

香江詩風

Aeolian Chimes:
 Twelve Poems by Huang Guobin

Translated by the Author and Mok Wing-yin

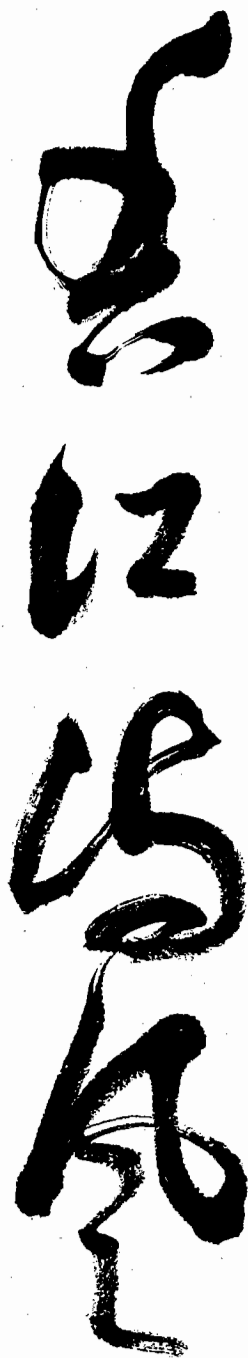
With three paintings by Wang Wuxie (Wucius Wong)

It is often said that a poet is born, not made. Huang Guobin is both. He decided to become a poet in his early teens, and from then on, his life has been dedicated to that goal. He has learned English, French, German, Italian and Spanish in order to read the major poets in their native tongues. At the same time, he has read widely in Chinese poetry, from the Book of Songs to the present day. Among contemporary poets, he acknowledges his indebtedness to Yu Kwang-chung. His first collection of verse, entitled A Child Reaching for the Laurels, was published in 1975, his sixth collection in 1983. Most of these poems appeared first in Shi Feng Bi-monthly 詩風雙月刊, now in its twelfth year, edited and published in Hong Kong by Huang and a group of young enthusiastic fellow-poets.

He has also published three solid volumes of poetry criticism. The first, published in 1976, is a collection of essays on a diversity of topics: "On the Obscurity of Modern Poetry", "Du Fu and Epic Poetry", "A Close Analysis of Yu Kwang-chung's White Jade and Bitter Melon", "A Short Comment on Eugenio Montale", "The Waste Land—an Interpretation" etc. The second, his Three Major Chinese Poets: Qu Yuan, Li Bo and Du Fu appeared in 1981. Most recent is his The Poetic Art of Tao Yuanming, published in November 1983. These studies have helped to complement his own creative insight and sharpen his awareness of the nuances of the Chinese language.

Huang is also a firm believer in the Chinese dictum: "To travel ten thousand miles surpasses by far the reading of ten thousand volumes". He has made two extensive trips to Mainland China when conditions have permitted him to do so. He has gone there not as a tourist but in order to recapture the experiences of the great poets of the past. He often resorted to hiking, to enjoy the magnificent views of the legendary mountains, lakes, river gorges, temples and shrines of old. His impressions and observations he carefully recorded in two travel journals published in 1979 and 1982 respectively.

S.C.S.



Autumn

The sea, a bright eye
Staring at the sky,
Staring at the hill;

The hill
In meditation,
Holds the gaze of the bright eye;
Suddenly the cry of a wild goose cuts across the vast
silence,
A pebble drops down the gorge in the mountains.

Soft as silk the west wind
In skeins
Over endless harvest fields
Comes swiftly,
Twines around the few remaining twigs and branches,
Trailing behind it the heavy golden ears of corn.

The sunlight has mellowed
Like red wine,
Soaking the hill,
Soaking the clouds.

12th November, 1971

tr. MOK WING-YIN

Waiting

My arms, like the bay in mid-summer,
Waiting for the sail beyond the horizon,
Wide open, wait for you to come home;
Come home to me, like the tender sail that returns
In the starlight, in the sea breeze
Quietly, and stay.

22nd June, 1976

tr. MOK WING-YIN

秋

海是一隻明眸，
凝視着天，
凝視着山；

山
入定，
叫明眸盼住了；
突然有雁聲劃過千萬頃寂寥，
一顆石子跌落山中的大壑；

柔軟如絲的西風
便一綵綵
從遼闊的麥田那邊
飄了過來
繞住疏疏落落的枝樞，
後面還牽着金黃的麥穗纍纍；

陽光也醇了起來，
像紅色的葡萄酒，
浸着山，
浸着雲。

1971年11月12日

等待

我的臂，如仲夏的海灣
等待水平綫外的一片帆，
張開，等待你歸來，
歸來，如溫柔的一片帆，
在星光下，在海風裏，
默默地停泊。

1976年6月22日

Taking a Picture

You stand under a tree, posing for a picture.
 Behind the tree is a building,
 Behind the building is a big mountain,
 Behind the big mountain is the wide, wide sea,
 And then there are the white clouds, ever-changing,
 And then there is the vast empty sky.
 The background beyond the sky—
 Let the focus shift as it may—
 Is not to be reached
 Till you leave:
 The tree withers,
 Mountain and sea and white clouds all vanish,
 Like tattered clothes
 The vast empty sky peels off,
 And the ultimate background
 Before the lens, in the absence of the peeping eye,
 Bares itself.

30th August, 1976

tr. MOK WING-YIN

Song of Madness

Let the reeds pander to the wayward wind,
 I am the mountain range
 That determines the course of the wind.

Let the seaweed flatter the inconstant tide,
 I am the moon
 That controls the tide's ebb and flow.

Let the magnet succumb to the unbending north and
 south,
 I am the great earth:
 Only I have directions.

28th December, 1976

tr. MOK WING-YIN

拍照

你站在樹下拍照，
 樹的後面是一幢建築物，
 建築物後面是一座大山，
 大山之後是茫茫的大海，
 大海之後是變幻的白雲，
 白雲之後，是漠漠的天空；
 天空之外的背景，
 任攝影機的焦點怎樣推移
 也尋找不到；
 直至你離去，
 老樹枯萎，
 山海白雲全部消失，
 如一襲破衣裳
 漠漠的天空脫落，
 最後的背景
 才向無人窺視的鏡頭
 裸露。

1976年8月30日

狂吟

讓蘆葦譎媚任性的風吧；
 我是山脈，
 劃出風的道路。

讓海藻奉承善變的潮汐吧；
 我是月亮，
 支配潮汐的漲退。

讓磁石服從嚴峻的南北吧；
 我是大地，
 因我才有方向。

1976年12月28日

A Night Prayer

We believe too much in ourselves,
Like high and perilous walls
Perched on a cliff when a storm impends,
Confident and self-assured.
We refuse to groan when wounded.
We shed no tears when hurt.
We are so unlike our ancestors, who feared the thunder, the wind,
And the dark in the wilderness.
When they were helpless, they would pray to the earth, call upon heaven,
Gather round a totem,
Kneel down, prostrate themselves, confess their sins,
Telling of their anxieties, misgivings, and fears.

We believe too much in ourselves,
Like stubborn locks, deaf and dumb,
Refusing the probings of all keys;
Like mummies,
Locking themselves up in a tomb,
Refusing the moonlight that knocks at the door,
Refusing even more the dawn that comes over the mountains.
In the quiet of the night, singing is heard from the galaxy,
But we lock our doors and windows fast,
Reluctant even to give ear to the wind that blows over our roofs,
More reluctant to go out
Into the wilderness and look up at the starlit sky.

We believe too much in ourselves.
We never let our roots reach into the soil
To listen to the song deep in the ground
And the ore racing in the veins of igneous rocks.
We never stretch ourselves like seedlings
To put forth soft green tender leaf-tips
Into the deep, blue sky,
And, trembling in apprehensive delight,
Reach into the damp, cool mist of dawn,
Towards the morning star in the east,
And, finally, amidst the silence of lakes and mountains,
Hurl headlong into the boundless space beyond the heavens.

13th December, 1977

tr. HUANG GUOBIN

夜禱

我們太相信自己：
 像一堵高峻的危牆，
 暴風雨前聳立在崖上，
 自信而肯定。
 受了傷，卻不呻吟；
 受了委屈，也不流淚。
 不像初民：畏雷畏風，
 畏曠野的黑暗；
 無救時，懂得祈地，呼天，
 懂得圍着圖騰
 下跪，匍伏，懺悔，
 訴說內心的惶惑和恐慌。

我們太相信自己：
 像一把聾啞的頑鎖，
 拒絕一切鑰匙的探詢；
 像一具木乃伊，
 把自己關在墓內，
 拒絕叩墓的月光，
 更拒絕漫山而來的黎明。
 夜靜時銀漢傳來歌聲，
 我們卻把戶牖緊鎖，
 連屋頂的風聲也不願傾聽；
 更不願走出屋外，
 到曠野去仰望星空。

我們太相信自己：
 從不把根鬚探入土壤，
 聽大地深處的歌聲，
 聽礦脈在火成岩內奔流。
 從不舒展，像一株幼苗
 把嫩綠敏感的葉尖
 伸入蔚藍的空曠，
 半驚半喜，震顫着
 探入濕涼的曉氣，
 向東方的啓明；
 最後，在湖山的沉寂中
 直衝天外的無窮。

1977年12月13日

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 copyright restrictions.

BEYOND THE CLOUDS, No. 1

Wang Wuxie 王無邪 (Wucius Wong) was born in Guangdong Province in 1939. He is now principal lecturer at the Hong Kong Polytechnic's Swire School of Design. 'Hong Kong,' he is quoted as saying, 'where East and West join hands, could play an important role in (China's) move towards a universal culture. This unification will later become the foundation for the new Chinese culture of the next century—hence the importance of our development.' (South China Morning Post, June 15, 1983)

Snow Night

Boundless beneath the infinite sky,
The snow billows into a blue beam of liquid light
Playing on the horizon, and dimly touches
The distant silence.
The still more distant mystery
Remains soundless beyond the silence.
The earth's round and soundless crust
Is listening to the revolving of a nebula
Beyond the galaxy.
The moonlight from the sky
Pours on the snow, flowing in all directions
Into infinity, copiously overflowing
The sky. In the shadows of mountains, the earth
Embraces the infinite and pure silence
With its vast nakedness.
Let me walk into the snowfield, naked,
Walk quietly beneath the moon,
Towards the vast expanse of snow, towards
The still more distant silence,
Walk into the centre of silence,
To touch and feel the liquid moonlight with my naked body, to feel
The mystery on the other side of the earth's crust,
To listen to the vortex of the nebula beyond the galaxy,
And to let the still deeper tranquility
Beyond space
Flow silently into me.

5th February, 1978

tr. HUANG GUOBIN

雪夜

白雪茫茫在無盡的空間
湧入地平流幻的
一脈藍光，幽幽觸到
遠處的寂靜。
更遠更遠的神秘
在寂靜之外無聲。
渾圓無聲的地殼
在沉沉的黑夜
傾聽銀河外
星雲的旋動。
月光自天空瀉落
雪地，向四面流入
無垠，溶溶向天外
泛濫。山影下，大地
以浩瀚的裸體
擁抱無窮而純粹的寂靜。
讓我，赤裸走入雪地，
在月下無聲
走向茫茫，走向
更遠更遠的寂靜，
走入寂靜的中心，
用裸體去接觸，感覺
溶溶的月光，感覺
地殼那邊的神秘，
傾聽銀河外
星雲的旋動，
任宇宙之外
更深更深的寧謐
脈脈流入體內。

1978年2月5日

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When You Are Naked, You Have Everything

Like the earth,
You must have nothing,
Except starlight, the water of streams,
And a dark night which is everywhere;
Like the reef,
Which has only the sound of billows, the spray of waves,
And the rise and fall of eternal tides;
Like the wind,
Which has only loneliness and solitude.

When you are naked,
You have everything;
Like the earth,
Which has rivers, mountain ranges, and forests;
Like the reef,
Which has the sea
And the pulse of the moon;
Like the wind,
Which has lofty mountains, towering ridges,
Boundless plains,
And vast oceans.

When you are naked, you have
The heavenly music beyond the nebulae
And the splendour beyond the heavenly music.

When you are naked, you have everything.

9th March, 1978

tr. HUANG GUOBIN

赤裸時你擁有一切

你要像大地，
甚麼也沒有；
只有星光、溪水
和一個無所不在的黑夜。
像海礁，
只有濤聲、浪花
和萬年潮汐的漲落。
像風，
只有孤獨和寂寞。

赤裸時
你擁有一切。
像大地，
擁有河流、山脈、森林。
像海礁，
擁有大海
和月亮的脈搏。
像風，
擁有崇山、峻嶺、
和無際的平原、
浩瀚的大海。

赤裸時你擁有
星雲外的天籟、
天籟外的光芒。

赤裸時你擁有一切。

1978年3月9日

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My Poem

My poem is a bridge, silent, lonely;
 For long, long years, it bears my tribesmen, a simple people,
 Helps them cross rivers, climb hills; in the morning and evening
 It reaches out to the village in smoke, in the light of dawn.

My poem is a well, old, alone;
 Through the ages it listens to the swallows as they come and go,
 Watches the folk as they wash and cook by the well,
 Listens to footsteps as they move away, as they draw near.

My poem is a song, distant, lasting,
 Hidden in the countless gorges, in the breathing of the sea;
 When crowds disperse, cries and clamour die down,
 It rises lightly, like the sea-gull in the wind.

My poem is a star, remote, steadfast,
 Resisting the heartless cold in the void beyond light years.
 Deep in the night, when the air is no more polluted by the neon lights,
 Its brilliance will linger on, in the eyes that look up to the sky.

29th March, 1978

tr. MOK WING-YIN

我的詩

我的詩是一道橋，沉默，寂寞，
 在悠悠的歲月裏渡淳樸的族人，
 幫他們涉水，登山，在黃昏和早晨
 伸向曙色和炊煙中的村落。

我的詩是一口井，古老，孤獨，
 世世代代在村中聽燕去燕來，
 看村民在井邊浣衣洗菜，
 聽聲音消失後傳來另一些腳步。

我的詩是一首歌，遙遠，持久，
 藏在萬壑，藏在大海的呼吸；
 當擾攘潰散，吶喊和叫囂靜止，
 就裊裊揚起，像風中的海鷗。

我的詩是一顆星，寥邈，堅定，
 在光年以外的廣漠抗拒酷寒。
 夜深，當大氣不再受霓虹的污染，
 光芒就脈脈流入仰望的眼睛。

1978年3月29日

The Kingfisher

In early spring, hovering over
A fish pond, like a blue star
Shining upon a sheet of glass,
It spellbinds a small fish
In the gaze of its brown pupils,
And, dazzling the sky and the earth,
Strikes like purple lightning.
When it flies away, skimming over the water,
The sharp, vermilion claws folded,
Already holding its prey in the black beak,
It leaves behind only a shrill scream
That rips open the dawn of spring.

15th May, 1978

tr. HUANG GUOBIN

Playing the Er-hu

A room,
In the centre sits a man
Holding an *er-hu*,
Drawing, drawing his bow,
He draws out tall mountains and flowing streams.

The man sits in the centre of the universe,
Bowing the strings of the *er-hu*;
Tall mountains and flowing streams
Flow up and down, to the four corners,
Flow into the past, into the future.

The man is gone,
Leaving the *er-hu*
In the centre of the universe
To draw out tall mountains and flowing streams.

The *er-hu* is gone,
Leaving the tall mountains and flowing streams
To flow in the universe.

18th August, 1978

tr. MOK WING-YIN

The er-hu is a traditional Chinese stringed instrument played by drawing a bow across the strings.

翠鳥

早春，在魚塘的上空
懸着，像一顆藍星
俯照玻璃。
把小魚祟入褐瞳，
天地眩轉間如紫電下擊。
當它掠水而去，
黑喙已叼着獵物，
朱紅的利爪收斂，
只留下一聲尖叫，
如刀劃破春曉。

1978年5月15日

拉二胡

一個房間，
中央坐一個人，
抱一個二胡，
拉着拉着，
就拉出了高山流水。

那人坐在宇宙的中央，
繼續拉着二胡；
高山流水，
流向四方上下，
流入了過去未來。

那人不見了，
剩下二胡
在宇宙的中央
奏着高山流水。

二胡不見了，
剩下高山流水
在宇宙裏流。

1978年8月18日

Listening to My Aeolian Bell at Night

On a night when the reeds were moist with dew,
 The aeolian bell before my window gently trembled.
 A tinkle from under the eaves
 Escaped into the night,
 Into the field,
 Towards the peak,
 Towards the stars,
 And touched their light in the remote reaches of the
 universe,
 Like the diamond on the ear of a beautiful woman,
 Falling into a silent, deep, dewy well, glittering.

I walked into the field. All was quiet.
 I saw only starlight quivering in the sky.
 The diamond
 Had already sunk into the depths of the stars,
 Never to be found again.

15th October, 1978

tr. HUANG GUOBIN

夜聽風鈴

在蒹葭滴着白露的夜晚，
 窗前的風鈴輕顫，
 就有聲音逸出，
 逸入屋簷外的黑夜，
 逸入平野，
 逸向山巔，
 逸向星際，
 觸着遙遠的星光，
 像美人的鑽石耳墜，
 亮晶晶的
 跌落一口幽深的露井。

走出曠野，萬籟沉寂，
 只見一天的星光顫動；
 那顆耳墜
 已沉入衆星深處，
 再也尋找不到。

1978年10月15日

Eel

Written in imitation of Montale's "L'anguilla"

Fish and shrimp follow the spring tide to the sea.
 I, from the sea, against the spring tide,
 Thrash inland,
 Like a flame, blazing,
 And there, thousands of miles away,
 Leave the warmth of my body.

22nd August, 1979

tr. MOK WING-YIN

鰻

—擬蒙達萊
 《鰻》

魚蝦趁春汛入海，
 我從大海逆春汛
 鞭入內陸，
 像一把火炬，熊熊
 在幾千里外
 留下我的體溫。

1979年8月22日