

Classic Poetry Series

Li Po

- poems -

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A Mountain Revelry

To wash and rinse our souls of their age-old sorrows,
We drained a hundred jugs of wine.
A splendid night it was
In the clear moonlight we were loath to go to bed,
But at last drunkenness overtook us;
And we laid ourselves down on the empty mountain,
The earth for pillow, and the great heaven for coverlet.

Li Po

A Vindication

If heaven loved not the wine,
A Wine Star would not be in heaven;
If earth loved not the wine,
The Wine Spring would not be on the earth.
Since heaven and earth love the wine,
Need a tippling mortal be ashamed?
The transparent wine, I hear,
Has the soothing virtue of a sage,
While the turgid is rich, they say,
As the fertile mind of the wise.
Both the sage and the wise were drinkers,
Why seek for peers among gods and goblins?
Three cups open the grand door to bliss;
Take a jugful, the universe is yours.
Such is the rapture of the wine,
That the sober shall never inherit.

Li Po

About Tu Fu

I met Tu Fu on a mountaintop
in August when the sun was hot.

Under the shade of his big straw hat
his face was sad--

in the years since we last parted,
he'd grown wan, exhausted.

Poor old Tu Fu, I thought then,
he must be agonizing over poetry again.

Li Po
tr. Hamil

Li Po

Alone And Drinking Under The Moon

Amongst the flowers I
am alone with my pot of wine
drinking by myself; then lifting
my cup I asked the moon
to drink with me, its reflection
and mine in the wine cup, just
the three of us; then I sigh
for the moon cannot drink,
and my shadow goes emptily along
with me never saying a word;
with no other friends here, I can
but use these two for company;
in the time of happiness, I
too must be happy with all
around me; I sit and sing
and it is as if the moon
accompanies me; then if I
dance, it is my shadow that
dances along with me; while
still not drunk, I am glad
to make the moon and my shadow
into friends, but then when
I have drunk too much, we
all part; yet these are
friends I can always count on
these who have no emotion
whatsoever; I hope that one day
we three will meet again,
deep in the Milky Way.

Li Po

Alone Looking at the Mountain

All the birds have flown up and gone;
A lonely cloud floats leisurely by.
We never tire of looking at each other -
Only the mountain and I.

Li Po

Amidst the Flowers a Jug of Wine

Amidst the flowers a jug of wine,
I pour alone lacking companionship.
So raising the cup I invite the Moon,
Then turn to my shadow which makes three of us.
Because the Moon does not know how to drink,
My shadow merely follows the movement of my body.
The moon has brought the shadow to keep me company a while,
The practice of mirth should keep pace with spring.
I start a song and the moon begins to reel,
I rise and dance and the shadow moves grotesquely.
While I'm still conscious let's rejoice with one another,
After I'm drunk let each one go his way.
Let us bind ourselves for ever for passionless journeyings.
Let us swear to meet again far in the Milky Way.

Li Po

Autumn River Song

The moon shimmers in green water.
White herons fly through the moonlight.

The young man hears a girl gathering water-chestnuts:
into the night, singing, they paddle home together.

Li T'ai-po
tr. Hamil

Li Po

Bathed and Washed

"Bathed in fragrance,
do not brush your hat;
Washed in perfume,
do not shake your coat:

"Knowing the world
fears what is too pure,
The wisest man
prizes and stores light!"

By Bluewater
an old angler sat:
You and I together,
Let us go home.

Li Po

Before The Cask of Wine

The spring wind comes from the east and quickly passes,
Leaving faint ripples in the wine of the golden bowl.
The flowers fall, flake after flake, myriads together.

You, pretty girl, wine-flushed,
Your rosy face is rosier still.
How long may the peach and plum trees flower
By the green-painted house?
The fleeting light deceives man,
Brings soon the stumbling age.

Rise and dance
In the westering sun
While the urge of youthful years is yet unsubdued!
What avails to lament after one's hair has turned white
like silken threads?

Li Po

Bringing in the Wine

See how the Yellow River's water move out of heaven.
Entering the ocean, never to return.
See how lovely locks in bright mirrors in high chambers,
Though silken-black at morning, have changed by night to snow.
... Oh, let a man of spirit venture where he pleases
And never tip his golden cup empty toward the moon!
Since heaven gave the talent, let it be employed!
Spin a thousand of pieces of silver, all of them come back!
Cook a sheep, kill a cow, whet the appetite,
And make me, of three hundred bowls, one long drink!
... To the old master, Tsen,
And the young scholar, Tan-chiu,
Bring in the wine!
Let your cups never rest!
Let me sing you a song!
Let your ears attend!
What are bell and drum, rare dishes and treasure?
Let me be forever drunk and never come to reason!
Sober men of olden days and sages are forgotten,
And only the great drinkers are famous for all time.
... Prince Chen paid at a banquet in the Palace of Perfection
Ten thousand coins for a cask of wine, with many a laugh and quip.
Why say, my host, that your money is gone?
Go and buy wine and we'll drink it together!
My flower-dappled horse,
My furs worth a thousand,
Hand them to the boy to exchange for good wine,
And we'll drown away the woes of ten thousand generation!

Li Po

Chiang Chin Chiu

See the waters of the Yellow River leap down from Heaven, Roll away to the deep sea and never turn again! See at the mirror in the High Hall Aged men bewailing white locks - In the morning, threads of silk, In the evening flakes of snow. Snatch the joys of life as they come and use them to the full; Do not leave the silver cup idly glinting at the moon. The things that Heaven made Man was meant to use; A thousand guilders scattered to the wind may come back again. Roast mutton and sliced beef will only taste well If you drink with them at one sitting three hundred cups. Great Master Ts'ên, Doctor Tan-ch'iu, Here is wine, do not stop drinking But listen, please, and I will sing you a song. Bells and drums and fine food, what are they to me Who only want to get drunk and never again be sober? The Saints and Sages of old times are all stock and still, Only the might drinkers of wine have left a name behind. When the prince of Ch'ên gave a feast in the Palace of P'ing-lo With twenty thousand gallons of wine he loosed mirth and play. The master of the feast must not cry that his money is all spent; Let him send to the tavern and fetch wine to keep our tankards filled. His five-flower horse and thousand-guilder coat - Let him call the boy to take them along and pawn them for good wine, That drinking together we may drive away the sorrows of a thousand years.

Li Po

Ch'ing P'ing Tiao

Clouds bring back to mind her dress, the flowers her face.
Winds of spring caress the rail where sparkling dew-drops cluster.
If you cannot see her by the jewelled mountain top,
Maybe on the moonlit Jasper Terrance you will meet her.

Li Po

Chuang Tzu And The Butterfly

Chuang Tzu in dream became a butterfly,
And the butterfly became Chuang Tzu at waking.
Which was the real—the butterfly or the man ?
Who can tell the end of the endless changes of things?
The water that flows into the depth of the distant sea
Returns anon to the shallows of a transparent stream.
The man, raising melons outside the green gate of the city,
Was once the Prince of the East Hill.
So must rank and riches vanish.
You know it, still you toil and toil,—what for?

Li Po

Clearing at Dawn

The fields are chill, the sparse rain has stopped;
The colours of Spring teem on every side.
With leaping fish the blue pond is full;
With singing thrushes the green boughs droop.
The flowers of the field have dabbled their powdered cheeks;
The mountain grasses are bent level at the waist.
By the bamboo stream the last fragment of cloud
Blown by the wind slowly scatters away.

Li Po
tr. Waley

Li Po

Climbing West Of Lotus Flower Peak

Amongst the grandeur of Hua Shan
I climb to the Flower Peak,
and fancy I see fairies and immortals
carrying lotus in their
sacred white hands, robes flowing
they fly filling the sky with colour
as they rise to the palace of heaven,
inviting me to go to the cloud stage
and see Wei Shu-ching, guardian angel
of Hua Shan; so dreamily I go with them
riding to the sky on the back
of wild geese which call as they fly,
but when we look below at Loyang,
not so clear because of the mist,
everywhere could be seen looting
armies, which took Loyang, creating
chaos and madness with blood
flowing everywhere; like animals of prey
rebel army men made into officials
with caps and robes to match.

Li Po

Confessional

There was wine in a cup of gold
and a girl of fifteen from Wu,
her eyebrows painted dark
and with slippers of red brocade.

If her conversation was poor,
how beautifully she could sing!
Together we dined and drank
until she settled in my arms.

Behind her curtains
embroidered with lotuses,
how could I refuse
the temptation of her advances?

Li T'ai-po
tr. Hamil

Li Po

Down from the Mountain

As down Mount Emerald at eve I came,
The mountain moon went all the way with me.
Backward I looked, to see the heights aflame
With a pale light that glimmered eerily.

A little lad undid the rustic latch
As hand in hand your cottage we did gain,
Where green limp tendrils at our cloaks did catch,
And dim bamboos o'erhung a shadowy lane.

Gaily I cried, "Here may we rest our fill!"
Then choicest wines we quaffed; and cheerily
"The Wind among the Pines" we sang, until
A few faint stars hung in the Galaxy.

Merry were you, my friend: and drunk was I,
Blissfully letting all the world go by.

Li Po

Drinking Alone

I take my wine jug out among the flowers
to drink alone, without friends.

I raise my cup to entice the moon.
That, and my shadow, makes us three.

But the moon doesn't drink,
and my shadow silently follows.

I will travel with moon and shadow,
happy to the end of spring.

When I sing, the moon dances.
When I dance, my shadow dances, too.

We share life's joys when sober.
Drunk, each goes a separate way.

Constant friends, although we wander,
we'll meet again in the Milky Way.

Li T'ai-po
tr. Hamil

Li Po

Drinking With Someone In The Mountains

As the two of us drink
together, while mountain
flowers blossom beside, we
down one cup after the other
until I am drunk and sleepy
so that you better go!
Tomorrow if you feel like it
do come and bring your lute
along with you!

Li Po

Farewell to Meng Hao-jan

I took leave of you, old friend, at the
Yellow Crane Pavilion;
In the mist and bloom of March, you went
down to Yang-chou:
A lonely sail, distant shades, extinguished by blue--
There, at the horizon, where river meets sky.

Li Po

Farewell to Secretary Shu-yun at the Hsieh Tiao Villa in Hsuan-Chou

Since yesterday had throw me and bolt,
Today has hurt my heart even more.
The autumn wildgeese have a long wing for escort
As I face them from this villa, drinking my wine.
The bones of great writers are your brushes, in the school of heaven,
And I am Lesser Hsieh growing up by your side.
We both are exalted to distant thought,
Aspiring to the sky and the bright moon.
But since water still flows, though we cut it with our swords,
And sorrow return, though we drown them with wine,
Since the world can in no way answer our craving,
I will loosen my hair tomorrow and take to a fishing-boat.

Li Po

For Meng Hao-Jan

I love Master Meng.
Free as a flowing breeze,
He is famous
Throughout the world.

In rosy youth, he cast away
Official cap and carriage.
Now, a white-haired elder, he reclines
Amid pines and cloud.

Drunk beneath the moon,
He often attains sagehood.
Lost among the flowers,
He serves no lord.

How can I aspire
to such a high mountain?
Here below, to his clear fragrance,
I bow.

Translated by Greg Whincup

Submitted by Edward McDonald

Li Po

Gazing at the Cascade on Lu Mountain

Where crowns a purple haze
 Ashimmer in sunlight rays
The hill called Incense-Burner Peak, from far
 To see, hung o'er the torrent's wall,
 That waterfall
 Vault sheer three thousand feet, you'd say
 The Milky Way
Was tumbling from the high heavens, star on star

Li Po

Going Up Yoyang Tower

We climbed Yoyang Tower with
all the scene around coming
into vision; looking up the
Great River seeing boats turn
and enter the Tungting Lake; geese
crying farewell to the river
as they flew south; evening falling
as if mountain tops upt up the moon
with their lips; and we in the Yoyang
Tower as if with heads amongst
the cloud, drinking wine as if the cups
came from heaven itself; then
having drunk our fill there blew
a cold wind filling out our
sleeves, it seeming as though
we were dancing in time with it.

Li Po

Good Old Moon

When I was a boy I called the moon a
white plate of jade, sometimes it looked
like a great mirror hanging in the sky,
first came the two legs of the fairy
and the cassia tree, but for whom the rabbit
kept on pounding medical herbs, I
just could not guess. Now the moon is being
swallowed by the toad and the light
flickers out leaving darkness all around;
I hear that when nine of the burning suns out
of the ten were ordered to be shot down by
the Emperor Yao, all has since been quiet
and peaceful both for heaven and man,
but this eating up of the moon is for me
a truly ugly scene filling me with forebodings
wondering what will come out of it.

Li Po

Green Mountain

You ask me why I dwell in the green mountain;
I smile and make no reply for my heart is free of care.
As the peach-blossom flows down stream and is gone into the unknown,
I have a world apart that is not among men.

Li Po

Hard is the Journey

Gold vessels of fine wines,
thousands a gallon,
Jade dishes of rare meats,
costing more thousands,

I lay my chopsticks down,
no more can banquet,
I draw my sword and stare
wildly about me:

Ice bars my way to cross
the Yellow River,
Snows from dark skies to climb
the T'ai-hang mountains!

At peace I drop a hook
into a brooklet,
At once I'm in a boat
but sailing sunward...

(Hard is the journey,
Hard is the journey,
So many turnings,
And now where am I?)

So when a breeze breaks waves,
bringing fair weather,
I set a cloud for sails,
cross the blue oceans!

Li Po

His Dream Of The Skyland

The seafarers tell of the Eastern Isle of Bliss,
It is lost in a wilderness of misty sea waves.
But the Sky-land of the south, the Yueh-landers say,
May be seen through cracks of the glimmering cloud.
This land of the sky stretches across the leagues of heaven;
It rises above the Five Mountains and towers over the Scarlet Castle,

While, as if staggering before it, the Tien-tai Peak
Of forty-eight thousand feet leans toward the southeast.

So, longing to dream of the southlands of Wu and Yueh,
I flew across the Mirror Lake one night under the moon.

The moon in the lake followed my flight,
Followed me to the town of Yen-chi.
Here still stands the mansion of Prince Hsieh.
I saw the green waters curl and heard the monkeys' shrill cries.
I climbed, putting on the clogs of the prince,
Skyward on a ladder of clouds,
And half-way up from the sky-wall I saw the morning sun,
And heard the heaven's cock crowing in the mid-air.
Now among a thousand precipices my way wound round and round;
Flowers choked the path; I leaned against a rock; I swooned.

Roaring bears and howling dragons roused me—
Oh, the clamorous waters of the rapids!
I trembled in the deep forest, and shuddered at the overhanging crags,
 one heaped upon another.
Clouds on clouds gathered above, threatening rain;
The waters gushed below, breaking into mist.

A peal of blasting thunder!
The mountains crumbled.
The stone gate of the hollow heaven
Opened wide, revealing
A vasty realm of azure without bottom,
Sun and moon shining together on gold and silver palaces.

Clad in rainbow and riding on the wind,
The ladies of the air descended like flower, flakes;
The faery lords trooping in, they were thick as hemp-stalks in the fields.
Phoenix birds circled their cars, and panthers played upon harps.
Bewilderment filled me, and terror seized on my heart.
I lifted myself in amazement, and alas!
I woke and found my bed and pillow—
Gone was the radiant world of gossamer.

So with all pleasures of life.
All things pass with the east-flowing water.
I leave you and go—when shall I return?
Let the white roe feed at will among the green crags,
Let me ride and visit the lovely mountains!

How can I stoop obsequiously and serve the mighty ones!
It stifles my soul.

Li Po

Leaving White King City

White King City I left at dawn
 in the morning-glow of the clouds;
The thousand miles to Chiang-ling
 we sailed in a single day.
On either shore the gibbons' chatter
 sounded without pause
While my light boat skimmed past
 ten thousand sombre crags.

Li Po

Listening to a Flute in Yellow Crane Pavillion

I came here a wanderer
thinking of home,
remembering my far away Ch'ang-an.
And then, from deep in Yellow Crane Pavillion,
I heard a beautiful bamboo flute
play "Falling Plum Blossoms."
It was late spring in a city by the river.

Li T'ai-po
tr. Hamil

Li Po

Looking For A Monk And Not Finding Him

I took a small path leading
up a hill valley, finding there
a temple, its gate covered
with moss, and in front of
the door but tracks of birds;
in the room of the old monk
no one was living, and I
staring through the window
saw but a hair duster hanging
on the wall, itself covered
with dust; emptily I sighed
thinking to go, but then
turning back several times,
seeing how the mist on
the hills was flying, and then
a light rain fell as if it
were flowers falling from
the sky, making a music of
its own; away in the distance
came the cry of a monkey, and
for me the cares of the world
slipped away, and I was filled
with the beauty around me.

Li Po

Marble Stairs Grievance

On Marble Stairs
still grows the white dew
That has all night
soaked her silk slippers,

But she lets down
her crystal blind now
And sees through glaze
the moon of autumn.

Li Po

Moon over Mountain Pass

A bright moon rising above Tian Shan Mountain,
Lost in a vast ocean of clouds.
The long wind, across thousands upon thousands of miles,
Blows past the Jade-gate Pass.
The army of Han has gone down the Baiteng Road,
As the barbarian hordes probe at Qinghai Bay.
It is known that from the battlefield
Few ever live to return.
Men at Garrison look on the border scene,
Home thoughts deepen sorrow on their faces.
In the towered chambers tonight,
Ceaseless are the women's sighs.

Li Po

Mountain Drinking Song

To drown the ancient sorrows,
we drank a hundred jugs of wine
there in the beautiful night.
We couldn't go to bed with the moon so bright.

The finally the wine overcame us
and we lay down on the empty mountain--
the earth for a pillow,
and a blanket made of heaven.

Li T'ai-po
tr. Hamil

Li Po

Nefarious War

Last year we fought by the head-stream of the Sang-kan,
This year we are fighting on the Tsung-ho road.
We have washed our armor in the waves of the Chiao-chi lake,
We have pastured our horses on Tien-shan's snowy slopes.
The long, long war goes on ten thousand miles from home,
Our three armies are worn and grown old.

The barbarian does man-slaughter for plowing;
On this yellow sand-plains nothing has been seen but
blanched skulls and bones.
Where the Chin emperor built the walls against the Tartars,
There the defenders of Han are burning beacon fires.
The beacon fires burn and never go out,
There is no end to war!—

In the battlefield men grapple each other and die;
The horses of the vanquished utter lamentable cries to heaven,
While ravens and kites peck at human entrails,
Carry them up in their flight, and hang them on the branches of dead trees.
So, men are scattered and smeared over the desert grass,
And the generals have accomplished nothing.

Oh, nefarious war! I see why arms
Were so seldom used by the benign sovereigns.

Li Po

On A Picture Screen

Whence these twelve peaks of Wu-shan!
Have they flown into the gorgeous screen
From heaven's one corner?
Ah, those lonely pines murmuring in the wind!
Those palaces of Yang-tai, hovering yonder—
Oh, the melancholy of it!—
Where the jeweled couch of the king
With brocade covers is desolate,—
His elfin maid voluptuously fair
Still haunting them in vain!

Here a few feet
Seem a thousand miles.
The craggy walls glisten blue and red,
A piece of dazzling embroidery.
How green those distant trees are
Round the river strait of Ching-men!
And those ships—they go on,
Floating on the waters of Pa.
The water sings over the rocks
Between countless hills
Of shining mist and lustrous grass.

How many years since these valley flowers bloomed
To smile in the sun ?
And that man traveling on the river,
Hears he not for ages the monkeys screaming?
Whoever looks on this,
Loses himself in eternity;
And entering the sacred mountains of Sung,
He will dream among the resplendent clouds.

Li Po

On Climbing in Nan-king to the Terrace of Phoenixes

Phoenixes that play here once, so that the place was named for them,
Have abandoned it now to this desolated river;
The paths of Wu Palace are crooked with weeds;
The garments of Chin are ancient dust.
...Like this green horizon halving the Three Peaks,
Like this Island of White Egrets dividing the river,
A cloud has risen between the Light of Heaven and me,
To hide his city from my melancholy heart.

Li Po

On Dragon Hill

Drunk on Dragon Hill tonight,
the banished immortal, Great White,
turns among yellow flowers,
his smile wide,
as his hat sails away on the wind
and he dances away in the moonlight.

Li T'ai-po
tr. Hamil

Li Po

On Kusu Terrace

The old gardens of Kusu Terrace
are a wilderness, yet the willows
that remain still put out new branches;
lasses gathering water chestnuts
sing so loudly and with such
clarity, that the feeling of spring
returns to us; but where once stood
the palace of the King of Wu, now
only the moon over the
west river once shone on
the lovely ladies there.

Li Po

Parting at a Wine-shop in Nan-king

A wind, bringing willow-cotton, sweetens the shop,
And a girl from Wu, pouring wine, urges me to share it.
With my comrades of the city who are here to see me off;
And as each of them drains his cup, I say to him in parting,
Oh, go and ask this river running to the east
If it can travel farther than a friend's love!

Li Po

Quiet Night Thoughts

Before my bed
there is bright moonlight
So that it seems
Like frost on the ground:

Lifting my head
I watch the bright moon,
Lowering my head
I dream that I'm home.

Li Po

Resentment Near the Jade Stairs

Dew whitens the jade stairs.
This late, it soaks her gauze stockings.

She lowers her crystal blind to watch
the breaking, glass-clear moon of autumn.

Li T'ai-po
tr. Hamil

Li Po

Self-Abandonment

I sat srinking and did not notice the dusk,
Till falling petals filled the folds of my dress.
Drunken I rose and walked to the moonlit stream;
The birds were gone, and men also few.

Li T'ai-po
tr. Waley

Li Po

She Spins Silk

Far up river in Szechuan,
waters rise as spring winds roar.

How can I dare to meet her now,
to brave the dangerous gorge?

The grass grows green in the valley below
where silk worms silently spin.

Her hands work threads that never end,
dawn to dusk when the cuckoo sings.

Li T'ai-po
tr. Hamil

Li Po

Song of the Forge

The forge-fire sets a glow in the heavens,
the hammer thunders, showering the smoke with sparks.

A ruddy smithy, the white face of the moon,
and the hammer, ringing down cold dark canyons.

Li T'ai-po
tr. Hamil

Li Po

Song Of The Jade Cup

A jade cup was broken because old age came too soon to give fulfilment to hopes; after drinking three cups of wine I wiped my sword and started to dance under an autumn moon first singing in a high voice then unable to halt tears coming; I remember the day when first I was summoned to court and I was feasted splendidly writing poems in praise of the Emperor, making jokes with officials around several times changing my horse, taking the best from the imperial stables; with my whip studded with jade and coral presented to me by the Emperor, my life was free and easy, people calling me the "Banished Immortal." Hsi Shih was good at smiling as well as frowning, useless for ordinary girls to try and imitate her. Surely it was only her loveliness the king adored, but unfortunately jealousy within the palace led to her death.

Li Po

Spring Night in Lo-yang Hearing a Flute

In what house, the jade flute that sends these dark notes drifting,
scattering on the spring wind that fills Lo-yang?
Tonight if we should hear the willow-breaking song,
who could help but long for the gardens of home?

Li Po

Summer in the Mountains

Gently I stir a white feather fan,
With open shirt sitting in a green wood.
I take off my cap and hang it on a jutting stone;
A wind from the pine-tree trickles on my bare head.

Li T'ai-po
tr. Waley

Li Po

Taking Leave of a Friend

Blue mountains lie beyond the north wall;
Round the city's eastern side flows the white water.
Here we part, friend, once forever.
You go ten thousand miles, drifting away
Like an unrooted water-grass.
Oh, the floating clouds and the thoughts of a wanderer!
Oh, the sunset and the longing of an old friend!
We ride away from each other, waving our hands,
While our horses neigh softly, softly

Li Po

The Cold Clear Spring At Nanyang

A pity it is evening, yet
I do love the water of this spring
seeing how clear it is, how clean;
rays of sunset gleam on it,
lighting up its ripples, making it
one with those who travel
the roads; I turn and face
the moon; sing it a song, then
listen to the sound of the wind
amongst the pines.

Li Po

The Old Dust

The living is a passing traveler;
The dead, a man come home.
One brief journey betwixt heaven and earth,
Then, alas! we are the same old dust of ten thousand ages.
The rabbit in the moon pounds the medicine in vain;
Fu-sang, the tree of immortality, has crumbled to kindling wood.
Man dies, his white bones are dumb without a word
When the green pines feel the coming of the spring.
Looking back, I sigh; looking before, I sigh again.
What is there to prize in the life's vaporous glory?

Li Po

Thoughts in a Tranquil Night

Athwart the bed
I watch the moonbeams cast a trail
So bright, so cold, so frail,
That for a space it gleams
Like hoar-frost on the margin of my dreams.
I raise my head, --
The splendid moon I see:
Then droop my head,
And sink to dreams of thee --
My Fatherland, of thee!

Li Po

Three—With the Moon and His Shadow

With a jar of wine I sit by the flowering trees.
I drink alone, and where are my friends?
Ah, the moon above looks down on me;
I call and lift my cup to his brightness.
And see, there goes my shadow before me.
Ho! We're a party of three, I say,—
Though the poor moon can't drink,
And my shadow but dances around me,
We're all friends to-night,
The drinker, the moon and the shadow.
Let our revelry be meet for the spring time!

I sing, the wild moon wanders the sky.
I dance, my shadow goes tumbling about.
While we're awake, let us join in carousal;
Only sweet drunkenness shall ever part us.
Let us pledge a friendship no mortals know,
And often hail each other at evening
Far across the vast and vaporous space!

Li Po

Through the YangZi Gorges

From the walls of Baidi high in the coloured dawn
To Jiangling by night-fall is three hundred miles,
Yet monkeys are still calling on both banks behind me
To my boat these ten thousand mountains away.

Li Po

To His Two Children

In the land of Wu the mulberry leaves are green,
And thrice the silkworms have gone to sleep.
In East Luh where my family stay,
I wonder who is sowing those fields of ours.
I cannot be back in time for the spring doings,
Yet I can help nothing, traveling on the river.
The south wind blowing wafts my homesick spirit
And carries it up to the front of our familiar tavern.
There I see a peach tree on the east side of the house
With thick leaves and branches waving in the blue mist.
It is the tree I planted before my parting three years ago.
The peach tree has grown now as tall as the tavern roof,
While I have wandered about without returning.
Ping-yang, my pretty daughter, I see you stand
By the peach tree and pluck a flowering branch.
You pluck the flowers, but I am not there
How your tears flow like a stream of water!
My little son, Po-chin, grown up to your sister's shoulders,
You come out with her under the peach tree,
But who is there to pat you on the back?
When I think of these things, my senses fail,
And a sharp pain cuts my heart every day.
Now I tear off a piece of white silk to write this letter,
And send it to you with my love a long way up the river.

Li Po

To Tan-Ch'iu

My friend is lodging high in the Eastern Range,
Dearly loving the beauty of valleys and hills.
At green Spring he lies in the empty woods,
And is still asleep when the sun shines on igh.
A pine-tree wind dusts his sleeves and coat;
A peebly stream cleans his heart and ears.
I envy you, who far from strife and talk
Are high-propped on a pillow of blue cloud.

Li Po
tr. Waley

Li Po

To Tu Fu from Shantung

You ask how I spend my time--
I nestle against a tree trunk
and listen to autumn winds
in the pines all night and day.

Shantung wine can't get me drunk.
The local poets bore me.
My thoughts remain with you,
like the Wen River, endlessly flowing.

Li T'ai-po
tr. Hamil

Li Po

To Wang Lun

I was about to sail away in a junk,
When suddenly I heard
The sound of stamping and singing on the bank—
It was you and your friends come to bid me farewell.
The Peach Flower Lake is a thousand fathoms deep,
But it cannot compare, O Wang Lun,
With the depth of your love for me.

Li Po

Under the Moon

Under the crescent moon's faint glow
The washerman's bat resounds afar,
And the autumn breeze sighs tenderly.
But my heart has gone to the Tartar war,
To bleak Kansuh and the steppes of snow,
Calling my husband back to me.

Li Po

Visiting A Taoist On Tiatien Mountain

Amongst bubbling streams
a dog barks; peach blossom
is heavy with dew; here
and there a deer can
be seen in forest glades!
No sound of the mid-day
bell enters this fastness
where blue mist rises
from bamboo groves;
down from a high peak
hangs a waterfall;
non knows where he has gone, so sadly I rest,
with my back leaning
against a pine.

Li Po

Waterfall at Lu-shan

Sunlight streams on the river stones.
From high above, the river steadily plunges--
three thousand feet of sparkling water--
the Milky Way pouring down from heaven.

Li T'ai-po
tr. Hamil

Li Po

Ziyi Song

Chang-an -- one slip of moon;
in ten thousand houses, the sound of fulling mallets.
Autumn winds keep on blowing,
all things make me think of Jade Pass!
When will they put down the barbarians
and my good man come home from his far campaign?

Li Po