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## "Rhapsody of Agonizing Contemplations on an Autumn Night" and "The Torment of Lady Daffodil" (〈秋夕怨思賦〉與〈水仙怨〉)

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## "Rhapsody of Agonizing Contemplations on an Autumn Night" and "The Torment of Lady Daffodil" (〈秋夕怨思賦〉與〈水仙怨〉)

### Abstract

"A spirit of extreme magnitude and fortitude that spreads passionately and boldly." — Dr. Pu Yi-Nan, poet, scholar, and Professor at the Department of Chinese Literature of Tamkang University in Taiwan on the publications by Rivolia Chen Xiao-Yu's that he has read 「浩氣慷慨。」——臺灣淡江大學中文系教師、詩人、學者普公義南，評其所閱陳瀟玉已刊之作

### Keywords

Cultural-Spiritual China, Chen Zi-Ang (陳子昂), Warriorship (俠)

### Disciplines

Chinese Studies | Creative Writing | Poetry

### Comments

Written for ENG 302: The Writing of Poetry: New Poems, New Poets

## **Rhapsody of Agonizing Contemplations on an Autumn Night**

*Composed under the persona of Chen Zi-Ang (659—700 CE) the martyr.*

The moon, where the soul of a mythological beauty resides,  
Hangs in loftiness and immaculate purity in the firmament  
While the Milky Way is cleansed and extends to the remoteness.  
My lone autumn garden is frozen with coolness  
And my medical burner exhales thin yet bitter vapors.  
I uphold my finesse amidst my quiet hermitage,  
While my heart is infused with prolonged sorrows  
As I recline on my sickbed, prostrated by my infirmities.  
In shattered candlelight and recurring sleeplessness  
I touch my Daoist prayer beads and descend into deep prayers.

In the past, I read classics and scriptures at the Golden Brilliance Monastery  
Where my fierce, noble ambition — an involuntary obsession —  
Has risen above the firmaments. I look down upon the green and chilly waters  
As I recite and compose impassioned poetic lines, while sometimes  
I gaze at the remote, eternal jade realm and narrate on my torments.

I wore my sword on my back and entered Luoyang, where I  
Painstakingly and diligently immersed myself in books under my study window.  
Without caring even if I am to be killed tens of thousands of times  
I repeatedly express my disagreements in my yearning to defend the Way  
And to bring peace upon countless people.  
Despite my incorruption, determination, and loyalty, I was kept in stocks:  
I, whose purity resembled that of a piece of white jade, was imprisoned  
For well over a year, during which blood and tears streamed,  
Their profound undercurrents have been piercing my heart every night.

I have returned to the mountains within a frosted forest  
Where I explore the Book of Changes and calculations on it  
While cleansing my psyche. Wrapping myself in a plain blanket  
I observe the transformations of innumerable scenarios  
And sense that my departure from this world is approaching.  
How long could all fresh and alluring earthbound beauties ever last?  
May I follow the honored dragons and cranes in ascending  
To the hallowed immortal realm enveloped within immaculate clouds!

Traditional Chinese Original:

秋夕怨思賦（代伯玉烈士作。陳子昂，字伯玉。）

娥魄皓潔，絳河迢遞。秋園凝寒，藥爐煙薄。  
持韶儀以幽居，懷惆悵而臥疾。撫流珠且深祈，對殘燈復無眠。  
昔讀經於金華，有猛志自凌霄。俯滄瀾而長吟，望玉京以敘憂。  
負劍入洛，苦節觀書。昧萬死而屢諫，冀護道並安民。  
廉貞被枷，白璧陷獄。年餘血淚，夜夜錐心。  
歸東山之霜林，研易占而自清。裹素衾而觀化，覺百年之漸近。  
紅塵鮮妍兮，能幾時？願隨龍鶴兮，登白雲！

### The Torment of Lady Daffodil

Within my melancholic meditations,  
The half-scattered lotuses were pink and white  
Amidst green princess bamboos;  
Beneath swaying, thin clouds sunken in sorrow  
Fragmented branches were twisted. —  
I remember how, when thinking on my flesh's upcoming separation  
From hallowed China, my profuse, dense grieving  
Flowed into tragic rivers, infusing my impassioned heart  
From which I recite my traditional lines echoing medieval heritages.  
It was several years after a gangster against people  
Seized an enormous earthbound power and wealth complex  
Combined with a position — keeping a tight grip into the present.

My words resembling pearls and jades were interconnected  
By my sorrowful contemplations; after my banishment, from the remote  
I gazed at the south of China, the Light, the Blossom, and the Magnitude  
While upholding my beauty; my tender-voiced sobs were interwoven.  
My fine face was paled by my fervent troubles  
And I felt like an aloeswood incense on immolation;  
My slender shadow was similar to a phoenix wounded at her wings.  
Densing autumn small frosts have dyed my dark hair  
While my embroidered dress quivered in night blows.

From indomitable soul that has been as cleansed and pure as rivers in the wilderness  
I have been weeping blood while my flesh suffers from nose-bleeds:  
My anguish has ensanguined all leaves in my vision —  
Their glow has intersected with yellowish autumn branches.  
Above the orchids hills, ghosts cried within luminous, flowing moonbeams  
While my heart drenched in my torments knotted more agonies  
And twined me in pains. Various flowers that once bloomed in splendor now wither

While my pure tears followed; the fading green leaves shriveled  
As does my flesh webbed in illness.

Who has ever consoled me —

A young Confucianist warrior banished from China, the hallowed land,  
Because of the current bloodthirsty gangster against people and his impact.  
My beauty resembles spring apricots, and I have been weaving  
My traumas into my chantings — the hues of my tears  
Have imprinted and dyed the embroidered silks of my lapels.  
Every year, my torment and physical infirmity intensify  
As I pause myself in my prolonged, lonesome standing  
And envy — in vain — birds soaring southwards  
To their native lands.

Original Traditional Chinese composition began in 2021 CE, using exactly the same meters,  
rhythms, and form as those of Liu Rushi's (1618–1664 CE) “Ballad of Lotus-Gathering”.  
Traditional Chinese original and English translation finalized in 2022 CE.

Traditional Chinese Original:

**水仙怨** 用柳如是〈採蓮曲〉瑤韻。

殘荷粉白妃竹綠，流雲慘淡殘枝曲。沅湘淒冷楚情濃，斷腸聲繼三十六。  
珠璣字字怨思牽，望郢悲歌嬌咽連。美人憔悴蜜香消，瘦影偏如折翼鸞。  
迷離秋霰染青絲，羅衣瑟瑟夜風吹。貞魂澄澈如江水，斑竹恨血映枝黃。  
蘭皋鬼哭月濛濛，愁心漸結千千網。繁華零落清淚從，墜綠支離瘦骨同。  
誰念無眠天杏子，襟頭淚色染羅綺。年年愁病苦相加，延佇空慕南歸雉。