, to be a poet-collector requires constant effort. Some *shiren* went so far as to say that not writing poetry for three days made him fall ill. They all betrayed some kind of anxiety of not living up to the commitment of a *shiren* when they felt that they were writing too little or missing a necessary poem. What enabled Zhao Fan to finish his poem on Intertwined Dragons Mountain, for example, was the fear of "missing a poem." Lu You had a similar moment when

---

Zhang Cheng, whose courtesy name was Daming, was appointed the Assistant Director Aid of the Right in the Department of State Affairs in 1129. *QSS* 49:30502.

[117] A cylindrical container to hold papers, the tube is a variation of the poem pouch. The poem is "On the path to the new roadside inn 新路店道中." *QSS* 42:26533.

[118] "Dawn Cooking at Hantang 晨炊旱塘." *QSS* 42: 26421.

he rode out on a spring day and felt it necessary to "taking down my silk pouch, let me fill in the missing poem on the end of spring 解囊且補殘春詩."[119] I have refrained from quoting long poems thus far, but the following poem by Zhang Zi is, for its length, a full and honest confession of the *shiren*'s anxiety of "not writing enough" (stanza division mine):

My recent poems number very few. As I walked in the tree shades, I was delighted to complete a poem in uneven meter, with great encouragement to myself.[120] From now on, I will make it a daily exercise. [121]	近詩殊少, 閒行綠陰下, 喜成雜言以自勉, 繼此當日課云
1.	
I wrote so few poems last winter,	去冬詩絶稀,
So I wait eagerly for a good spring.	作意待好春,
Only with the arrival of spring did I recover from my illness,	春至病始甦,
But my verses were forced and lack real feeling.	強賦情少真,
2.	
From plum blossoms to begonias,	梅花到海棠,
They only number in decades.	不過數十首,
Had there really been no inspiration at all?	其間豈無興,
When I held a brush, I had no heart to chant anything.	有筆慵開口,
3.	
Every time when wind and sun were beautiful,	每逢風日美,
My heart felt drunk, unknown to others.	心醉人不知,
I would run through the forest like mad	林間行若狂,
And lay on the grass for long periods at a time.	藉草或移時.
4.	
In no time, the fragrant flowers are all swept away,	芳花倏掃蹤,
Replaced by leaves that fill the entire garden.	轉作滿園葉,

[119] "Ballad of the One-Hundred-and-fifth Day after Winter (i.e. the Cold Food Day) 一百五日行," *JNSGJZ,* 5:2321.

[120] A *zayan* poem means that the lines are of different lengths, so this poem, consisting of all pentasyllabic lines, is not a *zayan* in the usual sense.

[121] *QSS* 50:31538-39.

Their rich green color seem to overflow,	油然翠欲流,
And so neat as if the shade is folded in layers.	剪若陰初疊,
5.	
I'm an old man loving deep recesses.	老夫愛深處,
I wind through trees to open a path.	穿樹開生路.
This scent is not the fragrance of wind	香不是風香,
That is blowing back and forth.	吹來復吹去,
6.	
So I lean on my walking stick and look up,	扶笻仰面看,
[And behold] the green plums clustering on the branches.	青子枝間團,
I invite the guests to help themselves,	引客任摘嘗,
Surely no one will mistake them for adjusting their caps.[122]	庸詎疑整冠.
7.	
When I have free time, I come to sit on the large rock,	閒來坐根石,
And attempt to gaze far through the wholly seamless [leaves].	遠望渾無隙,
It is as vast as the Heavenly Maiden's loom	大似天女機,
Weaving manifold layers of green gauze.	重重綠蘿織,
8.	
A bee seems to fear my anger,	黃蜂恐我嗔,
He considers coming to a halt, then backs away, but still hovers around.	擬住退逡巡,
As summer draws near I'm even lazier in writing poetry,	向夏吟更懶,
So on the contrary, I'm afraid of the [busy] bee laughing at *me*.	却防蜂笑人,
9.	
From now on I shall proceed with vigor,	從今當健走,
My antique pouch shall be duly dusted.	古囊勤抖擻,
Let me not hum like a housefly,	莫作蒼蠅鳴,
But always roar like a lion.	常如獅子吼.

From an apology and explanation for not having written better and more poems (stanzas 1-2),

Zhang Zi attempts to fill in the gap from those poemless days in stanza 3, emphasizing that

[122] A gentleman does not adjust his cap under the plum tree because the gesture may be mistaken for stealing the plums. The allusion is from "The Ballad of the Gentleman 君子行," in Guo Maoqian, ed., *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集, 4 vol., (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1979), 2:467.

although he did not write, he had still been caught in poetic moods. The main part of the poem narrates the experience that finally snapped him out of an unproductive period. Otherwise just a casual walk through the trees, the experience was made special because it enabled him to finish a poem that led to the resolution to write everyday. Interestingly, it was not the "mad" exhilaration (stanza 2) in spring time that broke through his poet's block, but a modestly pleasant exploration in the woods. Without a drunken heart this time, he allowed himself to be impressed by simple and ordinary things – a scent that lured him to plums, thick, layered canopy of green leaves, and a timid bee. While Zhang Zi does not preclude extraordinarily inspiring experiences from making way into his poetry – after all, a part of his resolution is to "always roar like a lion" – the kind of poetry to fulfill a "daily task" is simply a dairy-like entry, just like this one. It is the kind of poetry which we encountered in the previous section, and which made up the majority of any *shiren*'s poetic corpus.

In the end, Zhang Zi comes back to "the pouch." It is not an understatement to say that a *shiren* lived his life around his pouch, and the pouch contains a record of how they lived their lives. I will end the section with a pair of playful poems by Yang Wanli. The first compares his poetry collection to a travel journal, and the second – because he had been traveling through bad atmosphere – to a "Miasma Manual."

Written playfully in my boat	舟中戲題[123]
Flowers live in green mountains and willows live next to streams,	花處青山柳處溪,
The place I come to moor is where I camped some previous time.	新來宿處舊曾炊,
On returning home, I lost track of my travel schedule,	到家失却行程歷,
So I just sort through my mini poetry collection, *Returning West.*	只撿西歸小集詩.

[123] *QSS* 42:26245.

Entering the border of Chengxiang County	入程鄉縣界[124]
The dark miasma in Changle seems to solidify near the ground.	長樂昏嵐著地凝,
Pestilential vapors in Chengxiang blows on one with a stench.	程鄉毒霧噗人腥,
My poems are not "The Journey South Collection"–	吾詩不是南征集,
It's only fit to title it "The Miasma Manual."	只合標題作瘴經.

****

IV. The Long Conclusion – *shiren* in distress:

"*The one who wants to obtain poetic fame,*
Must first experience poetic misfortune."
欲將取詩名, 先應歷詩窮

Poetry (*shi*) and adversity (*qiong* 窮, also translated as "distress" or "misfortune") had been paired for so long before this period that for all their happiness in writing, the *shiren* still perpetuated the idea that poetic excellence is usually accompanied by illnesses and misfortune. But unlike poets from earlier periods, "poetic adversity" (*shiqiong* 詩窮) became an essential part of their self-definition and social repositioning as "poets."

In a poem I quoted earlier on, Yang Wanli claims to "look into Spring's heart with a poetic eye." It is in the same spirit that he makes the declaration that ends the following poem:

Watching Transformation	觀化[125]
People say that the east wind is crafty –	道是東風巧,
The west wind is no less so.	西風未減東,
Frost replaced yellow chrysanthemums with purple,	菊黃霜換紫,
And dews rubbed the green trees red.	樹碧露揉紅,
One must employ the idiosyncratic eye	須把乖張眼,
To sneak a peak at the forces of creation and transformation at work.	偷窺造化工,
I fear only to miss heaven's perfect art,	只愁失天巧,

[124] *QSS* 42: 26301.
[125] *QSS* 42:26523.

And never to regret getting cornered by poetry into adversity. 不悔得詩窮.

The "idiosyncratic eye," one and the same with the "poetic eye," allows him to see "the forces of creation and transformation at work." With a poetic eye, the *shiren* gains special knowledge that otherwise would be lost; he could "manage" and "arrange" materials into poetry like an artist; he could also gather the world into his poems and amass poems in a silk pouch. But in exchange, wealth in poetry necessarily brings him worldly misfortune. Yang Wanli was a high official and lived to a ripe old age; in the preface to Xiao Dezao's poetry collection, he could even write in the voice of Ouyang Xiu about his less prosperous friend who is, by analogy, Mei Yaochen. But in this poem, he still claims that "I never regret getting cornered by poetry into adversity." Regardless of their actual social and economic status, "poetic misfortune" became an indispensible part of the *shiren*'s self-definition, being an aesthetic as well as moral position. Whereas in the case of earlier unfortunate poets, such as Meng Jiao and Mei Yaochen, their more successful contemporaries explained misfortune as a test to sharpen their poetic skills or as the result of heaven's jealousy for their talent. Either way, they did not ask for it. But for the *shiren*, "poetic misfortune" is mostly a voluntary position. There would be a group of poets in the next generation, collectively known as the "Poets of Rivers and Lakes" (*jianghu shiren* 江湖詩人), who were actually "in adversity" because of poverty or low social status. In the generations of Yang Wanli and Zhao Fan, however, most *shiren* still belonged to the social elite, even if some of them chose to stay out of an official career.

"Poetic misfortune" was perhaps the second most-used stock trope after "materials for poetry." In addition to meaning poverty and/or an unsuccessful official career, it is also closely associated with the aesthetic of "thinness" (*shou* 瘦 or *qu* 臞). Zhang Zi is a good example to illustrate how "poetic misfortune" and "thinness" were used differently from earlier times. The

one word that sums up Zhang Zi's poetry in traditional criticism was "skeletal" (*qu* 臞) In the "Preface to Yuezhai's *Nanhu ji* 約齋南湖集序," Yang Wanli emphasized that the greatest merit to Zhang Zi's poetry was being just as "skeletal" as his person:

> He had deep-set eyes and a frowning expression, light eyebrows and delicate knees, and sat under a thatched roof. But he looked as if his heart is beyond such things like the crags, the ravines, the clouds and the moon. He was not at all like the scion of a noble family … It turns out that his poetry is even more skeletal than his looks.
> 深目顰蹙, 寒眉臞膝, 坐於一草堂之下, 而其意若在巖壑雲月之外者, 葢非貴公子也 … 葢詩癯又甚於其貌之癯也.

Yang qualified the term "skeletal" later on with a lengthy explanation:

> I said, "His ancestor the late prince helped the True Lord to reestablish the empire.[126] The prince's great loyalty and glorious feat fill the space between heaven and earth and outshines the sun, the moon and the stars. One would expect his descendants to brandish the horsewhip, stroke his sword, single-handedly take the central plains and return it to the Emperor. As for looking like he is choosing between 'push' and 'knock,' imitating the sound of autumn insects, or competing with Yin Keng, He Xun, Meng Jiao and Jia Dao to be the first to enter the realm of hunger, cold, distress and sorrow – these are affairs for poor scholars like us. *These* are what I see him busy with while he dawdles and puts off doing *those* things – that's why I laugh at Mr. Yuezhai." The two gentlemen said, "Isn't your laughing at Mr. Yuezhai just an excuse for praising him?"
> 余曰, 彼其先王翼真主以再造王家, 大忠高勳塞兩儀而貫三光, 為之子若孫者, 謂宜掉馬箠, 鳴孤劍, 畧中原以還於天子, 若夫面有敲推之容, 而吻秋蟲之聲, 與陰何郊島先登優入於飢凍窮愁之域, 此我輩寒士事也, 顧汲汲於此, 而於彼乎悠悠爾, 此余之所以笑約齋子也. 二君曰, 子之笑約齋子, 秖所以嘉約齋子歟.[127]

[126] Zhang Zi was the great-grandson of the prominent military commander Zhang Jun 張俊 (1086 – 1154), whose services in the early decades of the Southern Song earned him the title of "Commandery Prince" (*junwang* 郡王).

[127] Yang Wanli. "A Preface to Yuezhai's *South Lake Collection.*" In *Nanhu ji* 南湖集, reprint in *Zhi buzu zhai congshu* 知不足齋叢書. (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1999), 5:378-79.

Zhang Zi neglects doing what is expected of him as the descendant of a great general and focuses on the affairs of "poor scholars." Instead of being the key to a successful career, writing poetry now opens the door to hunger, cold, distress, and sorrow, which wears away one's flesh and by analogy, cuts away the unnecessary embellishment in one's poetry, making it "skeletal." In Zhang Zi's case, this quality is especially praiseworthy because it redeems him in Yang Wanli's opinion for being born into a noble family. The *Siku quanshu* editors made a similar comment contrasting Zhang's poetic style with his lifestyle:

> He inherited the surplus of his grandfather and father's wealth and prestige, and indulged in lakes and mountains, music and dance. He was extremely extravagant, perhaps being too flashy and uninhibited. But he was refined in the art of poetry … Upon close examination, his style is mostly pure and fresh; deep meaning often comes through casual and carefree expressions. He can be said to have quietly distanced himself from the querulous lot. There are indeed poets who do not write in the same style as they live – this is true for Zhang Zi.
> 是其席祖父富貴之餘, 湖山歌舞, 極意奢華, 亦未免過於豪縱. 然其詩學則頗為精深 … 詳其格律, 大都清新獨造, 於蕭散之中時見雋永之趣, 以視嘈雜者流, 可謂翛然自遠, 詩固有不似其人者, 鎡之謂歟.[128]

These comments portray Zhang Zi as someone born noble and wealthy but trying very hard, and succeeding, to look and write like a poor poet – a prized value of the day for poets.[129]

To be a poet in distress and delight in it – it is not a coincidence that the specialized group of *shiren* emerged in this period if we recall Lou Yue's "Colophon to Dai Shizhi's [Fugu] Poetry Scroll" from the beginning of this chapter: "In recent years, scholars are many but poets are few.

---

[128] The preface is included in the *Zhi buzu zhai congshu* edition of Zhang Zi's collection. *Nanhu ji*, 5:378-79.

[129] Records of Zhang Zi's lifestyle flatly contradicts this cultural image of leanness and otherworldliness. His estate became a hub of literary and festive activities soon after it was built. There he received visits from virtually all the notable poets in his day, and he was famous for giving extravagant parties. Zeng Weigang 曾維剛 has gathered the biographical and network sources in the book-length chronology *Zhang Zi nianpu* 張鎡年譜 (Beijing: Renmin, 2010).

One can still prosper through writing prose, but to master poetry is like acquiring the skill of slaughtering dragons. That is why few people favor it." The change in official examination system may be the event that occasioned the redefinition of poet and poetry. No longer a direct means to social success, writing poetry became an alternative way to gain fame, namely, "*shiming* 詩名" (poetic fame), a special way of reading and knowing the world, and a way of self-identity.

With the notable exception of Lu You, the *shiren* also repositioned themselves with regards to social and political duty, but only – it must be emphasized – when they are in that role. Some scholars attempt to distinguish Song poetry from the Tang by claiming that the Song poetry reflects more awareness in social and political crisis. This is largely not true in this period. The statesmen and social elite always had an acute awareness of crisis, but when they are in the role of *shiren*, not much of that awareness is reflected by their poetry compared to their predecessors. Their sense of crisis and duty is well-represented in their memorials to the emperor, letters and prefaces, but their poetry reflects interest in – well, poetry. While the later Poets of the Rivers and Lakes are accused of being "narrow" because all they could write about was "flowers and the moon," it is possible to explain the so-called "narrowness" through the distancing of poetry from social and political matters in this generation. To quote one more poem by Han Biao on this point:

It Snowed	雨雪[130]
It snowed when spring ran almost half its course,	雨雪春將半,
When coldness lingered in the mountains and streams began to swell.	山寒澗溢時,
Who will write a pentasyllabic line?	誰題五字句,
I have got a piece of poetry.	我得一篇詩,

[130] *QSS* 52: 32523.

How far my feelings reach when they are moderate,	淡泊情何遠,
How long-lasting the flavor as it lingers.	綢繆味愈遲,
Let me entertain myself in a leisurely life.	閒中且陶寫,
There are peaceful and dangerous times in governing a country.	治國有安危.

Han Biao is being his usual cryptic self in avoiding to state the exact connection between the last two lines. "Governing a country" is clearly on his mind when he entertains himself with poetry, but is he rejecting it or claiming responsibility for it? As the son of the renowned prime minister Han Yuanji 韓元吉 (fl. 1165), Han Biao mentions remarkably little of state affairs in his poetry. When he does, the attitude is always ambivalent. "It Snowed" speaks of the moderation of feeling and lingering – so of course mild – flavor, which he identifies with poetry-writing. The beginning and the end of the poem suggests that something is rotten in the state, where he mentions that it snowed in the middle of spring, and that there are "peaceful and dangerous times in governing a country," but these lines are worded to contain nothing more than the slightest hint. Anything more than that would be out of place with poetic moderation, as would actively rejecting or embracing the responsibility to govern a country. While political responsibility is not forgotten, the poem presents a gesture to unobtrusively back away from it and passively distancing the poetic realm from the affairs of the state.

Han Biao is admittedly the "purest" *shiren*, whose poetry expressed no desire to assume any other role than the poet recluse. His interest in contemporary affairs is well documented in his other work, *Jianquan riji* 澗泉日記, a collection of anecdotes in miscellaneous notes format. He is also a champion of moderation in feeling, taste, and expression, rather necessitating him to distance himself from social and political exertion more than others. Despite these personal peculiarities, Han Biao's poem represents the general trend that began with a generation before

him to gradually separate the role of the *shiren* apart from commitment to political responsibilities.

V. The Short Conclusion:

I have attempted to portray a *shiren*'s many faces and the new place and definition he gave to poetry by elucidating the common assumptions at work displayed in an amorphous group of poems. Except for the fact they all talk about poetry-writing to a different extent, the disparity among those poems in form, topic, and style precludes grouping them together as a genre, and they are certainly very different from the so-called "poems discoursing on poetry" (*lunshi shi* 論詩詩) or the poems that were collected as *shihua*. It must be emphasized that whatever points I made about the poems, they were assumptions, or invisible forces at work in poetry, and not outright statements made by the *shiren*. The *shiren* did not make grand claims for poetry in order to justify their writing so much and giving it such a high priority, claims that later poets made for them, such as "Poetry is the most significant for the Way; it is connected with the direction of the universe 詩於道最大, 與宇宙氣數相關," [131] which are symptomatic of the post-Zhu Xi syndrome. This is the period before the *shiren* felt the need of justification for writing poetry, and writing about writing is the unalloyed center of self-representation and self-discovery.

[131] See Xie Bingde 謝枋得, "Discourse on Poetry, to Liu Xiuyan" 與劉秀巖論詩. In *Dieshan ji* 疊山集, 16 juan., *Sibu congkan* edition, ser. 2, (Shanghai: Hanfen Lou, 1934 -), 5:4a-b.

Chapter Two

Making the Best of Jiangxi: Yang Wanli, Han Biao and the Regulated Poem

I. Introduction:

The second and third couplets in a regulated poem consist of parallel lines that are both antithetical and complementary. This will be the relationship between the two poets discussed in this chapter. Yang Wanli is the most outspoken *shiren* of the first generation, while Han Biao is at the tail-end of the second. The former is the ultimate erratic poet who valued unpredictable language and measured poetic progress with changes in style, while the latter remained placid throughout his career, seeking permanence within change. The former delighted in wit, frivolity, and colloquial expressions, while the latter maintained a meditative elegance. No two poets' voices could be more unalike than that of Yang Wanli and Han Biao, but both of them labored under the influence of Jiangxi poetics, and their self-identity centered on how they relate to their poetic works. Moreover, as discussed in the previous chapter, they were both writing under the same assumptions and principles of poetry that defined the *shiren*. For the above reasons, I put them side by side as two case studies in this chapter, and by doing so, explore how a *shiren* negotiates the poetic values prominent in his day with the form of the regulated verse to create the unique poetic personality that is to be presented to his contemporaries and the imagined posterity.

I will begin with a discussion of the Jiangxi school and the Late Tang, because they are the matrices around which different but overlapping sets of values were consolidating in this period, such as: a) "perfect craft" (*gong* 工); b) "deep" (*qing* 深); c) "lean"(*shou* 瘦); and d) "bitter." All of these values can be more or less associated with one or both of the Jiangxi school and the Late Tang, two trends that are thought to be fighting out their battle in the late 12th century and into

the Yuan. The two concepts, Jiangxi and Late Tang, are of course fraught with confusion, anachronisms, and creative interpretations throughout the ages. It is still a question, for example, whether there is such a thing as the Late Tang "school" in the Song. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify what these terms meant to this period's *shiren* both in theory and in practice, with the hypothesis that each *shiren* offered individualistic interpretations of the Jiangxi and the Late Tang by associating them with sets of values that overlapped.

These values were in turn associated with the forms of the pentasyllabic regulated poem and the heptasyllabic regulated poem. Thus, what we have here is a web of values, forms, models, and the so-called "schools," for want of a better term. I choose to focus on these two forms because they were the main grounds on which the supposed battle between the Jiangxi and the Late Tang were being fought. Moreover, the rigid set of formal rules that governs the regulated poem and the models of parallel couplets that had accumulated up to the Southern Song also make it easier to see where the *shiren* is making a unique interpretation of the form. As I will make clear in the case studies of Yang Wanli and Han Biao, the *shiren's* interpretation of the form is closely knit with his creation of a poetic personality to be presented to and received by the rest of the world.

The choice of Yang Wanli and Han Biao over Lu You, the obvious master of the heptasyllabic regulated poem, will become clear in due course. Let it be enough to state that the choice is not meant to be representative – that would be a lost battle indeed, considering how erratic each *shiren* was in his own way – but only to provide a starting point to read the history of traditional Chinese poetry from the perspective of the highly individualistic turn a *shiren* could take with the shared values in his day while keeping within the boundaries of formal restrictions. By doing so, I hope to open the possibility of reevaluating Fang Hui's story of Southern Song

poetry in terms of Jiangxi's battle with other models, mostly the Late Tang, and to examine the validity of reading this period's poetry through the concept of the "poetic school" (*shipai* 詩派).

IA. The Late Tang

In elucidating the meaning of "Late Tang" in the second part of the 12th century, I will mainly rely on Huang Yizhen's 黃奕珍 *Songdai shixue zhong de wantang guan* 宋代詩學中的晚唐觀.[132] Huang takes us from the height of the Northern Song, when the phrase "the latter years of Tang dynasty 唐之晚年" first appeared in Ouyang Xiu's 歐陽修 (1007-1072) discussions of poetry, to Fang Hui's synthesis in early Yuan, when he aligned High Tang poetry with the Jiangxi school in opposition to the Late Tang model. Huang met the difficulty of the immense cultural baggage that has accumulated around the concept of "Late Tang" by taking a historical perspective. That is to say, instead of taking "Late Tang" as a static and pre-formed concept, Huang correctly views it as ever-changing and undergoing a process of formation in the Song as generations of poets attributed to it positive or negative values according to their agendas. She traces those values to the exact moment in history when they came to be associated with the Late Tang.

Furthermore, Huang observes that interpretations of the Late Tang seldom existed in a vacuum, but always appeared in a dialectic relationship to something else. For example, as she points out, Ouyang Xiu's statement that poets in "the latter years of Tang dynasty" were characterized by "bitter chanting and hard thinking" (*kuyin jingsi* 苦吟精思), appeared in

[132] Huang, *Songdai shixue zhong de wantang guan,* (Taipei: Wenjin, 1998.)

contrast with his appreciation of Li Bai's "masculine and unrestrained" (*haofang* 豪放) style. Moreover, the fact that it appeared contemporaneously with Sima Guang's concept of the "middle years of the Tang dynasty" and his admiration of Du Fu's poetry points to an interesting phenomenon. That is, the opposition between two camps, the "carving and sculpting" (*diaozhuo* 雕琢) and the "masculine and unrestrained" approaches to writing poetry, was intertwined with Ouyang Xiu and Sima Guang's respective chronological division of Tang poets, which may or may not be consistent with the actual chronology of the dynasty.[133] Huang's approach will be important in this chapter, as the same kind of phenomenon kept reappearing throughout the Song dynasty, and examining the dialectic context in which the concept of the Late Tang was situated will be as important as examining the concept itself.

Huang discusses the concept of the Late Tang in the second half of the 12th century as it was understood by Lu You, Yang Wanli, and the Four Spirits. I will summarize her argument below, with some additions of my own as they become relevant to the purpose of this chapter. In the interest of space, I have had to simplify Huang's argument to a great extent.

By the time of Lu You and Yang Wanli, a commonly accepted set of attributes had formed around the "Late Tang" poets, namely, they wrote exquisitely crafted poems, especially parallel couplets; these poems were the product of painstaking effort; and they labored under the condition of poverty, cold, hunger and misfortune, which they dwelled on in their poetry. In short, they could be summarized in the four-word phrase mentioned above, "*kuyin jingsi*," and their poetic style is characterized as "cold and lean" (*hanshou* 寒瘦). "Late Tang poets" were

[133] Huang, Chapter Two, Part I, "Tangshi de tuxiang: 'Tang zhi wannian' yu 'Tang zhi zhongye' guannian de nianchu 唐詩的圖像: '唐之晚年'與'唐之中葉'觀念的拈出." 15-29.

represented by Meng Jiao, Jia Dao and Yao He, although that was chronologically disputable.[134] The "Late Tang" was also the target of Su Shi and Huang Tingjian's succinct but critical remarks in the context of their respective systems of poetic philosophy. Su Shi criticized Wang Anshi's poetry for having "a Late Tang flavor" largely from his distaste of being preoccupied with poetic craft. Huang Tingjian, in his turn, associated "Late Tang" poets with the failure to transcend personal misfortune, and he viewed the "bitter" aspect of Late Tang poets with great dislike.[135]

That was where Lu You and Yang Wanli came into play. Lu You took an orthodox view of the Late Tang, that is, the commonly accepted attributes listed above, and he accorded with Su Shi and Huang Tingjian's criticism of the Late Tang poets' defects. Yang Wanli, on the other hand, was more of a revolutionary. In the first place, he diverted attention away from the pentasyllabic regulated poem to the heptasyllabic quatrain. Defying the tacit assumption that hitherto connected pentasyllabic regulated poems with Late Tang poetry, Yang Wanli explicitly declared Late Tang heptasyllabic quatrains as a model worth studying. In the second place, interestingly, the stylistic and social import that Yang Wanli attributed to the Late Tang was not limited to the heptasyllabic quatrain. He implied that the most salient characteristic of Late Tang poetry was a hidden flavor, and its function was to correct social injustice, following the tradition of the *Airs of the State*. Thirdly, Yang Wanli also explored the orthodox attributes to Late Tang poetry, namely its fine craft and bitter complaints, and in practice, he took a "bitterly chanting"

[134] We are talking about the Song selection of the poets who represented their idea of the Late Tang; these poets actually cover a long range of stylistic difference. As Stephen Owen points out, although Jia Dao was a member in two pairings, one with Meng Jiao and another with Yao He, no one could imagine Meng Jiao and Yao He as a pair. See Owen, *The Late Tang,* 123.

[135] Huang Yizhen also points out that Huang Tingjian's understanding of Late Tang poets was much more sophisticated than this.

approach in writing poetry, but interestingly, he did not explicitly link any of this to the Late Tang. On the point of "bitterly chanting," Huang also notes that Lu You, notwithstanding his general disdain for Late Tang poetry, was also a *kuyin* poet in practice.

I cannot agree more with the major part of Huang's argument, and I will only add that, although Huang was right to note that sometimes Yang Wanli appeared indistinguishable from the "bitterly chanting" poets because he seemed to care more about the quality of his poem than about his health,[136] it was only one of Yang Wanli's self-representations. Admittedly, the figure of the diligent poet defying poverty, hunger, and cold exercised some pull over Yang Wanli's imagination; he enjoyed presenting himself as such with a comical turn – I will discuss this more in the appropriate section – but he also presents the image of poetry bursting out from his brush tip with equal enthusiasm, all bitterness forgotten. The same thing goes for Lu You. In fact, most of the poets writing during this period (*shiren* and less specialized ones alike) at one point or another sported with the image of the *kuyin* poet, with varying degrees of truth and frequency. In other words, we are as likely to read a sincere portrayal of the poet's hunger in Zhao Fan's collection as reading a lame poetic exercise on the same subject by Zhou Bida. As I mentioned in the last chapter, the *shiren*'s fascinating with being "cold and skinny" both physically and in terms of poetic style does not necessarily make them *kuyin* poets. It was a part of the social repositioning of the *shiren* in establishing a necessary connection between writing poetry and worldly misfortune. In short, *kuyin*, incorporating hunger, cold, straitened social circumstances as well as excruciating effort in writing poetry, was a set of the values associated with the Late Tang that kept reappearing in this period's poetry. As it will become clear in the next section, some of those values overlapped with a key Jiangxi figure, Chen Shidao.

[136] Huang, 167.

I would also like to emphasize the relative, rather than the absolute truth, of the values attributed to the Late Tang, in the systems of poetic philosophy by the respective poet-critics. Su Shi, Huang Tingjian, and Lu You used the "Late Tang" as a convenient phrase to capture the values that they sought to repel in poetry, grounded in a partial truth. This allows a certain amount of freedom for the values to shift around, displaced, even inverted, in relation to poetic models, which is precisely what happened with the *shiren*. With this in mind, we turn to "the Four Spirits."

According to Huang Yizhen, the Four Spirits advocated the return to the Late Tang style by focusing on descriptions of natural scenery with finely crafted couplets. At the same time, they also inherited the bitter attitude toward straitened circumstances and a narrowness in a limited set of imagery and tropes, which, in Fang Hui's reconstruction, made them the originators of the "shallow" and "low" *jianghu* poetry, as opposed to the "lofty" and "deep" followers of the Jiangxi school.

IB. The Jiangxi School:

The Jiangxi school of poetry was founded around what David Palumbo-Liu calls "the poetics of appropriation" of Huang Tingjian, which means mediating one's poetic voice with those of the past poets by manipulating the meaning of source texts.[137] As many important studies on the subject demonstrate, this method of writing poetry was a part of Huang Tingjian's philosophy connecting learning, literature (*wenzhang*), and self-cultivation.[138] Gong Pengcheng, for

[137] Palumbo-Liu, *Poetics of Appropriation*, 69-87.

[138] Qian Zhixi, *Huang Tingjian shixue tixi yanjiu,* cf. n. 20; Gong Pengcheng 龔鵬程, *Jiangxi shishe zongpai yanjiu* 江西詩社宗派研究, (Taibei: Wen shi zhe chuban she, 1983); and Wang

example, points out that Huang Tingjian's proposed method involved more than learning poetry; it required wide and careful reading, followed by a long process of personal reflection and plunging into the essential meaning (*yi* 意) of the ancients, and emerging from it an improved man.[139] Thus, the basis of Jiangxi poetics may have been some scattered comments made by Huang Tingjian and retrospectively put together by his followers, but they were grounded in a coherent and relatively stable system of thought highly consistent with the intellectual trend in the late Northern Song. In this respect, the Jiangxi school differed most significantly from Late Tang poetics, which, as we have seen in the above section, had a certain fluidity that allowed considerable room for individual interpretation.

This was at least the case up to the early 1130s when Lü Benzhong drew up the *Jiangxi shishe zongpai tu* 江西詩社宗派圖. In the preface to the *Zongpai tu*, Lü Benzhong defined the "live method" as the core of Jiangxi poetics, thus drawing up the terms on which later generations were either to support or refute them. Beyond this point in time, the extent of the influence of the Jiangxi school in the Southern Song has not been determined satisfactorily because too much weight, in my opinion, has been placed on a few well-known passages that apparently reject the Jiangxi method of writing poetry. The most often cited example is Yang Wanli's epiphany in 1178, recounted in his 1187 preface to *Jingxi ji* 荊溪集. A more detailed discussion of this passage belongs in the section on Yang Wanli; I will only note here that persuasive as such an example may be, it has not been considered in the proper context of the poetry actually written by Yang Wanli and his contemporaries, as I will explain below.

Yugen*, Ten Thousand Scrolls: Reading and Writing in the Poetics of Huang Tingjian and the Late Northern Song,* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2011).

[139] See Gong, 149-157.

There were more to the legacy of the Jiangxi school than the core method expounded by Lü Benzhong. Aside from the coherent intellectual basis that distinguished it from the Late Tang model, the Jiangxi school was like its supposed enemy in the sense of extending its influence in the set of values surrounding a few key figures, such as Chen Shidao, and some specific writing practices – or one can even call them writing habits – in the choice of words and in forming the parallel couplet. In these respects, the legacy of the Jiangxi school lived on long after its core method had been theoretically refuted, and it is those values and writing habits that I wish to explore, beginning with the figure who was almost as influential as Huang Tingjian in the Southern Song, Chen Shidao. In the passages quoted below, he is referred to by his style name, "Houshan 後山," or his courtesy name, "Wuji 無己."

Chen Shidao was widely admired in the Southern Song for his well-studied method in writing poetry, particularly for studying Du Fu's poetry so well that he could write poems that were indistinguishable from Du's.[140] This, of course, made him the exemplary model of the Jiangxi school. Zhang Zi and Yang Wanli, however, remarked on other aspects in Chen Shidao's poetry. In a poem titled "In response to a pentasyllabic ancient style poem presented by Huang Yanlao, the Magistrate of the Yongfeng County 答賦永豐宰黃巖老投贈五言古句," Yang Wanli wrote, "My friend Xiao Dongfu / Is today's Chen Houshan. / The more he's nurtured in the Way, the leaner his poetry becomes. / As the world buzzes around busily, he alone remains at ease. 吾友蕭東夫, 今日陳後山, 道腴詩彌瘦, 世忙渠自閒."[141] In another poem, "Postscript to Zhang Gongfu's gift of the second collection of *Yuezhai's Poetry* 跋張功父通判直閣所惠約齋

[140] See Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮, ed., *Huang Tingjian he Jiangxi shipai ziliao huibian* 黃庭堅和江西詩派資料彙編, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1978), vol.2.

[141] *QSS* 42:26562.

詩乙藁," Yang commended Zhang Zi to be "One solitary flower from Houshan's seed, / One petal of Fangweng's incense.[142] / So bitter it challenges the harshness of frost; / So lean that even a crane is stronger than him. 孤芳後山種, 一瓣放翁香, 苦處霜爭澀, 臞来鶴校强."[143] Zhang Zi, writing in response to a friend Yu Yuru's 俞玉汝 poetry collection, said that of all the poets in the past thousand years, he only admired four, Li Bai, Du Fu, Huang Tingjian, and Chen Shidao. For the last, Zhang Zi wrote, "Lofty and severe was Master Houshan / With his profound antiquity and subtle beauty 峭峭後山老, 深古復静麗." And last but not least, Zhang Zi made a present of Chen Shidao's poems to Yang Wanli, who considered "the pure, severe, sculpted and deep lines by Houshan 後山清厲刻深之句" to be "a valuable gift."

The above poems and comment suggest that writing in the model of Chen Shidao was something to be praised. Apparently, quite a few poets were doing it, with Xiao Dongfu among them, or Xiao Dezao 蕭德藻 (*jinshi* 1151) by his given name, whom Yang Wanli regarded as one of the four great poets in his day.[144] The addressee of Yang's poem, Huang Yanlao, or

---

[142] It refers to flower-shaped incense offered to Buddha.

[143] *QSS* 42:26355.

[144] Yang called them "Four Old Poets, You, Xiao, Fan, Lu," referring to You Mou, Xiao Dezao, Fan Chengda, and Lu You," modestly leaving out himself. This is the origin of the epithet, "The Four Great Poets since the Restoration 中興四大詩人." Xiao's collection did not survive; it may have been printed but certainly did not circulate widely, since the title does not show up in any of the Song bibliographies and the only mentioning of it was Fang Hui's 方回 note, "The printing block of his poetic anthology used to be in Yongzhou (in modern Hunan), but few copies are in circulation. 詩板舊在永州, 傳者罕焉." At the time *Song shi* "Yiwen zhi" was written, it appeared to have seven *juan* with a three-*juan* adjunct. (千巖擇稿七卷又外編三卷.) Xiao Dezao and You Mou 尤袤 (1127-1194) both had a claim to be one of the "Four Great Poets since the Restoration," and both poets' anthologies are non-extant, but unlike You Mou, Xiao Dezao's relatively low official status and poverty may have been detrimental to the preservation of his

Huang Jingyue 黃景說, was Xiao's relative and, in Yang's opinion, wrote exactly like Xiao.[145] Second, their description of Chen Shidao's style – lean, bitter, and sculpted – places him very close to *kuyin*. But for being "well-nourished by the Way" and for his "profound antiquity," Chen Shidao would have been indistinguishable from a *kuyin* poet in Yang Wanli's description.

By making these comments, Yang Wanli did something preposterous to Jiangxi, as Huang Tingjian would have said had he been alive. Yang's opinion was apparently influential on his younger contemporaries, Huang Jingyue and Zhang Zi. We know that Yang Wanli was so fascinated with the image of the *kuyin* poet that he often presented himself as such, but that he did not associate *kuyin* with the Late Tang. It seems that he displaced the value of *kuyin* onto Chen Shidao, the model of the Jiangxi school. One has to admit that Chen was the ideal choice for Yang Wanli to do such a thing because of his reputation for taking painstaking effort in crafting his poems, the reputation that Huang Tingjian himself took to propagate in calling him, "Searching for couplets behind closed doors is Chen Wuji 閉門覓句陳無己." More than one scholar has remarked that in poetic crafting, the Jiangxi school was just like the Late Tang. The difference was between crafting from received texts and from images in the external world.[146]

Huang Tingjian had no problem with poetic crafting, but he did dislike infusing one's poetry with bitter talks of personal misfortune. In other words, he endorsed the aesthetic aspect of *kuyin*

---

poetry. With one exception, the twelve complete poems we now have by Xiao are preserved in Southern Song *shihua* and collective anthologies compiled after his death.

[145] Cf. n.14.

[146] See Huang, 191. She cites an article by Hu Zhongxing 胡中行, "Lüe lun Jia Dao zai Tang shi fazhan zhong de diwei 略論賈島在唐詩發展中的地位," in *Fudan xuebao* 復旦學報, 1983:3, 46-50.

but sought to expel what he believed to be the morally deficient aspect. The former he remodeled with reading and learning; the latter he associated with the Late Tang and eyed with disdain. Before Yang Wanli, poet-critics talked of Chen Shidao's perfect craft, diligence, depth, lofty sentiments, and restraint, but never in terms of "lean" and "bitter." The last two were Yang Wanli's invention, but unlike the Late Tang poets, Chen Shidao had the Way to redeem him. It is doubtful whether Yang Wanli's opinion of Chen Shidao was shared beyond his immediate circle of friends. We can be sure, however, that the two influential aspects of Chen Shidao's poetry in the Southern Song, "hard thinking" and "lean," overlapped considerably with the Late Tang. What distinguished Chen Shidao, to the minds of Southern Song poets, was his understanding of the way and his "depth," as opposed to the "shallowness" of the Four Spirits' followers.

IC. Patterns of the Regulated Poem

When the Southern Song poet-critics spoke of *jufa* 句法, they usually meant the pattern of a parallel couplet in the regulated poem. There were distinctly "Late Tang" couplets and distinctly "Jiangxi" couplets; there were also examples where Jiangxi trod on Late Tang territory without admitting it. In our period, making a perfect couplet was more difficult than ever, as both "Late Tang" and "Jiangxi" standards were operative to measure the couplet's imperfection. Writing a good couplet sometimes required the ability to describe external things perfectly, something primarily associated with the Late Tang, and sometimes required clever use of book learning, primarily the legacy of Jiangxi poetics. In this section, I will introduce some clear-cut examples from both camps to illustrate the rules at work for the *shiren*.

One may criticize the Late Tang poets' bitterness, but no one could deride their craft. Generations of poets have hailed the following couplet to be one of the best from the Late Tang:

聽	雨	寒	更	盡
listen	rain	Cold	night watch (n.)	end

As I listen to the rain, the cold night-watch draws to a close.

開	門	落	葉	深
open	door	Fall	leaves	deep

(Fang Hui's reading:) When I open the door, leaves are falling heavily.
(Ji Yun's reading:) I open the door – a deep thick layer of fallen leaves.

This is the second couplet in the monk Wuke's 無可 poem, "Addressed to Jia Dao in Autumn 秋寄賈島." Fang Hui included this poem in *Yingkui lüsui* along with the following interpretation:

> He listens to the rain throughout the night. Then he opens the door to find that it was actually leaves falling like rain. This form is extremely rare and perfectly matchless. It is the same as "Fading sunlight sinks beneath the tall trees; / A distant wild fire moves into the autumn mountains." Chen Shidao's couplet, "Radiant and bright, weighty drops of dew dangled [from the cypress leaves], / Drop by drop, they adorns like flickering fireflies." This is to say drops of dew dangle from the cypress branch like decorating it with fireflies, but one line names the event, and the other uses a metaphor. This is called an unexpected variation in a poem.
>
> 聽雨徹夜, 既而開門, 乃是落葉如雨, 此體極少而絶佳, 微陽下喬木, 遠燒入秋山亦然. 陳后山輝輝垂重露, 點點綴流螢, 謂柏枝垂露若綴螢, 然一句指事, 一句設譬, 詩中之奇變者也.

It is typical of Fang Hui to sneak in a couplet by Chen Shidao that belongs to a different class altogether,[147] but if we accept his reading, Chen's couplet is a nice simple example to illustrate the hidden connection between the two lines. In Fang Hui's words, "one line names the event, and the other uses a metaphor." He wants to read the sound of the falling leaves as a metaphor for sound of the rain, in which case the couplet would enclose a cycle of passing time: it begins

[147] Cf. n. 49. Fang Hui likes this couplet very much. He cites it again in the preface to a poem on the "Loft for Listening to the Rain" (with another Chen Shidao couplet attached, of course). See *Tongjiang xuji* 桐江續集, *juan* 27.

by the poet listening to the sound of the rain; having passed the entire cold night in this manner, he opens the door to discover that the sound had actually been falling leaves. Stephen Owen aptly calls it "a metaphor of mistake."[148] Fang Hui obviously built his interpretation on a comment by Hui Hong 惠洪 in *Lengzhai yehua* 冷齋夜話, in the entry "Beyond-the-Image Couplets 象外句," "Tang monks wrote many good couplets. Their method of crafting the couplet lies in using a metaphor for something without naming that thing. This is what we call 'beyond-the-image couplets 唐僧多佳句, 其琢句法, 比物以意, 而不指言某物, 謂之象外句." Then Hui Hong quotes the same two couplets as Fang Hui. There is a better reading, in my opinion, by Ji Yun 纪昀, which I provided as an alternative,[149] but as we are talking about the Song dynasty, it makes better sense to stay with the Song reading. And in any case, Hui Hong and Fang Hui had been right to grasp the essentials of this couplet's art by pointing to a metaphorical resonance between the lines.

He Zhuo 何焯 (1661-1722) pointed out another aspect of this couplet's art, "A metaphorical parallel is of course meaningful, but even if we take both lines as factual descriptions, it is still a true scene of autumn sadness." By bracketing "factual descriptions" in the conditional, He Zhuo assumes like everyone else that the couplet is a product of deliberate craft rather than a simple

[148] See Stephen Owen, *The Late Tang,* 137.

[149] Ji Yun observes, "This explanation [Fang Hui's] is of course plausible, but it wouldn't be bad to take it to mean 'leaves have fallen after the rain.'" In Ji Yun's reading, when the poet opens the door in the morning, the rain has already stopped, leaving layers and layers of fallen leaves strewn on the ground, maybe even blocking the door. The thickness of the fallen leaves testifies to how heavy the rain had been in the night; moreover, it hints at something unsaid in the first line – the sound that the poet had been listening to was in fact the sound of raindrops beating on the leaves. It also puts a definitive closure to the night that has already passed and starts a new day even colder and bleaker than before.

narration. Yet, even if we set aside the craft it displays, he argues, it would still be a "true scene of autumn sadness." The couplet's capacity to be simple, or to be read "naturally," is the other important aspect that earned it so much admiration. If we reread the couplet after "shedding all the feathers," so to speak, we find that the poet is simply telling us what he did during the night and what happened in the morning. The couplet contains no difficult words, and the grammar is as straightforward as it can be.

This is the standard of perfection to which the Southern Song *shiren* were striving. The large number of failed attempts, mostly in the pentasyllabic line, only means that their couplets were short of perfection; it does not disguise how often the Late Tang brand of aesthetics was at work. But when a poet succeeded, he was indistinguishable from a Late Tang monk. Yang Wanli cited one of Zhang Zi's couplets in *Chengzhai shihua* 誠齋詩話:

> Gongfu wrote, "Because of a broken bridge, I take a detour. / The door to the ancient temple is left open." [150] This is extremely similar to the Late Tang poets.
> 功父云: 斷橋斜取路, 古寺未關門. 絶似晚唐人.

Indeed, if the couplet appeared in the Nine Monk's collection, no one would be able to tell it was actually written in the Southern Song. The couplet works by a hidden resonance between antithetical images of inaccessibility and accessibility. The easy path to the temple is made inaccessible by a broken bridge, while the temple gate is left open, presumably because so few visitors make their detour there. Both lines reinforce the impression of the ancient temple's isolation.

---

[150] "Because of the broken bridge, I take a detour" was a very popular line at the time. It is the third line of a "collected lines" (*jiju* 集句) poem titled "While Traveling 旅次" by the monk Shaosong 紹嵩, who attributed the line to Yang Wanli's cousin Yang Yanzheng 楊炎正.

A more commonly seen pattern of the Late Tang couplet looks something like this:

> An empty nest where frosty leaves have fallen,
> Through lattice's wide gaps pierce river fireflies.
> 空巢霜葉落, 疏牖水螢穿.[151]

Stephen Owen commented on the relation of this couplet to the preceding ones as "disjunctive," which highlights the "foregrounding of craft" often involved a typical Late Tang regulated poem. Owen also explains the striking visual imagery of this couplet as follows:

> The tightly woven twigs of the nest are articulated against the more widely meshed interstices of the window. The leaves, shining with frost, are caught in the nest; the smaller fireflies, bright in the darkness, penetrate the window lattice. As it often the case in parallel couplets, there is a conceptual pair (conceptual terms in Chinese often being antithetical) with some resonance in the situation.[152]

We may find similar attempts in the Southern Song at creating conceptual pairs, for example, Han Biao's couplet:

> Over a wide stream, evening sunlight descends,
> Into the empty forest, a light drizzle invades.
> 溪闊斜陽下, 林空細雨侵.[153]

Perfect craft does not necessarily equal a weak poetic voice, but in Fang Hui's opinion, the Late Tang brand of craft usually does, especially when the poet pays too much attention to craft and forgets that poetry is as good as the person's character. Moreover, as I have mentioned before, writing in the Late Tang style usually meant not reaching beyond a limited set of images

---

[151] From Jia Dao, "Journeying;" text and translation in Owen, *The Late Tang,* 100.

[152] Owen, *The Late Tang*, 101.

[153] "New Year's Eve: To the Same Rhymes 次韻元夕" (2 of 2), *QSS,* 52:2758:32512.

such as the wind, the flowers, the snow, and the moon, so that, even if one could "described external things perfectly," one could not avoid the criticism of being "shallow." Late Tang poetics had born this criticism long before Fang Hui; his contribution is in presenting a well-argued alternative in the Jiangxi brand. Before looking at a typical Jiangxi couplet, we should familiarize ourselves with Fang Hui's standard of a powerful poem, which is all too clear in his preface to "A Poem on Reading *Nanhu ji*."[154] *Nanhu ji* is the title of Zhang Zi's poetry collection:

> "The stream is clear for the spotted ducks to gather; /The banks are covered with verdure full of grass insects;" or "I recognize the swallows that have just returned. / I know the name of the peony before it blooms." I don't know who highlighted them in red ink. Whoever it was, he paid special attention to selecting lines of this kind. This I also disapprove. Moreover, like the line, "For an entire lifetime, I keep to the side of the plum blossom until it dies" is really excellent, but someone circled and changed it thoughtlessly in red ink. I would say that the person with the red ink have not gotten the treasure of the true *dharma* eye.
> 溪清花鴨聚, 岸綠草虫多, 燕子初歸曾識面, 牡丹未放已知名, 不知何人以朱筆加點, 專取此等句, 予亦謂不然. 且如人生守定梅花死, 此句殊佳, 何人輒用朱筆圈改. 予竊謂朱筆之人, 未得所謂正法眼藏也.

The first two couplets embody what Fang Hui believed to be the "shallow" and "low" poetry that the "River and Lake" followers of the Late Tang were writing. Pretty as those lines may be, they express no more than the poet's playful appreciation of spring. For a positive example, Fang Hui selected a line that expresses the poet's forceful character and upright morality, but one of the driest in Zhang Zi's collection. From here we pass on to a poem by Chen Shidao, which in Fang

[154] Fang Hui, *Tongjian xuji* 桐江續集, *juan* 8*, Yingyin Wenyuange Siku quanshu* edition, (Taipei: Shangwu, 1987), 1193:301-02.

Hui's opinion, combines craft and strength. It means, of course, a different kind of craft than the Late Tang. It is the craft of the Jiangxi school:

To Zhang Yunsou in Tanzhou[155]	寄潭州張芸叟
A metropolis between the [Dongting] Lake and the mountains,	湖嶺一都會,
Located up the stream to the southwest.	西南更上游,
"Duck's feet" pile high on a platter in autumn,	秋盤堆鴨脚,
The "cat's head" are presented as a dish of spring.	春味薦猫頭,
In the Grand Palace [He] thinks, "how late you are in coming!"	宣室思來暮,
The Steaming Pool gets to "borrow you to stay."	蒸池得借留,
Do you not know "the joys of being a Prefect?"	孰知為郡樂,
Do not stir "the sorrows of being in the Yue region."	莫作越鄉憂.

Fang Hui explains:

> Houshan learned to write poetry from Shangu (Huang Tingjian). "Cat's head" and "duck's feet" – perfect. Zhang Yunsou (Shunmin) is Houshan's brother-in-law. The fifth and sixth lines mean that he (Zhang Shunmin) arouses the thought of "coming too late" in the Grand Palace; can the "steaming pool" get him to stay long? "Borrowing him to stay" means that [eventually] they can't get him to stay. [This couplet] alludes to what happened to Jia Yi, but on the side, he incorporates two allusions, "coming too late" and "borrowing him to stay." This rigorous method is not something the Late Tang can understand (lit. taste). I selected one out of two.
> 后山學山谷為詩者也, 猫頭鴨脚工矣, 張芸叟舜民后山姊夫. 五六謂宣室興來暮之想, 蒸池之地, 其得久留之乎, 得借留謂不能得留也, 用賈誼長沙事, 而傍入來暮借留二事, 句法矯健, 非晚唐能嚅嚌也. 二首取一.

Fang Hui's explanation requires further explanation. "Cat's head" is the name of a bamboo shoot native to Tanzhou; according to the *Book of Rites*, commoners present chives in spring. Here, chives are substituted by the "cat's head" because it is local produce. Chen Shidao is borrowing the literal meaning of "cat's head" to pair it up with "duck's feet," while cleverly pointing out the location and official post of his friend. "Duck's feet," incidentally, is another name for the

[155] *YKLSHP,* 1:178-79.

ginkgo seed, so named because of the shape of the ginkgo leaf. Ouyang Xiu had written several poems about Mei Yaochen's gift of ginkgo seeds from afar as a token of friendship. Chen Shidao chooses this particular fruit to denote his friendship with Zhang Shunmin. To be able to say so much with a borrowed parallel of "spring" and "autumn," and "cat's head" and "duck's feet," is what Fang Hui means by "perfect."

The third couplet alludes to three historical figures, Jia Yi 賈誼, Lian Fan 廉范, and Kou Xun 寇恂. After a year of service under the king of Changsha, Jia Yi was summoned to court. Emperor Wen invited him into the Grand Palace and inquired into the nature of ghosts and spirits. After hearing him, the emperor sighed, "I have not seen Jia Yi for so long that I thought I had surpassed him, but now [I know] I'm not his match." Lian Fan, active during the Yongping era (A.D.58-76), carried out his duties so well as the prefect of Shu (present day Sichuan) that the people composed a song about him, saying "Lian Shudu, you came here too late!" Putting the two stories together, Chen Shidao commends on his friend's abilities by saying that the emperor must be regretting not having given him office sooner.

Kou Xun was twice appointed to Yingchuan 潁川 to pacify the bandits. His success in administering the area earned the people's respect so that when he was promoted to the court, the people petitioned Emperor Guangwu (r. 56-58) to let them "borrow Mr. Kou for one more year." Chen Shidao substituted Yingchuan with the "steaming pool," located in Hunan, to denote the place of Zhang Shunmin's official post, and hints by the story of Kou Xun that he was staying in Tanzhou only because the people liked him too much to let him go, and that he will eventually be promoted to the court.

To craft a couplet such as this requires considerable knowledge, both of proper and alternative names as they appear locally and in literary texts, and of the classics and the histories,

so as to be able to choose one short phrase to encompass an entire story and to apply it to the present context. Then, out of this knowledge, he creates a perfect literal parallel that demonstrates his craft, learning, and most importantly, his concern for the people, his friend, and an honorable sense of official duty. This, according to Fang Hui, is the "rigorous method" that the Late Tang cannot hope to comprehend.

Chen Shidao's poem includes two typically "Jiangxi" techniques. The clever use of alternative names to create a perfect literal parallel in the first couplet made Jiangxi a ready target of attack on its "artificiality" and "formalism." Although Huang Tingjian did not invent this technique, he and Chen Shidao did use it to an extent to warrant its connection with the Jiangxi school. But the point here is not to criticize or defend this technique, or to inquire into its theoretical foundations. The important thing is what this technique had become in the late 12th century. At the very least, it was a stylistic choice available to the poet, but it is also safe to say that it was a necessary part of a poet's training, a shared literary practice, a habit of writing, so that even after the rationale behind the habit had been refuted, the habit persisted. For example, we can easily detect its traces in one of Yang Wanli's early poems:

Responding to Zhongliang's "What Happened in Late Spring"[156]	和仲良春晚即事
I'm too poor to hire Mr. Happy (i.e. wine),	貧難聘歡伯,
And too ill to ride on the "interlocking coins" (i.e. a dappled steed).	病敢跨連錢,
My dreams haven't quite reached the flowers,	夢豈花邊到,
Spring is slipping away quickly in the rain.	春俄雨裏遷,
From barely one-plow deep (of spring rain), five units (of grain) are expected.	一犁闕五秉,
On hundreds of reed mats, (the silkworms') three hibernations are planned.三眠柳	百箔候三眠,

[156] This is the fourth poem out of a set of five. Zhongliang's given name is Zhang Cai. Yang Wanli made his acquaintance when serving as the County Magistrate of Lingling. *YKLSHP,* 1:352.

I, the scholar, am the only clumsy one, 只有書生拙,
Who tills the paper field all year long. 窮年墾紙田.

Fang Hui identifies the parallels in the following note:

> "Interlocking coins" and "paper field" is the fault of wanting to win out in rhyming. Putting together "*Yi li* (lit. one plow)," "*wu bing* (lit. five units)," "*bai bo* (lit. hundred mats)" and "*san mian* (lit. three hibernations)" is also pretty good, except it's not very natural, perhaps because the poem was written in his youth. But students learning to write poetry must start from here. I selected one out of five.
> 連錢, 紙田, 用韻好勝之過, 一犁五秉百箔三眠湊合亦佳, 但恐少年作未自然, 學詩者不可不由此入也. 五首取一.

The notable parallels in this poem are mostly numbered phrases, one of the most frequently used class of parallels in addition to personal names, colors, and (animal) body parts. Fang Hui took pains to point out that the poem was a youthful composition and grudgingly admitted that it was "not very natural." This, of course, was too good an opportunity to miss for Ji Yun to make a snide comment, and sure enough, he noted, "Of course it's a bit forced. This shows that even Fang Hui had his moments of perspicacity." Many more parallels like this, however, escaped Ji Yun's judgment, especially in social response poems in our period, long after the supposed rejection of the Jiangxi school. Sometimes they suggest deeper meaning like Chen Shidao's couplet, but most of the time, they were produced casually as a part of a shared literary practice, and to participate in this practice did not automatically align a poet to the Jiangxi school.

The second technique employed in Chen Shidao's poem, the allusive use of classical and historical texts, deserves further discussion. A more discursive variation of Chen Shidao's well-controlled style was popular with the late 12th century *shiren*. The following are the two middle couplets from Fan Chengda's heptasyllabic regulated poem, "The Urn of Human Fish-pickle 人

鮓甕."[157] The "urn" refers to a huge reef near the city wall of Guizhou 歸州 (present day Zigui, Hubei), which Fan Chengda passed on his way from Sichuan down the Changjiang River. Fan recorded in *Wuchuan lu* that the reef took up two-thirds of the river's surface and created powerful whirlpools with the rising tide. The reef probably got its scary name from the number of lives it took:

Being "swallowed up by the whirlpool (fourth tone)," they are lamentable;	與齊(去聲)俱入彼可弔,
Even "going along with the current," I am still in danger.	乘流而行吾亦危,
"Rivers and currents are formidable to violate" to this extent,	江河難犯一至此,
If "Heaven and earth bless living things," why is this reef here?	天地好生安取斯.

In the first couplet, Fan Chengda pairs up a phrase taken verbatim from *Zhuangzi* with one from *Zuozhuan*; therein lies one part of this couplet's craft. The other part concerns the way he reverses the meaning of the phrase from *Zhuangzi* from its original context. The phrase is a part of the conversation between Confucius and a person surfing in a dangerous reef, much like the one Fan Chengda is encountering. Confucius had thought that the surfer was trying to commit suicide and ordered his disciple to save him. When the surfer emerged unscathed, Confucius asked how he did it. The surfer answered that he knew those waters very well, "I go down with the whirlpool and emerge with the tide." Fan Chengda uses the first half of the surfer's speech in its literal meaning, "going down with the whirlpool" and never to reemerge, to lament the lives taken by the dangerous reef. In addition, the number of function words (*xuzi* 虛字) strewn across the couplets were also a marker of the Jiangxi style.

[157] *YKLSHP,* 1:201.

Even though critics had begun to question the Jiangxi method of writing poetry as early as the 1130s,[158] the actual writing practices that the Jiangxi poets helped to propagate took much longer to disappear. The two techniques described above, pairing up terms by borrowing their literal meaning, and using verbatim phrases from the classics or literary texts, persisted well into the late 12th and early 13th century,[159] and the fact that they appeared most often in social response poetry suggests that it was a part of shared expectation. A story about Yang Wanli and You Mou in the 13th-century anecdote book, *Helin yulu* 鶴林玉露,[160] confirms the prevalence and the social nature of this practice:

> You Liangxi, courtesy name Yanzhi, was well-read and excelled in writing. He was steadfast friends with Yang Chengzhai. During the Chunxi era, Chengzhai was the Director of the Palace Library, and Yanzhi was the Chamberlain for Ceremonials. They also served together under the Green Palace [of the Heir Apparent], and they never passed a day without getting together. Both gentlemen had an excellent sense of humor. Yanzhi said once, "There's a line from the classics, pray give it a parallel. The line goes, 'Mr. Yang acts for himself.'" Chengzhai answered directly, "A 'You thing' (rare beauty) distracts a person." Everyone sighed in awe of the readiness and accuracy of the parallel.[161]
>
> Chengzhai called Yanzhi "the blue crab" (*youmou*, the exact homophone of You Mou's name) in jest, and Yanzhi nicknamed Chengzhai "the goat" (*yang*, homophone of Yang's

[158] At roughly the same time as Lü Benzhong drew up the *Jiangxi shishe zongpai tu*, opposition to the Jiangxi school appeared in Zhang Jie's *Suihantang shihua* 歲寒堂詩話. The date of composition for this work has not been ascertained, but it is believed to have been written at the Northern-and-Southern Song transition.

[159] Maybe even longer, but the writer is not familiar with the poetry beyond this point to make a positive claim.

[160] Luo Dajing 羅大經, *Helin Yulu*, *Tang Song shiliao biji congkan* edition, (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), *juan 6*, 339.

[161] The first line comes from *Meng Zi*. In the original context, it means that the Yang school of thought advocates acting for oneself and ignoring the sovereign. The second line is from *Zuozhuan*.

family name) for fun. One day, when they were eating goat intestines, Yanzhi said, “Mr. Director of the Palace Library has a heart like brocade and intestines like fine embroidery, have they come to be eaten as well?” Chengzhai chuckled and chanted, “What is regrettable about having intestines to be eaten? / It still beats someone who has no intestines to eat.” This is because blue crabs have no intestines. Everyone seated had a big laugh.

尤梁溪延之博洽工文, 與楊誠齋為金石交. 淳熙中誠齋為秘書監, 延之為太常卿, 又同為青宮寮寀, 無日不相從. 二公皆善謔. 延之嘗曰, 有一經句請秘監對, 曰楊氏為我, 誠齋應曰, 尤物移人, 衆皆歎其敏確. 誠齋戲呼延之為蝤蛑, 延之戲呼誠齋為羊, 一日食羊白腸, 延之曰秘監錦心繡腸, 亦為人所食乎, 誠齋笑吟曰, 有腸可食何須恨, 猶勝無腸可食人, 蓋蝤蛑無腸也, 一坐大笑.

In the first half of the anecdote, everyone was impressed by Yang Wanli’s ability to produce a quick and accurate parallel to a line from *Mencius* that begins with his family name. The required line had to begin with You Mou’s family name and tease him at the same time. Both lines were taken out of their original context and given a new meaning based on the literal meaning of the words. The parallel bears a striking resemblance to the kind Fan Chengda produced in the poem, “The Urn of Human Fish Pickle,” and involves exactly the kind of skill required in producing a couplet in the Jiangxi style. Their artful and playful insults resemble the exchanges in a *Shishuo xinyu* anecdote. It flaunts wit, and familiarity with received texts is taken quietly for granted. What is notable here is that the parallel was not written to illustrate a method of writing poetry, but produced as the part of a literary game.

****

Part II. From Yang Wanli to Han Biao

IIA. Introduction

A common misconception about this period’ poetry is that upon realizing that the Jiangxi method stemmed one’s creativity, the poets turned to more natural ways of expressing

themselves, eventually leading to the Four Spirits' revival of the Late Tang style. This often leaves literary historians at a loss in understanding the major poets' continuity with the generations before and after them in more specific ways. It also requires them to leave out the prominent Zhao Fan-and-Han Biao duo, the most awkward piece of the puzzle, altogether.

A closer look at the values at work in this period yields a much more complex picture, and also a more accommodating one. Before proceeding onto the case studies, I want to discuss briefly a common concern of the *shiren*, beginning with the often-cited example of Yang Wanli's epiphany recorded in his preface to *Jingxi ji*:

> I first imitated the poetry of the gentlemen of Jiangxi, following which I studied the pentasyllabic regulated poems of Chen Shidao. Then I studied the heptasyllabic quatrains of Wang Anshi, and, finally, the Tang quatrains. But the more I studied, the less I was able to write. Once I complained about this to Lin Guangchao, who replied, "When you are so selective, it is hard to get what you want, so how could you hope for your works to be many?" I sighed and said, "Poets have different defects which yet arise from the same source, and I am surely not alone in this!" Thus, from the spring of 1177 all the way back to 1162, I had written only five hundred eighty-two poems; so few they were! …On New Year's Day of 1178, I started to write poetry, because I was on vacation and had no official duties. Suddenly, I was as if enlightened (*wu*), and at that moment I took leave of the Tang poets, of Wang Anshi and Chen Shidao, and of all the gentlemen of Jiangxi, no longer daring to imitate any of them. After that, I was content. I tried having my son hold the writing brush, while I orally composed several poems, and they came gushing forth without any of the earlier grinding.[162]
> 予之詩始學江西諸君子, 既又學后山五字律, 既又學半山老人七字絶句, 晚乃學絶句於唐人, 學之愈力作之愈寡, 嘗與林謙之屢嘆之, 謙之云, 擇之之精, 得之之難, 又欲作之之寡乎. 予謂曰, 詩人蓋異病而同源也, 獨於予哉. 故自淳熙丁酉之春上暨壬午止有詩五百八十二首, 其寡蓋如此…戊戌三朝時節, 賜告少公事, 是日即作詩, 忽若有寤, 於是辭謝唐人及王陳江西諸君子皆不敢學, 而後欣如也. 試令兒輩操筆於予口占數首, 則瀏瀏焉, 無復前日之軋軋矣.

[162] Translation adapted from Schmidt, J.D., *Yang Wan-li*, (Boston: Twayne, 1976), 40-41.

Yang Wanli's account of the epiphany has often been cited as the second landmark in rejecting the Jiangxi school (the first being the burning of all his Jiangxi-style poetry in 1162), which advocated learning from the ancients, and returning to the poet's natural creativity. What has escaped notice about this passage is that the reason why Yang Wanli became dissatisfied with the method centering on learning would not have been a problem at all in another period. Yang Wanli did not reject learning on the basis that later critics did, that is, on the argument that it produced obstructed, artificial poetry. His reason was simply, "so few they were!" Producing five hundred-and-eighty-two poems over a period of fifteen years had not been a problem for earlier poets, but it became a problem under the *shiren*, who, as we have seen in the last chapter, were operating on a new concept about the nature and function of poetry – poetry as a diary-like record of every notable moment in life. Accordingly, Yang Wanli measured his success in poetry by number without a word about their style: at the end of the composition period of the *Jingxi ji* (second month of 1179), he happily counted four hundred and ninety-two poems over a period of fourteen months.

Thus, the underlying issue in Yang Wanli's preface is not, as is commonly assumed, one between artificiality and natural expression, but a choice between selective or casual approaches to composition. The two binaries have often been conflated, but they are not the same thing. When the selective, perfectionist approach represented by Chen Shidao is no longer a viable option for Yang Wanli's idea of poetry, he decided to turn to the casual approach.

All of the other *shiren* made the same choice as Yang Wanli. So much so that when the Four Spirits began to imitate the Late Tang, it was not, as it is commonly argued, as a reaction to the "artificiality and formalism" of the Jiangxi school by turning back to nature, but against the casual approach of their contemporaries, which they equated with low standard and poor

language. Ye Shi 葉適, the spokesperson for the Four Spirits, argued thus in the *Tomb Inscription for Xu Wenyuan* (Xu Ji) 徐文淵墓誌銘:[163]

> There was a point when Tang poetry had long been ignored, and the gentleman (Xu Ji) discussed this with his friends Xu Zhao, Weng Juan, and Zhao Shixiu (known as the "Four Spirits"), saying, "poets of the past measured craft or crudeness by the sound and rhyme of a single word in a single line; this was when poetry was at the height of perfection. In recent times, poets write piece after piece to fill up the pages, endlessly and without restraint. How can they hope to achieve greatness?" The four poets thereupon achieved utmost perfection in their expression, and Tang poetry revived because of this.
> 初, 唐詩廢久,君與其友徐照翁卷趙師秀議曰, 昔人以浮聲切響單字隻句計巧拙, 蓋風騷之至精也. 近世乃連篇累牘, 汗漫而無禁, 豈能名家哉. 四人之語遂極其工, 而唐詩繇此復行矣.

Ye Shi voiced similar concerns in a preface to Xu Wenqing's 徐文卿 writings, observing that in contrast to the large tomes of his contemporaries' works, Xu Wenqing's composition numbered in the twenties, but every one of them was perfect.[164]To Ye Shi and the Four Spirits, Tang poetry represented craft at its perfection, which flatly contradicts the theory that their revival of the Late Tang style was the visible result of a latent, but ongoing trend against Jiangxi artificiality that had been gaining momentum since the 1160s.

Still, even with the casual approach to writing, the *shiren* were preoccupied with *jufa*, and all the way into the early 13th century, "Jiangxi," especially in the person of Chen Shidao, still signified depth, strength and perfect command of *jufa* when the *shiren* wanted to praise a friend's poetry. Examples of *kuyin* still attracted them as a model of being honed for perfection by

---

[163] Ye Shi, *Shuixin wenji* 水心文集, in Liu Gongchun 劉公純, et. al., eds., *Ye Shi ji* 葉適集, 2 vols., (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1961), 2:140.

[164] Ye Shi, "Preface to Xu Siyuan's Writings 徐斯遠文集序," in Wu Wenzhi 吳文治, et.al., compil., *Song shihua quanbian* 宋詩話全編 (henceforth *SSHQB*), (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1998), 10 vol., 7:7396.

adversity. Thus, far from totally rejecting poetic models to create their individual styles in a vacuum, the *shiren's* poetry corpuses represent constant negotiation between the casual approach to writing and past models of perfection. With this in mind, we turn to the first example, Yang Wanli.

IIB. Yang Wanli

"Aaaah! If it doesn't make you laugh, then it is not Chengzhai's poetry."
嗚呼, 不笑不足以為誠齋之詩.

1. A very brief biography:

Given the number of studies already done on Yang Wanli, a full biography is not necessary here.[165] For the purpose of discussion, I will recount briefly his poetic career as he himself described it in the prefaces to his mini-anthologies. Yang Wanli said that he wrote Jiangxi-style poetry up to 1162. None of them survived because he burned them all.[166] From 1162 to 1177, he modeled his poetry on Chen Shidao, Wang Anshi, and the [Late] Tang poets, which he collected into *Jianghu ji* 江湖集, totaling 7 *juan*.[167] He experienced an epiphany on the New Years Day of 1178 that resulted in the *Jingxi ji*, his first collection of model-free poetry, totaling four-hundred-

[165] Schmidt provides a short biography in his monograph, *Yang Wan-li*. There is also a chronology by Yu Beishan 于北山, *Yang Wanli nianpu* 楊萬里年譜, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2006).

[166] Yang Wanli, 1188 preface to *Jianghu ji*, in *SSHQB*, 6:5974.

[167] Ibid.

and-ninety-two poems written in the years 1178 and 1179 when he served as the prefect of Changshou (in modern Jiangxi).[168]

He was then summoned back to the capital to be appointed to another local post in Guangdong. Before setting off, he returned home (in Jishui, Jiangxi) for a year, visiting Fan Chengda on the way. The poems written during this interval made up the next collection, *Xigui ji* 西歸集, containing two hundred poems.[169] His official position in Guangdong lasted for two years (1180-1181), during which he wrote some four hundred poems that were later assembled as the *Nanhai ji* 南海集. Yang Wanli commented that some of them truly resembled Liu Yuxi's "Songs of the Bamboo Branch," a literary adaptation of local folk songs.[170] He passed the next three years at home in mourning for his mother, giving up all poetic activities. It was only in the second month of 1185, when he was on the way to the capital, that he was able to write again. He stayed in the capital for two years until the sixth month of 1187, and the four hundred poems from that period became the *Chaotian ji* 朝天集.[171] It was also during this time in the capital when he wrote all the prefaces to his previous collections, and the point when his collections began to be published.

In the fourth month of 1188, Yang Wanli requested a local post as the result of political struggles at court. He was granted a position in Yunzhou (in modern Jiangxi), which lasted until 1189, when he was recalled to court. It appeared that he enjoyed the trip to and the time in

---

[168] See n.33 and text.

[169] Yang, 1187 preface to *Xigui ji*, in *SSHQB*, 6:5975.

[170] Yang, 1186 preface to *Nanhai ji*, in *SSHQB*, vol.6, 5975-76.

[171] Yang, 1187 preface to *Chaotian ji*, in *SSHQB*, 6:5976.

Yunzhou immensely, calling it the "home of mountains and waters, the origin and forest of poets." He met Lu You on the way back to the capital, who asked him for his latest poems. Thereupon he put together the two-hundred-and-fifty poems from this period and titled them, *Jiangxi daoyuan ji* 江西道院集.[172]

Upon returning to the court, Yang Wanli was sent on a trip to the Song-Jin border to welcome the Jin ambassadors. The trip took place in the few short months between the end of 1189 and the beginning of 1190. When his son showed a few of his poem written during this trip to Fan Chengda and You Mou, both told him that his poetic style had changed again without him realizing it. Yang Wanli then assembled them, three-hundred-and-fifty in total, into the *Chaotian xuji* 朝天續集.[173]Shortly afterwards, Yang Wanli was appointed the Fiscal Intendant of Jiangdong (*Jiangdong zhuanyun shi* 江東轉運使), in which post he remained for two years in Jinling (modern Nanjing) and produced the five hundred poems in the *Jiangdong ji* 江東集. In the preface to this collection, Yang Wanli especially mentioned Wang Anshi, in fear that he was no match for what Wang had already written about Jinling, whereupon his young poet friend Gong Feng 鞏豐 encouraged him to take inspiration directly from the Bell Mountain and the Stone Battlements.[174] After 1192, Yang Wanli passed the rest of his time in retirement in his native home, Jishui, and the poetry he wrote in retirement was posthumously collected and published by his son under the title *Tuixiu ji* 退休集.

---

[172] 1189 preface to *Jiangxi daoyuan ji*, in *SSHQB*, 6:6976-77.

[173] 1190 preface to *Chaotian xuji*, in *SSHQB*, vol.6:5977.

[174] 1192 preface to *Jiangdong ji*, in *SSHQB*, 6:5977.

Fang Hui summed up this entire career based on Yang Wanli's own statement that he had one collection for every official post, and his style always changed with every collection. As briefly as we have gone through Yang Wanli's prefaces, we can see emphasis on change is consistent with the care he detailed the circumstances of composition for his collections. As he moved through his official posts across different locations in south China, he encountered the memory of past poets who had written in those areas. He thought of Liu Yuxi in Guangdong and Wang Anshi in Jinling, and his style changed accordingly. J. D. Schmidt rightly observes that Yang Wanli's "continuous obsession with transforming the style of his poetry," or "the idea of change and, particularly, unexpected change, to be a fundamental concept which underlies all of his verse."[175]

2. The master of surprise:

Yang Wanli is a unique phenomenon in the history of Chinese poetry; no one else has gotten away with writing so extensively in the low language register for the classical *shi* form, let alone getting applauded for it and having it named "the Chengzhai style" after him. He single-handedly created his image as a free – and comical – poet writing from his natural talent, but at the same time a careful poet who had studied the art properly, and was conscious of the changes in his poetic style through every stage of his life. True to his penname, Yang Wanli had given an honest portrayal of his poetic development, and all later critics of his poetry more or less follow this description. On the other hand, it also gave rise to the statement that he "started out from Jiangxi but not limited by Jiangxi," a cliché in modern scholarship that everyone repeats but rarely examines critically.

[175] Schmidt, 58.

I do not wish to decide whether Yang Wanli ever broke free of the Jiangxi school; to my mind it is a false question. The question is how the values and practices of the Jiangxi school, in the shape they took in Yang Wanli's time, were chosen and incorporated when he attempted to strike a balance between the casual approach to writing poetry and the ideal of careful crafting. Although Yang Wanli is immune to being aligned with the Late Tang style, the position of Late Tang style couplets and the *kuyin* model in his poetry also prove to be a useful lens in understanding Yang's stylistic development. Elements from both camps appealed to Yang Wanli and contributed in different ways in molding his poetic voice.

Yang Wanli was one of those poets for whom to speak of his style is to speak of his personality. The editor of Yang Wanli's selected poems in *Songshi chao* 宋詩鈔 sums up that personality quite nicely:

> Houcun [Liu Kezhuang] said, "Fangweng's strength comes from learning; he is like Du Fu. Chengzhai's natural talent is like Li Bai." This means that having shed all the feathers, he wove from a loom of his own. The poems that the ancients thought to be like Li Bai all become common slangs in today's vulgar view. I first obtained [Yang's] selected poems published by Huangchun Fang. Then I got a manuscript hand-copied by the Gaos of Zuili. I collated them and copied them out by hand. Everybody roared with laughter when they saw [the poems]. Alas! If it doesn't make you laugh, then it is not Chengzhai's poetry.
> 後村謂放翁學力也似杜甫, 誠齋天分也似李白. 盖落盡皮毛, 自出機杼. 古人之所謂似李白者, 入今之俗目, 則皆俚嗄也, 初得黃春坊選本, 又得檇李高氏所錄, 為訂正手抄之, 見者無不大笑, 嗚呼, 不笑不足以為誠齋之詩.[176]

To Liu Kezhuang 劉克莊 (1187-1269), Yang Wanli's use of colloquial language was the marker of a natural talent like Li Bai's, free from embellishment (feathers) and impossible for anyone

[176] Lü Liuliang 呂留良, et.al., eds., *Song shi chao* 宋詩鈔, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 2:2038.

else to copy. But the early Qing readers' found them amusing because they appeared like "common slang," and their first reaction was to "roar with laughter." Yang Wanli would have been pleased, for part of his poetic agenda was precisely to provoke laughter. Laughter was a marker of the unusual, of what surprises the reader's expectations, which formed the core of Yang Wanli's poetic voice. The following poem, collected in *Xigui ji*, is a typical example of the "Chengzhai style" (stanza division mine):

Mooring Overnight at the Stone Wharf in Tanzhou	宿潭石步
Midnight, moonless, the darkest hour,	三更無月天正黑,
Lightning breaks, thunder follows.	電光一掣隨霹靂,
Rain pierces the heart of the sky, falls onto the boat's roof,	雨穿天心落篷脊,
A sweeping gale blows the rain this way and that.	急風橫吹斜更直,
Through leaks in the scanty roof, water soaks my bed mat.	疎篷穿漏濕牀席,
The sound of waves pound on my pillow through paper-thin walls	波聲打枕一紙隔,
Startle from my dreams, I can't go back to sleep,	夢中驚起眠不得,
I gather up my clothes and sit up gingerly, sighing three times over.	攬衣危坐三歎息,
It's not like I haven't experienced hardship in traveling,	行路艱難非不歷,
But never in my life was there a night like this.	平生不曾似今夕,
Heaven played a stinking trick to scare the traveler,	天公嚇客惡作劇,
Coming out at me like this with no advance notice.	不相闕白出不測,
I haven't got the means at hand to taken in the wind and the rain,	收風拾雨猝無策,
How can I beg for it to dawn in the east?	如何乞得東方白,
Just when I hide my head, tuck in my feet and curl up,	垂頭縮脚正偪仄,
Boo! – one more raindrop on my head.[177]	忽然頭上復一滴.

[177] *QSS,* 42:26245. J.D. Schmidt reads the last line as an act of irrational humor. He argues that eliciting unexpected laughter Yang's poetry is associated with Chan enlightenment. See "Ch'an, Illusion, and Sudden Enlightenment in the Poetry of Yang Wan-li," *T'oung pao* 60.4-5 (1974): 230-281.

Although Yang Wanli's language in heptasyllabic ancient style poems rarely rises above common speech, the second half of this poem is still visibly more colloquial than the first. Moreover, the change in language register coincides with the shift from the dramatic description of dire weather to the poet's thoughts. In both halves, there are elements of surprise, but they surprise in different ways. The first half begins with shock – lightening breaks out in the darkest hour of the night, followed by thunder. In the second half, Yang Wanli deliberately stays away from the high-minded sentiments one usually hear in traveling on an official mission and chooses to use more colloquial language in accusing Heaven for playing "a stinking trick." The last surprise comes at the end. Normally, a poem on hardships in travel would end on the wish for dawn to come quickly (third-to-last line), but Yang Wanli chooses to add another dose of surprise: a raindrop on the head for him and a "boo" for the reader. If the second half had already taken a comical turn, this detail decidedly comes across as funny, thereby making the whole poem into a parody of the "Hardship in Traveling" sub-genre.

Schmidt outlines five devices by which Yang Wanli merited the title the master of the "live method," the core phrase in his critical reception from his contemporaries down to the present, and all of them are more or less visible in the poem above:

> Although none of the ancient critics who dealt with Yang Wanli enumerated the basic elements of Yang's live method, we have seen fit to treat the method under the following topics: (1) iconoclasm, (2) illusionistic and paradoxical language, (3) surprise and sudden enlightenment, (4) humor, and (5) colloquial language.[178]

Schmidt's covers the main elements of Yang's "live method," but the most important thing that Yang Wanli did to keep his poems "alive" was by moving through those elements unpredictably

[178] Schmidt, 56.

in a single poem. His main object is to surprise, to excite wonder, and to baffle expectation. His love for the unusual and the unexpected led him to compile a list of "extraordinary expressions 奇語" in *Chengzhai shihua* 誠齋詩話.[179] The list bears striking resonance to the kind of lines that formed the core of the "Chengzhai style." When he imbues the unexpected with the use of colloquial language and comic details, the result always borders on parody. Hence the judgment, "if it doesn't make you laugh, then it is not Chengzhai's poetry."

Yang Wanli's turn on the unexpected gives his poetry its unique charm, but it also means that his natural style is at odds with the balance and control we usually expect from Jiangxi and Late Tang regulated poems. It does not mean, however, that Yang rejected both. I will discuss in due course the elements of the Late Tang that charmed Yang Wanli; the Jiangxi poets, at the very least, represented a standard of excellence to him throughout his life. A turning point in his poetic style that came late in his career, around the time of *Chaotian xuji* (1189), witnessed Yang Wanli's success in writing his free, unpredictable style in the balanced and highly restrictive form of the regulated poem, owing to his lifelong admiration for the Jiangxi school and his early training in its core techniques, as I will explain below.

Yang Wanli believed that those who learned from the Jiangxi school wrote "deep" and "fragrant" poetry. Most of the time, he talked of the Jiangxi *jufa* as *dharma* to be handed down from master to disciple. For example, in "Seeing off the Magistrate of Fenning Luo Chongcai to the Capital upon Fulfilling His Term in Office 送分寧主簿羅寵材秩滿入京," he wrote, "You should know that poets should meditate over Jiangxi / just as followers of Chan should meditate

[179] *SSHQB*, 6:5934.

over Caoxi.[180] / Without reaching Nanhua[181] and Xiushui,[182] / how can you pass on the *dharma* and the cassock? 要知詩客參江西, 政是禪客參曹溪, 不到南華與修水, 於何傳法更傳衣." Later in the poem, Yang singled out Luo Chongcai as the one who received Huang Tingjian's personal instruction on the *dharma* in the middle of the night. Yang Wanli paid Xiao Yanyu 蕭彥毓 and Huang Boyong 黃伯庸 similar compliments as the transmitters of Huang Tingjian's bowl and cassock. When Yang Wanli compares his own poetry to Huang Tingjian and Chen Shidao, he is modestly ashamed, "With the one from Double Well[183] gone and Houshan passed away, / Who is passing on the lamp today? / This old man's (i.e. me) words totally lack flavor; / they are not just distasteful in autumn. 雙井無人後山死, 只今誰子定傳燈, 老夫言語渾無味, 不但秋來面可憎." In the poem titled, "Reading Shangu's Poetry Under Lamplight 燈下讀山谷詩," Yang Wanli states, "Mr. Huang from the Double Well is matchless in the world, / His writings remain as fragrant as before," and he wished that his poems had been as good as Huang's.

Yang Wanli's comments on the Jiangxi school do not go beyond this general praise and admiration, or else saying that its poetry had a distinct flavor.[184] Still, from his practical advice

[180] Huineng, the Sixth Patriarch, achieved enlightenment in the Nanhua Temple in Caoxi.

[181] Cf. n. 51.

[182] Huang Tingjian was from Xiushui (modern day Xiushui County, Jiangxi).

[183] The Double Well was near Xiushui, Huang Tingjian's hometown.

[184] See "The Preface to the Poetry of the Jiangxi School 江西宗派詩序," in *SSHQB*, 6:6970-71.

on writing poetry in the *Chengzhai shihua*, it is clear that what charmed him about Huang Tingjian's poetry had something to do with using the ancients' words in an unexpected way:

> When poets use the ancients' words but don't use it in their original intent, this is the most wonderful method. Shangu's "On Orangutan Hair Writing Brush" is an example of this (see the entry below for further explanation on this example).
> 詩家用古人語而不用其意, 最為妙法, 如山谷猩猩毛筆是也.

Although this may sound like the "poetics of appropriation," the preceding entry in *Chengzhai shihua* makes it clear that Yang Wanli means it on the most technical level (underlining mine):

> Those who are novices to poetry must use the ancients' fine expressions. It could be two words or three words. For example, Shangu's poem "On Orangutan Hair Writing Brush" goes, "How many pairs of wooden clogs [do you wear through] in life? / After death [you leave] five cartloads of books." The two words "in life" come from *The Analects*; as for the two words, "after death," Zhang Han in the Jin Dynasty said, "If I become famous after death." "How many pairs of wooden clogs" are Ruan Fu's words. "Five cartloads of books" is what Zhuangzi said about Hui Shi. These two lines are pieced together from four different places.
>
> Another example: "Spring wind and spring rain, flowers pass in front of my eyes; / North of the River, south of the River, water beats against the sky." "Spring wind, spring rain," and "North of the River, south of the River" are common expressions in poetry. Du Fu wrote, "Watch for now what is soon to be no more – the flowers that pass in front of my eyes." Han Yu wrote, "In the dim vapors over the ocean, water beats against the sky." This is putting a four-word phrase together with a three-word phrase, which makes a line instantly without any blockage. You must recite a lot of poems and use the words selectively. You begin by picking them out, but by and by they will come naturally from your heart, coming and going unpredictably. Then it's okay to use them, and it's okay to not use them.
> 初學詩者須用古人好語, 或兩字或三字, 如山谷猩猩毛筆平生幾兩屐, 身後五車書, 平生二字出論語, 身後二字晉張翰云, 使我有身後名, 幾兩屐阮孚語, 五車書莊子言惠施, 此兩句乃四處合來, 又春風春雨花經眼, 江北江南水拍天, 春風春雨江北江南, 詩家常用, 杜云, 且看欲盡花經眼, 退之云, 海氣昏昏水拍天, 此以四字合三字, 入口便成詩句, 不至生梗, 要誦詩之多, 擇字之精, 始乎摘用, 久而自出肺腑, 縱橫出没, 用亦可, 不用亦可.[185]

[185] *SSHQB*, 6:5936.

This is the expedient version of the "poetics of appropriation": take what is good from different places and put them together, and you have a ready-made line "without any blockage." When you practice often enough, you will feel like it is coming directly from your heart. If Huang Tingjian's couplet still represents the careful manipulation of the meaning of ancient texts that we have seen in Chen Shidao's poem, Yang Wanli's second example consists purely of haphazard juxtaposition of building blocks. There is nothing said about studying the ancients' words to grasp their meaning, or about learning the texts for self-cultivation; the method is described on a purely technical level. If we go through Yang Wanli's poetry, we will find that he is giving this advice from personal experience. It also describes the kind of poetry that some of his colleagues at court were writing. Yang Wanli, however, distinguished himself with the knack of putting together phrases from different places in unexpected ways, and thereby achieve the effect of surprise or laughter. Although one can definitely trace this practice back to the Jiangxi school's "poetics of appropriation," it has already been transformed to suit an almost utilitarian purpose with Yang Wanli's "funny" take on it.

Using this method of composition to juxtapose colloquial expressions with literary language is one of the devices by which Yang Wanli achieved his trademark style. He was not the first one to use colloquial expressions. According to Zhang Jie's *Suihantang shihua*, it was a literary device employed by Du Fu, Su Shi, and Huang Tingjian; Zhang also observed in the that colloquial language is the most difficult thing to incorporate into the poetry:

> The world only sees a lot of unpolished and colloquial language in Du Fu's poetry, but they do not know that it is most difficult to use unpolished and colloquial language in poetry. This is not really unpolished and colloquial, but in fact the highest antiquity… Su (Shi) and Huang (Tingjian) of the recent generation also liked to use colloquial language, but when they did, they had a fair amount of trouble arranging them [in poetry]. They were never as good as Du Fu, for whom it just flowed from his heart.[186]

[186] *Suihan Tang shihua jiaojian*, 2.

> 世徒見子美詩多麤俗，不知麤俗語在詩句中最難，非麤俗，乃高古之極也…近世蘇、黃亦喜用俗語，然時用之亦頗安排勉強，不能如子美胸襟流出也.

To Zhang Jie in the 1130s, "unpolished and colloquial language" represented the "highest antiquity," but it required some skills to "arrange" them in poetry. Although we cannot be sure whether Yang Wanli read the *Suihantang shihua*, or whether he used colloquial expressions because Du Fu, Su Shi, and Huang Tingjian did it,[187] there is definitely continuity between Zhang Jie's idea of "arranging" them and Yang Wanli's method of juxtaposition.

The form best suited for Yang's method is the heptasyllabic quatrain and ancient style verse, the form taken by many of Yang Wanli's representative poems. Yang Wanli's first few collections contain visibly more of these two forms than the heptasyllabic regulated verse, the most difficult form for his method of composition. Most of the heptasyllabic regulated poems in the first few collections are social response poems, which suggest that Yang wrote them as required by etiquette. The turning point in Yang Wanli's success with practicing his method on regulated poems came around the time of *Chaotian xuji*, which contained considerably more and better heptasyllabic regulated poems than the previous *Jiangxi daoyuan ji*. Fang Hui observes that Yang's style changed yet again in this collection, and as we can usually count on Fang Hui to detect anything remotely related to the Jiangxi school, we can safely assume that the change was mainly in his regulated poems. In this collection, Yang Wanli began to experiment with different forms of the heptasyllabic regulated poems, including the *Tanglü* 唐律 and the "alternating neighboring rhyme" forms (*jintui ge* 進退格), which appeared only one other time in *Tuixiu ji*. I have not been able to ascertain the exact meaning of the former, except that in all four

[187] Schmidt argues that the ending shows the influence of Chan. In "Ch'an, Illusion, and Sudden Enlightenment."

instances, it appeared in conjunction with the latter with a preface saying, "I wrote two poems on such-and-such, the first one is a *Tanglü*, the second one uses alternating neighboring rhymes." The number of heptasyllabic regulated poems visibly increased beginning with this collection, and the subject matter became more variegated. Yang Wanli could seamlessly pass between different language registers between and within parallel couplets. One example from the *Jiangdong ji* would suffice to illustrate the mature form of Yang Wanli's heptasyllabic regulated poem:

Entering the Border of Jianping County[188]	入建平界
The south bank of Li River connects to Jianping,	溧水南頭接建平,
So the boys and girls are working hard plowing.	丫頭兒子便勤畊,
Hemp and soybeans have already become the elder generation,	疎麻大豆已前輩,
Wheat and cabbages are budding youngsters.	蕎麥晚菘初後生,
They round up the thousand mountains into a single reserve,	席卷千山為一囿,
Heaven pities [their] spring planting by bestowing autumn harvest.	天憐春種賜秋成,
"I am not as good as the old gardener" – ain't that true now?	不如老圃今眞个,
Who said Mr. Fan ever passed through the sage's door?[189]	樊子何曾透聖扃.

Yang Wanli's characteristic casual approach and unpredictable style are balanced in an interesting way by his fascination with *kuyin*, one of the two aspects of the Late Tang that figure significantly in his poetry.[190] Although he appreciated the beauty of Late Tang couplets and could easily recognize one when he saw it, he wrote them sparingly. A few examples would be

[188] In modern Jiangsu.

[189] *QSS,* 42:26509

[190] The other being quatrains. Mo Lifeng goes as far as to argue that the maturation of his Chengzhai style coincided with his peak in writing quatrains. Cf. Chapter 3 n.261.

from “Being Stirred by Autumn 感秋, “A morning of delicate scent from dewy lotuses, / An autumn of pale light under the clouds and sun. 露荷幽馥曉, 雲日淡光秋;”[191] or from “Camping Under a Tree in the Baboon Vines Path 野炊猿藤逕樹下,” “Crimson maples brighten the distant trees, / Yellow leaves darken the gurgling spring. 丹楓明遠樹, 黃葉暗鳴泉;”[192] or, “The peaceful waves let light travel far, / Sparse raindrops make the ripples move in slowly. 平波光去遠, 疎點暈來遲,” (“Setting Off in the Morning from Jinling and Having Breakfast in Yijing” 明發金陵晨炊義井).[193] However, this kind of couplets are few in number and never seem to fit in seamlessly with the rest of the poem.

The aspects about the Late Tang to which Yang Wanli referred the most in his poetry were two-fold: lean poetry, and the painstaking effort and harsh conditions involved in the writing of it. He often spoke of his poetry as the only thing left for him, a poor scholar failing official service, to do, and it is “lean” poetry, the product of hard thinking throughout the night:

Sitting Alone at Night in Spring[194]	春夜孤坐
As I grow old, I grieve over the difficulty in searching for a line of poetry:	老來寬句苦難成,
To whirl an axe as swiftly as wind to finely carve thin ice.[195]	細把風斤鏤薄冰,

[191] *QSS,* 42:26199.

[192] *QSS,* 42:26296.

[193] *QSS,* 42:26503.

[194] *QSS* 42:26234.

[195] The *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典 glosses “wind-axe” as “cuttingly cold wind” and cites Yang Wanli’s line as example of usage. However, I believe that Yang is alluding to the story of Carpenter Shi in the “Xu Wugui” chapter of *Zhuang Zi*. A man smudged the tip of his nose with a thin layer of mud and told Shi to slice off the mud with his axe. Shi whirled his axe like the

When I walk to the long hallway, all human sounds are silent,	行到長廊人寂寂,
From inside a window, one fleck of light from the reading lamp.	隔窻一點讀書燈.

The most significant change he wrought for the Late Tang, however, is his parody of *kuyin*:

Insomnia (Second poem out of a set of four):	不寐
It's not like I love to chant poetry on my pillow –	非關枕上愛吟詩,
I do it to divert sorrow for a few short moments.	聊復銷愁片子時,
My worn-out eyes, forced to sleep, eventually failed to bring a dream,	老眼强眠終不夢,
My empty stomach rumbles and grumbles to announce long starvation.	空腸暗響訴長飢,
Toss and turn, this way and that – aw, my whole body aches,	翻來覆去體都痛,
Now dim, now bright - who's the lamp doing that for?	乍暗忽明燈為誰,
Everyone just say 'ow a long day gets boring,	只道晝長無那著,
Tha's 'cause they dunno how hard it is to endure the long night.	夜長難禁不曾知.

Insomnia (III):

Surreptitious bugs wail at night and refuse to stop,	暗蟲夜啼不肯停,
Wailing all the way from dusk to dawn.	直從黃昏啼到明,
I don't know what they're talking,	不知討論底事著,
Or who they're grumbling about.	為復怨嗟誰子生,
Thousands and thousands of words throughout the whole night	至竟終宵千萬語,
Are really just two or three sounds:	真實只是兩三聲,
Trill-trill, tweet-tweet, trill-tweet-tweet –	唧唧唧唧復唧唧,
What else do they say? – you try and listen.[196]	此外何言君試聽.

It is not difficult to recognize the tropes of *kuyin* in the above pair of poems – the hunger, the pain, the sleeplessness, the endless night – all are there in the first poem, and as the Late Tang

wind and sliced off the mud without hurting the nose, while the man stood without losing his composure.

[196] *QSS,* 42:26255.

poets' treatment of these tropes were pejoratively known as "the bug's song," Yang Wanli delivers a playful version of his "bug's song" in the second poem. Beneath the ostensibly colloquial language, however, the poem still obeys the prosodic rules of the regulated poem, and we can detect the traces of Yang Wanli's method in transplanting and manipulating the meaning of words from different places. On a deeper level, this successful transformation of the *kuyin* trope in a Chengzhai-style regulated poem is a double-edged comment on the values of both the Late Tang and the Jiangxi tradition.

3. Han Biao

It is not possible to do a chronological study with Han Biao as we have done with Yang Wanli because not much of his biographical details survive; Fang Hui mentioned that he had written Han's biography,[197] but unfortunately it is nowhere to be found. According to a brief note in *Yingkui lüsui*, we know that he withdrew from official service in the beginning of the Jiading era (1208) and lived in retirement for the rest of his life. He might have served in court briefly, as indicated by the presence of one *zhici* 制詞 in his collection, but a significant part of his life was passed in his home in Shangrao. We find famous names here and there in his social response poems, but again, dating them is a problem, if not impossible. His poetry collection may have been chronologically arranged at one point, since Fang Hui could date most of Han Biao's poems included in the *Yingkui lüsui*, but the *Siku quanshu* edition, the only version we have today, was copied out from the *Yongle dadian.* It seems that either the Ming or the Qing editors decided to arrange the poems first by form, and next by subject. No chronological order is discernible in the present edition.

[197] *YKLSHP*, 2:836.

Fang Hui also mentioned that Han Biao's collection amounted to some five thousand poems in more than forty *juan*. Only half of that survived through the *Yongle dadian*. The earliest datable poem by Han Biao is from 1192, included in *Yingkui lüsui*, which Fang Hui considers as being exceptionally mature for a poet in his thirties. A dedicated and influential poet, he did not make it into Yang Wanli's list of aspiring young poets, even though Yang highly esteemed his close associate Zhao Fan, who lived and wrote at exactly the same time and the same place. This unique position makes Han Biao an illuminating case study: he had enough in common with his older contemporaries to form a close-knit friendship and exchange poetry with Zhao Fan on an almost daily basis; at the same time, he was fifteen years younger than Zhao Fan, which placed him at a distance from Yang Wanli's circle of poets, and we can detect some interesting differences.

Han Biao is traditionally seen as one of the orthodox followers of the Jiangxi school. Unsurprisingly, it was Fang Hui who first put him in that lineage in the preface to "To Zheng Yi (Shengyu) of Shangrao in the Same Rhyme" 次韻贈上饒鄭聖予沂并序:

> In Shangrao, since the restoration, Zeng Chashan (Ji) acquired the method of writing poetry from Lü Ziwei (Benzhong). It was passed down to Zhao Zhangquan (Fan) and Han Jianquan (Hu) of the Jiading era, so the orthodox lineage was not interrupted. Nowadays, those who learn from the Four Spirits of Yongjia don't know about this anymore.[198]
> 上饒自南渡以来, 寓公曾茶山得吕紫微詩法, 傳至嘉定中趙章泉韓澗泉, 正脉不絶, 今之學永嘉四靈者, 不復知此.

[198] *Tongjiang xuji, juan* 15, 1193:402-03.

There is definitely evidence in Han Biao's oeuvre to support Fang Hui's view, and Liang Kun 梁崑 made a convincing argument to enlist Han as a "fourth phase poet of the Jiangxi school."[199] At the same time, his poetry is also decorated by pretty couplets that bear a strong resemblance to the Late Tang, such as the "Over a broad stream" couplet in the last section. In terms of subject matter, Han Biao's poetry exhibits continuity with his east coast contemporaries, the Four Spirits of Yongjia, for focusing primarily on the joys and sorrows in the life of a poet-recluse. It is not surprising to find all of these things in Han Biao's poetry, but again, what interests me is not his potential affiliation with a particular school/style, but the ways in which he made use of and transformed the values and practices of those models.

Han Biao was known in his day not only as a teacher of poetry, but also a high-minded recluse who declined official service for moral principles. In the abstract to Han Biao's *Jianquan riji* 澗泉日記, the *Siku quanshu* editors cited an elegiac poem by one of his unofficial students, Dai Fugu 戴復古 (1167-?):

> Dai Fugu's *Shiping ji* contains "An Elegy for Han Zhongzhi," "His elegant spirit stood out from the common herd, / He gave up his official post for twenty years. / Living in a secluded dwelling on the stream, / He drank purely from the mountain spring. / He discussed contemporary affairs with emotion; / How disconsolate were his last poems! / He left these three poems posthumously - / they should be handed down with history." Dai Fugu's note says, "Shocked by contemporary affairs, Han Biao caught an illness and passed away. He wrote three poems, 'Hence the ones from the Shang Mountain,' 'Hence

[199] See Liang Kun, *Songshi paibie lun* 宋詩派別論, (Shangwu yinshu guan: Changsha, 1938), p128-129. As he argues in the preface, Liang Kun uses the concept "poetic school" to clarify some of the sweeping generalizations made about Song poetry, such as "Song poetry is shallow," or "Song poetry is mainly discursive." He also recognizes that by the "third phase of the Jiangxi school" (i.e. Yang Wanli's generation), poets had already departed so far from those in the first and second phases that they almost went over to the opposite end.

> the ones from the Peach Blossom Spring,' 'Hence the one from the Deer Gate Mountain.' Those were his last poems."[200]
> 戴復古石屏集有挽韓仲止詩云, 雅志不同俗, 休官二十年, 隱居溪上宅, 清酌澗中泉, 慷慨商時事, 凄涼絶筆篇, 三篇遺稿在, 當竝史書傳. 自注云, 時事驚心得疾而卒, 作所以商山人所以桃源人所以鹿門人三詩, 蓋絶筆也.

The three poems to which Dai Fugu referred were recorded in the 13th century compendium of "talks on poetry," *Shiren yuxie* 詩人玉屑.[201] In Han Biao's collection, they are a set of eight-line ancient-style poems titled "Thinking about the Past 懷古," and the three lines that Dai Fugu used to name them were the seventh line for each poem. For some unknown reason, the *Siku* editors decided that "Hence the one at the Deer Gate Mountain" was lost, and only included the other two in *Jianquan ji*. The Shang Mountain, the Dear Gate Mountain, and the Peach Blossom Spring were out-of-the-world homes for famous recluses in antiquity. In those poems, Han Biao declared outright rejection of the outside world because he was content with the simple pleasures of a recluse's life, which also let him embrace the transformations in the four seasons. He especially emphasized that, contrary to accepted lore, the old men from the Shang Mountain decided to "take leave from the Han and resolved never to go out again." Although Han Biao did not mention it explicitly, Dai Fugu tells us that this was because Han Biao was shocked by the course of contemporary events without ever being able to totally forget about them.

Dai Fugu's commemorative poem and note lend a harsh undertone to Han Biao's meditative poetry, most of which were written in the bland, understated style and, in the case of pentasyllabic regulated poems, studded by prettily crafted couplets. Han Biao's typical poem

[200] Han Biao, *Jianquan riji*, in *Yingyin Wenyuange Siku quanshu*, vol. 864, 769-70.

[201] With some textual variants.

records his observations on an ordinary day, with him being quietly aware of the transformations brought about by the seasonal cycle:

The Twenty-Fifth	二十五日
I burn incense in deep seclusion,	焚香得深居,
The pure breeze nurtures my solitary heart.	清風養幽抱,
How late have the cuckoos the come [this year]!	杜鵑來何遲,
The wild swans always depart early.	鴻鴈去常早,
Light ripples tinkle in the ravines,	微瀾響溝流,
Accumulated moisture makes stone steps slippery.	積潤滑磴道,
Steadily and silently, the myriad vegetations grow,	綿綿百草長,
While spring wind grows old in the rain.[202]	春風雨中老.

Vegetation grows in the rain while spring wind "grows old;" the two processes are opposite and mutually dependent, and they continue in the natural course of seasonal change without and despite human intervention. The poet does nothing except to let the "pure breeze nurture [his] solitary heart" and to observe the activities of living beings. Talking of the natural course of things with a meditative calm is Han Biao's characteristic way of ending his poems in the pentasyllabic line, as he wrote in another poem, "I watch the four seasons with a calm heart / And feel the movement and transformations evermore. 平心閱四時, 益覺運而化." As a side note, one of his "Four Spirits" contemporaries, Weng Juan 翁卷, was doing the same thing in Yongjia, "Living at ease, I watch the transformation of things – / Several leaves are blown eastward once again 閑居觀物化, 幾葉又飛東." Without Dai Fugu's poem to guide us, Han Biao would have appeared a temperate philosopher, as most of his poems in the pentasyllabic line are written in this vein.

[202] *QSS* 52:32388.

Han Biao presents his poetry mainly as the result of heightened sense of perception in absolute silence and solitude guided only by his consciousness. In "The Twenty-Fifth," his opening lines often take the reader into his world – a virtual world of solitary meditation and a mental quest for insights into the truth of things. "Sitting Up at Night" is another good example of this:

In a cold night I sit beside a pile of ashes,	冷夜灰堆坐,
As I search for poetry, I carefully trim the lamp wick.	尋詩細撥燈,
Because of this, my heart embarks on winding journey,	心懷為宛轉,
And my words are able to reach the pinnacle.	語句得憑凌,
At the approach of the year's end I fear too much drinking,	歲晚愁多飲,
Winter has arrived, but it is still warm, not freezing cold.	冬來煖未冰,
[It feels] so soon when I hear the dogs bark:	俄聽荒犬吠,
In the silent village they answer each other from afar.[203]	村靜遠相仍.

There may be a tenuous connection in the first couplet to *kuyin*, where he speaks of "searching for poetry" next to a pile of cold ashes in a winter night. Although he does it much less than Zhao Fan, Han Biao's poetry does not lack those examples of composing poetry under harsh conditions. In this poem, however, the opening is not so significant as an act of *kuyin* as its objective in embarking the reader, along with Han Biao himself, on a virtual journey in search for poetry: the metaphor continues in the second couplet, where he feels as if his heart is traveling on some winding road before his words finally reach the summit. The poem ends accordingly on the awakening from this trance-like state when the dogs' barking signals the coming of dawn, but still before the villagers start to stir. Even the barks are listened to with deliberation: in the background of absolute silence, he could distinguish them responding to each other.

[203] *QSS* 52:32570.

Thus, it is not surprising that "taking a walk" became Han Biao's favorite trope. Walks were taken alone, in deliberation, and often without a preset destination. When Han Biao is at his best, even the most realistic details in a most realistic walk can suddenly turn into a dream:

The Thirteenth Day of the First Month	正月十三日
Spring snow on the South Mountain have not completely melted,	南山春雪未全消,
The path merges with a floating plankway, but I take the stone bridge.	路並浮梁步石橋,
A dark green tint is gradually returning to the topmost willow leaves,	深緑漸歸高柳葉,
Pale pink [flowers] have just reached the tiny tips of the plum tree.	淺紅初上小梅梢,
From a temple cold and high rises the sound of bells,	峭寒寺院鐘聲起,
Candlelight in an evening home casts a wavering shadow	昏暮人家燭影摇,
East wind, blowing all night, sobers me up from tipsiness,	一夜東風吹酒醒,
When I return from a dream of flowers and moon, it is already the Lantern Festival Eve.[204]	夢回花月是元宵.

Until the poet realizes that he had been tipsy, which does not happen until the second-to-last line, the poem presents a sober journey in search for hints of spring. Time passes in the succession of imagery – a colorful day is succeeded by the dusk temple bells, and finally by the flickering candlelight – and beyond the cycle of night and day is a larger one of seasonal change. The truth of every detail in this poem rests on the poet's consciousness, and yet he tells us in the end that perhaps, it had all been a "dream of flowers and moon," the product of his tipsiness. He can no longer tell which images had been real and which had been his imagination, or whether the journey had ever continued beyond that "floating plankway." The east wind may eventually bring about the flowering season, but it also transports the poet from the most immediate contact with its beauty in his trance-like state. While the beauty of the poem is in the world it creates – a

[204] *QSS* 52:32592. "*Yuanxiao,*" or the Lantern Festival Day, is on the fifteenth day of the first month, but this creates a conflict with the title, "The Thirteenth."

world floating between waking and dreaming, between imagination and reality, it is also a world that no longer exists once the poet sobers up and looks back wistfully.

Solitary walks, seasonal change, and natural phenomena take up a large number of Han Biao's extant poems. They are free from bookish allusions and difficult words, but they usually contain one or two finely crafted couplets in the Late Tang model. The poet's vision is limited to the details close at hand, and his images consist of the predictable set of wind, flowers, temples, and what not. These features of Han Biao's poetry should remind the reader strongly of the Four Spirits' remaking of the Late Tang, and indeed, when we consider the following two poems on spring, the first by Xu Ji, and the second by Han Biao, they are almost indistinguishable, at least before we take a closer look:

Spring Prospect	春望
I watch late spring from the balcony,	樓上看春晚,
A mist separates the nearby hamlet from the one afar.	烟分遠近村,
It cleared in the morning [to reveal] greenness in every tree,	曉晴千樹緑,
A fresh rain shower [makes] half of the pond murky.	新雨半池渾,
Willows are dense – orioles hidden without a shadow,	柳密鶯無影,
The mud [on the nest] is new – a swallow has left his trace.	泥新燕有痕,
Feeling a slight chill in my thin clothes,	輕寒衫袖薄,
I had better warm my wine cups again.[205]	杯酌更須温.
A Day in Spring	春日
With no one in the courtyard,	院落無人到,
Floating filaments shorten and lengthen by themselves.	遊絲自短長,
The delicate breeze enriches sunny hues,	細風添霽色,
The slanting sun revolves its glimmering rays.	斜日轉流光,
Willows [don] a tender color as they move close to the orioles.	柳入鶯邊嫩,

[205] Jiang Jianren 蔣劍人, ed., *Song Siling shi* 宋四靈詩, (Shanghai: Shanghai Zhonghua shuju, 1940), 51.

Flowers [waft] a sweet scent as they fly beyond the swallows.	花飛燕外香,
With a cup in my hand this long spring day,	一杯春晝永,
I try to inquire into the season's beauty.[206]	試與問年芳.

If there is a procedure to writing a poem on spring, this pair of poems certainly followed the same procedure. Spring is viewed from an enclosed space; a holistic couplet is followed by one focusing on details, and finally, the poet closes with a cup of wine. In the third couplet, three images – willows, orioles, and swallows – occupy the exact same positions. Yet, the difference between the two poems arises precisely from these almost identical couplets in the ways they fit into the respective poems. Xu Ji's couplet has little thematic resonance with the rest of the poem: the perfect hiddenness of the orioles contrast nicely with traces of newly smeared mud on the swallow's nest, but the pattern is not repeated in the rest of the poem. The two couplets in Xu Ji's poem, in short, are typically Late Tang in the sense that they are set apart to highlight the craft, while their relationship with the rest of the poem is fragmentary. In contrast, Han Biao's couplet repeats the theme of constant, flowing movement of living things in this poem: floating gossamers, flowing breeze, glimmering light, and most importantly, the cyclical movement of the seasons, which in fact is one of the major themes in his entire poetic corpus. To put it plainly, the couplet "flows" with the rest of the poem.

Although we can never be sure, this may be one of the reasons why Han Biao was never identified with the so-called "Late Tang school" centered around the Four Spirits. Another reason may be his experiment with a variety of styles, as Liang Kun observes in *Songshi paibie lun*:

> Jianquan has some warm and fine moments in his lean and bland style. Zhangquan's (Zhao Fan), on the other hand, mostly consist of ancient tree trunks and dry branches and have no lingering flavor. Fairly speaking, Jianquan's poetry seems to be better than

[206] *QSS,* 52:32512.

> Zhangquan's. His pentasyllabic ancient-style poems have the air of Tao Yuanming and Wei Yingwu. His regulated poems, but for the lack of power, resemble Lu You.
> 澗泉於瘦淡中自有溫粹, 章泉則多老幹枯枝, 無復餘味, 平心論之, 則澗泉詩似在章泉之上也. 其五古亦有陶韋之風, 近體具陸游而力量尚不及爾.[207]

Liang Kun is perhaps the most judicious modern critic of Han Biao's poetry, and after reading the few examples of Han Biao's poems, it is easy to understand what he means by "warm and fine moments" in a largely "lean and bland" style. Han Biao's pentasyllabic poems are very different from the free, rambling style and heroic sentiments expressed in his heptasyllabic ancient-style poems, and as Liang Kun points out, his heptasyllabic regulated poems resembles Lu You. Moreover, the words "lean and bland" cover a wide aesthetic range. It may describe the poems we have seen that contain some "warm and fine moments;" it can also describe a poem like the following (also by Han Biao):

To Changfu using the Same Rhyme (Sixth poem out of seven)[208]	次韻昌甫
Old age makes me regret the fewness of my associates;	老嘆交情少,
A leisure life acquaints me with the difficulty in the principles of friendship.	閒知友道難,
How can I bear the Wuyi immortal's stream	何堪武夷曲,
Being ever so near Yan Ziling's riverbank?	更近子陵灘,
I seal my lips from mentioning dragon meat;[209]	絶口談龍肉,
I will join you in eating horse liver.[210]	從渠食馬肝,

[207] Liang Kun, 128.

[208] *QSS* 52:32552.

[209] When Zhang Hua saw dragon's meat, he considered it one of the abnormalities that boded ill in a chaotic age. See Zhang Hua's biography in *Jin shu* 晉書.

[210] The Horse Liver Stone is the main ingredient of a concoction for immortality. See Guo Xian 郭憲, *Dong ming ji* 洞冥記.

I do not deserve to say that I select a tree on which to nest,	敢云棲擇木,
Merely going along with the world to myself comfortable on a single branch.	隨世一枝安.

"Wuyi stream" and "Ziling's riverbank," along with "dragon meat" and "horse liver," suggest "Jiangxi" for the middle two couplets. Those bookish allusions, however, are stringed together by a series of conversational phrases, unlike the dense couplet we have seen by Chen Shidao. The style of the poem is correspondingly appropriate for the subject of steadfast friendship in troubled times. Although most of Han Biao's social response poetry is written in this style, Han Biao never expressed the kind of fervent admiration for Jiangxi poets like Zhao Fan did. Zhao proclaimed in no uncertain terms that he was a student of the Jiangxi method, and it is probably due to this and his close friendship with Han Biao that led Fang Hui to group them together in the "orthodox Jiangxi lineage." Han Biao, however, admired the Jiangxi poets for more reasons than their "method of the line:"

> Shao You (Qin Guan) is better than Huang [Tingjian] and Chen [Shidao]. Huang Luzhi (Tingjian) has an extremely lofty spirit. Chen Houshan's writing lacks talent, and the only noteworthy thing about him is his elegant and clean method. [211]
> 少游在黃陳之上, 黃魯直意氣極高, 陳后山文字才氣短, 所可尚者步驟雅潔爾.

While Huang Tingjian's "lofty spirit" may have inspired Han Biao's heptasyllabic regulated poems, the shadow of Chen Shidao's "elegant and clean" method still informs most of Han Biao's poetry, including those that resemble the Late Tang at first glance. It is ultimately the in synthesis of Han Biao where the Jiangxi-and-Late Tang division falls utterly to pieces.

III. Conclusion:

[211] *Jianquan riji, juan* 3, 864:791.

Yang Wanli and Han Biao's poetry is far too rich to be fully covered in a discussion about the Jiangxi school and the Late Tang. It was not the purpose of this chapter to deliver a well-rounded study of either poet but to explore how certain poetic values were transformed within the form of the regulated poem. Although Han Biao almost certainly read Yang Wanli's poems, there is no evidence to suggest that he was personally instructed or directly influenced by the older poet. The two *shiren* are connected by a shared concept of poetry as diary and interest in the values, models and practices of the Jiangxi and Late Tang poets. Besides that, they represent two relatively independent *shiren*, each responding to and incorporating those values and practices as they form a strong, individualized voice. Those values, in turn, emerge transformed and handed down to later generations for repeated processes of transformation, so that we can no longer safely use the concept of "the Jiangxi school" or "the Late Tang" without first understanding what they have become. We can choose to read a linear development from Yang Wanli to Han Biao, and draw our conclusions from there, but to do so would mean treading on grounds of inference, not to mention the fact that the two poets were in no way representative of their respective generations. I wish only to open the possibility of looking at this period's poetry differently than identifying them or separating them from petrified ideas of "schools." This is the period before dogmatism invaded the realm of poetry; while the concept of "poetic schools" is useful in distinguishing different trends at work within the even more generic idea, "Song dynasty poetry," there is no reason to assume that every poet writing in this period were adhering to – or defying – a set of "school codes."

Chapter Three

Quatrains Sets in the Late Twelfth and Early Thirteen Centuries

I. Introduction: Asking the Questions and the Inevitable Flashback to Du Fu:

The quatrain occupies a significantly more prominent place in the Southern Song *shiren*'s poetic collections than in the previous generations. Quatrains, and especially quatrain sets, were a major part of their poetry corpus and constitute an important section of their poetic journal. The Northern Song did not lack poets who devoted serious efforts to the composition of quatrains, among whom Wang Anshi and Huang Tingjian were the most notable. Between the two of them, they resurrected every theme and style that had previously appeared in the quatrain. But the true breakthrough in the parameters of quatrains laid down by the Tang poets came in the Southern Song, when what had largely been a matter of sporadic preference for the quatrain became a fashion. The quatrain was the first and the only poetic form for which anthologies were compiled in the Southern Song: *Quatrains from the Past and the Present* (古今絕句 *Gujin jueju*), compiled by Wu Yue 吳說 (12th century); Hong Mai's 洪邁 *Ten Thousand Quatrains by Tang Poets* (萬首唐人絕句 *Wanshou Tang ren jueju*); and *Tang Poetry: Selected by Masters Zhangquan and Jianquan with Commentaries* (*Zhujie Zhangquan Jianquan er xiansheng xuan Tang shi* 註解章泉澗泉二先生選唐詩), compiled by Han Biao and Zhao Fan with Xie Bingde's commentary. And by the end of the thirteenth century, the annotated anthology and poetry-writing manual, *Tang Song qianjia lianzhu shige* 唐宋千家聯珠詩格 compiled by Cai Zhensun 蔡振孫, used hepta-syllabic quatrains exclusively to illustrate the wording patterns in lines of

poetry.[212] Aside from the general avid interest in reading quatrains that occasioned these anthologies, the most notable addition made by the Southern Song poets were "journal" quatrain sets – groups of a sequence of quatrains written about a journey or moments of leisure in the poet's life. Examples of such quatrain sets before the Southern Song had been few and far in between, and then it took remarkably little time to grow from a sudden burst of interest into a widely written genre.

This new vogue fits in with the general trend of treating poetry as journal, but it begs the question, "why the quatrain?" Are there qualities unique to the quatrain that justified its popularity with the Southern Song *shiren*? Or to ask the question from the other end: what did the *shiren* write about in the quatrain sets and how did they write them that they otherwise did not do in other *shi* forms? In attempting to address these questions, we find Du Fu, the irrepressible presence in Southern Song poetry, resurface yet again for having been first to experiment on the quatrain set, and for the uncanny ways in which his quatrain sets foreshadowed some of the most important themes and literary devices in the quatrains of our time period. Hence, this flashback to Du Fu's spring in 761:

It breaks my heart - spring on the river coming to an end.	腸斷江春欲盡頭,[213]
With a cane I take a leisurely walk and stop on the floral riverbank.	杖藜徐步立芳洲.
Wild willow catkins whirl in the whirling wind;	顛狂柳絮隨風舞,
Flighty peach flowers flow with the flowing water.	輕薄桃花逐水流.

[212] See "Tang Song qianjia lianzhu shige yu Songdai shixue 唐宋千家聯珠詩格與宋代詩學" in Bian Dongbo 卞東波, *Nan Song shixuan yu Songdai shixue kaolun* 南宋詩選與宋代詩學考論 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2009), 204-261.

[213] For Du Fu's quatrains in this chapter, I use the version in *Wanshou Tang ren jueju* 萬首唐人絕句. Hong Mai 洪邁, compil., Huo Songlin 霍松林 ed., *Wanshou Tangren jueju jiaozhu jiping* 3 vol., (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin, 1988), 2:209. Hereafter *WSTRJJ.*

Sadness about the imminent end of spring was still poetically fresh in Du Fu's time, before later *ci* writers made it cliché. Willow catkins and falling flowers are figures for spring's ephemerality. The intensity of his sadness is conveyed through the sharp contrast between their flurried movement and the poet's stationary figure.

This simple quatrain, while perfectly capable of standing on its own, gains in sophistication when we read it in the context of the set to which it belongs. This is the fifth poem in a set of nine titled "Impromptu Poems: Nine Quatrains" 絶句漫興九首. Despite what the word "impromptu" in the title may suggest, the perfect ordering of the poems by seasonal progression prevents us from reading the set as a random conglomeration of casual compositions. Flowers blossom in the first poem; they begin to fall in poem five; and by poem seven coin-sized lotus leaves dot the stream. The set has a clear beginning and end: it opens with the arrival of a anthropomorphic spring and is brought to a violent close when a gust of wind breaks the longest willow frond outside the poet's home. Yet, though markers of the season's progression make them the most obvious organizing principle of the set, the interwoven pattern of motifs and poetic device plays a more important role in knitting the poems together as a whole.

Personification is the most persistently used device here. A cursory reading of the first poem in the set will show that "wild willow catkins" and "flighty peach flowers" are the minions of a spring season that had been "impertinent" in its first arrival:

Seeing the traveler's sorrow, sorrow without waking,	眼見客愁愁不醒,
Impertinent Spring arrives at the river pavilion.	無賴春色到江亭.
It hastens the flowers to open at once – so very reckless;	即遣花開深造次,
It then makes the orioles warble – rather too prattling.	便教鶯語太丁寧.[214]

[214] *WSTRJJ,* 2:208.

This poem exemplifies the ironic way in which pathetic fallacy is to be employed throughout the set. Instead of sympathizing with the poet's feelings, spring appears determined to thwart them. It often annoys and occasionally diverts the old poet in sadness so that he is never wholly submerged in it. Orioles in this poem make too much noise; swallows in poem 3 visit his home too often and bug him on purpose. Here, flowers are "reckless" for blossoming; in poem 5, as we have seen, peach flower petals are "flighty" as they fall into the river. Various species of birds and plant life and the prankish intentions that the poet attributes to them appear to be the driving force of this set of poems.

One example, poem 6, will suffice to show that the poet's perspective move from one poem to the next:

Lazy and fit for nothing, I never go out of the village.	懶慢無堪不出村,
Though the sun is still up, I call my son to shut our briar gate.	呼兒日在掩柴門.
Emerald moss, murky ale, it is quiet in the woods.	蒼苔濁酒林中靜,
Green water, spring wind, it gets dark out in the wilds.	碧水春風野外昏.

In poem five we find the poet standing in an overwhelming flurry of willow catkins and falling flowers. At the beginning of poem six, we see him determined not to stir from home. Even before dusk comes on, he shuts the gate of his home against spring. The voice of this poem is easy to identify as that of the weary old man who stood still on the riverbank in poem 5. While he entertains himself with some ale in the secluded grove, dusk gradually steals into his consciousness from beyond the countryside. Between the two successive poems we move with the same poet's consciousness from outdoors to enclosed space, and moving outwards again. Every poem in the set thus corresponds in some way to the others. The movement in space between poems 5 and 6 is only one example in the carefully-wrought web of connections between the well-ordered nine quatrains.

With his "Impromptu Poems," Du Fu made several important innovations in the quatrain.[215] Poets up to his time have written quatrains primarily on the themes of love, pleasure, parting and the frontier.[216] Du Fu took up the form to write about mundane details in everyday life, a theme that found great popularity with Southern Song poets. Secondly, with his innovative take on the device of personification, he forged a new kind of relationship between natural imagery and poetic feelings: instead of the direct association between the two by metaphor or invocation, creatures in nature have feelings independent of the poet and, set at a distance, enacts a half-playful drama with him. The device is not as commonplace as it sounds: such kind of relationship between poet and natural imagery is rarely seen in *shi* poetry up to Du Fu's time. Lastly, Du Fu also took the quatrain set to a new level. The poems making up quatrain sets before Du Fu had been varying treatments of the same theme without any essential order or structural unity, while the ones in Du Fu's set are carefully ordered to cover his experience over an extended period of time. Small-scale quatrain sets began to appear more and more often throughout the Northern Song, but rarely does one see a well-organized set with a sense of progression. The only examples are the poems by Qian Xu 錢珝 and Sikong Tu 司空圖 in the Tang and Wang Anshi in the Song. Wang Anshi and Sikong Tu are important links in the tradition of Du Fu quatrain sets, but they hardly deviated from the old master. Qian Xu, on the other hand, retrospectively organized the quatrains he wrote on a journey into the set titled "A

[215] Zhou Xiaotian 周嘯天, *Tang jueju shi* 唐絕句史, (Chongqing: Chongqing, 2006), 199-212.

[216] An important exception is Wang Wei's 王維 quatrains on his Wangchuan estate.

Record of My Journey by Boat" 舟中錄[217] – a manner of composition that some poets chose to adopt for their travel journal quatrains in the Southern Song.

This sums up the examples of journal quatrain sets between Du Fu and our time period. The next section will identify the main characteristics of the quatrain form in the mid-Southern Song, especially the type that make up the majority of journal quatrain sets.

II. Stylistic Expectations for the Quatrain in the Late Twelfth Century

The quatrain, the shortest and simplest form of *shi* poetry, is also the most difficult to be defined as a genre. In his book on the history of quatrains, *Jueju shi shi* 絕句詩史[218], Zhou Xiaotian describes it as a poem of four lines of equal length using a single rhyme category with rhyme words required for even-numbered lines. This is based purely on formal features and is an adequate description for all of the poems classified as "quatrains" up to the present, but it is certainly not an exclusive definition. For instance, the same could be said for some Buddhist and Taoist verses, as well as folk songs (or imitations thereof) that traditionally fall under the heading of *yuefu*. A four-line verse stanza that fits Zhou's criteria is also the most common unit in longer poems; it could also be a *ci* lyric or a stanza thereof. Approaching the question from a different angle, Lin Shuen-fu describes the common qualities of the quatrain as written in simple language, is divided into two complementary couplets, and exhibits a dynamic quality in the individual lines as well as in the progression of the whole piece.[219] Although Lin's conclusions

---

[217] The set is mistakenly attributed to Qian Qi, his great-grandfather, as "Traveling by Yangtze River, Left Untitled," in *WSTRJJ*, 1:357.

[218] Zhou, *Jueju shi shi,* (Chengdu: Bashu, 1999), 1.

[219] Charles H. Egan tries to distinguish *jueju* from *lǜshi* in "A critical Study of the Origins of Chüeh-chü Poetry," *Asia Major,* Vol. 6, No. 1 (1993), 84-86.

are drawn specifically from the quatrains written during the High Tang whose course of development could be traced back to the end of the Han Dynasty, he accurately defines the stylistic expectations of the quatrain, even as it mutated, forked and mingled to become the many-faceted phenomenon in later times. In his study on the evolution of quatrains, Daniel Hsieh likewise argues that it is a literary genre evolved from a basic form, having, in its mature stage, attained a consistency in style, language, and tone as well as a set of established approaches, themes, occasions or subgenres.

I will take the above points as a working definition for the quatrain genre with a few emendations. Lin stopped with Du Fu, and Hsieh even earlier with the early Tang poets, because the quatrains up to Du Fu's time were still fairly uniform in style and limited in themes. However, when one looks to the Southern Song and beyond, quatrains eventually attained a wide range of topics along with varying approaches to write them. here is a fluid quality about the two-couplet unit, allowing it to stand alone as an individual poem (the quatrain) or as the basic stanzaic unit in longer poetic forms, a quality that may be attributable to one of the hypothesis of its origins, the "linked verses" practice among the literary men in the Southern Dynasties. No other poetic form can be thus complete and incomplete at the same time like the quatrain. Another debated origin of the pentasyllabic quatrain, the four-line folk songs of Jiangnan that the literati appropriated into their writing, further testifies to the adaptability of this stanzaic unit into sung verse. Thus, the quatrain's fluidity makes it easy to adapt to a wide range of topics and occasions, and to develop into various genres.

Identifying the conventions of the quatrain is useful in so far as we recognize their fluidity when the quatrain gained in complexity through the ages. It allows us to see the characteristics that quatrains widely share, for example, its double-sided nature as being both

complete and incomplete; and owing to the quatrain's reputed origin in Southern Dynasties *yuefu* poetry, simple, sometimes intentionally colloquial language, and the use of the voice of a persona. These characteristics, however, were meant to be treated differently at the hands of different poets in different times. Thus, part of the purpose of this chapter is to explore the ways in which these general characteristics became historically specific in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, a crucial period when the quatrain soared in popularity.

Contemporary sources and opinions – the first place to look for direct answers – are far from conclusive. The time would come late in the Southern Song when novices were to be instructed in prescriptive methods of writing in different poetic forms, of which the quatrain was no exception. When Zhou Bi 周弼 (d. 1294) wrote the commentary for *San ti Tang shi* 三體唐詩, he positively asserted seven methods in writing the quatrain that the student should master.[220] Critics in the Ming and Qing dynasties also furnished rich commentary on all aspects of the quatrain. But in the late twelfth century, opinions on the quatrain were only sporadically voiced, and were more suggestive than instructive. Even the widely used term, *Tang ren jueju* 唐人絕句 (quatrains by Tang poets), varied in the scope of inclusiveness. Aside from the two quatrain anthologies, *Ten Thousand Quatrains by Tang Poets* and *Tang Poetry Selected by Masters Zhangquan and Jianquan*, we only have a handful of comments by Yang Wanli.

Hong Mai's 洪邁 (1123-1202) 1180 preface to *Ten Thousand Quatrains by Tang Poets* seems to be the natural place to start looking for contemporary views on the quatrain:

---

[220] In Zhou's "Preface" and "Selection Criteria," *Santi Tang shi, Wenyuange Siku quanshu* reprint edition, (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu, 1983), vol. 1358, 3-4. See also Zhang Zhihua 張智華, "Cong Tang santi shifa kan Zhou Bi de shixueguan jian lun Nan Song houqi Tang shi xue sichao de yanbian 從唐三體詩法看周弼的詩學觀兼論南宋後期宗唐詩學思潮的演變," *Wenxue yichan*, 1999.5, 25- 37.

When I left my post as the Prefect of Jian'an in the autumn of 1180, I was already fifty-eight years old. I had grown old: my eyes bleary and mind weary, I did no more reading. But for the purpose of regularly instructing my young son to recite the Tang poets' quatrains, I gathered and organized all the quatrains from every poet's extant collection, totaling five thousand four hundred poems in five or seven-word lines. I copied them out by hand into six volumes. When I brought my family along to my official post as the Prefect of Wuzhou, I took the manuscript with me. A year later, I returned to the court once more. When attending the Grand Emperor in a banquet, he chanced to talk of the custom of writing on fans in the palace, saying that recently, he had about several hundred Tang poems collected and copied out. Upon hearing this, I reported to him all about my previous compilation. He was surprised at there being so many, and ordered me to present the original manuscript. It was honorably placed in the Return to Antiquity Palace Library.

In the four years that have passed since then, in my spare time from official duties as the prefect of Kuaiji, I went back to organize what I had left unfinished. Four hundred years have passed since the Tang.[221] According to the *Bibliographic Record* [of the *Tang shu*], almost five hundred people have collections listed, only half of it is now extant, and some are misattributed…[222] My present compilation is certainly not free of error, but I have no time to correct them. I also selected readable verses from Guo Maoqian's compilation of *yuefu* and the poems by immortals and ghosts recorded in unofficial histories and smalltalk, and combined them all into one hundred scrolls. I had woodblocks carved by the Penglai Pavilion and recorded the book's origins in the front.[223]

淳熙庚子秋, 邁解建安郡印歸, 時年五十八矣, 身入老境, 眼意倦罷, 不復觀書, 惟時時教穉兒誦唐人絶句, 則取諸家遺集一切整彙, 凡五七言五千四百篇, 手書為六帙, 起家守婺, 齎以自隨, 踰年, 再還朝, 侍壽皇帝清燕, 偶及宮中書扇事, 聖語云, 比使人集録唐詩得數百首, 邁因以昔所編具奏, 天旨驚其多, 且令以元本進, 入, 蒙寘諸復古殿書院, 又四年來, 守會稽間, 公事餘分, 又討理向所未盡者, 唐去今四百歲, 考藝文志所載以集著録者幾五百家, 今堇及半, 而或失真 … 今之所編, 固亦不能自免, 然不暇正. 又

[221] We can only assume that Hong Mai is rounding the number of years up to the nearest hundred. Exactly four hundred years before the time of his preface would give us the year 790. It is unimaginable that Hong Mai would consider Tang poetry to have ended before the Yuanhe era.

[222] The examples he gives here are omitted in translation.

[223] The preface is dated to 1190.12.6, at which time the woodblocks were still incomplete. The remainder of the job was taken to and completed in Jinhua a year later. See Hong Mai's postscript at the time of its completion. *WSTRJJ* 3:15265.

> 取郭茂倩樂府與稗官小說所載仙鬼諸詩, 撮其可讀者, 合為百卷. 刻板蓬萊閣中而識其本末於首.

Hong Mai mentioned some of the uses to which quatrains were put at home and in the palace, but he appears fairly unconcerned about its generic boundaries. For his young son, reciting quatrains was the start of a poetic education; for grown-ups such as the emperor and himself, they were objects of collection and potentially of artistic value when inscribed on fans. He acknowledged that there were collections lost, poems misattributed, and textual errors. It is worth noting that although he apologized for not being error-free, he did not speak of any attempt to track down errors and correct them, merely stating that "there was no time" before giving it to the press. His decision, by no means reprehensible as later and more fastidious editors found it to be, reflects a way of reading that set little store by authorship, putting the quatrain in quite a different class than other *shi* forms.

Hong Mai did not group the poems he took from *Yuefu shiji,* Guo Maoqian's compilation of verses written to music, into a different section, as he did for poems by immortals and ghosts with Buddhist and Taoist monks and women. Instead, he incorporated them into the collection by attributed authorship. A good part of the reason of lumping everything together under the category of quatrains was of course to fill the magnificent 100 scrolls, but one can also argue that the indiscriminate attitude of the preface represents the reader's and also, if I may use the word, the consumer's perspective on the quatrain. Where Hong Mai *was* being selective, he selected poems on the basis of "readability." The anthology began as a convenient place to gather the poems he could teach his son to recite; his royal reader, Emperor Gaozong's main interest in quatrains was to use them to decorate fans, an obvious advantage of the petite form. Under this perspective, as long as the included poems served those purposes, it was unnecessary to be nice about textual accuracy or generic boundaries, and authorship became little more than a

convenient way to organize the poems chronologically. The last thing of note in his compilation is that the phrase "quatrains by Tang poets" is taken at face value to include everyone from the Tang, whereas many of his contemporaries used the term to refer to poets after Du Fu.

In not pretending to be a serious compiler of a scholarly encyclopedia of quatrains, Hong Mai must be lauded for providing an honest statement of the Southern Song consumer's perspective of the quatrain. But due to the all-inclusiveness of Hong Mai's anthology, we are obliged to look elsewhere to narrow down the criteria for "readable" quatrains in his time, and more importantly, to address the question, "what did the Southern Song poet value in the quatrain?"

Since Wu Yue only includes two poets, Du Fu from the Tang and Wang Anshi from the Song, in *Quatrains from the Past and the Present*, his preference is quite obvious. On the other hand, *Zhujie Zhangquan Jianquan er xiansheng xuan Tang shi*[224] represents several dozens of Mid-and-Late Tang poets with one or two poems each, but favored Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 and Du Mu 杜牧 in number. It also includes a few poets from the High Tang, such as Wang Wei, Cen Shen, and Gao Shi. Yang Wanli is well known for taking Wang Anshi and Late Tang as his models in learning to write quatrains,[225] but it is worth nothing that it the one Late Tang poet he mentioned by name was Lu Guimeng 陸龜蒙:

"Reading the *Miscellaneous Writing of Lize [Lu Guimeng]*" (first poem out of a set of three)[226]	讀笠澤叢書
Lu Guimeng's poetic fame will ring for thousands of years.	笠澤詩名千載香,

[224] The exact date of its first publication is uncertain; we can only date its compilation within the first two decades of the 13th century, when Zhao Fan and Han Biao were both living in Jiangxi.

[225] Cf. Chapter 2.

[226] *QSS* 42: 26432.

His poetry wrings my heart every time I read it.	一回一讀斷人腸,
With whom do I enjoy the unique flavor of the Late Tang,	晚唐異味同誰賞,
Slighted as they are by the poets of late?	近日詩人輕晚唐.

It appears from this list – Du Fu, Wang Anshi, Liu Yuxi, Du Mu, and Lu Guimeng – that the Southern Song poets had a disparate picking of favorite quatrain writers from the old poetry tomes. Nevertheless, the term "unique flavor" in Yang's poem, elusive as it may be, is a clue to the quality that they valued.

Yang Wanli deemed it unnecessary to get any more specific than "it wrings my heart" to describe the "unique flavor." One could, however, reconstruct at least some aspects of this flavor by reading some of Lu Guimeng's quatrains. A set of thirty quatrains titled "Poems to Divert Myself" 自遣詩,[227] with the following preface, was collected in the *Miscellaneous Writings of Lize*:

> "Poems to Divert Myself" are poems I wrote my on estate in Zhenze. I was not fully recovered from a former illness, and in my depression I kept to my bed in the farmhouse. In the day time, farmers came to chatter about farming. At night, when I could not fall asleep, all kinds of feelings stirred up, adding to the chaos in my mind. Moreover, "poetry" is "to take hold," which means to keep a hold on one's feelings and nature to prevent them from running out of control.[228] Thus, I composed these four-line poems. They accumulated to thirty quatrains, each having meaning of their own. Since I call them "Poems to Divert Myself," no [other] titles are needed.

---

[227] Of which twenty-two were included in Hong Mai's anthology.

[228] The origin of this concept can be traced to Mencius, IIA:2, "Take hold of your will and do not abuse your qi 持其志, 無暴其氣" (transl. by Lau, p77). The phrase, "poetry is to take hold" first appeared in *The Weft of Book of Poetry* 詩緯 attributed to Song Jun of the 3rd century, but in this original context, "poetry" refers specifically to The Classic of Poetry, and it is professed to "hold" signs and patterns between heaven and earth. Liu Xie 劉勰 used the phrase again in Literary Mind, Carving of Dragons 文心雕龍, expanded the scope of "poetry" to include recent *shi* poetry, and added that, "it holds one's feelings and nature." (in Chapter 6, "Elucidating Poetry" 明詩). Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書 explains that "running out of control" in Lu Guimeng's preface refer to elements that are "excessive, subversive, harmfully sad, and reprehensible." Qian, *Guanzhui bian* 管錐編, 5 vols., (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1979), 1:57.

自遣詩者震澤別業之所作也. 故疾未平, 懨懨臥田舍中. 農夫日以耒耜事相聒, 每至夜分不睡, 則百端興懷攪人思, 益紛亂無緒. 且詩者, 持也. 謂持其情性, 使不暴去. 因作四句詩, 累至三十絕, 絕各有意. 既曰自遣, 亦何必題為?

The idea that poetry and music can check excessive emotions and keep them in harmony has existed since the beginning of the commentarial tradition of the classics. However, the dominant theory about the origin of poetry still comes from the "Greater Preface" to *The Classic of Poetry*, that it is the expression of one's will or resolve (*zhi* 志). Even when Liu Xie offered the alternative, "poetry is to take hold," he did it after duly citing the "Greater Preface." And yet, over the classical definition of *shi*, Lu Guimeng chooses the less prominent alternative, "to take hold," to describe his set of quatrains. He also chooses to describe their content as "one's nature and feelings" as opposed to resolve. If the difference seems abstruse, the following pair of poems from the set will make it quite clear:

Long floating gossamer drift down from the azure sky.	數尺游絲墮碧空,
Year after year they dally with the east wind.	年年長是惹東風.
How do you know that no one lives in heaven,	爭知天上無人住,
Where the white-haired old men sorrowful in spring also dwell.	亦有春愁鶴髮翁.
I came beyond the clouds originally to dwell this idle self.	本來雲外寄閒身,
To the clouds over the stream I then became their master.	遂與溪雲作主人.
The gust of wind throughout the night *I fear, will scatter them* (or read: *disperses my sorrow)* in all directions.	一夜逆風愁四散,
At dawn, only a few pieces here and there will remain to touch my clothes.	曉來零落傍衣巾.

The poems are about "sorrow," a familiar feeling that had been expressed many times over. Thus, the quatrains do not express it but only suggest it. After reading the poems, we are none the wiser about the poet's personal reasons for being sorrowful, and we are left on our own to gauge the strength and depth of his feelings. We are instead presented with stylized descriptions

of sorrow. The first poem plays on poetic associations with the "gossamer" (*si* 絲) imagery, both a pun on "longing" (*si* 思) and a metaphor for white hair, which the poet imagines to belong to sorrowful old men dwelling in heaven. The gossamer is a light, almost imperceptible, and a playful object; it is not the embodiment of the poet's sorrow but is the starting point of his whimsical imagination. The gossamer is also a weighty omen: it suggests to him that sorrow is not to be escaped from – even heaven is full of it – and yet the voice that muses over this is ironically light. Thus, the poem manages to contain – "take hold of" (*chi* 持) – the poet's feeling of sorrow in a display of suggestive imagery while keeping the reader at the surface of the display.

The cloud imagery in the second quatrain works in very much the same way as the gossamer in the first one, merging the weighty feeling of sorrow and the poet's light treatment of it. In this oblique representation lies the difference between "taking control of" and "expressing" one's feelings. Hitherto we have assumed *shi* poetry to do the latter, that is, we have taken all the *shi* poems in this study to be autobiographical, identifying the poetic "I" with the biographical "I": an understanding that may be contrary to modern literary criticism but an actual assumption under which most poets wrote. But at this point of the argument, with the oblique representation seen in Lu Guimeng's quatrains, such complete identification is no longer possible. A disjunction is clearly visible between the "I" of the prose preface and the "I" of the poems in their ways of representation. The former is recognizable as the same voice from Lu's autobiographical poems, where the historical Lu Guimeng identifies completely with the feelings and thoughts he professes in them and thereby achieves the main objective: to "express" instead of to "take control" of his feelings. The "I" of the quatrains, on the other hand, encases a generic sorrow in the display of imagery and suppresses autobiographical information. The voice that

muses over the movements of the gossamer displaces his sorrow to imaginary white-haired old men in heaven, and thereby placing himself at a distance from it. This act of displacement, the method of oblique representation allows him to "take hold of" his feelings, and consequently separates the "I" of the quatrains from that of the preface. If we take the "I" of the preface to be autobiographical, then the "I" of the quatrain requires us to read him as a persona, one who only obliquely reflects on the historical poet.

This persona relates to the natural objects in a particular way: he playfully personifies the natural creatures that are supposed to reflect his sorrow and observes them from a distance. This sorrowful poet not wholly immersed in his sorrow is recognizable as the same one from Du Fu's quatrains quoted at the beginning of the chapter. Both poets in their quatrains feature a "play" with nature, which defines a new relationship between poet and nature than that found in autobiographical poems. However different the two poets may be in other respects, here is the one point of identification between them. What Lu Guimeng and Du Fu's quatrains portray are a *type* of voice and *types* of feeling. In this light, Hong Mai's lack of fastidiousness for authorship of quatrains is not so out of place. It is a characterstic of the quatrain to deviate from the predominant mode of "speaking one's resolve," and to structure a complex self-representation.

The type of quatrain discussed here is certainly not the only type – and not even the representative one – from the Late Tang, but it is retrospectively important as they became the most salient type of quatrains in the Southern Song. For this reason, I single them out from more clearly identifiable types of the quatrain that are arguably no less important: quatrains on objects, history, and love. For convenience, I will hereafter refer to them as the "quatrains of portraiture." A quatrain of portraiture captures a moment of "play" between the poetic persona and his surroundings. It presents a display of a generic type of feeling, but a display unique to that

moment, one that reveals some aspects in the sensibility of the poetic persona. The latter maintains a distance from the autographical poet, but is always possible to be identified with him. The Southern Song poets, by writing the quatrain of portraiture in large numbers, experimented with and fulfilled this potential.

The following poem by Fan Chengda 范成大 is an example of the quatrain of portraiture from the mid-Southern Song:

On the Muma Mountain Path	牧馬山道中[229]
An earthen bridge, a few thatched cottages;	土橋茅屋兩三家,
A tinkling spring in the bamboos washes over the white sand.	竹裏鳴泉漱白沙,
The spring scene brings on incessant annoyance:	春色惱人無畔岸,
It flaps my billowing sleeves left and right to sweep down the plum blossoms.	亂飄風袖拂梅花.

The poem has many things to delight the reader, whether in its painterly way of setting the scene in the first two lines or in the representation of the fragile beauty of spring flowers in lines 3 and 4. There is perfect continuation of the poet's oblique self-representation from Du Fu and Lu Guimeng into the Southern Song. The poem does not seek to simply express annoyance with the transience of spring; to do so would only provoke more annoyance with a hackneyed trope. Rather, it presents a portrayal of a poet persona as an organic part of the scene of falling flowers. As Spring made him the innocent culprit in hastening the end of the plum blossoms, he is endowed with both the charm of beauty and the sorrow at its imminent end. Again, the poem owes its effectiveness not to a powerful emotion, but to the author's skill in constructing the scene and bringing out the dynamics between the poet persona and his surroundings.

[229] *QSS,* 41:25786.

Reading the Southern Song *shiren's* poetry collections as a whole, the alternative mode of self-expression, as represented by the quatrains of portraiture, appears with striking frequency in quatrains, while its absence from the other forms of poetry is equally remarkable. The *shiren* apparently reserved their experimentation with the mode of portraiture for the quatrain form and, interestingly, for the *ci* lyric. This was done on tacit agreement without being explicitly voiced: contemporary accounts about quatrain writing, as presented earlier in this section, were desultory and inconclusive. One must look forward to the end of the Southern Song for the next suggestive comment: Xie Bingde, retrospectively writing a preface to *Zhangquan Jianquan er xiansheng xuan Tang shi*, made a distinction between "the heart's resolve" and "feelings and ideas," and aligned the latter with the quatrain form:

> In the world of the hidden, they cannot move heaven and earth and arouse the ghosts and spirits; in the world of the manifest, they cannot strengthen human relations and transform human customs: truly, there were no more Odes after Confucius pared down the number... After the Three Hundred Poems came the renowned words of Du Zimei [Du Fu]. Many Tang poets learned from Zimei, but without his heart's resolve, they ultimately lacked his voice. Only their quatrains [contain] hidden and subtle feelings and thoughts, and can be a match for Du Fu in the world of the "Changed Airs". Masters Zhangquan [Zhao Fan] and Jianquan [Han Biao] instructed us to start with the Tang quatrains to learn the art of poetry. When thoroughly familiar with them, one can gradually proceed onto Du Fu's poetry.
> 幽不足動天地感鬼神, 明不足厚人倫移風俗, 刪後真無詩矣 ... 三百篇之後便有杜子美名言也. 唐人學子美多矣, 無其志, 終無其聲音. 獨絕句情思幽妙, 可聯轡齊驅於變風境上. 章泉澗泉二先生誨人學詩, 自唐絕句始. 孰[熟]於此, 杜詩可漸進矣.

Xie Bingde argued that the poets from the Late Tang were inferior to Du Fu because they lacked his commitment – with the exception of the quatrains, which bears no necessary relevance to the poet's "heart's resolve." Giving the quatrain a place apart from other forms of *shi* poetry, he appraised them on the grounds of "hidden and subtle feelings and ideas."

Admittedly, Xie Bingde was writing more than half a century later than the time of the anthology's first compilation. The intellectual climes had changed considerably: instead of (or in addition to) writing poetry, scholars endeavored to systematically educate others about theories, methods, schools, and patterns of poetry. Scattered comments were developed into coherent frameworks, and the Neo-Confucian worldview was fully incorporated into poetic thought. In short, poetry completed its transformation into a branch of learning, resulting in a different set of writing practices from half a century before. Thus, not all of Xie Bingde's preface may be taken directly as representing late-twelfth and early-thirteenth century opinion. Nevertheless, two points ring true. The first is the direct quote from Zhao Fan and Han Biao that one should "start with the Tang quatrains to learn the art of poetry" – Xie's father had been a student of the two old masters, and one may trust Xie for not inventing a quote. And secondly, his assertion that the post-Du Fu quatrains excel in "hidden and subtle feelings and ideas." That this may be the rationale behind Zhao and Han's "Quatrain Primer 101"[230] is corroborated by the common characteristics of the poems they selected, and also by what Zhao and Han sought to achieve in their own quatrains. However, I will delay the full discussion of this second point because it requires a lengthy reading of examples from the anthology as well as Zhao and Han's poetry. The discussion will duly take place in Part II as the basis for defining the genre of moments-in-leisure quatrain sets. Suffice it to say here that the quality that Zhao and Han valued in quatrains was indeed "hidden and subtle feelings and ideas," and that, both being influential scholars, their opinion was important in late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.

To sum up, the quatrain served a purpose in the Southern Song which the other poetic forms could not fulfill. Yang Wanli, and Xie Bingde spoke of it as the starting place for learning

[230] The anthology contains exactly 101 quatrains.

poetry. It appealed to collectors as an object of acquisition, and it adapted readily to the practice of inscribing couplets or short poems on fans. The form's versatile appeal for the casual consumer was accompanied by the connoisseur's preference to write a particular type of quatrain, the quatrain of portraiture, where the portrait of a poetic persona replaces the autobiographical voice for self-representation.

Du Fu and Lu Guimeng's poetry: through a display of a type of feeling, or through a "play" between poet and persona – both shy away from direct autobiographical expression, but nevertheless cast light obliquely on the poet's personality. The preference for such a kind of quatrains among the Southern Song *shiren* went hand-in-hand with their obsession with their self-image as poet, both individual and collective. Indeed, some of the most bizarre and dramatic representations of the poet as "the poet" were given in quatrains (c.f. Chapter One). The quatrains of portraiture figure most prominently in the first genre that I will discuss, the travel diary quatrain sets.

III. Two Genres of Journal Quatrain Sets

A. Travel Diary Quatrains – Poetry of Discovery

The travel diary quatrain sets are easily identifiable as a number of quatrains grouped under the same title or a short preface describing the circumstances of composition. For most poets, long journeys to or from regional official posts frequently yielded a fair number of small quatrain sets, which, when read together, made up a journal of the entire trip. Additionally, sightseeing trips to the countryside or natural landscapes also occasioned quatrain sets. The number of poems in Southern Song travel diary quatrain sets ranged between two to seventy-two, and they do not form an exclusive body of texts. Unlike Du Fu's tightly-knit and sophisticatedly structured "Impromptu Poems," the Southern Song sets are usually open to being

combined or regrouped. In some cases, the poet would note in the preface that the poems were composed freely over the course of the journey and then retrospectively organized into a set. [231] Despite this casual approach and the relative lack of pre-planning, a roughly chronological order is still discernible in most sets.

The Southern Song was an important period in the development of the prose travel diary (*youji* 遊記), to which the extended quatrain account of a journey can be said to be the poetic counterpart. The quatrain sets, however, served a different purpose than providing a faithful record of notable places and local customs that the writers found interesting, which were the primary focus of the prose diary. Poetic accounts of travel were of course not limited to the quatrain form, nor did it start only from the Southern Song era. The long-standing themes of hardship on the road, the ever-changing perspective in viewing the landscape, the delight on discovering a wonderful site, and the surprise at the swiftness of the journey, remained popular with the poets of that era, who treated these themes with a heightened awareness of the effect that a poetic vision could have on the physical landscape. The surge in popularity of travel diary

[231] The precedent is Qian Xu's preface to "A Record of My Journey by Boat 舟中錄序": "In the winter of 895, in the eleventh month, I was put in charge of drafting imperial edicts in the Department of State Affairs. In the summer of 900, in the sixth month, I was banished from the post of Drafter to be the Assistant Prefect of Fuzhou. Hastening to my post in the summer heat, I fell ill on the way. In the eighth month in autumn, I traveled downstream by boat from Xiangyang. Having nothing else to do in the boat, I unpacked my books to look at the drafts of my writing, of fragments. Five hundred and forty pieces were worth preserving. The Chancellor's memorial to the throne reported 100 pieces. I sorted and arranged them in twenty scrolls … I would not presume to call the arrangement an anthology. I titled it 'A Record of My Journey by Boat' because they were organized in the boat. 乙卯歲冬十一月, 余以尚書即得掌誥命, 庚申歲夏六月以舍人獲譴, 佐撫州, 馳暑道病. 秋八月自襄陽浮舟而下, 舟行無役, 因解束書視所為辭稿, 剪剪冗碎, 可存者得五百四十篇, 丞相表奏百篇, 區別編聯為二十卷…所編聯不敢以集稱, 理諸舟中, 遂曰舟中錄. 是年九月錢珝自序於沔陽之南." In *Wenyuan yinghua*, *juan* 707:8a-b, 5:3648.

quatrains, therefore, occurred in the context of undiminished interest in poetic travel accounts, and ran parallel to the development of prose travel diaries.

Even so, a set of quatrains, especially one mostly consisting of quatrains of portraiture, can achieve something special, and carry a tenor that is fit for neither the prose diary nor other poetic forms. The quatrain sets engage a different landscape than the one in the physical world; it is one where the poetic landscape superimposes on the natural landscape. The poet's interactions with it are represented in a series of small dramas through which the poet grows. I will discuss the genre through two examples. The first, an exchange of poems between Yang Wanli and Zhao Fan, yields insights on the kind of information expected and received in travel journal quatrains. The second example highlights the special project of journal quatrain sets by comparing it with a hepta-syllabic ancient style poem written on the same geographical location.

1. Writing and Exchanging Travel Diary Quatrains:

In the following quatrain, Zhao Fan gives a mundanely accurate portrait of the busy poet on the road answering his readers' plea for poems:

Every time I take a rest along the road, I ask for brush and ink to copy poems down. I write this twenty-eight-word poem [on the subject].[232]	塗中每息必索硯筆抄詩作廿八字
I look far, far to the randomly clustered green mountains, I travel on and on to the white clouds' side. When I chance to come across a roadside inn for a moment's rest, I am once again rushed by poetry debt.	望望青山亂作堆 行行身到白雲隈 偶逢道店聊休歇 又被匆匆詩債催

[232] *QSS,* 49:30770.

The poem testifies to the poet's obligation: no matter whether it is the case that he wants to pay off his debt *to* poetry by writing down his compositions before he forgets them, or that he means his debt *of* poetry to friends who sent poems to him and are waiting impatiently for his replies, we find examples of both in his poetry collection. It was the same Zhao Fan who, upon receiving some quatrains from Yang Wanli on his journey to Guangzhou, wrote several back using the same rhymes, collectively titled, "Seven poems using the same rhymes as the ones Yang Wanli sent me from his journey to Wan'an in Taihe 次韻楊廷秀太和萬安道中所寄七首." And to this exchange of poetic epistles we now turn for insight on insight on the kind of information that was intended by the writer of the travel diary quatrain sets and those gathered by his contemporary reader.

Yang Wanli's seven poems to which Zhao Fan replied were not grouped into a single set in *Nanhai ji*, but are two sets of three, "On the first day of the second month, ferrying across the Taihe River at dawn 二月一日曉渡太和江"[233] and "Writing down what happened on my way to Wan'an 萬安道中書事" plus the first quatrain out of a set of two, "When setting off from the Haizhi Temple, I was caught in the rain 明發海智寺遇雨." That Zhao Fan took the liberty to choose and regroup Yang Wanli's original compositions suggests a flexibility in the way these poems were first circulated and read. The following are Yang Wanli's poems in the same order as they are answered by Zhao Fan:

"On the first day of the second month, ferrying across the Taihe River at dawn"
1.

The green willow leaves join up, and flowering apricot [branches] cross each other.	緑楊接葉杏交花,
Tender waters just beginning to rise, still revealing some sandbar.	嫩水新生尚露沙,

[233] *QSS,* 42:26266.

I look back by chance after ferrying across the springtime river:	過了春江偶回首,
A stretch of fine homes line the yonder shores.	隔江一岸好人家.
2.	
The morning verdure blocks my vision to the distant mountains.	曉翠妨人看遠山,
A light breeze deliberately seeps into my thin traveler's robe.	小風偏入客衣單,
The peach blossoms love to send out a message about springtime chill,	桃花愛做春寒信,
But perhaps the blossoms are feeling the chill themselves?	只恐桃花也自寒.
3.	
At the onset of the second month, the days of springtime showers,	二月初頭春雨中,
The tips of floral branches in the thin sunlight, and willow fronds tip in the wind.	花梢薄日柳梢風,
Travelers who break off sprays of flowers are complete rascals -	折花客子渾無賴,
Must they strew the red petals all over the road?	狼籍須教滿路紅.

"When setting off from the Haizhi Temple, I was caught in the rain:"[234]

Better than a whole month's spring wind wasted	枉教一月費春風,
Is what a light rain since morning accomplished:	不及朝來細雨功,
It dyed the grass as green as the indigo plant	草色染來藍樣翠,
And washed the peach blossoms to a shade of fleshly pink.	桃花洗得肉般紅.

"Writing down what happened on my way to Wan'an:"[235]

1.	
Clouds retreat from the Jade Cliff and dally with the slanting sunbeams.	玉峰雲剥逗斜明,
The mud on the floral path dried up, so I can travel late.	花徑泥乾得晚行,
In the subtle, subtle breeze, there is warmth in the chill.	細細一風寒裏暖,
From time to time, a few dollops of clear sky in the rain.	時時數點雨中晴.
2	
Families on spring excursion crowd the road.	攜家滿路踏春華,
The cheerful children have no thought for home.	兒女欣欣不憶家,
Even the mounted officers forget about their hard toil on duty -	騎吏也忘行役苦,
Every one of them is wearing a flower.	一人人插一枝花.
3.	
The peach blossoms with blush lightly applied	桃花薄相點臙脂,

[234] *QSS,* 42: 26266.

[235] *QSS,* 42: 26267.

Loses to the pear blossoms' snowy complexion.	輸與梨花雪作肌,
Only the weeping willows don no makeup:	只有垂楊不脂粉,
Strands of gold and sweeps of green set off their slender waists.	縷金鋪翠襯腰肢.

At the time of this exchange (spring of 1180), Zhao Fan was serving as the Assistant Magistrate of the Taihe District, and he met Yang Wanli when the latter stopped by in the district on his way to the official post as the Supervisor of Guangdong 廣東提舉.[236] Yang wrote the first set of poems right after leaving the town to cross the Taihe River and, reading from Zhao Fan's reply set, sent them back along with a number of other poems before he reached Guangdong. Yang Wanli was already an established poet and a high official by this time, and Zhao Fan, a rising talent, who wrote the following poems in reply:

1.

I remember that half of the poems you sent talked of flowers;	記得詩來半説花,
You didn't mention suffering from wind and dust on the long road.	不言長道苦風沙,
I know that you are not taking lightly the mission to Qiaonan (Guangdong).	知公不薄嶠南使,
Just like the past officials, how will you make your home there?	政似昔人何以家.

Zhao Fan is quick to point out what begs to be noticed in Yang Wanli's poems, that "half of the poems talked of flowers." Indeed, every poem that Zhao wrote a reply to talked of flowers, and consequently, the most common theme in poems about travel, "suffering from the wind and dust on the long road," was left out. From this, Zhao concludes by some hidden logic that Yang was not taking his official duties lightly, and thereby introduces the main theme of *his* answering

[236]"On my way to my official post in Guangdong, I passed by the Taihe district. I ascended Kuaige to see Shangu's [Huang Tingjian] inscriptions, and composed two quatrains. Presented to the District Magistrate Li Shen (courtesy name Gongchui) and the Assistant Magistrate Zhao Fan (courtesy name Changfu) 之官五羊, 過太和縣, 登快閣, 觀山谷石刻賦兩絕句呈知縣李紳公垂主簿趙蕃昌父." *QSS* 42:26266.

quatrain set, that is, how he would carry out his official duties while coping with the difficulties of living in the alien south.

Qiaonan, or the region "south of the pointed ridges," comprises the modern Guangdong and Guangxi areas. The two most renowned "past officials" sent there were Han Yu and Su Shi, to whom Zhang Fan will allude by name in Poem 5. They shared the misfortune of being demoted to the undesirable post of governor in the far south, but each managed good governance during their terms of office. They also wrote poems about their long journeys there, including discovering the strange local customs, trying to adapt or enjoy the local food, and exploring the local terrain. Although they exhibited widely different attitudes toward life in exile, Zhao Fan reinterprets their poetry in the light of Yang Wanli's optimism. He introduces a theme common to all three – how does a scholar official make it his home in an alien land – and develops it through the set.[237]

3.

That "Luoyang is the center of the world," as the old saying goes,	舊說洛陽天地中,
Makes the northerner dread the southern climes.	遂令北客病南風,
But now that governance and education have spread to Southern Guangdong,	只今政教通南粵,
They also have mulberry trees that sprout toward the end of winter.[238]	亦有大寒桑樹紅.

Poem 4 is a request for Yang to send poems about Guangdong after he arrives:

4.

I often wanted to write a poem and send it by the obliging wind,	幾欲裁詩託便風,
But I am bitterly ashamed for lacking any progress.	苦慙別後欠新功,

[237] I omit Zhao's second quatrain, an answer to Yang's seven-word ancient style poem, "On the Assistant Magistrate of the Taihe District Zhao Changfu's 'Hall of Longing to Become a Recluse,'" suggesting that Yang must have written it on the road and sent it back with the other poems.

[238] *Dahan* is the last of the twenty-four seasonal segments. It is not clear here why mulberry shoots are red.

When will you send me your compositions from South Guangdong　何時寄我廣南作,
That are superior to the gold of the plantains and pink of the lychees?　壓倒蕉黃荔子紅.

Poem 5 picks up the main theme from #1 and #3: as a scholar official from the central states to venture into the miasmic, uncultured south, Yang could by virtue of his moral powers spread the civilizing influence to the land (as mentioned in poem2), and enjoy comfort and happiness in his mind in return.

5.

Sir, you devote your effort to studying and are naturally sincere and wise.　先生力學自誠明,
Your loyalty and fidelity are known from your trip to the barbarian lands.　忠信今知蠻貊行,
Remember Han Yu and Su Shi from the past, the two immortals,　憶昔韓蘇兩仙伯,
For whom sea mirages appeared in winter, and clouds cleared over the Zhurong Peak.[239]　海成冬市况融晴.

In Poem 6, Zhao Fan turns from Yang's journey to his own:

6.

My [advancing] years often make me sigh over nature's charms.　幾為年華嘆物華,
Now I've prepared my luggage, definitely going home.　只今結束定還家.

[239] *Kuang* 况 must be a textual error for *zhu* 祝. The Zhurong Peak, named after the god of fire and of the south, was one of the peaks in Mount Heng. When Han Yu visited the Mount Heng Temple on the return journey from his exile to Chaozhou, he found to his dismay that the peaks were completely enveloped in rainy clouds that the ascent seemed impossible. He made a silent prayer, and the sky cleared up. Han Yu believed that his sincerity and uprightness have moved the gods to answer his prayer. (See Han Yu's poem, "Visiting the Mount Heng Temple and Passing the Night in the Monastery, I Wrote a Poem on the Gate Tower 謁衡嶽廟遂宿嶽寺題門樓"). Su Shi cited this episode when writing about an experience of his own of nature's marvels, in"Sea Mirages at Dengzhou 登州海市." It was winter when he arrived in Dengzhou, not the season for sea mirages to appear. Su Shi had hardly dared to hope that the gods would conjure up the spectacle to please his eyes. He was delighted when sea mirages did appear, and concluded that after all, the Creator took pity on a weary old man like him.

Just behold that [plum] tree by the river bloom [with the passing time].[240]	且看垂發江邊樹,
Never had I the chance to spend a day viewing flowers in Chang'an.[241]	未問長安一日花.

Far from finding any pleasure in being an itinerant official, Zhao decides that he has reached retirement age (despite being Yang's junior) and resolves to go home. In direct answer to his correspondent's flower-laden poems, Zhao speaks of lacking in one important flower-viewing experience in the life of a scholar-official – one that signifies his success in the *jinshi* examinations. A close cognate of the word for flowers (*hua*) appears twice in the first line in "years" and "nature's charms" to highlight the contrast. When it comes to noticing "nature's charms," Zhao Fan looks to the flowering plum tree by the river, which only reminds him of his old age. The theme of "hardship on the road" that figures so importantly in Yang's poems by virtue of its absence, is likewise unmentioned in this poem. And yet, it is understood to be the reason for Zhao Fan's decision to give up and go home.

Zhao concludes his set of replies in Poem 7, which I omit here, by bidding Yang to travel slowly and take good care of himself. Aside from the lamentable lack of literary merit, this set of poetic epistles is one example of the purpose behind writing travel diary quatrains and their

[240] The expression *chuifa* 垂發 means "about to bloom." However, this line strongly echoes Du Fu's poem, "A single tree by the river flourish with time, / through dawn and dusk it hastens my hair to turn white 江邊一樹垂垂發, 朝夕催人自白頭," from "An Answer to Pei Di's 'Ascending the East Pavilion in Shuzhou to See Someone Off 和裴迪登蜀州東亭送客逢早梅相憶見寄詩." Qiu Zhao'ao takes *chuichui* 垂垂 to mean "gradually," while Yang Shen thinks that it refers to the way plum flowers blooms downwards. Zhao Fan has created an ambiguity in appropriating Du Fu's poem.

[241] In other words, "I have never passed the *jinshi* examination," alluding to Meng Jiao 孟郊, who wrote "春風得意馬蹄疾, 一日看盡長安花。after passing the exam.

reception by contemporary readers.[242] It may be useful here to look separately at the obvious layer of meaning in Yang's set of poems and the second layer that Zhao brings out with his replies, while remembering that the two layers may never have been distinct to a late twelfth-century mind. By Yang's loving description, an early spring scene unfolds in the open country space, where all living creatures, and flowers in particular, appear fresh and full of life. A few are quatrains of portraiture and present an image of a cheerful traveler with an eye for beautiful flowers and, at times, a hopelessly flirtatious voice. What are missing from Yang Wanli's poems are equally notable: as the poetic record of a journey, they have failed delightfully to provide any substantive information about it. After reaching the end of the set, we are none the wiser about what makes the landscape special, nor have we sensed any depth in the poet's mind. Neither is there studied elegance in the language. In short, Yang's poems present a surface of description which, while pleasant to read, may be vulnerable to criticisms of being frivolous.

Zhao Fan's set of replies accentuates the elements already present/absent in Yang's poems to lend them another layer of meaning. By his selection, the most important message sent and received concerns Yang Wanli the poetic persona: though at first glance Yang's poems seem to direct our attention outward to the pleasant spring scene, Zhao Fan redirects the focus back to the *viewer* of the scene. His set of replies brings together the seven Yang Wanli poems, originally from three different titles, to be read as a new group. The selected poems share one thing in common: they all mention spring flowers. From Zhao Fan's point of view, a scholar

[242] While all forms of travel writing (including prose journals and poetry) circulate in the Southern Song for the information they provide about local customs and terrain, as well as the writers' personal experiences, I have yet to do broader research on contemporary reception of quatrains. We do know that Yang sent his *Nanhai ji*, a mini-collection to which this set belongs, to his friend Lu You. Lu, then in Yanzhou, read it in the middle of the night and praised it highly. See Lu's poem, "Yang Tingxiu Sends His *Nanhai ji* 楊廷秀寄南海集," in *JNSGJZ*, 3:1492.

official who cannot keep off the topic of flowers means that he would rewrite the poetic narrative on the journey to Guangdong, a narrative primarily of exile generated by Han Yu and Su Shi.[243] And finally, Zhao Fan adds yet another layer for comparison when he tells his own story of a politically unsuccessful scholar. The dynamics of the exchange rests on the mutual knowledge of past poets and poetry. Based on his familiarity with the genre of travel poems and the works of Han Yu and Su Shi, Zhao Fan constructs Yang Wanli reading from what he regards as pointed omission. And Yang, though we have no record of *his* replies, would have understood Zhao's answer based on the same background knowledge.

This poetic exchange furnishes some insight into the late-twelfth-century practice of sending and answering travel quatrain (sets). In addition to being a descriptive record of the journey, the poetic portrait of the traveler is also a topic of communication. In the next section, we follow Yang Wanli further on his sojourns in Guangzhou to read his poems on passing the Slope Trail – an ancient-style poem in the hepta-syllabic line and a set of seven quatrains. Reading the two poem [sets] side by side will bring into sharper focus the special project of the quatrain set; in other words, what functions it serves which the other forms do not.

2. A Shadow Epic by Accident – Yang Wanli's hike through the Slope Trail:

An epic poem tells the story of a hero – a story of his growth as he performs a series of feats during the quest journey. The Wordsworthian epic, *The Prelude,* tells the growth of a Poet. Through a series of "moments in time," the chosen boy is nurtured, chastised, and instructed in turns by the anthropomorphic Nature, and eventually grows to be worthy of his destined vocation

[243] The rewriting does not reflect so much the poet's willful choice as a change in the general perception of Guangdong by the Southern Song. Although Zhao Fan still uses entrenched ethnocentric vocabulary, such as "barbarian lands," to describe Guangdong, getting a post there is no longer inherently a form of exile.

of Poet. It is at once Wordsworth's own story and one representative of the life's journey of Man and Poet.

The travel diary quatrain sets from the Southern Song neither pretended nor were intended to be epic poetry. Often valued for their light-hearted depiction of ordinary scenes, they may even be said to be the opposite of the momentous epic genre. Yet they too, tell stories of a poet's journeys: the long and short journeys through a landscape that conflates the physical and the poetic. They, too, are built from series of moments in time in which the poet persona is brought into encounters with various personified elements in nature. Unlike the epic, the changes that the poetic persona undergoes through these encounters cannot be described as sustained development. The coherence of the story hangs on the progression of the journey: as the poet persona moves through the landscape, the quatrains of portraiture capture the moments of his encounter with nature, and they present an image of him through the characteristic device of oblique reflection.

It is in these shadowy dimensions of epic poetry that the singular attraction of travel diary quatrain sets can best be construed. The *shiren* delighted in making a poem out of an otherwise insignificant moment; they also shared an obsession with completeness when they let their poetry collections – rather than any single masterpiece poem – represent their life's stories. These two aspects of the *shiren's* mentality found joint expression in journal quatrain sets, and particularly those about travel. The quatrains of portraiture may stand alone as individual poems and read for light amusement, but one must not forget that in the context of the *shiren*'s larger project to build their poetry collections, it is the future fate of the poems to gain an additional layer of meaning as fragments of that collection. It was common practice to organize one's poetry collection chronologically during one's lifetime, and some poets would divide theirs into

mini-collections from various stages of their lives and name them accordingly. At a given period, the *shiren* may prefer one poetic form to others, but he would never write exclusively in one form. Thus, a travel diary quatrain set may be viewed as a subset within the *shiren's* heterogeneous poetry collection.

The set of quatrains by Yang Wanli on passing through the Slope Trail, when read in context of the *Nanhai ji* (the mini-collection to which it belongs), represents a microcosmic image of the collection. But before placing it in the larger context, I will first discuss its project as a journal quatrain set by comparing it to the hepta-syllabic ancient style poem (Poem A) produced on the same occasion:

Poem A:

On Entering the Slope Trail[244]	入陂子逕
Down one ridge,	下一嶺,
Up one ridge.	上一嶺,
Up like climbing to heaven, down, like [going down] a well.	上如登天下如井.
Locals call it the "Slope Trail."	人言箇是陂子逕.
No humans inhabited the Gibbon Vine Trail;	猿藤逕裏無居民,
No travelers walk the Slope.	陂子逕裏無行人.
The wind chills and trills, the sun is rising bright.	冷風瀟瀟日杲杲,
The dew moistens the half-yellow, half-green grass.	露濕半黃半青草.
The Gibbon Vine from the day before still had gibbons.	前日猿藤猶有猿,
Now here, not a single bird chirps.	今此一鳥亦不喧.
Trees bear no red fruit, nor grass edible seeds.	樹無紅果草無蘂,
What food is there for the gibbons and the birds, even if they lived here?	縱有猿鳥將何餐.

[244] *QSS* 42:26298.

Two peaks tower like walls, the cliffs appear cleaved. 兩山如壁岸如削,
The trail suspends in mid-air, barely holding my foot. 一逕緣空仄容脚,
The brook resounds for a thousand fathoms, shaking the forest ravine. 溪聲千仞撼林壑,
The crags look about to collapse; I am about to fall! 崖石欲崩人欲落.

Tomorrow, the Long Peak Trail – a trail even longer – 來日長峯逕更長,
[Next to which] the wild Slope Trail would not appear so wild. 陂子逕荒未是荒,
Before I get my hands on Jiang's three [hermit's] paths, 蔣家三逕未入手,
The three trails in Lingnan already wring my insides. 嶺南三逕先斷腸.

Poem Set B.
過陂子逕五十餘里喬木蔽天遣悶七絶句
As I Pass Through the Fifty-*li* Slope Trail, Tall Trees Blocked the Sky, I Wrote Seven Quatrains to Dispel My Low Spirits[245]
1.
Only at noon does a little daylight penetrate into the woods, 林中亭午始微明,
Where inverted maple trees and reclining firs sprawl all over the path. 楓倒杉傾滿路横,
Yellow leaves and green moss pile one foot deep – 黄葉青苔深一尺,
The old master, surprisingly, loves to walk in them. 先生却愛此中行.

2.
Light over the grasses, moisture in the leaves – it is also pure and lovely here. 草光葉潤亦清佳,
A fragrant scent – but not of flowers – rises from the verdure. 翠裏生香不是花,
I've got something to tell that no one will believe: 一事説來人不信,
Bracken the length of trees, and earthworms the size of snakes. 蕨長如樹蚓如蛇.

3.
The thick reeds burying the stone footpath are quickly raked apart, 蘆深石路旋芟開,
But vines get caught on my sedan chair and make it back out. 藤絓肩輿却倒回,
Orchids grow all over the mountain – for whom is their aroma intended? 蘭蕙連山為誰好,
By no human effort, plantain trees fill the valley. 芭蕉滿谷不緣栽.

4.

[245] *QSS* 42:26299

Out of pity I avoid the sedan chair, lest it cuts into the carriers' shoulders,	為憐上轎齧人肩,
So I get down and walk until my shoes wear through.	下轎行來脚底穿,
Just as anxiety fills my heart as dusk approaches,	客子心心愁欲暮,
The blue-green clouds, by design, half cover the sky.	碧雲偏作半陰天.

5.

Evening wind has quieted down, the trees are shady and gloomy.	晚風寂寂樹陰陰,
Pines have stopped to whine sadly, as the bamboos their murmur.	松不悲鳴竹不吟.
There is only the clear water meeting up with the white stones,	只有清泉逢白石,
And babble on to people about mountains and forests.	向人刺口説山林.

6

The brook tries to dissuade me from hastening away from the mountain,	澗泉勸我出山遲,
It lays a barrier at every turn, and follows my every step.	曲曲遮留步步隨,
I can't stop it from being sentimental, nor it, my low spirits.	泉自多情儂自悶,
Tonight, I shall certainly get out of these mountains!	今宵會有出山時.

Where the mountain ends, I am delighted to see a river plain.	山窮喜見一平川,
What a change from the woods, where I could not dicern the sky.	不似林中不識天,
Now that I am out of the mountains, all bad luck goes away -	只此出山災便散,
What is the need to predict my fortune this year?	何須更問小行年.

These are two verse compositions, written by the same poet about the same geographic landscape, but present drastically different pictures of it. In Poem A, there is no sign of animal life or any possibility of sustaining life in the trail: the cliffs are precipitous, the mountain trail seems to hang in midair and barely wide enough to walk. The sound of water thunders and shakes the mountains, making it feel like being on the verge of collapse. The dew-sodden grasses are half dead under the chilled sunlight, and wind whistling through the trees adds to the sense of gloom. The poet spares no words to make the mountain path appear cold, dangerous, and forbidding, hardly recognizable as the same place that he describes in Poem Set B, a place not lacking in small delights. Upon closer reading, we find many objects that the poet find pleasing

in the quatrain set are actually the same ones that unnerve him in Poem A. For example, dewy grasses: "grasses are wet with dew – half yellow, half green" (Poem A), as opposed to "light over the grasses…it is also pure and lovely here" (Quatrain 2). Or the sound of the mountain brook: it thunders and shakes the mountains in Poem A, making the poet feel about to fall over, but "babbles on" to him like a homely woodcutter in Quatrain 5.

How can the same place be so different in the eyes of the same poet? Do the hyperbolic expressions in Poem A make it an imaginary account, or does the ostensibly plain language of the quatrain set necessarily make it a factual one? Or perhaps, which poem is a more truthful account is the wrong question: compared to the two poetic representations, Yang Wanli's preface to the set of quatrains on the Long Peak Trail (mentioned at the end of Poem A) seems more "factual" for its prosaic attention to detail:[246]

> Caught in Rain when Passing through the Long Peak Trail, I Wrote Ten Quatrains to Dispel the Gloom.
> In deep mountains and long valleys, where it is utterly silent with no trace of human habitation, and where a path runs through the middle, Southerners call it a "trail." There are three trails on the way from Wengyuan to Heyuan, two of which, the Gibbon Vine and the Slope, are fifty li each. The Long Peak Trail is over one hundred *li*. Those who pass through had always to camp in the wilderness, and start a fire with flint for cooking. I managed to make it swiftly through the trail in one day plus half a night, and stopped to sleep in Xiuxi.[247]
> 過長峰逕遇雨遣悶十絕句
> 南人謂深山長谷, 寂無人煙, 中通一路者謂之逕. 自翁源至河源, 其逕有三. 猿藤, 陂子各五十里, 惟長峰餘百里. 過者往往露宿, 鑽火以炊. 予以半夜一晝疾行出逕, 宿秀溪云.

[246] Xiaofei Tian, in *Visionary Journeys: Travel Writings from Early Medieval and Nineteenth Century China,* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2011), discusses the ways in which different genres of literary writing can represent the same journey differently.

[247] QSS 42:26299.

It is the goal of neither poem [set] to translate a topographical description in the prose account directly into poetic language. The belated preface provides a skeletal sketch against which the poetic representations of his experience with the landscape may be read. The titles of each poem indicate the time frame of the compositions as "on entering" and "as I pass through" the trail, respectively. The ancient style poem, representing a panoramic view of the mountains and its dramatized perils, reflects the poet's state of mind upon first entering the trail. The quatrain set, with its series of the playful vignettes, covers the rest of his journey. It would seem that the poet's journey through the physical landscape is compounded with the dimensions of mental landscape and, as will be discussed below, the landscape of poetic traditions.

The different kinds of experience with the landscape seen in each poem [set] are not out of place with the respective poetic forms chosen to represent them. From the theme of perilous landscapes, real or imaginary, to the related theme of hardships on the journey, to the bombastic language – all are familiar to seven-word line ancient style poems. Nor are the arch vignettes in Poem Set B alien to the aesthetics of quatrains. Neither poem [set] is, in short, an outright revolution of a poetic form. Nevertheless, Poem A and Poem Set B represent different ways in which the poet negotiates with the landscape within the conventions of these respective forms: If the poetic personality in Poem A blends in as a part of the landscape that overwhelms him – in other words, he is no different than the half-yellow grasses, cold sunlight, and other elements in nature that serve primarily to signify the wilderness of the landscape – he reemerges in Poem Set B as a presence apart from nature, being alternately cheered, surprised, irritated, and depressed by it. Poem A, for all of Yang Wanli's quirky remarks, is a "conventional" poem in the sense that it weaves the surroundings into a coherent pattern, done from the perspective of the poet but including him as a harmonious part of the whole. The poet may feel that he is about to be

plunged into the depths (line 16), or the dangers of the journey may inspire him with a yearning for the peace of a hermit's dwelling (line 20). These sentiments are no disruption to the pattern of the perilous landscape and, indeed, are a part of it in the poetic convention. With Poem A to represent his experience upon first entering the trail, it may be just as well that Poem Set B was written to "dispel low spirits," so that we get an insidiously subversive personality delivered much to our delight.

Poem Set B consists mostly of quatrains of portraiture and achieves something quite different from Poem A. A full discussion of its subtleties requires a slight digression on the presence of a poetic landscape permeating through the natural, physical landscape. The same object in nature may be formed into poetic imagery in a number of different ways; some of them, in the form of widely-read lines of poetry, may "stick" in cultural memory and be circulated via literary anthologies and encyclopedias. At the sentence level, learning the language of poetry was tantamount to internalizing the repertoire of poetic antecedents so as to incorporate them into one's own work, responding to, transcending, and at the same time expanding the repertoire. The truth of this statement may be traced as far back as the first appearance of *leishu,* and was indisputably the case after the Jiangxi school advocated their signature method. Well-known poetic antecedents came so naturally to the collective consciousness of the literary elite, such that the minimal description of an object with a single word may invoke a set of moods, feelings, or occasions associated with it. Like the device of allusions, invocation makes use of past examples; but where the allusion is the conscious use of a literary device to point specifically at one apposite antecedent, invocation only vaguely gestures toward a sweep of possible antecedents, a washed-out backdrop where parts of it may move to the fore. It was almost as if objects in the

natural landscape had a double existence in poetic language, and could acquire different layers of meaning in the poetic tradition. Hence the term, "poetic landscape."

The "pure and lovely" things – glistening light on the grass and the luster on the leaves – are Yang Wanli's spirit-refreshing discovery in the physical landscape. Joined with the level of poetry, it is a moment where the poet persona translates a natural object into poetic terms, with a slight mismatch between the poetic conventions and the present moment, and thereby places his discovery on the joint plane of the natural landscape and the poetic landscape. At the end of that line, a bite-sized addition has been made to places that may be considered "pure and lovely" in poetry. This is expressed subtly, unobtrusively, with the adverb *yi* 亦: "it is *also* pure and lovely here."

Had this only been an isolated example of Yang Wanli's smartness, his small discovery would have rightly disappeared in the sea of his contemporaries' poetry. But it merits more attention when the same kind of poetic discovery appears with fair consistency and frequency across all the travel diary quatrains of the period. In fact, quatrain set B is full of such moments where the poet persona describes objects that are common in poetry, such as orchids, palm trees, greenish clouds and so on, with a subtle tweak by adverbs that seem carelessly strewn around: *que* 卻 (on the contrary), *yi* 亦 (also), *pian* 偏 (deliberately; willfully), *bu* 不 (not), and *zi* 自 (on one's own; naturally). Such moments are drama on two levels: his lively way of engaging the objects in nature as well as the nooks and corners of the poetic tradition. With each little drama, we catch a different glimpse of the poet's personality in the immediacy of the natural setting that he presents. There is the moment when, out of consideration for the sedan chair carriers, he slows down at the risk of having to spend the night in the mountains. As the dusk approaches, the greenish clouds choose to half-cover the sky – just as they should in a poem about a melancholy

traveler, but much to his dismay. There is also the sound of spring water splashing against the rocks to break the moment of silence in Quatrain 5. In the late imperial tradition, "clear spring water" and "white stones" would become buzzwords for the ethereal life led by immortals in the grotto, or hermits at the very least. But here, they "meet up" and "babble on," throwing otherworldliness to the winds. Without naming the rest one by one, the quatrain set fulfill the title's promise "to dispel low spirits" and exude a palpable enjoyment of that personality by the poet who created it.

Thus, reading the above quatrain set against an ancient style poem, written by the same poet on the same occasion, suggests a different project for each of the two forms. The poetic I in the quatrains sit at the center of the little dramas that subtly change the poeticized natural landscape. It is a curious, but indisputable phenomenon that mid-Southern Song poets created a niche for the quatrain form, not only by writing it in large quantities, but also by reserving for it a movement rare in other poetic forms. When we place the "Slope Trail" set back in the context of Yang Wanli's term of office in Guangdong and Guangxi, and that of *Nanhai ji*, his poetry collection of that period, the contours of that niche would emerge more clearly.

The *Nanhai ji* contains 258 quatrains (including 59 sets), 24 pentasyllabic ancient style poems, 27 seven-word ancient style poems, 30 pentasyllabic regulated poems and 53 seven-word regulated poems. Thus, two-thirds of the poems in the *Nanhai ji* are quatrains, and except for [how many in] five and six-word lines, all the rest are in the seven-word line. In subject matter, the quatrains are divided between travel journal poems and moments-in-leisure poems. Considering how busy Yang Wanli was hurrying back and forth between his local posts, it is natural that the former constitutes the majority. There are only six exceptions: two quatrains on trees, two on cuisine fish, and two about Tang dynasty consorts. By comparison, the subject

matters of the other poetic forms are much more varied: while many are about travel, we also get poems about banquets, visiting friends, in-the-style-of-examination poems, "writing my feelings," farewells, congratulations, condolences and thank-you-for-sending-it-to-me poems.

The expectations raised by these landslide numbers on the monumental enterprise of the quatrains are only to be matched by their deflating content. Here, what is left out from the quatrains is equally telling as what has been left in. The "Slope Trail" set dates from the tenth month of 1181, when Yang Wanli was making his way from Shaozhou 韶州 to Meizhou 梅州 and Chaozhou 潮州 to put down an armed uprising. [248] It was an important event during his term of office, but nowhere in his many quatrains did he even hint at the serious purpose of his journey except for the following poem. One may expect that he had better things to say about his soldiers:

	長峰(5)
One glance of an empty mountain, emptiness upon emptiness:	一眼空山空復空,
Leaning reeds and flattened rushes in the rain and wind.	欹蘆倒荻雨和風.
But, because a small bannered troop is passing,	卻緣小隊旌旗過,
The green maple leaves are taught to redden in their example. [249]	教得青楓學著紅.

He does his soldiers justice in a couple of penta-syllabic ancient style poems. One "Ancient Road 古路" reads, "Every knight bristles in [righteous] fury, / every private individual cherishes a patriotic heart 士皆衝冠怒, 人挾報國私." And speaking for himself, "The affairs of the King require this expedition [of me], / unknowingly I forget myself in it. 王事當有行, 忘身那自知." And yet, in the quatrain, the noble sentiments give way to colored banners, whose only good

[248] Yu Beishan 于北山, *Yang Wanli nianpu,* 254.

[249] Same set as "Caught in Rain when Passing through the Long Peak Trail, I Wrote Ten Quatrains to Dispel the Gloom."

deed is to teach the green maple leaves to turn red. The quatrain is skillful in blending visual illusions, in the play on conventional poetic motifs, and communicating the change in the poet persona's state of feelings. However, these do not prevent the poem from being a severe understatement of this military expedition, nor the fact that the *Nanhai ji*, which is supposed to represent an important stage in Yang's official career and growth as a poet, consists mainly of diverting quatrains of this sort. There is something ironic between the *shiren's* serious investment in creating a self-representative poetry collection, and his choice to focus on small, playful moments at the expense of more weighty and straightforward ways of self-expression.

To get to the bottom of this irony, it is not satisfactory to make the well-accepted observation that poets in the Song dynasty paid more attention to writing about commonplace matters in poetry, or that Yang Wanli's style is "lively." True as they are, these surface observations are inadequate to describe the specific and subtle way in which the writing of quatrains was changing the meaning of being a poet, as well as the relation between the poet and his poetry. One may begin with the quatrains in *Nanhai ji*, as they are representative of its kind in the era. Furthermore, they were published in a self-edited poetry collection, conveniently arranged by chronology. Thus, an overview of them would be sufficient to cover all the common themes and tropes in that period's travel diary quatrains, and more importantly, to understand the place they hold as an important part in a poet's project.

If we treat the *Nanhai ji* as the poetic record of Yang Wanli's trip to Guangdong and Guangxi, it gives a very clear opening and closure. The collection opens with a quatrain set of two, dated exactly to the fifth day of the first month in the year 1180. It marks the beginning of his journey to Guangzhou:

On the Fifth Day of the First Month in the Gengzi year, I Crossed the Dagao Ferry at Dawn. Two Poems.[250]	庚子正月五日曉過大皋渡二首
Beyond the fog, the landscape is a blur,	霧外江山看不真,
I can only rely on the cry of dog and chickens to recognize a village ahead.	只憑雞犬認前村.
The boat plank is covered by snowy-white frost,	渡船滿板霜如雪,
Here I make the first footprint in green straw shoes.	印我青鞋第一痕.
The river sand tossed high in tides crushes the embankment; as it threatens to reach the mast,[251]	危沙崩岸欲侵牆,
It is washed straight down the clear river for more than a hundred feet.	直下清江百尺強.
While I was passing in my basket of a sedan chair, I had been unaware [of its force].	過了筍輿元未覺,
Suddenly I look back in cool reflection.	忽然回首冷思量.

Aside from the obvious reenactment of "Rooster crows, moon over the thatched-roof inn; / footprints in the frost over the wooden plank bridge 雞聲茅店月, 人跡板橋霜," the first poem ends with a symbolic footprint: the first among early-rising travelers as well as the poet's first step into the journey. Its correspondence with the poem of closure is too neat to be ignored:

On the Road in Nanhua. Two Poems.[252]	南華道中二首
It is a bracing dawn – the sky newly cleared, and everything is full of life.	清曉新晴物物熙,
In a slight breeze, the mild sun warms the homecoming banners.	小風淡日暖歸旗.
I can't bear to look back on the road in Nanhua	不堪回首南華路,
Last year the time plum blossom and fine rain.	去歲梅花細雨時.
Don't be angry at the whooping officers on their horses,	騎吏歡呼不要嗔,
They are homecoming folk, returning north over two thousand li.	二千里外北歸人.
I eagerly scoop up a handful of water from the Cao Stream	殷懃自掬曹溪水,
To wash clean the dust from my face.	淨洗先生面上塵.

[250] *QSS* 42:26265.

[251] 牆 (wall) is probably an error for 檣 (mast).

[252] *QSS* 42:26317.

This set is the fifth-to-last title in the *Nanhai ji*; there is a five-month gap between this and the next poem, which dates from the capital. Thus, one may safely take this set as the last on the journey.[253] Furthermore, there is the symbolic gesture of "washing clean the dust from my face" – if his first gesture in the journey had been to make an imprint, this last would be to obliterate one. The clear opening and closure indicates a possible internal coherence among the poems in the *Nanhai ji*, or that they share more than merely being part of the same mini-collection.

What reinforces the sense of coherence is the frequent repetition of some tropes, most noticeably in the quatrains. The opening and closure poem sets have already introduced some of them: anticipating and remembering various points in the journey; looking back in cool reflection; noting the passage of time or an impression of it. The repetition of this group of tropes gives a mental measurement of the steps along the journey. The "Dagao Ferry" quatrain materializes the first step into a footprint; in other quatrains, the poet might look forward to the distance ahead (as in "only two more legs to go between here and Shaozhou 此去韶州只兩程"),[254] or anticipate the time of arrival ("Not far from here to Zhenyang; / when we arrive, it should be in time for the Third of the Third Month 真陽此去無多子, 到時應逢三月三");[255] he may sum up similar experience, "I mock myself – three years I passed in the south, / Once every

[253] The last four poems in the collection dates from the summer of 1182; thereafter Yang Wanli experienced a two-year-long writer's block. Therefore, it is likely that he included them in *Nanhai ji* because they did not belong anywhere else.

[254] "Setting Off by Boat from Nanxiong on the Twenty-third of the Second Month: Two Poems 二月二十三日南雄解舟二首." *QSS* 42:26270.

[255] "The Rain Hampered My Passage Through the Sitavana Rapids on the First of the Third Month, I Moored at the Clear Brook Town: Two Poems 三月一日過摩舍那灘阻雨泊清溪鎮二首." *QSS* 42:26271.

year I brave the rapids 自笑南來三換歲, 一年一度犯驚湍;"[256] he may note the passing of time, as seen in Poem One of "On the Road in Nanhua." This kind of comments only appear in the quatrains, usually include some colloquialism, and vary in degrees of vapidity with some bordering on a waste of ink and paper, "Not that it isn't good to reach Shimen, / it is only worrisome to not have reached Shimen 到得石門非不好, 只愁未到石門時."[257] Insignificant as individual poems, they are much more meaningful as mileposts in the *Nanhai ji* that suggest a narrative coherence and continuity to a loosely ordered group of poems.

The second group of common tropes is the variations on the theme of hardship in travel. As the poet moves through mountains and water, the landscape may join with the weather to please him (rarely) or make it difficult for him (often), in which case the poet would either best them or be bested. Needless to say, this type of drama makes a typical quatrain of portraiture, and usually borders on parody of the theme "hardship in traveling." Examples have appeared plentifully in this chapter, to which I will add one more for the triumphant figure of the Poet. He braves the raging tidal waves with an exhilarating laugh and equipped with his cup of wine, and so carries on the legacy of indestructible Poets:

Mooring at Little Lingxing Sea	泊靈星小海
In truth, tides don't calm just for you,	波濤端不為君休,
When had wind and rain ever cared about a traveler's sorrow?	風雨何曾管客愁.
Poets since antiquity have never succumbed to grinding trials.	自古詩人磨不倒,
Wine cup in hand and laughing heartily, I ask leave of the god of tides.	一樽大笑謝陽侯.

[256] "Passing the Yellow Nest Outcrop 過黃巢磯." *QSS* 42:26313.

[257] Fifth poem in "I Wanted to stop at Shimen on the Pure Clear Festival Day, but was caught in heavy rain and wind before arriving, so we moored at Little Lingxing Sea. Six Poems 清明日欲宿石門未到而風雨大作泊靈星小海六首." *QSS* 42:26273.

The two most common tropes related to this category are covering a great distance while the poet is under the false impression of being stationary; and looking back on the same spot with a new perspective. None of this, of course, was new to poems about travel; what was new in the quatrains was to turn a visual experience into an individual conversation with the landscape. The poetic "I" becomes something more than the assumed autobiographical perspective; he assumes a personality within the quatrain [sets] and develops through individualist encounters on the joint plane of the natural and poetic landscape. This may be done by vague invocation of past poetry, as I have explained in the example of the "Slope Trail" poems, or by reworking a specific poem. The gibbon's cries in the Three Gorges, for example, resound uncannily in the following two poems:

I Breakfasted in Huangzhoupu, and Walked in the Mountains After Eating[258]	晨炊黃州鋪飯後山行
Walking in the mountains made me feel as plushy as cotton.	山行行得軟如綿,
I hastily got on the sedan chair for a moment's sleep.	急上籃輿睡霎間,
In my dreams, I only hear cries to clear the road,	夢裡只聞人喝道,
Unaware that I have passed several mountains.	不知過盡數重山.

Mooring at Night at the Crow Pier[259]	夜泊鴉磯
In the gorges, no sign of humans for the whole day.	峽中盡日沒人煙,
When my boat moored at the Crow Pier, there turned out to be a village.	船泊鴉磯也有村.
I am already wearied to the bone by the cuckoos,	已被子規酸骨死,
So of first importance, let there be no gibbon cries tonight!	今宵第一莫啼猿.

In the quatrains built around this type of trope, the reworking of past poetry usually materializes into sensory experiences during the journey, in the form of visual or aural

[258] *QSS* 42:26266.

[259] *QSS* 42:26285.

discoveries. Aside from their merit as individual poems, as parts of a cumulative poetic record, they represent the poet's notable encounters and progress along the journey.

The third type of tropes place the world under microscopic view. This type is also common in moments-in-leisure quatrains, except as travel diary quatrains, the title usually tells us that some hindrance in the journey occasioned the microscopic observations:

Held Up in Zhong's Village by the Wind, I Observe Nature's Transformations, Two Poems[260]	阻風鍾家村觀岸傍物化二首
A water bug just emerged from the green waves.	水蟲纔出綠波來,
I observe closely as he scuttles over the sandy beach and up the rocky banks,	細看爬沙上石崖.
Then transforms into a dragonfly and suddenly flies away –	化作蜻蜓忽飛去,
When, after flying away, will he fly back?	幾時飛去却飛回.
Its shell, like shed cicada skin, is still wet and new,	殼如蟬蛻濕仍新,
No longer will it play under the waves in spring.	那復浮嬉浪底春.
He takes his present body on a flight to look at its reflection in the water,	却把今身飛照水,
Unaware that on the rock lay his previous body.	不知石上是前身.

The subject is always an insignificant critter given a life of its own. Although some aspects may tempt one to read them as analogies to the poet, they bear no direct relation to constructing the poetic personality. Current scholarship usually regards these quatrains as reflecting the Song poets' tendency to glean greater philosophical meaning from small matters.

Thus, with a clear opening and closure, with the repetition of the set of common tropes, and by mentally noting the steps along the journey, the travel diary quatrain [sets] in the *Nanhai ji* invite the reader to view them with an internal coherence and continuity. This coherence is by no means absolute or exclusive in the way in which, for example, Du Fu's nine "Impromptu

[260] *QSS* 42:26286.

Quatrains" form a closed, tightly-knit unit. One may group together some of the quatrain [sets] in the *Nanhai ji* with some flexibility – which Zhao Fan did at one point – without necessarily excluding poems of other forms and subjects. In this chronologically arranged collection, the quatrains intersperse among regulated poems and ancient-style ballads on closely related moments in the same journey. Generally speaking, poems of other forms tend to be more conventional in the way of adopting an autobiographical voice to express hardly-out-of-expectation sentiments in a given circumstance. The quatrain [sets], on the other hand, always depart from that beaten path.

The typical quatrains of portraiture adopt the device of oblique reflection to reveal a poetic personality through his encounters with nature; when several quatrains are grouped under the same title, they portray the poetic personality in multiple fragments through his discoveries in the natural and the poetic landscape, usually not without a suggestion of irony or parody of a poetic convention. The quatrains and small quatrain sets, furthermore, hang together with a narrative coherence and collectively present a poetic personality to coexist with the conventional autobiographical "I" but, at the same time, clearly distinct. He shies away from revealing his noble heart's intentions clearly and completely, but chooses to let his readers discover bits of a humbled personality displayed in bits of drama, just as he makes his own discoveries in out-of-the-way corners. It is always possible to link this humbled personality to the backdrop of the conventional poetic "I" – as Zhao Fan did in his exchange with Yang Wanli – but for the first time, a major part of a poet's self-representation no longer presumes unambiguous identification between the poet and his poetry, nor is the former assumed to be a unified totality.

With 2/3 of the poems being quatrains and the majority of which being about travel, the *Nanhai ji* is unusual even among Yang Wanli's other poetry collections, and certainly so among

his contemporaries. This might have been due to the frequent journeys required of him during those three years of official service in Guangdong. The fact that he chose to write the majority of his travel poems in heptasyllabic quatrains or quatrain sets, however, is still significant. Mo Lifeng did a title count of Yang Wanli's oeuvre and found that heptasyllabic quatrains make up half of his total number of poems. The average ratio is lower for his contemporaries but still far exceeds that in the Tang and Northern Song collections. [261]

Although the travel diary quatrains in the *Nanhai ji* are unusual in their numbers, they are qualitatively representative of their age. Thus, it is safe to conclude here with a symbolic synopsis of travel diary quatrains, a representative image of the solitary traveler in search for beauty on the road of life:

The Little Peach Tree on the Roadside[262]	道旁小桃
The dwindled peach blossoms are all blown off – no more to dwindle;	吹盡殘桃無可殘,
On the ground, no trace of fallen flowers.	也無地上落花痕.
I walk alone in search until I reach a mossy spot,	獨行尋到青苔處,
Where I pick up a single blush-pink petal to observe.	拾得嫣紅一片看.

B. Interlude: Solitary Musings over Solitary-Musing Poems

(Alternative Title: Poetry of a Single Moment: Preparing the Way for Moments-in-Leisure Quatrain Sets)

[261] Mo Lifeng observes the close correlation between the big increase of the number of quatrains in *Jingxi ji, Xigui ji,* and *Nanhai ji*, and the maturing of the Chengzhai style. In Mo, "Lun Yang Wanli shifeng de zhuanbian guocheng 論楊萬里詩風的轉變過程," *Qiusuo* 求索, 2001.4., 105-110.

[262] *QSS* 42:26268.

The quatrains of portraiture and travel diary quatrain sets are like the blush-pink petal that Yang Wanli found in his solitary quest down the peach blossom lane. Their advantage in numbers and easily-distinguishable characteristics set them in clear relief against the moss-covered remains of mid-Southern Song quatrains. In our search down the quatrain lane (or labyrinth…), they are the first ready object to pick up and examine. Yet the problem has been lurking from the beginning: they constitute an important part but by no means represent the entirety of the quatrain's riotous efflorescence in that era. In order to present something closer to a complete and truthful picture, one must venture further through the tortuous "sheep's intestines," and fill spaces whose boundaries are not easy to delineate, or trace patterns that may soon become blurred.

The "moments-in-leisure quatrain sets" is one such nebulous space to be filled. They are harder to define than travel diary quatrain sets because, for the latter, one only has to look at the title. There remain a large number of quatrains and sets whose titles do not indicate travel; instead, they cover a motley of occasions that might transpire on a leisurely day at home: taking a walk; noticing the season; commenting on the weather, be it hot or cold, raining or snowing, or about to rain/snow; moping during or after an illness; having a meal or taking a nap; hearing a sound or sitting around; enjoying the company of books, birds, flowers in a vase or a poem in the mind; or simply titled by date or "Random." Nevertheless, they beg to be identified as a genre through one common strategy: each poem is devoted to constructing – or reconstructing – one single moment experienced in solitude, a moment that encases emotion, feeling, sensibility, mood or thought, or all of the above. I will attempt, in this section, to explain the meaning of that moment, and justify myself in defining a genre by it.

In *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics: Omen of the World*, there is a section about poems written on ordinary moments which Stephen Owen titles, "Quotidian Alchemy." The phrase is a magical coinage and, whether he intended it or not, resonates with the Jiangxi School catchphrase, "to transform iron into gold." Owen observes that "the range of solitary occasions steadily increases from the Tang through the Song," and that, "eventually almost anything might be an excuse for a poem."[263] There is no word more apt than "alchemy" to describe the transformation of an ordinary moment into a poetic experience. And yet, to accept this designation is to accept its challenges on some fundamental assumptions in reading traditional Chinese poetry. A transformative process interposes a distance and assumes an essential difference between the historic moment and the poetic moment. It highlights the poet's role as artist, as transformer, as opposed to speaker and subject. It strikes an alien note in a poetic discourse that emphasizes immediacy and spontaneity, one that looks to the poet's personality to anchor the meaning and appreciate the value of his poems.

Thus, we have at hand two possible ways to approach the ocean of "quotidian" quatrains –subjective expression or artistic transformation. The task is not to choose one or the other, but to follow both of them out to the points where each might converge with late-twelfth and early-thirteenth century philosophy on quatrain-writing. To illustrate the two possibilities by borrowing Owen's example (and his translation) of Lu You's 陸遊 poem (dated to 1187):

New Year's Eve: Snow	除夜雪
Surprised my thick covers can't keep out the cold,	只怪重衾不禦寒,
I get up to watch the swift snow, dry flakes of jade.	起看急雪玉花乾.

[263] Owen, 242.

Ready at daybreak to pay respects in the God of the Void's palace:	遲明欲謁虛皇殿,
Wearing his [felt] blanket,[264] the horse of the stable stands in the last of the night.	廄馬蒙氈立夜闌.

The poem, it appears, contains a double illusion. Lu You fantasizes about the God of Void's palace, and we the readers have the illusion that the poem is about common human experience, or that it is within everyone's grasp. Owen is not so sure about the second one. Perhaps he is too enamored by it to denounce it as illusion.[265] Or more probable still, the illusion is not set up to be sustained. In accepting the poem's basis in an ordinary moment, we accept the illusion of its proximity; and by seeing through the illusion, we recognize the poem's claim to greatness. Both the acceptance and the seeing through are essential to our experience of the poem.

There may be a third illusion – that of the horse(s) standing through the snowy night in the stable. "May be" – because there is no reason why it cannot be fact. Lu You wakes up, sees it snowing, is on his way to go out, and upon arriving at the stable, finds his horse standing in the cold dawn. Poetry "happens" when Lu You encounters the sight of his horse and is reminded of his own thick blankets. The poem is a record of it, an attempt to reproduce that moment's irony and intense feeling with as little art as possible. We read the poem as we would a diary entry, and we regard the poet as its subject and speaker. The fantasy of the God of Void's palace can be tamed into the deity's shrine on earth. This reading agrees with the general tendency to value immediacy and spontaneity in traditional *shi* poetry, and is capable of charming the audience by endowing the aura of poetry on everyday happenings.

[264] Addition mine (in brackets).

[265] Owen lets an imaginary interlocutor speak for him on this second illusion (246-48). The interlocutor accuses him of being "completely entangled in it."

The charm comes with a trap. While the aura of poetry can spread to cover verse records of any everyday event, it could also wear thin and lose poetry its privileged status. The vast quantities of poetry in the late-twelfth century were the natural outcome, as was the concern for the loss of value to make a great poem or poet. Ye Shi represents the contemporary voice of critique when he spoke of this consequence, "Previously, when Tang poetry had long fallen into neglect, the gentleman [Xu Ji] discussed with his friends Xu Zhao, Weng Juan, and Zhao Shixiu saying, 'the authors of the past weighed their craft on the [distribution of] different tones and the use of a single character or line. This is the utmost excellence in poetry. Recent authors, on the other hand, produce piece after piece and page after page, voluminously and without inhibition. [Writing in this manner,] how is it possible to achieve renown and distinction?' 初, 唐詩廢久, 君與友徐照, 翁卷, 趙師秀議曰: '昔人以浮聲切響單字只句計巧拙, 蓋風騷之至精也. 近世乃連篇累牘, 汗漫而無禁, 豈能名家哉.'"[266] The concern was a real one, and it follows from a way of reading that credits the poems with factual basis and immediacy while divesting them of the claim to art. Ye Shi regards them as writings bearing the label of poetry but little poetic value.

This was one branch of thought in the late-twelfth century. In its critique, we find contemporary corroboration for one of the possible approaches to everyday moment quatrains. But we wonder whether a poem like "New Year's Eve: Snow" is truly artless. Suppose we follow Owen's reading and regard that vision about the stable horse as Lu You's "little fiction." Lu You may be seeing them in his mind's eye as he does the heavenly palace. There is even the possibility that the "felt blanket" is a metaphor for the blanket of snow. In this light, historic reality stops at the moment of viewing the snowflakes, at which point the artist takes over, his poetic imagination alighting on the one imagery that imbues the original moment with the

[266] "Tomb Inscription for Xu Ji [Wenyuan]." Cf. Ch.2.

sharpest irony. He also looks to the tradition to lend it meaning – a tradition of poems about cold, snow, empathy with fellow creatures' sufferings, petitioning the gods, and on paying respect to the emperor on New Year's Day. A quatrain materializes out of alchemy of the tradition and the present moment, the feeling and the poetic imagination.

This reading rattles the poem's presumed basis in reality and dualizes the poet's role into that of subject and artist. It projects, for the everyday-event quatrains, additional content for the veritable records of a poet's day. A ready alternative in the form of "art emotions" beckons from the yonder side: one has but to step across from alchemy to chemistry, and into the analogy of reagents and catalyst. T. S. Eliot scorns the poet's personal emotional capacity and advises him to act as "catalyst." If the creative process is analogous to a chemical reaction with the tradition and the present as reagents, the poet's role would be to bring about their transformation while himself, his personality and emotions, remain inert, neutral, and unchanged. For Eliot, what the poem presents are not personal emotions but "art emotions," and the creative process is not one of self-expression but of the self's extinction. [267]

At the prospect of that last point, a traditional *shi* critic may cry "heresy" and refuse to step across. Nevertheless, what "ingredients" Eliot conceived of for the chemical process agree exactly with those that make the quatrain, and thereby cast into sharper focus the questions that arise from the ensuing divergence. Reading the stable horse imagery as an illusion makes the feeling of empathy in the quatrain, to some extent, an art construct. If it is against the general principle of traditional Chinese *shi* poetics to suppose a total exclusion of the poet's personality, then what role does he play in the construction of the feeling? What is the relation between the

[267] T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," originally published in 1919, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/resources/learning/essays/detail/69400, accessed on May 12, 2017.

moment of the historic present and the moment in the poem, and to what extent is the latter based on the former? Given that the quatrain does more than recording an ordinary moment, how are additional layers of meaning structured into the immediate present? Moving on from Lu You's example to the late-twelfth and early-thirteenth century quatrains in general, these were real questions that the Southern Song poets asked and dealt with in their indirect and suggestive ways.

Consider the following pair of poems, the first by Fan Chengda:

A Scene in the Wilds[268]	野景
In the sound of the soft rushes, flowers of the reeds are dry.	菰蒲聲裏荻花乾,
An egret stands between river and sky, a vast expanse of water mirror.	鷺立江天水鏡寬.
No painting can attain and no poem can reach –	畫不能成詩不到,
The brush lacks a place to cloak with desolation.	筆端無處著荒寒.

The scene in the wilds as it is described in the first couplet has all the components that commonly invoke a desolate mood in painting or poetry. Han Biao fares better:

Xizhi's Small Fan[269]	希之小扇
Wild waters and cold mist wash over the sandy riverbank.	野水寒煙洗岸沙,
Maples and rushes rustle their leaves, chastened by the frost.	蕭蕭楓葦淨霜華.
Standing alone with no human presence, an egret has just flown hither.	無人獨立飛來鷺,
It doubles the feeling of desolation.	冷落心情一倍加.

The scenes that the two poems portray are almost copies of each other. In both poems, the first three lines sketch an autumnal scene with wild waters, rustling leaves, and a solitary egret as the focal point – to culminate in the naming of the mood in the last line. But Han Biao is not writing about a scene in the wilds. The title of his poem is "Xizhi's Small Fan." To describe a painted

[268] *QSS* 41:26018.

[269] *QSS* 52:32745.

scene as if it were natural, as Han Biao does in his poem, or to "paint" a scene in poetry, as Fan Chengda has done, are both familiar devices and have generated quite a number of observations that all boil down to "a poem contains a painting" and vice versa. However, the more intriguing things about this pair of poems are the high degree of standardization in the connection between scene and poetic feeling, and the unquestioned identification between a scene in nature and a scene in art. The latter does not represent the highest achievement in mimetic art; rather, it reveals the danger of art becoming the dominant medium of perception of nature and the meaning of its signs. A scene such as this asks us to examine and reconsider the relationship between imagery and feeling in poetry.

The works of Stephen Owen and Pauline Yu have elucidated a number of important assumptions that underlie the reading of imagery in traditional Chinese poetry. Whereas reading in the Western tradition is predicated on a dualistic conception of reality – one that presumes an "other," higher reality to the one in the concrete, natural world – the Chinese worldview assumes no "other" reality than the Dao that is immanent in all levels of a world of inherent patterns (*li* 理). Thus, one does not speak of bridging the distance between sign and meaning, and between metaphor and referent, because it is not a matter of "bridging" but one of recognizing and articulating a latent pattern. A poem is not a thing created to imitate higher reality, but the process of that pattern becoming manifest in language.[270] This classical model of poetry allows human emotions and thought, when they arise in response to encounters with the world, to

[270] See Pauline Yu, *"*Setting the Terms," in *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition,* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987), 4-43. And Owen, "Omen of the World," in *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics,* 12-27.

become a part of its pattern. It grants the poet the privilege to partake in the pattern, and to be the medium of articulation without having to surrender his individuality.

A stanza from Su Shi's poem, below, is based on the nexus of relations between images, feeling, language and poet in this model, and illustrates the process by which a *potential* poem may come into being:

The gibbon's wail and the crane's cry originally had no intent.	猿吟鶴唳本無意,
They are unaware of the travelers passing below.	不知下有行人行.
The night's rain falling on empty steps makes the purest sound by itself.	空階夜雨自清絕,
Who made it into the suppressed sobs of a friendless one? [271]	誰使掩抑啼孤煢.

The dividing and connecting lines are clearly drawn between what sounds mean in nature and what they *could* mean in poetry. Images in nature and human affective response are in an original state of dissociation and require active exertion from poetic sentimentality to bring them together – and indeed, the Chinese poetic canon does not lack lines that join the traveler's sorrow with the gibbon's cry, or ones that willfully mistake raindrops for sobbing.

This model was not allowed to remain unchanged and unchallenged. It may even be broken when Neo-Confucians ascribe a different meaning and relationship to its key terms, *wen* and Dao. This was precisely what Zhu Xi was doing in the late twelfth century.[272] How and why Zhu Xi managed to eventually succeed is outside the scope of this chapter. For now, Zhu Xi has

---

[271] From "Poem in the Rhyme as Presented to Me by the Monk Qian 次韻僧潛見贈." *SSSJ,* 3:879.

[272] Michael Fuller, in "Aesthetics and Meaning in Experience: A Theoretical Perspective on Zhu Xi's Revision of Song Dynasty Views of Poetry," discusses Zhu Xi's role in changing the nature of aesthetic experience in the Southern Song," in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (Dec., 2005), 311-355. See also Chapters 7-8 in *Drifting Among Rivers and Lakes,* 299-404.

to stand by as a mere contemporary to a different mode of revision being effected in the quatrains: the displacement of the affective or ideational response from the poet to the scene. There is no need to distinguish between a natural scene and an art scene because, when "scene" is the arrangement of images with a mood or feeling, then by definition it contains human and art elements. The poet approaches it with a preferably sedate state of mind, ready to be impressed by the "feel" of the scene. This puts him in a position very much like that of a reader – except he is blessed (or burdened) with the task of rendering the scene, feeling and all, into a poem.

The pair of poems by Fan Chengda and Han Biao quoted above exhibit the working of this revised model when it is brought out to eventuality. Unlike the original model illustrated in Su Shi's poem, where a latent connection awaits to emerge between images and feeling, here we have an arrangement of images that preconditions a particular type of feeling: barren and cold and desolate but, strangely, aesthetically satisfying. Allowing for some variation, the two poems include all the same key images, and the arrangement is remarkably alike. Zhao Fan remains in the role of a passive viewer and transcriber throughout the poem. He is impressed by the feel of the scene – or call it mood, aura, or atmosphere. The impression is a movement inward to the poet, as opposed to a subjective response moving outward. His sense of failure comes from however he may transcribe the appearances of the scene, the feeling is beyond the reach of the artist's pen. The irony is, of course, that his outlook had been shaped by poetry and painting in the first place. Han Biao, likewise, takes the position of viewer and transcriber, although the ending to his poem may be giving him entrée.

For the scenes in their poems, tradition supersedes the poet's personal feelings as the main source of meaning. It is not natural scenery we speak of, not even for Zhao Fan's poem, but a selective arrangement of images from nature based on a tradition of literati poetry and painting,

except that the tradition is so internalized that their description appears objective and natural. The two poems betray a degree of fossilization in the arrangement of images and its relation to a particular type of feeling. It is the inevitable outcome, but it needs not be alarming because most poems stop short before the inevitable, such as the following one by Zhang Zi:

Waterside Plantains[273]	水蕉
Lush were the trees by the water – my old favorites.	籠叢舊愛谿邊樹,
As the road turns, there is pure breeze in the shade all day long.	路轉清風盡日陰.
It is not a differentiable image that arises by my window –[274]	窗下不生分別相,
In a stone pot with autumn water, I grow a plantain grove.	石盆秋水養蕉林.

Zhang Zi (mis)uses a Buddhist concept to structure his willful identification between his miniature bonsai and the shady trees by the river. It is a perspective that bypasses the natural vs. artificial distinction: the same perspective that led Fan Chengda and Han Biao, writing independently from each other, to describe a scene in the wilds and a scene on the fan in almost identical terms. There is something about the artificially-arranged potted plantains that gives the same "feel" as the ones in nature.

That "feel," in traditional critical terminology, is *qing*. I have hitherto translated it indiscriminately as feeling, mood, or emotion, but in the broadest sense of the term, it may indicate any or all of the above, or, used impersonally, condition and circumstance, or the essential inner quality of a thing. The last brings it close to *xing* 性 (innate character), and the

[273] *QSS* 50:31659.

[274] 分別相 *paricchedâkāra* is Buddhist term, The discriminating nature; the pervasively imagining nature. (*Digital Dictionary of Buddhism.)*

two words are sometimes bound as a compound. In the poem, "Noon Walk," Han Biao uses *qing* in the broadest sense to indicate what a poet appreciates in natural scenery:

Noon Walk[275]	午步
The flower-growing weather is half cloudy, half clear.	養花天氣半陰晴,
Singing birds by the river deliver three or four notes	啼鳥水邊三四聲.
Let the sightseers not carelessly pass by the appreciation	游人往來莫漫賞,
Of so much *qing* in the scenery both past and present.	多少古今風物情.

From the too-predictable mood of desolation from Han and Zhao's wilderness scene, to the general appreciation of nature in Zhang Zi's "Waterside Plantains," and finally to Han Biao's sweeping outlook toward all possible moods and feelings from a scene in his noon walk – the four quatrains represent the varying scope of *qing* that a scene may encapsulate. *Qing* is the existential sphere in which the poet experiences a world that is at once nature and human, past and present. It tunes the notes of a birdsong and tones the flower-growing weather to make them continuous with the summation, "scenery past and present (*gujin fengwu* 古今風物)." It is a claim by which a quatrain rooted in circumstances of "here" and "now" partakes of the meaning of a timeless tradition, and thereby fulfills the aesthetic expectation, "the meaning of a quatrain goes on after the line breaks off." As a privileged class of meaning only accessible in poetry, its significance extends beyond one poetic form in a given era. Nevertheless, two aspects about *qing* set apart the quatrains of the late-twelfth-and-early-thirteenth centuries: its assumed locus of origin and the poet's approach to it.

For the first, the locus of *qing* shifted from the historic moment of encounter between poet and nature to the scene itself. The former, as Su Shi's stanza shows, is the classic model of

[275] *QSS* 52:32710.

poetry; whereas the four quatrains by Zhao Fan, Han Biao, and Zhang Zi represent the shift to the latter. Each of the above quatrains represents one single scene – an arrangement of images – impregnated with *qing.* The *qing* is always evoked by some association from the scene to the literary, historical, or aesthetic tradition. Hence, the shift in the poet's approach to it: the poet conceives of scenes *in terms of* the *qing* they already suggest. He partakes in the *qing* and may identify with it, but his own emotions are no longer the only or the dominant source of meaning.

Here I will borrow Wang Guowei's concept, *jingjie* 境界, as the basis for explanation because it takes scene and feeling as one unit. Although scholars debate on the finer points about Wang's use of the phrase and whether it is different from the abbreviated version, *jing* 境, they agree that on the most basic level, both terms refer to a sphere of reality evoked in poetic moments that unite scene and feeling.[276] *Jingjie* has been translated variously as "realm," "scene," "state," "world," or triumphantly left alone (the option taken here) as eluding translation. The spatial dimension in the literal meaning of *jingjie* translates into: (a) the sphere of experience evoked in the concrete setting of a poem, or (b) an exalted state of feeling or of understanding, a metaphorical height to which a poet aspires. I borrow the concept primarily in the former, descriptive usage. Although Wang Guowei introduced *jingjie* for *ci* criticism, it is a convenient concept to use here because it describes exactly the sphere of experience that a quatrain tries to capture. Not only does it unite scene and feeling in a concrete moment, its best

[276] Adele Rickett summarizes it as follows, "From these scattered comments one can summarize Wang's concept of *jingjie* as the total excellence which makes a poem a truly fine creation. It is defined in its most basic aspect as the verbalization of the unique moments of reality that are manifested in one's heart and in the world outside." See Rickett, *Wang Kuo-wei's Jen-chien tz'u-hua: A Study in Chinese Literary Criticism*, (Hong Kong, Hong Kong UP, 1977), 25. For a thorough explanation of the three levels of meaning in *jingjie*, see Chia-ying Yeh, "Wang Kuo-wei's Song Lyrics in Light of His Own Theories." In James Hightower and Chia-ying Ye, *Studies in Chinese Poetry,* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1998), 466-96.

advantage lies in the suggestion of space: it allows one to visualize a moment of poetic experience as a sphere to be shared, one which a poet may approach from many angles, including that of a reader.

No doubt I am limiting the potentials of *jingjie* considerably from Wang Guowei's original conceptualization. The most important difference between the two of us is that Wang regards the creation of *jingjie* as the poet's original act, whereas I see it as one of perceiving and re-creating. Even before the poet takes up his brush, tradition has already worked alchemy on the historic present to produce *jingjie*. The writing of the poem turns a private moment of perceiving *jingjie* into a shared sphere of poetic experience. Qiu Wanqing 裘萬頃 (d.1219) offers an excellent account of the process in the following poem:

To the Same Rhyme as Yu Zhongyong's "Pine Wind Loft" (The Eighth)[277]	次余仲庸松風閣韻十九首 (八)
Deep in the willow tree cries a cuckoo bird.	楊柳陰中啼杜鵑,
On the paulownia branch blast the cicadas.	梧桐枝上噪玄蟬,
Verses and stanzas fill my vision and no one else comprehends,	篇章滿眼無人會,
They have me, an old poet, to compile at my leisure.	贏得詩翁取意編.

Southern Song poets often talk of looking out to a vista and finding a line of poetry looking back at them. It is not simply images we speak of when we scroll through the first couple of lines, but *jingjie* complete with scene and *qing*. Qiu's "compilation" is one of the three approaches that a poet may take toward the *jingjie* he perceives. His personal emotions, aside from the sensibilities of a generic poet, retreat behind the ones already present in the *jingjie*; the poems are already written in the scene, and his role is to "compile" them.

[277] *QSS* 52:32298.

The other two approaches, "mirror reflection" and "reenacting," allow the poet to reveal his own emotions. As he looks out to find himself facing poetic *jingjie*, he may discover that the emotions therein exactly mirror his own. In a poem about nothing in particular, Han Biao sums up the "reflection" approach in the characteristic offhand manner:[278]

"Leaning and slanting;" "clear and shallow;" "a fragrance floats unseen":	橫斜清淺暗香動,
The heart's emotions are copied in a hundred ways.	時把心情百樣摹.
Suddenly I recall Hermit Lin of the West Lake	忽憶西湖林處士,
With a smile – there is no match for his style in all of history.	此風應笑古來無.

The plum flowers that attempted to grace Han Biao's vision might have been real – or not. It did not matter. It was not flowers that he saw, but the *jingjie* that Lin Bu 林逋 had realized in the all-time favorite couplet, "The sparse shadows lean and slant [over] water clear and shallow, / a fragrance floats unseen in the moonlight, soft and dim 疏影橫斜水清淺, 暗香浮動月黃昏." In his quatrain, Han Biao does nothing more than suggesting that this *jingjie* copies his heart's emotions "in a hundred ways" before he steps back and smiles his knowing smile with Lin Bu. His readers are invited to smile with him: by surrendering the privilege to describe his own heart's emotions to a past poet's *jingjie*, he assumes a position very much like that of a reader – except that he turns a private moment of reading and perception into a shared sphere of poetic experience. That sphere joins up a private, ordinary moment with one that tradition had made immortal, and by it, Han Biao joins his readers in viewing a visual "copy" of his emotions.

[278] From a set of eight quatrains titled, "Lu, the Top Prefectural Graduate, Used Su Shi's 'Empty Mountain Without People, Water Flows, Flowers Bloom' as Rhyme Words for His Set of Poems; I Wrote a Set to the Same Rhymes 魯解元以坡語空山無人水流花開為詩和韻." *QSS* 52:32715.

The third approach, "reenacting," allows a still stronger presence of the poet. Its alchemistic working is demonstrated in the following example by Zhao Fan:

Walking Alone (second poem out of two)	獨行 (二)
Spring wind, bold and boundless, over the water's wide waves.	春風浩浩水橫波,
The waters stretch into the distance, the shores long – what is to be done?	水遠灘長可奈何.
I gaze till the last of the clouds disappear in the blue sky, but no sign of him/her.	送盡碧雲人不見,
I pick the orchids and pluck the lavender. Alone I walk in song.	折蘭采若自行歌.

Rather than drawing on one predecessor, Zhao Fan uses the images and vocabulary from *Chuci* to write a poem about solitude and longing for an absent friend. Many poets before him have done the same thing, making the *jingjie* in his poem a familiar one. For example, Jiang Yan 江淹 (444-505), whose "Poem Imitating the Monk Huixiu's 'The Grievance of Separation' 擬休上人別怨"[279] begins with:

Northwesterly the autumn wind reaches	西北秋風至,
The traveler of Chu – such sorrow in his heart!	楚客心憂哉.
At dusk the blue clouds gather,	日暮碧雲合,
Only the Lovely One has not come!	佳人殊未来.

Jiang Yan's poem is an imitation piece in the first place, but oddly, it shares more common ground with Zhao Fan's poem than with Huixiu's "Ballad on Sorrow" that it professes to imitate. The emotion therein – sorrow in separation – is conveyed in the language of longing for the absent god or goddess, and unfolds in a scene that strongly suggests of the *Chuci.*[280] The season

[279] In Li Shan 李善, annot., *Wenxuan* 文選, 6 vols., (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1986), 3:1480.

[280] Two couplets down: "Longing on the sandbanks of Wu Mountain, / Dejected, gaze toward the Yang Terrace.相思巫山渚, 悵望陽雲臺."

changes from autumn to spring in Zhao Fan's poem, but the scene retains the strong *Chuci* pathos*:* from the wind over the vast expanse of water to the solitary poet walking by the shore, and to the signature flowers, orchid and lavender. They involve the same type of feeling (*qing*) bound by and enacted through a specific type of scene: in other words, they produce the same *jingjie*. Both the scene and the feeling look to the *Chuci* tradition to lend them meaning beyond the poems' immediate boundaries.

So far, for the purpose of explanation, I chose examples where the poet adopts only one of the approaches – to compile, to use as mirror, or to reenact them. However, the relationship between the new *jingjie* and the old is usually one of resonance than of rigid one-on-one correspondence, especially in the case of "reenacting." The following pair of poems, "Light Rain in Late Spring 暮春小雨" by Yang Wanli and "Beside the Water 水邊" by Zhang Zi, are more typical of the third approach:

Light Rain in Late Spring[281]	暮春小雨
Not quite awake from last night's hangover, I am still a little tipsy.	宿酒未醒尚小醺,
I feel dull and sick, and not very happy.	似癡如病不多欣.
Over the deep, deep pond a light, light rain.	深深池沼輕輕雨,
Alone I lean on the railing to watch the patterns of the ripples.	獨倚欄杆看水紋.
Beside the Water[282]	水邊
Emerald green ivies wreathe the tree, flowers in the sunset aglow.	翠藤縈樹夕花明,
Countless round lotus leaves cling to clutters of duckweed.	無數圓荷貼亂萍.
Half sober from drunkenness, I come to look at my reflection in the water.	酒力半銷來照影,
In the evening breeze, pure and mild, a crane combs his plumes.	晚風清淡鶴梳翎.

[281] *QSS* 42:26164.

[282] *QSS* 50:31648.

Poets can get very emotional when drunk, as Lu You and Yang Wanli demonstrate in a number of hepta-syllabic ancient-style poems. But in the quatrain, it is an emotionally-subdued Yang Wanli, still with mild aftereffects of wine, who comes to observe the pond. And so, in the same emotional state, does Zhang Zi. However, beyond this overlap in the "solitary reflections of a poet recovering from drunkenness," the *jingjie* in each poem resonate with quite different antecedents in the tradition.

Leaning on the railing and looking out is commonplace in poetry. More so a pond: here the changes in the seasons are first seen and felt through the flourishing or withering of water plants; here, one may chance upon a relic of remembrance; and also here, the water subtly reveals the emotions of the observer, either in its still reflection or through its ripples under rain or wind. Thus, to the admirably commonsensical question, "can Yang Wanli lean against the railing overlooking a pond without evoking past poetry," the answer is probably no. This is not to deny the originality or the spontaneity of the act. On the contrary, to admit both while embracing a rich resonance with the past tradition – such is the nature of poetic experience in the quatrains of mid-Southern Song.

Resonance, admittedly, is not quite the same as "reenacting." The scene of the solitary poet leaning against the railing and observing the pond in the light rain, impregnated with a feeling that may be as deep as the "deep deep pond," or as fine as the "light light rain," or as complex as the patterns of the rippling, make up the poem's *jingjie.* There is a similar moment in Li Shangyin's poem, "The Morrow 明日:"[283]

In the sky, the Triple-Banners Stars pass. 天上參旗過,

[283] Liu Xuekai 劉學楷 and Yu Shucheng 余恕誠, eds., *Li Shangyin shige jijie* 李商隱詩歌集解, 5 vol., (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1998), 4:1762.

In the world of humans, candlelight goes out.	人間燭焰銷.
Who could have told that readying a pair of shoes	誰言整雙履,
So easily parted us across the Three Bridges?	便是隔三橋.
The place of our acquaintance – a lock of yellow gold.	知處黃金鎖,
Where I had been – windows screened by emerald green silk.	曾來碧綺寮.
I lean on the railing, feeling the feel of the morrow –	憑欄明日意,
The pond expansive, the rain scant and thin.	池闊雨蕭蕭.

Cleared of all baffling hints, Li Shangyin is feeling the pain of separation from a locked past just before the dawn of a new day. The poem culminates in the last scene, where he leans on the railing and looks to the pond in the rain, knowing too well how he would feel on this new day. The *jingjie* in Yang Wanli's poem concurs with this moment of scene and *qing*. There is nothing to confirm a definitive link between the two poems. In fact, the circumstances and the substance of their feelings are quite different. Yet, in the visual representation of the feeling, in the scene presented to suggest its nature, Yang's poem rings of Li Shangyin's final couplet. In this sense, Yang Wanli's quatrain can be said to reenact that moment's *jingjie*. In most examples of "reenacting," the relationship between the new poem and the old is no more than a suggestive concurrence rather than conscious reworking. At the same time, it does not exclude the new poem from resonating with other moments in the poetic tradition, and thereby acquire more layers of meaning. Yang Wanli's quatrain, for example, evokes vague associations with poems on ponds, leaning on the railing alone and looking out, and feeling depressed after waking up. His poem is no doubt successful in presenting a scene with deep feeling, but the scene is merely the surface; while suppressing all biographical details as to the substance of the feeling, it relies on its resonance with moments in the poetic tradition for depth and intensity.

Zhang Zi's "Beside the Water" works very much in the same way. Besides the above-quoted couplet on plum flowers, Lin Bu has another beloved one in the pentasyllabic line, "The

crane, idle, looks over the water for a long time; / The bees, lazy, pollinate the flowers infrequently 鶴閒臨水久, 蜂懶採花疏." [284] One is expected to see past the crane and the bees to the idle and lazy poet, who has to sit by the water long enough to observe the crane doing the same thing, and to notice the bees being too lazy to do their job. Zhang Zi's quatrain reenacts the first line in Lin Bu's couplet: both the scene with the crane, the water, and the poet; along with the pure and mild feelings of a recluse as suggested by his description of the evening breeze. At the same time, other images in the scene impose a not-so-serene mood. In the striking visual contrast of the sunlit flowers against the ivy-bound tree, and to the chaotic clutter of duckweed and lotus leaves, the poet adds his reflection and the crane's. Plant life in nature already has a life of signification in poetry; in this poem, they further entangle and cling to each other, setting each other off, changing each other's significance. It is a beautiful scene, but also unsettling.

Thus, from the world of latent patterns, we shift to a world of *jingjie* where a poet may choose to compile, to use as mirror, or to reenact them. This revised model of poetic creation requires a different kind of exertion from the poet: instead of weaving a pattern from his personal *qing* and the external world, he works alchemy on emotion-imbued scenes (*jingjie)* already existing in the tradition. He retreats from his poems as the primary source of meaning, but is still able to reveal his emotions from a specific moment. Paradoxically, this revised model creates the dual positions of the artist and the subject, but reconciles them in the poet so as to preserve the values of immediacy and spontaneity. It unites the historic moment and the poetic moment, and personal emotions and art emotions, by rendering their distinction immaterial.

Revealing one's feelings and emotions indirectly through those in the *jingjie* was a new development in *shi* poetry, but not new to the Chinese poetic tradition. It is no coincidence that I

[284] From the poem, "Written About Myself, a Recluse in the Small Way 小隱自題." *QSS* 2:1192.

borrowed the term *jingjie* from *ci* criticism: it had been the primary mode of expression in *ci* lyrics, from the early stages of the genre, to construct a *jingjie* where the voice of a borrowed persona speaks. The quatrains of the mid-Southern Song, mass-produced under this borrowed mode, straddle the *shi* form and the *ci* genre; they represent a wide-spread phenomenon of the age, when deep-seated assumptions and practices in the writing of *shi* and *ci* were infiltrating into each other's territories, and while equal effort was devoted to reconsolidate the boundaries. It may be impossible to satisfactorily explain why it occurred at this particular time, but one can identify a few important conditions. The *ci* had by this time established itself as a mature genre; the poetic canon held a vast repertoire of familiar *jingjie*. And most importantly, the Jiangxi School had instilled a mentality to actively engage the tradition.

Generalizations aside, *jingjie* forms the basis for identifying the moment-in-leisure quatrains as a genre. A moment-in-leisure quatrain transforms an ordinary moment into a shared sphere of poetic experience, one that joins the moment in the historic present with moments of art in the tradition. The four-line form is too petite to allow sustained development of one or more such moment-spheres, or *jingjie*, as is the case with longer *ci* lyrics. For quatrains, the poet usually devotes the whole poem in building up to a single *jingjie*. It comprises a scene, which in its images or the arrangement thereof resonates meaningfully with the tradition; and *qing*, a generic type of feeling particularized by the scene that encases it. *Jingjie* favors the poet with a sedate mind to be able to perceive it, but does not require him to extinguish his personal *qing*, which may still be revealed indirectly. *Qing* – as feelings, emotions, nature, sensibility, or mood – will be the heart of the resulting quatrain. Its depth and intensity does not depend on the biographical poet alone, but on its multilayered resonance with him in the context of the entire poetic tradition and its readership.

We are now in a better position to take up Xie Bingde's comment again, that Tang quatrains after Du Fu excelled in "hidden, subtle feelings and ideas 情思幽妙." I stated that we can safely take Xie's comment as the selection principle behind the Tang quatrain anthology that Zhao Fan and Han Biao compiled, although he spoke from half a century later. Zhao Fan's syntax is stubbornly awkward, and Han Biao's poetry bears distinct Neo-Confucian overtones: in other words, there is little surface resemblance between their own quatrains and the ones they anthologized. But underneath, there is the common value of a hidden and subtle *qing* that they endeavored to achieve.

In an anthology that is not organized by chronological order, nor by topic, nor by the authors' ranking – in short, no obvious organizing principle – one may assume, at least, that the poem chosen to head the anthology has some special significance. The poem is Wei Yingwu's 韋應物 "West Stream at Chuzhou 滁州西澗":

Alone I cherish the hidden plants that grow beside the stream,	獨憐幽草澗邊生,
Above which the yellow oriole sings deep within the trees.	上有黃鸝深樹鳴,
Spring's high water, bearing rain, comes swiftly with evening:	春潮帶雨晚來急,
A ferry in the wilds, no one there – the boat crosses by itself.[285]	野渡無人舟自橫.

This poem caused a fair amount of uneasiness among traditional critics because they could not be sure how to construe its meaning. Ouyang Xiu, having done a bit of field research and

[285] Translation by Stephen Owen, in *The Great Age of Chinese Poetry: The High T'ang,* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1986), 316.

satisfied himself that there was no stream west of Chuzhou deep enough to float a boat, remarked, "Could it be that the poet endeavored to write a good poem, but the scenery did not actually exist [in nature]?"[286] Xie Bingde read the poem as an allegory. He Liangjun 何良俊 (1506～1573) declared that the version in circulation was wrong (italics mine):

> Wei Suzhou's (Yingwu) "West Stream at Chuzhou," in his own calligraphy, is printed in the *Models of Calligraphy of the Taiqing Tower*. The original reads, "Alone I cherish the hidden plants and *walk* beside the stream. / The yellow oriole *still* sings deep within the trees." Only in this version, the poem relates to [the poet's] nature and feelings. Today's edition has "*grow*" for "walk", and "*above*" for "still," which makes it utterly irrelevant to the poet's self. No doubt this is an error from textual transmission.
> 韋蘇州滁州西澗詩有手書, 刻在太清樓帖中. 本作獨憐幽草澗邊行, 尚有黃鸝深樹鳴. 蓋憐幽草而行於澗邊, 始於性情有關, 今集本行作生, 尚作上, 則於我了無與矣. 其為傳刻之訛無疑.[287]

All this discomfort arises from the retreat of the biographical poet. After cherishing the hidden plants in the first line, he quickly relinquishes an active part for the rest of the poem and lets the scene speak its own language. It leaves the poem like the unsteered boat, relieved of the default anchor of meaning on which readers after the Song increasingly depend. He Liangjun tries valiantly to reinstate him by insisting on the variants that give him more agency, but sadly for He, the version he considers wrong has remained the preferred one up to the present. It is precisely the retreat of the poet that produces a new focus for the poem: the hidden and subtle *qing* in the scene itself. Xie Bingde's reading comes closest to this new focus:

> The hidden plants and the yellow oriole are allegory for the morally superior men being in the fields while the small-minded people take their positions. "Spring's high water, bearing rain, comes swiftly with evening" means that the era of decline is full of crises,

[286] Ouyang Xiu's comment appears in *Tang San ti shi* (juan 2), 1358:26.

[287] Cited from He's *Siyou zhi congshu* 四友齋叢說 in *Wanshou Tang ren jueju jiaozhu jiping,* 2:460.

> just like the day has ended and there is no more light. The last line means that on the wide, desolate shores, there is always a worthy person, just like the lone boat crossing by itself, only the sovereign cannot employ him.
> 幽草黃鸝比君子在野小人在位. 春潮帶雨晚來急, 乃季世危難多, 如日之已晚不復光明也. 末句謂寬閒寂寞之濵必有賢人如孤舟之橫渡者, 特君不能用耳.

In his eagerness to pin down the meaning, Xie Bingde finds an explanation for every image – a feat that earned him the criticism of over-interpretation. Yet, his attempt to locate meaning in the scene itself suggests recognition of the poem's project. He takes up the same position assumed by the retreating poet to experience the hidden and subtle feeling *through* the suggestive scene. His reading supplies the link between Zhao Fan and Han Biao's quatrains and the ones they anthologized – the value that they considered important and endeavored to achieve. The following poem by Han Biao shows how dissimilar a Southern Song moment-in-leisure quatrain can be to Wei Yingwu's "West Stream at Chuzhou," and how continuous the common value:

Near the Close of the Drinking Party[288]	酒闌
Near the close of the drinking party, one roams with Heaven and Earth.	酒闌天地與同游,
Regrets and annoyances complete a poem of helpless sorrow.	懊惱吟成不那愁.
North of the Wei River, East of the Yangtze, trees in spring are far away.	渭北江東春樹遠,
In the past and the present, the waves sway the white floating gulls.	古今波蕩白浮鷗.

Alcoholic intoxication, Han Biao divulges, expands our horizon immensely. What does it matter if all our friends are leaving at the end of the party, when Heaven and Earth will join in? So whence sprung the regrets and annoyances, and what sorrows did grype our poem? The trees in spring are far indeed, on the north of the Wei River in Du Fu's mindscape as he remembered his friend Li Bai. On the waves that flow through the past and the present sway the unfettered gulls, their feathers white as the sorrowful man's hair. There are many other familiar lines where trees

[288] *QSS* 52:32748.

and gulls evoke sorrow – but stop! lest I shatter the spell of subtlety. "Regrets, annoyances," "helplessness," and "sorrow," the generic categories of *qing,* fail to do justice to what the poet experiences when he is left alone near the end of a drinking party to view a mirage of trees and gulls. Like Wei Yingwu's "West Stream at Chuzhou," a that-which-must-not-be-named *qing* is the focus of the poem, but it must remain hidden and only to be experienced through the poem's scenario. And lastly, the *jingjie* in this poem suggests a flexibility in the poet's position. Han Biao compiles two *jingjie* and subsumes them under a third one that he reenacts. This flexibility will be more pronounced when poets extend their moments-in-leisure quatrains into sets.

C. Moments-in-Leisure Quatrain Sets – The Building of a Poet's Universe

It must have been an ordinary morning when Zhao Fan moored his boat and stopped at a tavern for a drink. The experience was soon transformed into a poetic moment when Zhao Fan projected his imagination on a future day and saw himself viewing a painting, one that would have preserved his memories of that morning. So he wrote this poem, "On a Tavern in Xinshi 題新市酒家:"[289]

There are fish to catch and ale to buy:	有魚可漉酒可沽,
You have yet to know the pleasures in the mountains and rivers.	爾更未知山水娛.
This morning I docked my boat for just a moment.	今晨繫纜纔須臾,
It will be a painting to look back and view on a yonder day.	異日回頭看畫圖.

As if to confirm Zhao Fan's hopes, Han Biao wrote from "a yonder day" about his memories of the Cold Food Festival in Suzhou. Now at home in Jiangxi, in "Cold Food Festival

[289] *QSS* 49:30935.

on The Twenty-Ninth 二十九日寒食,"[290] he painted to himself in words of the beautiful springtime Suzhou, where he had been a traveler in the previous year:

Last year's Cold Food Day, at a Suzhou guesthouse,	去年寒食姑蘇館,
I chanted Ziye's Songs of Wu.	吟到吳歌子夜聲.
I can still remember – the city in spring, a ferry of fragrant grass,	猶記春城芳草渡,
An ornate boat moved through a curtain of flower-rain.	一簾花雨畫船行.

The moments of travel and ones of repose in a poet's life – and the poems that represent them – are like the forces of the yin and yang, constantly transforming each other and into each other. And so, it is fairly easy to cross the tenuous line that separates the moments-in-leisure quatrains from the quatrains of portraiture. In the latter, the poet enacts little dramas with nature that reflect obliquely on his personality. In moments-in-leisure quatrains, he adopts a more passive part: he perceives poetic *jingjie* in the external world, observes himself in them, and may reveal himself through them. It is sometimes hard to decide his part in the scenery as being active or passive, as in this moment-in-leisure quatrain by Han Biao:

The Snow Clears, Coming Home from Hutuan[291]	雪晴歸自湖團
From the drain in the roof tiles, what is left of the snow drips in the spring wind.	瓦溝殘雪滴春風,
The ravaged remains of the landscape lie in a pale mist.	賸水殘山淡靄中.
The birds are unaware how human feelings are worn with age.	禽鳥不知人意老,
In a few notes they chirp down the wild plum flowers – red.	數聲啼落野梅紅.

The sudden flash of brilliant red against the washed-out backdrop evokes a rush of intense feeling in an age-worn heart. Looking back at the images that build up to this climax, the emotions are remarkably layered and complex for such a short poem. "Ravaged remains of the

[290] *QSS* 52:32699.
[291] *QSS* 52:32704.

landscape" is a harsh expression that is always used to describe a country suffering from the aftermaths of war. For example, Han Biao's older contemporary, Xin Qiji 辛棄疾, used it to deplore the broken state with few worthy men, "The ravaged remains of the landscape, expressionless, are managed into 'wind-and-moon' by the sparse plum flowers 賸水殘山無態度, 被疏梅料理成風月." Han Biao, however, tempers the expression by shrouding his landscape in a pale mist. Moreover, that landscape opens from the roof drains that drip of the melting snow. Could it be that by "ravaged remains," Han Biao is not referring to the Jurchen threat, but merely the harsh cold, and that the cold is already lifting at the arrival of the spring wind? Almost immediately, "human feelings worn with age," aided by the unknowing birds, thwart the suggestion of a new beginning. Bird song brings life and a dash of color to the landscape, but the beauty is short lived: it signals the end instead of the beginning of bloom. When the birds pair up with flowers to upset the poet in the ravaged remains of a landscape, the contemporary reader would gravitate to Du Fu's couplet for reference, "Moved by the times, flowers splash tears, / Pain in separation, birds startle the heart 感時花濺淚, 恨別鳥驚心." Where Du Fu voices his pain as sharp and unrelenting, Han Biao uses an ambivalent expression for his feelings, "age-worn." This is the only description of the poet's presence in the landscape. He remains a passive observer throughout to all nature's little animations, but his feelings, working like the "pale mist," seem responsible for its washed-out tone. There are conflicting signals of harshness and warmth, destruction and revival, old age and new beginnings, while the poet's role and the true state of his feelings remain beyond our grasp.

With this mischievous smudge over the categories that I so industriously established, we embark on the last leg of the journey through the quatrains of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. The smudge is for better appreciation of the two examples of moments-in-leisure

quatrain sets, Fan Chengda's "Random and Impromptu Seasonal Poems on the Fields and Gardens 四時田園雜興" and Lu You's "Miscellaneous Poems on the North Garden 北園雜詠." As the new world of *jingjie* liberates the poet from being the locus of meaning, he is now free to move between different positions or take on more than one position simultaneously. He may stay behind the *jingjie* he compiles, or reveal his feelings indirectly through those that mirror him or those that he reenacts. He may be a passive observer, or actively engage in little dramas with nature, or remain ambivalent. The moments-in-leisure quatrain sets of the age exercise the new freedom to the full. In this section, through Fan Chengda and Lu You's two quatrain sets, I will discuss the ways in which the free shift of perspectives produce a complex, layered tapestry of meaning. Remarkably, that complexity is experienced intuitively through ingenuous portrayals of ordinary moments, in the poems that are read today for their immediacy and basis on the "here" and "now." This represents the most important achievement in mid-Southern Song quatrain sets, as well as a most significant development since the model established by Du Fu, the ancestor of diary quatrain sets.

Fan Chengda's "Random and Impromptu Seasonal Poems on the Fields and Gardens" set (hereafter referred to as the "Seasonal Poems") has been loved throughout the history of its reception for the complete and realistic portrayal of country life in Suzhou. Scholars have studied it in the context of bucolic poetry, where it holds an indisputably important place, or in the biographical context of Fan's period of retirement in Suzhou."[292] James Hargett translated the set in full in "Boulder Lake Poems: Fan Chengda's (1126-1193) Rural Year in Suzhou Revisited,"[293]

[292] See J. D. Schmidt, *The Poetry of Fan Chengda (1126-1193)*.

[293] *CLEAR* 10:1/2, July 1988, 109-131.

to whom I owe all of the "Seasonal Poems" translations in this section. The most important contribution made by Hargett is his insight on how the set works as a whole:

> The sustained, detailed, and diversified picture of farm life depicted by Fan Chengda represents a new, unprecedented direction in *tianyuan* poetry. By organizing his poems according to the sexegenary cycle and apportioning them into a highly organized seasonal sequence, Fan has created a tour de force that embodies completeness and, at the same time, suggests movement and continuity. (119)

I have nothing to add to the discussion of the "Seasonal Poems" as bucolic poetry. Its success on all aspects of the genre, including the idyllic portrayal of the countryside, the depiction of harsh realities of farm life, the bold and lively images in the fields and gardens, and the poet's enjoyment of local celebrations, are not to be disputed. I wish to emphasize its continuity with the quatrain practice of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries by discussing it in the horizontal context as a subgenre of the moments-in-leisure quatrain sets.

With the mention of every major holiday on the Song dynasty calendar, [294] temporal progression is the main line of organization for the "Seasonal Poems." The ongoing, cyclical nature of the calendrical organization creates the impression of a self-sustained totality, along with a clear divide between the "insider's perspective" and "the outsiders." The people within organize all their activities around the seasonal sequence. Being at home with the natural seasonal cycle distinguishes them from the outsiders who put in rare appearances: a family from the nearby town (#8), a weary traveler (#33), a passing official on duty (#50), a curious visitor (#57), and a stuck-up tax officer (#58). It is this subjective nature about the seasonal cycle that lends the set its dynamic and intimate quality. The seasons' progression is not described as an objective almanac, but is always based on the poet's own exploration and discovery, and in turn,

[294] Hargett, 119.

it dictates his activities. Organizing one's activities by a subjectively perceived schedule is not limited to the "Seasonal Poems," but is a common trope in moments-in-leisure quatrains of the era. Therefore, as it is impractical to trace it through the set of sixty, I will explain the way it works through a smaller set of Fan's quatrains, "From Morning to Noon, My Movements and Meals Are All Timed According to the Sound of Human Activity Outside the Wall. I Write Four Quatrains for Fun. 自晨至午起居飲食皆以牆外人物之聲為節戲書四絕" (hereafter "Morning to Noon Poems").[295]

In Poem One, a special alarm clock wakes him up:

At the south end of the lane, clapboards announce the last watch.	巷南敲板報殘更,
To the north, someone plucking the lute and chanting sutra as they go.	街北彈絲行誦經,
My dreams are already interrupted by these two folks	已被兩人驚夢斷,
When some family's wind chimes started clanging.	誰家風鴿鬪鳴鈴.

Poem Two times his medicine:

When things get loud in the farmer's market, daylight comes through my window.	菜市喧時窗透明,
After the muffin man's calls, my medicine is done brewing.	餅師叫後藥煎成,
Living in leisure, there is nothing to do after the sun is up.	閒居日出都無事,
There is only the sound of opening doors and sweeping the ground.	惟有開門掃地聲.

As more noise reaches the poet's ears in Poem Three, we are surprised to learn that he is still in bed:

They are calling back men in the north outpost – the sound of their drum carries far.	北砦教回撾鼓遠,
The meal is ready in the east temple – they keep striking the bell.	東禪飯熟打鐘頻,
As the servant boy gives me the third wakeup call,	小童三喚先生起,
Sunlight floods the east window, making it as warm as spring.	日滿東窗煖似春.

[295] Fu Shousun 富壽蓀, collat., *Fan Shihu ji* 范石湖集, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2006), 377.

At long last, he is up in Poem Four, book-in-hand and his hair a mess:

I get up to prop against the east window with a book in my hand.	起傍東窗手把書,
My white crest in each and every way cannot bear combing.	華顛種種不禁梳,
Breakfast is coming: I must put on a cap.	朝餐欲到須巾裹,
Already they've brought the second round of late-market fish.	已有重來晚市魚.

In this set of poems, time works in the most delightfully intimate fashion. The universe runs around the common folks' activities, and as the happy poet shows off his thorough knowledge of them, he adds his own activities to the system. Extend this half-a-day to a whole year, and let the poet get out and about and employ all his senses, we would find ourselves in the world of the "Seasonal Poems."

When we look to a set of *yuefu*, where Fan Chengda sets out to paint a realistic picture of Suzhou village customs, it becomes clear that such is *not* his project for the "Seasonal Poems." For the "Ten *Yuefu* Poems on the Village and Fields in the Twelfth Month 臘月村田樂府十首,"[296] Fan explains in the preface, "I retired to live on the Boulder Lake. In my comings and goings among farmers, I got to know ten activities that take place at the end of the year. I used the local expressions to write a poem about each, in order to record the local customs 余歸石湖, 往來田家, 得歲暮十事, 採其語各賦一詩, 以識土風." He goes on to explain the origin, significance, and practices surrounding each activity to make up the lengthy, fact-oriented preface that heads the ten *yuefu,* where he keeps strictly to the self-delegated role as record-keeper. In the "Seasonal Poems," objective attention to facts gives way to subjectively perceived details; and in turn, the focus shifts from farm life per se to the poet's many-faceted interplay with the rural world in his poems.

[296] *Fan Shihu ji,* 409-13.

To begin with, the poet is, paradoxically, both insider and outsider to that world. Here, the analogy between the "Seasonal Poems" and the "Morning to Noon Poems" works well. In the "Morning to Noon Poems," a wall separates the poet from the bustling world that runs on the commoners' activities. He listens from the other side of the wall, never intending to join in or interfere. But when he starts to schedule his activities according to the common folks' time system, he becomes one of them. In this sense, he is also an insider. In the "Seasonal Poems," we never find Fan Chengda act the farmer. He is comfortable enough not being the one to carry a hoe, which Tao Qian enjoys doing. True to being the convalescent old poet as he describes in the preface, an invisible wall separates his idle amusements from the farmers' hard labor. But neither is he a pure observer like Wang Wei, the other paragon of bucolic poetry. He synchronizes all his amusements with the same seasonal cycle that governs the farmers' activities. To be the first to discover the seasons' progression, to be thoroughly familiar with how the farmers' chronology works and to live his life around it, makes him a participant in their universe. [297]

This paradoxical relationship leads to the constant interplay between the poet's personal world and the world he perceives, the true focus of the "Seasonal Poems." Here, the poet's newfound freedom in the genre of moment-in-leisure quatrains is exercised to best advantage because, as the poet shifts freely from various perspectives and positions, nowhere in the set is immediacy of one perspective sacrificed to the identification with another. With the ever-changing "I" from one poem to the next, the poet keeps to the "impromptu" nature of the poems while he builds the complex totality of a small universe, within which he explores the interplay

[297] This is my major point of disagreement with Hargett, who argues that Fan Chengda for the most part remains an observer: "Fan Chengda himself plays a role in these depictions (Fan makes his "debut" in Poem 5, in the role of an old drunkard returning home). But for the most part, this role is limited to that of observer. He devotes himself almost entirely to relating the beauties and realities of country life." (Hargett, 125)

between the farmers' world and the world of poetry, between knowledge and discovery, and the self's sphere and external reality.

The set is organized into five groups, one for each season (spring is divided into "Spring" and "Late Spring"). The poet heads each group with a first-hand experience of the change in the season. As with "Spring" (#1):

Willow blossoms in deep lanes, at noon a cock's call;	柳花深巷午雞聲,
Mulberry leaves are pointy and crisp, but not yet green.	桑葉尖新緑未成,
After dozing in a chair, I awake with nothing to do;	坐睡覺來無一事,
Bright sunlight floods the window where I watch silkworms hatch.	滿窗晴日看蠶生.

This poem has been pointed out as one of many where Fan Chengda emphasizes temporal progression and where the dynamic quality of the "Seasonal Poems" is most discernible. But to my mind, we owe the dynamic quality not so much to the mention of season-markers, such as the hatching of silkworms, but to the movement within the poems. More specifically, changes in the external world are always felt through the poet's intimate experiences, and they are always concurrent with his own movements. In early spring days, the movement is from stillness to life as a rooster's call stirs things up in the secluded tranquility of the deep lanes. The silkworms are hatching in the bright spring sun – this picture of new life is related from the poet's own eyes as he also undergoes an "awakening" from a nap. Similarly, in the other four poems that head each season's sequence, seasonal progression is inextricably linked with the poet's activities through sight, sound, touch, and, as in the following poem, taste (#13): (with modifications of Hargett's translation)

Lavender-green watercress have the fragrance of rolled lotus leaves;	紫青蓴菜卷荷香,
Snowy-white celery sprouts are tall like the thriving leeks.	玉雪芹芽拔薤長,

I gather the creek's wild veggies to serve as my evening meal; [298]	自擷溪毛充晚供,
Under a small awning, in wind and rain, I spend the night at Transverse Bank.	短蓬風雨宿橫塘.

The poet does not confine his active role to the start-of-the-season poems. In almost half the poems, hints such as "I awake with nothing to do" show the "I" to be Fan Chengda the idle poet, and by relating his observations and movements in accordance with seasonal changes, they play an important part in moving the set through the year. [299] In the rest of the poems, Fan Chengda adopts the perspective and voice of a farmer when he relates the real world concerns: farming schedules, irrigation, division of labor, heavy taxation, and ritual sacrifice to farm gods.[300] Colloquial expressions and "technical" terminology are concentrated in these poems to beef up the farmer's voice, such as "bundle of rice shoots," "no dearth of (*qian* 欠)," and "soon (*kankan* 看看)" in the following example (#11):

On a lucky day we open our bundles of rice shoots;	吉日初開種稻包,
Thunder rumbles in the southern hills, it rains all night.	南山雷動雨連宵,
This year no dearth of water for the seedling-beds:	今年不欠秧田水,
Waves, newly risen, are almost lapping against the little bridge!	新漲看看拍小橋.

In the poems where the "I" is harder to identify, the rural world that Fan Chengda experiences blends seamlessly with the common folks' world of heavy labor and hard-earned breaks (#5):

Paper money burns below the altar, drums sound like thunder;	社下燒錢鼓似雷,

[298] For the first two lines, Hargett's translation reads: "Lavender-green mallow leaves curl around the scented lotus; / Snowy-white celery sprouts tug on the lengthy leeks." For "the creek's wild veggies," read "duckweed from a creek."

[299] Going by my reading, poems 1, 2, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25, 32, 34, 36, 37, 39, 40, 43, 46, 47, 48, 49, 59, 51, 52, 54, 55 belong to this category.

[300] Poems 11, 12, 14, 19, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 35, 41, 42, 45, 53, 60

In the setting sun they help this old drunkard return home.	日斜扶得醉翁回,
With green twigs covering the ground, and flowers all over the place,	青枝滿地花狼籍,
I know that the children have been playing the "matching plants" contest![301]	知是兒孫鬬草來.

Everyone gets a day off work on Sacrifice Day to the God of Soil *(sheri* 社日), drums roar, and ale is drunk. Besides Fan Chengda himself, any old village folk can be the "old drunkard" in the poem. When the poet's "I" is indifferentiable from that of a villager, Fan Chengda becomes the true insider. It is especially the case whenever an outsider pokes a head in (#33):

A traveler on the yellow, dusty road with sweat streaming down,	黃塵行客汗如漿,
Stops at my house awhile to taste the well's sweet water.	少住儂家漱井香,
"You may sit down on the big rock in front of the gate;	借與門前磐石坐,
It's noon and right now a cool breeze is blowing in the willow shade."	柳陰亭午正風凉.

Most of the time, however, Fan Chengda would lift the spell of harmony and let the two worlds – his personal, poet's sphere and the wide countryside – influence each other across the invisible divide. This is true for all of the poems in the first category (the first-person accounts of seasonal progression and beauties in the countryside). Bucolic verse by definition dooms the rural world to the remolding powers of poetic sensibility, but not every poet would address this issue in that very genre. Fan Chengda chooses to do so: as he complies with the rural world's seasonal cycle, he is conscious of his role in shaping it. The varying degrees of influence of a poet's mind on the rural world made it a sustained topic in the "Seasonal Poems." The poet may be willful at times (#51):

Atop the roof I pile on high another bundle of thatch;	屋上添高一把茅,
My house walls of thick clay are like those in a monk's hut.	密泥房壁似僧寮.

[301] Modified from Hargett's original translation, "jousting grasses." "Matching plants contest" (*dou cao* 鬥草) is a game in which children compete in gathering different plants.

Let the north wind will howl outside my cottage, 從教屋外陰風吼,
While I lay back and listen to a jade flute whistling from a hedge. 臥聽籬頭響玉簫.

We witness Fan Chengda reverse an "image of the mind" by deliberately creating a misperception. Instead of giving a realistic depiction of the countryside, he transforms the real into something whimsical – and gloats on the deliberateness of the act.

Aside from the outright make-believes, one may also sense the subtle effect of a poet's mind in descriptions that are deemed most objective and realistic. As one reads in Poem #25 that, "The day is long and no one passes by the bamboo hedge, / Save only the dragonflies and butterflies flitting about 日長籬落無人過, 惟有蜻蜓蛺蝶飛," one does not doubt the "historical" existence of the dragonflies and butterflies, but one cannot help wondering whether the line would have been different if Du Fu had not written, "穿花蛺蝶深深見, 點水蜻蜓款款飛 Deep in the flowers are the flitting butterflies seen, / The idly fluttering dragonflies brush the water's surface." Or whether Su Shi had a hand in Poem 23, "Reed-buds sprout forth shoots, blowfish come to the surface; / Chinaberries unfurl blossoms, stoneheads come swimming by 荻芽抽筍河魨上, 楝子開花石首來."[302] In descriptions like these, a poet of the moments-in-leisure quatrains, describes his experience of the world though poetic *jingjie*.

Occasionally, Fan Chengda's poetic idyll gets a rough shake-up by harsh reality, as in the following two adjacent poems (#34, #35):

Amid one thousand acres of lotus, I merrily cast off my boat; 千頃芙蕖放棹嬉,
The blossoms are thick and I lose my way, by evening I've forgotten the way back. 花深迷路晚忘歸,
The folks at home should have an inkling of where my boat has traveled, 家人暗識船行處,

[302] "Mugwort grow everywhere, young fish are small, / Just the time for riverhogs to come to the surface. 蔞蒿滿地魚芽短, 正是河豚欲上時."

For once in a while there are startled ducklings flying off.	時有驚忙小鴨飛.
Picking caltrops is bitter and painful, but useless are plows and hoes;	采菱辛苦廢犁鉏,
Bloody fingers bleeding red, ghostly bodies are worn thin.	血指流丹鬼質枯,
With no means to buy land they can only farm the water,	無力買田聊種水,
Yet nowadays even using a lake requires rent payment!	近來湖面亦収租.

The love songs of Jiangnan sung by caltrop-picking girls gave the activity its poetic aura. It would be the first association for "picking caltrops," especially when Fan Chengda had just reenacted a familiar scenario in the preceding poem: the startled birds mark the place of a boat that had disappeared into the lotuses. [303] But instead of beautiful girls and love songs, we come across the most sobering images in the whole set: "bloody fingers" and "ghostly bodies." Outside of poetry, caltrop-picking is a "bitter and painful" livelihood for those too poor to own farmland. The juxtaposition of the two poems is no coincidence. Fan Chengda takes an active role in Poem 34, being the "I" who enjoys getting poetically lost in the lotus-filled lake. He retreats behind the role of the caltrop-pickers in Poem 35 to relate in the first person the common folks' sufferings in the very same lake. The shift of perspectives is based on the two poems' thematic continuity to represent a poet's conscious revision in his understanding of the external world.

Lastly, a few poems in the set teleport us outside the world of "fields and gardens," none more obvious than Poem 43:

The Mid-Autumn Moon's luminous expanse belongs to this lone recluse;	中秋全景屬潛夫,
My oar dips into the transparent brightness as I gaze across Lake Tai.	棹入空明看太湖,
Beyond me – a complete silvery span of water and sky:	身外水天銀一色,
Could such a bright moon ever be found within a city wall?	城中有此月明無.

[303] "Caltrop songs" and "lotus songs" are often used interchangeably in poetry.

Surely, it is not due to the lack of Mid-Autumn village customs that Fan Chengda chooses to enjoy the holiday by launching himself into the lake. While most of the other poems in the set define the countryside by a positive structure of details, this one defines it by negation – where it is not "within a city wall."

In the vivid and dynamic descriptions of the countryside, in adopting the intimate first-person perspective and in the poet's ever-shifting perspectives and roles within the set, Fan Chengda's "Seasonal Poems" are continuous with his contemporaries' bucolic quatrain sets. His uniqueness is in using the sexagenarian number to create a continuous, cyclical experience in a world of totality. Although the superb depiction of the countryside is indeed one of the set's best merits, we do it an injustice by treating it as merely such. The outlook which I have argued to be central to moments-in-leisure quatrains – an outlook through *jingjie* – consistently informs Fan Chengda's descriptions of the countryside. He also fully utilizes the freely shifting role of the poetic "I" to represent the constant interplay between the poet's sphere and external reality in the universe he creates.

For the most part, rural description is a self-contained sub-genre within the moments-in-leisure quatrain sets. But a poet may hybridize a robustly rural set with poems that roam beyond the rural world. Fan Chengda's Mid-Autumn poem (#43) is one such example, although it does not change the overall project of his set. Lu You, on the other hand, manages to turn his rural world topsy-turvy in "Miscellaneous Poems on the North Garden: Ten Poems"[304] ("North Garden" hereafter). I will zoom through the first seven because they involve the same themes and devices I already discussed in the "Seasonal Poems," and begin the discussion with Poem Eight:

[304] *JNSGJJ,* 5:2288-90.

1.

Over the west village on the yonder side of the woods, cooking smoke rises.	西村林外起炊煙,
By the bridge on the south shore, the fishing boats are tied.	南浦橋邊繫釣船,
In a year of good harvest, every family is satisfied.	樂歲家家俱自得,
The Peach Blossom Spring are not necesarily immortals.	桃源未必是神仙.

2.

North of my lodge, east of the bridge, there are many hidden things of interest.	舍北橋東幽事多,
I, an old man, stroll back and forth after a full meal.	老夫飯飽得婆娑,
When over the thatched roof the sun sets, I hear the call to pound rice.	茅簷日落聞舂相,
As the mist thickens over the rush-grown shore, there comes a fisherman's song.	荻浦煙深有櫂歌.

3.

The small bridge secretly leads the road to the west hill;	小橋密接西岡路,
A bypath remotely connects to the village in the north mountain.	支徑深通北崦村,
I walk my old self on a whim and take no notice of the distance,	老子意行無遠近,
In the moonlight I often knock on the door of a man of the fields.	月中時打野人門.

4.

Frost is mild in the Wu region, where garden vegetables are plenty –	東吳霜薄富園蔬,
Purple mustard leaves and green cabbages after a light rain.	紫芥青菘小雨餘,
Before they are picked for the spring plate,	未說舂盤供采擷,
I also need them often for my noodles.	老夫湯餅亦時須.

5.

Every family takes advantage of the late clear weather to hoe the wheat field.	鉏麥家家趁晚晴,
Everywhere embankments are built to await plowing in the spring.	築陂處處待舂耕,
The ale is ready on the little strainer, and the pig's feet are delicious.	小槽酒熟豚蹄美,
I'll yet celebrate the peaceful times with the children.	剩與兒童樂太平.

6.

With nothing better to do, I accompany the old man next door to go hoeing,	閒伴鄰翁去荷鉏,

Through the sparse trees, the village houses are clearly visible.	林疏歷歷見村墟,
I wonder at the large flock of white egrets rising in flight.	怪生白鷺飛無數,
It turns out that the water has receded to reveal the shore, making it easier to fish.	水落灘生易取魚.

7.

On a short walking stick, I amuse myself and emerge from the redbud trees,	短笻行樂出紫荊,
The snowy weather is passing, and unexpectedly it clears up.	雪意闌珊却變晴.
I see that the springtime pheasants are already flying over the forest,	林際已看春雉起,
While the pig for New Year's Eve sacrifice is still oinking next to the house.	屋頭還聽歲猪鳴.

So far, the poems are set in the year's end. The poet enjoys a warm winter in the countryside as he keeps discovering signs of spring's early arrival. Poem Seven finds the pig for the New Year's Eve sacrifice still blissfully alive, while Spring communicates its impatience to arrive through the pheasants. Boarding the boat from Poem One, the poet sets out eagerly to meet Spring half way in Poem Eight:

Near the end of the year, it already feels like early spring.	歲殘已似早春天,
On the other side of the river, stretching across the forest, a smear of mist.	隔水橫林一抹煙.
I hear that to the west of the dike, the plum flowers are half blooming.	聞道埭西梅半吐,
I take along my son and leisurely board the fishing boat.	攜兒閒上釣魚船.

In Poem Nine, the boat that is supposed to transport him to Spring's conference takes an unexpected turn (even before it takes off):

White hair thinned, my body is full of illness;	白髮蕭蕭病滿身,
The frozen clouds and the ferry in the wilds sadden me at this moment.	凍雲野渡正愁人,
That day, when I brandished my horsewhip on the frontier pass,	揚鞭大散關頭日,
I looked over ten thousand *li* of spring in the Central Plains.	曾看中原萬里春.

In the first eight poems, the North Garden is a part of an idyllic world like the Peach Blossom Spring, and Lu You, an immortal within it. With his belly full, his body well-exercised, and his heart content, he is ready to welcome another spring season. Poem Nine countermands every single detail that has evoked idyllic happiness so far. "Frozen clouds" replace "a smear of mist," "a light frost," or the passing snowy weather. Instead of the bridge on the south shore, the fishing boat is now docked at a ferry in the wilds – all the country folk, who had hoed with him, tolerated his late-night visits, produced cooking smoke, and had been his fellow immortals, suddenly vanish. The Happy Old Poet is now saddened and ill, and instead of noting the reassuring signs of an early spring, he looks to a spring that no longer exists.

One must remember that the moment in Poem Nine is the same historical moment as in Poem Eight. Nothing has changed in Lu You or his surroundings – only the poem. In four lines, Lu You leaves behind the idyllic world that he had enjoyed building little by little over the course of eight poems, and looks back at it from a vantage point that is remote in both time and geography. He finds this world vanish into one that exists only in imagination. "Ten thousand *li* of the Central Plains" modifies a non-existent spring that wipes an imminent real one with pheasants, pigs, flowers and garden vegetables, from his consciousness. The backdrop message is a political criticism: the Southern Song court has grown decadent in the prosperous southeast China, and takes no action to recover the Central Plains. There is also Lu You's personal pain whenever he remembers his services to the state on the frontier pass. He had been useful in these years, but has now become old and fragile. Lu You often repeats these sentiments in his poetry, but here, without voicing it directly in this moments-in-leisure quatrain set, the effect is truly moving.

With dramatic abruptness, Poem Nine hauls us to a different plane of experience than that in Poem Eight. In Poem Ten, the boat launches into still another – the one of metaphor:

In the twilight of my life, I am like an empty boat	暮年身似一虛舟,
Given over to the currents to freely drift.	付與滄波自在流,
Looming over the ground are the snowy clouds that wind cannot disperse;	垂地雪雲吹不散,
Let me pour rustic ale and eat sashimi on the stern.	且傾桑落膾槎頭.

Lu You likens himself to an empty boat for the first two lines. He becomes a poet again in the last line to drink on the real boat. In the *jingjie* of abstractions – an insignificant entity roaming freely over the rivers and lakes, there are two jarring specifics: the rustic name for ale, *sangluo* 桑落, brings back an element of idyll from the first eight poems; while the looming clouds echo the frontier pass from Poem Nine. And with this comment on his two major outlooks on life and the world around him, Lu You concludes this remarkable set of quatrains.

****

Conclusion:

A number of literary, art, and culture factors may explain by correlation the burst of interest in reading, writing, and anthologizing quatrains in mid-Southern Song. The poetry of experience, occasioned by the interest in the ordinary and the trivial, may have found the form appealing for its plain language and vignette representation. In visual art, the shift from monumental landscape to album and fan paintings offered complementary ways of representing nature with the quatrain's pictorial depictions. However, this chapter tries to explain the swift increase in the proportion of quatrains from the important development in the form itself. I argue that in two widely-written quatrain genres of this period, the poets explored a changing poetic sensibility in contradistinction to the conventions of the *shi* form that defaults the voice to the

historical poet. They rediscovered Du Fu's innovations in the journal quatrain set, namely the invention of a poetic persona shaped by his playfully disruptive encounters with nature. The persona became the focus of travel diary quatrain sets, and by virtue of its distance and diminished stature next to the historical poet, complicated the serious commitment to self-representation. The moments-in-leisure quatrain sets effected a similar move to compound the voice of the poet by revealing him through previously-realized poetic scenarios. As the locus of meaning shifted from the historic moment of encounter between the poet and the world to the layering of compound voices, poetic experience in journal quatrain sets became predicated on the poet's freedom to move between different perspectives and positions without sacrificing the sense of unity.

Chapter Four

Poetry of the Everyday and Every Day: The Unremarkable Poetic Realm

I. Introduction: The One Lu You?

After one hundred years, same in one deserted grave mound;
Within the four seas, surely there aren't two Dissolute Old Men.
百年等是一枯塚, 四海應無兩放翁.[305]

A couplet that pairs the centenary human lifespan with the world's vast expanse spells grandiloquence, and to cast oneself as a lone existence in this great time-space bespeaks intensity. And yet, he inserts a colloquial expression (*deng shi* – "to be equal") and a modal for near certainty (*ying wu* – "surely there aren't…"), and the effect borders on parody.

This is the Southern Song, post-Jiangxi moment: the textual tradition and models of writing that the poets internalized in their earlier training persist in spite of their realization that not all poetry can be acquired by learning. Familiar line patterns and vocabulary cast shadows of high style poetry, but they are filled in by colloquialisms, details from ordinary life, or descriptions of objects that had previously been considered too trivial for poetry. This is also Lu You in old age: by the seventy-sixth fascicle of the *Jiannan shigao* and in his eighty-fourth year, he had nothing else to do than reading and organizing his old poems, and going out with is walking stick to look for new ones. He finished them off at such astonishing speed that we are inclined to take him at his word that writing poetry had become a habit – as close to natural as it gets for being second nature. In this couplet, Lu You muses on his uniqueness in all the world from the common destiny of a deserted grave. This is a big question, and we expect something impressive for an

[305] The second couplet from "Unsorted Poems from Early Summer 初夏雜興", the sixth poem in a set of six. *JNSGJZ,* 7:4175.

answer, something like: "My loyalty and sense of right will live on after my bones decay."[306] But the rest of the poem again deflates the high tone:

Long stalks of yellow jade – I choose bitter bamboo shoots;	栗玉長枝挑苦筍,
Small bunches of rouge leaves – I clip the parsnip sprouts.[307]	胭脂小把翦防風.
This place is remote, the day long, I haven't a thing to do:	地偏日永閒無事,
I plan to write a catalogue of rare vegetables.	擬著珍蔬譜一通.

It is hard to decide whether Lu You is supporting or undercutting his claim to uniqueness by this description of his life as gardener. He shows effortless perfection in the parallel couplet before reverting to casual language in the last line. In both the poem's message and language is a doubleness: the invocation of uniqueness and greatness implied in the world of high poetry exists side by side with the celebration of ordinary life, delivered in a language that mixes the elegant and common registers.

Lu You did manage to become unique and great – precisely by writing about what an ordinary life he led. He is acclaimed to have captured the entire world of experience in poetry. But more accurately, to Lu You, the world of experience *is* poetry. In theory, Lu You never uttered anything so radical. He upheld the mainstream values about poetry: given its primary function to speak the resolve, it must be grounded in the poet's moral character. In practice, he created a poetry of the everyday and every day. With the ongoing writing of ordinary life events into poems, the nature of poetry changed unobtrusively. And so did the meaning of "everyday:"

[306] From the poem, "Big Sighs 太息," written in his seventies. The original reads, "With whom do I discuss my scholar's loyalty and sense of right? / After my bones decay, this thought will surely remain. 書生忠義與誰論, 骨朽猶應此念存." *JNSGJZ*, 5:2413.

[307] As Lu You informs us in his note to another poem, young parsnip sprouts are rouge-colored and good for pickling.

the experience of ordinary moments takes shape through a poetic consciousness of the personal, historical, and textual past.

The doubleness in the above poem is one manifestation of a poetic process that unites the past and the present, the great and the common. The latter pair translates into his two dominant voices. The dual tendencies to express the "the resolve of Xinting" – a fervent drive to recover the lost heartland and to fully realize his potential in rendering service to the state[308] – and to describe the joys of a leisurely life in the countryside, took turns to prevail upon each other as Lu You found one hard to fulfill and the other insufficient. Xu Zong points out that to Lu You himself, these two main themes had been inseparable, that they were connected on a deeper level by the inner trajectory and the distinctive qualities of his mind, but that they were gradually made distinct during the course of his reception.[309] For today's readership, the unifying idea of a single authorship is but poor camouflage for two Lu You-s: the passionate poet-patriot exists side

---

[308] Neither "patriotic poems" nor "loyalist sentiments" quite capture the feelings that Lu You voices in these poems. I refer to an anecdote in the *New Tales of the World:*

> Whenever the day was fair, those who had crossed the Yangtze River would always gather at Xinting (a southern suburb of Jiankang) to drink and feast on the grass. On one occasion Zhou Yi, who was among the company, sighed and said, "The scene is not dissimilar to the old days in the North; it's just that naturally there's a difference between these mountains and rivers and those." All those present looked at each other and wept. It was only Chancellor Wang Dao, who, looking very grave, remarked with deep emotion, "We should all unite our strength around the royal house and recover the sacred provinces. To what end do we sit here facing each other like so many 'captives of Chu?"
> 過江諸人, 每至美日, 輒相邀新亭, 藉卉飲宴. 周侯中坐而歎曰, "風景不殊, 正自有山河之異." 皆相視流淚. 唯王丞相愀然變色曰: "當共勠力王室, 克復神州, 何至作楚囚相對." (2:31)

From Liu Yiqing 劉義慶, *Shishuo yinyu* 世說新語. Translation by Richard Mather, in *New Tales of the World (*Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2002)*,* 47, with Romanization changed to *pinyin* for consistency.

[309] Xu Zong, *Song shi shi* 宋詩史, 673-674.

by side with the mellow poet of leisure, but few have attempted to inquire deeper into the nature of the underlying connection.

The separation of two Lu You-s became widespread in Qing readership. From the early Qing dynasty onwards, the tendency was increasing to rank the resolve-of-Xinting poems over the enjoyment of leisure as the core Lu You, although poems expressing the former are in the minority. Ji Yun's 紀昀 comment on two "Writing My Indignation" poems reflects the influence of this separation:

> Poems of this kind is where the Dissolute Old Man cannot be effaced. For a collection to have these poems is analogous to a house having pillars or a person having bones. If his whole collection were to consist of couplets like, 'In the stone inkwell never was ink allowed to sit overnight. / In the earthen jar, I put new flowers as I please,' then Lu You is not worth valuing. How come that [lesser] sort get chosen when people select his poems?
> 此種詩是放翁不可磨處, 集中有此, 如屋有柱, 如人有骨. 如全集皆「石研不容留宿墨, 瓦瓶隨意插新花」句, 則放翁不足重矣. 何選放翁詩者, 所取乃在彼也?"[310]

Ji Yun deems it necessary to correct the errors in the general readership.[311] Pan Deyu 潘德輿 concurs in *Yangyi zhai shihua* 養一齋詩話, naming ten-some poems including the "Writing My Indignation" in Ji Yun's comment:

> These ten-some hepta-syllabic regulated poems, in addition to having powerful lines, are stimulating and outstanding to match on the whole. These poems are the crystallization of

[310] *YKLSHP*, 3:1372.

[311] The immense popularity of Yang Dahe's 楊大鶴 selective anthology from 1685, *Jiannan shichao* 劍南詩鈔, shows that for the most part of the Qing, readers preferred Lu You's mellow, everyday voice. See Xie Hailin 謝海林, "Imitating Su, Huang, and Lu – Studying the Tracing Back the Orthodox Form of the Song Dynasty Poetry by Anthology of Song Poems in the Qing Dynasty 師法蘇黃陸 – 從清人所編宋詩選本看清代宋詩學之推宗," *Journal of Gansu Lianhe University (Social Sciences)* 26, no. 6 (2011.11.), 1-6.

> loyal indignation – where the resolve reaches, his vital force follows – and are not ordinary emotions. Compared with the rest of the collection, they number in one out of several dozen. Nevertheless, those who discuss the Dissolute Old Man's heptasyllabic regulated poems must take them as the foundation, while taking poems such as "several flickers of remaining light, the ale market" as accessory. Only by this can one know the governing idea in poetry and the Old Man's true power. The Old Man would be unwilling to accept praise otherwise.
> 此十數章七律, 著句既遒, 全體亦警拔相稱. 蓋忠憤所結, 志至氣從, 非復尋常意興. 較之全集七律, 數十之一耳. 然論放翁七律者, 必以此為根本, 而以「數點殘燈沽酒市」等詩附之, 乃知詩之大主腦, 翁之真力量, 否則贊翁而翁不願也."[312]

While insisting on a small number of poems being the core Lu You, Ji Yun and Pan Deyu unintentionally admitted to the irresistible appeal of his effortless polish in the greater part of his corpus. Since the beginning of the Qing dynasty, this latter feature, according to the advocates to skim the cream of Lu You's corpus, was responsible for greatly advancing the popularity of selective anthologies of Lu You, because it was professedly more approachable and learnable than loyal indignation.[313] Their argument separates – to use their own metaphor – the bones from the flesh and dismisses the latter as unimportant. This view continues to influence modern readers.

Two recent studies have again taken the complex unity of Lu You's corpus on its own terms. In a section titled, "The layering and integration of imagery, emotions, and principles," Xu Zong argues that, "Read as a whole, Lu You's poetry exhibits the essential spirit and artistic features of

---

[312] The entry is included in Kong Fanli 孔凡禮 and Qi Zhiping 齊治平, eds., *Lu You ziliao huibian* 陸遊資料彙編 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2003), 345. (Hereafter *LYZLHB*.)

[313] Burton Watson, in the preface to his translation of Lu You's poetry, observes that his appeal in Japan also comes from his poems of daily life, "with their abundance of succinct and evocative detail, that have won the admiration of readers in China and, introduced to Japan in late Tokugawa times, influenced the development of the haiku form." *The Old Man Who Does as He Pleases* (New York: Columbia UP, 1973), xvii.

Song poetry; at the same time, it is open to incorporate the lyrical tradition and aesthetic model of Tang poetry. Not only did he embrace reality but also transcends freely above it; his passion bursts forth but he does not drown in it; it is rich with pathos but pathos is not its end. The blending and interweaving of multiple factors created yet another unique crest in the history of Song poetry."[314]

In *Drifting Among Rivers and Lakes*, Michael Fuller writes of a different kind of dividedness – the dual source of meaning for poetry, as both thorough acquaintance with the outer world and as inner moral cultivation:

> While the world provides the stuff of poetry, it is not as mere atomistic elements but as inherently organized patterns. Moreover, poets need to recognize what is humanly meaningful in what they encounter, and this recognition requires experience in the world, learning tested by that experience, as well as a fervor – I can find no better word to capture Lu You's sense of the elusive and difficult key term *qi,* "breath" – and the moral cultivation to properly regulate that fervor. Thus, for Lu You, poetry is a moral enterprise, but its moral nature derives as much from the structure of the world as it does from human commitments. (280)

The quest to understand the sources of meaning, sometimes manifesting in a self-dividedness, is the drive underlying all of Lu You's poetry.

In this chapter, I propose to restore the unity of Lu You's poetry from a third angle: Lu You's paradoxical relationship to poetry viewed in the cross section of vertical context – the perpetual question and ever-changing discourse on the meaning of being a poet – and the horizontal context of poetic practices in his time. While poetry was claimed by many of his contemporaries to be a necessity and a daily commitment, Lu You took that practice to extreme lengths as a way of self-fulfillment, but was also deeply dissatisfied with it. In his life of unfulfilled dreams, poetry was the dominant medium in organizing and articulating experience in multiple planes for

[314] Xu, *Song shi shi*, 683. My translation.

a mind that must always aspire to go beyond poetry. It was this persistent paradox that led to the contradictory conclusions among later readers of Lu You: that Lu You put everything in poetry, but he was not a poet.

II. On Pervasive *Qi* and Complete Poetry

IIA. On Completeness

Lu You lived poetry, and his resulting collection stands as an unaddressed challenge to his posterity audience whose tendency was to rarefy the poetic genre – a challenge all the more interesting for the fact that it involved no significant broadening of the existing range of poetic topics and styles in his time. Like many of his contemporaries, Lu You chose *shi* poetry as the primary literary form to write about everyday experiences, only surpassing them in quantity and complexity. Into his poetic diary, Lu You incorporated the dimensions of dream and memory, as well as worlds imagined and historical. At the same time, poetry-writing never left the sphere of the everyday and held its place as one of the many daily activities it chronicles. A remark from Emerson puts Lu You's project into perspective: "literature is a point outside our hodiernal circle through which a new one may be described." The opposite is true for Lu You: the hodiernal circle that excludes literature has all but vanished. Understanding Lu You's project requires us to rethink poetry as more than a literary form, just as his extant collection – the decimated remains from a once-monstrous body of writing subjected to his own rigorous sifting and organizing – reflects Lu You's changing answers to the same question.

Reflections on the meaning of writing poetry makes a part of the driving force that gives life to his writing – a force his readers unanimously observed despite their divergent views in other

respects. In his *Remarks on Poetry,* Wang Shizhen 王士禛 (1634-1711) remarked on a "vital energy":

> Lu You was leisurely and content. He wrote about villages, woods, thatched cottages, farmland, plowing, fishing, flowers, rocks, zither, and drinking. He often keeps track of months and days and records cold and hot seasons. Reading his poetry is just like reading a chronological record of his life. But within it there is a throbbing vital energy. The central plains were unsettled, and even in sleeping or dreaming he longed to establish a legacy of meritorious service to the state. The sincere and unembellished parts were more than his crafted art. It is best to select the former.
> 務觀閒適, 寫村林茅舍, 農田耕漁, 花石琴酒事, 每逐月日, 記寒暑. 讀其詩如讀其年譜也. 然中間勃勃有生氣. 中原未定, 夢寐思建功業. 其真樸處多, 雕鎪處少, 取其多者為佳.[315]

Wang Shizhen would be in agreement with most readers since the Qing dynasty by locating the source of the vital energy in Lu You's loyalist drive to recover the lost heartland. While that drive is certainly at the core, it would have to be stretched rather thin to cover all his chronology-style poems, even if it were faithful to his project to do so. The "vital energy" that comes through so powerfully to his readers originates from something deeper and broader than the loyalist drive, something that manifests itself in even the blandest poem about village life – it originates from Lu You's constant struggle with the power and limitations of being a poet in the particularity of his changing circumstances.

In so far as he considers poetry as a purpose and way of life, Lu You is dealing with the universal question of one's raison d'etre in the late 12th-century context. Feeling the futility of his services to the state as a politically marginalized scholar-official, what talent and energy he could have exercised to gain success and honor instead earned him the reputation as a great

[315] From *Daijing Tang shihua* 帶經堂詩話. In *LYZLHB,* 161. There is also a collated edition, Zhang Zongnan 張宗柟, compil., and Dai Hongsen 戴鴻森, collat., *Daijing Tang shihua* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1998), 1:43.

writer, especially of poetry. While voicing his doubts and dissatisfaction with being a poet, Lu You also keeps affirming and perpetuating that role by writing ever more poems as he advances in years, especially after retiring to his home in Shanyin. To readers who insist on the expression of loyalty as the core Lu You, most of his late poems would be "non-essential," because compared to the years in Sichuan, the core poems are now few and far in between large numbers of what may be loosely categorized as poems about leisure. But from a holistic perspective, this change in topics does not represent a revision of his earlier views on poetry, but rather, in sync with his transition from official service to retirement, is a natural outcome of his continued pursuit into the question of what it means to write everything into poetry. Under the surface of a body of poems that increasingly resembles a chronology of everyday happenings, Lu You has created a collection that in retrospect, represents the mutual realization of the self and poetry, and gave new meaning to the idea of completeness.

The potential to completeness[316]– the achievement of having captured the full complexity of the world of experiences in a poetic oeuvre – is an unusual criterion by which to evaluate a poet's works, mainly because not many poets make it their task and even fewer merit the claim. It has been said about Du Fu, adding height where none is needed to his already unattainable status, and about Bai Juyi, Su Shi, and Lu You. Wang Shizhen groups the last three together in the following comment:

> Those the past people acclaimed to be 'Masters of Widespread Teaching and Transformation' – one was from the Changqing era (821-825) named Bai Letian (Bai Juyi), one Su Zizhan (Su Shi) from the Yuanfeng era (1078-1086), and one Lu Fangweng (Lu You) after the "Crossing to the South" (1127). They were so styled because [their

[316] The Chinese word used for completeness is *bei* 備. It overlaps in semantic scope with *quan* 全 and *cheng* 成 in meaning "complete," but *bei* denotes the quality "to have ready," while *quan* denotes wholeness, ("intact, to keep perfect"), and *cheng,* "to accomplish, to make perfect."

> poetry] is complete with all emotions, events, scenes and objects. But Su is dust to Bai, and Lu is a disaster to Su."[317]
> 昔人所稱廣大教化主者, 於長慶得一人, 曰白樂天; 於元豐得一人, 曰蘇子瞻; 於南渡得一人, 曰陸放翁. 為其情事景物之悉備也. 然蘇之於白塵矣, 陸之於蘇亦劫也.

One need not subscribe to Wang Shizhen's ranking of the two later poets as dust and disaster to discern his reservation in crediting Lu You with value which, in common assumption, should have been all positive. The idea of completeness, though readily available, is not central in the post-Song reception of Lu You, and does not stand alone as unqualified praise, but often adopted as a line of defense against criticism of his flaws. As represented in Zhou Zhilin's 周之麟 comment in his preface to *Selected Poems of Mr. Lu You* 放翁先生詩鈔:[318]

> As to lines of poems repeating throughout his collection – one may use the metaphor of deep mountains or vast wetlands that house multitudinous creatures, not having the leisure to trim and clear away [all the excess.] How does it compare with one who keeps to a mansion of a mere half an acre, where every tree and rock can be counted on one's fingers, and yet who wants to pride himself on this account at the expense of the former?
> 若其詩之前後錯出, 譬之深山大澤, 包含者多, 不暇剪除蕩滌, 豈如守半畝之宮, 一木一石, 可屈指計數, 而顧欲以此傲彼乎.

In comments such as Zhou's, usually in Lu You's favor, completeness is not taken as a value in its own right, but used to excuse repetitions and imperfections. Its meaning hovers uncertainly between "including many" and "including all," and the suggestion is equally strong for "rich content" and "miscellaneous jumble." While it may be acceptable to leave the concept in this

[317] *LYZLHB*, 192. Wang Shizhen borrows the appellation, "Master of Widespread Teaching and Transformation," from Zhang Wei's "Poets Charted According to Rankings of Master and Guest."

[318] As a part of the selective anthology of Su Shi, Huang Tingjian, Fan Chengda and Lu You's poetry titled *Song si mingjia shichao* 宋四名家詩鈔, first published in 1693. Zhou Zhilin was co-editor with Chai Sheng 柴升. Both editors' prefaces are included in *LYZLHB,* 187-88.

vague state in the discussion of Bai Juyi and Su Shi, for whom completeness is a side issue, in Lu You's case, completeness follows naturally from what Lu You identifies as the life and source of poetry – vital force. Understanding his idea of the vital force is the first step toward explaining the changes at different stages in his career, and restore unity to the contradictions.

IIB. The Role of the Vital Force (*Qi)* in Making and Undermining Poetry

In a lengthy comparison of Lu You and Su Shi, Zhao Yi 趙翼 (1727-1814) with great acumen brings out the two aspects that make Lu You unique – the scope of his poetry and his writing process:

> Su [Shi] and Lu [You] are regarded as the two great masters in Song poetry. Smitten by East Slope's (hereafter Su Shi) reputation, those of the later generation usually claim that he is superior to Lu, but they do not realize that it is in fact the other way around. When the New Policy plagued the common people, Su Shi exercised little discretion with his ready tongue and sharp pen, and what statement he made invariably implicated him in libel. After the "Crow Terrace" case, he did not dare to discuss the world's affairs again. By the time he ascended the court in the Yuanyou era to a comfortable life in peaceful times, his boredom came to no good. During his remote exile in the Shaosheng era, the inquisition was strict, and he did not dare to voice his sense of injustice. Therefore, he only went so far in his poetry – he merely let his readers see that there were matters outside of it.
>
> Lu You, by contrast, took things outside of poetry and put them all in. It was after the court crossed to the south and the peace negotiations were complete. To the imperial court that felicitated in a precarious peace, military action was taboo, but the scholar-officials had not stopped weeping the tears of Xinting. Thereupon, as an individual kept from realizing his plans, Lu You maintained the integrity of "never eat a single meal without remembering his lord," took all the scenes on the frontier and tidings of the enemy and wrote them into poetry. The distress over the fall of the sacred provinces was no longer a pressing matter in his time, but no one dared to address this wrong. Thereupon Lu You was able to fully exercise the power of his talent, sometimes with passionate cries, sometimes by chanting with prolonged tones and deep sighs. Since the purport of his poems was relevant, the expressions were naturally steady and powerful. This was the first reason why it was easy for Lu You to attain mastery in poetry.

宋詩以蘇、陸為兩大家。後人震於東坡之名，往往謂蘇勝於陸，而不知陸實勝蘇也。蓋東坡當新法病民時，口快筆銳，略少含蓄，出語即涉謗訕。烏台詩案之後，不復敢論天下事。及元祐登朝，身世俱泰，既無所用其無聊之感；紹聖遠竄，禁錮方嚴，又不敢出其不平之鳴。故其詩止於此，徒令讀者見其詩外尚有事在而已。放翁則轉以詩外之事，盡入詩中。時當南渡之後，和議已成，廟堂之上，方苟幸無事，諱言用兵，而士大夫新亭之泣，固未已也。於是以一籌莫展之身，存一飯不忘之誼，舉凡邊關風景、敵國傳聞，悉入於詩。雖神州陸沉之感，已非時事所急，而人終莫敢議其非。因得肆其才力，或大聲疾呼，或長言永嘆，命意既有關系，出語自覺沉雄。此其詩之易工一也。

After Su Shi was reinstated [in court] from Huangzhou, as the story of his experience spread through the land, he was swamped by affairs public and private. Many of his poems were composed off-hand, either at banquets or for a social occasion. His quick intelligence and impatient nature occasionally resulted in sloppy diction and forced rhymes. Lu You, in his official career, served as assistant prefect five times and four times as temple supervisor. These were all idle posts and allowed many leisure days for reading. Therefore, he usually came up with good lines first and added the titles later, as in "Describing What Was in My Heart," "Writing About My Indignation," "Moved by An Event", "Dispelling Gloom," or "Walk in the Mountain," "A Walk in the Country," "Book Studio," "Dao Studio," and so on. Among his poems, not even one or two out of ten were written for social occasions.[319] For example, if one counts the "Account of My Dream" poems in the whole collection, there are ninety-nine of them. How can there be so many dreams in a lifetime? He must have used dreams as a pretext for his untitled poems. Since the heart was at leisure, it was easily inspired, and wonderful thoughts came in profusion; having spare time made it easy to polish his poems so any little flaws were all eliminated. This was the second reason why it was easier for Lu You to attain mastery in poetry.

Seen from this perspective, this is why Lu You's poetry is superior to Su Shi despite the fact that the latter has better talent. Try to compare the two masters' poetry with a fair mind, and one would not treat my words as idle talk.

[319] This is an accurate observation of Lu You's extant poetry. However, written correspondence between Lu You and his contemporaries shows that he attended plenty of parties when he served in Sichuan, and also when he stopped at Lin'an in between appointments. These parties called for writing poetry. The number of party poems in his collection are disproportionately fewer than the parties he attended. It is reasonable to infer that he did write social occasion poems, but that they were among the ones he weeded out from his published collection. One may even push this further to suggest that Lu You had his own agenda on what kind of poems were worth leaving to posterity.

東坡自黃州起用後，揚歷中外，公私事冗，其詩多即席、即事，隨手應付之作，且才捷而性不耐煩，故遣詞或有率略，押韻亦有生硬。放翁則生平仕宦，凡五佐郡、四奉祠，所處皆散地，讀書之日多，故往往有先得佳句，而後標以題目者。如寫懷、書憤、感事、遣悶，以及山行、郊行、書室、道室等題，十居七八，而酬應贈答之作，不一二焉。即如紀夢詩，核計全集，共九十九首。人生安得有如許夢！此必有詩無題，遂托之於夢耳。心閒則易觸發, 而妙緒紛來；時暇則易琢磨，而微疵盡去。此其詩之易工二也。

由斯以觀，其才之不能過於蘇在此，其詩之實能勝於蘇亦在此。試平心以兩家詩比較，當不河漢其言矣。[320]

Zhao Yi's statements need some fine-tuning when we try to take matters beyond the narrow comparison. It is true that in contrast to Su Shi, "Lu You took matters outside of poetry and put them all in." But Su Shi makes a poor yardstick to measure what was inside poetry: criticism of the world's affairs had always been within poetry's realm; it was the unfortunate combination of Su Shi's manner of writing and the political environment that necessitated the exclusion.[321] Lu

[320] Zhao Yi, *Oubei shihua* 甌北詩話 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue 1998), 79-80.

[321] "Subtle criticism" is one of poetry's primary functions, and society's tolerance of it depended on the fluctuating state of politics. Poetry twice ran afoul of politics in the Song up to Lu You's time: the Crow Terrace Poetry Case (1079) and the Palanquin Pavilion Poetry Case (1089). Poetry was used as incriminating evidence to charge and send the writers into exile. However, there is little resemblance between the poems in these cases and Lu You's poems on current affairs. In both cases, the writers were already embroiled in major factional struggles, and their poetry was not so much the cause of guilt as a convenient tool for their enemies to find them guilty. This was especially true in the Palanquin Pavilion Poetry Case, where the charge was entirely founded on forced allegorical interpretation (or misreading) of the poems. For the Crow Terrace case, see Charles Hartman, "Poetry and Politics in 1079: The Crow Terrace Poetry Case of Su Shi," *CLEAR* 12 (Dec., 1990), 15-44. Shen Songqin 沈松勤 discusses both cases in his study on Northern Song factionalism, inquisitions, and their impact on literary writing in *Bei Song wenren yu dangzheng – Zhongguo shidafu qunti yanjiu* 北宋文人與黨爭 – 中國士大夫群體研究 (Beijing: Renmin 1998).
It has been agreed upon that the inquisition under Qin Gui silenced opposition to the court's peace policy, but it was relaxed after Xiaozong succeeded to the throne. Lu You's extant poetry

You's contribution was not in introducing new topics into poetry. His two most important topics – "the emotion at Xinting," which has received the most critical attention, and leisure, the most frequently occurring – were already well-established by his time. The change he effected in poetic scope was to make the established topics "everyday" as the occasions for his daily poeticizing. The difference I try to bring out here is between expanding the poetic scope and grounding it.

There was no need, in fact, to expand the poetic scope any further by Lu You's time, because generations of poets before him have been adding to the poem-worthy topics to the point that further addition looked impossible. A case in point is the Song edition of Du Fu, *Du Fu's Poems Arranged by Topics with Collected Commentaries* 分門集注杜工部詩. Even as the poets had the choice to break topical conventions, each addition to the repertoire under various topics substantiated the emerging contours for different types of poetic experience, enabling, from the literary and aesthetic features that enrich it, a formal and more easily determinable category of the poetic, which, encircling it in a halo of elegance, obscures the need to distinguish it in more fundamental aspects, such as the origin and nature of its affective powers.

---

cannot prove him to be the voice of dissent during the inquisition, simply because most of it dates from after that period. While there is sufficient evidence to suggest that Lu You's outspoken political opinions placed an obstacle in his advancement, it is not enough to prove that they were the only or even the main obstacle, or that they refer to the opinions he voiced in *poetry*. Reading by Lu You's account of what the emperor told him before he left for his last local post in Jian'an, "write a lot of poems there," it seems that the emperor would prefer him to write more outspoken but harmless poems, rather than having him submit memorials on how to run the government. For a review of Lu You's role in politics, see Zhu Dongrun 朱東潤, "Lu You suo jiechu dao de tongzhi jieji neibu dongzheng 陸游所接觸到的統治階級內部鬥爭," in Zhou Kangxie 周康燮 ed., *Lu You yanjiu huibian* 陸游研究彙編 (Hong Kong: Chongwen, 1975), 69-82.

Demarcating a scope for poetry requires a clear statement on its meaning, function and forms. While the ancient theory of poetry – that it speaks the resolve – was never forgotten in poetic discourse, there lacked a new paradigm since the Great Preface that defined poetry on its purport, function, and the relationship between its main elements, one that took into account the new forms, authors, and the much-expanded repertoire along with the changed cultural context that produced it. The lack of a consensus left poets to negotiate these questions within some very basic ideas, offering widely different, and sometimes directly opposing answers in varied forms of writing, ranging from short random remarks to poetry manuals. Despite their differences, however, their answers appeared driven by a common endeavor to identify and recapture an essential element that gives poetry its moving power. Shi Decao 施德操 (fl. c. 1127), in *A Record of Oiling the Axle by the North Window* 北窗炙輠錄, points out that even for the *Classic of Poetry*, the Poems of the present are not what they were in antiquity:

> My great-uncle was good at singing the Poems. As long as he taught in the academy, he would always prepare three rounds of drink in days of recess, and lead the students to sing the Poems in the main hall. When he was in retirement or by himself, or taking a walk on his staff, there never was an occasion where he did not sing the Poem. Confucius' commentary said, "Aroused by the Poems."[322] "Arouse" means to enkindle people's goodwill. All the six classics are correct principles; why can the *Classic of Poetry* alone enkindle people's goodwill? Can today's readers of the *Classic of Poetry* enkindle people's goodwill? What were called the Poems in antiquity are not the same as today. The Poems in antiquity refers to the spirit of the Poems, while today it refers to the form. How is it so? The Poems is the way of voicing and music. In the ancient times, a Poem was always sung to music. Like today's Music Bureau poems, no verse is without music. All three hundred pieces were sung. This was how they stimulated blood vessels and circulate energy. Their use is entirely in singing the poems. The singing is now lost. What remains are lines and verses. Thus, what we call the spirit of the Poems are gone,

[322] *The Analects*, 8:8. "[One is first] aroused by the Poems; [the character] is established by ritual propriety; [learning is] completed in music. 興於詩, 立於禮, 成於樂. Traditional commentaries have suggested different topics for this sentence. I follow Zhu Xi's *Lunyu jizhu*, whose reading agrees with Shi's interpretation of the first line.

and only its form remain. And yet, one wants them to enkindle people's goodwill – is it not too difficult?

叔祖善歌詩，每在學，至休沐日，輒置酒三行，率諸生歌詩於堂上。閒居獨處，杖策步履，未嘗不歌詩。信乎，深於詩者也。傳曰"興於詩"，興者，感發人善意之謂也。六經皆義理，何謂詩獨能感發人善意，而今之讀詩者，能感發人善意乎？蓋古之所謂詩，非今之所謂詩。古之所謂詩者，詩之神也；今之所謂詩者，詩之形也。何也？詩者，聲音之道也。古者有詩必有聲，詩譬若今之樂府，然未有有其詩而無其聲者也。三百篇皆有歌聲，所以振盪血脈，流通精神，其功用盡在歌詩中。今則亡矣，所存者，章句耳。則是詩之所謂神者已去，獨其形在爾。顧欲感動人善心，不亦難乎！[323]

Shi Decao believes that the written text of Poems is merely part of its physical form and that, only by giving voice to this incomplete body of texts can one restore to the *Classic of Poetry* its spirit – which is both its affective power and moral function – the power to enkindle people's goodwill. Scholarship on *The Classic of Poetry* shares many concepts and vocabulary with the discourse on poetry, and often points to parallel concerns in the same era. Shi envisions a differentiating element absent in the other classics, a quality that transcends the individual odes and yet, at the same, gives life to the Poems. He names it "spirit" (*shen*) and locates its origin in singing them. Writers likewise explored the origin and dynamics of *shen* in poetry, just as they did the relate concept, *qi* (vital force), and a couple of other terms that emphasize the aesthetic rather than moral aspects of poetry, "resonance" and "interest," as possibilities for the differentiating and transcending element that gives life to the text of a poem, and by which one may evaluate the works of a poet. This inquiry into the essentials of poetry was in tandem with the search for ways to write good poetry, which continued into but did not end with the theories of the Jiangxi poets.

[323] Zhang Jian 張健, ed., *Nan Song wenxue piping ziliao huibian* 南宋文學批評資料彙編, (Taipei: Chengwen, 1978), 97.

Lu You practiced his model of poetry amidst the apparently limitless range of topics on the one hand, and on the other, the diverse notions about the essentials of poetry and competing instructions to attain perfection in it, which were adding to the implicit limits, if somewhat fortuitously, that eventually shifted poetry from its place as a common and established practice in literati life to a specialized branch of learning. His writings on poetry starts from the traditional tenet, "poetry speaks the resolve." In the "Preface to Zeng Qiufu's (Jili) Poetry 曾裘父詩集序," he discusses two types of resolve, fulfilled and unfulfilled:

> The ancient theory of poetry is that it speaks the resolve. When one fulfills that resolve and manifests it in words, as did Gaoyao, Duke Zhou, Duke Shao, and Jifu – this is indeed "resolve." Should one meet with misadventure and slander, adrift in the world in hardship, one speaks of not realizing one's resolve – this is also "resolve." Even so, when one is impassioned or anguished, worrying about the times or pitying oneself, and imputes these emotions to external objects, it is indeed difficult to move the readers to sighs and tears. As for one who is at peace with the times and complaisant with change, transcending the worldly affairs and setting aside arrogance and dejection, falsehood and resentment – the writings he issues would be placid, simple, and far-reaching in meaning. It makes the readers leave behind thoughts of fame and profit, and forget worldly gains and losses, as if they come face to face with the Master Complaisance of Dongguo and feel their own ideas melt away. Is this not even more difficult?
> 古之說詩曰言志. 夫得志而形於言, 如皋陶, 周公, 召公, 吉甫, 固所謂志也. 若遭變遇讒，流離困悴，自道其不得志，是亦志也。然感激悲傷，憂時閔己，托情寓物，使人讀之，至於太息流涕，固難矣。至於安時處順，超然事外，不矜不挫，不誣不懟，發為文辭，沖澹簡遠，讀之者遺聲利，冥得喪，如見東郭順子，悠然意消，豈不又難哉。[324][嘉定元年二月丁酉 1208]

Unfulfilled resolve is an individual's response to adversity in a world fallen short of ideal order. To borrow a term from another of Lu You's prefaces, it would be "permutations" (*bian* 變), "All poetry, starting from the Airs of the States, are permutations. Even Duke Zhou's 'Airs of Bin'

[324] Ma Yazhong 馬亞中 and Tu Xiaoma 涂小馬, annot., *Weinan wenji jiaozhu* 渭南文集校注. (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji, 2015), 2:157. Hereafter *WNWJJZ.*

are permutations. It is the general human condition that, when sadness and indignation build up inside unspoken, they spring forth as poetry. Otherwise, there would be no poetry. 詩首國風, 無非變者. 雖周公之爾, 亦變也. 蓋人之情, 悲憤積於中而無言, 始發為詩. 不然, 無詩矣."[325] "Permutations" is an inept rendering of *bian* for which the "Great Preface" gives its origin and definition: "When the kingly way declined, ritual and correctness abandoned, the kingdoms differed in governance, and the clans differed in customs, the changed Airs and Odes arose. 至於王道衰, 禮義廢, 國異政, 家殊俗, 而變風變雅作矣." By styling all poetry as *bian*, a deviation from the balanced correctness that characterize the original Airs and Odes produced under the ideal kingly way, Lu You links the origin of poetry intrinsically to a crooked political and social order, one that anguishes the conscientious individual in his unfulfilled resolve to rectify it. In this moralistic view of poetry rings a strong personal note, because in many of his poems, Lu You comes across as one such individual. He also adds another permutation to the original theory, that it is specifically the pent-up emotions, the sadness and anger otherwise unspoken, or the scholars' suppressed vital force to which poetry gives outlet.[326] The subject of this preface – a poet who chose to stay out of government during the inquisition under Qin Gui – and the

[325] From "A Preface to the Poetry Collection of the Gentleman of the Tranquility Studio 澹齋居士詩序." Lu You had been acquainted with the author, Chen Tang 陳棠, in Shanyin, as testified by his poem from 1159, "Seeing Off Chen Deshao on His Way to the Capital in Twenty Rhymes 送陳德邵宮教赴行在二十韻." The preface dates from 1205, forty-three years after Chen's death in 1162. *WNWJJZ* 2:147.

[326] Lu You presents here a narrowed version of Han Yu's statement on the origin and nature of writing as resulting from perturbance: "generally, when things fail [to maintain] their state of equilibrium, they make sounds 大凡物不得其平則鳴." From Han's "Preface on Sending Off Meng Dongye (Jiao) 送孟東野序."

examples he cites of the recent poets – make this permutation historically specific.[327] And so, to refrain from making undue generalizations on suppressed *qi*, we focus on *qi* itself, to which Lu You gives primary importance as a pervasive physical and moral force that a scholar must cultivate.

Many of the "Dao Studio" or "Book Studio" poems from Lu You's retirement period in Shanyin reflect his commitment in nourishing his *qi*. Upright and powerful *qi* manifests itself in all aspects of a scholar's person, not the least his poetry. In the preface to Fang Fengzhi's poetry, Lu You describes effect of a correctly nourished *qi* in the highest level of attainment – keeping it intact:

> How is poetry easy to discuss? Heaven endows one with talent, but it is up to oneself to nourish his *qi*. When one has talent but his *qi* is not strong enough to harness it,

[327] The following is the main part of the preface:

> Su Wu, Li Ling, Tao Qian, Xie Lingyun, Du Fu, and Li Bai were impassioned and had no alternative, thus their poetry became models of all time. Of the present dynasty, Lin Bu and Wei Ye died without ever becoming officials; Mei Yaochen and Shi Yannian were rejected from the government; Su Shunqin and Huang Tingjian died in exile. Recently, the renowned scholars from Jiangxi all became famous because they were banned under the inquisition as the associates of [the Yuanyou] faction. During the Shaoxing era, when Chancellor Qin Gui was in power, he convicted scholar-officials for their speech at every opportunity. The literati mostly invested their suppressed vital force in poetry, but many of them were still caught. Now, Mr. Chen Deshao, the Gentleman of the Tranquility Studio, had an early acquaintance with Qin Gui at school, but considering that a clash would be inevitable [if they were to become colleagues], he withdrew from official service and amused himself with writing. His poetry struck harmony with music. It was free from resentment and anger, but the force of his righteous indignation and hatred at the world's perversity was awe-inspiring and never bent back. It was a narrow escape that he did not bring disaster upon himself."
>
> 蘇武, 李陵, 陶潛, 謝靈運, 杜甫, 李白, 激於不能自已，故其詩為百代法。國朝林逋魏野以布衣死，梅堯臣石延年棄不用，蘇舜欽黃庭堅以廢絀死。近時，江西名家者，例以黨籍禁錮，乃有才名，蓋詩之興本如是。紹興間，秦丞相檜用事，動以語言罪士大夫。士氣抑而不伸，大抵竊寓於詩，亦多不免。若澹齋居士陳公德召者，故與秦公有學校舊，自揣必不合，因不復與相聞，退以文章自娛。詩尤中律呂，不怨不怒，而憤世疾邪之氣，凜然不少回撓。其不坐此得禍，亦僅脫爾。

> one falls to wantonness in wealth and power, or deviate from principle in poverty or humble condition. His gains cannot make up for what he has lost, and his glory cannot cover his shame. If poetry issues from this, and one still want to catch up with the ancients' chariot, how can it be done?
>
> Since my youth I have heard about a scholar from Puyang, Fang Deheng, who was named Fengzhi at birth. His talent was exalted, but he still persisted in nourishing his *qi*… Late in his life, Deheng was less and less favored by fortune, but his *qi* was ever more intact. By reading his poetry, one can understand what he has nourished… A while ago, one of his clansmen, Fang Yun, told me that Deheng contracted sickness and died in an inn in Lin'an. When his life was about to expire, he could still sit up to adjust his clothes and cap, and wrote with his own hand a letter to one of his clansmen, an official in Lin'an, asking him to buy a coffin. He passed away after the coffin arrived, maintaining his normal countenance and speech [to the end.] How could it have been possible if he had not nourished his *qi* to keep it intact?[328]
>
> 詩豈易言哉，才得之天，而氣者我之所自養。有才矣，氣不足以御之，淫於富貴，移於貧賤，得不償失，榮不蓋愧，詩由此出，而欲追古人之逸駕，詎可得哉。予自少聞莆陽有士曰方德亨，名豐之，才甚高，而養氣不撓 … 德亨晚愈不遭，而氣愈全，觀其詩，可知其所養也… 往時，有方畋者，與德亨同族，為予言: 德亨遇疾，卒於臨安逆旅。垂困，猶能起坐，正衣冠，手自作書，與其族人官臨安者，使買棺。棺至，乃歿，色辭不異平日。非養氣之全，能如是乎。請以是為序。慶元六年四月丁酉，山陰陸某序。

Notwithstanding the additional significance that the Neo-Confucians had assigned to *qi* – an elemental force that coalesces to make matter – Lu You still abides by Mencius' idea of a moral *qi:*

> It is consummately great and consummately strong. If one nourishes it with uprightness and does not injure it, it will fill the space between Heaven and Earth. This is *qi*: it is the companion of rightness and the Way, in the absence of which it starves. It is born from an accumulation of rightness rather than appropriated through an isolated display. If one's actions cause the mind to be disquieted, it starves.

[328] "Preface to Fang Deheng's (Fengzhi) Poetry Collection 方德亨詩集序," *WNWJJZ*, 2:131. Fuller also translates the first part of the preface in *Drifting Among Rivers and Lakes* (271-72).

其為氣也, 至大至剛, 以直養而無害, 則塞于天地之間. 其為氣也, 配義與道. 無是, 餒也. 是集義所生者, 非義襲而取之也. 行有不慊於心, 則餒矣."[329]

The task is to nourish one's *qi* by the same substance that produces it – moral uprightness – and keep it unharmed. Lu You replaces the last with a word of the same meaning, "intact" (*quan* 全), and frequently measures his *qi* by this sublime standard. The following poem from the winter of 1206 is one example:

Assiduous Farming[330]	力耕
Assiduous farming brings me a storehouse of grain every year.	力耕歲有一囷米,
My meager salary is less than thirty strings of cash per month.	殘俸月無三萬錢.
Do not wonder at my utter destitution; my heart does not sway.[331]	莫怪窮空心不動,
Precisely because I lack wit and skill, my *qi* is fairly intact.	正緣愚拙氣差全.
I study the classics tirelessly after suspending my official's carriage.	學經亹亹懸車後,
I will conscientiously observe the rites until they change my mat.[332]	秉禮拳拳易簀前.
Still, one regret: I cannot forget brush and ink-stone.	猶恨未能忘筆硯,
My son has gathered my poems into yet another collection.	小兒收拾又成編.

The same three manifestations described in the "Preface to Fang Fengzhi's Poetry" of a correctly nourished, intact *qi* recur in this poem. First, as a force of moral rectitude, it animates a heart that does not sway, or as Lu You describes in the preface, also referencing Mencius, prevents one from becoming wanton in wealth and power or deviating from principle in poverty and humble

[329] Translation in William Theodore de Barry and Irene Bloom, *Sources of the Chinese Tradition* vol.1 (New York: Columbia UP, 2013), 127.

[330] *JNSGJZ,* 7:3864.

[331] Mengzi asserts that keeping one's *qi* unharmed is the way to having a mind/heart that does not sway. From the same passage as cited above.

[332] That is, until I die.

condition. Secondly, the force's constitution dictates that the subject must nourish it by never deviating from rightness in every concrete action. Fang Fengzhi's intact *qi* enabled him to be calm and proper until the moment of death, but the reverse is also true – that Fang's persistence in abiding by propriety to the very end is necessary to keep his *qi* flawless. Likewise, Lu You resolves to observe ritual propriety until the last moments of his life. He also describes his assiduous effort in farming and studying the classics, both essential in building his *qi*.

Writing is the third aspect in which an intact *qi* manifests itself. Lu You does not specify the shape that a *qi*-infused poetry might take, conceivably because *qi*, primarily a moral force, cannot be a prescription for literary style. Nevertheless, Lu You makes his preferences quite clear in the three prefaces cited so far. In the preface to Zeng Jili's poetry, without invalidating the expression of sadness or self-pity, Lu You values higher the one who has transcended the world's affairs, and whose "placid, simple, and far-reaching" poetry has the power to effect a similar transcendence in the reader. He praises Chen Tang's poetry for being "free from resentment and anger, but the force of his righteous indignation and hatred at the world's perversity was awe-inspiring and never bent back." For both poets, he emphasizes their positive moral influence on the reader.

All three prefaces date from the last years of Lu You's life, and one can read them as a recapitulation of the values to which he had aspired in his own poetry, which, despite bearing the distinct Lu You character, resonates with the righteous indignation in Chen Tang on the one hand, and on the other, the ease of Zeng Jili. What were later perceived as two distinct voices of Lu You were both expressions of unfulfilled resolve guided by a correctly nourished vital force. They are not related as core-and-accessory; in fact, at various points in the collection, Lu You demonstrates the effort to transcend indignation by rewriting this powerful feeling in an earlier

poem into learned poise.[333] Along with the other sundry, hard-to-categorize topics and modes found in Lu You's vast marshland of a collection, these two main voices are different types of circumstance-based responses issuing from a common core, the intact *qi* of uprightness.[334]

Thus, in his last years, Lu You has summarized his poetic practice into a consistent framework, complete in its origin, composition, and function. The poetic trajectory shares the same path as a Confucian scholar's learning: rooted in moral self-cultivation, takes shape in words, and realizes itself in moral transformation of others. His collection both confirms and belies this framework. One might remember that in "Assiduous Farming," poetry is the much-rather-forgotten afterthought – unsurprising, because while the primacy of *qi* channels a force larger than poetry itself, it does not account for what makes poetry uniquely compelling compared to learning and other forms of writing. It invites the need for justifying the writing of poetry in its own right, but offers no justification. This self-diminishing aspect had been more pronounced in an earlier postscript, dated from 1188, where Lu You all but questions poetry's right to exist:

> When vapors rising from mountains and marshes form into clouds and descend as rain, the [sprouts that had been] curled would unfurl, and those had formed ears would grow to fullness. This is the cloud's being put to use. Have you seen clouds in years of drought? It rises to form marvelous-looking peaks, towering and jutting, enough to please

[333] See examples in part II.

[334] In a memorial that Yu Beishan dates to 1188, Lu You emphasizes the primacy of *qi* in all human affairs, writing being only one of them: "*Qi* should be the dominating factor in the world's myriad affairs; [Su] Shi used it especially in writing … When *qi* dominates a deed, the deed would be accomplished; when *qi* overcomes an enemy, the enemy would be subdued… In today's world, talented men are numerous, but I am still worried because their *qi* to bear heavy burden on the long road cannot catch up with the ancients. 天下萬事, 皆當以氣為主, 軾特用之於文爾…蓋氣勝事則事舉, 氣勝敵則敵服…今天下才者眾矣, 而臣猶有憂者, 正以任重道遠之氣未能盡及古人也." See Yu Beishan 于北山, *Lu You nianpu* 陸游年譜 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1961), 262.

the eye but not put to use. This would be the cloud's misfortune. A superior man, with his learning, should realize the world of Yao and Shun for his lord and people. If, to the contrary, he were to pine in exile, and to write poems in the style of "The Airs" or "Encountering Sadness" to cheer himself in sadness or to relieve his sorrow – likewise, this would be writing's misfortune.

My friend Wu Mengyu packed off his several hundred poems to all the famous and worthy high ministers who preside over the literary circle. They unanimously sighed in praise. Lastly, he showed them to me. I was somber, and said, "Your writing is to be grieved for its perfect skill, and mourned for its misfortune. The older you grow, the graver your predicament. Future readers will say, 'this is a man in hard straits being skilled in poetry.' Considering your feelings, would you be happy to accept such reputation? Let me broaden your resolve – one must be ever more steadfast in predicament and ever stronger in old age. A man's affairs are only settled at the closing of his coffin. A superior man's learning realizes the world of Yao and Shun for his lord and people. This is what I hope from my friends. To cheer oneself in sadness and to relieve one's sorrow is merely writing poetry in the style of 'The Airs' or 'Encountering Sadness' – how can this be my hopes for a friend? Written by Lu in Fuli[335] on the 26th day of the 11th month, 15th year of the Chunxi Era.

山澤之氣為雲, 降而為雨, 勾者伸, 秀者實, 此雲之見於用者也. 子嘗見旱歲之雲乎, 嵯峨突兀, 起為奇峰, 足以悅人之目, 而不見於用, 此雲之不幸也. 君子之學, 蓋將堯舜其君民, 若乃放逐憔悴, 娛悲舒憂, 為風為騷, 亦文之不幸也. 吾友吳夢予, 槖其歌詩數百篇於天下名卿賢大夫之主斯文盟者, 翕然嘆譽之, 末以示余, 余愀然曰, 子之文, 其工可悲, 其不幸可吊. 年益老, 身益窮, 後世將曰是窮人之工於歌詩者. 計吾吳君之情, 亦豈樂受此名哉. 余請廣其志曰, 窮當益堅, 老當益壯. 丈夫蓋棺事始定, 君子之學, 堯舜其君民, 余之所望於朋友也. 娛悲舒憂, 為風為騷而已, 豈余之所望於朋友哉. 淳熙十五年十一月二十六日甫里陸某書.[336]

Clouds, formed from vapor (same old *qi*), capture the idea of the pervasive vital force in humans and the world. Their very existence in cloud form bespeaks their misfortune and the plight of the whole world, for magnificent cloud clods mean a dry year, and that they are not fulfilling their natural function, which is to un-cloud and give moisture to the sprouts. A scholar puts his

[335] Near present Suzhou. Lu Guimeng called himself "Master Fuli" when living here, whom Lu You sometimes remembers in poetry.

[336] "Postscript to Wu Mengyu's Poetry Collection 跋吳夢予詩編," *WNWJJZ,* 3:193.

learning to the best use when he restores the ideal of Yao and Shun for his lord and people. Should his learning take the shape of writing – at its worst the "Airs" and "Encountering Sadness" sort – the writing epitomizes some kind of failing: his learning has fallen short of its function in a world fallen short of Yao and Shun.

There have been notions of poetry as (mere) literary endeavor, obsession, or frivolity, notions that let poetry self-vindicate even as they critique. None comes close to problematize poetry's existence as a failing as Lu You, the author of the largest poetry collection, has done in a postscript received with dubious appreciation to his friend's poems. Yet, it is precisely this quixotic insistence on connecting poetry to a scholar's purpose – an idea rooted in the three-fold indelible achievements that "the best is to establish virtue, next comes establishing works, still next is establishing words 大上有立德, 其次有立功, 其次有立言" – that takes Lu You's poetic project beyond a mere literary endeavor by merging the poetic pursuit with life-consuming commitments, such as the cultivation of the vital force. But at the same time, it undermines the validity of poetry in its own right and leads to the persistent self-questioning about the meaning of being a poet. It came to a climax but did not stop with the powerful image of a poet-on-a-donkey-in-the-rain, which he fashioned into the well-known couplet, "Is this person that I am fit to be a poet? / In the fine drizzle, riding on a donkey, I enter the Sword Gate Pass 此身合是詩人未? 細雨騎驢入劍門."

Compared to the skepticism in his prose prefaces, the opinions he expresses in poetry on the "Airs of the State" and "Encountering Sorrow" are more varied and generally positive. Self-questioning notwithstanding, Lu You's perseverance in writing poetry as a daily practice confirms its meaningfulness. The necessity of his practice can only be explained in terms of the special capacity of the poetic form, to which we turn in the next section.

****

III. Resolving the Conflict between Vital Force and Poetry: The Unremarkable Poetic Realm

In Lu You's playful line, "Laughable, that the Dissolute Old Man has nothing to do; / he endeavors to use poetry to occupy his time 堪笑放翁無一事, 強將詩句佔年光,"[337] there is prosaic reality. It remains to supply the missing link between the prosaic reality and poetry, and to try to trace the shadows of the ineffable Way that transforms one into the other: the unremarkable poetic realm.

The paradigm of the unremarkable is important not only in Lu You, but also for much of Song poetry. It provides the methodological basis for a poetry based in learning and self-cultivation: the idea that good poetry (and writing in general) naturally issues from a correctly cultivated subject. The critical concept, "realm," captures poetry's capacity to represent multiple layers of experience in a shared moment.

IIIA. The Unremarkable:

When Fang Xinru 方信孺 (1177-1223) was serving his term as prefect in Shaozhou (1210-1212), he had two large characters in Lu You's calligraphy engraved on a stele – "Poetic Realm (*shijing* 詩境)." The expression clearly held some special significance for Fang because he also used it to name his study. Lu You did not explain his choice of this expression, and it does not appear elsewhere in his extant writings. Nevertheless, one can still gain an accurate sense of its meaning from later interpretations, starting with Fang's record of conduct penned by Liu Kezhuang 劉克莊, who links it with achieving the unremarkable:

[337] "Waking Up by the North Window 北窗睡起," *JNSGJZ,* 6:3008.

> Mr. Fang had read comprehensively. He never had to make a draft before writing. At first it seems as if he put in no thought, but on close reading, everything was smooth and appropriate, with no trace of the "axe and chisel." He had asked Mr. Lu [You] of Shanyin about calligraphy, and Mr. Lu wrote "Poetic Realm" in two large characters for him. Mr. Ye Shi from Longquan was stingy with his approval, but a line he wrote late in life, 'the literary star is directly over Pu," referred to Mr. Fang. When the Bureau Director Chen Kongshuo read Mr. Fang's recent compositions, he said, "they are gradually approaching the unremarkable." The unremarkable is the ultimate level of attainment in poetry, as it is said: "the Mean is not a course in which one can become competent."
> 公貫穿羣書, 為文未嘗起草, 初若不入思, 細視皆平夷妥帖, 無斧鑿痕. 嘗從山陰陸公游問書, 陸公為大書詩境二字. 龍泉葉公適靳許可, 晚有文星直莆中之句, 蓋為公發. 陳郎中孔碩見公近作曰, 漸趨平澹矣. 平澹, 詩之極致, 所謂中庸不可能者.[338]

Pingdan 平澹 (also written as 平淡) can describe literary or personal temperament. It used to be possible to capture its meaning with a few English adjectives – even, smooth, serene, and bland – until the Song writers appropriated it to convey a profundity-loaded equilibrium, here translated as "the unremarkable" to capture the embedded meaning of "attainment through two stages." *Pingdan* acquired this nuance after Han Yu's well-known couplet – "Extravagance, extremities, the strange and changes done, / He always attains the smooth and serene 姦窮怪變得, 往往造平澹"[339] – one only attains *pingdan* after going through all sorts of quirkiness. However, the aesthetics of Han Yu's smooth and serene *pingdan*, as he enacts it in the next four lines, is nowhere near the sphere of unremarkable *pingdan* in the Song:

---

[338] Xin Gengru 辛更儒, ed., *Liu Kezhuang ji jianjiao* 劉克莊記箋校, 14 vols., (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2011), 14:6465.

[339] This is Han Yu's description of Jia Dao's poetry, in "Sending Off the Monk Wuben to Return to Fanyang 送無本師歸范陽. In Fang Shiju 方世舉 annot., *Han Changli shiji biannian jianzhu* 韓昌黎詩集編年校注, (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2012), 2 vol., 2:418.

Wind-borne cicada [buzz] – fragments of patterned brocade;	風蟬碎錦纈,
In the green pond, mounds of flowering lotus.	緑池垤菡萏.
Magical blossoms shoot up from the wild thorn bushes;	芝英擢荒蓁,
A lone pinion rises from the spreading reeds.	孤翮起連茷.

These last four lines show effortless craft and outward beauty, two things the Song writers firmly excluded from the unremarkable, which, simply put, meant plain language and bland expressions, to be slowly chewed over for far-reaching meaning. Modern scholars often use Tao Qian's poetry, which the Song poets unanimously agreed to be *pingdan*, to discuss the meaning of this important critical concept. However, the perceived transparency of Tao Qian's poetry was never fully in accord with the ideal of the learned unremarkable, starting with Tao's first strong advocate in the Song, Mei Yaochen.[340] The term continued to pick up more nuances in the subsequent generations, and it was only after Huang Tingjian's model of learning and writing established its canonical status did the term acquire the consistency in meaning with which it appeared in Southern Song discourse. By which time, partaking of the large trend in incorporating aesthetic values into learning and moral self-cultivation, "the unremarkable" had become broader than a literary style: unremarkable writing results naturally from a psychical equilibrium acquired through amassing learning. With a thorough grasp on the readings, one would be able to approach and write about one's experiences in a way that naturally accords with the methods and principles embodied in the classic models. One's writing would be unremarkable for being free from deliberate effort, and the style would appear calm and smooth, similar to the water's mirroring surface that reflects marvelous landscape.

[340] In Chapter Four of *Mei Yao-ch'en and the Development of Early Sung Poetry,* Jonathan Chaves reviews the usages of the term *pingdan* (rendered as "even and bland") in literary criticism from its first occurrence in *Shipin,* and discusses its meaning in Mei's theory on poetry. See Chaves, *Mei Yao-ch'en,* (New York: Columbia UP, 1976), esp. 114-125.

The unremarkable is the greatest irony in Song literary thought: to controvert the blatantly beautiful, striking, and strange styles,[341] usually the product of painstaking craft, one applies infinitely more painstaking effort to studying the canon, just so that one may, when the occasion calls, write "naturally." A few passages from Huang Tingjian onwards will suffice to illustrate the consistency in the usage of "unremarkable" during the Southern Song. In the following letter to Wang Fan, Huang tries to reconcile the paradoxical relationship between learned and natural in the unremarkable:

> There are many excellent lines in the poems you sent, but regrettably, there is still too much effort in carving and chiseling. Just read thoroughly Du Fu's ancient-style and regulated poems from his Kuizhou period, and you will grasp the method in the lines: simple, but the finest craft comes forth; unremarkable, but within it, mountains are lofty and waters are deep, as if they cannot be reached. Only when you complete writings without the traces of the axe, will it be excellent composition.[342]
> 所寄詩多佳句, 猶恨雕琢功多耳. 但熟觀杜子美到夔州後古律詩便得句法. 簡易而大巧出焉, 平淡而山高水深, 似欲不可企及, 文章成就更無斧鑿痕, 乃為佳作耳.

"No trace of the axe and chisel" is one of Huang Tingjian's favorite carpentry metaphors for the highest attainment in writing, the other one being, "without the need for measuring or trimming, it naturally accords [with the model.]" If – and only if – we concede that Du Fu's Kuizhou period poetry forms a classic standard in itself, Huang Tingjian's outlandish claim about it being unremarkable would be perfectly logical. The same goes for his other outlandish claim: the most wonderful thing about Du Fu was that he wrote without prior intent.[343] But perhaps to Huang's

[341] The showy vs. unremarkable antithesis is aligned with the recent vs. ancient.

[342] "Letter to Wang Fuguan (Wang Fan) 與王觀復書," in *BSZLHB*, 222.

[343] "An Account of the Hall of Great Elegantiae 大雅堂記" in *BSZLHB,* 220.

followers, the most wonderful thing about his system was that the model is attainable, and the key is to "read thoroughly."

Huang's method of reading the model texts thoroughly and his insistence on having "no word without origin" translates into textual re-appropriation on the technical level. However, intertextuality is the outgrowth, rather than the root or the ultimate purpose, of an undertaking through which the subject allows himself to be transformed by his readings. It explains why, despite the glaring differences between the Du Fu-in-Kuizhou and Tao Qian, they are both considered to be unremarkable in the collective appreciation after Huang Tingjian. Just like Tao Qian, Du Fu's poetry is supposed to happen spontaneously without the need for deliberation or crafting. His poetic response to the surroundings is seen as no less immediate than Tao Qian's; the difference is that they are two kinds of human subject separated by ten thousand fascicles. As Shi Decao states:

> Du Fu read all the books in the world and could discern the inherent patterns in everything. Heaven, earth, the forces of creation, and the past and present events in all their infinitude, are amassed in his chest, which was so vast that there was not a single thing that it did not contain. As soon as something stirs him, he expresses it in poetry. Tao Yuanming went with whatever he saw, pointed at them and turned them into poetry. When he saw flowers, he said "flowers;" when he encountered the bamboo, he said "bamboo," and never made the slightest effort.
> 子美讀盡天下書, 識盡萬物理, 天地造化, 古今事物, 盤礴鬱積於胸中, 浩乎無不載, 遇事一觸, 輒發之於詩. 淵明隨其所見, 指點成詩, 見花即道花, 遇竹即說竹, 更無一毫作為.[344]

To have thoroughly read all the world's books is an essential step toward understanding all the world's patterns. Whereas Huang Tingjian would use the expression "remold the texts" for that process, Shi Decao says "amass" (*yuji* 鬱積) – regardless of the nature of the action that the

[344] Shi, *Beichuang zhiguo lu*, in *BSZLHB,* 97.

human subject takes on his readings, he is at the same time acted upon. When something in the world stirs the subject – in other words, when poetry happens –the response it inspires would be from a subject different from a computer database on the one hand, and on the other, the simple subject that Tao Qian represents.

The description of Du Fu might have applied to Lu You: a third of Lu You's poems during his retirement in Shanyin either describe his experiences in reading, are inspired by reading some book, or mention reading books. He often describes reading as sedulous effort, and it must begin from the source, the "Six Classics." In these respects, he affirms Huang Tingjian's model of reading and learning. He also takes reading books as part of the everyday effort involved in cultivating his upright vital force, which is at the center of his thoughts on poetry. He also demonstrates a level of engagement with everyday particulars unseen in Huang Tingjian:

Reading Out Loud on a Spring Evening, Moved	春夜讀書感懷
In the deserted forest, an owl hoots alone.	荒林梟獨嘯,
In the rustic waters, the flock of geese are honking.	野水群鵝鳴.
I sit by the window of my shabby dwelling,	我坐蓬窗下,
Answering them by reading out loud.	答以讀書聲.
Oh sad, this white-haired old man!	悲哉白髮翁,
Of the world's affairs I have had enough.	世事已飽更.
It is not of myself that I am concerned,	一身不自恤,
But worry for my country that tears overflow.	憂國涕縱橫.
I always think on the end of the Tianbao era:	永懷天寶末,
The commanders Li and Guo came forth to lead the army.	李郭出治兵.
Although Hebei was not taken [right away],	河北雖未下,
The important thing was that they reclaimed the two capitals.	要是復兩京.
With three thousand officials of the same virtue	三千同德士,
And one million Plume Forest Guards,	百萬羽林營.
After one full sexagenarian cycle,	歲週一甲子,
We still don't see the barbarian dust cleansed.	不見胡塵清.
The bandit chieftain is actually a weakling leader;	賊酋實孱主,

The bandit generals do not stand out among men.	賊將非人英,
Why are we missing this time	如何失此時,
To sit around and wait for the ascent of the treacherous adventurer?	坐待姦雄生.
After I die, my bones will decay,	我死骨即朽,
My name will not be in history.	青史亦無名.
If this poem is not written,	此詩倘不作,
Who else will make clear this sterling heart?[345]	丹心尚誰明.

The long string of thought involves comparing the An Lushan rebellion with the Jurchen occupation of Kaifeng and writing a heart-revealing poem to fill his absence in the historical records. His thoughts reach far into the past and future, but has an almost comical beginning in the present: They take off when he answers the owl and the geese with his voice in reading books. The unremarkable is seldom a static mode with Lu You. In this poem, he starts in it, but soon leaves it behind.

In theory, Lu You uses the same vocabulary as Huang Tingjian in writing *about* the unremarkable – to write without prior intent, and to attain it through effort:

Deep Stirrings[346]	幽興
I grow old in this fleeting life, my purpose has gradually waned.	老向浮生意漸闌,
Light and free, I wait for death amidst the water and clouds.	飄然俟死水雲間.
A tortoise props up my bed, secure in the nights of new chill.	龜支床穩新寒夜,
A crane attached with a missive returns to the familiar hermit's mountain.	鶴附書歸舊隱山.
Only when free of intent, does poetry draw close to the unremarkable;	無意詩方近平淡,
Cut off from society, even in dreams I feel the lucid ease.	絕交夢亦覺清閒.
One thing that puts me above Yuanming:	一端更出淵明上,
My deserted bramble gate is always left unlatched.	寂寂柴門本不關.

[345] 3:70. 1184.

[346] *JNSGJZ,* 7:3650.

Autumn Thoughts[347]	秋懷
My poems bland as water – I advance somewhat in my efforts.	詩如水淡功差進,
My body lonely as a cloud, its burdens are ever lighter.	身似雲孤累轉輕,
In the falling leaves I lean on the bramble fence,	落葉擁籬門巷晚,
About to take a leisurely walk on the liana cane.	一枝藤杖且閒行.

Although Lu You cannot overemphasize the seriousness with which he undertakes reading and learning, he draws no direct link between learning and the unremarkable, and he rarely refers to his own poetry as unremarkable. Nevertheless, his Shanyin-period poetry provides sufficient basis for his readers in the next few generations to describe it in the vocabulary surrounding the unremarkable. It is the standard by which Fang Hui assesses his own poetry at the age of seventy:

Poets have laws of their own:	詩家自有律,
Loftiness is found in the plain.	高處在平中.
If you can make the raw ripe,	能使生為熟,
Worry no more about clumsiness not becoming skill.[348]	何愁拙不工.

In his account of the "Poetic Realm" stele, Liu Kezhuang compares the unremarkable to the course of the Mean. It is an example of the larger trend to integrate aesthetic values into moral self-cultivation. At the same time, his comparison is consistent with the recent development in the meaning of the unremarkable: it is not an acquirable skill in which one can achieve competence, but a course whose meaning can only be realized through practice. Lu You's late poetry achieved a level of ease in writing about the everyday in a way that reflects a mind

[347] Fourth poem of a set of four. *JNSGJZ,* 7: 3565.

[348] From his poem, "Poems by a Seventy-Year-Old in Pentasyllabic Lines 七十翁五言," first in a set of ten. *LYZLHB,* p81.

cultivated by learning, and so his calligraphic "Poetic Realm" was made to represent the unremarkable – the highest attainment in poetry – in the minds of Fang Xinru, Liu Kezhuang, and the generations thereafter.

IIIB. Lu You's Poetic Realm:



Early usages of the word *jing* mostly denoted geographical borders or, in a small handful of examples, conceptual boundary. The meaning of cognitive sphere for *jing* 境 has origins in Chinese Buddhism, where it is used to translate "object of cognition." It was also a Buddhist monk, Jiaoran, who first appropriated the word into poetic discourse. "To grasp a realm" is the creative step the poet takes to produce original poetry through hard thinking. Jiaoran argues that, contrary to some misconception that hard thinking destroys genuineness, the poet must take his thoughts through the most difficult and precarious places before he can conceive of an extraordinary line. The poet can also accumulate fine thoughts beforehand, and let his spirit take control of them at the creative moment. The nature of the realm grasped at the beginning decides the poem's mode, of which Jiaoran names nineteen, a puzzling mixture of affective, moral, and

impressionistic categories.[349] Based on these categories, what Jiaoran means by "realm" in *Poetic Formula* is best described as the projected domain of a poem, more abstract than concrete, and its nature rests on the poet's creative abilities. Jiaoran's model is introspective, giving prerogative to originality and instrumentality of the poet's mind. "Realm" retained the meaning of cognitive sphere and perhaps a little of the esoteric spell Jiaoran cast on it when later poets coined the expression, "poetic realm," but all Song usages of this expression suggest a shift toward the concrete and the open – a shared space at a given moment containing feelings and thoughts in poetic unity.[350]

---

[349] Jiaoran, *Shi shi jiaozhu* 詩式校注 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 2003). For an introduction to *Shi shi*, see Nicholas Morrow Williams, "The Taste of the Ocean: Jiaoran's Theory of Poetry," *Tang Studies*, 31 (2013), 1-27. Xu Lianjun 許連軍 discusses Jiaoran's "realm" as a part of the history of "the theory of idea realm" in Chapter 3 of *Jiaoran Shi shi yanjiu* 皎然詩式研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2007), 52-62.

[350] Modern Chinese scholarship on the poetic realm treat it as the perfected concept of "idea-realm" (*yijing* 意境), incorporating its development through the Ming, the Qing, and the early twentieth century. Recent studies still exhibit the strong influence from Zong Baihua's 宗白華 *Meixue sanbu* 美學散步 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin, 1981) in emphasizing its metaphysical aspects and its centrality in traditional poetics. See for example, Deng Weilong 鄧偉龍, in *Zhongguo gudai shixue de kongjian wenti yanjiu* 中國古代詩學的空間問題研究, argues that the concept allows for the spatialization of time (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 2012), 279-335. Chen Bohai 陳伯海 devotes a chapter to examining the poetic realm in the Tang in *Yixiang yishu yu Tang shi* 意象藝術與唐詩, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2015), 88-112. He argues that the poetic realm theory was already well-established by the end of Tang, and that subsequent developments from the Song through the Qing saw no qualitative breakthrough in its meaning (Chen, 304). Chen, however, errs in seeing a coherent development of the concept in the Tang by drawing connections between three Tang works on poetics that contain the word "realm" and two other isolated usages. As the examples in this paper show, the expression "poetic realm" in the Tang and the Song had not acquired the weight nor the exclusiveness as it had after the Ming. The Song usages especially suggest that writers use it in a general way: "where one is in poetry."

"Poetic realm" is an uncommon compound in Tang and Song poetry with a small handful of examples. One of its earliest usages is in Bai Juyi's set of two poems, "Autumn Pond."[351] The pair conveniently has the "realm of tranquility" side by side with the "poetic realm" for comparison:

Autumn Pond (1)	秋池
My body is at leisure, doing nothing.	身閑無所為,
My mind is at leisure, thinking of nothing.	心閑無所思.
Better still: an evening in the old garden	況當故園夜,
Plus this pond in the wake of autumn.	復此新秋池.
The shores are dark after the crows roost.	岸暗鳥棲後,
The bridge is bright as the moon rises.	橋明月出時.
In the caltrop-scented breeze, fragrance disperses everywhere.	菱風香散漫,
In the dew on cassia, light twinkles.	桂露光參差.
The realm of tranquility is often had in solitude,	靜境多獨得,
Who understands my cares unseen?	幽懷竟誰知.
The carefree words in my heart –	悠然心中語,
I ask myself: why do they come so slowly?	自問來何遲.
2.	
My clothes in the morning were thin and energizing;	朝衣薄且健,
The bamboo mat in the evening feels fresh and smooth.	晚簟清仍滑.
Festival day is near, swallows' shadows are sparse;	社近燕影稀,
After the rain, the cicadas' buzzing ceases.	雨餘蟬聲歇.
In leisure I get a poetic realm;	閒中得詩境,
This realm is recondite and too hard to explain.	此境幽難說.
On dewy lotuses, pearls roll off by themselves.	露荷珠自傾,
In the breezy bamboos, jades chime together.	風竹玉相戛.

[351] There is only one earlier example in a poem by Liu Shang 劉商, active in the Dali era (766-779), "Who can reach your poetic realm? Your Chan mind surpasses even your poetry. 詩境何人到, 禪心又過詩."

Who can pass the night with me?	誰能一同宿,
Together, we can appreciate the new autumn moon.	共玩新秋月.
Summer heat has abated; early cool is back.	暑退早涼歸,
This is a good time by the pond.	池邊好時節.

Leisure, which Bai Juyi dubs as no-doing-no-thinking, can land him in one of two realms: the realm of tranquility or the poetic realm. While the two realms overlap in a scene by the pond, the two poems move in the exact opposite directions. The realm of tranquility leads him away from the exquisite breeze-and-dew couplet and leaves him slow with words, whereas the poetic realm leads him *to* the most exquisite couplet in the poem, although he finds it hard to describe at first. One reaches the realm of tranquility in solitude, while the poetic realm has him wishing for company.

In the subsequent examples of usage in the Tang, concentrated in a few poets' works after Bai Juyi, evoking the poetic realm always involves some familiar trope, such as drinking or autumnal scenes. It may be because "poetry" is a much more capricious abstraction than "tranquility," that the poet must rely on concrete scenes to relate its realm. And so the meaning of "poetic realm" remained simultaneously transparent and elusive: readers would understand it as the invitation to share the moment of feeling or of thought captured in a scene, but to say definitively what kind of realm counts as poetic was tantamount to defining poetry itself, which was rarely done.

Lu You chose "poetic realm" to write in large characters as advice to Fang Xinru. Somehow, the expression got lost in related discussion of Lu You until Weng Fanggang 翁方綱 (1733-1818) rediscovered the Poetic Realm stele and wrote a long poem on its meaning:[352]

[352] From his poem, "On the Poetic Realm, Postscript to the Rubbing of a Stele Inscription in the Dissolute Old Man's Handwriting 詩境篇書放翁石本後. *LYZLHB*, 306. Weng's note on the

I don't know to what "Poetic Realm" refers.	不知詩境何所指,
Someone said, "texture beautiful and rich, the tones harmonious."[353]	或云經緯麗密宮商諧.
Another said, "It is the master talking about himself –	或云先生蓋自道,
A one-hundred poem manuscript completed in just seventy-eight days."[354]	百篇之藁七十八日纔.
The poetic realm attains ripeness from the raw;	詩境從生乃造熟,
When ripe, everywhere on flat ground is magnificent.	熟後平坦皆崔嵬.
The Shao River joins with the Long River,	韶江合瀧江,
Two distant green streams blend in clamor.	兩股遠綠交喧豗.
That day I felt the inscription with my hands till dusk.	我時摸碑到日夕,
Right then, I saw a stream of billowy clouds coming hither with great force from Cangwu.[355]	正見雲氣一縷浩浩蒼梧來.
The rivers and mountains truly open up for the poetic realm;	江山信為詩境開,
To the rivers and mountains I pour a cup of ale as libation.	我酹江山酒一杯.
Ah! The Dissolute Old Man! The talent of an era!	吁嗟放翁一代才.
The energy of rivers and mountains will never drain out –	江山氣尚洩不盡,
Woohoo! How boundless the poetic realm! How eternal!	吁嗟詩境曷有窮止哉!

title, "The stele is in Shaozhou. Fang Xinru, acting prefect in the Song dynasty, traced and had it carved."

[353] Weng's note: "'Tones harmonious, texture beautiful and tight' are Liu Kezhuang's words in his preface to Fang Xinru's *Collected Writings of Hao'an* 宮商協諧, 經緯麗密, 劉後村序方信孺好庵集語."

[354] Weng's note: "Fang Xinru keeps the Dissolute Old Man's handwritten poetry manuscript, at the beginning, it is written [Lu You himself,] 'In seventy-eight days I got a hundred poems.' 方信孺家藏放翁手錄詩藁, 自題卷前云, 七十八日得詩百首."

[355] Cangwu is the burial ground of Emperor Shun. It echoes the beginning of the poem (not quoted) that stele was located at the Terrace of Hearing Shao. It was said that the nine movements of Shao music were performed when Shun traveled down to Cangwu.

The term "realm" had become more weighty and complex, and even harder to define, in the late 18th century than in the Song. Weng mentions skill and swiftness as possibilities, but without much conviction. His final explanation uses the vocabulary of the unremarkable – to turn raw (strange, unfamiliar) into ripe (common, familiar) and to achieve magnificence in the plain. It must be noted that in the Qing, "ripe" often had the pejorative sense of "cliché". By his usage of it here as a positive value, Weng consciously evokes Song vocabulary. He substantiates this explanation of the poetic realm with images that visualize the energy of the landscape: the rushing sound of two rivers and the billowy clouds from Cangwu.[356] Embedded in the cloud imagery is that of a strong wind (to impel the clouds hither) and the music of the legendary antiquity. The poet stands in an animate landscape whose energy circulates through the rivers and mountains, the earth and the sky, the high antiquity and the present moment. If "poetic realm" is still undefined by the end of the poem, it would be because the animate landscape that generates it defies boundary in both space and time. Nonetheless, until that final liberating image, perceptions of the landscape's energy had all been anchored by the poet's (Weng's) subjectivity. Though he appears to surrender it by a final salute to the realm's boundlessness, poetic subjectivity had remained a powerful source of meaning.

Weng's interpretation of Lu You's poetic realm brings together the important elements of his poetry that I have discussed so far. Poetic realm is open and ever-renewing because *qi*, the force that gives life to it, is the same vital force that animates the universe. As Weng presents him, the poet is sensitive to this vital force and also channels it; his highest attainment is not in exotic

[356] Weng Fanggang's "realm" is a central concept in collected remarks on poetry. He distinguishes between the "real realm" (*zhenjing* 真境) and the "transformed realm" (*huajing* 化境). See Weng, *Shizhou shihua* 石洲詩話, in Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞 and Fu Shousun 富壽蓀 eds., *Qing shihua xubian* 清詩話續編, 4 vols., (Shanghai: Shanghai guji 2016), 3:1303-1439.

creations, but in reaching a stage where even the common things become magnificent. The energy that Weng sees circulating in the external landscape is in essence the same human-oriented *qi* that Lu You believes should dominate poetry. The open and expansive character of the poetic realm translates into the capacity of his poetry to include everything, although the "everything," or the world experience in entirety, is more of a potential and promise than an accomplished fact. The promise to completeness dissolves the circle that demarcates poetry apart from other planes of experience, for instance, ordinary life.

The actualization of this promise is in the ongoing practice of writing in the unremarkable aesthetic, observable over Lu You's day-to-day poetic record. Due to space constraints, I will limit myself to four examples, starting with a poem on the landscape: "When I served in the army in Nanzheng, I frequently traveled between Xingyuan and Fengzhou. On a leisurely day, I write this reminiscence of my past travels. 頃歲從戎南鄭屢往來興鳳間暇日追憶舊遊有賦."[357] Lu You's nine-month service in 1172 under the Pacification Commissioner Wang Yan 王炎 is the most-often remembered period in his later poetry. He spent most of his time in Wang Yan's headquarters in Xingyuan (present-day Hanzhong in southwest Shaanxi) near the Song-Jin border, and ran official errands between nearby outposts and towns. Xingyuan was just outside Guanzhong, the site of the ancient capitals Chang'an and Luoyang, and the territory that Lu You believes to be of foundational importance and should be the first to recapture from the Jin. He notes that the Zhongnan Mountains on the outskirts of Chang'an is visible from Nanzheng (a district in Xingyuan).[358] For such a fondly-remembered site, the poems that directly describe his

[357] *JNSGJZ,* 8:4154.

[358] Lu You's note to "Written on Horseback in Nanzheng 南鄭馬上作" (*JNSGJZ,* 1:234)

experiences there are remarkably few.[359] We derive much of our knowledge of Lu You's time there from his later poems of reminiscence, in which vivid descriptions are often accompanied by passionate outbursts and imaginary constructs. [360] Among them, the following poem stands out as the most even-minded recollection:

In the past, when I served in the outpost north of Silkworm Clew's land,	昔戍蠶叢北,
I frequently traveled to the south of Phoenix Gathering.	頻行鳳集南.
Beacon fires transmitted between closely placed fortresses;	烽傳戎壘密,
Post stations sent the traveler avid on his journey.	驛送客程貪.
Flowers continued to open after the end of spring;	春盡花猶拆,
Rain was half contained in the clouds hanging low.	雲低雨半含.
The swidden was mostly planted with beans and millet;	種畬多菽粟,
The cultivated trees were a mix of pine and nanmu.	藝木雜松楠.
The women drew water with only earthen vessels;	婦汲惟陶器,
Half of the commoners' dwellings were thatched huts.	民居半草庵.
Wind and fog obscured the cliff walkways.	風煙迷棧閣,
Thunderbolts rose from the deep pools.	雷霆起湫潭.
In the cities, the custom of Qin is kindred;	城郭秦風近,
In the hamlets, the Shu dialects take part.	邨墟蜀語參.

[359] Counting from "The Guozhou Post Station 果州驛" (*JNSGZ,* 1:219), the first travel post he stops on the Jialing River, to "Written about Some Matter 書事" (1:259), the last poem he wrote in Xingyuan, there are 51 extant poems over 9 months, including the ones he wrote for social occasions. In addition, Lu You mentions some hundred poems that he lost: "I had sundry poems from Shannan, more than a hundred total. When I passed the Wangyun Rapids, they fell into the water. I regret it to this day. 山南雜詩百餘篇, 舟行過望雲灘, 墜水中, 至今以為恨." (his note to "Moved by My Memory of the Past 感舊," *JNSGJZ* 5:2380). Xu Wenjun 許文軍 observes a drastic difference in the way Lu You portrayed his experience while in Nanzheng and how he reconstructed it in later poems. Xu argues that the sense of uncertain and misery in the earlier poems and the heroism in later ones represent different realities in the different stages in Lu You's life. Xu, "Lu You in Nanzheng 論陸游在南鄭," *Shaanxi Shifandaxue xuebao* 陝西師範大學學報 (哲學社會科學版) 31.sup. (Nov. 2002): 254–63.

[360] Yu Beishan compiled a convenient list of all the poems in remembrance of serving in Nanzheng. See Yu, *Lu You nianpu*, 123-24.

It exhilarated my heart to come upon an open expanse;	快心逢曠野,
It refreshed my eyes to gaze far on the floating mountain mist.	刮目望浮嵐.
On studying the ancient sites, I was moved by the current affairs;	考古興時感,
Every time I failed to write a poem, I felt ashamed of myself.	無詩每自慚.
The Jialing River is most worth remembering,	嘉陵最堪憶,
The willow branches, long and lush, greeted me on my horse.	迎馬柳毵毵.

The long regulated poem (*pailǜ* 排律*)* had fallen out of favor in the Southern Song. Out of Lu You's ten-thousand poems, less than one percent are *pailǜ*, and most of them stop at ten rhymed couplets.[361] Adding to the unusual form and length is his choice of rhyme: the *tan* 覃 category contains many challenging words to use in a long *pailǜ*. There is only one precedent throughout the Tang and the Song: Su Shi's "Poem on Entering the Gorges 入峽詩" in thirty rhymes. Su Shi has another ancient style poem in the *tan* rhyme, "On the East Lake 東湖詩," also in thirty couplets. It is perhaps the combination of all these unusual factors that led Ji Yun to judge the poem as "mostly an imitation of Su Shi's poem in the Gorges."[362] Ji Yun, however, is mistaken. While Lu You's choice of form and rhyme unmistakably invokes Su Shi, his poem is not an imitation. Su Shi's composition is a display piece – almost a *fu* on the local landscape with a lyrical twist at the end – presenting an exhaustive but well-structured description of the Gorges region. Su Shi's first rhymed compound, "to freely explore (*zongtan* 縱探*)*," summarizes the content of his poem. He unearths hidden beauties of the landscape as well as its history and legends. In contrast, Lu You appears to have no clear project in mind and rambles on from a

[361] What remains of Lu You's early poetry contain more long poems. "Seeing Off the Distinguished Talent Han Zi in Eighteen Rhymes" is partially a *pailǜ. JNSGJZ* 1:23.

[362] Ji Yun's note is included in the commentarial edition of *Yingkui lǜsui*. Cf. n.8, no. 61. For Su Shi's poem, see Wang Wengao 王文誥, annot. 蘇軾詩集, (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982), 8 vol., 1:31-33.

failing memory. He is content with recapturing scenes as they came to mind. He starts from his travels on official business, talks about the scenery, notes on the local customs, back to the scenery, back again to the locals, and so on and so forth. The poem's style is characterized by lacks: it does not contain hyperbolic descriptions and striking imagery, or boast of craft through the skillful use of difficult rhyme words. In the free flow of reminiscence, it keeps to the unremarkable aesthetic.

In the poem's smooth descriptions, Lu You unobtrusively reorganizes his experience of the landscape. Some of the scenes we recognize from his earlier poetry, such as traveling on horseback in the dense willows by the Jialing River. Others supply information about agriculture, customs, and local dialects for the first time. Still others are partially corroborated in historical sources:

> In the Xingyuan Prefecture after the war, thorn bushes grew in the city, officials and commoners alike dwelled in thatched-roof houses, and caches of valuables were entrusted to Buddhist monasteries. When Defender-in-Chief Yang Zheng served the second term as Pacification Commissioner, he rebuilt things in order. Today the prefecture is all renewed, and the population gradually grew to be like the peaceful times.
> 興元自兵亂以來, 城內生荊棘, 官民皆茅屋, 而帑藏寓僧舍. 自太尉楊政再為帥, 以次繕治, 至是一新, 戶口浸盛, 如承平時矣.[363]

According to this entry on the year 1156, the rebuilding of Xingyuan was then complete. And yet Lu You still writes of half the peoples' houses being thatched huts in the 1170s. We may never ascertain whether the details on the peoples' houses and wares come from his personal observation to amend historical records. The only selection and organizing principle for the scenes seems to be what stands out in reminiscence at the moment of writing this poem.

[363] Li Xinchuan 李心傳, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 建炎以來繫年要錄, in *Song shi ziliao cuibian* 宋史資料萃編, ser. 2 (Taipei: Wenhai, 1968), 8:5254 (*juan* 164).

"Evening Walk on the South Dike, Noting Down My Neighbors' Conversation 南塘晚步記鄰里語" embeds a natural disaster and an unusual message in the understated narrative style. I will present it in stanzas (my division), starting with the long-winded prelude:

I called for a boat, intending to go out on the lake.	喚舟欲泛湖,
When I get out of the door, it's already dusk.	出門日已暮.
Looking at the shadows, I give up on going.	顧景遂輟行,
Me being old and sick, and vulnerable to wind and dew.	老病畏風露.
Better go on the South Dike	不如上南塘,
To take my leisurely walk.	蕭然散予步.
The youngest son carries my books in his arms;	季子挾書卷,
My second grandson tends to my needs.	仲孫奉杖屨.

One wonders why he wants his son to bring along books when it is already getting dark. Then enter the neighbors:

This summer and autumn, I mostly stayed in.	夏秋多杜門,
As soon I get out I'm surprised by the passers-by.	一出驚行路.
My neighbor villagers are saying to each other:	鄰里相與言,
"The state of farming affairs is seriously alarming.	穡事凜可懼.
Locust swarms fly and block the sun.	群蝗飛蔽日,
They've gnawed through all the crops and started on the bamboo and trees.	殘嚙到竹樹.
Only these several li around	惟茲數里間,
Seem to have divine protection.	若有神物護.
Luckily natural disaster is light on this place alone –	天菑幸獨薄,
Can it be because of *this* old guy?" (italics mine)	豈以此老故.

The Zhejiang region suffered from locust plagues every year between 1207 to 1209.[364] Lu You noted in many poems their impact on nearby villages. In 1208, the locusts passed by Sanshan 三

[364] Aside from the obvious *Song shi*, Ma Duanlin 馬端臨 devotes a section to locust plagues in the Song in *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考, *juan* 314. In it, he connects the plagues with the

山, where Lu You lived, without descending on the crops.[365] However, other villages were not so lucky, as a visitor tearfully informed him.[366] "The locusts avoided this area because of me" raises eyebrows, even if he puts it in the villagers' mouths. A Song reader with a basic education in history would recall Lu Gong 魯恭 from the Han Dynasty, whose good moral influence had the locusts avoid the district where he was serving as magistrate.[367] Lu You's fellow villagers, however, presumably did not know this story. What they did know was to ask Lu You to draw a locust-repelling talisman.[368] While either his moral influence or his talisman might have done the trick, Lu You's own explanation was that "the spirits and deities liked me":

The old guy chuckles in self-mockery:	老人亦自笑,
These sick bones can fall over any day.	病骨日欲仆.
I wonder why the spirits and deities	鬼神彼何爲,
Have different preferences than the world's men.	與世殊好惡.
Let's resolve to diligently cultivate ourselves –	相期勤自修,
How often can we have this kind of luck?	此幸豈可屢.

harmful aura caused by Han Tuozhou's disastrous military expedition. Ma, *Wenxian tongkao* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2011), 14 vol., 13:8507-08.

[365] Lu You mentions this fact in a note to "Unsorted Compositions 雜賦" (11th of a set of 12). In that poem, he attributes the miracle to the village's good customs and harmonious energy. See *JNSGJZ,* 8:4296. Sanshan is a hill nine *li* west of Shanyin and the site for North Village. For a brief account of Lu You making his home there, see Shi Su 施宿, *Jiatai Kuaiji zhi* 嘉泰會稽志, facsimile of 1808 ed., (Beijing: Zhonghua 1990), 9:25b.

[366] "Autumn Thoughts 秋思" (7th poem of 10). *JNSGJZ,* 7:4212.

[367] The original account is in Lu Gong's biography in the *Hou Han shu*, and often cited as an exemplar in deflecting natural disasters by human virtue.

[368] In "Second-Month-of-Autumn Stuff 仲秋書事" (6th poem of 10). *JNSGJZ,* 7:4231.

When Lu You heard of the locust plague affecting the nearby villages, he had written something similar: "It's as if the Heavenly Heart, for the sake of this frail old man, / Makes it possible to eat our fill and sleep peacefully only in the North Village."[369] An exceptional literary talent stands in a tricky position to Heaven and the spirits and deities. The power of his poetry can reach beyond the human realm to affect the spirits. It is also a perennial question whether his talent is a sign of Heaven's special favor or merely an obstacle to his worldly success. Writings on this theme can get quite serious and even tragic, but here it is playfully referenced as a general platitude.

This poem is typical of Lu You's Shanyin poetry in appearing to be a plain record of "what happened today." However, both the writing and the reading of it assumes knowledge in the histories and past literary writing. The section of his neighbors' conversation calls to mind sections of *yuefu* ballads, while his reaction must be read against the dialectic nature of the poet-scholar's talent as either Heaven's favor or misfortune. The poem's all-time pedantic ending – "let's resolve to diligently cultivate ourselves" – draws on the "moral resolve" ending of ancient style poems and Lu You's own emphasis on the importance of Confucian learning in poetry. The poem suggests that, in practice, the meaning of unremarkable in Lu You is threefold: the choice of topic in ordinary life events; its presentation in accord with an aesthetic that seeks to impress not by originality, but by familiarity; and the use of book-learning – even if it is sometime platitudes and pedantry – to create unusual meaning beyond the ordinary (here he falls a little short of "magnificent").

When Lu You was not cooped up sick in his "thatched hut," he spent most of his days in the nearby lake and hills:

Coming Home from the Lake in the Evening	湖上夜歸
Nothing but new frost in the mirror - what to do about getting old?	滿鏡新霜奈老何,

[369] 天心似為衰翁地, 飽食安眠獨北村. Cf. n. 265.

Spend every day on a small boat with my drunken face rosy.	扁舟日日醉顏酡.
Happy, like leading a yellow hound on a hare hunt.[370]	樂如逐兔牽黃犬,
Exhilarating, like commanding an army to polish off the White Tide.[371]	快似麾兵捲白波.
Frost approaches, chrysanthemums are yet to be seen.	霜近菊花猶未見,
After the rain, tangerines are good to roll [between my palms].	雨餘橙子已堪搓.
In the little Lakeberry Dike market, a countless crowd[372]	湖桑小市人無數,
Vie to get a look at this old mountain rustic keeping beat on his oars, singing.	爭看山翁擊檝歌.

While it makes sense to roll a tangerine between one's palms to make it easier to peel, nobody wrote in poetry about "rolling (*cuo* 搓)" one except for Su Shi: [373]

My hair knot is weighed down – I don't mind – by the yellow chrysanthemums I wear all over it;	髻重不嫌黃菊滿,
My hands are fragrant – delightfully so – from the green tangerine I just rolled.	手香新喜緑橙搓.

It may be a coincidence that Lu You, like Su Shi, pairs chrysanthemums with tangerines in the parallel couplet. After all, these are common things to enjoy in autumn. But then again, with Lu You being the only Song poet to write about rolling tangerines after Su Shi, it is hard not to draw

[370] Before his execution, Li Si 李斯 reportedly said to his son, "I want to go on a hare hunt with you leading yellow hounds just like before, but how is this possible?"

[371] "Roll the White Tide 捲白波" can refer to a drinking game or a drinking song, both urging the guests to "bottoms-up." It is a commonplace in Song poetry for drinking up quickly. Lu You's usage here with the battle metaphor shows that he is aware of the phrase's purported origin as Zhang Biaochen 張表臣 (fl. mid-12th c.) explains in *Shanhugou shihua* 珊瑚鉤詩話, "After the Eastern Han [general] caught the White Tide rebels, he slaughtered them like rolling up mats. The [swiftness] is imitated in drinking banquets to enliven the guests' mood and spirit. (Zhang, in turn, is quoting from a Tang source.)

[372] According to a Song local gazetteer, the Lake Mulberry Dike 湖桑堰 was located ten *li* west of Shanyin. A small market had formed there, attended by numerous local residents. See Shi Su, *Jiatai Kuaiji zhi*, 4:16a.

[373] From "To the Same Rhymes as Record Keeper Su Bogu's 'Double Ninth.'"

the connection. The rest of the poem alike describes Lu You's everyday activities vividly, but is at the same time loaded with adventitious allusions to past writing. While almost every line requires a footnote today, Lu You's contemporaries would not have found any of it obscure. The last couplet makes a perfect example: mentioning the Lakeberry Dike by name grounds the audience firmly in the present reality, while the scene they are watching is a bit sensational. For all we know, Lu You probably did come back drunk singing at the top of his voice and enjoying the crowd's attention. This spectacle, however, is presented in a way to invoke several levels of realities. A native of Jiangnan would know the practice of fishermen singing to the rhythm of the oars or by tapping on the edge of the boat. A general reader would be familiar with poetic portrayals of singing fishermen or of poets posing as fishermen. Readers of Li Bai would think of the scene in the "Song of Xiangyang," where the all the children sung and laughed at the dead-drunk poet.[374] The poem does not require us to decide on which level of reality it is operating, and forges a unity between the past poems and the present moment.

The figure of the wild-mannered poet for public display has many precedents. While they add meaning to Lu You's self-description, they also threaten to make it generic. One way for him to be unique is to establish uniqueness of the moment by naming a location or time. This he does in the above poem by mentioning the Lakeberry market. But his most common method,

[374] In the "Song of Xiangyang," Li Bai alludes to "Old Shan" (*Shan gong* 山公 or *Shan weng* 山翁) – Shan Jian 山簡 of Western Jin whose drunken episodes in Luoyang made him the object of mockery in a children's song. In the context of this poem, *Shan weng* very likely alludes to Old Shan. At the same time, the compound often means, simply, "an old man of the mountains." I chose the general usage in the translation to preserve the open-endedness.

paradoxically, is by repetition over many poems. Not in the least, "Looking for Plum Blossoms by the Lake and in the Hills 湖山尋梅:"[375]

When I go to the lake in the light snow looking for plum blossoms,	小雪湖上尋梅時,
Randomly pinned to my easy cap are none but flowering twigs.	短帽亂插皆繁枝.
The passersby who look at me all say to each other:	路人看者皆相語,
"This old fellow's always got poems in his heart."	此老胸中常有詩.
I come home, the lamp's blue flame burns bright in the window.	歸來青燈耿窗扉,
My mind suddenly enters the Creator's loom.	心境忽入造化機.
A shallow layer of ink in the inkwell, the brush tip dry,	墨池水淺筆鋒燥,
Smiling, I smooth out the fine stationery[376] and do a free cursive.	笑拂吳箋作飛草.

Having reached this example, we should not be surprised by Lu You's local celebrity status. When he goes out, the locals often point him out as "this old fellow." Admittedly, the sight he sometimes makes – such as drunk singing or wearing flowers all over his head – can draw this sort of attention. But it is important to note that the locals not only know him as a crazy old poet, but also by face as *the* Lu You. He writes in and about a small secluded world where he is always being pointed out and recognized. And so, after a certain number of poems, we learn to place stress on the demonstrative "this" in "*this* old mountain rustic" and "*this* old fellow," something we cannot do for any other poet.

It takes no transition, no self-stated epiphany for Lu You to leave the world of lookers-on and enter a state of poetic creativity equal to that of the primal forces of Creation. A bright lamp in

[375] Second poem of a set of two (*JNSGJZ* 8:4310) As far as I can tell, this rhyme scheme is used only in Du Fu's "Song of Tonggu" and its imitations.

[376] *Wu jian* 吳箋, stationery made in the Wu region. The usages in the Song suggest that it is fine stationery counted in singles (*ge* 箇) and saved for fastidious writing, such as letters or love poems. Lu You using it to write in free cursive here shows what a "Dissolute Old Man" he is.

the window is all there is: the most ordinary thing to see upon coming home in the evening, while also doubling as an image of an active, luminous consciousness. Thus, looking beyond the additional meaning that "poetic realm" accrued through the Ming and the Qing, the best definition I can give for Lu You's poetic realm is tautological: wherever one is in poetry. It requires book-learning and moral self-cultivation, but the way in which the textual tradition shapes writing is not the kind of conscious re-appropriation in Huang Tingjian's method. Poetic subjectivity, to which Huang had assigned a mediating role between literary writing and the world of experience, is now directed toward channeling an animating force that unite the two. There is nothing remarkable or mysterious in the process of making the ordinary magnificent. Simply by vanishing the boundary between poetry and experience down to the most ordinary moments, Lu You achieved the unremarkable in a way that Huang and the Jiangxi poets had not foreseen.

IIIC. From Realm to Meta-Realm

"How many poems to complete this life?"

It was very hot in the summer of 1206, and Lu You got sick. Already in his 82nd year, he could not help feeling weak and weary. He was convalescent by early autumn, and felt well enough to write, "The cool air revives these sick bones, / The falling leaves arouses my poetic emotions." A pause, and he mused, "Every illness takes several days; / How many poems to complete this life?"[377]

[377] "Sudden Chill 乍凉," *JNSGJZ,* 7:3789.

This was not the first time, nor the last, that Lu You measured his days with poetry. Just a couple of years earlier, when mooring his boat on an outing to the lake, he had written, "The months and years are in the poetry collection; / The rivers and lakes – in the scenery of my travels 歲月詩編裏, 江湖旅色中."[378] In fact, it would be hard to find an aspect of his life that he did not measure with poetry. While on his post as the Acting Controller-general of Shuzhou, he compared the volume of his official duties with his poetry, and expressed discontent with his sinecure, "Downcast and reflecting, I am undeserving of my salary; / The duties of my office are fewer than my poems. 低回殘祿米, 官事少於詩."[379] Nature's sounds in early autumn invigorated him, and he went after the wild geese with bow and arrow:

The bowstring is drawn, the goose falls, my poem is also complete.	弦開雁落詩亦成,
The power of my brush has not yielded to the potency of the bow.	筆力未饒弓力勁.

In the years Lu You spent in Sichuan, achieving merit by serving in the army was foremost in his mind. He frequently turned the usual battle-related metaphors for poetry into comparisons between the power of his poetry and his suppressed energy toward the military. It led to deep discontent with poetry: "And yet, I use these hands that should be drawing felt blankets and drafting military proclamation / To produce little poems to decorate the western provinces' spring 卻將覆氈草檄手, 小詩點綴西州春."[380] Fast forward to his old age in Shanyin, and we find Lu You using the same yardstick – poetic effectiveness – to measure his declining health.

---

[378] "Tying My Boat 繫船," *JNSGJZ,* 6:3333.

[379] "Morning Outing to the Lake 晨至湖上," second in a set of two, *JNSGJZ,* 1:435.

[380] "Moved in My Heart After Waking from Drunkenness in a Summer's Night 夏夜大醉醒後有感," *JNSGJZ,* 2:582.

And the examples run on. Lu You's poetry collection, a chronicle of everyday moments, is the literal fulfillment of the often-exaggerated claim to poetic diary, and writing about writing poetry gives it thematic coherence. Zhao Yi observes that every one of Lu You's ten-thousand poems has a meaning of its own. Calculating by one smaller meaning per line and two couplets per recent-style poem, he concludes that it amounts to forty thousand smaller meanings total.[381] The meanings and smaller meanings often do not stop with the here and now, but simultaneously invoke moments from the past, whether they are from history or his personal past. It is remembered, dreamed, imagined, read in historical records, or encountered in one of his old poems. While Lu You's discussion on *qi*-based poetry vanishes the boundaries between poetry, writing, and self-cultivation, and thereby explains in theory the completeness of his collection, his poetry confirms the achievement of completeness by comprehending all types of virtual experience in the chronicle of unremarkable everyday moments.

Lu You's "Poetic Realm" in large-character calligraphy captures the achievement of completeness. His poetry does not lack the realms in Weng Fanggang's broad definition, that the poet always finds poetic realms in the living landscape. There is no limit to poetic realm just as the energy of mountains and rivers never drains out. What is unique in Lu You, however, is that his evolving poetry collection makes a meta-realm. The collection realizes poetry's capacity to recall and rewrite earlier realms without sacrificing immediacy of engagement with the present. Following out the building of this collection through all its revisions testifies to the fluid nature of the collective and personal past in poetic consciousness, and it is organized through a different kind of coherence.

---

[381] Zhao, *Oubei shihua,* 78.

The following poem, "West Village 西村,"[382] calls to mind an earlier realm while pointing to a future one:

Deep in the orderless hills, a little Peach Blossom Spring.	亂山深處小桃源,
I had asked for broth that year – I remember knocking on a door.	往歲求漿憶叩門.
Tall willows close around the bridge, at the first turn of my horse [I come upon]	高柳簇橋初轉馬,
Several homes by the stream, forming a village on their own.	數家臨水自成村.
Through lush foliage the wind brings the song of birds unseen.	茂林風送幽禽語,
On the crumbling wall, moss overruns the traces of drunken writing.	壞壁苔侵醉墨痕.
One fresh poem to remember this evening,	一首清詩記今夕,
Wisps of clouds, the new crescent moon glows in the twilight.	細雲新月耿黃昏.

"The traces of drunken writing" are from one of his old poems, perhaps the very one that contains the famous couplet, "Hill upon hill, the stream winds, there seems to be no path; / Willows darken, flowers brighten, yet another village." That old poem ends with a decision, "From now on, if I am permitted to take advantage of the moonlight, / Cane in hand, at random times, I will knock on doors at night." Reading by the beginning of the present poem, he did knock on a door asking for broth.

Lu You's writing practice, as he describes it, predicts a good chance for him to encounter an old poem. He writes exuberantly and effusively, and leaves his ink traces everywhere:

Drunk, I Wrote on a Commoner's Wall[383]	醉中題民家壁
Back in my prime, I was a wanderer fed up with my old dwelling.	壯歲羈游厭故栖,
In the dusk of life, I came to love my low thatched-roof cottage.	暮年卻愛草堂低.
Friendship is best in poverty revealed.	交情最向貧中見,
The world's affairs are often in drunkenness evened.	世事常于醉後齊.
The pine trees breathe an intermittent whistle, cooling my short hair.	松吹颼颼凉短髮,

[382] *JNSGJZ,* 6:2812.

[383] *JNSGJZ,* 5:2702.

In straw sandals, I flip-flop through the fresh mud.	芒鞋策策響新泥.
My poems playfully adopt Cold Mountain's style;	吾詩戲用寒山例,
In the small market and on people's houses, everywhere I inscribe them.	小市人家到處題.

His wall art on ancient sites then becomes a part of the scene to be revisited:

Yu's Shrine[384]	禹寺
Yu's Shrine is in ruins; the bells and drums remain.	禹寺荒殘鐘鼓在,
I come here and see once more nature's flowering beauty renewed.	我來又見物華新.
In the Shaoxing era I wrote on the wall.	紹興年上曾題壁,
Many viewer suspect that the author is an ancient.	觀者多疑是古人.

Yu's shrine is the embodiment of ancient ruins decaying, never to be decayed. His writing adds the record of fresh human activity to the disused relics and the ever-renewing nature, placing them under shifting historical perspectives. Many frequently-visited sites in Shanyin, including the West Village and the Plum Market, witness Lu You encountering his old poems. For some of the sites in Sichuan that he never again has the chance to revisit, he recalls and rewrites them through memory and dreams. With each rediscovery of the old with the new, the poetry-writing subject changes with the changing poetry collection.

In the next two pairs of poems, we pass from the rewriting of realms to the rewriting of emotions. From the perspective of his evolving collection, Lu You's fervent drive to achieve merit by rendering services to the state is not the stable core as it is perceived in later reception, but subject to the poet's revisions. The following examples are chosen for their proximity to each other in the extant collection. They represent Lu You's attempt to transcend his powerful

[384] Written in 1208 (*JNSGJZ,* 8:4115). The poem he speaks of is the *ci* lyric he wrote on the wall of Shen's garden about his divorced wife. See Qian Zhonglian's note, *JNSGJZ*, 4:1809.

emotions to reach a state of sereneness that he describes in the "Preface to Zeng Jili's Poetry Collection," a sereneness approaching the unremarkable.

Moved by Indignation – Written in an Autumn Night	感憤秋夜作[385]
In dim moonlight, on the window – the tree's stark jutting form.	月昏當戶樹突兀,
The wind is rough; the sky is full of clouds going to and fro.	風惡滿天雲往來.
The sword Paramount shelved away in its case, unused;	太阿匣藏不見用,
"Solitary Indignation," penned to completion, is empty self-lament.	孤憤書成空自哀.
Our honorable hearts can truly penetrate the sun.	吾輩赤心本貫日,
The ancients' bared bones are now covered in moss.	昔人白骨今生苔.
Divine writing emerging from the Yellow and Luo Rivers is seen no more.	榮河溫洛不可見,
Qinghai and the Jade Pass– where are these now?	青海玉關安在哉!

The second poem, "Re-Versing 'Moved by Indignation' 反感憤," has a short preface, "The next evening, I read my previous poem and was saddened, so wrote this to console myself 明夜讀前作而悲, 乃復作此自解:"

Bak-bak in the courtyard tree the chickens just woke up to daylight.	膊膊庭樹雞初明,
The wild geese cry in unison as they travel south in the sky.	嗈嗈天衢雁南征.
How are the hundred years of human life, same as morning dew, long-lasting?	百年朝露豈長久,
The myriad affairs, like the drifting clouds, are always in flux.	萬事浮雲長變更.
To serve or not, as long as I have a heart, I am shameful;	出處有心終有愧,
Even the sages and worthies, without destiny, would accomplish nothing.	聖賢無命亦無成.
Although the West farmland is not fertile, I can provide for myself with effort;	西疇雖薄可自力,
With a pair of young oxen, I should take advantage of the rain to plough.	雙犢且當乘雨耕.

[385] *JNSGJZ,* 3:1544

Stirred by the night rain, Lu You breaks into a plaintive streak, which he hastens to chasten by a second poem:

Stirred by the Night Rain[386]	夜雨有感
The severed rainbow does not keep rain away from the riverside hamlet.	斷虹不隔江郊雨,
One bowl of dim oil lamp, the night is at its midpoint.	一盞昏燈夜半時.
Many things stir my heart to sadness, but ale is not among them.	多感生悲那為酒,
Wasted away by long decline, I wrongly blamed poetry.	積衰成瘦錯冤詩.
How to stop the sound of rain dripping over the empty steps?	空階點滴何由止,
Wearily I lean on my pillow – in desolation known only to myself.	倦枕淒涼只自知.
Old friends all have perished,	平日故人零落盡,
To whom can I send a letter since our last parting?	寄書誰與敘睽離.
I Happened to Write a "Night Rain" Poem. Reading It the Next Day I Laughed at Myself, and Wrote a Different One	偶作夜雨詩明日讀而自笑別賦一首
Not all vulgar feelings were erstwhile forgotten,	俗情向者未全忘,
Let them be chastened by a wisp of incense smoke encircling the curtains.	洗以縈簾一縷香.
Gains and losses are indeed unfathomable.	得失故應長浩浩,
The rights and wrongs – give them up to the heaven.	是非正可付蒼蒼.
The last cicadas' incessant buzzing tells me autumn's approaching,	殘蟬不斷知秋近,
The swallow couple has returned to keep me company in the long days.	雙燕歸來伴晝長.
Who is aware of the new strength in my Tortoise Hall	誰識龜堂新力量,
Instead, my east neighbor laughs at the madness of the student who met Confucius' carriage.	東家卻笑接輿狂.

Lu You took his poetic diary practice to the very end of his last, 87th year, writing so much that Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716-1797) complained, "When orioles grow old, let them not harmonize their songs; / When people grow old, let them not write poetry. / Their energy invariably wanes, /

[386] *JNSGJZ,* 6:2829.

Producing numerous repetitions and redundancies. 鶯老莫調舌, 人老莫作詩. 往往精神衰, 重複多繁詞."[387] However, to Lu You with a complete poetry collection in the making, not a moment is repetitious. He captures with increasing ease and spontaneity every small moment that happens to touch him, producing unremarkable poetry while looking ahead to a time when the unremarkable becomes marvelous:

On a Leisure Day, A Poem Composed While Sitting amidst Pines and Rocks at the Foot of the Mountain[388]	暇日坐山麓松石間作
I happened to come out of my hibiscus hedge on a dry-bamboo staff.	偶曳枯笻出槿籬,
On a huge stone slab in the pine grove, I sat a long while.	松間盤石坐移時.
The hungry roes have chewed up all the grass; no green remains.	飢獐嚼草無餘綠,
The young magpies are building a nest – there is a falling branch.	乳鵲營巢有墮枝.
The subtle matters fall into categories – each and every one can be charted.	幽事類分皆可譜,
Lofty sentiments, communicated in words, naturally become poetry.	高情辭達自成詩.
Do not lament about completing my life in silence –	莫嗟寂寂終吾世,
This is just the scene to be looked upon in the future as a marvelous episode.	正是他年一段奇.

****

IV. The Donkey-rider: Conclusion and Afterthought

Meng Haoran might have been surprised to find that a portrait of him poeticizing in the snow, reportedly done by Wang Wei, had become a legend in the Song dynasty. The original was of dubious existence, copies were numerous, and disagreement over the details grew over time. Yingzhou and the Ba Bridge outside of Chang'an were two possible settings for the portrait. Popular opinion inclined toward the latter, although the former had the support of

[387] *LYZLHB*, 264.

[388] Dated to 1204. *JNSGJZ,* 7:3453.

Ouyang Xiu's *New Book of Tang* and the Meng Haoran's namesake pavilion in Yingzhou, where Wang Wei had supposedly done the portrait. But then again, there is nothing to suggest that Wang Wei drew only one (or any at all). Everyone agreed that Meng Haoran in the portrait was tall and thin, and obviously thinking hard. Meng was riding on a quadruped – if it was a horse, the horse was skinny; if a donkey, the donkey was lame. The one Su Shi saw had the donkey, and he described it thus, "Have you not seen Meng Haoran riding a donkey in the snow, / Frowning as he chanted poetry, his shoulders hunched like hills?"[389] Ge Lifang, compiler of the poetry miscellany *Yunyu yangqiu*, saw several with the horse. One must be a common copy, he said, because the poet in the painting was short and chubby.[390]

Meng Haoran's own poems, as we have them today, do not mention donkeys at all. This story of him and Wang Wei most likely emerged with the iconic image of *kuyin* poets over the last century of the Tang dynasty. Thin, thinking hard, and on a donkey (or at least an undersized equine quadruped easily distinguishable from the mount of a successful official), the poet is the focus of an equally iconic scene of snow on the Ba River. The story in *Beimeng suoyan* 北夢瑣言 captures the essential elements of the scene:

> Someone asked him, "Chancellor, have you written new poems recently?" He returned, "Poetic thoughts are in the wind and snow over the Ba Bridge on a donkey's back. How do I get them here?" By this, he refers to his laborious mind throughout his life [in composing poetry]. [391]

---

[389] "To the Distinguished Talent He Chong, a Portrait Artist 贈寫真何充秀才." 又不見雪中騎驢孟浩然, 皺眉吟詩肩聳山. *SSSJ* 2:587.

[390] Ge, *Yunyu yangqiu, juan* 14, *Lidai shihua tongbian* edition (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan, 2003), 1:380.

[391] Sun Guangxian 孫光憲, Jia Erqiang 賈二強 collat., *Beimeng suoyan*, *juan* 7, *Tang Song shiliao biji congkan* edition, (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2002), 149-150.

或曰：「相國近有新詩否？」對曰：「詩思在灞橋風雪中驢子上，此處何以得之？」蓋言平生苦心也。

The hero in the story is Zheng Qi 鄭綮, a prominent minister in the last years of the Tang who also excelled in poetry. One can easily replace Zheng Qi with Jia Dao or, as the popular portrait would have it, Meng Haoran. The scene has core enough to allow for a few substitutions, especially for poets who choose to write themselves into it as the new hero.

On the other hand, the scene is also open to influence by the evolving group – let us call them donkey-riders – of beloved poets who experienced difficult times on their official careers, and captured all that wretchedness in the image of themselves on donkey-back. For example, Du Fu, "with the donkey for a mount, for thirteen years / lived a wanderer's life in the capital's spring 騎驢三十載, 旅食京華春." Su Shi had his own lame donkey story to contribute when he remembered that experience to his younger brother Su Che: they were on their way to the capital, his horse died, and he had to complete the journey to Mianchi on donkey-back, "Of the bygone days, that rugged path – do you still remember? / The road was long, we were in trouble, and the lame donkey whined 往日崎嶇還記否, 路長人困蹇驢嘶."[392] These real-life moments, taken down in powerful poetry, accrued in the received tradition and continued to influence the creation and reading of poetic experiences. One might ask of the following poem – how much of this baggage contributed to Yuan Haowen's poetic realm over the Ba Bridge – and never get an answer:

甲寅十二月四日出鎮陽寄宰魯伯
The year Jiayin (1254), on the fourth day of the twelfth month, on departing from Zhenyang, I sent this poem to Zai Lubo.

[392] *SSSJ,* 1:96

On the Hu River moves the light of dawn,	滹水曉光動,
It shares its poetic realm with the Ba Bridge.	覇橋詩境同.
I brave the cold, riding a skinny horse;	衝寒騎瘦馬,
On identifying the reflections, I recognize the frail old man.	認影識衰翁.
The long road in the sound of wind,	長路風聲裏,
A lone fortress in the brewing snow.	孤城雪意中.
I turn my head to look back at the place of song and laughter,	廻頭歌笑處,
Forlorn in the extreme - where do my thoughts end? [393]	凄絶意何窮.

The poem dates from the last few years of his life, when Yuan Haowen undertook the formidable task of gathering material to write a history of the fallen Jin state. His journey is grim, and he is not out in the cold to get into the "laboriously chanting" mood. Nevertheless, he alludes to the Ba Bridge as "the same poetic realm." What happens at the moment when he looks into the water and identifies the reflection of the frail old man as himself? Is it harmony or discord he sees between the subject and the scene? Is it a connection or break between the laboriously chanting poets of the past and him, the poet who sought to transmit Jin history through the poetry anthology, *Zhongzhou ji*? As he turns his gaze from his reflection toward the long road before him, does he also see it as the same road that stretched before Su Shi? And when he looks back at the city in the brewing snowstorm, does he recall the lone fortress Du Fu saw hidden in the fog? Of his passionate outburst in song and laughter, making him "forlorn in the extreme," how much of it is empathy with poets of similar realms in the past? Or has the grim reality of the road and fortress in the immediate present – a stark scene on its own – overpowered all impressions of the past? The poem builds a new realm over the familiar one on the Ba Bridge. The new realm

[393] Zai Lubo's given name is Zai Yi 宰沂. In Di Baoxin 狄寶心, *Yuan Haowen shi biannian jiaozhu* 元好問詩編年校注, 4 vol., (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2011), 4:1454.

moves us with its immediacy and powerful emotions, but the relationship between its numerous layers is uncertain.

Any moment with scene and feeling in aesthetic unity is potentially a poetic realm, even before the expression was introduced into poetic discourse. But somewhere from the Song dynasty, poetic realms started to get complicated with the growing role of the shared textual tradition. Scenes in poetry retained the immediacy of the present, and the relationship between the subject and the imagistic elements remained harmonious, but the realms they made began to appear opaque to the reader for the layers of meaning to which they point. Reading and writing poetry became closely interwoven experiences, a large part of which is in empathizing the relationship between the realm of the present and those of the past. When the shared tradition that enriches the poetic realms becomes oversaturated, poetry would appear to repeat itself, because what is original in the present would be hidden from the reader, until a new generation of poets strive to restore transparency and originality by proposing to draw inspiration from their raw spirit. This, however, belongs in the story of the Yuan and the Ming.

Precisely because of its multidimensional nature, the poetic realm is the ideal place – indeed the only possible one – for Lu You to complete his answer to the deep and persistent question: what does it mean for me to write poetry? While searching for an answer, he engaged the core of the Confucian tradition in locating the source of poetry in vital force. Keeping the vital force correct and upright requires exertion in everyday activities and engaging in a model of reading and learning that effectively transforms the subject. It is an axiological commitment with far broader ramifications than enlivening literary writings. Lu You's changing answer represents his continual discoveries in learning, reflecting, and most importantly, in the world of the here and now. Poetic realm, a space at once concrete and fluid where many dimensions of experience

converge, allows him to follow all out his discoveries simultaneously. The poetry he produces is continuous with the paradigm of the unremarkable, developed alongside the Neo-Confucian model of self-cultivation and comparable to the course of the Mean. His project, however, reaches far beyond the unremarkable to subtly redefine poetry itself.

Having followed Lu You's poetry to the end, and taking one final look back at Lu You on the donkey to Sword Gate, the once-transparent scene is suddenly dense with shared knowledge. Like the mixed stains of dust and wine on his travel clothes, it is to be read with deep self-reflection at the moment of truth:

My clothes bear the dust of travel mixed with wine stains –	衣上征塵雜酒痕,
Everywhere on the far journey overwhelms my heart.	遠遊無處不消魂.
Is this person that I am fit to be a poet?	此身合是詩人未,
In the fine drizzle, riding a donkey, I enter the Sword Gate Pass.	細雨騎驢入劍門.

But in fact, on the way into Sword Gate, Lu You was riding a horse.[394]

[394] From three poems he wrote on the same journey. In "When I traveled in Shu and took the road out of the Tandu Pass, I always took a rest in the Mountain Scene at Lohan Monastery; now passing here again, I am moved 余行蜀漢間道出潭毒關下每憩羅漢院山光軒今復過之悵然有感": "My journey to Jiange on horseback starts from today. / The boat to Wu, moored at my gate, is already planned 馬行劍閣從今始, 門泊吳船亦已謀"; "Writing About Matters on the Plank Path 棧路書事": "Drawing water from the river, the people carry urns. / Riding a horse, the traveler (I) covers himself in felt 汲江人負盎, 騎馬客蒙氈"; "Traveling on the road to Yichang after the snow stopped, it feels quite like spring 雪晴行益昌道中頗有春意": "The geese descend at Duling – the year is about to end. / Traveling west by myself on horseback, snow blocks the way to the pass 杜陵雁下歲將殘, 匹馬西遊雪擁關." (*JNSGJZ,* 1:264-66).

The Conclusions

One:

Donkey-riders continued to roam the landscape after Lu You's death in 1209 and that of Yuan Haowen in the north in 1257. The poetic landscape, however, would have seen the last two enshrined masters of *shi* poetry. There would not be another name that required no justification or explanation to grant authority to the one who invoked it, placing him at the end of a recognized lineage that extended far into the august past. With as much precision as that of a buzzword to an inside audience, the name would call to mind an honored model, a distinct style, or a memorized masterpiece. The Southern Song and the Jin developed different poetic cultures independently from each other.[395] The famous names were known to the other side, and diplomats may have helped with the circulation, but there is not enough evidence to show mutual influence. Thus, with the death of the last two eponymous *shi* models, the years 1210 and 1257 arguably mark the completion of the old *shi* canon in the then separate regions.

A chasm kept the great poets after Lu You and Yuan Haowen from attaining the "buzzword" stature. The chasm may be nothing more than the historical process of selective canonization.[396] Nevertheless, the clear divide in selection process invites us to look closely into

---

[395] Hu Chuanzhi 胡傳志 presents evidence of mutual influence in *Song Jin wenxue de jiaorong yu yanjin* 宋金文學的交融與演進, (Beijing: Beijing daxue, 2013). Studies on the relationship between Song and Jin poetic cultures are severely handicapped by the imbalance in extant sources. We rely on a single writer and anthologist, Yuan Haowen, for most of the texts from the Jin. The available sources do not contain enough evidence to support the "blending together" claim about poetry.

[396] The tradition – one to which the same great latecomers belonged and helped to build – seemed to have decided that its set of models was complete. Which is not to say poetry became monotonous – nothing can be farther from the truth. The latecomers were a brilliant, factious, and quarrelsome bunch: except for a prominent few, most of them made their names by forming close circles based on local regions, social networks, or similar ideals about writing ("schools" in the preferred terminology of modern scholarship). Their preferences varied widely. And yet,

those last decades. Especially in the unchosen qualities of the chosen poets, we glean insight into what changed and what drove the change in the nature of the poetic experience. The preceding chapters have been a study of the poetic experience in those decades in the Southern Song.

The message in Ye Shi's praise of the Four Spirits is clear and strong: good poetry is necessarily rare. His reactionary cry draws attention to the inundation of poems in the late twelfth century. The leading poets of the time would have us believe that they wrote everything into poetry.[397] Their impulse to write is based on the conviction that every moment is different poetically. Their extant work presents a compelling outlook different than that of the rare good poem: for the *shiren*, poetry and the world have mutually diffused into each other. So long as they go about conscious of their role as *shiren*, poems exist in abundance to be gathered and collected.

Three moments in the timeline of poetry put their outlook on the relationship between the world and poetry in perspective. Tao Qian from the late fourth century saw "true meaning" in the mountain at sunset. A poet from the 17th century saw "the ideal model" in the landscape:

> *With cane and shoes, I follow heaven and earth.*
> *In mountains and rivers, I see the ideal model*.
> 杖履隨天地, 山川見典型.[398]

---

regardless of the styles they took or the models they chose to adopt, even when the choice was to reject the idea of "modeling," the tradition could supply them with a buzzword from before 1257.

[397] The exclusion of such topics as domestic chores, the dirty and the ugly, or the love for women, shows that a selective principle for "the poetic" was still at work.

[398] From a poem by Wang Fuzhi 王夫之, "Late Autumn, Wishing for Ou Zizhi 深秋望歐子直." Wang, *Jiangzhai shiji* 薑齋詩集, published in *Wang Chuanshan shi wen ji* 王船山詩文集, 2 vol., (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1962), 1:204.

In those same mountains and other natural scenery, the late-twelfth-century poet saw lines of poetry. Worded poems were written into the world they perceived. It is with this outlook that they engaged Huang Tingjian's poetics of appropriation and regulated the densifying patterns in the body of poetic language, producing moment-by-moment poems that are grounded in the immediate present while resonating with past writing.

Two:

Since the publication of Qian Zhongshu's *Song shi xuanzhu* 宋詩選注 (1958), and especially after the 1980s, scholars have gone far in revisiting deep-seated generalizations about Song poetry, offering in their turn more nuanced readings. The last two decades saw a surge in the study of Southern Song poetry, especially of the "Restoration Era." However, most of the new studies in Chinese accept without question the characterizations of Song poetry as "new" and "change" even as they imbue these terms with a positive sense. "New" creates an "old," and "change" needs a starting point. While a generation's immediate predecessors make a definable and comparatively unproblematic "old starting point," one eventually needs to look further backward and forward to gain a macro historical view. Here, the colors on the immediately preceding "starting point" fade into the shadow of a unitary old (usually Tang) orthodox. Because few scholars have attempted to critically engage the nature of the orthodox, Song poetry remains in its shadow, merely changing from being "not as good" to "different for sure, but just as good." Southern Song poetry in its turn is doubly shadowed by the Tang and the Northern Song.

The problem of how to contextualize Song poetry, and especially that of the Southern Song, is a problem of literary history. Michael Fuller addresses this directly in *Drifting Among*

Rivers and Lakes by viewing the changes in poetics as a part of the shift in the nature of aesthetic experience. I build on his conclusions while narrowing the focus on the characteristics that distinguish poetry from other forms of writing. My efforts would find both contradiction and support in traditional literary discourse: writers rarely made rigorous distinctions between *shi* and the broader category of *wen* ("writing"); it was more common to argue that *shi* was an organic part of the latter. But at the same time, the writers conveyed strong if sometimes unstated sense of what poetry is and is not. Because occasional writings far outnumber specialized treatises as the medium for expressing literary thought,[399] the message is bound by the circumstances of their composition, and thus often resist generalization.

The general statement I made about the poetics of encounter in the introduction is necessarily broad. It is allowed to stand because the positions and lines in its structure do not prescribe but are inflection points for change. Its key positions are occupied by human's innate sensitivity as it has the potential to be moved, the world of phenomena as it can be encountered, and the body of poetic language with the capacity to interfuse with either side. Changes in the key positions and movements within this structure are fluid; ideally, the movements both occur within and are manifestations of the cosmic harmony between humans and nature. However, the realization of this utopian vision often stop short in the poets' doubts and anxieties, or in their efforts to overcome the difficulties posed by language. It is in this context that I discuss the "newness" and "change" of the late twelfth century moment.[400]

[399] Such as letters, prefaces, and postscripts.
[400] The Chinese terms with which to talk about literary history are source and streams, orthodox and change. In traditional discourse, the orthodox was identified with the source; and change often had the sense of deviation or devolution.

Three:

Taking the poem as the enduring imprint of what poetry is – the moment of encounter between human's innate sensitivity and the world we inhabit – requires a degree of poetry's physical presence. The material aspect to the "body of poetic language" endured through the transition from manuscript to print. When poems circulated in manuscripts, inscribed on various media such as paper, fine stationery, fabric, fans, or leaves, they had the most material and individual body. Poetry collections printed in batches divested the poem of much of its individual quality, but poets in the Southern Song still exchanged and appreciated each other's collections as material objects. In discussing the body of the poetic language in its layers of imprint, I have justifiably assumed the physical embodied nature of its patterns.

The imprint is both the place and the calling for the realization of poetic experience. And yet, its physicality is swiftly fading away in the age of digitization. Cyberspace also promises a unity in its clouds and projects a future of internalizing large bodies of writing. In doing so, it offers an uncanny antithetical parallel to the late-twelfth-century poetic experience.

****

Epi-logue: *Xin* to Eliot

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow

His blood transmuted into azurite after three years –
So they say.

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the Shadow

His shadow engraved in the mountain's bones
Carved and chiseled to this day.

Bibliography

List of Abbreviated Titles:

QSS: *Quan Song shi*
YKLSHP: *Yingkui lüsui huiping*
WSTRJJ: *Wan shou Tang ren jueju*
JNSGJZ: *Jiannan shigao jiaozhu*
SSSJ: *Su Shi shiji*
LYZLHB: *Lu You ziliao huibian*
BSZLHB: *Bei Song wenxue piping ziliao huibian*
NSZLHB: *Nan Song wenxue piping ziliao huibian*

Primary Sources:

Collective Anthologies:

Li Shan 李善, annot. *Wenxuan* 文選. 6 vols. Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1986.

Li Fang 李昉, ed. *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1965.

Guo Maoqian, ed. *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集, 4 vol. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1979.

Hong Mai 洪邁, compil., and Huo Songlin 霍松林 ed. *Wanshou Tangren jueju jiaozhu jiping* 萬首唐人絕句校注集評. 3 vols. Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin, 1988.

Fang Hui 方回, compil., and Li Qingjia 李慶甲 ed. *Yingkui lüsui huiping* 瀛奎律髓彙評. 3 vols. Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1986.

Jiang Jianren 蔣劍人, ed., *Song Siling shi* 宋四靈詩, (Shanghai: Shanghai Zhonghua shuju, 1940)
Lü Liuliang 呂留良, et.al., eds. *Song shi chao* 宋詩鈔. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1986.

Wang Yaoqu 王堯衢, ed. *Gu Tang shi hejie* 古唐詩合解. Jinzhang shuju lithograph printing, 1909.

Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮 et. al., eds. *Quan Song shi* 全宋詩. Beijing: Beijing daxue, 1991.

Zhou Duwen 周篤文 and Ma Xingrong 馬興榮, eds. *Quan Song ci pingzhu* 全宋詞評注, 10 vol. Beijing: Xueyuan, 2011.

Individual Anthologies:

Fan Qin 范欽 and Chen Dewen 陳德文, ed. *Ruan Sizong ji* 阮嗣宗集, published as *Ruan Ji ji* 阮籍集. Shanghai: Shanghai guji: 1978.

Huang Jie 黃節, annnot., *Xie Kangle shi zhu* 謝康樂詩注. Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1958.

Peng Qingsheng 彭慶生, annot. *Chen Zi'ang ji jiaozhu* 陳子昂集校注. 3 vol. Anhui: Huangshan shushe, 2015.

Qu Tuiyuan 瞿蛻園 and Zhu Jincheng 朱金城, annot. *Li Bai ji jiaozhu* 李白集校注. 2 vols. Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1980.

Qiu Zhao'ao 仇兆鰲, ed. *Du shi xiangzhu* 杜詩詳注, (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1979), 5 vol

Fang Shiju 方世舉 annot. *Han Changli shiji biannian jianzhu* 韓昌黎詩集編年箋注. 2 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua, 2012.

Wang Qi 王琦 ed. *Li Changji geshi* 李長吉歌詩. Published in Yang Jialuo 楊家駱 ed., *Li He shi zhu* 李賀詩注. Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1991.

Feng Jiwu 馮集梧, annot. *Fanchuan shi jizhu* 樊川詩集注, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1998)

Liu Xuekai 劉學楷 and Yu Shucheng 余恕誠, eds. *Li Shangyin shige jijie* 李商隱詩歌集解, 5 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1998.

Wang Wengao 王文誥, annot. *Su Shi shiji* 蘇軾詩集. 8 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982.

Ren Yuan 任淵 and Mao Guangsheng 冒廣生, annot. *Houshan shi zhu bujian* 後山詩注補箋. 2 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1995.

Xin Gengru 辛更儒, ed. *Yang Wanli ji jianjiao* 楊萬里集箋校. 10 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua, 2007.

Fu Shousun 富壽蓀, collat. 范石湖集. Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2006.

Qian Zhonglian 錢仲聯, annot. *Jiannan shigao jiaozhu* 劍南詩稿校注. 8 vols. Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2005.

----. *Lu You quanji jiaozhu* 陸游全集校注. 13 vols. Hangzhou: Zhejiang jiaoyu, 2011.

Ma Yazhong 馬亞中 and Tu Xiaoma 涂小馬, annot. *Weinan wenji jiaozhu* 渭南文集校注. Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji, 2015.

Deng Guangming 鄧廣銘, annot. *Jiaxuan ci biannian jianzhu* 稼軒詞編年箋注. Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1993.

Liu Gongchun 劉公純, et. al., eds. *Ye Shi ji* 葉適集. 2 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1961.

Lou Yao 樓鑰. *Gonggui ji* 攻媿集. *Congshu jicheng* 叢書集成 edition, ser. 1. Shanghai: Shangwu, 1934.

張鎡 *Nanhu ji* 南湖集. *Zhi buzu zhai congshu* edition. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1999.

Han Biao 韓淲. *Jianquan riji* 澗泉日記. In *Yingyin Wenyuange Siku quanshu*, vol. 864.

Shi Guoqi 施國祈, ed. *Yuan Yishan shi jianzhu* 元遺山詩箋注. Based on 1260 edition of *Yuan Yishan quanji* 元遺山全集. *Sibu beiyao* reprint. Shanghai: Shanghai zhonghua, 1920- 1936.

Di Baoxin 狄寶心, ed. *Yuan Haowen shi biannian jiaozhu* 元好問詩編年校注. 4 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua, 2011.

Xin Gengru 辛更儒, ed. *Liu Kezhuang ji jianjiao* 劉克莊集箋校. 14 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua, 2011.

Xie Bingde 謝枋得. *Dieshan ji* 疊山集. 16 juan. *Sibu congkan* edition, ser. 2. Shanghai: Hanfen Lou, 1934 - .

Fang Hui 方回. *Tongjiang xuji* 桐江續集. In *Yingyin Wenyuange Siku quanshu*, vol. 1193. Taipei: Shangwu, 1987.

Huang Yu 黃畬, ed. *Shanzhong baiyun ci jian* 山中白雲詞箋. Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji, 1994.

Wang Fuzhi 王夫之. *Jiangzhai shiji* 薑齋詩集. Published in *Wang Chuanshan shi wen ji* 王船山詩文集, 2 vol. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1962.

***Shihua* and Poetry Criticism:**

Zhang Deng 張燈, ed. *Wenxin Diaolong yi zhu shu bian* 文心雕龍譯注疏辨. Shanghai: Fudan, 2015.

Cao Xu 曹旭 ed. *Shipin jizhu* 詩品集注. Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1994.

Li Zhuangying 李壯鷹, annot. *Shi shi jiaozhu* 詩式校注. Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 2003.

Sun Guangxian 孫光憲 and Jia Erqiang 賈二強 collat. *Beimeng suoyan* 北夢瑣言. *Tang Song shiliao biji congkan* edition. Beijing: Zhonghua, 2002.

Meng Qi 孟棨. *Ben shi shi* 本事詩. Published with *Xu Ben shi shi* 續本事詩 and *Ben shi ci* 本事詞. Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1991.

Chen Yingluan 陳應鸞, annot. *Suihan Tang shihua jiaojian* 歲寒堂詩話校箋. Chengdu: Bashu, 2000.

Zhou Benchun 周本淳, ed. *Shihua zonggui* 詩話總龜. 2 vols. Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1987.

Hu Zi 胡仔. *Tiaoxi yuyin conghua* 苕溪漁隱叢話. 2 vols. Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1962.

Ge Lifang 葛立方, *Yunyu yangqiu* 韻語陽秋. In *Lidai shihua tongbian* 歷代詩話統編, vol.1. Beijing: Beijing tushuguan, 2003.

Luo Dajing 羅大經. *Helin Yulu* 鶴林玉露. *Tang Song shiliao biji congkan* edition. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983.

Cai Zhengsun 蔡正孫 compil., and Bian Dongbo 卞東波 collat., *Tang Song qianjia lianzhu shige jiaozheng* 唐宋千家聯珠詩格校證. Nanjing: Fenghuang, 2007.

Dai Hongsen 戴鴻森, annot. *Jiangzhai shihua* 薑齋詩話. Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1981.

Zhang Zongnan 張宗柟, compil., and Dai Hongsen 戴鴻森, collat., *Daijing Tang shihua* 帶經堂詩話. Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1998.

Zhao Yi 趙翼. *Oubei shihua* 甌北詩話. Beijing: Renmin wenxue 1998.

Weng Fanggang 翁方綱. *Shizhou shihua* 石洲詩話. In Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞 and Fu Shousun 富壽蓀 eds. *Qing shihua xubian* 清詩話續編. 4 vols. Shanghai: Shanghai guji 2016. 3:1303-1439.

Modern Compendia:

Huang Qifang 黃啟方, ed. *Bei Song wenxue piping ziliao huibian* 北宋文學批評資料彙編. Taipei: Chengwen, 1978.

Zhang Jian 張健, ed., *Nan Song wenxue piping ziliao huibian* 南宋文學批評資料彙編. Taipei: Chengwen, 1978.

Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮, ed. *Huang Tingjian he Jiangxi shipai ziliao huibian* 黃庭堅和江西詩派資料彙編. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1978.

Zhan Zhi 湛之, ed. *Yang Wanli Fan Chengda ziliao huibian* 楊萬里范成大資料匯編. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1964.

Kong Fanli 孔凡禮 and Qi Zhiping 齊治平, eds. *Lu You ziliao huibian* 陸遊資料彙編. Beijing: Zhonghua, 2003.

Wu Wenzhi 吳文治, et.al., compil., *Song shihua quanbian* 宋詩話全編. 10 vol. Nanjing: Jiangsu guji, 1998.

Chronologies:

Zeng Weigang 曾維剛. *Zhang Zi nianpu* 張鎡年譜. Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 2010.

Yu Beishan 于北山. *Yang Wanli nianpu* 楊萬里年譜. Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2006.

Yu Beishan 于北山. *Lu You nianpu* 陸游年譜. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1961.

Others:

Wang Xinzhan 王心湛, ed. *Yang Zi Fayan jijie* 揚子法言集解. Shanghai: Guangyi shuju, 1136.

Liu Yiqing 劉義慶, *Shishuo yinyu* 世說新語. Translated by Richard Mather as *New Tales of the World.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2002.

Cheng Yi 程頤 and Cheng Hao 程灝. *Er Cheng yishu* 二程遺書. Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2000.

Li Xinchuan 李心傳. *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 建炎以來繫年要錄. In *Song shi ziliao cuibian* 宋史資料萃編, ser. 2. Taipei: Wenhai, 1968.

Shi Su 施宿. *Jiatai Kuaiji zhi* 嘉泰會稽志, facsimile of 1808 ed. Beijing: Zhonghua 1990.

Ma Duanlin 馬端臨. *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考. 14 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua, 2011.

<u>Secondary Scholarship (by date of publication):</u>

General:

Stephen Owen. *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics: Omen of the World.* Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.

Pauline Yu. *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition.* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987.

Zhou Yukai 周裕楷. "Zhongguo gudian shige de sanzhong shenmei fanxing 中國古典詩歌的三種審美範型." *Xueshu yuekan* 學術月刊, 1989:9.

Asami Yoji. Jin Chengyu 金程宇 and Chika Okada 岡田千穗 trans.. *Juli yu xiangxiang: Zhongguo shixue de Tang Song zhuanxing* 距離與想像: 中國詩學的唐宋轉型. Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2005.

Zhang Hongsheng 張宏生. *Zhongguo shixue kaosuo* 中國詩學考索. Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu, 2006.

Chen Bohai 陳伯海. *Zhongguo shixue zhi xiandai guan* 中國詩學之現代觀. Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2006.

Chen Wenxin 陳文新 et. al., eds. *Zhongguo wenxue biannian shi* 中國文學編年史. 18 vols. Changsha: Hunan renmin, 2006. Vol. 8-9.

Geng Jianhua 耿建華. *Shige de yixiang yishu yu piping* 詩歌的意象藝術與批評. Jinan: Shandong daxue, 2010.

Deng Weilong 鄧偉龍. *Zhongguo gudai shixue de kongjian wenti yanjiu* 中國古代詩學的空間問題研究. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 2012.

Jiang Fei 姜飛. *Zhongguo wenxue de zhenshi guannian* 中國文學的真實觀念. Taipei: Xiuwei zixun, 2014.

Chen Bohai. *Yixiang yishu yu Tang shi* 意象藝術與唐詩. Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2015.

Zheng Yuyu 鄭毓瑜. "類與物 – 古典詩文的'物'背景. In 超越文本: 物質文化研究新視野.

Song Dynasty:

Liang Kun 梁崑. *Song shi paibie lun* 宋詩派別論. Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin, 2014. First edition published in 1912. 以南宋五大家皆入江西. 本書三分之一述江西, 以黃庭堅為宋詩集大成者.

Hu Yunyi 胡雲翼. Song shi yanjiu 宋詩研究. Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 1993. First edition published in 1935.

Yoshikawa Kojirô 吉川幸次郎. *Sōshi gaisetsu* 宋詩概說. Tokyo, 1960. Translated by Burton Watson as *An Introduction to Sung Poetry*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1967.

Jonathan Chaves. "'Not the Way of Poetry": The Poetics of Experience in the Sung Dynasty." *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews,* Vol. 4, No. 2 (Jul.,1982), 199-212.

Xu Zong 許總. *Song shishi* 宋詩史. Chongqing: Chongqing, 1992.

Li Xi 李栖. *Liang Song tihuashi lun* 兩宋題畫詩論. Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1994.

Han Jingtai 韓經太. Song dai shige shilun 宋代詩歌史論. Jilin: Jilin jiaoyu 1995.

Zhou Yukai 周裕鍇. *Song dai shixue tonglun* 宋代詩學通論. Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1997.

Huang Yizhen 黃奕珍. *Songdai shixue zhong de wantang guan* 宋代詩學中的晚唐觀. Taipei: Wenjin, 1998.

Xu Zong 許總. *Song shi: Yi xinbian zaizao huihuang* 宋詩: 以新變再造輝煌. Guilin: Guangxi shifan, 1999.

木齋 Mu Zhai. *Song shi liubian* 宋詩流變. Beijing: Jinghua 1999.

Michael Fuller. "中國詩歌經驗的理論闡釋: 對宋詩史的反思緒言 (Theorizing Chinese Poetic Experience: A Prolegomenon to Rethinking the History of Song Dynasty Poetry)." Translated by Chen Lin 陳琳. In *Xin Song xue* 新宋學 1 (2001): 167-81.

Li Chunqing 李春青. Song xue yu Songdai wenxue guannian 宋學與宋代文學觀念. Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue, 2001.

Zhang Hongsheng 張宏生. Song shi rongtong yu kaotuo 宋詩融通與開拓. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2001.

Lü Xiaohuan 呂肖奐. *Song shi tipai lun* 宋詩體派論. Chengdu: Sichuan minzu, 2002.
She inherited Liang's division of "styles." and discusses the establishment of 宋調 from the changes in poetic schools. Considers Jiangxi as the typical (典型) Song style and Yang Wanli as the crucial figure in 轉型 (among the four restoration poets).

Zhang Gaoping 張高評. *Chuangyi zaoyu yu Song shi tese* 創意造語與宋詩特色. Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 2008.

Zhao Min 趙敏. *Songdai wan Tang ti shige yanjiu* 宋代晚唐體詩歌研究. Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 2008.

Michael Fuller. *Drifting Among Rivers and Lakes: Southern Song Dynasty Poetry and the Problem of Literary History.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2013.

Hu Chuanzhi 胡傳志. *Song Jin wenxue de jiaorong yu yanjin* 宋金文學的交融與演進. Beijing: Beijing daxue, 2013.

Pan Shuxian 潘殊閒. *Song dai wenxue piping de xiangyu tese yanjiu* 宋代文學批評的象喻特色研究. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 2014.

Southern Song:

Hu Ming 胡明. *Nan Song shiren lun* 南宋詩人論. Taibei: Xuesheng shuju, 1990.

Zhang Zhihua 張智華. Nan Song de shiwen xuanben yanjiu 南宋的詩文選本研究. Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2002.

Qian Jianzhuang 錢建狀. *Nan Song chuqi de wenhua chongzu yu wenxue xinbian* 南宋初期的文化重組與文學新變. Xiamen: Xiamen daxue, 2006.

Bian Dongbo 卞東波. *Nan Song shixuan yu Song dai shixue kaolun* 南宋詩選與宋代詩學考論. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008.

Li Xin 李欣. *Song nandu shitan de geju yu bianqian* 宋南渡詩壇的格局與變遷. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 2011.

Yang Lilun 楊理論. Zhongxing si dajia shixue yanjiu 中興四大家詩學研究. Beijing: Zhonghua 2012.

Han Liping 韓立平. *Nan Song zhongxing shifeng yanjin yanjiu* 南宋中興詩風演進研究. Shanghai: Huadong shifan, 2013.

Huang Weihao 黃偉豪. *Wenxue shicheng yu shige tuiyan* 文學詩承與詩歌推演. Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2015.

Gu Youze 顧友澤. A Study on Poetry in the Early Southern Song Dynasty 宋代南渡詩歌研究. Beijing: Beijing daxue, 2015.

Wang Jun 汪俊. *Liang Song zhi jiao shige yanjiu* 兩宋之交詩歌研究.

Liu Tingting 劉婷婷. *Study on the Relationship between Social Change, Psychology of Scholars and Literature Trend in the Southern Song Dynasty* 南宋社會變遷, 士人心態與文學走向研究. Zhongguo shehui kexue 2015.

Poetry and Chan:

Schmidt, J. D. “Ch’an, Illusion, and Sudden Enlightenment in the Poetry of Yang Wan-li,” *T’oung pao* 60.4-5 (1974): 230-281.

Du Songbo 杜松柏. Chanxue yu Tang Song shixue 禪學與唐宋詩學. Taipei: Liming wenhua shiye, 1976.

Xie Siwei 謝思煒. “Chan zong de shenmei yiyi ji qi lishi neihan 禪宗的審美意義及其歷史內涵.” In *Tang Song shixue lunji* 唐宋詩學論集. Beijing: Shangwu, 2003, 293-309.

Zhang Peifeng 張培鋒. *Song shi yu Chan* 宋詩與禪. Beijing: Zhonghua, 2009. Twenty chapters casually pointing out how different aspects of poems and culture are manifestations of Chan practice.

Huang Qijiang 黃啟江. *Yiwei Chan yu Jianghu shi – Nan Song wenxue seng yu Chan wenhua de tuibian* 一味禪與江湖詩 – 南宋文學僧與禪文化的蛻變. Taipei: Taiwan shangwu, 2010. Poet-monks and their interaction with the literary circles in the Southern Song.

Zhou Yukai 周裕鍇. *Fayan yu shixin – Song dai fo Chan yujing xia de shixue huayu jiangou* 法眼與詩心 – 宋代佛禪語境下的詩學話語建構. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 2014.

Huang Tingjian and the Jiangxi School:

Gong Pengcheng 龔鵬程. Jiangxi shishe zongpai yanjiu 江西詩社宗派研究. Taipei: Wen shi zhe, 1983.

Palumbo-Liu, David. *The Poetics of Appropriation: The Literary Theory and Practice of Huang Tingjian*. Stanford: Standford University Press, 1993.

Qian Zhixi 錢志熙. *Huang Tingjian shixue tixi yanjiu* 黃庭堅詩學體系研究. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2003.

Wu Xiaoman 伍曉蔓. *Jiangxi zongpai yanjiu* 江西宗派研究. Chengdu: Bashu, 2005.
Wang Yugen*, Ten Thousand Scrolls: Reading and Writing in the Poetics of Huang Tingjian and the Late Northern Song,* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2011)

Zhang Chengfeng 張承風, *Huang Tingjian shilun* 黃庭堅詩論. Chengdu: Bashu, 2013.

Lu You:

Michael S. Duke. *Lu You*. Boston: Twayne, 1977.

Burton Watson. *The Old Man Who Does as He Pleases.* New York: Columbia UP, 1973.

Zhou Kangxie 周康燮 ed., *Lu You yanjiu huibian* 陸游研究彙編 (Hong Kong: Chongwen, 1975)

Xu Wenjun 許文軍, "Lu You in Nanzheng 論陸游在南鄭," *Shaanxi Shifandaxue xuebao* 陝西師範大學學報 (哲學社會科學版) 31.sup. (Nov. 2002): 254–63

Fan Chengda:

Kong Fanli 孔凡禮. *Fan Chengda yizhu jicun* 范成大佚著輯存. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983.

Hargett, James M. "Boulder Lake Poems: Fan Chengda's (1126-1193) Rural Year in Suzhou Revisited," *CLEAR*, Vol. 10, Nos. 1-2, (July, 1988), 109-131.

J. D. Schmidt. *Stone Lake: The Poetry of Fan Chengda (1126-1193)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Yang Wanli:

Jonathan Chaves. *Heaven My Blanket, Earth My Pillow.* New York: Weatherhill, 1976.

J. D. Schmidt, J.D. *Yang Wan-li.* Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976.

Mo Lifeng, "Lun Yang Wanli shifeng de zhuanbian guocheng 論楊萬里詩風的轉變過程," *Qiusuo* 求索, 2001.4., 105-110.

Earlier Poets and Poetry (by author's last name):

Ronald Egan. *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1994.

James Hightower. *The Poetry of T'ao Ch'ien*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1970.

Hu Zhongxing 胡中行. "Lüe lun Jia Dao zai Tang shi fazhan zhong de diwei 略論賈島在唐詩發展中的地位." In *Fudan xuebao* 復旦學報, 1983:3, 46-50.

Charles Hartman. "The Tang Poet Du Fu and the Southern Song Literati." In *CLEAR*, 4(2008):199-212.

----. "Poetry and Politics in 1079: The Crow Terrace Poetry Case of Su Shih." In *CLEAR,* 12(1990): 15-44.

J. D. Frodsham. *Goddesses, Ghosts, and Demons: The Collected Poems of Li He (790-816)*. London: Anvil Press Poetry Ltd, 1983.

Jonathan Chaves, *Mei Yao-ch'en and the Development of Early Sung Poetry,* (New York: Columbia UP, 1976)

Nicholas Morrow Williams, "The Taste of the Ocean: Jiaoran's Theory of Poetry," *Tang Studies*, 31 (2013), 1-27.

Stephen Owen, *The Great Age of Chinese Poetry: The High T'ang.* New Haven: Yale UP, 1986.
----. *The End of the Chinese Middle Ages: Essays in Mid-Tang Literary Culture*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996.

----. *The Late Tang: Chinese Poetry of the Mid-Ninth Century (827-860).* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2006.

----. *The Poetry of Du Fu,* 9 vol. Boston: De Gruyter, 2016.

Others (by author's last name):

William Theodore de Barry and Irene Bloom, *Sources of the Chinese Tradition.* Vol.1. New York: Columbia UP, 2013.

Charles Egan. "A critical Study of the Origins of Chüeh-chü Poetry." In *Asia Major*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1993), 83-125.

Michael Fuller. "*Aesthetics* and *Meaning* in Experience: A Theoretical Perspective on Zhu Xi's Revision of Song Dynasty Views of Poetry." In *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (Dec., 2005), 311-355

Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書. *Guanzhui bian* 管錐編. 5 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1979.
Adele Rickett. *Wang Kuo-wei's Jen-chien tz'u-hua: A Study in Chinese Literary Criticism*. Hong Kong, Hong Kong UP, 1977.

Qiu Meiqiong 邱美瓊. *20 shiji yilai Riben xuezhe de Song shi yanjiu* 20 世紀以來日本學者的宋詩研究. Nanchang: Jiangxi renmin, 2010.

Shen Songqin 沈松勤. *Bei Song wenren yu dangzheng – Zhongguo shidafu qunti yanjiu* 北宋文人與黨爭 – 中國士大夫群體研究. Beijing: Renmin 1998.

Xiaofei Tian. *Visionary Journeys: Travel Writings from Early Medieval and Nineteeth Century China.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2011.

Tang Yongtong 湯用彤. "Yan yi zhi bian 言意之辯." In *Wei Jin xuanxue* 魏晉玄學, *Tang Yongtong quanji* 湯用彤全集 edition. Taipei: Foguang 2001.

Rudolph Wagner. *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy in China: Wang Bi's Scholarly Explanation of the Dark.* Albany: SUNY Press, 2003.

Xie Hailin 謝海林. "Imitating Su, Huang, and Lu – Studying the Tracing Back the Orthodox Form of the Song Dynasty Poetry by Anthology of Song Poems in the Qing Dynasty 師法蘇黃陸 – 從清人所編宋詩選本看清代宋詩學之推宗." In *Journal of Gansu Lianhe University (Social Sciences)* 26, no. 6 (2011.11.), 1-6.

Xin Yanjun 辛衍君. *Yixiang kongjian: Tang Song ci yixiang de fuhao xue chanshi* 意象空間: 唐宋詞意象的符號學闡釋. Shenyang: Liaoning daxue, 2007.

Xu Lianjun 許連軍. *Jiaoran Shi shi yanjiu* 皎然詩式研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2007)

Chia-ying Yeh. "Wang Kuo-wei's Song Lyrics in Light of His Own Theories." In James Hightower and Chia-ying Ye, *Studies in Chinese Poetry.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1998.

Zhang Bowei 張伯偉. *Tang Wudai shige huikao* 唐五代詩格彙考. Nanjing: Jiangsu guji, 2002.

Zhang Zhihua 張智華, "Cong Tang santi shifa kan Zhou Bi de shixueguan jian lun Nan Song houqi Tang shi xue sichao de yanbian 從唐三體詩法看周弼的詩學觀兼論南宋後期宗唐詩學思潮的演變." In *Wenxue yichan*, 1999.5, 25- 37.

Zhou Xiaotian 周嘯天. *Tang jueju shi* 唐絕句史. Chongqing: Chongqing, 2006.