

Classic Poetry Series

Yang Wanli
- poems -

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Yang Wanli()

At Dawn, See Off Lin Zifang At Pure Benevolence Temple

Now it comes, mid June on West Lake,
Four seasons, the vista ever unique.
Lotus leaves to the horizon, boundless green,
Sun glow on lotus buds, peerless red.

Yang Wanli

Cold Sparrows

Hundreds of cold sparrows dive into the empty courtyard,
cluster on plum branches and speak of sun after rain at dusk.
They choose to gather en masse and kill me with noise.
Suddenly startled, they disperse. Then, soundlessness.

Yang Wanli

Don'T Read Books

Don't read books'

Don't chant poems'

When you read books your eyeballs wllther away
leaving the bare sockets

When you chant poems your heart leaks out slowly
wlth each word

People say reading books is enjoyable

People say chanting poems is fun

But if your lips constantly make a sound
like an insect chlrrping In autumn

you will only turn into a haggard old man

And even If you don't turn into a haggard old man

Its annoying for others to have to hear you

It's so much better

to close your eyes sxt in your study

lower the curtains, sweep the floor,

burn incense.

take a walk when you feel energetic,

and when you're tired go to sleep.

Yang Wanli

Early Summer, Dwelling In The Idleness, I Wake From A Noon Nap

Sour plums at lunch left my teeth feeling all feathery.
Banana trees cast green across gauze window-screens.
A long day. I Wake from a noon nap empty of thought,
all idleness, watch kids catch falling willow blossoms.

Yang Wanli

Listening To The Rain

A year ago my boat, homeward bound,
moored at Yen-ling-
I was kept awake all night by the rain
beating against the sails
.?Last night the rain fell on the thatched roof
of my house.
I dreamed of the sound of rain
beating against the sails.

Yang Wanli

On A Portrait Of Myself

The pure wind makes me chant poems.
The bright moon urges me to drink.
Intoxicated, I fall among the flowers,
heaven my blanket, earth my pillow.

Yang Wanli

Reading By The Window

I idly open a book of T'ang poems
and find a petal of peach blossom, still fresh.
I remember taking this book with me
to read among the flowers
and realize that another year has passed.

Yang Wanli

Rising Early

Chrysanthemums in bloom-as gaunt as ever;
peonies, leaves falling off; seem completely withered.
A locust, frozen nearly to death,
clings desperately to a cold branch.

Yang Wanli