

Classic Poetry Series

Mei Yaochen
- poems -

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Mei Yaochen()

A Rural Home

The cock crows three times; the sky is almost light.
Someone's lined up bowls of rice, along with flasks of tea.
Anxiously, the peasants rush to start the ploughing early,
I pull aside the willow shutter and gaze at the morning stars.

Mei Yaochen

East Stream

I walk to East Stream to gaze at the water
and a boat late in shoving off as I sit by a lonely isle.
Wild ducks calmly sleeping by the shoreline.
No branch looks ugly when the old tree blooms

Short low rushes as if cut with scissors.
Sand so flat and pebbles smooth and clean as if sieved.
I don't dislike this place and yet I cannot stay.
In thin twilight I return by wagon, my horse exhausted.

Mei Yaochen

Mourning Loss

When we two first became husband and wife
Was seventeen years ago today.
We couldn't look at each other enough,
What loss could compare to this?
Already, my temples are mostly white,
I'd rather my body had finished its time.
In the end, we'll share a tomb;
Still not dead, I weep and weep.

Mei Yaochen

Sacrifice To The Cat That Scared All The Rats

When I had my Five White cat,
The rats did not invade my books.
This morning Five White died,
I sacrifice with rice and fish.
I see you off in the middle of the river,
I chant for you: I won't neglect you.
Once when you'd bitten a rat,
You took it crying round the yard.
You wanted to scare all the rats,
So as to make my cottage clean.
Since we came on board this boat,
On the boat we've shared a room.
Although the grain is dry and scarce,
I eat not fearing piss or theft.
That's because of your hard work,
Harder working than chickens or pigs.
People stress their mighty steeds,
Saying nothing's like a horse or ass.
Enough- I'm not going to argue,
But cry for you a little.

Mei Yaochen

Sad Remembrance

After you came back to my home,
You never complained that we were poor.
Up till midnight every night,
We had our breakfast after noon.
Nine or ten days eating pickles,
Then one day we'd have dried meat.
East and west for eighteen years,
Together we shared both bitter and sweet.
Expecting a hundred years of love,
How could I know you'd go one evening?
I still remember that last hour,
You held me, but you could not speak.
Although this body yet survives,
Finally we'll be dust together.

Mei Yaochen

Writing Of My Sorrow

Heaven's already taken my wife,
Now it's also taken my son.
My two eyes are still not dry,
My heart desires only death.
Rain falls and soaks into the earth,
A pearl sinks into the ocean's depths.
Dive in the sea and you can seek the pearl,
Dig in the earth and you can see the water.
Only people return to the source below.
For all of time. This we know.
I hold my chest; to whom now can I turn?
Emaciated, a ghost in the mirror.

Mei Yaochen