

the song of the tower of the duke of yue (son of the tang emperor tai-zong)

how magnificent the view of the tower from mian-zhou
it was built in the xian-qing period by the duke of yue
it towers lonely in the wilderness northwest of the town
its green roofing tiles and red framing timbers cast their color on the city walls

at the foot of the tower the great river flows past a hundred fathoms wide
over the mountains past the tower the sinking sun now disappears
the last visage of the princely creation admired by the townspeople
for a thousand years the tower will evoke the same reverence and awe

murphy admiring the reflected sun of dawn across the hudson
2/28/2008 9:12 AM

von zach IX,1

the story of the palm (transplanted from distant lands beyond the sea)

beside the governmental offices of mian-zhou on the left bank of the clear fou river
there grows a great palm tree high into the surrounding clouds
its bark a mixture of dragon scales and rhinoceros armor
a man can barely reach around the thick trunk streaked gray and white

because many other trees crowd around in a messy tangle
no one can see the palm would afford excellent building materiel
so she will not be cut down to use in the capital chang-an
only the local tatar officials see the potential of this neglected palm

murphy hiding his virtues under a wicker basket
2/28/2008 9:29 AM

von zach IX,2

the song of the tufted falcon painted by jiang-jiao, lord of chu-guo

the duke of chu-guo painted this image of a tufted falcon
his eyes have the murderous desire one imagines true northern falcons to have
those who gaze at the picture fear the hawk will break free from the hunter's sleeve
the nature of such a warrior bird must reflect the nature of the painter himself

the painting is in the governmental offices of mian-zhou
the only pity is that no other falcon has come from this artist's hands
and the swallows and sparrows nesting among the beams should have no fear
the hawk who looks so real cannot fly up into the high regions of the sky

murphy arguing that a painter should not work from photographs
2/29/2008 8:59 AM

von zach IX,3

on the birthday of my son zong-wu (who has stayed behind in cheng-tu-fu while i am held back in zi-zhou by an uprising)

this day in late autumn is your birthday, little son, when will i see you again
since you speak the language of the capital with me, others already see the poet in you
our family is known for its poetry so it is natural for them to think this
so you should study the classics and eschew interest in pretty clothes and such

today in spite of my physical suffering i have organized a small party
i lie sprawled in an easy chair since i cannot even sit up to celebrate
i will have just a little of the delightful wine called liquid morning red
i shall be content to sip it slowly from my cup a drop at a time

murphy still able to hobble to the corner liquor store to buy red wine for dinner
2/29/2008 9:20 AM

von zach IX,4

the story of the precipitous slope of the guang lu mountain

on the way over the mountain i see the sun sinking behind a precipitous cliff wall
on the western horizon thousands upon thousands of mountains are reddened
on the branches of the trees birds flit and twitter among themselves
in no time it gets dark and i meet no other travelers on my way home

now if my horse shies i will surely fall into a deep gulch
when the grasses move i fear a robber's arrow from ambush
would we could return to the peaceful times of the kai-yuan period
now traveling is dangerous and the roads beset by thieves

murphy putting his wallet in his front pocket before boarding the packed subway car
2/29/2008

von zach IX,5

autumn complaint

a cold wind whips through from the distant north
while numerous robbers still infest these lands
far from my native country i sent a letter home today
this onset of autumn has made me desirous of travel

i observe the migration of birds through the heavens
and lament my ill health which prevents my so moving
originally i wanted to travel home through the three gorges
but i could never reach there now through the lands filled with rioting

murphy laid up in bed with a badly broken foot
2/29/2008 1:31 PM

von zach IX,6

night in the foreign lands

how could i expect to be asleep so far from home
the autumn night drags on, refuses to become morning
the rays of the setting sun shine through the bamboo curtain
i lie quietly on the high pallet listening to sounds of the distant stream

due to my continuing folly i have neither clothes nor food
in my misery i hope for help from my friend gao shi
my old wife keeps sending me questioning letters
knowing my plight she should understand why i have not returned

murphy inspecting the holes in the soles of his shoes
2/29/2008 1:43 PM

von zach IX,7

in the guest house

the window of autumn shows another first light of day
trees have lost their leaves, the winds are high
the sun rises over the far cold mountains
the river still hidden by the morning fogs

the imperial court wastes no talent among the people
but i am now grown old and have been useless for a goodly time
i do not have many more years left to me in my life
and still but a thistledown blown by the wind

murphy old enough to be put out to pasture
3/1/2008 9:53 AM

von zach IX,8

three poems in jest sent to the prince of han-zhong (1 of 3)

you sire are a prince of royal blood while i am a vagabond from cheng-du-fu
both our temples have turned to white since we parted five years ago
you know how to limit your wine and live up to your rightful honor
i cannot though and wander drunken like a swimming water chestnut

murphy wondering if he should open a beer at 11 in the morning
3/1/2008

von zach IX,9

three poems in jest sent to the prince of han-zhong (2 of 3)

today i used my cane to come visit you in your new home
you, of course, know of my drunken ways and have limited somewhat my intake
the wine from si-chuan is quite strong, its fish easily caught and tasty
i think of nothing else now but getting drunk with you by your wild goose pond

murphy taking his accustomed stool at the end of the bar
3/1/2008 10:13 AM

von zach IX,10

three poems in jest sent to the prince of han-zhong (3 of 3)

i cannot return home in these riotous times so you see my dilapidated face here in the hinterlands
you are amazed at some of the poems of my journeys and remember how wild my spirits get with wine
now you have risen even higher in the imperial hierarchy, though many of our friends have died
only i, this wandering minstrel, is left, perhaps you will honor me with your presence again

murphy too old to be restrained by proper protocol
3/1/2008 10:23 AM

von zach IX,11

farewell to mister wei, tutor to the crown prince

because of my illness i walk with a cane to escort you on your departure
i am sore reminded of my own inability to return to my native land
i cannot stop the tears as i begin the long journey home to my thatched hut
and close my rustic gate which is twisted with thornbushes again

my old friends here in si-chuan leave one by one
and i don't seem to find any new ones to replace them
we have been friends now for twenty years
and my heart cannot endure many more such partings

murphy reading an obit in the times about an old classmate now departed
3/3/2008 7:53 AM

von zach IX,12

on the ninth day of the ninth month on the town wall of zi-zhou

often in my youth i drank chrysanthemum wine on this holiday
now an old white haired man faces this festive occasion
as i did once long ago i take great pleasure in this wine
but my health has changed and only this habit of indulgence remains

my brothers and sisters are here only in my funeral songs
i can conjure up the emperor's court only in my drunkenness
the war continues to ravage the land, and my thoughts
sink low to become occupied with the defense of the borders

murphy reluctantly reading the latest reports from the war in iraq
3/3/2008 8:07 AM

von zach IX,13

on the ninth day of the ninth month i respectfully send these verses to governor yan wu

on this ninth day of the ninth month you may not be celebrating
you have begun your arduous trip here from the capital chang-an
sleepless in your vigilance you carry in your hands the imperial staff
and must decide how you will get through the mountains to si-chuan

in the small postal station you will drink the fragrant bar wine
among the high crags you will see the flecks of small chrysanthemums
from this distance i dream i see you surrounded by your escort
you turn your head from the white clouds to the south to face the land where i remain

murphy eagerly awaiting the visit of his daughter late next week
3/3/2008 8:24 AM

von zach IX,14

i write this verse on the mural wall of the house of the abbot of xuan-wu-xian

i wonder in which year gu-kai-zhi covered this wide wall
to fill it with his beautiful depictions of paradise
one sees the wood smoke of the hearth reddened by the sun
the blue sky stretches over the big river flowing into the eastern sea

far off the sage bai zhi stands with his tin cane as cranes take wing
the fabled bei-du-he-shang rides in his boat without scaring the gulls
as i look at his picture i imagine myself traveling over lu mountain
wandering with hui yuan as once did tao-yuan-ming

murphy looking at photographs of harvard yard taken in the 50's
3/3/2008 8:41 AM

von zach IX,15

i am weary of the moonlight, sent to the prince of han-zhong

deep in the night the dew picks up the highlights
the full moon pours its light about the town and on the shore
this normally restless traveler sits quietly submerged in thought
while you must begin your return to peng-zhou on your lonesome boat

now everything is lit up by the moon, the passes, the mountains, all the same moon
even magpies and ravens are roused by the brightness to fly anxiously around
i would like to own the magic brush of huai-nan-zi to dim this light
to quieten things so the wind should come and bring some clouds

murphy slowing things down so he can make all the words sing
3/3/2008 10:30 AM

von zach IX,16

a song of friendship, dedicated to vice-prefect yan (2nd of his clan)

on my trip to the eastern section i enter the town of zi-zhou
every few steps i turn my head back toward cheng-du-fu
it must be left desolated after the recent disorder
i even wonder if my thatched hut still remains on the shore of the huan hua

among the gifted men of zi-zhou one stands out as the greatest
it is vice-prefect yan who has long been famous
he seizes my arm, opens the wine pots, gives me good drink
after he becomes drunk he swings his sword and roars like a dragon

my black cap is cleaned of its dust, my mule is fed
servants bring roasted food, others replenish our wine
candles on bronze candelabras bring light bright as day
the night is far advanced and i finally find time to speak intimately with yan

who would have thought we should become such good friends so quickly
i relax and throw away all worries and the cares of the world
it has been a long time since i enjoyed myself like i have tonight
my host is charming, his heart brims with kindness, really a marvelous man

i who have been traveling so long filled with grief
am suddenly renewed and animated, restored
now i can look on the world again with pride, even accept that i will grieve again
friendships i have know in my past pale alongside this feeling

and even though i have become aged long before he will
i am not saddened by this and look forward to our friendship
one always searches for a man with his qualities
but they are almost always found in the men of antiquity

murphy kicking up his heels like a sophomore in college
3/3/2008 10:58 AM

von zach IX,17

on the river of with the yan family i sing a song

troops move incessantly throughout the land
one cannot miss them tramping back and forth in their misery
yet the governors of the border provinces are independent and full of plans
they also try to entertain me as if i were a spoiled child

they invite me to banquets of rich meats and strong wine
sadly the ethics of high esteem for scholars is in deep decay
the competent men of these times are bemused with pomp and circumstance
so much the better i am a mere wanderer without the need for feasting

i have felt the inconvenience of my constant travel all day long
now it is night on a boat on the cold river with a bright moon above
i am glad to have you, o yan, to talk with throughout the night
i wander to the east and then back to the west, i am exhausted

what final destination can i find in my future
all i know is that there are old spruce trees on the shore of your river
and that sponges grow succulent among their roots
i have no stronger wish than to cook and consume them with you as we talk

murphy eschewing the spotlight of tabloid fame
3/4/2008 8:27 AM

von zach IX,18

i tell stories of antiquity (1 of 3)

the red warhorse is eager for the bridle to draw the wagon
he is able to run for more than a hundred miles
it begins to neigh and paw the ground
who shall be the driver of this marvelous horse

the fabled phoenix flies up from the east
why does he yet again soar to the heights
the bamboo this year have not blossomed, borne fruit
i regret the great phoenix is left hungry these days

i present these examples of our natural world
so you may think of the relations between rulers and ministers of old
a worthy man knows beforehand what determines his destiny
he chooses correctly whether he serves the ruler or withdraws

murphy stepping down as principal to go back into the classroom
3/4/2008 8:45 AM

von zach IX,19

i tell stories of antiquity (2 of 3)

at noon businesspeople gather in the marketplace
they dispute among themselves over the smallest of profits
it is as if fat were added to the burning fire
they both waste away in their earnest disputes

farmers always hope for a good harvest
they attack the weeds with gleeful zeal
they look to what is most important, the food in the paddy
they do not tire themselves in seeking small profits

emperor shun raised sixteen excellent men to be his ministers
the whole land prospered as they faithfully foresaw large harvests
in the time of the chin princes the petty shang yang was minister
his many petty laws brought with them small weights, small profits, small yields

murphy with only one rule for his classroom, do not interfere with another's chance to learn
3/4/2008 9:07 AM

von zach IX,20

i tell stories of antiquity (3 of 3)

in the han times guang-wu-di became emperor of the whole empire
this occurred after the events surrounding the wang-mang episode
but since the good fortune of this dynasty lasted for a long time
one mustn't forget the hand of the founder han-gao-zi

but was it only due to the wisdom of han-gao-zi
one must also consider the contributions of xiao-hey and cao-can
for any government to prosper and to blossom
it must have many competent ministers and aides

i also admire the worth of kou-xun and deng-yu
they were instrumental to the success of their times
also geng-yan and jia-fu are to be revered
they flew under the wings of emperor guang-wu-di lifting him higher

as a result of the efforts of these men the han dynasty lasted for 400 years
today all their pictures of are displayed in the cloud balcony of the south palace

murphy gleefully googling himself on the internet
3/4/2008 9:29 AM

von zach IX,21

after the end of the autumn

autumn has ended and i have moved further east but not yet home to cheng-du-fu
my thatched hut i left behind rests in a corner of the outer citadel
by now the beautiful chrysanthemums by the hedge must be withered
on my trip on the great river i have met only unpleasant officials

alone without friends i watch the sun set behind the snowy mountains
insurgents still hold swordgate pass so no one from the north can reach here
i will remain a disgruntled traveler in these lands for a bit longer
would that my troubled heart could heal and peace return to the land

murphy restless with worries for the new year
3/5/2008 10:03 AM

von zach IX,22

looking over the lands

to the north are the jin hua mountains, west of fou river
in this second month of winter it is finally cold and bleak
the mountains of yue-zhou and sui-zhou completely surround si-chuan
the fou flows about ba-zhou and zu-shou to the land of the five rivers

on the shore i spot a single crane, and i don't know why he dances
a hungry crow looks over to me as if to call out for food
the spring wine from she-hong-xian is green though it is cold
i strain my eyes and feel miserable with no one to pour for me

murphy taking the front seat on the tour bus so he can see better
3/5/2008 10:17 AM

von zach IX,23

in winter i visit the study of the late censor chen-zi-ang in the taoist cloister on jin hua mountain

on the right shore of the fou river there rise many mountains
but only jin hua peak towers purple high in the winds
the sky above stretches the heavens with its deep blue
the marvelous reddish hue of the cloister nestles in this hue

at the foot of the precipitous escarpment i tie my boat securely
i use my sturdy stock to help me follow the serpentine steps to their end
from the high point of the mountain i look over all four directions
when i look down i see only scree and tumult in the deep gorges

far away i see the last rays of the dying sun pass behind the snowy mountains
a snow white goose flying overhead looks sad and lonely in the cold
i imagine genuflecting fairies in the billowing smoke of the burning incense
and peer to see if immortal genii approach through the surrounding fogs

behind the cloister is the ruined study of chen-zi-ang
the stone pillars crumble crookedly in the blue-green moss
a sad wind rises suddenly and adds to my grief
that such a great talent should have been unappreciated in his time

murphy raising a glass to an old colleague in the math department, now deceased
3/6/2008 11:03 AM

von zach IX,24

the old study of the censor chen zi-ang

in the house of the former censor some of the long rafters still stand
the sun sinks beyond desolate mountains, fog fills the old garden
your secondary position didn't seem to bother you
what you esteemed above all were the ways of antiquity

your poetic talent was that of the li-sao or the shi-jing
many excellent poets did not rise to your exalted levels
you were born after yang-xiong and si-ma-xiong-ru in si-chuan
your fame will last as long as there is a sun and a moon

your friends were the extraordinary men from whom rose the ministers
all the great men who helped the emperor govern the state
among them the exalted zhao-yan-zhao of the famous precious stone from zhao
and guo-yan-zhen appointed at the beginning of his career as judge in tong-guan

the recognizable calligraphy of each is still extant
painted on the smooth outer wall of the house
the time all these men lived and blossomed was short
especially when compared to how long these ruins will last

for all the future he put up an example of proper duty to the emperor
leaving behind in his poetry the thanks he felt for his chance to so serve

murphy thanking his students for their trust in his lessons
3/6/2008 11:27 AM

von zach IX,25

visiting the cloister of abbot wen

the cloister of the wilderness is hidden behind mighty trees
the mountain priests live here and there in the heights
at the stone gate entrance the sunlight suddenly blossoms
imbuing the mist midst the luxuriant plants with a reddish tint

i wend my way high up on the wind-swept steps
long pendulous plants and thick creepers tangle together
a stone tiger sleeps in the court of the hermitage
it tells me i have reached the abbot's home

from here i see the ten thousand families of cheng-du-fu
the smoke and dust of the many people far below
my exalted teacher only rarely gives audience
already it is more than ten years since he came down from this place

patrons have of course showered him with gold
but he only wishes the peace of this meditation retreat
he is like the pearl which has freed itself from its birthing shell
he is the bright moon shining in the emptiness of the sky

i am only a brainless traveler caught between the north and the south
i have failed to hoe the luxuriant weed of my nature
i have long stained my being with wine and song
why should i also have become an official

kings and princes perish as do the lowly ants
all follow themselves into their destined graves
i wish to find the essence of the buddha
and return to the pureness within the heart

this learning is worth more than the gold of the sun
or the massing of a thousand precious stones
there are ways to escape this cycle of endless rebirth
he can show me with his training and teaching

murphy always on the lookout for a better party
3/6/2008 3:19 PM

von zach IX,26

i respectfully dedicate this poem to my older friend li (fourth of his clan), judge of she-hong xian,

if a crow sits on your roof and you are a good person
by the simple fact of being your guest it will not be a bad crow
throughout your life you have shown me great generosity
and this is not simply because of our long acquaintance

cheng-du-fu is finally free of rioting, but i am reluctant to go home
what i always loved there is now wilted and half destroyed
i am a traveler again and without an established home
i would leave my thatched hut to the autumnal weeds

i would like to travel by the ming-ye gulch to the yang-ze in the east
raise my sail and visit the enchanted islands of the eastern sea
but for this long trip i will need ten catties of gold
how can i raise this money, me without enough to feed my family

during the long rioting throughout the empire i have become an old man
i am an old unicorn, useless and filled with disappointments
you are an ambitious man and also deeply saddened by events
mutual sympathy and understanding fills our hearts

murphy being a bit short and hoping his friend will pay for lunch
3/7/2008 7:25 AM

von zaxh IX,27

at false dawn i leave she-hong-xian and write the following verses traveling to the south

only in old age does one become wholly absorbed with poverty and misery
even with the mobilization of all one's forces, one cannot rise against them
i have begun my trip very early in the morning
i thus run the risk of being taken ill because of the bitter cold

because of my poverty i have lost my sense of independence
and can maintain my dignity only with the help of others
i have finished packing all my belongings and gathered with the caravan
we find ourselves at daybreak passing through difficult places in the mountains

the winter sun comes out late to burn away the fogs
the clear stream slips quickly by within its rocky bed
the servants plod slowly in a determined march of progress
the tired horses are laden with bundles strapped on their backs

we pass some islands in the middle of the stream
the beautiful scenery briefly lifts my spirits and calms my grief
it is almost like the joy in scenery i had in my earlier years
but it is truly not the same as wandering in society with friends

yet the haggard look in my lean face is lifted for one moment
since, otherwise, beautiful views are worthless within themselves
but without friends it is as if i, a second yuan-ji, have reached a dead end
and i weep even more more tears than yang-zhu having reached his crossroads

murphy too decrepit for climbing any mountain
3/7/2008 8:00 AM

von zach IX,28

scenery south of the postal station at tong-quan 15 miles from tong-quan-xian

if one travels by way of the deep gorge garments become wet
only at midday does the humidity disappear from the air
here in si-chuan the winters are warm and gnats and mosquitoes abound
in the wilderness wild ducks and marsh birds are found everywhere

climbing steep crags clouds seem to come out of the mountains
descending the precipitous river shore a profusion of plants hinder me
the grounds around the postal station are beaten down
a fine smoke can be seen rising from the town far away

from here to tong-quan-xian the scenery is exquisite
i could spend the whole day gazing with admiring looks
the mountains stretching so quietly in the distance
the river's flow seems to increase at the end of the day

i hesitate to compare myself to confucius who was saddened by time's passing
but, far from my native country, i have become as morose as wang-can in his laments
my life has indeed been quite filled with grief
and the only response i have is sighing ever more deeply

murphy back on the move again
3/7/2008 10:33 AM

von zach IX,29

i visit the old house guo-zhen, duke of dai-guo (in tong-quan-xian)

when the competent man has not yet succeeded in life
his appearance sometimes shows disdain for customs
the young man who became the duke of dai-guo
carried himself very casually when a small official here in tong-quan

as he later scaled the official heights with loyalty
his dignity and honor appeared in their wholeness
by his early quaintness he showed he was a special man
one could expect in him a feeling for the ordinary people

after the end of the long period of the old emperor
he was instrumental in re-establishing the throne
without hesitation he followed the son of the old leader
and tutored him in the proper ways to establish order

now in my travels i get to visit his old house, the pond and gardens
its guest quarters been restored to accommodate travelers
i praise the vigor of that man who knew how to decide important affairs
my tears flow freely as i wander his old homestead

with a loud voice i sing his song in praise of his remarkable sword
and offer my spiritual friendship to his eternal spirit

murphy touching greatness in the artifacts of a hero
3/7/2008 10:58 AM

i look at the calligraphy and painting of crown prince xie ji (in qing-shan cloister in tong-quan-xian)

i view the calligraphy and paintings of crown prince xie ji
when i visit the qing-shan cloister in tong-quan-xian
he was inspired by the poetics of the classical times
this is understood from reading the inscribed poetry

it is a pity that his official works should suffer so at the end of his life
today he is chiefly known only as a calligrapher and painter
while wandering about the area to the east of ci-zhou
i found these examples of his art tucked away on the shore of the fou river

the paintings are hidden within the buddhist cloister
his calligraphy is hung up on a gilt board
when i examine his marvelous strokes i imagine dripping dew
there is no decay nor even the slightest imperfection

three mighty characters catch the attention
rising around a threatening, carved wooden dragon
in addition he painted the buddha himself
the image extends from the ground up to the roof beam

it brings life to the pale, sad wall
and the colors have not faded to this day
on this trip i found one after another immense impressions
quo-zhen and xie-ji were both worthy men of great talents

however, i doubt that a thousand years from now
men will make a pilgrimage such as mine to see their works

murphy checking off one more lesser museum of manhatttan that he has visited
3/8/2008 8:56 AM

von zach IX,31

in the back of the official offices of tong-quan xian crown prince xie ji has painted the picture of cranes

eleven cranes grace the picture painted by xie ji
they seem drawn from real cranes of qing-dian
the colors of the painting have faded quite a bit
but remain a special sight despite this problem

each crane retains its individuality in the life size painting
each stands alone throughout the field of the painting
i marvel at the vigorous expressions which remain
despite the pale colors of the faded image

they seem to have the vigor to fly ten thousand miles
one is tempted to keep them from flying away

their stately posture is that of the white phoenix
and show nothing which would be similar to orioles
through time the high walls of the offices have begun to collapse
but now guests may take full joy in their inspection

yet the picture is on an outside wall and exposed to the sun
one can only deplore the effects of the wind and rains
in the sky one sees a real crane flying
he doesn't care to land to drink of the dirty pond

he flies to his heart's desire and looks down with disdain
who could tame such a desire for independence

murphy remembering last night's dream when he could soar into the heavens
3/8/2008 9:21 AM

von zach IX,32

i attend the banquet given by censor wang in the pavilion of the wilderness on the mountain east of tong-
quan-xian

the waters of the stream flow incessantly to the east
our beakers of wine continually overflow until the setting of the sun
in these foreign lands we take our pleasure together
the friends at the party even forget we are so far away from chang-an

from this pavilion one views many mountains and lakes
smoke from the villages contrasts with the clear air over the river
at the sight of all this scenery i sing a wild song
wherever i can get so drunk it seems like home to me

murphy guarding the beer keg at the fraternity party
3/8/2008 9:38 AM

von zach IX,33

with censor wang i mount the highest point of the east mountain where district judge from tong quan xian has given a banquet to master yao. in the evening comes wine more wine and we take a boat out on the stream.

who could be compared to master yao in his quality as a competent governor he does not take second place to the famous prefect chen shi from tai-qiu at all and among the excellent officials in the tong-quan district there is also censor wang master yao has a lot of leisure and daily accompanies the censor on his excursions

today censor wang has given a marvelous banquet on the highest point of the east mountain we saw down on the town and its lands and thereby discarded our troubles about sundown when the shining sun was nearly completely gone censor wang invited us all onto the delightfully appointed ship

the wild flute sounds led the party through their sadness in the middle of the river at midnight the graceful movements of the dancers have yet to end the lamps of the ship attract big fish to continually leap from the waters as the songs go on and on these fish seem to be begging for something

around midnight a cold wind begins to stir up waves the guests begin to talk louder and the ship grows more sluggish the reflection of the stars in the milky way disappears from the surface as the waves begin yet all the guests maintain their frivolous mood

i ask my friends to remember the warnings in the book of odes and end our revelry before calamity should arise i asked whether every pleasure should be chased to its end better would it be not to moisten our garments with the night dews

murphy for the first time being the one to call a halt to the party
3/8/2008 10:07 AM

von zach IX,34

the elevation of jiang-ling to the seat of power (a poem in twelve rhymes)

the people are unsettled and cannot find peace
the northern barbarians still control over half the lands
the ministers assemble on the cloud balcony for consultation
who among them will help the emperor who wishes to move his throne to jiang-ling

the imperial power is doled out to new weaker centers
and jiang-ling is raised to the seat of power
i fear this means luo-yang will lose all hope of resistance
and that chang-an will lose its weight as center in the west

in these dangerous times one must strive to erase the disgrace of the capital
this means that it is frivolous to discuss removing to jiang-ling
although the dynasty rests where the emperor, governors, and people agree it does
i fear that if current plans go through an enormous coup will take place

i once dared to remind the crown of its true duty
and even today live in fear of terminal reprisal
i weepingly remember xia-ji giving advice to the han court and being exiled therefore
and revere the soul of qu-yuan who looked for and found death in the xiang river

now in the dead of winter i wander beside the great river in si-chuan
it is now where i always return, it is now my home
immense storms here have broken the stalks of the reeds,
frost covers the roots of the green bamboo

all the many officials who try to expel the barbarians have not done so
i fear chang-an will now be wrapped in darkness for a long time
i do fear the movement of the capital to jing-ling
a greater need would be to free the north of huang-he from the yoke of the enemy

murphy barging into the situation room with all new maps
3/8/2008 2:31 PM

von zach IX,35

wandering in the distant regions

who would remember me the unhappy beggar in these distant regions
i have lost the ability to return to the capital, my home is now my capital
the wind blows above and around the bamboo grove
the stream leaves its foam on the shores of the great river

i self medicate with herbs to prevent my senility
i recite poems to assuage my profound and growing grief
a rumor reaches me that the tatar barbarians have fled
my first thought is to the fate of the palace in chang-an

murphy steadfast in his love of little stacy park in austin, texas
3/8/2008 2:43 PM

von zach IX,36

i hear that the imperial forces have recovered the land south and north of huang-he

from the other side of si-chuan sudden news of the recapture of huang-he
when i first hear the tears flow to wet my garments
when i turn to tell my wife and children their faces ease
to seize on something to do i roll up my poems and look about with glee

on such a day drinking wine to celebrate is the only answer
soon it will be spring and time enough then to return home
first i will go through ba gorge and then through wu
then down the xiang-yang, down, down to luo-yang

murphy dreaming of the old homestead in austin
3/9/2008 5:20 PM

von zach IX,37

one spring day i climb the tower of the town wall of zi-zhou (two poems (1 of 2))

in these times of trouble the rioting is so bad i cannot travel
i climb the poor tower of the town but cannot even discern the proper road
my body will not return to the activity of a youth
and my life has become nothing else than enduring exile

the floods of the river flow by the limits of the town
the spring wind carries the drums of the soldiers up to me here
i notice that pairs of swallows fly up from the south
already they carry mud with which to build their nests

murphy too restless to occasion any cause to pause in his pacing
3/9/2008 5:33 PM

von zach IX,38

one spring day i climb the tower of the town wall of zi-zhou (two poems (2 of 2))

i look to heaven from the tower to follow the wind
it leads the way back home to my native country
just now the battles have ceased to rage
i wonder if my old pastures are still viable

i have had my fill of the the chilly reception here in si-chuan
i long for the land of wu with its comfortable scenery
i think of my oars and go to prepare my boat
whistling with joy i pass through my rustic gate

murphy daring to dream again
3/9/2008 5:51 PM

von zach IX,39

under changing blossoms

the tree support thousands and thousands of blossoms
the majority already show the yellow insides of maturity
under these changing blossoms it suddenly seems to me
as if i were in the middle of a rain or the smoke the aurora

i believe this place is h-yang-xian where pan-yo planted his many plum trees
this wagon of wei-jie's will look nice when it is decorated
because the flowers are now at the height of their perfection
it would be a waste to allow them to fall into the mud

murphy changing into his sunday best for the hell of it
3/9/2008 6:12 PM

von zach IX,40

in the meadow

i hve spoken before of the efflorescence of the plum blossoms
have i not fully communicated the nascent green of the leaves
the branches hang down all together to the ground
in every little leaf the new spring appears

purple swallows fly first here then there
the yellow orioles sing without restraint
i might live out my days here south of the han river
though the great distance to chang-an fills me with grief

murphy limbering up his fingers before playing the guitar
3/10/2008 8:30 AM

von zach IX,41

on a spring day i send a humorous poem to gig my old friend governor he

your high-minded generosity reaches up to the sky
i remember you used to invite me early to your parties
and you would send a marvelous horse to my house to pick me up
beautiful women comparable to the famous courtesan jiao-rao populated your rear rooms

now we are like the east flowing water and the west flying swallow
have pity on us so we can experience again the beam of springtime
i would hope that you could visit here bringing both girls wang and zhao
so my eyes can again take note of the beautiful whiteness of their silk-like skin

the small enclave of tong-quan lies in zi-zhou
maybe if you come here you can cheer me up
while the dancers faces become the same as blossoms
wrapping embroidered sashes around their heads before our fresh-filled mugs

murphy stacking splendid words in elegant piles
3/10/2008 8:50 AM

von zach IX,42

on the western plateau of qi-cheng i escort my older friend, the auditor li, and my younger friend, the auditor wu, as they leave for cheng du fu

on this high-situated place i take reluctant leave of my beloved friends
we sit together for a long time to enjoy these last nice hours of our being together
the distant bodies of water you will traverse have high waves
but the distant mountains you will travel will be filled with spring

wherever you go the blossoms of the wilderness will open
everywhere on your way the new leaves will unfold
far away from the old home country i have withered away
but here lately we have had many such parties of escort

murphy saying bon voyage on the decks of the great liner
3/10/2008 9:04 AM

von zach IX,43

i write these verses on the wall of the reed-covered house of district officer qi-xian kuo (32nd of his clan)

on the shore of the stream i have tied my boat for a short time
i wanted to visit you because you have always had compassion for me
here where you are district officer, the clouds have brought fruitful rain
the fields are as green as tao-yuan-ming once described those at peng-ze

i have been surprised that such a capable man is still only a district judge in a small district
i would question with pleasure the heavens about the wisdom of this
after i leave this place i wish to visit eastern si-chuan
i want to see if there are others there of the same quality as you

murphy finding a way to work the old-boys network to his advantage
3/10/2008 9:15 AM

von zach IX,44

i respectfully escort my mother's brother inspector cui of the watercourse and ferries office as he travels
to the yang-zi gulch to the east

there are countless rafts situated on the fou river
when they all are floating on the stream their oars cause a clamor
we should not be separated for a great length of time
how could i allow myself to forget chang-an

you will pass through the gorges of bai-gou amd huang-niu
there you will see the temple of the morning cloud and the evening rain
when you visit these places on your long trip
i expect to receive descriptive poems with your name attached

murphy being polite as usual
3/10/2008 10:40 AM

von zach IX,45

i go to the hui-yi cloister in zi-zhou with four prefects (li from zi-shou, wang from long-zhou, su from su-zhou and li from guo-zhou)

we meet no one here though it is a perfect spring day
we are enrapt with the world in the emptiness of mountain air
everywhere is the marvel of early spring scenery
on the spur of the mountain where rests the cloister

what may i expect in my old age left as the rest of my life
my heart has become content after my wanderings over mountains and streams
who of these four companions would give up his seal of office
to settle with me into the quiet life of contemplation

murphy growing lonelier in his dotage
3/10/2008 10:54 AM

von zach IX,46

i accompany with wei-ban a piece of way on the fou river as he returns by boat to chang-an (i am given the character shan as a rhyme)

today we share the same boat for a piece of the way you travel
our entire journey is caught up with our enjoyment of the spring weather
i wandered long and far in my travels throughout my life
i envy your adventure of the return to the capital chang-an

everywhere the trees are covered with fair blossoms
everywhere light fluffs of cloud flirt with the mountains
here in si-chuan at the end of the world few friends remain
now that you are leaving my temples will only grow whiter

murphy with his feet on the desk writing his poetry
3/10/2008 11:02 AM

von zach IX,47

in the resthouse for officials at the xiang ji cloister of the fou cheng district

below the cloister the riverbed is so deep that the river does not seem to move
this in spite of the high water level now in the spring
the resthouse for officials is nestled into the mountain slope
for some reason my grief here increases unusually

green lichens grow on the wind-swept cliffs
a few singular clouds drift above, sharply outlined
a stand of reddish maple down the slope catch the eye
they seem to thicken in the sun of late afternoon

on the balustrade of the small inn it is lonely and still
ducks and herons frolic below on the river
the open gates to the sky begin to shut and the hotel becomes more somber
til at last the darkness reaches the cloister on the side of the mountain

murphy standing motionless, absorbed in his thoughts
3/10/2008 2:35 PM

von zach IX,48

i escort dou, 9th of his clan, as he returns to cheng-du-fu

writing poetry is not your main asset
but there are many ways for a man to show his strengths
if you had not been so assiduous in your juridical duties
would you have attained the same level of fame

you have studied diligently in the taoist temple yun-go
now you return to cheng-du-fu to visit your father the governor
there is a bamboo grove in the straw hut i own there on the shore of the huan-hua
i would be desirous of one of your rare poems about those bamboo

murphy toadying up to the local gentry
3/10/2008 2:52 PM

von zach IX,49

i escort the censor lu, 6th of his clan, as he proceeds to an audience at chang-an

i our earliest youth we were friends, forty years ago
there was a time when we were known only to each other
we didn't know whether we would share our futures
today we have just met and now suddenly we are parted again

now is the time the of the peach blossoms making a red brocade
and we are bewitched by the white blooms in the pastures
just now at the height of the spring in si-chuan
i am become a sorrowful man as we drink our wine of parting

murphy waiting for the time clock to assume it is time to quit
3/10/2008 3:14 PM

von zach IX,50

i escort a parting guest to his boat

in this second month i have been escorting departing guests repeatedly
today i found the fou river the usual height at the shore
the mountains have flowers in showy luxuriance
the oars cut the moving waters with practiced ease

sadness descends on me as the goodbye drink is readied
the sad flute matches my growing sorrow
now the ritual of parting will be played out
my heart cannot take this so easily

murphy celebrating his 71st birthday a bit early
3/11/2008 7:52 AM

von zach IX,51

i climb to the chang-le cloister on niu-tou mountain

my longing for green mountains will never be satisfied
with an active step i climb up to the niu-tou heights
here on the mountain i feel there are no restraints
it has become for me a joyous occasion

in the midst of the flowered jewelry rests the cloister and its spring
beside a delightful bamboo screen lies the wilderness pond
somewhere an oriole sings a long sad song
it waits, waits, but hears no call in return

murphy setting rabbit snares on bivouac his sophomore summer
3/11/2008 8:03 AM

von zach IX,52

first glimpse of the chang-le cloister on niu-tou mountain

i catch a first glimpse of the chang-le cloister on niu-tou mountain
the climbing steps have writhed through a deep woods
the colors of spring cover the entire mountainous space
the dark buildings of the cloister rise to touch the sky

despite the fact it bathes in the light of the day
the golden yellow light of buddhist acolytes shine through the windows
i am an old man and sing no more wild songs
i disengage my heart from the outside world

murphy putting on his game face before the opening tip-off
3/11/2008 8:17 AM

von zach IX,53

i climb to the famous cloister du-shi-da

du-shi-da is a justly famous cloister
in its halls one finds the true apprenticeship
one can see over the rivers and mountains of ba and shu
the vast beams of the building are from the lands qi and liang

although i have cried for a long time for my native country
here one never forgets the love of buddha
the white bull of mahayana connects the near and the far
i would mount him to help reach the ship of redemption

murphy disdaining to renew his vows at the baptist revival
3/11/2008 8:33 AM

von zach IX,54

a look around the du shi da cloister

dense trees line the way up the side of the mountain
the stream is deep and separates us from the gate
a number of clouds hang over the woody way
waves on the river show effervescence in their rush

the sky seems to open up over the cloister
the admiration of buddha envelops my mind
as the heart is cleansed by unbidden thoughts
i prepare to bathe and enter the holy place

murphy getting dressed in the itchy clothes for sunday school
3/11/2008 8:50 AM

von zach IX,55

on the stream moving i escort the inspector of the grain magazines wei, 18th of his clan, on his return to the capital and use this opportunity i send greetings to the official of the crown prince cen shen and the ministerial secretary fan ji-ming

the late spring sun sinks deeply in the waters of the four river
on a light boat i escort my friend wei on his return to the palace
my longing thoughts for the capital deepen the sadness of your departure
the splendid scenery blurs behind my eyes full of tears

when you sit before jugs of wine in the future remember this one
and don't lightheartedly share my poetry with those not my friends
but when you meet my old friends cen and fan ji-ming
be sure to send them both my fondest greetings

murphy sipping sherry at the mixer for freshman officers
3/11/2008 8:46 AM

von zach IX,56

i climb to the pavilion on the niu tou mountain

the way to the pavilion strikes out from the cloister
from its balustrade one looks down on countless dwellings and farms
the town by the river lies lonely in the bright sun
on the distant mountains one can see the trees bend with the wind

as the warlike riots continue throughout the land i grow old
no more letters can reach me from shen-si in the north
there are only a few tears that remain for me
how could i not loose them before the splendor of these countless blooms

murphy noting the first bunch of crocuses coloring the yard
3/11/2008 8:59 AM

von zach IX,57

i escort censor he on his return to the court chang-an

on an oar boat the governor li from zi-zhou gives the parting guest a goodbye party
the imperial commissioner he is returning to chang-an representing those left on the shore
everywhere in the mountains are the flowers of spring
but here the lonely waterbird has only himself for company

here i face the coming year with tangled white hair
far from my native land i say goodbye to you, o censor
now you my old friend are leaving me behind
my heart cannot bear the pain of any more such isolation

murphy watching his contemporaries drop like flies
3/11/2008 9:17 AM

von zach IX,58

i accompany the governor li from zi-zhou on his occasional boat excursions, singers are on the boat and improvise two humorous love songs (1 of 2)

the noble governor li gives the order that the guests horses are led back to the sytables
the boats on the shore of the river are festooned with beautiful women
the river floods beneath the chorus of singers
the bank woods stretch away behind the garments of the dancers

the beaded white sleeves of the dancers float symmetrically in the wind
gilt jugs jiggle on the tables as a result of the choppy waves
we are surrounded by the glorious panoply of spring
while the girls compete amongst themselves to give their flirtiest looks

murphy welcomed aboard the pleasure boat for the afternoon cruise
3/11/2008 9:19 AM

von zach IX,59

i accompany the governor li from zi-zhou on his occasional boat excursions, singers are on the boat and improvise two humorous love songs (2 of 2)

the sun sinks bit by bit behind the songs and dances
the flute sounds penetrate stronger into the night sky
the singers with green-black eyebrows have not stopped
the dancers with the high hid dresses continue to form their patterns

in the dark the mountains loom beside our waiting horses
the women return to the small boats spread on the river
you o governor have your own special woman
while this old mandarin duck remains alone

murphy neglecting to attend his third mixer of the evening
3/11/2008 9:31 AM

von zach IX,60

i escort district judge wang up tp the hui-yi cloister as he starts out for cheng-du-fu, and i am given the rhyme feng

hidden from sight the cloister lies high up in the valley
beyond the surrounding woods the mountain tops rise gracefully
we see the balustrade during our long climb
but the cloister proper is seen only bit by bit

our horses stick to the path lined with flowers
the evening bell sounds just at our separation
our parting belies the mountain's promise of spring
in the end i cannot follow you on your way

murphy saying goodbye one too many times
3/12/2008 8:23 AM

von zach IX,61

i escort master wei, judge of da-li-si as he returns to cheng-du-fu

i have come to si-chuan on the run from the riots
i met master wei who found himself in the same situation
the world is filled with the sound of clanking weapons
we stayed together for a long time on the shore of the stream

we resigned ourselves to our fate throughout the spring
both of us had our hair turn even more white
visit for me the bamboo grove at my old thatched hut
the new growth should begin to peek above the wall abut now

murphy hoping his neighbors mow the lawn in his absence
3/12/2008 8:37 AM

von zach IX,62

a shortened stanza

after i have finished my walk along the stream
i turn to gaze at the flags flutter on the town wall
in the evening the wind flaunts spring's resplendence
drums and trumpets sound from the high watch tower

murphy caught up in another of his small rituals
3/12/2008 8:55 AM

von zach IX,63

a short song i give to archivist qi from jiong-zhou as i escort him on his return to he-zhou, and i take this opportunity to send greetings to governor su from he-zhou

long ago we have parted in this very same way
though many years had passed i still remembered your face
why is it that the current generation has so few memorable faces
your proven talents will not allow you to remain in a low position for long

today you trust your ship to the high waves of the spring stream
also i have prepared my small boat and tied it to the shore
i ask you to extend my greetings to your superior the governor of he-zhou
tell him i expect to visit him in the official's tower at the end of spring

murphy postponing his last trip to texas until late in may
3/12/2008 9:13 AM

von zach IX,64

i escort ministerial secretary xin, two poems (1 of 2)

today many deep-red fruits hang from the cherry trees as they do in chang-an
i wonder who owns these fields next to the town wall
i have come with you a far distance and still wish to hold you back
during the entire meal at parting i gave myself over to admiration for your talents

murphy slavering his garlic bread with mayonaise
3/12/2008 9:34 AM

von zach IX,65

i escort ministerial secretary xin, two poems (2 of 2)

two lonely crags stand beside the spring balcony prepared for the parting meal
the green shine of the new bamboo reflects in the wine mugs of the guests
it is difficult to rise from the soft green grass we have perched upon
it is with melancholy that we view the nearby flowers

how can we voyage together in a boat like we did in our past
today and tomorrow i ride beside you and think not of turning back
only at mian-zhou will i finally say goodbye
who will be my companion on such rides in the future

murphy pouring the libation for his honored guests
3/12/2008 9:500 AM

von zach IX,66

at the swollen mian river i hand these verses to governor dou of mian-zhou

as a result of the night rains the south stream has risen
the mighty waves look similar to distant mountain points
the lonely postal station sits beside the swift running water
many farms hereabout are threatened by flooding

high in the clouds birds fly as if in mourning
in the mud of the river even old dragons are struggling
here at the end of the world we sit at the roadside inn
as we contemplate the flood you take my hand and comfort me

murphy needing friends in the harsh face of mother nature
3/12/2008 9:58 AM

von zach IX,67

another two poems which i hand to governor dou (1 of 2)

more and more i am astonished at the destruction caused by the waves
i fear the shore will soon collapse and the flood shall begin its rampage
fortunately the beakers are filled with wine
and i feel more and more like the waves in the sea

in my imagination i see the reduction of shan-xian in zhe-giang
in my internal eye i see the destruction of yang-zhou
but since i am granted leave to drink here with my friend
the fears within diminish somewhat after a time

murphy sitting in the bathub with a six-pack during the hurricane
3/12/2008 10:20 AM

von zach IX,68

another two poems which i hand to governor dou (2 of 2)

about evening the waves again become green and transparent
the shore is restored to its grassy green sheen
the day turns to balmy spring at its end
and i still am the victim of grief and drunkenness

as i age and wander about i find consolation in my mug
i remain here at the roadside inn because i cannot leave you yet
we have drunk to our native country and must say goodbye again
we are both but floating waterchestnuts in the flood

murphy popping the top of his malt liquor with practiced ease
3/12/2008 10:41 AM

von zach IX,69

on my journey i rest in yan-ting-xian and write the following poem in four rhymes which I send respectfully to both governors from sui-zho and peng-zhou as well as the secretaries of an imperial prince, three brothers from yan-ting with the family name yan

ahead of my horse i see yan-ting-xian in the distance
its district is surrounded by high mountains and their greens
the heavy smoke from the valley makes the flowers seem pale
the spring floods splash outside against the town walls

in the whole of si-chuan there reside many scholars
and the house of the family yan has assembled many stars
i have drawn out writing these verses to express my infinite thanks
i wish only that i would be heard by the honorable fathers

murphy gladhanding his way through the provinces
3/12/2008 10:58 AM

von zach IX,70

leaning on my traveling stick

although i could enjoy myself with the flowers inside the town wall
i have chosen to walk along the river with the help of my cane
i am soon make my way past the small market area
then beside the bridge where the boats assemble only in the spring

an intrepid seagull tests the whitecaps on the stream
a returning white goose is glad of the clear blue sky
i admire the nature of the surrounding scenery
yet i cannot escape my thoughts of this last year of war

murphy disgruntled at his lack of peace of mind
3/13/2008 8:06 AM

von zach IX,71

in the company of the governor wang from han-zhou with governor you from mian-zho i go with to see
minister fang-guan in han-zhou and his nearby lake

minister fang-guan of han-zhou has been recalled to chang-an by imperial mercy
he often walks by his beautiful pond in the height of spring before his departure
although he has yet to leave for the capital to take up his duties
the imperial glory already shines brightly on the oars of his boat

on this boat vegetables are made tastier by the addition of soy
while the flashing blades serve up small tasty bits of fish
the black cars of two governors wait side by side
gracing the sandy shore of the beautiful lake

murphy inveigling himself into the free wine tasting at the waldorf
3/13/2008 8:24 AM

von zach IX,72

i take some swans from the lake of fang guan

in the west part of the lake of minister fang there was a crowd of swans
asleep on the shore, swimming near the shore, a white cloud of swans
one might consider taking a few as a gift to grace the imperial phoenix pond
i, another wang-xi-hi, have already a few in swan baskets behind me

murphy in tense anticipation of the double flip of the trapeze artist
3/13/2008 8:43 AM

von zach IX,73

i send yang, governor from zi-zhou, these verses as an answer

if i had boredom i always came to the shore of the garden pond of yang's father
it met by chance that you his son became governor of zi-zhou in eastern si-chuan
now on your invitation i have come again to the green pond, but you are not there,
so my boat returns to fetch you, another wang rong, to the assembled party

murphy at the store to pick up delicacies for the afternoon drinking bout
3/13/2008 8:57 AM

von zach IX,74

The orange garden

during these spring days a thousand blossoming orange trees are found
they are in a 200 acre orchard on the shore of the pure running stream
the dark clouds are shamed by the density of her white blossoms
the snow if it were here would hide its face in shame

as soon as fruits are formed they will be given over to the commisioner of tribute
the baskets of oranges will be opened before the emperor
although oranges ripen after peaches and plums
they will enjoy the luck to be presented as a gift to his majesty

murphy learning to tie decorative knots to complete the gift wrapping
3/13/2008 10:13 AM

von zach IX,75

i send this poem to cheng-du-fu, to be written on the wall of my thatched hut

i was born with an unfettered nature that loved to roam
but i have seen much of the world and its nature
i now take my pleasure with wine in the bamboo grove
i took up residence near a spring in the woods

because of the war and its riots i fled to the shore of the big river in si-chuan
here i have been forced to leisure by my illness, much toward my inclinations
i cut reeds early on in order to make this area larger
bit by bit i extended it to accommodate my taste

i began the construction of my wall here at the beginning of shang-yuan time (760)
it is finished two years later in the bao-ying period (762)
i did not think of the beauty of earth and wood
but instead built a sturdy hut with a thatched roof

pavilions and outbuildings follow the uneven terrain
my front on the big stream was especially enlarged
although many friends came to help in the construction
we mostly idled away our time together in fishing

we dared not fill the straw hall with drunken songs
but slept quietly as the riots seemed to never end
even dragons had no steady place to stay
and snow geese preferred to soar the heavens rather than walk the shore

since time immemorial brave men do not let external affairs matter
they rather remain true to the thrust of their inner selves
yet i am but one gate who opened to allow in collected wisdom
how could i have anticipated the remorse which led to my thatched hut

i had to flee of a sudden with my old wife
we had little preparation for the long trip necessary to arrive here
my wanderings have had no especial purpose
i was only ashamed that i could not keep up my appearance along the way

yet thinking of myself i did plant four small spruce trees
which i have embraced because they are other than weed
they will always be able to withstand the cold of winter
and stand here to withstand the compassion of my neighbors

murphy driven by circumstance to sell his high school graduation ring
3/13/2008 11:09 AM

von zach IX,76

i take part in the banquet which the censor and acting governor of eastern si-chuan zhang-yi gives in the south tower of zi-zhou, with the character feng i am given as a rhyme

here i am on the extreme border of the empire
at the end of a long summer i share in this marvelous party
the imperial court lies north on the plank road burned by the rebels
the noise of war roars through the rains of eastern si-chuan

i have dined many times at the house of the general zhang-zi
he has repeatedly made horses available for my use
i am unfortunately not in the possession of the elixir of life
and thus have not prevented my becoming a white-haired old man

i dedicate myself to singing wild songs and to ignore the insurgents
i drink hard to force a forgetfulness of my old age
the clouds above the woods slowly move over the river
a fine rain is driven by the wind under the eaves to reach my face

from the darkness of the town come martial bugle calls
we sit in bright candle light to write our poems
i fall from drunkenness onto the others
and escape all complaints about my miseries

murphy truly the life of the party with his rapier wit
3/13/2008 11:29 AM

von zach IX,77

on the platform of the south tower i receive the character liang as a rhyme

on the platform of the high tower the party is continued
by order of the governor, for us the gates of the town are not closed
on this roof which rises to the clouds one forgets the sultriness of the season
a cooling breeze comes down to us from the mountains

with my age a few mugs have made me completely drunk
i indulge myself in a long dance which nobody appreciates
why should i think that candles would look kindly on an old dotard
i should be ashamed really, of more than my gray hair

murphy with a new generation pushing him off the pedestal
3/13/2008 11:43 AM

von zach IX,78

i escort auditor wang (15th of his clan) when he returns to qian-zhong with his mother, receiving the character kai as a rhyme

like once the woman cao-da-gu proceeded with her son to the east
now your mother returns with you to the native country
when the wind rises from the island in the stream
your brocade sail will be filled and you can proceed

wherever your boat will go you a pious son like meng-song
will be met by green bamboo for the pleasure of your mother
the white fish of the big river will rise to you
they will present themselves to you as jiang-shi once presented food

with this separation it becomes heavy for me to endure
i am stuck here forever in my striving for healing rest
in these difficult times the empire needs all strong men
your help will be appreciated all the more you offer

messengers such as qian yang arrive only seldom in the capital
you must take this opportunity to reflect the needs of this place
it is certainly not to your practiced eye unexpected
that i would ask you to refill my mug again and again

murphy tired of raising the same old flag
3/13/2008 12:10 PM

von zach IX,79

i take part in a party given for governor cui from jia-zhou by the acting governor zhang-yi in the hui-yi cloister at as he proceeds to his next post

marshal zhang -yi gives governor cui, his excellent guest, a marvelous party
the discipline of his troops is awesome, they must be thoroughly drilled
cui has entered the cloister with his entourage, the prepared tent flutters in the winds
the eagerly awaited meal is beyond us behind a golden cord

we have lingered long in cheerful entertainment on the southern fields of the town
then we were all led up high on the mountain to this banquet place
from the cloister high above the tips of the trees come the clear tones of the ringing stones
from a distance we have come to be guests of the priests who live near the clouds

it is no new place to which i am returned to now
the music from above sends old tendrils down
now my ear is filled with the wind resounding through caves
my eyes rests on the ice filling the cold valleys

here the roads have no trace of the wheel, one has left the world behind
and because of the height i even forget it is in the heat of the day
i long to spend a long summer here in mahayana apprenticeship
perhaps in consideration of my age they would allow it

here far away from my native lands i am glad for these banquets
without them i fear i would seldom see my friends
how short indeed is this laborious life given to us
separation and the pain of separation forever follow one another

murphy listening to the cajun music his father preferred
3/13/2008 12:34 PM

von zach IX,80

i follow the acting governor zhang-yi to the new pavilion where other friends assemble to escort some guests on their way

in the new pavilion the governor has arranged a big party
the departing guests have chosen a favorable hour for their leaving
the sun rises and shines on the shore of the stream
the wind roars, and the flags on the balustrade flap wildly

i have stopped by to eat the wonderful meat
and will not be averse to drinking a little more
i weep like the people before the inscriptions on the mount xian
i write this poem with no hope of returning to my native country

murphy with a tender feeling for the old homestead in austin, texas
3/14/2008 8:30 AM

von zach IX,81

in the orange pavilion of the governor zhang yi from zi-zhou

during the autumn day this pavilion smells of the thousand orange trees all around.
we sit on brocade mats and empty our jade mugs while we enjoy the coolness of high clouds
what happens in this farewell party given by zhang-yi ti to his guest master dou
we eat and drink as usual, write our poems, and it goes on forever

in my senile decay every separation brings tears of pain
dou's fame as a competent man will receive another boost from this appeal from chang-an
he will surely be made a new general in short order and return in his new position
then history will have more to speak of than zhao guang-han and zhang-chang

murphy reading the who's who a century past his time
3/14/2008 8:46 AM

von zach IX,82

the water pavilion of the governor zhang yi from zi-zhou

this evening the town is as usual completely covered by fog
the pavilion lies deeply hidden by the mist in the midst of lotus flowers
beyond the bridge only few of his under officials follow the governor
the autumn waters rush tumultuously by the side of the pavilion's party

han-zhong from the imperial family is in attendance
other excellent men come from the taoist cloister of xi-qian
the people of zi-zhou shower their governor with love
i sing a drunken duet with my host to the glory of all who've come

murphy dressed in his finery for the festivities
3/14/2008 8:57 AM

von zach IX,83

i send two humorous poems to the prince from han-zhong (1 of 2)

i have been waiting for a pair of wild geese to fly up to me
perhaps they will bring some news of you and your doings
you seem to be filled with the love of a new son
and therefore have no time you can spend writing your friend

the wind now should be blowing softly over the big river
as it is here by the han where i am now staying
because i have stayed so long away from home
i have become forgetful of the details of my origin

murphy sitting in a cocoon of no news caused by his prolonged vacation
3/14/2008 9:16 AM

von zach IX,84

i send two humorous poems to the prince from han-zhong (2 of 2)

the storm still surrounds the oars of the boat
the prince from han-zhong is still in exile
the winter snows on the balcony of your palace in chang-an
will surely await you at the start of the winter season

now, as once xie stayed with his courtesans in the mountains of the far east
you spend your time secure in your place of exile
remember that the tall wind-blown bamboos of the imperial park
patiently wait for your triumphal return

murphy trying flattery as a last resort
3/14/2008 9:36 AM

von zach IX,85

the palm whisk

this palm whisk is nothing but one unimportant thing
how could he also know of his more useful qualities
its gilt handle holds a clutch of wing feathers
which are tied together by red silk strings

indeed one cannot separate his feathers from the fan
but he is enough to expel the black flies
he is also right by my side and always ready
he is used with pride and exaggerated promise

i am old and ill and my house is poor
i lie throughout the hot season tied to my bed
mosquitoes abound and i have grown quite tired of them
fortunately he leaps readily to my hand

if a tool is useless it is quickly rejected
no one thinks of the usefulness of the ordinary
the cool autumn of my third year here approaches
i will fold you away to wait patiently for next summer's flies

murphy finally finding the perfect pocket knife
3/14/2008 9:51 AM

von zach IX,86

i escort the poet yuan-jie, 2nd of his clan, as he proceeds to the eastern part of the big stream (giang-su)

today we have been pushed here by the incessant rioting
now in deep autumn you will move again into the distance
as i spend my time in perpetual exile from my home
my longing goes with you to where the big river pours into the sea

you will become the prefect of the district of nan-qing
and replace gung-shun-shu in the fortress at bo-di-cheng
when you arrive at your destination you must take care
military affairs are not to be spoken of lightly

murphy sitting in the locker room putting on his face of ferocity
3/14/2008 10:12 AM

von zach IX,87

i escort governor lu as he proceeds to his post

the dynasty has suffered much from the last few years of rioting
hence, the high dignitaries have all been military men
now you have pacified you-zhou and yan-zhou and travel there is free
now the governors can be scholars and poets as of yore

our country has need of wise, worthy men
and you are one of the newly promoted
with the powerful sword of a prefect you start your journey
your black travel car awaits the winds and the dust

the eternal battles have destroyed much of the world
the peoples' treasuries and grain magazines stand empty
your under officials should all be wise and fair
i trust you will not overburden the people with your acts

i fully hope that you will rise high in the firmament
as i sink even further down into the bottom mud
now autumn is stripping the leaves from the trees
and it is with melancholy i look out from the shore of the big river

murphy wishing his self-sacrifice was internally motivated
3/14/2008 10:31 AM

von zach IX,88

i send this poem to the at zi-zhou and at the same time to chamberlain wei

does it go well or badly with the officers at headquarters
for a long time i have received no news from you
because i know that none of you will abandon people for poverty or illness
i ask if these are the reasons chamberlain wei has given up on me

murphy reminding the powers that be that he still exists
3/14/2008 10:33 AM

von zach IX,89

i stay as a guest in the roadside hotel of earlier days

this place is already known to me from an earlier visit
i left this pavilion before at the beginning of the autumn
now coming back i already see the red foliage of the pear tree
set against it the bamboo grove is still as green as before.

but why have the curtains against the high winds been rolled up
last night the cold winds whipped down on the washing stones
i have no hopes of continuing my journey to the land of chu
winter comes and my afflictions are acting up again

murphy giving in sullenly to his old age
3/14/2008 10:51 AM

von zach IX,90