

SAMPLER

Staunin Ma Lane

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獨立

Chinese Verse in Scots and English

SAMPLER
Owreset bi

Brian Holton

霍布恩

Shearsman Books

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NOTE TO THE READER

I have provided no glossary for non-Scots speaking readers, as the magisterial fruit of
many generations of scholarship that is the *Dictionar o the Scots Leid* is available free at
www.dsl.ac.uk.

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Dedicat ti the memorie o ma brithers:

Harvey Rae Holton, 1949-2010

Edward Norman Holton, 1951-2004

Owre monie's the nation an monie's the sea wis A cairriet
for ti win hame ti thae wanhairtsome obsequies, oh ma brither,
sae's A micht ser ye the solemn sepulchra's for the defunct
and uiselessly speak ma piece ti the dumb aiss at's left o ye,
for wickit weird hes reivit yir livin sel frae me.
Ochone, ma puir brither, thae me nou sae unglaidlie,
tak ye nou thae things, the wey our langsyne fore-elders
haunit down ti us, set out in wanhappy exequies;
tak ye tae, aathegither droukit wi a brither's tears,
ma halse, brither, an ma fareweill for ever mair.

Catullus 101

Prelude

楔子

Water on the Border

邊疆水

These poems were commissioned by artists Helen Douglas and Telfer Stokes for their lovely art book *Water on the Border* (Yarrow: Weproductions 1994): in it, they present their art with drawings by schoolchildren in Yarrow, Scottish Borders, and in Hangzhou, China, all made in response to the same set of Chinese poems which share the theme of water or the waterside. I translated these for the artists, and I present them here shorn of their beautiful context. I have made minor revisions to the published versions.

Li Bai 701-762

Frae the Hairt, Fou in Springtime

This warld's like ae muckle dream:
whit for wad ye trauchle yir life awa?
Liefer stey on the batter aa yir days,
an dover easie-ozie ben the hous.
A wakent, and spied on the green,
in amang the flouers, a wheeplin bird:
"Whit day's it the day?" speirs A,
an on the spring wind cam the merle's sang.
Great o hairt, A gied a lang souch,
turnt an poured masel anither dram;
A sang a rant, waitin on the mune,
an forgot aa else vnce it wis sung.

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李 白

Li Bai

春日醉起言志

From the Heart, Drunk in Springtime

處世若大夢
胡為勞其生
所以終日醉
頽然臥前楹
覺來眄庭前
一鳥花間鳴
借問此何時
春風語流鶯
感之欲嘆息
對酒還自傾
浩歌待明月
曲盡已忘情

This world is like one huge dream:
why should you toil your life away?
Better to stay drunk all your days
and doze at home in idleness.
I woke and saw on the grass,
among the flowers, a whistling bird.
“What day is it?” I asked,
and on the spring wind came the blackbird’s¹ song.
Heavy of heart, I turned and poured myself a drink:
I sang a ranting song, waiting for the moon,
and forgot all else once I’d sung it.

¹ Naturalised: *oriole* in the original.

Tao Yuanming (365-427)

陶淵明

Hingin Clouds

停雲

Hingin clouds rowin, rowin,
timeous rain drowie, drowie,
mirk an mirk in ilka airt,
haughs turnt aa ti rivers.
There's drink, there's drink,
ti cannily tak at the eastren windae,
thinkin lang, wearyin on ma freins,
naither cairt nor coble comin near uis.

靄靄停雲
蒙蒙時雨
八表同昏
平路伊阻
有酒有酒
閑飲東窗
愿言懷人
舟車靡從

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Low Cloud

Low clouds rolling, rolling;
seasonal rain drizzling, drizzling;
dark, dark in every direction,
riverbanks all broken.
There's drink, there's drink
to sip quietly at the eastern window,
thinking long, yearning for my friends,
neither carriage nor boat coming near me.

Qiwu Qian 692-c749

綦毋潛

Driftin on Ruoye Watter in the Spring

春泛若耶溪

There's nae en to wearyin for easedom:
frae here, A'll wander whaur A will.
The gloaming wind 'll blaw ma boatie on
intae the watter-fuit's flouerie yett.
Nicht faas, an A turn to the westlin corries:
A watch the staurs outowre the braes;
a gowstie haar gaes fleein abune the stank;
ahint the wuids, a laich mune faas.
Life's but a muckle watter in spate –
oh, gin A wis a cantie fisher-lad!

幽意無斷絕
此去隨所偶
晚風吹行舟
花路入溪口
際夜轉西壑
隔山望南斗
潭煙飛溶溶
林月低向後
生事且彌漫
願為持竿叟

Drifting on Ruoye River in the Spring

There's no end to longing for ease:
from here, I'm going to wander at will.
The evening wind will blow my little boat onward,
into the flowery gate of the river mouth.
Night falls, and I turn to the western corries:
I watch the stars out beyond the slopes;
a gust blows the mists away above the pool;
behind the woods a low moon sets.
Life's but a huge river in spate –
oh to be a happy fisher-boy!

Li Bai (701-762)

Bouzin Ma Lane Ablow the Mune

Amang the flouers wi a pig o whisky,
bouzin ma lane, wi ne'er a frein,
A lift ma gless ti cry the mune in:
ma sheddae, the mune, and me maks thrie.
The mune's nae great boozier, tho,
an ma sheddae juist follaes uis about:
an inconstant cronie, a mune-sheddae,
but sprees in springtime there maun be.
Gin A sing, the mune shoogles back an forrit;
gin A dance, ma sheddae stotters aa aroun:
whan we're whiskified we're blithe thegither
but gin we sober up we'll hae ti pairt –
sae we'll ramble an rant on forever
gallivantin thegither the galaxie owre!

李 白

Li Bai

月下獨酌
其一

花間一壺酒
酌無相親
舉杯邀明月
對影成三人
月既不解飲
影徒隨我身
暫伴月將影
行樂須及春
我歌月徘徊
我舞影零亂
醒時同交歡
醉後各分散
永結無情游
相期邈雲漢

Boozing Alone Under the Moon

Among the flowers with a jug of wine,
boozing alone, without a friend,
I lift my glass to invite the moon in:
my shadow, the moon, and me makes three.

The moon's no great boozier, though,
and my shadow just follows me around:
an inconstant crony, a moon-shadow,
but there have to be sprees in springtime.

If I sing, the moon sways unsteadily back and forward;
if I dance, my shadow staggers all over:
when we're liquored up, we're happy together,
but if we sober up we'll have to part –
so we'll ramble on and carouse forever,
gallivanting together across the galaxy!

Zhang Xiaoxiang (1132-1169)

Whit a Nicht!

Ti the air *Lillie Leesome Niannu*

On the gress-green lochs o Dongting
nearhaun mid-hairst,
no a braith o wind:
a field o jade, a jewelt warld acres wide,
whaur ma coble's a wee soumin leaf.
Twae munes leam,
twae siller galaxies shine,
skimmerin bricht, ablow an abune.
The hairt 'll easy read sic messages,
but the ferlie o't canna weill be tellt.
A bude ti mind on thae lang years southawa
whan, bi the licht o my aefauld hairt's leam,
brichter nor the snaa wis ma lealty.
Tho A'm scrimp o the pow, and A'm chitterin wi the cauld,
A'll drift a whylie yet on caller waters, cairrie-braid.
The haill Westlan Watter's pourin out here
for me ti ladle't aa inti the staurs o the Pleuch,
an staun a roun for aa Creation!
Clappin on the rimwale, singin ti masel –
Whit a nicht! Whit a nicht!

張孝祥

Zhang Xiaoxiang

念奴嬌·過洞庭

洞庭青草
近中秋
更無一點風色
玉鑒瓊田三萬頃
著我扁舟一葉
素月分輝
明河共影
表里俱澄澈
悠然心會
妙處難與君說
應念嶺表經年
孤光自照
肝膽皆冰雪
短發蕭疏襟袖冷
穩泛滄浪空闊
盡吸西江
細斟北斗
萬象爲賓客
扣舷獨笑
不知今夕何夕。

What a Night!
To the air Lovely Niannu

On the grass-green Dongting Lakes,
not a breath of wind,
this close to mid-Autumn:
a jade field, jewelled acres wide,
where my skiff is a little swimming leaf.
Two moons shine,
two silver galaxies gleam,
shimmering brightly above and below.
The heart can easily read such messages,
though their wonder can't be told.
I ought to remember long years ago in the South,
when by the gleam of my heart's integrity,
my loyalty shone brighter than the snow.
Though my hair is thin and I'm shivering with cold,
I'll go on drifting on cool waters as broad as the sky above.
The whole of the Western River is pouring out here
for me to ladle it into the stars of the Plough
and buy a drink for all Creation!
Beating time on the gunwale, singing to myself –
what a night! What a night!

Li Bai (701-762)

李 白

Cantie ma Lane

自 遣

Dram afore uis, A didna see the derknin,
ma claes happit owre wi flouers at fell;
tozie A rise, an follae the mune in the burn,
ilka bird reistit, fowk few an far atween.

對酒不覺暝
落花盈我衣
醉起步溪月
鳥還人亦稀

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Cheerful Alone

With drink in front of me, I didn't see it get dark,
and my clothes are covered in fallen flowers;
tipsily I rise and follow the moon in the stream,
every bird gone to roost, and people few and far between.