

li bai xi-01

given to secretary wang at the time i went straight back to my hermitage cell near ping feng die at the foot of mount lu shan

once we parted at the house of the yellow cranes
i then wandered for a long time between the huai river and the sea
we both whirled away like leaves caught in the wind
will spread over the waters of dong ting lake

in these later years i did not see you again
as i uselessly wandered through the lands of wu and yue
but everywhere i went i thought often of you
at tian tai shan in the moonlight surrounded by green ivy

on gui ji mountain under a beautiful full moon
from where i returned to the banks of the yan river
there clouds and mountains emerged from the sea
people and nature posed as if reflected in a beautiful mirror

then i crossed the stream to go north to zhe giang
i remained there intoxicated on the terraces of the land of chu
in jing men i surpassed the poetry of qu yuan and song you
in the park of xiao liang wang i put zou yang and mei sheng in the shade

secretly people laugh at me because of my boasting
but where stands the man who sees true my pompositities
the formidable rebel an lu shan occupies hong gou
but his victory is merely a wind in the trees of autumn

but i am not the man who can help his age
so i go to hide temporarily in ping feng die
tomorrow morning i shake the dust from my clothes and leave here
and join with the seagulls who ever fly free

murphy always landing on his feet

6/27/2011 9:10 AM

li bai xi-02

at the banquet of the marine troops, given to the censor of headquarters for prince li lin

the moon has turned into five white dragons
and these fly to the ninth heaven where the rebel waits
the sands of mongolia frightened bei hai
as lightning swept across the river at lo yang
the arrows of the enemies were like rain on the imperial palaces
and the equipage of the ruler had to turn and flee

our beautiful prince has planned campaigns on behalf of the emperor
and prepared to clean the southern borders with an ax in his hand
the banner of the marines flutters toward heaven in the falling snow
the golden spears shine in their multitude in the misty valley
all dependent on the decisions of a single noble, our prince
the censor has sent this group of able men

the land of rivers and lakes welcomes the military flags
the censors in their embroidered finery have provided festive entertainment
the prince has provided a fleet of warships for the coming battles
it is as if we were on the gold balcony of yan zhao wang
it is believed the immortals of the purple mists visit us from afar
though up til now i have hidden myself behind the door woven from grass stems

and i have kept my art secret for forty years
who can know what this man of solitude might say
it is fact that he wears on his hip the sword long yuan
with one swipe of the sword he can part the drifting clouds
truly he will clear the lands of yu and yan of the enemy
how i would love to sit at table with you, oh censor

while all the quiet work of tai gong on strategy goes on
we all accept the imperial grace, we are partners
and there is no consideration of the downfall of any small person
what we hope for is the destruction of the rebels
then, according to merit, following the example of lu zhong lian,
to disappear without thought of any reward

murphy the patriot, first, last, and always

6/28/2011 8:43 AM

li bai xi-03

given to wu o 17th of his clan

introduction: wu o is my student, a man who devotes himself entirely to the fight for justice for others. his character is simple, straight, silent and brave. he looks at yao li) as his ideal. solitary, he fishes in the river or the sea and does not tend to the affairs of this world.

when he heard of the current difficulties, he came up from the west to see me. my beloved son, bo qin was living in the land of lu, and wu o offered at my request, to defy the arms of the barbarians. seized with gratitude, i took in hand my brush and made him the following poem:

a noble steed as fast as the horse yan huei fitted out with silk reins
will rush up to the wu men gates tomorrow morning
he will bear my guest wu o who is to be compared to yao li
from the west he comes to reciprocate my love

laughing he stripped the dagger from the crown prince of yan
and he wiped it clean without saying a word
the barbarian hounds bellow over the clear lo river
the bridge at heaven's ford is the gate now for the enemy

my beloved son is separated from me in east lu
i cry in vain like a monkey whose guts are torn by pain
lin huei threw away the snow white gem
and fled a thousand miles to be safe with his child

you will bring my son here to be with me
packing light you will pass over the source of the huai river
your true heart will be in harmony with the dao of heaven
you must forgive yourself for the long ago escaped soul of deng you

murphy counting on old friends to make things right

6/30/2011 9:27 AM

li bai xi-04

given to lu qiu district judge of su song xian

when yuan ji was appointed as governor
he rode to dong ping on a donkey
there it took only ten working days
for him to set his district aright

then suddenly he went away shaking the dust from his clothes
who can fathom yuan ji's state of mind in this
you, oh master, are district judge of su song
you well know the passing clouds which cover this town

you have cleaned the place and the crops now grow large
since your arrival last autumn calm has been restored
the fugitive birds return now to their nests
the people have returned to cultivate their fields

you should not be ashamed to measure yourself against bu fu qi
you need not stand aside for tao yuan ming
i suspect that a thousand years from now
your fame will have surpassed their names

murphy bombastic in the praise of his betters

6/30/2011 9:40 AM

li bai xi-05

humbly sent from prison to minister cui huan

the mongolian cavalry had crossed the lo river
blood flowed freely on the battlefields
thousands of horses thundered to the sad scenes
the people of china were in danger of destruction

but you, the worthy minister, knew how to restore the harmony of nature
and once again peace extends throughout the empire
the imperial court has ministers like kui and long
shining brightly like the 28 constellations in the heavens

with their wings they protect the ministers of the three great saints
they allow the brightness of the two suns to be warmly felt
and i trust you might think of me stuck here under a bowl
and perhaps allow me once again to shed tears in the light

murphy begging for his freedom

7/1/2011 8:09 AM

li bai xi-06

the oversensor ruo song si man rushed to he nan with 3000 crack giang su troops. when his army arrived in xun yang he freed me from prison. i now work as a consultant and dedicate this poem to him.

you are the world's most honorable oversensor
you have come from the seashore as an imperial agent
and scared away all the tigers as did once song zhun
as once meng chang you have led the good citizens to return

your soldiers shine in jiu pu
your warships sail into ying du
first you will prepare your officers for the battle
then by the next full moon you will subdue the mongols

the blood lust of the troops is felt throughout the land
their noise makes the entire kingdom tremble
even master swordsmen must honor your thrust
you are a second zhang liang in your mastery of strategy

your enemies face their immediate destruction
the rebels will soon be eradicated
i regret that i am no field commander such as ji meng
and know not how to aid you in your wonderful plans

murphy cheering on the team from the sidelines

7/1/2011 8:27 AM

li bai xi-07

banished to ye lang i give this poem to secretary xin

once we got drunk in the brothels of chang an
the five counts and the seven nobles sharing our wine
we were trying to emulate the knights of the past in our revels
so our pleasure and joy did not lag behind any other's

your face, oh master, was flushed in the vigor of youth
as we raced up the street by the zhang tai balcony gold whips in hand
we submitted our poetry to the emperor's unicorn palace
regaled by song and dance we lingered over tortoise shell meals

you and i believed the good times would never be gone
but even the grass trembles when the wind and dust rise up
the mongol hordes have broken through the hang gu guan pass
all the forces of the empire are rallying around our ruler

only i alone am fully grief stricken and banished to ye lang
when will the emperor finally pardon me so i can return

murphy ever a loyal subject even in adversity

7/1/2011 8:47 AM

li bai xi-08

given to liu du zhi

you are like liu cheng from dong ping
who is famous for his ability in the south
at your first appearance you were awarded a red sash
then when you turned fifty the silver seal of a minister

ice water sufficed for you at headquarters
your brocade garments glistened in the land of giang su
although the city of tong guan xian has a large population
your magnificent hall held few court procedures

your words are more valuable than gems or pearls
your writings can call up the winds and snow
i, however, was forced to separate myself from my ruler
with sorrow in my heart i accepted banishment to ye lang

after returning home i drank much wine in reciprocal toasting
and guests lined up in rows before my gate
cheerful conversations were had around the well laden table
in one day a thousand cups were emptied

but my future plans so far show no prospects
my wish for a position and the fur cloak of office frustrated
if my ruler truly does not care for my services
then i will leave early tomorrow for cang lang to go fishing

murphy sniffing with what little pride he has left

7/2/2011 8:59 AM

li bai xi-09

given to censor chang

when xie visited an shi in the eastern mountains
he did not have the intention of helping the kingdom
as soon as he left there he shook off the riotous world
after his success he returned to his pure independence

a great man has times when he emerges and times when he retires
the current generation shamefully neglects its education
who will now bring the world back to order
but you alone know me and know my worth

i have heard that field general bo qi the baron from wu an
shook the roofs of chang ping with his spirit and energy
i trust this noble man from the lands of yan and shao will eradicate the rebels
and that he will re-establish the ancestor temples in lo yang and chang an

and if you have the opportunity to inquire at the court
please ask about the fate of jia yi in the south

murphy chatting with the mighty about important things

7/2/2011 9:17 AM

li bai xi-10

given to xiu cai yi

as a young man i unbuckled my long sword
and gave it to you as a parting gift when we separated
why have you not killed rhinoceros and elephants with it
your luster has dimmed since that time

now you complain about the failures in your life
and i hide from my pursuers as i prepare to leave
i will grow old far from chang an and die in exile like you fan
and complain about the exigencies of autumn as song you once did

the fragrant cassia flower has faded away
but the character of the old spruce is still unbowed
touched by your lifelong friendship
i send these verses in an attempt to comfort

murphy trying his damndest to be a good friend in need

7/2/2011 9:29 AM

li bai xi-11

after the riots and being banished by the imperial grace to ye lang, i remember my old walks and write my thoughts here. given to the prefect wei liang cai from jiang xia

in the heavens tower the white clouds of jade city
on the mountain kun lun with its 12 gate towers and 5 walls
an immortal genius from this city touched my mind
and i received at an early age the teaching of long life
but i recklessly threw myself into the pleasures of this world
and managed this feat through both war and peace
and i have learned of the 96 outstanding men of history
whose names and fleeting fame were like fleeing clouds
life is nothing more than a continuous gamble
for people will not forego their scrabbling struggle
i tried to offer thoughts for the emperor to ponder
i had hoped to secure a ministerial career
but at the time conditions were extremely unfavorable
so i gave up that idea and began to wander through the land
i had studied fencing but had to laugh at myself
i became a writer to see where that might lead
with the sword you can fight one man not a thousand
with the brush you can acquire fame throughout the empire
but to speak of these things is really not necessary
i sighed five times as did liang hong when leaving chang an
and just as i was about to depart for the unknown
as tears of emotion flowed from my eyes
i regretted the separation from you and your extraordinary talents
you are like a pillar of strength towering over the flowers of the empire
you gave me a farewell party and wished me a happy journey
and wished to comfort me as i took my far reaching walk
friends on horseback were like drifting clouds
as they accompanied me to the pavilion of he qu bing
the songs and music could not assuage the sadness of our thoughts
as the bright sun descended over kun ming lake

in the tenth month i reached you zhou
there i saw lances and spears as thick as stars in the sky
the emperor had given up the coasts of the northern sea
and all that land was left to the large whale, an lu shan
in a moment a hundred valleys had been lost
and yan ran mountain may now be wrested away
in my heart i see the downfall of the empire, but will not say more
now my heart returns to its desire to live on the islands of the immortals
i stretch the bow but fear the sky wolf
i nock the arrows but dare not shoot
my tears flow freely on the golden terrace
i cry out to the heavens mourning prince zhao

since his death no one remains who knows good horses
the magnificent horse "green ear" rears free of a rider
if yo yi were to be born amongst us again
he would probably only once more run away
pursued by misfortune and unsatisfied
i rode fast horses here to your district gui xiang xian
i met you there in your trappings of officialdom
full of dignity you sat in the great hall
in your district of over 100 miles you represent the best of antiquity
you exemplify serenity much as did tao yuan ming
in my honor you sent for singers from the house of eternal joy
you arranged a banquet to be set up with pitchers of wine
amongst the young heroes you placed beautiful young women
before the burning candles they stood in resolute rows
later they danced here and there on beautiful silk carpets
loud chants reverberated for a long time in the high rafters
but the pleasures you shared had only just begun
you were called back to chang an at a propitious time
when you left there ten thousand crowded around
the tents of your friends stretched far and wide
from now on, however, ten thousand miles separate us
and your glory and my misery are as dissimilar as hot and cold

hot and cold periods, how many have since passed us by
in the nine provinces there is terrible turmoil
our troops have been committed to struggle with those of an lu shan
sand and dust rise to the heavens in dark clouds
all of nature trembles before the bloodlust of men
even the stars have lost their lustrous glory
bleaching bones litter the hills and mountains
the poor people, how much they have suffered
the han gu guan pass was the safest place for the emperor
the fate of the empire depended on general go shu han
but despite his 300,000 troops armed for battle
he opened the gates and submitted to the infamous rebel
the highest officials hired themselves out like dogs and sheep
but the emperor remained true and vowed to slice up the fiend
then the two emperors xuan zong and su zong fled to you
and chang an and lo yang became piles of rubble

the young emperor is given command for himself
and moves his headquarters to the bulwark at chu
the discipline in his armies surpasses that of huan gong or wen gong
the soldiers are trained to fight like tigers and bears
yet the hearts of the people do not know whom to follow
the force of the rebels is that of a sudden cloudburst
yet you made a brave stand at fang ling
your fealty exceeds that of the heroes of antiquity

meanwhile i rested on the top of the incense burner mountains
i ate the red of morning sun while drinking from the jasper spring
the gate of my house opened to the windings of the nine streams
and even from my house i could see all five lakes
and then in the middle of the night came the ships of war
and suddenly xun yang was filled with flags and banners
my insignificant personage found misfortune
and i was forced to board one of the battleships
the nothingness of five hundred ounces of gold was mentioned
but i dismissed the idea as so much floating smoke
i declined an official post and took no reward
and then was unexpectedly banished to ye lang
the path to ye lang is ten thousand miles long
and the trek to the west makes a man old from grief
even now after the empire has been cleansed of rebels
i am still pressed down from the burden of that disaster
the sun and moon mean nothing to me here in my exile
how can i manage to tell all this to the sublime son of heaven
you are recognized by men as an enlightened shepherd
from your deep love of man you will show pity on me
your old friend

as long as i am in receipt of your noble hospitality
i have thrice climbed to the yellow crane tower
i can only feel shame standing before the scholar ni heng
for without inspiration i sit outside parrot island
the martial spirit of the time of san guo is gone from fan mountain
the whole world now looks deserted and barren
the great stream takes the snow of o mei mountain with it
as its waves roll through the three gorges in si chuan
ten thousand ships have come together here in wu chang
and many sailors are to be found in giang su
if my eye looks out to consider a long journey of 10,000 miles
then i feel free and my worries dwindle away to nothingness
from the look out point of the tower is an unrestricted view
the trees on the banks of the stream look like small dark hairs
when i look at the sun i am afraid she will vanish behind the mountains
when i drink wine i look forward to the time of the lunar festival
the girls of beauty from the lands of wu and yue
bear with grace their powders and paints
if they are called upon to raise us to heaven
they come before the guests with graceful airs
dancing in the light spring wind in transparent attire
kneeling, i pray the lord host to take his rest
but his feelings are yet not satisfied
i read his poem from jing mountain
even jiang yan and bao zhao would be moved
it recalls the clear water rising from the lotus

completely natural without embellishments
the joy of nature springs forth from the heart
always reflecting the natural beauty of the world
we come to the red gate of your villa's garden
a myriad of ceremonial spears standing proud
there you have thinned the bamboo and removed rocks
the waters have risen, their depths a still clarity
on the balcony we sit and talk together
your thoughts are couched in the language of beauty
each single word more precious than a sparkling gem
you say i do not need to be ashamed before you
i answer i will once again show you my loyal heart

between the five colored clouds flies the magpie
singing as he descends from the heavens
he gives me word that the imperial pardon has arrived
and i can return home from my exile in ye lang
it is as if a warm wind sweeps into the cold valley
as if hot smoke rises from dead ashes
if you should ever come to the phoenix pond
do not impute to me the talents of jia yi
now in the time when the hounds of hell are loosed
the huns laugh because the chinese have only talkers like che qian qiu
in the middle of the night i constantly sigh
and worry about our great empire
the banners of the foes are spread along both rocky banks
where the yellow river passes between them
chickens fighting each other cannot get into the henhouse
and the cavalry watering their horses have not courage to fight
how can we get archers as good as those of prince yi
they would certainly bring down arrows on the stars of the barbarians

murphy newly returned and ready for war

7/6/2011 12:10 PM

li bai xi-12

a shi given to the chamberlain in jiang xia at the banquet of my uncle, the imperial commissioner

the phoenix leaves the imperial city
his beak closed on the decree of pardon on purple paper
once i was banished to the three districts of xiang
today i return leaving 10,000 others alone

if you ask how were you separated from the immortals
and forced to stay far away in a foreign land
i say a fish in a dry wagon rut wishes for flowing water
when the fleeting clouds have lost their previous location

i am mortally ashamed standing before the imperial chamberlain
but ask to be spared cold treatment because of my exile
again we are friends like ji yuan and yuan xian in the bamboo grove
and i will show myself first in the society of the fragrant feast

i trust you will rise to ever higher posts in your official career
similar to that bird which was created from the great fish of the northern ocean

murphy retying his cravat with care

7/7/2011 9:13 AM

li bai xi-13

the governor zheng from bo ping comes to visit me from from lu shan a thousand miles distant via jiang xia through the bei shi men, and then returns to wu ling. just before he was mounting his horse to leave i handed him this poem of separation

da liang admired wei gong zi very highly
his praise rose over the high clouds of cang wu
if he would not have had 3000 loyal followers
who would have said he was xin ling zhun

preserving the zhao kingdom and the existence of the wei empire
is his imperishable claim to fame throughout the world
though in han dan he knew to humble himself
when he went as a friend to the philosophers mao and xie

he met with the hermit hou ying by the yi men gate
and they became fast friends
when he wanted a bodyguard around him
hou ying led him to zhu hai who kept a hammer in his sleeves

if one does not search for good men with an open heart
how can one be effective in this world
i appreciate you because your word is given seriously
my desires i have already communicated to you from a distance

you now enter the shi ma gate with the pomp of a governor
the splendor of your gold bedecked saddle shines on the walls
you have put behind you the dignity of an imperial envoy
and now you wish to befriend the immortals in their lotus garments

you will go search for the peach blossom spring in wu ling
when will i again see your carriage return
with the utmost feeling i constantly think of you
for our separation swirls my soul like a monkey caught in the rapids

murphy always making plans for finding his hidey-hole

7/7/2011 12:18 PM

li bai xi-14

given to chang shi dou at the river

han gao cu sought zhi bu at jia zhu in the lu kingdom
chu ping wang banished wu yuan and he left the zhang hua balcony
and even i was banished by the emperor to ye lang far to the south
then after three years i returned to chang feng sha

i hear talk of you aspiring young officials
who ply the waters of the western stream under brocade sails
when one sits in these ships one imagines being high in the sky
the waters clear, the shimmering clouds red, between two layers of silk

how fervently i wish to see you again
i sing now as i row a small boat in the moon light
i'm not a flunky with pearl embroidered shoes
and i would like to renew our friendship which fills my heart

murphy a special friend to the rich and famous

7/7/2011 12:35 PM

li bai xi-15

given to district superintendent wang of han yang

a white jade coffin fell from the sky
wherein wang zi qiao left ye xian
it has been almost a thousand years since that time
but in han yang i have you, the second wang zi qiao

now the shoes you wear transmute into birds
and we always recognize in you the face of an immortal
how sleek and black you hair still remains
and your face is fresh as a piece of white silk

meanwhile i look like the fairy ma gu has played with sea water
and its depths have seen three roiling changes
it really is as ma gu has said
time passes quickly and runs like lightning

i want to share with you goblets of wine
then we can fully enjoy a shared meal
let us disappear together like an evanescent white cloud
why should we remain in the turmoil of this world

murphy feathering an edenic nest in his mind

7/8/2011 8:23 AM

li bai xi-16

two poems given to secretary fu from han yang xian (1 of 2)

i have heard you have the intention to give up your office
i have long lived on the banks of the han river
and i wonder if this long loneliness of mine
compares with the time you spend in your court hall

the sky here is clear and the moon shines on the river
my heart is quiet and the seagulls have become my friends
you should think about the fate of jia yi exiled to chang sha
who had nothing left but to mourn for qu yuan

murphy wholly content with his meager lot

7/8/2011 8:32 AM

li bai xi-17

two poems given to secretary fu from han yang xian (2 of 2)

parrot island is located across from han yang du
the water forms a cold fog which hides the trees on the shore
in nan pu i ascended the tower but did not meet you
why have you now withdrawn from your official position

in han gow i formed two fish with brocade scales
they were the letter i wished to be carried to you
therein you will find only a few words
that my feelings remain unchanged both in fall and spring

murphy a true friend always ready to lend a hand

7/8/2011 8:46 AM

li bai xi-18

in jiang xia, given to the district judge wei bing from nan ling xian

the horses of the tartars throw up the sands of the desert
their young warriors now water them by the heaven's ford in lo yang
you were the district magistrate of zhang ye not far from jiu quan
while i was 9000 miles away in si chuan on my way to ye lang
when heaven and earth realigned and times again were just
there i was leaving my exile and coming home in this cold winter
and my friend waited full of memories to see if i could visit
but the east wind rose to frustrate my desire to go to chang an
who would have thought we would suddenly find ourselves here in jiang xia

it happened within mists and vapors
you gave a party with wonderful whistles and flutes
but this heart worn down by misery could not produce a single sentence
before i wore brocade, a gift from the emperor, and drank from jade cups
it happened that way without much effort on my part
then i was riding a racing steed from ferghana
now i am sitting on a slow mare before the gates of provincial governors
my heart was comforted by my meeting with the governor at nan ping
and here with you, oh master, who support me with noble speeches
it is like a cleft in the mountains over ten thousand miles long
i see in all directions the sorrow of the scattered people
and when a man has sorrow it always lodges in the heart
and bitterness adds to bitterness
then it is when trouble comes i drink 20,000 flagons of wine
until the cold ashes warm again and glorious spring arrives
shan gung could ride home after his drunkenness
but it is different for a host with his guests standing before him
clouds and the moon seen from the tou-to monastery honor the Buddhists
but mountains and rivers could never encompass all my thoughts
better to play the flute and drums floating on the river
then we could call on the maidens of jiang nan to sing for us
i want to smash the upper balcony of the yellow crane tower for you
and for me you would overthrow those on parrot island
but to win honor under the red banner of war is but a dream
it is better to sing and dance to ease the pain of parting

murphy ever the pragmatist selling himself short

7/9/2011 8:19 AM

li bai xi-19

given to the financial controller lu

the autumnal landscape stretches before us
we leave by the gate and you see nothing but the cold mountain
but i recognize the fleecy clouds far in the distance
they wait for me to come as a hermit to cang wu

i wish to find the crane of dan lu to ask my question
how long til i can again see my friends in chang an

murphy stuck in the backwater of amarillo for the summer

7/9/2011 8:30 AM

li bai xi-20

two poems given to my cousin li zhi yao governor of nan ping (1 of 2)

as a young man i was dissatisfied
and despondent because i could not find a proper place to be
once i wished to follow ren gong zi
and fish for the great whale which swallows ships
and i always drank wine when i admired beautiful landscapes
and my heart would wish then no more for salary and fame
orchids grow deep within the gorge where no one weeds
where no one watches the clouds on the mountain shrink and expand

but the son of heaven in the han dynasty is riding his chariot then
the red carriage hurrying through si chuan to si ma xiang ru
i am received in audience by the emperor in the nine story palace
the dragon's face appears and spring reigns throughout the world
from all sides of the red throneroom comes the cry live 10,000 years
to congratulate his holiness on overcoming his difficulties

in the han lin academy i take up the brush and proudly look all around
who is my equal now where the unicorn gallery rises high above
by the imperial grace i enter for the first time through the yin tai gate
and write my words alone in the jin luan palace
i ride a beautiful horse with precious stones on the stirrups and saddle
i rest on an ivory bed and eat from golden bowls
those who laughed at me before in my subordinate position
now come requesting to be received by me for an audience

then one morning i must feign disease and cross rivers and seas
of all my former friends how few now are left
previously they bowed deeply at the gates, now they shut me out
today we become friends and then tomorrow all is changed
i love you because your friendship is as firm as a mountain
i will always follow you though mists confuse my way
once xie ling yun in a dream of his brother wrote "in the lake sprouts spring vegetation"
and this made his poem "climb the tower by the lake" seem all the more valuable to me
after our separation i wished to send you from afar a poem like lin hai by xie ling yun
that you may then with your friends send an answering song

murphy first and foremost pledging his loyalty

7/9/2011 11:01 AM

li bai xi-21

two poems given to my cousin li zhi yao governor of nan ping (2 of 2)

dong ping once and nan ping now
both captains of the infantry
from the first they loved their tasty wine
and heeded not the district judge

you also were banished to the peach blossoms of wu ling
where you wandered around looking at the flowers
and the people there treated you like an old friend
they came out of their homes and received you with joy

murphy seeing the past in everything he does

7/10/2011 7:58 AM

li bai xi-22

given to censor pan in advocacy for qian shao yang

how proud the censor looks in his embroidered robes
with his helmet and white hair pin more severe than a mere braid
many men of the three armies stand by him and heed his advice
the tiger guard marches proudly before him brandishing their swords

although they cannot be compared with the 25 old ones, the gong zi tui
who serve under the grizzled old man qian shao yang
his eyebrows look like the fresh snow on mountain pines
he will surely be able to protect the heir to the throne

if you will look with favor on this under officer
all men in the realm will look upon you and see your glory

murphy returning a favor for an old friend

7/10/2011 8:18 AM

li bai xi-23

given to liu yuan

bamboo flourishes in abundance in qiu pu
why should the visiting phoenix feel hunger there
and yet i flew around crazy as a magpie in the moonlight
seeking a friend who would offer shelter on his branch

but you, oh master, are the gem tree where the phoenix will nest
finding his perch and preening his beautiful plumage
i love you and must always think of your noble virtue
after my return home i will always remember your hospitality

murphy the shameless flatterer

7/10/2011 8:33 AM

li bai xi-24

being banished to ye lang, on the way there i prepare my pardon and to ask permission to return. at the same time i am pleased at the wonderful news of the recapture of two cities. i describe my feelings in a poem and show it to xiu cai xi

the young yellow beaked bird was caught in the men's nets
the white dragon took on the appearance of a fish
if i received punishment did that mean i should blame the heavens
because of my own stupidity i fell into the net
the giant fish of the rebels is not yet eradicated
the predators still attack and destroy
so i deplore my banishment to the land of chu
having not the chance to help my country as did shen bao xu

in my life i have met two illustrious rulers, xuan zong and su zong
and over time have been banished twice by them
i had to leave home to be filled with remorse in ye lang
expelled from society i hid myself in desolate valleys

halfway there i managed to free myself from the clouds of despair
and i felt relief like a bird escaping his cage
i hear from afar that we have recaptured the two capitals
this surpasses even the achievements of guang wu di
the son of heaven xuan zong went on an inspection tour to si chuan
the heir to the throne kept his troops occupied in fu feng
the two gave orders to restore the imperial throne
they received with open arms all brave men who rallied to their side

the auxiliary mongolian troops came from the far west
and destroyed in a thunderous flash the rebels east of the passes
they cleansed the land completely, first to the left and then to the right
then they finally took back the emperor's palace in lo yang
the imperial sedan chair of su zong then returned to chang an
and the entire country was once again a united whole
with powerful energy the imperial rule was re-established
and the resulting acclaim is infinite

then, too, the imperial carriage of xuan zong returned to chang an
the two suns were suddenly back at their zenith
then one day xuan zong renounced the throne
the sword and shield of empire was passed seamlessly to su zong

i am ashamed that i have not been able to help in these events
i have truly become a young old man
the emperor can now reach me no more
he can only check the lofty flight of the wild goose

i discard my sword and study the preparation of the elixir of life
two young immortals help me with my alchemical furnace
i send this verse to you master xi and bid you
to also think of your eventual going to the island of the immortals

murphy ever the onlooker at the big parade

7/11/2011 9:41 AM

li bai xi-25

two poems given to minister zhang hao (1 of 2)

taking care of the throne is a heavy obligation
the sky wolf peers down on the imperial palace
the six dragons draw the sun chariot of the emperor away
the entire world is darkened by the dust of the western barbarians

then the lofty heavens send such as you as minister
your nobility shines in your understanding of governmental actions
quietly you manipulate patriotic enthusiasm
and suddenly you have control of the highest state authority
your powerful presence is that of the giant mountains
your remarkable plans have the power of witchcraft
zhang liang saved han gao zu at the festival of hong men
in the present tang dynasty you are the reincarnation of zhang liang

you carry the flag and grab the golden spear
the drums roll as you mount the carriage with red wheels
as general of the guard you are fierce as thunder and lightning
as commander in chief you begin your march to the east
the provincial governors stand reverently in front of your warhorse
your fierce warriors tear away the skin of the rebel whale
your grace is poured out to all sides and even the fish and birds are freed
your commands lead to a fresh new growth of spring

your holy wisdom knows how to seize opportunities
you know how to praise men at the proper time
i need not mention the large numbers of captured enemies
you can make them wear the head-dresses of women
you bring forth from the dark sea luminous pearls
all gather round to be valuable assets on your staff
another feng yi delivers the prophecy of the "red flame"
another deng you arrives as in the time of guan wu di
everything is in motion as once before in the battle of kun yang
and one sees the renewal of the reign of the han

once i was friends with you as guan zhong was with bao shu ya
then i was suddenly forced to leave chang an and i fled to wu
my entire life i hoped to repay my lord his grace
for a hundred generations i hoped my elders to give him glory
but eventually it did not come to pass
oh it is difficult to think about the separation again
i feel infinitely lonely in this desolate exile
the winds and clouds of this world still stir my ambition
i have become such a scraggly old tree i would frighten gentle folk

but i have heard that you will travel here from chang an
my mind begins to expand and my spirit begins to come together
you will find me as zhou ya fu found his ji meng
the enemy has no one who can conceive of such depths
i want to sit with you as once wang meng sat with huan wen crushing lice
and have the opportunities to discuss the difficulties of this time
a fresh wind blows in the world but worthy men are suffering hardship
why not speak of this wind as it stirs the tips of green water chestnuts

and if these words do not please you
then i will return to the shores of the han river to live out my old days

murphy still wanting to make a difference in the world

7/12/2011 4:21 PM

li bai xi-26

two poems given to minister zhang hao (2 of 2)

my family was originally from long xi
my ancestor li guang defended the borders as a general in the han empire
his meritorious plans united the heavens and earth
his fame flew up over the dark clouds
yet he did not win the title of count until the end of his fighting
at that time he was very despondent
the world knows of the bravery of the kong tong men of long xi
whose energy springs from the brisk west wind
this courage has been handed down to the ancestor's grandchildren
the spirit of a hundred generations still is dominant in me

at fifteen i was studying classics and rare books
and i have written better rhyme prose than si ma xiang ru
the imperial dragon honored me with his exceptional grace
and my rooms in the unicorn tower were close to the imperial apartments
but the troubles of my world had not reached their end
i was sorely defamed in troubling times
i think of the similarity of now with the end of the jin dynasty
when there arose a malevolent wave of dust from the tartar hordes
the officials fell under their spears and arrows
and the savage barbarians filled the court and bazaar
a shi lo looked over the ruling of china
a liu cong took as prisoner the son of heaven
the hand on my sword sings as i whistle through the night
this staunch heart loses itself with a thousand miles to go
indeed i wish to lop off the heads of the rebel sea monsters
and again bloody the waters around lo yang

i want to wet the six sky regions with a refreshing rain
so all of nature does not wilt nor look to die
it is like when i need to pour only a cup of water
and laugh at myself at how easy i can do this
relying on others to succeed brings to me a sense of shame
but well laid plans and cooperation lend weight to effort
i want to annihilate the enemy and talk of this no more
then on the wings of the wind i will fly to the island of the immortals
and i will leave only the shoes of an qi sheng
behind on the banks of the mighty sea

murphy champing at the bit

7/13/2011 8:58 AM

li bai xi-27

i hear xie yang er sing of wild tigers so i give him this poem

we are in the same district and only the water separates us from qiu pu
there i heard the singing about wild tigers
the next morning i asked who it was that sang
and i learned it was the estimable xie yang er

murphy sending a billet doux to his favorite chorus girl

7/13/2011 9:07 AM

li bai xi-28

i stay at the house of the lord of qing shi

in the night i arrived at the qing shi river
and remained in your house of green rock
above the veranda is the constellation of the bushel
the bed looks out on the windswept waves
now when the moon sinks behind the western mountains
in the darkness i hear only the melancholy cries of the monkeys

murphy the guest making himself at home

7/13/2011 9:13 AM

li bai xi-29

detained in prison in xun yang i send three poems to minister cui huan (1 of 3)

the 400,000 men from han dan
destroyed in one day at chang ping
if you are able to change the dispensations of heaven
perhaps i might hope to escape from here alive

murphy the luckiest man in the world

7/13/2011

li bai xi-30

detained in prison in xun yang i send three poems to minister cui huan (2 of 3)

the real mao sui has not fallen into the well
the real ceng shen has killed no one
the neighbors of the wrong mao sui were misled by ping yuan
the mother of the real ceng shen was deceived and fled
if a white stone becomes as one with a moonlit pearl
only then can one consider it a genuine jewel

murphy turning to writing fables in his old age

7/13/2011 10:25 AM

li bai xi-31

detained in prison in xun yang i send three poems to minister cui huan (3 of 3)

when time oppresses a rain shower gladdens
i imagined myself to be the spirit of the yang tai terrace
although i am haunted in my waking dreams
i cannot forget the chaotic beauty of duke xiang of chu

murphy tortured by the vividness of his imagination

7/13/2011 10:30 AM

li bai xi-32

in ba ling given to the chamberlain jia

the honorable jia looks with longing to the west of chang an
banished to the southern bank of the xiang river, he dare not despair
our illustrious ruler has more grace than emperor wen di of the han
he has pitied you and not banned you even further to chang sha

murphy always on the sunny side

7/13/2011 10:40 AM