

Mid-Autumn Moon

I.

(after three poems by Wang Wei)

In old age now, I know the value of quietness,
Ten thousand things no longer stir my heart.
In this quiet autumn night, I ask myself:
Without greater plan, do I know anything better
Than to return to the forest of old?
My belt is undone by the wind from the pine trees,
Through the empty hills comes out the moon,
That startles the frightened birds calling in the ravine.
Sitting alone within the deep quiet bamboo grove,
I pluck the guqin, and my voice resounds lengthily.
In this remote forest, nobody knows my presence
Aside from the bright moon shining on me.

II.

(after two poems by Bai Juyi)

On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, last year,
I stood in the apricot garden at the lake's edge.
On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, this year,
Empty are the fruit gardens and the fields, scarce the crops.
Hard are the times – a whole year of famine already,
During which I have seen the full moon a few times.
Still the same as past year remains the clear moonlight.

III.

(after two poems by Su Shi and Li Bai)

The sunset clouds withdraw. Clear and cold night –
The Silver River circles the jade orb.
Before my bed, the moon's light shines.
Is it the frost spreading upon the ground?
Raising my head, I look at the bright moon.
Where will I contemplate it next year?

Laurent Mettraux