

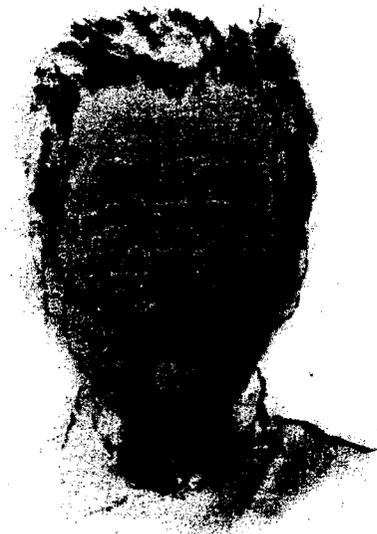


W. J. F. Jenner

Lu Xun's poems combine revolutionary political content with subtle artistry. Employing metaphor, symbolism and satire, Lu Xun's poems make a strong impact on their readers.

Not many of Lu Xun's poems survive. The forty-seven in this selection include the majority of them.

His later pieces in particular exposed the role of imperialism and the Chiang Kai-shek government, expressed sympathy for the sufferings of the masses and praised the revolutionary cause of the proletariat. They bear the imprint of the stirring years of the 1920s and 1930s and reveal the course of his intellectual development in those years.



魯迅詩選

LU XUN
SELECTED POEMS

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS BEIJING

TRANSLATED BY W. J. F. JENNER

ISBN 0-8351-1002-8

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(英) W. J. F. 詹納爾 譯

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外 文 出 版 社
北 京



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
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First Edition 1982

Front Cover: Lu Xun by Wang Ziwu

ISBN 0-8351-1002-8

Published by Foreign Languages Press
24 Baiwanzhuang Road, Beijing, China

Printed by Foreign Languages Printing House
19 West Chegongzhuang Road, Beijing, China

Distributed by Guoji Shudian (China Publications Centre)
P.O. Box 399, Beijing, China

Printed in the People's Republic of China



At Shanghai, September 17, 1930

無 題 二 首

大 江 日 夜 向 東 流，
聚 義 羣 雄 又 遠 游。
六 代 綺 羅 成 舊 夢，
石 頭 城 上 月 如 鉤。

其 二

雨 花 臺 邊 埋 斷 戟，
莫 愁 湖 裏 餘 微 波。
所 思 美 人 不 可 見，
歸 憶 江 天 發 浩 歌。

一九三一年

W. J. F. Jenner

TWO UNTITLED POEMS

("By night and day the mighty stream flows east")

1

By night and day the mighty stream flows east,
While all the heroes set off on new travels.
The splendour of the past is now a dream:
Over Stone City hangs a crescent moon.

2

On Rainflower Terrace the broken pikes are
buried;
In Weep-not Lake the water ripples yet.
The longed-for Beauty nowhere can be found.
My song recalls the sky above the river.

1931

not certain whether the poem had been composed earlier; Lu Xun recorded it in his diary for that day. In August the three poems were published in a Shanghai left-wing magazine with an editorial note saying that they had been written previously, and that they were full of anger and grief after the Changsha Incident and the deaths of Rou Shi and the other young revolutionary writers.

The first couplet thus seems to refer to the once beautiful river running red with blood. (Another view has it that this alludes to the establishment of Red bases near the river.) The second couplet has striking images, but their meaning is less clear: the goddess of the river dressed in her finery is reflected a brilliant white in the river's waters. Does this mean that she has lost all her colour and beauty after the massacre? Or is she a sign of brilliance and hope? Interpretations differ.

In the third couplet the images are of fear and desolation. The "high hill" reminds readers of high hill where the author of the ancient elegy *Li Sao* did not find his loved one; it was also the name of a mountain in the Chu country through which the Xiang flowed. The death of fragrant plants is a theme common in the *Li Sao* and similar pieces and has long been regarded as a political metaphor: Lu Xun also used it to commemorate young writers murdered in prison. Line seven may be adapted from two lines by the Tang poet Qian Qi that Lu Xun wrote out for a Japanese friend in 1935.

When the tune is ended the player disappears:
Green are some peaks beside the river.

They refer to the goddess of the Xiang playing the lute. As it happened he also copied out another short poem by Qian Qi on 25 February 1931, so that he may have had "The Goddess of the Xiang Playing the Lute" in mind when he wrote his own piece. The last line points to the contrast between the symbols of peace in the capital and the reality of repression and war.

TWO UNTITLED POEMS

("By night and day the mighty stream flows east")

These two quatrains were written out for the Japanese lawyer Miyazaki Ryūsuke and his wife on 14 June 1931. The first poem is about Nanjing, also known as Stone City, from which Kuomintang factions led by Hu Hanmin, Wang Jingwei, Sun Ke and others had withdrawn in opposition to the growing despotism of Chiang Kai-shek. The mighty stream is the Yangtse; the lost splendour was that of the Six Dynasties, of which Nanjing was the capital from the fourth to the sixth centuries A.D. The second poem appears to be a lament for the loss of Nanjing's past glories, probably referring to the early days of the Republic, in the founding of which Miyazaki's uncle Miyazaki Torazō had played a part. Rainflower Terrace (Yuhuat'ai) had once been a fort defending the southern approaches to the city, and it had seen fighting in 1911. (Later it became a place of execution: some commentators see the broken pikes as dead revolutionaries.) "Weep-not Lake", supposedly named after the beautiful

Weep-not Lu, is near the Rainflower Terrace. The "Beauty" — a familiar figure in Chinese political poetry who stands for the leader or associate that the poet seeks in vain — is said by some to represent Sun Yat-sen, who had been the Republic's acting president in its first months with his capital in Nanjing, and with whom the older Miyazaki had been closely associated. It might also refer to the need for a good political leader in China at the time the poem was written.

A RIPOSTE TO A FRIEND

This is recorded in the diary as one of five poems written out for friends on the last day of 1932, this one being done for the writer Yu Dafu. (Later Lu Xun copied it out again, dating its composition to 1931, but this appears to be another example of his ability to muddle dates in the memory.) The reference is evidently to his devotion to his son Haiying, born in 1928.

UNTITLED

("Strong grows the grass")

This is recorded in Lu Xun's diary for 23 January 1932 as being written out for Professor Kōra Tomiko of the Tokyo Women's University, whom Uchiyama Kanzō

had provided with an introduction to Lu Xun. The first couplet apparently refers to the victims of war and repressions — perhaps more specifically the victims of anti-Communist campaigns — creating strength through their own deaths, while the spring-like vigour of revolutionary forces matured underground. The second mocks the antics of the "Heroes" — leading generals — and their political advisers going through such empty gestures as weeping at Sun Yat-sen's mausoleum pretending to be sick, as did Wang Jingwei.

or

AN IMPROMPTU

This short piece was written for Shen Songquan and recorded in Lu Xun's diary for 31 March 1932. Shen, who had published books translated by Lu Xun, was then on his way to study in Japan. The first line may refer to the low cash value of literature in China, or more probably to the way it was being trampled underfoot like dirt. The second line doubtless refers to Japan, either to memories of his own time there, or else to his friends in that country. The desolation of the third line was perhaps that of Chinese culture after years of repression. The significance of the orchid and chrysanthemum is open to argument: it may be that Lu Xun, while regretting the dead orchid in the bare wood, is looking forward to the flowering of the chrysanthemum in the future, when China's culture revived.

鲁迅诗选
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外文出版社出版
(中国北京百万庄路24号)
外文印刷厂印刷
中国国际书店发行
1982年(34开)第一版
编号:(汉英)10050—1027
00165
10-CE-1584P