唐詩 TANG SHI — 300 TANG POEMS

An anthology of 320 poems. Discover Chinese poetry in its golden age and some of the greatest Chinese poets. Tr. by Bynner (en).

Tangshi I. 1. (30)

韋應物 WEI YINGWU

ON MEETING MY FRIEND FENG ZHU IN THE CAPITAL

出的東方遊子見我，
With the rain of Baling still on your clothes,
我問你何來這裡。
I ask you what you have come here for.

You say: "To buy an ax for cutting wood in the mountains"
...Hidden deep in a haze of blossom,
武定為之顛簸。
Swallow fledglings chirp at ease
As they did when we parted, a year ago....

How grey our temples have grown since then!

Wuding means "un-fixed" or "shifting" and probably refers to the fact the sands in the desert shift, causing rivers to change course.

fau enmui - 9 - 2006/11/01

Thinking only of their vow that they would crush the Tartars--
On the desert, clad in sable and silk, five thousand of them fell....

But arisen from their crumbling bones on the banks of the river at the border,
Dreams of them enter, like men alive, into rooms where their loves lie sleeping.

The above translation was embellished with some "poetic license".

Literally, the words meant:

Pledged to sweep the Xiong-nu away without fear for their own safety;
Five thousand clad in sable and brocade perished in the dust of Hua;
Pity the bones littering the banks of the Wu Ding River,
they were the very people dreamt of in ladies' bedchambers.

fer-de-lance - 9 - 2002/11/02

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