To the Tune of Su chung-ch'ing

In the past, I travelled
Ten thousand miles in search of glory,
I was stationed at the Liang-chou border.

Where are my broken dreams of
Wilderness passes and rivers?
Dust has darkened my old sable coat.

The Tartars not yet defeated,
My temple hair has turned grey
And tears flowed in vain.

This life,
Who would have predicted?
My heart at Tien Shan frontier
My body in a riverside lodge.

陸游詞

Ten Tz’u by Lu Yu
Translated by James P. Rice
To the Tune of Yeh yu kung

Presented to Shih Pai-hun After Recalling a Dream

A snowy dawn—
As the Tartar pipe blares
Starting up here and there,
In my dream I travel to
An unknown place
Where armed cavalry
Without a sound
Move like rivulets of water.

I am reminded of a frontier river—
West of Goose Gate
Or perhaps the border of Ch‘inghai.

I awake in the cold light
Of the lamp,
The water clock has stopped,
Moonlight slants through
The paper window.

It is my ambition
To achieve fame ten thousand miles away.

Understand me:
Even though my temples have faded,
My heart still yearns for glory!
To the Tune of Yü chiào

Presented to Cousin Chung Kao

Gazing eastward
Where is my homeland?

Going and coming—
Thirteen thousand miles.

Writing home—
I fill the pages in vain,
Sad tears flow,
A letter in return:
The New Year already past.

I sent the message through the water
Below the Red Bridge:
On a flat boat—
When can I sail to seek you?

Travelling to the edge of the earth
I have become truly old.

Sadness—
No sleep,
Strands of my temple hair
Hanging in the tea’s mist.

Yú jiā āo

寄仲高

東望山陰何處是
往來一萬三千里
寫得家書空滿紙
流清淚
書回已是明年事

寄語橋橋下水
扁舟何日尋兄弟
行徧天涯真老矣
愁無寐
鬢絲幾縷茶煙裏
To the Tune of Ch’ueh-ch’iao hsien

Colored Lanterns—
Indulging in games of chance,
Engraved saddles gallop by
Shooting targets,
Who remembers that year’s heroic deeds?

Those fond of the cup
One by one become office-holders,
Alone, I leave for the riverside
To become a fisherman.

My light boat is eight feet long with
Three lowered awnings,
I relish the duckweed island
All by myself in the misty rain.

Mirror Lake: always
The place for people at leisure,
No need for Imperial favor!

鵲橋仙

華燈縱博
雕鞍馳射
誰記當年豪舉
酒徒一一取封侯
獨去作
江邊漁父

輕舟八尺
低篷三扇
占斷蘆洲煙雨
鏡湖元自屬閒人
又何必
官家賜與
To the Tune of Ch’ai-t’ou-feng

Pink, moist hands,
Choice yellow wine,
City full of spring colors—
Willows behind the palace wall.

East Wind—malicious,
Chance for love is scarce,
My heart—filled with sadness,
Several years of separation.

Wrong, wrong, wrong!

Spring the same as before—
She has grown thin in vain,
Tears leave red traces
On her silk scarf.

Peach blossoms fall,
Deserted pond and pavilion.
Our mountain vow still stands,
But gilded letters cannot be sent.

Never, Never, Never.
To the Tune of Ch'ueh-chiao hsien

At Night Hearing the Cuckoo's Cry

Beneath thatched roofs
   Everything is quiet—
Lanterns in rough windows
   Are dimmed,
The wind and rain of late spring
   Spread over the river.

Forest orioles and nesting swallows
   Are silent—
There is constantly the cry
   Of the cuckoo
On this moonlit night.

Quickening the flow of sad tears,
   Cutting short my lonely dream,
It selects a branch
   Deep among the trees
And flies away.

Even at home
   I could not bear to hear it—
Let alone
   After half a lifetime of drifting!
To the Tune of Che-ku t'ien

Retired—
A green mist at sundown,
Not a trace of
Worldly affairs affects me.

Having poured the last of the jade wine,
I thread through the bamboo grove—
Being done with my "Huang Ting,"
I lie down and look off at the mountains.

I want to go about whistling, carefree—
Letting myself grow old and feeble,
Nothing to prevent me from offering
A smiling face everywhere I go.

I should have known earlier
The Creator had other intentions—
An old warrior,
I am leaving my past glories behind.

---

1 A Taoist text.
To the Tune of Han kung ch'un

Starting from Nan-Cheng coming to Ch'eng-tu
on Official Business

Feathered arrows, carved bows—
I remember calling my falcon
Atop the ancient rampart,
And killing a tiger on the vast plain.

A Tartar pipe is blowing, evening,
Returning to my tent,
Snow weighed down the green coverlet.

Unrestrained in my drunken writings,
Dragons and snakes
Fly and settle on my colored notepaper.

I was unduly praised for
My poetic feelings and military planning,
For a time, my talents were considered transcendent.

漢宮春
初自南鄭來成都作
羽箭雕弓
憶呼鷹古壘
截虎平川
吹笳暮歸野帳
雪壓青氈
淋漓醉墨
看龍蛇
飛落麄箋
人誤許
詩情將略
一時才氣超然
Now I am ordered to come south,
I watch the Double Ninth Herb Fair,
The first full moon, mountains of lanterns.

Blossom time—crowds of people, making merry,
Men with caps slant, whips hanging down.

At the sound of a song, I think of the past,
Still from time to time,
My tears flow when I have the bottle beside me.

Sir, remember:
A scholar could very well become a General,
I do not believe fame and merit depend on heaven.
To the Tune of Shuang t'ou lien

Presented to Fan Chih-neng, Advisor

White temple hair—
Like scattered stars,
I wake up to my unfulfilled dreams,
Merely a lodger in this world.

Sad and lonely like a sick horse,
Silent and unnoticed,
My heroic fervor of those years—
Completely gone.

I am haunted by dreams of the hills
And streams of home,
Separated by layer upon layer
Of mist and water.

I have travelled ten thousand miles,
Old friends have all dispersed,
Who remembers visits to Green Gate?
Everyone says Ch‘eng-tu is beautiful, but—
In my office full of leisure,
I sigh at how the days seem to last forever,
Spending more time
Sleeping in my hut.

In pure sadness I get drunk,
Thinking of this time—
To whom can I
Tell the feelings of my heart?

Even if my rudder were from Ch‘u
And my mast from Wu,
Who knows when I could sail East?

Longing in vain
For fishcakes and the fragrance of Zizania,
Now that the autumn wind is again rising.
To the Tune of Pu-suan tzu  
Song of the Plum

Outside a courier post
By a broken bridge
Quiet and lonely,
It blossoms without a lord:

Already dusk
Alone and grieving.
In the wind and rain.

Having no wish to vie with spring
It allows all flowers
Their jealousy.

When its blossoms are
Ground into mud and dust,
Only the fragrance will be as before.