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Poem by Chin Wha

To Hwa (Peach Garden)

The tangled grass with thorny tips point me the way
Off to the east amid the smoky blue,
Where fairy flowers encircle all the world.
This is the place where refuge found its hold
Against the rough compulsion of King Chinsee's day.
The fairy's choicest garden is its name,
Fresh limpid streams enclose it round and round.
Its land is rich, its waters sweet and clear
Red fluffy dogs wake to its day
And bark when clouds go by.
The blooming flowers kissed by the passing breeze,
Drop, one by one, upon the grassy sward.
We planted peaches out beyond the road
To throw men off the scent and keep the world away.
And now we talk of things that happened
Ere the state was burned and all its sacred books.
We watch the grass and trees to tell how time goes by—
The seasons of the year.
We laugh as with our children we forget the past,
And think not of the days to come.
Sometimes a fisher wanders in and sees our joy,
And goes to call his kind, but later finds the way confused
And, hopeless, never sees our world again.

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A very old song:

You clanging wild goose of the night, whither away?
List for a moment, please :
My master is in Seoul. Halt will you, pray, and say to him,
"Just as the moon goes down I feel your loss, so great,
My spirit dies."
"I have a deal to see to," says the goose, "am pressed for time,
"Whether I'll manage it or not

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A sasöl sijo

Outside the window wends the tinker-man,
Who fixes pots and pans. But can he fix a broken heart?
The tinker answers, 'Even Hsiang Yü of the Han,
Who lifted hills and tossed them o'er the land,
Could not do that; and Chu-ko Liang himself,
For wisdom famed, who read both earth and sky,
Not even he could mend a broken heart.
How much the less a creature such as I.

Don't ask me, please.

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Poem by Kim Pusik

The closing year speeds on:
Long nights and shorter days, they weary me.
'Tis not a lack of candle-light forbids me read,
But that I'm ill, my soul distressed.
I toss about for sleep that fails to come;
A hundred thoughts whirl tangled through my brain.
The cock-bird sits all silent on his perch.
Soon he will surely flap his wings and crow.
I toss the quilts aside and sit me up
And through the window chink come rays of light.
Wide out I swing the door and look abroad.
And there off to the west, the night stars shine.
I call my boy, 'Wake up! What ails that cock
That does not crow? Is he alive or dead?
Has someone thraved his neck,
Or has a weasel-bandit done him ill?
Why are his eyes tight shut and head held low
With not a sound forthcoming from his bill?
In the 'Kuo-feng' book she thinks upon her lord
And says they crow though winds and rain cease not;
This is the cockcrow hour and yet he sleeps.
Is he not breaking God's most primal law?
The dog who fails to see the thief and bark,
The cat who lets the rat go by, deserve
The direst punishment. Yes, death itself
Would not be too severe. Still, good men have
A word to say; love speaks, I dare not kill.
I'm moved to let you live. Beware, however,
And show repentance.

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Poem by Kim Pusik

O lilting, joyous yellow bird
You mate to live and love each other
While I, alas, unloved, unheard
Have lost my everything, sweet brother.

Page 135

Poem by Yi Chehyŏn (c. 1319)

Down comes the rolling Hua ng-ho from the west,
Its sources in the fabled Kuen-Jun peaks.
The envoy of great Han built him a raft
To seek its fountainhead. From out the hills
It thunders forth ten thousand measures

Downward to the sea; he found it was
The Milky Way, that drops here earthward
And comes swinging forth; by nine great wheels
It gathers in the circles of the sky.
A battle fierce it seems 'tween Han and Ch'u,
Crash of ten thousand horsemen on the plain,
When slantwise it comes rolling, ever ceaseless,
Mounting and overflowing fields and meadows:
The people's hearts forsake them for pale fear.
Through opening gates in mountainsides it cleaves
Its mighty way: the fierce strokes of its blade
Cut out a thundering pathway to the sea.

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Kagok

A fierce sea-fight on Yangtze's main
Lights up the sky with fire and flame.
Great loss is Ts'ao Ts'ao's on this day,
He flees, as rats run wild away,
Before a chief whose righteous ire
Flashes from eyes ablaze with fire;
Whose threefold beard blows bristling high,
Whose red horse leaps from sky to sky;
Whose eighty-pound blue-dragon blade
Is swung aloft, unmatched, unstayed.
Ts'ao Ts'ao in flight, in feint, in fears,
Begs for his life with humble tears.

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Anon (tribute to Pak Chesang's wife)

Who first built ships to force this sad farewell?
Would that the wind and storms might block his way.
Who made the sea to bar all safe return?
Had I but power, I'd sweep the sea away.
Who gave the savage leave to kill my lord?
Would that the deeps might whelm this island o'er.
I'd cross mid-air had I but wings to fly,
An eagle bird that scorns the miles of space,
A spirit I'll return to guard this pass for ever.

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3 Sijo

O rapid stream that flows through mountain gorges,
Pray don't be glad swift-winged to flow away ;
When once you fall into the deep blue sea,
There's no return. Let's wait before we go.

That ponderous weighted iron bar,
I'll spin out thin in threads so far,
To reach the sun and fasten on
And tie him in before he's gone,
That parents who are growing gray
May not get old another day.

That rock heaped up on yonder shore,
I'll chisel out and cut and score,
And mark the hair and make the horns,
And put on feet and all the turns,
Required for a cow;
And then, my love, if you go 'way,
I'll saddle up my bovine gray,
And follow you somehow.

Page 161

Poem by Yi Kyubo

Have you not heard that the glance of her eye
Is a sharpened blade?
That her eyebrows are a double-faced headsman's axe?
That her red cheeks are a deadly potion,
Her soft flesh a hidden demon that demands the soul?
With her axe she strikes, with her blade she thrusts,
With her hidden wiles she seeks my life,
With her deadly draught she brings me down
To guilt and shame. Is she not a danger?
Among all my deadly foes, who can equal her?"
Therefore is she called a thief, a robber,
One who means my death.
How dare I make friends with her?
So I say, put her far away!
To the eye she is a delightful invitation,
But in reality she is a fearful evil.

Page 162

Poem by Yi Kyubo

Viewing the moon has ever been a pleasure.
In ancient days, so now: the sages left
Their moon with us. If we should fail to view it,
How bad the moon would feel.
Once her resentful anger rose, she'd shine no more.
My fear is that the whole creation,
Thus grown dark, would lose its eyes, go blind.
Let's take a cup and go tonight to see the moon!
We went. Delighted was the moon:
She swept the clouds aside and shone for us.
A million pupils of the eye, all centred
In her disk, shot up their spears of light
To make her brighter still.

If eyes should fail to see, how soon the moon
Would lose its ray! List now, my friend,
Until I sing you of the moon.
Let's have a cup, and still another cup,
And watch the night through till the morning breaks.

Page 163

Poem by Yi Kyubo / Kim Saeng

The morning dew alights, the evening mist is there,
The angry dragon lifts his claw, the phoenix flies;
'Twas God who made you what you are:
Wonderful! No words can tell.

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3 Poems by Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn

The Swallow

She goes with the fading summer
And comes with returning spring ;
Faithful and true is she,
Regular as the gentle winds
Or chilly rains of autumn.
We are old friends, she and I.
You know, ungrateful bird, that I have always
Consented to your occupying a place
In my spacious home, but more than once you soiled
The painted rafters. Are you not ashamed?
You leave hawks and uncanny birds far off
In islands of the sea, and come to join
Your heron friends in streams and synnu shallows.
Your rank is equal to that of the goldfinch,
I should think ; but when it comes, finch-like,
To bringing home finger-rings in your bill
As gifts to your master, you fail me !

The Seagull

So free you are to ride the running whitecaps,
Rising and falling with the rolling waters!
You lightly shake your feathery skirts and mount
Aloft, indeed the fairy of the deep.
You soar and sweep, serenely free; no taint
Have you of man or of the dusty world;
Your practised flight must have been learned
In the abodes of genii. Enticements
Of rice and millet fields have no power
To woo you, but the spirit of the winds and moon
Is what delights your soul. I think of Chuang-tzū,
Who dreamed of the fairy butterfly; surely

I too dream as I behold thee.

The Tide

Like a rising storm of snow or sleet you come,
A thousand rollers from the deep, dark tide;
Over tracks so deeply worn, again you come
And go. As I see how you never fail
To keep the appointed time, I am ashamed
To think how wasteful all my days have been,
And how I spend in idle dissipation
The precious hours. Your impact on the shore
Is like reverberating thunder, or
As if the cloud-topped hills were falling.
When I behold your speed, I think
Of Tsung Ch'ieh and his wish to ride the wind;
But when I see your all-prevailing might,
I think of sleeping dragons that awake.

Page 180

Poem about the ondol (c. 1200)

Beneath the winter's moon the biting cold
Sharp-toothed sets fingers on my quivering skin.
At last - good luck - a fire blows 'neath the floor
With heat awakening from its faggot brand.
The welcome warmth is like the breath of spring,
And friendly grows the blanket at its spell.
I speak my satisfaction: all may hear;
Once more I feel myself in hand and live.
Not that I greatly care for comfort's cheer,
But how to meet the cold's the question.
The really great feel neither cold nor heat,
But I am no such breed, blue shivering I.

Page 181

Poem by Yi Inno (1152-1220)

Combing the Hair

The jade-like flame that lights my room burns low;
Across the boundless deep the dawn shafts rise.
I sit in silence and close down my wakeful breath,
While with my hands I hold its will in leash.
The locks beneath my ears grow gray;
With moon-shaped comb I smooth and brush them out.
White flakes drop round me like the falling snow.
As gold by passing through the fire, not once,
But many times, is rendered pure,
So does a combing-out make new the man,
And help his soul to live and flourish fair.

'Tis like the cock refreshing in his dust-bath,
Or when the horses roll and roll again
Upon the sand : Such is a good head-comb.
The master, Tung-p'o, too, hath said the same.

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This World

I set out in my cart to thump upon
The gates of heaven and ask that God let down
The Milky Way to wash this wicked world.
Its insane calculations blear my eye.
How many fish can hope to swim in hoof-tracks?

So 'tis with men in this brief round . I play
My harp with practised hand : none comes to hear;
I bare my arms and show a tiger's strength,
But never meet my man. Life's disappointing ,
Sad my song. My sword, shut in its sheath
With nought to do, cries as dragons cry.

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Ch'oe Ch'ung: By Night

The light I saw when I awoke,
Was from the torch that has no smoke;
The hill whose shade came through the wall
Has paid an unexpected call.
The music of the pine-tree's wings
Comes from the harp that has no strings.
I see and hear the sight, the song ;
Would I could pass its joys along !

Page 187

Poem by Kim Pusik

The terrace heap on which King Yao took stand
Was only three feet high, and yet his name
Resounds through all the ages since his day;
Ch'in built the wall that guards ten thousand li,
Yet the next generation saw his fall.
Throughout the vivid annals of the past
Models are set before us for reflection :
Think deep of Sui who perished in luxury,
And spent his people's blood in wild display.

Page 191

Poem by Kwak Yō

Far to the east, off here among the hills

We meet again who never thought to meet.
Full thirty years ago before the King
We wrote our best for fame and fortune's sake ;
But lengthening suns have drawn us far apart,
And clouds in spotless white have led you on,
The moon too, silver shield across the water.
We meet, we look, but have no words to say
Our spirits hold their silent intercourse.

Page 191

Poem by Yi Chahyŏn (a reply to the previous poem)

This grateful visit turns the season rounds
And brings me orders from my lord the king.
Shu Ch'i and Po I rose and left the world
To save their souls, while Chi and Heieh marched on
To please high heaven; your honoured self likewise
With stamp and seal. When will you doff your hat
And shake your soul from out this dusty world?
Is it not here that you and I may hide
And bend our steps to where immortals dwell?

Page 192

Poem by Yi Hwang

These hills crowd up, while off the river swings.
My ladder leads me o'er the giddy way
Where tinkling streams abound.
Men tell us still of these same Yosan Hills,
For here the master ploughed his simple field,
Just as the moon fills all the waiting sky
So his great soul is with us.
Mere gossamer web that leaves no trace behind
Such was the glory of the world to him.
Who writes his story now?
Doth not his simple life film dim your eyes?

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Poem by Yi Kyubo

The old home

The morning's late and yet I lie abed,
While swallows on the eaves make sport of me.
The servant lads, bound for the field,
Haul by their cart: 'Come, come,' they shout, 'It's late!'
Up quick I get, unwashed, my head uncombed;
Whistling my thoughts, out through the pinewood gate,
(Beneath the shade, unfingered by the sun,
The glittering grass hangs wet with morning dew),
Slowly I wend down to the sparkling brook,

Across whose stones skid spouting streams of rain.
The women, dressed in creeper coats, weed o'er the field,
While men outdecked in hempen blue, work by and sing;
The hand-hoes move like waving clouds .
The season of the iris and the apricot,
The time to plough, the time of seed is here.

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Yi Kyubo: Animals

The toad

You warty lumpy beast, a sight to see,
With fingered feet you grip the crumpled ground.
Yet other creatures must not view you ill,
For you have climbed aloft into the moon.

The frog

No angry words or fierce looks cross your eyes,
And yet at times your stomach swells with fire.
Proud of the music of your band you sing,
And yet, uncharmed, we turn our ears away.

The rat

Your eyes, like lentil -beans,
Lead you to scamper wildly through the night;
You pierce my walls and do your wilful way,
A thief you are indeed, a thief of thieves.

The snail

A man appears; at once in go your horns,
And into home, your shelter, there you hide.
Such horns were never made for battle-fields
Whose rivers run with blood.

The ant

Out from the winding of the way you come;
You rush about the circling millstone, wild.
Who'd ever guess that 'neath this quiet tree
A whole state organized doth live and dwell?

The spider

Athwart the eaves you hang your silky web,
Or on the wall weave soft an entrance hole.
You land upon the needle finger of the maid
And speak good luck for her.

The fly

You buzz as all the rooster tribe that crow,
And spot my jade with marks of foulest gray.
Though driven off you come again, you pest!
I'll get the king to turn his thoughts on you.

The silkworm

You vomit up long threads of twisted silk,
A spun cocoon that finds the boiling pot.
So highly gifted, yet so great a fool,
I'm truly sorry for your luck, I am.

Picture of a tiger

Not a real tiger, only make-believe,
And yet I shrink before those awful eyes.
The sparrow looks with terror on the hawk
That's dead: I, too, as I see thee.

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3 poems by Yi Kyubo

Yi Kyubo: His reflection in the water

Along the edge I walk and gaze into the water;
My windy image dances to my eyes,
My form vibrates in a hundred odd contortions.
I think of Su Tung-p'o and how he saw
Deep in the Ying-shui Pool, a hundred beards,
Two hundred eyebrows quivering clear.

Yi Kyubo: Looking into the well

For long I have not looked into a glass,
And what I'm like, I'm scarcely free to say.
But now by chance I gaze into this well
And seem to catch a face I've seen before.

Yi Kyubo: Moved in heart

I have a tongue and yet I dare not speak;
Eyes too, that cannot weep. Who'd ever guess
The sorrows of my soul? The long day through
Distressed am I. Is it the cold that bites,
Or that my clothes are threadbare, thin and poor?
Comes it from lack of food and eating weeds,
This my distress, beyond what words can say?
My trouble lies down deeper far than that.
I set my feet and gaze toward the sky,

Yet heaven itself makes thoughts grow sadder still:
I long to grasp the heavenly Dipper's ends
And vault me up into the stellar lights.
Some men go by, seals dangling from their belts,
And others wear high horned caps of state;
The little birds find nought to wet their beaks,
Nor can the prisoned phoenix hope to fly;
The deadfall traps have failed to do their work,
Tigers and leopards rampant rage around.
Though Chia Yi saw there were two things for tears,
And Cheng Hsiian spoke of ten ways states could fall,
Who now will rise with such a mind as they?
A brave outspoken word no echo bears;
What I might say, man greets with scornful ear.

Page 198

2 Poems by Yi Kyubo

A pinetree picture screen

Who was it built his house beside the pines
And saw their tufted tops against the sky
With all his powers of vision squarely set?
Through days and months and years, his soul was lost,
The world of pines became his second sight
That overflowed; then quivering needle tips
And waving breaths he vomited in bloom
Upon the six folds of this painted screen.
Elsewise how could an inch of weasel-tail
Have wrought so vast a scene of deathless wonder?
How dark the background hills, deep the far shore!
Black in the darkness, shining serpent forms
Wriggle seawards. The tide has swung away
And left behind great monsters of the deep:
Whales, stripped of their flesh, stand in bony forms,
Lean against cliffs and hang the valleys o'er;
Their pillowed heads are close against the sky.
In openings of the scene I catch a view
Of eyes and mouths, odd faces, peering through.
On misty days when winds awake,
I doubt not dragon wails and calls will come
From out this shadow screen. Throughout the day
I sit with chin in hand and gaze my fill:
To think that ink could work so great a wonder,
Or human hand be found the brush to swing.

The little ducks

Soft water like a silken sheen's their world,
All day they sport without an hour apart.
He cannot think to let her from his sight,
Nor she to see him for a moment go.

Page 204

Poem by U T'ak (1262-1342)

I spent some years in pleasure trips down south,
Mid hills and streams too wonderful to tell.
Bright grows the grass down to the ferry's edge,
And green the willows on the standing shore.
The breeze tiptoes it o'er the shining stream
And round the wall hang wreaths of ivy hue.
The rain sweeps by and joyous workers sing ;
Dim in the distance comes the woodman's raft.

Page 204

Poem by Kwŏn Pu (1262-1346)

The dew has washed
The Milky Way and polished bright the moon;
Brimming, the wine-cup flouts the winter's cold.
My friend, who sings, shines like the polished jade,
Outmatching candles as the night sweeps on.

The yellow flower, the coloured leaves, the autumn moon!
Golden the wine-cups, bright the shining fire!
My children come to wish me weal, how dear!
Old bones like mine wake as on fairy-wing.

Page 205

Poem by Ch'oe Hae (1287-1340):

Written in reply to a poem by Chŏng Chahu

Men of today look down on those who are gone,
And children disrespect their parents.
The former scholar class is dead,
Now none left know the simple joys of yore.
Contempt for others is the order of the day, E
ach thinks himself a model and so plans to do
His wayward will. A century more and none will know
Which is the male and which the female of the crow.
I am distressed that I am born so late:
I love the past and would reform the world,
Would speak my inner soul to men. We are divided,
They and I, even more than Yueh and Ch'u.
I'm out of gear with all with whom I have to do,
And weep my eyes out through the hapless day.
Why should I fare as those who plot and schem ?
My heart is set on what is right.
In place of halls and palaces
My soul sits happy in its wattle hut.
Last fall I turned me home toward the south;

I rode far off, and in my dreams
Outdistanced e'en the wild-goose flight;
I saw the hills and all their wondrous store.
Pent up, my feelings found a swift relief
And waited for a time to rest
And let the world wag on its dismal way.
I had set out upon a round of pleasure,
But hastened back once more.
Religion rests in the heart,
While being in and out of the world.
Within the sacred books all may be found:
I am not anxious now, though left alone.

Page 205-6

Poem by Ch'oe Hae

Rain on the 23rd of the 3rd moon

Last year the sun and rain turned out awry,
And all the farmers failed to plant their seed,
The world dropped down low to starvation point
And faces looked through lines of anxious care.
This year again the spring broke endless dry
And hands were folded in the scorching sun;
The green moss in the well was shrivelled up,
And red blood marked the morning sky.
Along the highways were the starved, the dead,
And all the fields lay wasted, bare as bone.
I in my little hut lay long asleep,
When suddenly I hear the sound of rain.
I hear it patter on the famished court,
And fall in gems from off the hanging eaves.
I start, I wake, I rise in wonder wild,
I fling the window wide and mad delight
Looks out upon the scene: across the hill
The willow-treetops shine and laughing flowers
Awake along the lea; all things take on
Divinest shades, and fragrance fills the air.
I know now that the mind of God
Thinks of the needs we mortals bear.
Out go the ploughs, the harrows, hoes and spades,
A presage of abundant crops to come.
We thank God for a leaky thatch;
I shall forget my mouth and stomach now.

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Poem by Yi Chehyŏn (1281-1367)

China's Snow

The wild north wind rolls up the trembling earth,
And flings its shadows over hill and river.

In the bosom of the clouds is heaped up snow
 That gives the traveller anxious thought. All heaven
 And earth are blotted out in whirlwinds of confusion;
 The ground is robed in glistening white,
 A new and fresh creation. First I thought
 It was the Milky Way had broken loose
 And fallen earthward, or that the hilltops,
 Struck by the storm, were down upon us.
 The angels of the sky, robed in rainbow garb,
 Fluttered around like phoenix birds,
 Fairies of the deep flashed forth dragon scales.
 My horse's hoofs slip as he steps in fear ;
 He moves not though I let him feel the whip.
 My robe takes on a hundred pounds of weight,
 While I, inside it, think of Meng Hsiang-yang,
 Of how he rode a donkey through the snow
 And thought out verses to relieve his hunger.
 How very kind the master of the inn,
 Who dips a cup of wine to cheer me!
 I take my seat beside the cat
 That sleeps upon the softly heated floor.
 Have you seen Chu-saeng's picture of the snow,
 How on one sheet he piles its vast creation?
 The willows by the river-bank are weighted down
 Where crow-birds used to light. The little inn
 Has closed its doors, no breath of life appears.
 A guest is starting off upon his cart
 Into the wilderness; official duties
 Make him pull his bridle-rein and twist
 His horse's nose. How happy is his lot
 Who draws his quilt around his ears
 And floats off into common country dreams,
 To let the world of heat and cold
 Drive forward as it pleases.
 I too behold the scene that Chu-saeng pictured,
 And ne'er forget the meaning of his pen.
 If some day we should meet, Chu-saeng and I,
 I'll clasp his hand and talk with him
 About the landscapes of the snow.

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Yi Chehyōn: Domestic animals

The cat

Two ears you have, and two green eyes,
 And claws and teeth;
 And yet how rats abound and gnaw and scrape!
 Why sleep? Wake up, I say!

The dog

You wag your tail, so glad to greet my eye;

You lick me with your tongue most dear!
ow, never fight, and don't o'er friendly be,
But watch the holes that poke beneath the fence.

The cock

See, when you crow, that 'tis the proper time;
And when trespassers come, stand up and fight.
You pick your living from the refuse heap
To make a sacrificial meal for me and mine.

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Poem by Yi Chono

The hills behind Seoul

Behold these shafts three-sparred against the sky,
Their lights and shades like clouds piled mountain-deep.
I gaze straight up where stand the armèd peaks,
I look across at lotus flowers between.
For long I studied in a temple there,
But two years stayed beside the River Hsn.
Who tells me mountains do not have a soul ?
Today we meet, and tears are in our eyes.

Page 217-8

Poem by Yi Sungin (1349-1392)

(The second envoy on the first embassy to the Ming court in 1389 expresses fear at signs of the end of Koryŏ.)

How sad this autumn night!
The witch-wind and the rain drive through the dark.
I long to sleep my griefs away
And free my soul. My spirit takes its flight
And upward wings its ready way;
Into the depths of space I whirl, all landmarks gone,
Until I light upon the windy height
That leads to heaven. In a flash I feel myself
Before its gates, where God sits throned on high.
Wide out they swing and then a voice calls, 'Come!'
Who would turn back from such a call as this?
So in I go, and kneeling down speak out.
God looks at me with kindly face
While I make bold to speak:
'I live a humble dweller in the lower earth,
With heart and soul distressed.
A day or two ago I was a child
In swaddling clothes. By slow degrees I waked
And longed to live as did the saints of old-
Just as Confucius taught. His words:
Deny yourself and live a life of love.
He also said: *Let not the thoughtful scholar*

Ever forget he is a child of sorrow.

The Master Mencius loved to speak these words,
And yet he failed and had to die. I too
Have buckled on these precepts, strong to act,
To do my best and be a faithful minister,
A loyal subject of the state.
But evil habits of the day make all depraved;
Flattery and falsehood are round about the king.
I am a fish drawn from the sea,
Destined to be sliced and cooked.
Already do they lift their eyes and clean
Their teeth for action; yet though I should die
A thousand deaths, my mind dare never change.
I come up here to have a wide extended view.
If Thou hearest not, whither shall I go?
Thy justice is exceeding great: save me,
I pray thee, from my lost and foundered state.
My tear-drops fall like rain,
My heart so pent-up wild, I gasp for breath.'
God looked with pity on my low estate
And said, 'Come near and hear what I shall say.
You must adapt yourself to times and needs,
For e'en the sun, when once it tops the height,
Goes down; and the moon whose full face fades away.
Even religious views will vary with the times.
Why should you wonder at men's changing ways?
The world hates most a sharply-cornered soul.
Why not round off your roughened edges
And think of others? The world loves white:
Why should you stand by black and win ill-will?
I pity your hard lot; and yet the fault
Is all your own. If you would shake free
From such distress and come to peace with men,
Then you must change your ways.'
Now as I think it o'er, God's grace is boundless,
And yet for me there is no way of change;
I can but hasten on unto the end.
A thousand years ago men lived and died,
A thousand years to come they will live still,
But change I cannot. This dark world knows me not.
Hence I have spoken.

Page 218

Poem by Yi Sungin

Feelings

But yesterday I felt the blazing heat,
And now today I'm chilled clear to the bone.
The frost nips hard the leaves of every flower,
The sun swings, wheel-like, past my window chink.
Frail man, that's born of time and earthly clods,
Labours his day and generations through.

His body, lacking iron-will and stone,
Fails long before its hundred years are up.
From this grim fact the ancients used to say,
'Guard well your time; 'tis short.'

I've heard of Wang Tzu-chin and how he fared
Among the fairies in the Kou-shan Hills :1 7

The pipe he played was heard in many lands,
His white cranes flew like steeds across the sky.
All worldly trammels far he cast aside,
And, stripped of every care and grinding care,
He looked far down upon these fields of strife,
Where life is but the fever of a day.

If, after all, I'm but a hand-cuffed slave,
Let's rid me of my stocks and get me free.

Whom shall I tell this inner mind of mine?

Come tune my harp and sing a roundel ay:

The constellations ride across the sky,
The autumn comes with sad and shrivelling breath,
The west wind blows on rattling wing as well,
And whistles through the leafless boughs at night.

My master long has dwelt an exile drear;

He left me with no message of return.

I live alone in this deserted room

And think and think the weary daylight through,

But thoughts have failed to bring him back again.

My sadness and my grief alone remain.

Page 221-2

Chōng Mongju on being sent to Japan,

A thousand years have stood these islands of the deep;

By raft I come, and long I linger here.

Priests from the hills bow, asking for a song;

My host, too, sends me drink to cheer the day.

I'm glad we can be friends, kind to each other;

Let's not be mean in mind because of race.

Who'll say one is not happy on a foreign shore?

Daily we go by chair to see the plums in blossom.

Page 222

Chōng Mongju: On Taejo

His presence is the mighty warrior, firm

He stands, an eagle on a mountain top;

In wisdom and resource none can compare,

The dragon of Namyang is he.

In judgment on the civil bench,

Or counsel from the warrior's tent, he rules:

He halts the waves that roll in from the sea,

And holds the sun back from its heavenly course.

Page 227

Pyŏn Kyeryang: On Muhak

The religion of the Master
Is beyond ken such as mine.
He was a peerless son of meditation,
A teacher of the Fathers.
While he lived on earth
He was a little child.
When he met with one enlightened
It was like a charge of armies flung together.
An almoner 's cap and one spare dress his all,
How lowly did he seem;
And yet in majesty and greatness none his peer.
As one born to highest honour
He cared not for sounding praises.
His prophet-vision was unlimited;
God gave him lengthened life,
Seventy and nine long years.
Whence came he at his birth?
The sun's rays shot him forth.
Whither now depart his steps
Up beyond the lotus flower?
In all places his disciples
Leave his marks and memories.
The strongest things 'tween earth and heaven
Are rocks and stones:
So write we deep in stone
That he may long endure.

Page 234

Poem by Pyŏn Kyeryang

So quiet sits this hamlet 'neath the hill,
With softened shade and furrows freshly turned.
I wander by the stream to seek for simples,
My books I spread out 'neath the drying sun.
Across the sky's blue vault the wild-goose wings,
Amid the moonlit bamboo calls the whippoorwill.
I look toward Seoul, whence endless thoughts arise,
And jot a verse down for my friend of friends.

Page 237

Some anonymous sijo

I
Buy me love! Buy me love! I say,
But who sells love?
Buy my parting! buy my parting!
Who will buy my tearful parting?
No one sells and no one buys,

My lover's gone; my spirit dies.

II

My dreams last night, how fair!
A letter from my love, so rare!
A hundred times I read and read:
It slept with me, it shared my bed.
So light its weight, so fleet its part
And yet it almost broke my heart.

III

You cuckoo bird, why cry?
What use however much you cry?
But if you cry, then cry alone, and don't wake me;
Your cries at midnight break my anxious sleep.

IV

On the wide lifting sea, ye waterfowl,
Curlews and gulls and divers of the deep ,
Could you but know how far the water lies beneath,
As on its face you softly rise and fall,
Then you might know my lord, how deep his soul; I know it not.

V

O moon, o shining moon,
My master's shining silver moon!
Tell me he sleeps alone.
Or has some partner won her way?
You know and see. Tell me, o moon,
My life hangs on it.

VI

The third watch of the night, with roaring rains
That slash the odong trees! I turn and turn
As endless thoughts race madly through the brain,
The cricket in the inner room cheeps out;
The wildgoose calls across the blinding sky
The endless longings of my soul.
Know, crying wildgoose, in your flight,
My heart is broken! Dreadful is the night!

VII

My home is in the White Cloud Hills
Who knows to call on me?
My only guest a clear soft breeze;
My ever-constant friend, the moon.
The crane-bird passes back and forth;
He stands my guard.

VIII

Deep drunk with wine, I sit here like a lord,
A thousand cares all gone, clean swept away.
Boy, fill the glass! Let's make an end
Of anxious thought.

IX

Hello!

Who dyed thus black the crow!

Explain!

Or bleached so white the crane?

Who pieced the legs of the heron tall

And gave the duck no legs at all?

I wonder!

Still, black or white, low-set, long-reached,

Pieced out, or clipped, black-dyed, or bleached,

Who cares? What matters it?

Page 243

Poem by Sōng Sammun

They beat their drums to hasten life away;

I turn my head toward the setting sun.

There are no inns within the Yellow Shades:

Where shall I sleep tonight?

Page 244

Poem by Chōng Yōch'ang

The rush-rods flutter in the flying wind,

So light, so lithe, so free ;

'Tis May and yet the barley's rolling ripe

As autumn fields should be.

I view the hills of Chiri, height on height,

Then turn my boat and lose me in the night.

Page 252

Poem by T'oegye Yi Hwang

I do forget so soon,

And have to read again my scattered books;

Now I gather and place them on the shelf.

The sun is late and swings off to the west,

The stream that ripples by reflects the shade.

I take my staff and step into the court;

I look out at the clouds that touch the hill.

The rising smoke proclaims the evening meal;

A clear cool breath floats freshly o'er the plain.

The reaping time is near and harvest joy,

And all the hands who beat the grain are glad.

At even the crow flies by on easy wing,

The crane stands out clear-cut against the shade.

I, I alone, am wrung with anxious thought

That fills my soul, alas, too deep for tears.

No place is there where I can tell my grief,

I take my harp and wake the silent night.

Page 258

Poems by Yulgok

The windy world has whipped my whiskers gray;
How vain it seems as home by boat I come.
The hills before me beck with kindly mien,
'Twould seem that they alone have hearts to love.

No fleck bedots the boundless azure blue.
From misty hills the palaced moon peers up
Of which the world sees only wax and wane;
It never guessed the moon is always round .

While digging roots I've lost my mountain way,
Mid coloured leaves by countless peaks I come.
A priest returning from the spring, I meet;
He points to a curling cloud, announcing tea.

The world is tasteless, less than water-brew;
My life alas, has fallen quite away.
But those there are I dare not leave behind,
The little tots who play about my knee.

Page 266

Poem by Prince Kwanghae

The north wind blows the rain across my way,
And mists hang seep upon the city wall ;
The sea roars in upon the evening tide,
And all the hills are wrapped in anxious gloom.
My homesick heart hangs by each blade of grass,
And in my dreams I wander by the shore.
I know not how my state goes, up or down,
And passing boats speak not nor give a sign

Page 267

Poem by Queen Inmok

The weary ox, grown old through years of labour,
With neck sore chafed and skin worn through in holes,
Nods off to sleep. His ploughing now is done,
And harrow days are over, spring rains fall:
Why does his master still lay on the goad
And cause him pain?

Page 270

Poem by Yi Chǒnggu

The little inn upon the river's brink
Waves bright its willows o'er the passing stream ;
While soft the springtime breaks the morning blue,
And evening drops behind the mountain wall.
The sparkling water tells the time of year,
Though weary miles mark lines across my face.
The wandering thought finds nothing worth the while
And lets its rhymes drop from a pointless pen.

Page 286

From the *Haeyu-rok*

This night I could not sleep for some reason or other, so I wrote a verse or two to while away the time:

With flags and banners o'er the deep blue sea,
We sailed into the port at eventide.
Beyond the clouds lie ancient Silla's state,
While all around lift high Yamato's hills.
Dear thoughts of home come crowding on apace,
And valiant verse steps proudly through the soul.
The waning moon hangs by the hawser's line;
I laugh to drink Japan's most honoured health.

Page 287-8

Poems by Hong Yangho

Autumn

My horse treads fallen twigs along the way,
And step by step awakes the sounds of autumn.
Wind whips the leaves and whirls them o'er the hill,
And, roaring, calls the echoes from the clouds.

Our meeting

Athwart the bridge the shadow of a priest—
I ask him, 'Whither off among the hills?'
Slow the soft-stepping staff makes no reply,
But lifted, points me to the clouds.

On the death of his eldest son

Since you are dead
Twice have the hills been brown and sere;
The bitter frosts have veiled our eyes,
And saddened winds have chilled my soul.
But what's my soul, for I am dead,
And strength has left me bare;

The days and months go fleeting by,
Earth and heaven stretch to infinity.

Your little lad has learned to speak,
But he knows only 'mother' and 'grandpapa';
So busy is he at his letters,
Yet I cannot teach him the word for 'father'.
When he grows up and asks me what it means,
What shall I tell him?
His little voice sounds more and more like yours;
This ought to be a comfort to me.

Your grave rests on the hillside
That overlooks the stream;
'Twas here you begged me, years ago, to build.
The house still stands, but you are absent.
Alone in my old age am I;
You doubtless have a place of rest.
But my thoughts of you are ever restless.

Now I am off on a thousand-mile journey
Where the blue sea murmurs.
Your brothers have come to say farewell
And all the neighbours;
Drink and refreshments abound,
But I have no heart to taste.
I long to go to your grave and weep,
But fear lest I make your soul feel sad.

I was so happy when you were young, and loved
To write the character and compose verses.
What I dictated you wrote
And marked my couplets for me;
But now that you are dead,
I have no heart for verse.
I compose this as a last farewell,
But who is there to write it down?

Page 297

Poems by King Chōngjo

The sun

The sun's round face a-blazing bright
Spans all the world with kingly rule;
No one can fly his searching light,
So fair, so wondrous wide, so cruel.

The Great Bell

Here sits the Time Tower high aloft
That guards a monster in his pride,

A bell wrought of ten thousand tons,
That rings at dawn and eventide.
Ye toilers of the dusty day,
You rest and rise as rings the bell,
For while at e'en it says: 'Asleep',
With waking morn it booms: 'All well!'