

A decorative border of intricate floral and vine patterns in a reddish-brown color, framing the top, left, and bottom of the cover. The patterns include leaves, scrolls, and stylized flowers.

A Bilingual Textbook

英美诗歌名篇

English **选读**
and American Poetry

陈才宇

Compiled by Chen Caiyu

ZHEJIANG UNIVERSITY PRESS

浙江大学出版社

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Compiled by Chen Caiyu 陈才宇

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Preface

This bilingual course, consisting of 16 lectures, is designed to improve students' knowledge of English and American poetry. In the first chapter, I give a brief account of poetry ABC, including rules and forms of poetic composition. About 100 famous poems by 51 poets are selected. By reading these poems, students can enjoy the beauty of poetry in original. My brief introduction to the authors makes up a brief history of English and American poetry. The selected poems have been translated into Chinese by myself; by reading the Chinese versions, students can have a better understanding of English and American poetry and learn a bit about translation skill.

I have six years' experience of teaching the bilingual course, first in Zhejiang University, then in Shaoxing College of Arts and Sciences, but I had no intention of publishing the lecture notes at all until my colleagues encouraged me to print them. Without their encouragement and the sponsorship from our college, the publication will remain a question, since poetry as a branch of learning is so declining in a highly-commercialized society. I sincerely hope this textbook will stimulate students' interest for reading and enjoying English poetry, so as to enhance their cultural quality.

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Lecture 1

Poetry ABC

诗歌 ABC

What is poetry?

There are 4 basic genres of literature: novel, essay, drama and poetry. Poetry is a genre of literature.

Poetry is the gem of literature. Poetry is the core of literature.

Poetry is creation; if you create something, you are a poet; if you just copy something, you are not a poet.

Poetry is a pinch of salt; it can make our dull life full of tastes and freshness.

Poetry is a kind of decoration; it can dress you up gloriously and gentlemanly.

Poetry is imagination; it can allow a worldly person enjoy a heavenly life, because most beautiful things exist in poetry, not in real life; if you are a poet, you are being with beauty and perfection.

Poetry is an olive; the more you chew it, the more tasty it will turn out to be.

What is a poet?

“Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.” (Shelley)

“A poet is born, not made.” (Fuller)

A great poet is a fountain forever overflowing with the water of wis-



dom and delight. ①

Read a poem about poem by W. C. Williams②:

Poem

As the cat
climbed over
the top of

the jamcloset
first the right
forefoot

carefully
then the hind
stepped down

into the pit of
the empty
flowerpot.

① 从雪莱原文改写。原文是：“A great poem is a fountain forever overflowing with the water of wisdom and delight.”

② 威廉姆斯是意象派诗人,参见第十五讲。



【译文】

诗

当那猫
爬过
果酱柜

顶端
先伸出右
前足

谨慎地
再将后足
踩进

空
花盆的
内部。

【点评】

如果猫的意象指的是诗,那“果酱柜”应该是指物质层面的追求;猫将后足踩进“空花盆”,可以理解为精采纷呈的精神境界。这里的“空”,不是“空洞”,而是指“形而上”。威廉姆斯在这里谈论的是诗的本质。



Rules and Forms of Poetic Composition

To read English poetry, we should know some basic rules and forms of poetic composition.

Meter :

Meter refers to the arrangement of strong and weak beats (or stressed and unstressed syllables). There are 4 meters in English poetic composition :

a) iambic: $\overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{un}}\text{-}\overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{rest}}$, $\overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{de}}\text{-}\overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{feat}}$;

b) trochaic: $\bar{\text{wel}}\overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{come}}$, $\bar{\text{em}}\overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{pty}}$;

c) anapaest:

$\overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{Like}}\ \overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{a}}\ \bar{\text{child}}\ \overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{from}}\ \overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{the}}\ \bar{\text{womb}}$,

$\overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{Like}}\ \overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{a}}\ \bar{\text{ghost}}\ \overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{from}}\ \overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{the}}\ \bar{\text{tomb}}$.

d) dactylic: $\bar{\text{merr}}\overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{ily}}$;

$\bar{\text{Just}}\ \overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{for}}\ \overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{a}}\ \bar{\text{handful}}\ \overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{of}}\ \bar{\text{silver}}\ \overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{he}}\ \bar{\text{left}}\ \overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{us}}$.

Foot :

A foot is a metrical unit formed by a group of syllables. If a foot consists of iambic, we call it an iambic foot; if trochaic, a trochaic foot; if anapaest, an anapaest foot, if dactylic, a dactylic foot.

A line can consists of one foot, or more than one foot, so we have the following special names for feet: monometer, dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, hexameter, heptameter, octameter, etc.

Analyze the meter and foot arrangement of the following line:

Yet thy spirit shall not sleep.



Basically this is a trochaic trimeter with an extra stressed syllable at

the end of the line.

Stanza :

Two lines or more than two lines can consist of a stanza. In other words, a stanza is a group of lines in a repeating pattern forming a division of a poem. Special names for the division of stanzas are as follows:

- a) Couplet (or heroic couplet) ;
- b) Triplet ;
- c) Quatrain (or ballad stanza) ;
- d) Ottava ;
- e) Spenserian stanza ;
- f) Sonnet.

Rhyme :

Within a stanza, we should pay attention to rhyming system. In old English poetry, the poets used head rime, i. e. **alliteration**.

When fortitude has lost its fire, and freezes into fear.

In modern English poetry, poets usually use **end rime** instead of head rime.

According to the number of syllables, end rime can be divided into male rime, female rime and triple rime.

- a) Male rime: fan, ran.

Since male rime sounds loud and strong, it fits for the poem expressing masculinity.

- b) Female rime: motion, ocean; waken, forsaken.

Since female rime sounds relatively weak and light, it fits for the poem expressing femininity.

- c) Triple rime: glorious, victorious.

Since triple sounds meaningful and funny, it fits for the poem ex-

