

CHRYSANTS

THIRTY-FIVE POEMS RENDERED IN SCOTS

FROM ANCIENT CHINESE POEMS

by

DAVID PURVES

CHRYSANTS

1.	Derk Dule	Ode of Confucius (ca.500 BC)
2.	Sanctuary	Lu Chi (261-303)
3.	Nichtfaw	Kennawha (ca.600)
4.	The Waesum Fish	do,
5.	Whit Ails Me	do.
6.	Auld Brolach	Kao-Shih (ca. 700)
7.	A Temple Veisit	Wang Wei (701-761)
8.	Anaith the Muin	Li Po (701-762)
9.	Drouthie Cronies	do
10.	Braw Burds frae the Bens	Chang Chi (8 th century)
11.	Nicht at Anchor	do.
12.	Sair No Weill	Po Chü-I (772-846)
13.	Lown Eild	do.
14.	The Caunil	Li Shang Yin (813-859)
15.	Motion	Ssü-Kung T'u (834-908)
16.	Quaeit Seil	do.
17.	Set Free	do.
18.	The Tao	do.
19.	Ma Veision	do.
20.	The Auld Battil Grund	Li Hua (ca.850)
21.	A Sair Hert	Mei Yao Ch'en (1002-1060)
22.	Ah Dreime Foraye	do.
23.	Ah Mynd the Blue River	do.
24.	Wrutten Whyle Fou	Su Tung P'o (1036-1101)
25.	Epigram	do.
26.	Daith	Fuyo-Dokai (1042-1107)
27.	A Simmer's Day	Li Ch'-ing-chao (1082-1144)
28.	Lyfe	Daie-Soka (1089-1163)
29.	The Clachan at Shansi	Lu Yu (1125-1209)
30.	Ah Ryse at Dawin	Lu Yu (1125-1209)
31.	Back at the Loch	Chang Hsiao-hsiang) (1134-1169)
32.	Lest Lowp	Tendo-Nyojo (1163-1228)
33.	Dule	Chu Shu Chen (ca. 1200)
34.	The Wey	Dankyo-Myorin (13 th century)
35.	Zen	Shishin-Goshin (?-1339)

Chrysants

Ancient Chinese Poems in Scots and English

Ode of Confucius (ca. 500 BC)

DERK DULE

*The sun foraye is ful an bricht,
the pale muin crynes doun ilka nicht
an whitfor soud this be?*

*Ma hert that aince wes fou o licht
is lyke the dwynin muin this nicht
an lyke ti die.*

*But whan Ah dream o ye apairt,
Ah howp the dawin wul heize ma hert,
the sun ti see.*

DARK GRIEF

*The sun is always full and bright,
the pale moon wanes every night
And why should this be?*

*My heart that once was filled with light
is like a dying moon tonight
and like to die.*

*But when I dream of you apart,
I wish the dawn would lift my heart.
The sun to see.*

Lu Chi (261-303)

SANCTUARY

*Ah tak horse afore the cock craws
ti win til the monastery or the forenicht bell.
The whuff o incense parfumes the lown air.
The new muin gaes down owre the forest edge.
This hame o men o peace an saucht
is lent ti me, a siccar refuge or the dawin.*

* * * *

*Nae fae wul follae me the-morn's morn.
alang the road Ah tak amang the trees,
Anelie the blissit chantin o the monks
wul echo throu thir derk firs.*

Lu Chi (261-303)

THE MONASTERY

*I mount my horse before the cock crows
to reach the monastery by the evening bell.
A whiff of incense scents the quiet air.
The new moon goes down at the forest edge.
This home of men of peace and quiet
Is loaned to me as refuge till the morning.*

* * * * *

*No foe will follow me tomorrow
along the road I take among the trees.
Only the blessed chanting of the monks
will echo through the dark firs.*

Anonymous (ca. 600)

NICHTFAW

*At nichtfaw he lowpit in owre the hedge.
At dawin, he opent the yett an gaed oot.
He haes taen his pleisir an nou
Ah dout, he thinks nae mair o me.*

NIGHTFALL

*At dusk he leaped in over the hedge.
At dawn he opened the gate and left.
He has taken his pleasure and now,
I doubt, he thinks no more of me.*

Anonymous (ca.600)

THE WAESUM FISH

*The fish greits in the dried river bed.
Owre late he is waesum an vext
that he plowtert owre stanes
throu the shallaes, an nou
he greins ti gae back again
for ti wairn ither fishes.*

THE SAD FISH

*The fish weeps in the dried river bed.
Too late he is sad and regrets
that he flopped over stones
through the shallows, and now
he longs to go back again
to warn the other fishes.*

WHIT AILS ME?

*Ah wunner whit ails me whitever?
Wi aw the wycelyke fallaes in the warld
whitfor can Ah think anelie o you?*

Anonymous(ca. 600)

WHAT IS WRONG WITH ME

*I wonder what can be wrong with me?
With so many fine men in this world---
Why can I think only of you?*

Kao-Shih (ca.700)

AULD BROLACH

*The war aince a Keing o Liang---a Keing o byuss
nicht---
wha kept an apen pailace, whaur muisic chairmed
the nicht---*

*Sen he wes laird o Liang, a thousan years
haes flaen,
o aw the touers he biggit, yon rikkil stauns
alane.*

*Nou hings an awesum seilance; rank weeds
throu winnoks growe,
an doun the strachts o Liang, auld echoes dwyne
an dowe.*

DESOLATION

*There was once a King of Liang---a King of wondrous
might—
Who kept an open palace, where music charmed
the night---*

*Since he was Lord of Liang, a thousan years
have flown.
Of all the touers he builded yon ruin stands
alane.*

*Now hangs an awful silence; rank weeds
throu windows growe,
an down the streets of Liang, old echoes wail
and die.*

Wang Wei (701-761)

A TEMPLE VEISIT

*Myles aff the baeten trek
is the temple, Ah im eftir. Ah graip
among the cloud-happit peaks
an auncient wuids, whaur
naebodie haes evir wun afore.
Frae sum heich steid abuin,
a tollin bell threips awa.
A hieland burn kelters down
frae a touerin craig abuin.
Bricht sunlicht glimmers
throu the mukkil pines.
At gloamin, bi a lown puil,
Ah licht upon a hunkert monk
his lane, in meditation, quaetlie
slayin the puzzent draigon,
aw fylit thocht, wi Zen.*

A TEMPLE VISIT

*Miles off the beaten track
is the temple I look for. I grope
among the cloud-covered peaks
and ancient woods, where
nobody has ever been before.
From a remote place above
a tolling bell resounds away.
A highland burn skelters down
from a towering crag above.
Bright sunlight glimmers
through the tall pines.
By evening, by a quiet pool
I come upon a crouching monk
alone, in meditation, quietly
slaying the poisoned dragon,
impure thought, with Zen.*

Li Po (701-762)

ANAITH THE MUIN

*Unner the crescent muin's cauld lowe
Ah hear the washerman's bat
dirdin on claes even on frae ferr awa
an the Back End saur souchs cannilie.
But ma hert gaes aye til the Tertar war
cryin ma man back hame ti me*

BENEATH THE MOON

*Under the crescent moon's cold light
I hear the washerman's bat
thumping on clothes from far away
and the Autumn breeze sighs gently.
But my heart goes out to the Tartar war
crying my man back home to me.*

DROUTHIE CRONIES

*We baith hae drunk thair health,
aw thir braw Hieland flouers;
a toast, a toast, anither toast
an syne anither, wi glesses heich.*

*Ah im fair fou an lang ti sleep.
Man, lat me be, for a wee!
Bring yeir lute an yeir lyre,
aerlie the morn's mornin!*

DRUNK FRIENDS

*We have both brunk thair health,
all these lovely mountain flowers;
a toast, a toast, another toast
and then another, wi glasses raised.*

*I am drunk and long to sleep.
Sir, leave me alone for a while!
Bring your lute and your lyre
back early tomorrow morning!*

Chang Chi (8th Century)

BRAW BURDS FRAE THE BENS

*Whyte fethers lyke the glisterin silk.
Thay roostit ilka nicht up in the tree
bi oor houss end. The-nicht a monkey
cam ti pick the chessies, an twa bi twa,
thay flew awa for guid, airtin for the muin.*

FINE BIRDS FROM THE HILLS

*With white feathers like shining silk.
They roosted every night up in the tree
by our house end. Tonight a monkey
came to pick the chesnuds, and they flew
away in pairs, aiming for the moon.*

NICHT AT ANCHOR

*The muin dounsets aince mair.
Freist plenishes the haill lift.
Maple leifs faws on the wattir.
The fishermen's fyres haud me wauken.
Frae ayont Su Chou the midnight bell
jowes awa on Cauld Ben an raxes
the lenth o ma wee bit boat.*

NIGHT AT ANCHOR

*The moon sets down once more.
Frost fills the entire sky.
Maple leaves land on the water.
The fishermen's fires keep me awake.
From beyond Su Chou the midnight bell
tolls on Cold Mountain and reaches
the length of my little boat.*

Po Chü-I (772-846)

SAIR NO WEILL

*Ah hae been no weill that lang Ah canna count the days.
At the winnok, forenicht an nou again forenicht.
Dowie chirpin in the gress ablo ma aesins,
the wunter speugs lilt on frae morn til nicht.
Ah mak a dour effort an lean lourdlie on ma bed.
Stoiterin, Ah hirpil til the courtyaird yett an here
bi chaunce, Ah meet a frein wha's cummin,
ti see me, juist lyke Ah'd ettilt ti meet him.
Thay taen ma couch an stuid it in the settin sun;
thay spreid ma plaid an Ah liggit in the porch.
The freinlie crack did mair for me nor onie drogs;
for syne ma feelins lowed ti thowe ma fruizen hert.*

SO LONG UNWELL

*I have been ill so long, I can't count the days.
Evening at the window and now again the evening
Sad chirping in the grass below my eaves,
The winter sparrows sing on from dawn to dusk.
I make a stout effort and lean heavy on my bed.
I stagger and limp to the courtyard gate and here
by chance, I meet a friend who's on his way
to see me, as if I'd intended to visit him.
They took my couch and turned it to the setting sun.
They spread my plaid and I lay down in the porch.
The friendly chat did more for me than medicine:
for then my feelings glowed to thaw my frozen heart*

LOWN EILD

*Owre an again the gowden sun gaes doun,
the blue lift mirkils intil nicht,
an as a cloud Ah reinge afore the wund.
The world's speirit throu me dirls.
Inouth ma breist nae dule can byde,
tho ilk day daws on runkils an whyte hair:
the taikens o the rowthness o ma years,
an in the birkenshaw, ma lane, Ah dreme:
sen lyfe an daith in cycles cums an gangs,
gin Ah depairt, Ah'l kest nae gledge ahint,
afore ma saul skails til Eternitie*

Li Shang Yin (813-859)

THE CAUNIL

*The caunil throws derk shaidaes
on the mither-o-paerl screen.
Slawlie, slawlie, the haill galaxie
faws down the lift. The sterns gae oot.
Quyne in the muin, ir ye no vext
ye stale the herb o immortalitie,
an nicht eftir nicht be weirdit for
ti watch foraye the restless emerant sie,
an the outlin sterns in the bounless lift?*

THE CANDLE

*The Candle throws dark shadows
on the mother of pearl screen.
Very slowly, the whole galaxy
falls down the sky. The stars die out.
Lady in the moon, are you not vexed
you stole the gift of immortality,
and every night be fated forever,
to watch the restless emerald sea,
and the alien stars in the boundless sky?*

Ssü-K'ung T'u (834-908)

MOTION

*Frae the cawin wattir-wheel
til the yird's gret axis birlin aye
anaith the ever-restless lift abuin
Ah mell wi awthing intil ane
ayont the bounds o thocht an dreme
rinkin the universe wi outlin spheres
whas orbits lests a thousan years
ti win the kie that fits ma theme.*

MOTION

*From the driving water wheel
to the earth's great axis whirlin always
beneath the ever-restless sky above
I blend with all things into one
beyond the bounds of thought and dreme
rinkin the universe with alien spheres
whose orbits last a thousand years
to win the key that fits my theme.*

Ssü K'ung T'u (834-908)

QUAEIT SEIL

*It bydes in the deep seilence,
unkent on ben an plain
lippert bi tydeless harmonie,
it toves wi the lanesum crane.*

*As the springtyme saur whas flauchter
the silken skirts haes blawn,
as the wund-drawn note o the bamboo fluit
whas chairm we wad mak oor awn, ---*

*Chance-heard, it kyths ti yield;
socht, an it wyles us ben;
aye-showdin in maik an fantasie,
it jouks us, an is gaen.*

TRANQUILITY

*It dwells in the quiet silence,
unseen on hill and plain.
It is lapped by tideless harmonies,
It soars with the lonely crane.*

*As the springtime breeze whose flutter
the silken skirts has blown,
as the wind-drawn note of the bamboo flute
whose charm we would make out own---*

*Chance-heard, it seems to surrender;
sought, and it lures us on;
ever-shifting in form and fantasy,
it escapes us, and is gone.*

SET FREE

*Ah im browdent in flouers athout end.
Ah'm at atom at random in space.
The world is the steid whaur Ah dreame.
Ma saul's in etherial naeplace.*

*The taps o the swaws Ah couer ower,
mang the wunds o the warld spreidin wyde.
Ah im aw ane wi leimitless pouer,
the haill universe reinged at ma syde.*

Ssü K'ung T'u (834-908)

SET FREE

*I glory in flowers without end.
I'm an atom at random in space.
This world is the place where I dream.
My soul's in etherial no place*

*The crest of the waves I tower over,
in the winds of the world spreading wide.
I'm all one with limitless power,
the whole universe ranged at my side.*

THE TAO

*Ayont the rax o fashious thocht,
lat us win in til the hert o awthing
an thare haud fest foraye,
fed frae an endless rowth!*

THE TAO

*Beyond the reach of conception
let us gain the center of everything
and there hold fast forever
sustained by endless abundance!*

MA VEISION

*A drap o wyne brings back the Spring,
doun on the theik an auntrin shour,
a gentil scholar lowdent in the bouer.
Whyte clouds reinge athort the lift abuin.
Syne beildit in the birkenshaw, he sees
a faemin torrent breinge til the mere.
Aroun his dremes the deid leifs faw;
lown wi the sterred chrysanthemums,
he sees the saisons' glories cum an gae,
an reads the buiks that never pall.*

MY VISION

*Wine that recalls the glow of Spring,
upon the thatch a sudden shower
a gentle scholar in the bower.
White clouds in heavens newly clear.
Sheltered in among the birches, he sees
a foaming torrent charge to the mere.
Around his dreams the dead leaves fall;
calm with the starred chrysanthemums.
He notes the seasons' glories come and go
and reads the books that never fail.*

Li Hua (ca.830)

THE AULD BATTIL GRUND

*This is the Border whaur the Han airmies
forgethert, whaur thay maircht forfochen
for thousans o wearie myles. Anaith the
bounless lift thay'l never ken the day
o thair return, but for aw, thay'r aye here,
thair breists aye bare ti the peitiless steel
an aw the unco gaws o war. Ah think
Ah see thaim yit, a host o stoursell Tertar
warriors, waitin on us in the snell wund.
Oor chieftain scorns the fae an we haud forrit.
But Nature, hirsell, favors the Tertars
wi a deidlie blizzard on thair galluss chairge.
Oor men fecht til thair knees in snaw.
Nae claes can keep oot sic nitherin cauld.
Hands ir lyke deid an flesh freezes in the freist.
Ti yield is ti becum a slave, ti fecht
is but ti mell wi the desert sand foraye.
Faintlyke nou, an waucher aye, dirds
awa the drums, aw smeddum's gaen,
arraes aw spent an bou strings sindert.
The dykes o the Auld Great Waw ir slaigert
wi the bluid o monie a mither's son.*

* * * * *

*Nae soun o flichterin burd nou frae thir links.
Aw is still, binna the wund that yowls
an skirls throu the lang nicht o the deid.
The dwynin muin abuin aye skinkils
on the freist that haps the frozent grund.*

Li Hua (ca. 850)

THE OLD BATTLE GROUND

*This is the Border where the Han armies
assembled, where they marched exhausted
for thousands of weary miles. Under the
boundless sky they'll never see the day
of their return, but they will always be here,
their breasts still bare to the pitiless steel
and all the terrible wounds of war. I think
I see them yet, a host of of dusty Tartar
warriors, awaiting us in the bitter wind.
Our chieftain scorns them and we march on.
But Nature, herself, favors the Tartars
with a deadly blizzard on their reckless charge.
Our men fight to their knees in snow.
No clothes can keep out such perishing cold
Hands are numb and flesh freezes in the frost.
To yield is to become a slave, to fight
is to die and merge with the desert sand.
Faintly now and weaker, and weaker always,
the drums beat on, all strength is gone,
arrows are spent and bow strings sundered.
The ramparts of the Old Great Wall are smeared
with the blood of many a mother's son.*

* * * * *

*No sound of fluttering bird now from this land.
All is still, but the endless wind that howls
and whistles through the long night of the dead.
The waning moon above still stares down
on the frost that covers the frozen ground.*

Mei Yao Ch'en (1002-1060)

A SAIR HERT

*Heivin taen ma wyfe awa
nou it haes taen ma son anaw.
Ma een ir no allowed even ae
dry brek It is owre mukkil for
ma puir hert. Ah grein for daith.
Whan the rain skails down an draks
intil the yird, whan a paerl
faws richt down til the bed
o the sea, ye can aye dyve
in the sea an finnd the paerl,
ye can howk in the yird an
finnd the wattir. But naebodie
haes ever cum back frae the
Yallae Springs. Aince gaen,
lyfe is owre for guid. Ma kist
tichtens agin me. Nou Ah hae
naebodie ti turn til, naething,
no even a shaidae in a gless.*

A SORE HEART

*Heaven took my wife away,
now it has taken my son as well
My eyes are not allowed even one
dry break. It is too much for
my poor heart. I long for death.
When the rain falls down an seeps
into the earth, when a pearl
falls right down to the bottom
of the sea, you can always dive
in the sea and find the pearl,
you can dig in the earth and
reach the water. But nobody
has ever come back from the
Yellow Springs. Once gone,
life is over for good. My chest
tightens against me. Now I have
nobody to turn to, nothing,
not even a shadow in a glass.*

AH DREME FORAYE

*Aw throu the day Ah dreme
Ah im wi hir. At nicht anaw,
Ah dreme she's bi ma syde.
Eydent she cairries aye hir kit
o culort threids. Ah see hir yit
bent ower hir poke o silks.
She redds an derns ma orra
claes an fashes whyles, gin Ah
nicht kyth worn oot an duin.
Tho deid an gaen foraye
she watches ower the lave
o ma lyfe. Hir maimorie
even on, draws me til daith.*

I DREAM ALWAYS

*All through the day I dream
I am with her. At night also
I dream she's by my side.
Busy, she always carries her kit
of colored threads. I see her still
bent over her bag of silks.
She mends and darns my old
clothes and worries if I
appear worn out and untidy.
Though dead and gone forever
she watches over the rest
of my life. Her constant memory
draws me towards my death.*

Mei Yao Ch'en (1002-1060)

AH MYND THE BLUE RIVER

*The muin weirs a halo, an nou the'l be wund.
The boatmen crack thegither throu the nicht.
Bi dawin, a gleg saur fills oot oor sail.
We leave the bank an breinge oot owre the swaws.*

*It's nae pleisir for me in the laund o the Wu,
for awthing Ah grein for is nou back in Ch'ou.
Ah dremed that ae day, she'd cum here wi me
on a veisit lyke this, but she's nou nocht but stour.*

I REMEMBER THE BLUE RIVER

*The moon wears a halo and now comes the wind.
The boatmen chat softly all through the night.
By the dawn a good breeze fills out our sail.
We leave the bank and set out over the waves.*

*There's no pleasure for me in the land of the Wu,
for all that I long for is now back in Ch'ou.
I dreamed that one day, she'd come here with me
on a journey like this, but she's now only dust.*

Su Tung P'o (1036-1101)

WRUTTEN WHYLE FOU

*Blek clouds spreid ower the lift, ink-lyke.
Ah can nae langir richt see the bens.
Hailstones stots frae the ruijs o the boats.
A whirlwund soups oot frae the forelaund
but dwynes near down til nocht bedein.
Frae the paveilion, luikin ower the loch,
the wattir is nou aw ane wi the lift.*

WRITTEN WHEN DRUNK

*Black clouds spread over the sky like ink.
I can no longer make out the bens.
Hailstones bounce from the roofs of the boatd.
A whirlwind sweeps out from the shore
but disappears to nothing at once .*

Su Tung p'o (1036-1101)

EPIGRAM

*Ah fish for littil menans in the loch.
Juist born, thay hae nae fear o man,
an thaim that haes lairnt thair lesson
never cum back ti wairn the lave.*

EPIGRAM

*I fish for little minnows in the lake.
Just hatched they have no fear of man
and those that have learned their lesson
never return to warn the others.*

Fuyo-Dokai (1042-1107)

DAITH

*Seivintie-sax: aw by
an duin nou, wi this lyfe--
Ah haena socht a heivin,
an fear nae hell ava.
Ah'l lay thir banes o mynes,
ayont the Thriepil Warld,
unthirlt, unfasht*

DEATH

*Seventy-six: all over
and done with this life---
I've never sought a heaven
and fear no hell at all.
I'll lay these bones of mine,
beyond the Triple World,
uninvolved, unperturbed*

Li Ch'ing-chao (1082-1144)

A SIMMER'S DAY

*A gey dreich day this, wi rouk an cloud
that claers awa wi wraiths o incense reik.
Ti think midsummer's day is by again
an fowk suin say, 'The nichts is drawin in!'
The rouk haed drak't lest nicht throu drapes
til bousters drouk't wi cauld dew draps.
The gloamin faws, beglaumert wi the scent,
Ah dauner til the gairden fuit wi gless in haund,
seekin oot flouers whas parfume fills ma sleeves.
But aye wi a sair hert for aw---!
The wastlin wund nicht kyth the muin
an shaw the color o ma peilie chowks,
faucher nor the yalla o chrysanthemums.*

Li Ch'ing-chao (1082-1144)

A SUMMER DAY

*A dull day this with fog and cloud
That clears away with wraiths of incense smoke.
To think that midsummer's day is past again
and folk will say: 'The nights are drawing in!'
Last night the fog had seeped through drapes
to bolsters drenched with cold dew drops.
The dusk falls, enchanted with the scent,
I stroll to the garden end with glass in hand,
seeking out flowers whose perfume fills my sleeves,
but always I am sore at heart.
The West wind may reveal the moon
and show the color of my sick cheeks,
Paler than the yellow of chrysanthemums.*

Daie-Soko (1089-1163)

LYFE

*Lyfe is aye as we finnd it---
Daith anaw, wha kens?
Mebbe a bit pairtin poem?
Ah winna threip on aboot it!*

LIFE

*Life is always as we find it---
Death as well, who knows?
Perhaps a little parting poem?
I will not insist on it!*

Lu Yu (1125-1210)

THE CLACHAN AT SHANSI

*Dinna turn up yeir neb at the wersh wyne!
The fermers brew nae better lyke,
at the back end. At ither tymes, mynd,
thay bring oot pigs an poutrie for ee.
It's no that easie for ti finnd the gait
mang heichs an howes an breingin burns,
But see, ayont yon flouers a clachan kyths!
Yonder sum fowk, an Spring is shuirlye here!
In mainer, dress an couthie tung,
thir kintrie fowk haud til thair auld weys.
Frae nou on, gin Ah micht, Ah'l caw on thaim
bi muinlicht, chap on thair doors. Aiblins,
thay'l cry me ben for a cup an hae a crack.
Whit mair nor this is't aw aboot?*

Lu Yu (1125-1210)

THE VILLAGE AT SHANI

*Don't turn up your nose at the rough wine!
The farmers brew nothing better than this
at the Fall. At other times, remember
they'll bring out pigs and poultry for you.
It's not that easy to find the road among heights
and hollows an rushing streams, but see,
beyond yon flowers, a village comes in sight!
There are some folk and Spring is surely here!
In manner, dress and homely tongue,
These country folk hold to their old ways.
From now on, if I may, I'll call on them
by moonlight, knock on their doors. Perhaps,
they'll invite me in for a cup to have a chat?
What more than this is life about?*

AH RYSE AT DAWIN

*Whan yeir teeth ir duin, lyke
ye canna growe new anes.
Whan yeir hair faws oot
ye canna plant it again.
Ah ryse at dawin an regaird
masell in the luikin gless.
Ma gizz is runkilt, ma heid is gray
an Ah im fou o peitie for masell.
Ah'm waesum for the years
that is gaen lyke skailt wattir.
We canna mak nae mair o't.
Ah waucht a gless o the wyne
an turn til ma buiks aince mair.*

* * * * *

*Back throu the centuries Ah reinge
athort thrie thousan year, ti veisit
Shun an Yu the Gret, an Kue Lung,
yon unco, namelie, randie skellums.
Thair corps is lang murlt inti stour,
but Ah can see thaim claerlie still.
Whit dis it maitter? Thay leeve
foraye in the mynd's ee. Ma flesh,
lyke thairs, wul weir awa wi tyme.*

I RISE AT DAWN

*When your teeth are gone
you cannot growe new ones.
When your hair falls out
it cannot be planted again.
I rise at dawn and regard
myself in the glass.
My face is wrinkled, my head is gray
and I am filled with pity for myself.
I'm desolate for the years
that are gone like spilt water.
We can make no more of it.
I swallow a glass of the wine
and turn to my books once more.*

* * * * *

*Back through the centuries I range,
over three thousand years, to visit
Shun and Yu the Great, and Kue Lung,
those famous, lawless scoundrels.
Their bodies have long turned to dust,
but I can see them clearly still.
What does it matter? They live
forever in the mind's eye. My flesh
like theirs, will wear away with time.*

Chang Hsiao-hsiang (1134-1169)

BACK AT THE LOCH

*Thrie year awa, an here Ah im aince mair
ti view the spring-tyme bewties o this loch!
Blawn bi the aest wund in ma sail, Ah feel
the whusper o the sauchs upon ma chowks.
The'r naething lyke makkin yeir merk in lyfe
ti gar ye feel at ease, whaure'er ye finnd yeirsell.
The wattir at the boathouss bi the shore
an aw the lift abuin, is nou aw yae blue.
A hantil maws tak flicht up frae the shallaes
an skraichin, flie awa ti whaur thay'd raither be.
Ah wush ye aw weill; an nou fareweill*

BACK AT THE LAKE

*Three years have gone, and I'm here once more
to see the Spring-time beauty of this lake!
Blown by the East wind in my sail, I feel
The whisper of the willows on my cheeks.
There's nothing like making your mark in life
to make you feel at ease, wherever you find yourself.
The water at the boathouse by the shore
and the whole sky above is now all one blue.
A flock of gulls take flight from the shallows,
and shrieking, fly away to where they'd rather be.
I wish you all well; and now farewell!*

Tendo-Nyojo (1163-1228)

LEST LOWP

*Eftir saxtie-sax year
getherin sins,
Ah lowp inti Hell—
abuin Lyfe an Daith*

LAST LEAP

*After sixty-six years
gathering sins,
I leap into Hell--
above Lyfe and Death*

Chu Shu Chen (ca.1200)

DULE

*The pale muin leims down frae abuin
in the cauld lift o September.
Whyte freist wyes down the fulyerie,
raxin ower the freezin wattir.
Ma lane, forenent ma winnok
the sair wecht o the passin days
never lichtens, even for a wee,
but Ah skreive awa at ma poems,
syne chyng an redd thaim up
an i the feinish, Ah thraw thaim awa.
Gowden chrysants wuther alang the plettie.
The skraichs o gangrel maws faws frae abuin*

* * * *

*Ah'm aw bi masell bi ma wundae.
Ah'm dernt in ma tuim chaumer.
Sae syne, Ah burn a pikkil incense,
an dwaum in the reik ma lane.*

SORROW

*The pale moon shines down from above
in the cold sky of September.
White frost weighs down the foliage
reaching over the freezing water.
All alone before my window,
The heavy weight of the passing days
never lightens, even for a lttle,
but I write away at my poems,
then change and tidy them up
and in the end, I throw them away.
Golden chrysants wither on the balcony.
I hear the skrieks of vagrant gulls above*

Dankyo-Myorin (13th century)

THE WEY

*Cummin, Ah steik ma neives;
gaun, Ah spreid ma haunds wyde.
Aince throu the peel an on
the path, a lotus stem wul
fairlie pul a mukkil elephant*

THE WAY

*Coming, I clench my fists;
going, I spread my hands wide.
Once through the barrier and on
the path, a lotus stem will pull
a huge elephant*

Shishin-Goshin (?-1339)

ZEN

*Speakin, Ah founder echt tymes;
haud ma tung, Ah trip aince or twyce!
Zen Buddhism awhaur nou! Ah dout
Ah better sit down an lat ma mynd be.*

ZEN

*Speaking, I fall eight times;
hold my tongue, I trip once or twice!
Zen Buddhism everywhere now!
I'd better sit down and let my mind be.*