

A Study on the English Translation of the Poetry by Kwang-Chung Yu

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1. Modern poetry

A misty landscape with a lake and mountains. The scene is dominated by soft, hazy green and grey tones. In the foreground, there are dark, silhouetted hills. A large, calm lake occupies the middle ground, reflecting the surrounding landscape. In the background, rolling mountains are visible under a pale, overcast sky. The overall atmosphere is serene and quiet.

Modern Poetry

1.1 What is Modern Chinese Poetry?

- Modern poetry is different from Chinese traditional poetry in rules and forms.
- It is not confined by level/oblique tones, the limit of total word numbers, or traditional rhyming patterns.

Modern Poetry

- **1.2 The Origin of Modern Poetry**
- Literary works were very difficult to read by the general people in ancient China.
- It was introduced to Taiwan when Taiwan was under Japanese rule.
- Poetic Societies: Blue Star, Genesis, and South and North Flute.

Modern Poetry

1.3 Differences between Chinese Poetry and Western Poetry

- **Word syllables**
 - Chinese is a monosyllabic language.
 - English is a polysyllabic language.
- **Emotional expression**
 - Chinese poetry tends to be reserved
 - Western Poetry tends to be unrestrained

**2. Why we choose
Kwang-Chung Yu as our
subject matter**



2.1 Features of Kwang-Chung Yu's poetry

Kwang-Chung Yu :

- Representation of Chinese literary tradition in his poetry
- Expression of nostalgic emotions in his poetry
- The content materials of his poems are wide and his descriptions are delicate.
- His writings reflect social reality and explore inner romantic feelings.
- He appeals to creative wording and imagination to attract readers with unique poetic power.

2.2 Yu's position in modern Chinese poetry

- 1. Kwang-Chung Yu has been studying and writing modern poetry for more than six decades, and he keeps creating new works.
- 2. When modern poetry in Taiwan was at its zenith, Kwang-Chung Yu remained always one of the most important poets.
- 3. After six decades of accumulation, Kwang-Chung Yu's poetic creation has reached the highest quality and quantity in the field of modern Chinese poetry.



3. Translation Theories

3.1 Steps of Translation

- Be familiar with the subject
- Comprehend the background of the task
- Understand the original text
- Making the first draft
- Making the final draft

3.2 Six basic theories of translation

- Conceptual meaning: it refers to the four levels of information or semantic content—words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs.
- Contextual meaning: the meaning of words in a particular context.
- Formal meaning: features of language in the formal or chapter arrangements and chapter structure.

3.2 Six basic theories of translation

- Style meaning: including the stylistic features and the writer's personal terms and their characteristics.
- Image meaning: rhetorical figurative words from literal meaning to the development and transfer of figurative meaning.
- Cultural meaning: language reflects culture and mentality.

3.3 Translatability and the limit of translatability

- **Translatability**

1. In spite of language change, the sentence structure and syntactic elements remain the same.

2. Languages refer to the physical world and social realities, which exist in different societies.

3.3 Translatability and the limit of translatability

- Untranslatability

1. The cultural implications and rhetorical methods may be different between two languages.

2. The pronunciation and grammatical rules are different between two languages.

4. Translation results



Poem 1: 〈菊頌〉

霜後的清香是烈士的清香

風裏的美名是晚節的美名
淡而愈遠，辟邪，與茱萸齊名

誰說遲開就不成花季？

古神話裏早登了仙籍

唯大勇才敢向絕處去求生

九九大劫日偏是你生日

平地已風緊，更何況是登高？

西風壓東風倒了華裔

桃之天天盡逃之天天

凡迎風紅妝的都紅過了

唯壓你不倒，壓不倒

逆風赫赫你標舉的燦爛

列黃旗簇金劍耀眼的長瓣

昂向秋來肅殺的風霜

綻不盡重陽高貴的徽號

落英縱紛紛，也落在英雄的塚上

更冷酷的季節，受你感召

有梅花千樹競發對冰雪

你身後，餘音嫋嫋更不絕

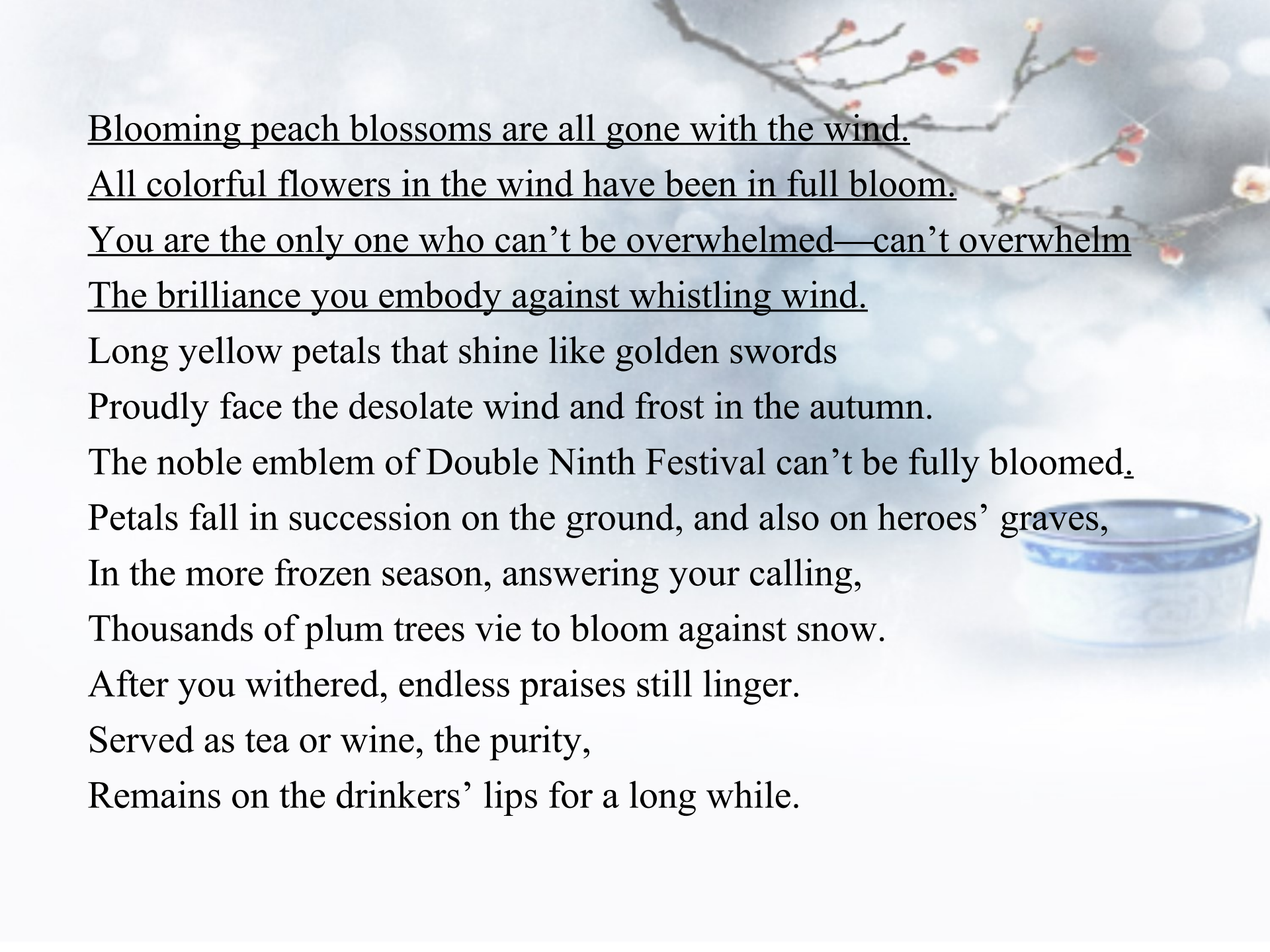
煮茶或釀酒，那純潔

久久流芳在飲者的唇上

Poem 1: “Ode to the Chrysanthemum”

The fragrance after frost is a martyr’s fragrance;
The reputation in the wind is the reputation of one’s later years.
Mild and far, it drives evil away and is as famous as cornel.
Who says late blooming can’t make a flowering season?
You have since long registered your name in ancient mythology.
Only great bravery dares to seek life from death’s door.
The Disaster Day, September 9th, happens to be your birthday.
Fierce winds rage on the ground—let alone climbing a height?
The west wind overwhelms the east wind and fall the Chinese
descendents.



A branch with several red buds is visible in the upper right corner of the image, set against a soft, out-of-focus background of snow and light. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Blooming peach blossoms are all gone with the wind.

All colorful flowers in the wind have been in full bloom.

You are the only one who can't be overwhelmed—can't overwhelm

The brilliance you embody against whistling wind.

Long yellow petals that shine like golden swords

Proudly face the desolate wind and frost in the autumn.

The noble emblem of Double Ninth Festival can't be fully bloomed.

Petals fall in succession on the ground, and also on heroes' graves,

In the more frozen season, answering your calling,

Thousands of plum trees vie to bloom against snow.

After you withered, endless praises still linger.

Served as tea or wine, the purity,

Remains on the drinkers' lips for a long while.

A small, shallow ceramic bowl with a blue and white patterned rim is positioned in the lower right area of the image. The bowl is empty and sits on a light-colored surface.

Poem 2: 〈月光光〉

月光光，月是冰過的砒霜
月如砒，月如霜
落在誰的傷口上？
恐月症和戀月狂
迸發的季節，月光光

幽靈的太陽，太陽的幽靈
死星臉上迴光的反映
戀月狂和恐月症
崇著貓，崇著海
崇著蒼白的美婦人

太陰下，夜是死亡的邊境
偷渡夢，偷渡雲
現代遠，古代近
恐月症和戀月狂
太陽的鷹幣，鑄兩面側像

海在遠方懷孕，今夜
黑貓在瓦上誦經
戀月狂和恐月症
蒼白的美婦人
大眼睛的臉，貼在窗上

我也忙了一整夜，把月光
掬在掌，注在瓶
分析化學的成份
分析回憶，分析悲傷
恐月症和戀月狂，月光光

Poem 2: “Bright Moonlight”

Bright moonlight, the moon is iced arsenic.
The moon is like arsenic; the moon is like frost.
Upon whose wound does it fall?
Selenophobia and selenomania
Burst out in this season, bright moonlight.

Sun of the ghost, ghost of the sun.
The light reflects on the dead planet.
Selenomania and selenophobia.

Sneaky cats, sneaky ocean.
A sneaky pale beautiful woman.



Under the moon, the night is the edge of death.

It smuggles dreams; it smuggles clouds.

The modern times are far away but the ancient times are nearby.

Selenophobia and selenomania.

The sun's counterfeit coin has two sides of forged portraits.

The sea is pregnant far away, tonight.

A black cat is chanting the sutras on the tile.

Selenomania and selenophobia.

A pale beautiful woman

With big eyes on her face sticks to the window.

I have been busy all night, too; I hold

The moonlight in my palms and pour it in a bottle.

I analyze its chemical elements.

I analyze its memory and analyze its sadness.

Selenophobia and selenomania, bright moonlight.



Poem 3: 〈淡水河邊弔屈原〉

青史上你留下一片潔白，
朝朝暮暮你行吟在楚澤。
江魚吞食了二千多年，
吞不下你的一根傲骨！

太史公為你的投水太息，
怪你為什麼不游宦他國？
他怎知你若是做了張儀，
你不過流為先秦一說客！

但丁荷馬和魏吉的史詩，
怎撼動你那悲壯的楚辭？
你的死就是你的不死：
你一直活到千秋萬世！

悲苦時高歌一節離騷，
千古的志士淚湧如潮；
那淺淺的一灣汨羅江水，
灌溉著天下詩人的驕傲！

子蘭的衣冠已化作塵土，
鄭袖的舞袖在何處飄舞？
聽！
急鼓！可愛的三閭大夫！
灘灘的龍舟在為你競渡！

我遙立在春晚的淡水河上，
我彷彿嗅到湘草的芬芳；
我悵然俯吻那悠悠的碧水，
它依稀流著楚澤的寒涼。

Poem 3: “Mourning for Qu Yuan by the Tamsui River”

You left a slice of pure white in history.

You sang, strolled by the Chu lakes every morn and eve.

River fish have swallowed for more than two thousand years.

They cannot swallow up a moral backbone of yours.

The Grand Scribe sighed for your drowning yourself,

Blaming you for not trying to find a post in other countries.

How did he know if you had been Zhang Yi,

You would have been but a pre-Qin political talker.

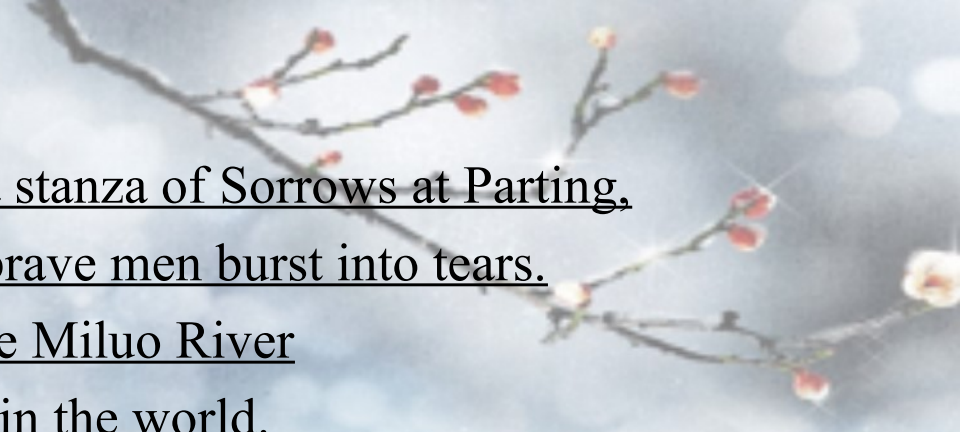
How could epics by Dante, Homer, and Virgil

Challenge your solemn and stirring Songs of Chu?

Your death is your immortality:

You have been living throughout the ages!





When you felt sad, you sang a stanza of Sorrows at Parting,
Which makes generations of brave men burst into tears.
That shallow water bend of the Miluo River
Irrigates the pride of all poets in the world.

Zi Lan's hat and clothes had turned into dust.

Where did Zheng Xiu's sleeves flutter?

Listen!

Hurried drumming! A cute minister of the state of Chu!

Shoals of dragon boats are racing for you!

I stand far from the Tamsui River in the spring evening.

I seem to smell the fragrance of Xiang grass.

Sorrowfully, I bend to kiss the endless jade-like water.

It vaguely flows the chill of the Chu lakes.



Poem 4: 〈等你，在雨中〉

等你，在雨中，在造虹的雨中
蟬聲沉落，蛙聲升起
一池的紅蓮如紅焰，在雨中

你來不來都一樣，竟感覺
每朵蓮都像你
尤其隔著黃昏，隔著這樣的細雨

永恆，剎那，剎那，永恆
等你，在時間之外
在時間之內，等你，在剎那，在永恆

如果你的手在我的手裏，此刻
如果你的清芬
在我的鼻孔，我會說，小情人

諾，這隻手應該採蓮，在吳宮
這隻手應該
搖一柄桂槳，在木蘭舟中

一顆星懸在科學館的飛簷
耳墜子一般地懸著
瑞士錶說都七點了。

忽然你走來
步雨後的紅蓮，翩翩，你走來
像一首小令
從一則愛情的典故裏你走來

從姜白石的詞裏，有韻地，你走來

Poem 4: “Awaiting You, in the Rain”

I await you, in the rain, the rain that creates a rainbow
The sounds of cicada fall, and the sounds of frogs arise
A pond of red lotuses is like the red flames, in the rain

Whether you come or not doesn't matter, somehow I feel that
Every lotus looks like you
Especially when separated by the dusk, separated by such drizzle

Eternal, instant, instant, eternal
I await you, outside time
Within time, I await you, in the instant, in the eternal

If your hand is in my palm, at this moment
If your fragrance
Is in my nostrils, I would say, little lover





Look! This hand should pick the lotus, in the Palace of Wu

This hand should

Row a paddle made of osmanthus, in a magnolia boat

A star hanging on the cornice of the science museum

Hanging like an earring

It's already seven o' clock says the Swiss watch

Suddenly, you walk towards me

Through the red lotuses after the rain, gracefully, you walk through

Like a piece of short lyrics

From an allusion of love you walk towards me

From the lyrics of Jiang Baishi, with rhyme, you walk towards me



Poem 5: 〈一武士之死〉

他們在他的墓上種了些菊花
每到十月，遲緩的清芬中
就出現那蒙面人在墓前
上香，下跪，讓歷史從閉住的眼中
流下，灼熱的淚水燙痛菊花
然後飄飄離去，然後
第二年秋天一同來上墳
終於有一個秋天不見那蒙面人
數叢鮮黃留下，像誰的
魂魄，淒涼給自己看。那老僧說
武士是害死的，非戰死的
有人說是點穴，有人說用砒霜
眼睜睜被亂刀剁死，後來
他的劍就神祕地失蹤

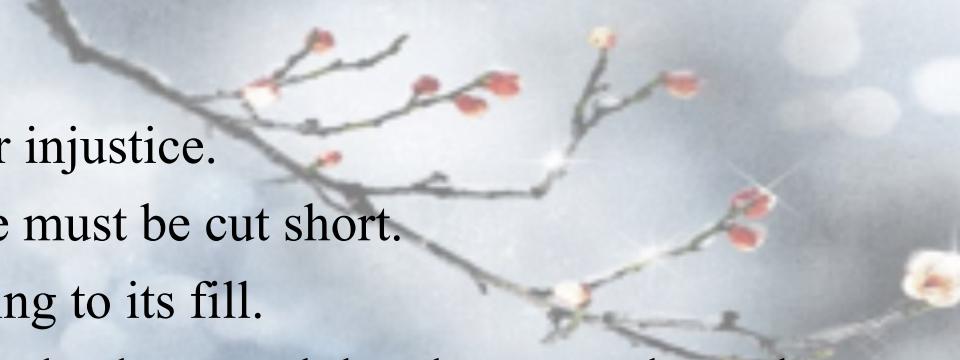
——他的劍，從不為不義出鞘
出鞘，必斷却一醜陋的生命
冰冷的鋼必有次痛飲
仆者痛，立者肅其容，觀者大快

——他的劍，那武士死後
就神祕地失蹤，那劍是那人
那人是那劍，人死，劍亡
死，是靈魂出鞘的一種典禮
禮成，只留下生鏽的劍鞘
而一柄無形的巨劍似懸在半空
青鋒眈眈，崇著一切奸徒
夜夜冷汗，滴，沿一個冰頸的惡
夢


Poem 5: “The Death of a Warrior”

They grew some chrysanthemums on his tomb.
When it came to October, in the sluggish fragrance
The masked man appeared in front of the tomb,
Burning incense, kneeling and letting the history from closed eyes
Shed burning tears that scalded the chrysanthemums.
Then he floated away and then
The next year he came back with autumn to the grave.
Eventually, the warrior was not seen in one autumn.
Clusters of bright yellow remained, like someone’s
Soul, and left bleakness to himself. That elderly monk said
The warrior was framed to death rather than killed in a battle.
Some said he died of a vital point attack; some said he died of arsenic.
He was hacked to death helplessly. Afterwards,
His sword was missing mysteriously.





His sword was never unsheathed for injustice.
Once it was unsheathed, an ugly life must be cut short.
The ice-cold steel must enjoy drinking to its fill.
The fallen pained, the standing looked solemn and the observers cheered up.
—His sword, after he died,
Was missing mysteriously. The sword was that warrior.
That warrior was the sword. The warrior died and the sword perished.
Death was a ceremony for the soul to be unsheathed.
When it was finished, the rusted sheath was the only thing left.
But an invisible giant sword seems to hang in the air;
Its blade keeps looking keenly at all conspirators,
Who were in cold sweat every night, dropping, along a nightmare that chills
their necks.



Poem 6: 〈蓮的聯想〉

已經進入中年，還如此迷信
迷信著美
對此蓮池，我欲下跪

想起愛情已死了很久
想起愛情
最初的煩惱，最後的玩具

想起西方，水仙也渴斃了
拜倫的墳上
為一隻死蟬，鴉在爭吵

戰爭不因漢明威不在而停止
仍有人歡喜
在這種火光中來寫日記

虛無成為流行的癌症
當黃昏來襲
許多靈魂便告別肉體

我的卻拒絕遠行，我願在此
伴每一朵蓮
守小千世界，守住神秘

是以東方甚遠，東方甚近
心中有神
則蓮合為座，蓮疊如台

諾，葉何田田，蓮何翩翩
你可能想像
美在其中，神在其上

我在其側，我在其間，我是蜻蜓
風中有塵
有火藥味。需要拭淚，我的眼睛



Poem 6: “The Associations of Lotus”

I am already in the middle age, still so superstitious
Superstitious about beauty
To this lotus pond, I would like to kneel down

I recall that love has passed away for a long time
I recall that love was
The initial worry, the primary toy

I recall the west, narcissuses were thirsty to death
Above the tomb of Byron
Crows were fighting for a dead cicada

The war won't stop due to the absence of Hemingway
Still, someone enjoys
Writing a diary in this kind of flame



Nihilism has become a trendy cancer
When the dusk comes
Many souls wave their bodies goodbye

Yet, mine refuses to journey far from home; I would like to be here
To accompany every single lotus,
Holding on to the *hsiao-chien* world, holding on to mystery

Hence, the Orient is so far, and the Orient is so close
If the god is in my mind
Then the lotuses gather to form a base, and they pile up like a stand

Look! What lush leaves of lotus! What graceful lotuses!
You might imagine
Beauty is in them, and God is above them

I am on their side, I am in between, I am a dragonfly

There is dust in the wind

And a smell of gunpowder. Tears in my eyes need to be wiped off

5. Conclusion and Observations



5.1 Chinese-English translation

- People interpret cultures rather than languages
- A big difference in terms of word syllables
- Differences in social values, thinking patterns, language norms and living habits



5.2 Difficulties we encountered

- Lack of perfect equivalence between Chinese and English

ex: 諾，葉何田田，蓮何翩翩

How lush leaves of lotuses! How graceful lotuses!

- Loss in translation

ex: 小時候，鄉愁是一枚小小的郵票

When I was a child, nostalgia was a small stamp.

- Allusions and rhetorical dictions

ex: 月如砒，月如霜

The moon is like arsenic; the moon is like frost.



Thank you for your attention.

