

Classic Poetry Series

Xue Tao
- poems -

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Xue Tao()

A Spring In Autumn

Behind a ribbon of evening mist, a chill sky distills,
and a melody of far waterfalls like ten silk strings
comes to my pillow to tug my feelings,
keeping me awake in sorrow past midnight.

Xue Tao

Autumn, Hearing The Headwaters On A Moonlit Night

When that chilly hue strikes clear
the single strand of mist,
a muffled trill slides
far away:
ten silken strings.

It comes, long-drawn, to pillows.
It tugs at hearts and thoughts.

It will not let
at midnight
those who sorrow sleep.

Xue Tao

Moon

Its spirit leans like a thin hook
or opens round like a Han-loom fan,
slender shadow whose nature is to be full,
seen everywhere in the human world.

Xue Tao

On Cicadas

Dew-rinsed:
their pure notes
carry far.

Windblown:
as dry, fasting leaves
are blown.

Chirr after chirr,
as if in unison.

But each perches
on its one branch,
alone.

Xue Tao

Sending Old Poems To Yuan Zhen

Everyone writes poems in their own manner
but only I know delicacy of wind and light,
and when writing of flowers in moonlight, lean towards the
dark.

Of a willow in rainy dawn I write how twigs hang down.
They say green jade should stay hidden deep,
but I write candidly on red-lined paper.
I'm old now but can't stop writing
so I open myself to you as if I were a good man.

Xue Tao

Spring Gazing

Flowers bloom but we can't share them.
Flowers fall and we can't share our sadness.
If you need to find when I miss you most:
when the flowers bloom and when they fall.

I pull a blade of grass and tie a heart-shape knot
to send to the one who understands my music.
Spring sorrow is at the breaking point.
Again spring birds murmur sad songs.

Wind, flowers, and the day is aging.
No one knows when we'll be together.
If I can't tie my heart to my man's,
it's useless to keep tying heart-shaped knots.

Unbearable when flowers fill the branches,
when two people miss each other.
Tears streak my morning mirror like jade chopsticks.
Does the spring wind know that?

Xue Tao

Willow Catkins

In February, light, fine willow catkins
play with people's clothes in spring breeze;
they are heartless creatures,
flying south one moment, then north again.

Xue Tao