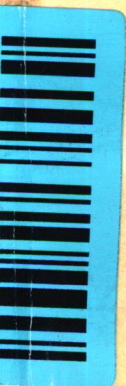


# Cross-cultural Experiences

## *Snake Alley*

Poems by Inara Cedrins 岳流萤 (美)

Translated by He Wei 贺炜 (中)



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文化之旅

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第一部 华西街

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译者 贺炜 (中)

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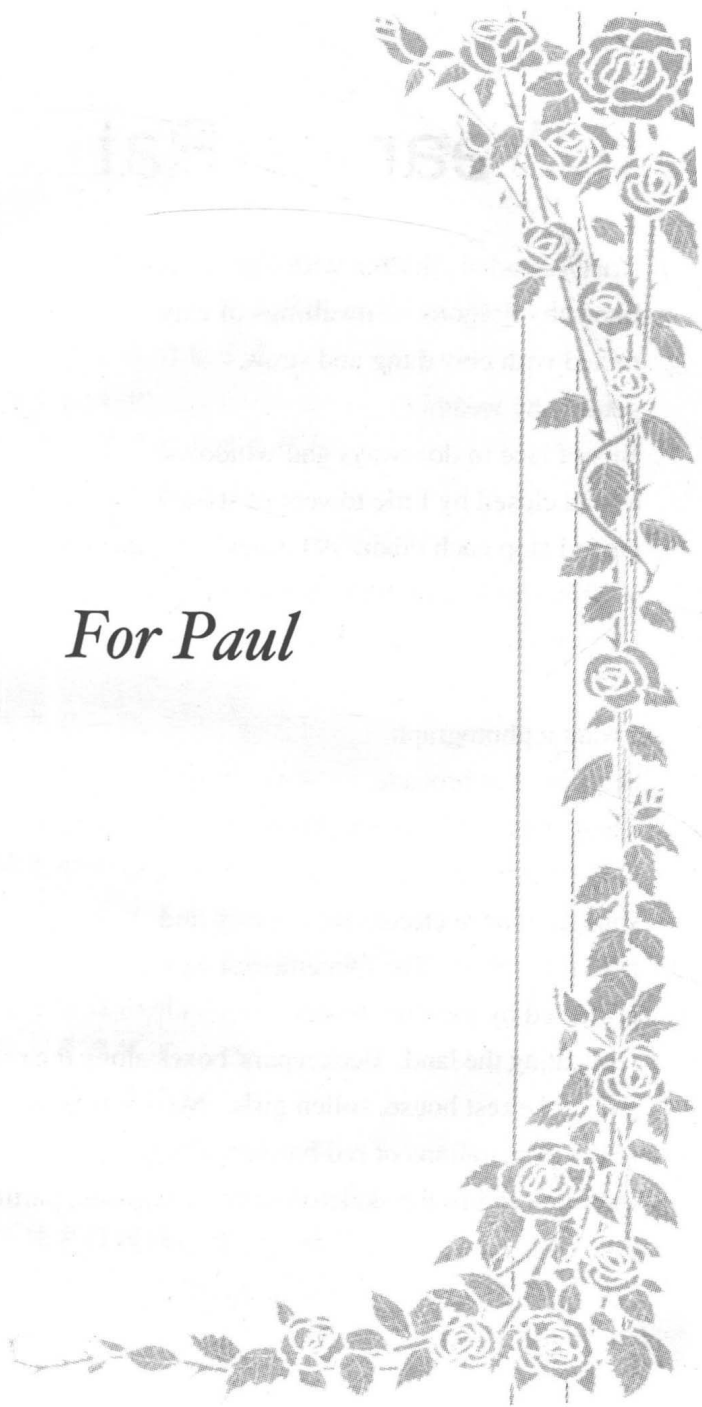
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*For Paul*



# The Year of the Rat



Bristly headed children with liquid eyes  
like baby dragons — dwellings of clay  
mixed with cow dung and straw,  
gentled by weather.

Bits of lace in doorways and windows,  
a road closed by little towers of stones  
placed atop each other. A farmer in his thirties  
washing up in a tin basin before his brick shanty  
looks up with a great innocence.

I want a photograph  
composed as brocade.

The jagged wide-swept curves of the Great Wall  
loop over the green hills, delicate as bone  
spine that once circled the country and  
held it together. The Qin emperor lies under earth  
protected by mercury rivers  
replicating the land. Beekeepers' boxes along the roadside,  
and at the rest house, sullen girls. No one listens  
to the exhortations of red banners any more:  
the form within the skeleton shifts, coalesced, particulate.





# 鼠 年

头发蓬乱的孩子眼睛清澈明亮，  
像章小龙子——住在用泥土混着牛粪  
和稻草垒成的屋子里，  
正立在风中。  
门口和窗户里点缀着饰物，  
路两边是层层  
叠起的小石塔。而立之年的农夫  
在自家砖屋前的铁盆前洗涮，  
表情那么茫然。

我想拍一张  
像锦缎一样的相片。  
蜿蜒起伏的长城，盘绕在  
绿色的山峦上，如同脊骨，  
曾经，拱卫这个国家，并且  
使之统一。秦始皇深葬在地下，  
陵寝仿造山川，  
围护着水银河。  
路旁摆放着蜂箱，  
休息室里坐着忧郁的女孩，没人注意  
红色标语上的口号：  
任凭岁月转换、重合、破碎。

# Night Flower

In Hangzhou that August, townspeople slept outside  
to escape the heat, lawn chairs scattered  
along the edge of West Lake. They lay  
under the trees like night blooming blossoms  
with scooped out watermelon rinds  
under the lounges, languid hands  
and soft conversation. The ricksha  
climbed the hill slowly, like a great beetle.

In the insomniac town  
shopkeepers rose bowing in their alcoves  
to offer green tea. The hematite necklace  
clasped around my neck glints like that night's  
separate orbs of vignettes, compact. They unfurled scrolls  
by the artist who approaches blank rice paper  
as a mirror for the flower  
that takes place in the mind.

# 夜开花

八月杭州，西子湖畔，  
人们露宿街头，避暑纳凉。  
树下摆满躺椅，仿佛  
夜间盛开的巨花。  
啃剩的瓜皮  
散落脚下，人们松垂双手，  
窃窃私语。人力车  
如硕大的甲虫，缓缓爬上山坡。  
在这不眠的城市  
茶棚老板躬身为我，递来  
绿茶一盏。乌钢石项链  
在我颈上熠熠生辉，仿佛那夜  
簇拥的星辰，紧凑密实。  
画师展开，洁白的宣纸  
那夜开之花浮现心间  
尽收画中。

# Following the Dynasties

## I.

Double Hey, Triple Eight Seafood, Seven Star Golden:  
auspicious numbers name the streets,  
signs dangling like the golden carp  
hung under the eaves in the Sung-dynasty town  
in China, symbol of prosperity.

The choosing of propitious sites and times  
is *feng shui*, wind  
and water: is that what was operable

in allocating compartments on the night train  
to Luoyang? Bedraggled antimacassars and grimy linen,  
few of the fans worked, or revolved. We'd already  
been traveling too long. Sweltering at first  
and then cold wind through the windows  
smelling of rain and candles and soot,  
and we were glad of the dirty grey comforters.  
At each impact of approaching train, whistles crescendoed,  
the car seemed to quiver, stunned, to momentarily  
float, before lunging on. So

# 古朝觅踪（一）

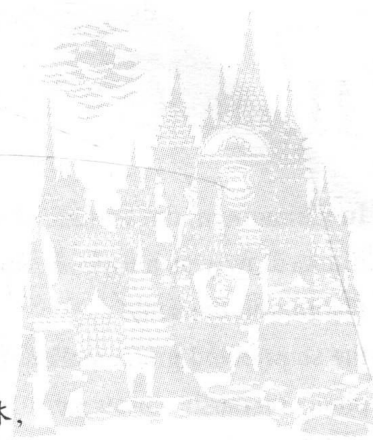
双喜、八八八海鲜、七星高照，  
商店用这样的吉利数命名，  
悬挂的招牌象宋朝古镇  
屋檐下的金鲤鱼，  
在中国象征着富足，  
而选择吉时宝地，  
则靠风水先生。  
在这开往

洛阳的列车车厢上  
也管用么？脏兮兮的椅套、污黑的桌布，  
没有几台电扇是好的。我们已经  
旅行得太久。先是闷热难耐，  
接下来冷风挟着雨水、蜡烛和煤灰的  
气味吹进窗户，  
我们很庆幸有这灰色的脏被子。  
伴随列车每次相会产生尖锐的啸叫，  
车厢也似乎猛烈抖动，甚至  
在继续冲刺之前，短暂地飘起来。终于

we came at last to the city of three hundred peonies,  
where on Songshan Mountain the monks  
lay buried clustered in yellow beehive pagodas,  
where the Buddhas in the White Horse Temple  
held fingers rounded to symbolize rebirth;  
index and little finger raised  
for those who become enlightened  
and don't have to go through it again.

We trooped past the street vendors'  
sizzling woks and great cauldrons  
of dumplings, and in the evening  
there was warm rice wine  
for our uneasy stomachs. China immersed us,  
yet like a precipitate, intact:  
we rested bemused as the cicadas  
that taste life only every seven years.





我们来到牡丹之城。  
附近嵩山上密布  
安葬和尚的黄色塔林，  
白马寺中的佛像，  
手指圈起，象征再生；  
而那翘起的食指和小指，  
代表悟道者  
不必再受轮回之苦。

傍晚经过街边食摊，  
啾啾作响的炒勺  
蒸包子的大锅，  
暖暖的米酒，  
抚慰我们辘辘饥肠。中国风情弥漫全身，  
就像一阵薄雾袭来，  
我们像蝉一样，  
每隔七年体验一次生命。

## II.

In Chinatown, the vendor of vegetables  
blinks slowly as a tortoise, symbol of longevity,  
placing on the scale  
the segmented green stalks of one of the oldest  
plants on earth. Snow peas like petals  
drift from the small heap weighed out,  
a finger tips the balance. Three hours into the countryside

while you retched blood, the others squabbled over the price  
of melons, standing in the hot exhaust of the bus.

I didn't even know then  
how important you'd become to me, how you'd fill  
that experience immeasurably, to capacity. There's no  
bargaining here. One has to know where to find  
the preserved duck eggs, flower dumplings, lotus leaf.



## 古朝觅踪（二）

唐人街的菜贩

如长寿的龟一样慢慢眨着眼，

把西兰花这种地球上

最古老的植物放在秤上，

手指移动秤砣，

如花瓣的雪豆堆得冒尖。

在前往乡下三个小时中，

你不停地吐血，其他人却为瓜果价格

争论不休，当时我站在

炎热难挡的车厢里，

未曾想到你今后对我多么重要，

你将使那次旅程无以伦比。而此时

没了砍价声，要自己去寻找

咸鸭蛋、包子和荷叶。