

文苑

WEN YUAN

**Studies in
Language
Literature
and
Culture**

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Wen Yuan

Studies in Language, Literature and Culture

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The Poet as Translator

Wang Zuoliang (王佐良)

本文对诗人戴望舒的诗歌翻译进行了研究。戴望舒以写象征派、现代派诗出名，而实际上他译诗的数量远远超过他的创作，范围也不小，俄国的普希金和叶赛宁、英国的勃莱克和道生，他都译过，但主要用力则在法国和西班牙的现代派诗，译得最出色的是选自波德莱尔的名作《恶之花》的24首诗和加西亚·洛尔卡的若干名篇，如《梦游人谣》、《西班牙咒语》、《伊涅修·桑契斯·梅希亚思挽歌》。文章对戴的译笔作了全面观察和具体分析，以大量实例说明他的成就和特色，并且发现戴的翻译和创作互为影响，有一种同步的发展，而这个发展又同戴本人在当时中国现实环境里的思想变化息息相关。

在文章的最后部分，作者进一步探讨了有关诗歌翻译的三大问题，小结如下：1. 诗须由诗人译；2. 译诗是一种双向交流，译者既投入自己的写诗经验，又从中取得新的感兴，有助于他的创作；3. 译诗取得最好效果，往往是在译者所用的语言处于高度活跃、开放状态的时候。戴望舒之所以译得出色，原因之一，是当时中国经历文学革命之后不久，文学语言从文言变成白话，还在发展变化，再加上戴本人的天才和修养，因此能译出充满现代敏感的新形象、新写法而又使普通读者能够理解和接受。

Verse translation is thriving in China today. A publishing house in Hunan has launched a whole series of foreign poetical works in Chinese translation¹ ranging from Sanskrit Vedas to Japanese *haikus* and is, from all reports, doing brisk business on them. The literary journals, too, are giving generous space to poetry from abroad. A rough check of some of the Beijing-based magazines published in the last six months or so finds the following names among the poets translated: Margaret Atwood, Baudelaire, Robert Bly, Burns, Giosuè Carducci, T.S. Eliot, Kenneth Koch, Robert Frost, Hugh MacDiarmid, Sorley Maclean, Mallarmé, Yunna Moritz, Edwin Muir, Bulat Okudzhava, Giuseppe Ungaretti, Valéry, Yuri Voronov, William Carlos Williams, etc.

Does a parallel situation exist in any Western country as regards Chinese or Asian poetry? One doesn't know. But in China, verse translation has always been a prominent feature of the new poetry, itself the child of the New Culture Movement of 1919. Many poets have tried their hand at translating. A number have turned out good translations. A few, like Bian Zhilin in connection with Shakespeare, Zha Liangzhen in connection with Byron, have had a second lease of their poetic lives as accomplished translators.

What follows is a study of one of these poets-translators, Dai Wangshu.

Note. The author is indebted to several friends for helping to track down and elucidate the Spanish and Russian originals of some of the passages cited. Particular thanks are due to Professor Liu Zongci, Mr. Jiang Zhifang and Mr. Zhou Qiang.

Dai was a major poet who had won many admirers in the 1930s with his symbolist poems. Recently a volume of his collected verse translations² came out to remind us that he had all along been translating other people's poetry even as he was writing his own. Indeed, it is surprising to find this volume a good deal thicker than the rather slim collected edition of his own poems, being 340 and 165 pages respectively. Particularly important work was done around 1940, when he translated Baudelaire and Garcia Lorca.

The twenty-four items from *Les Fleurs du Mal* which he translated included such well-known pieces as "L'Albatros", "Correspondences", "L'Homme et la Mer", "Harmonie du Soir", "L'Invitation au Voyage", "Chant d'Automne", etc. Baudelaire had never been translated adequately into Chinese; but Dai managed to capture his quintessence in passage after passage of a rare felicity:

A travers ma ruine allez donc sans remords,
Et dites-moi s'il est encor quelque torture
Pour ce vieux corps sans âme et mort parmi
les morts!

— Le Mort Joyeux

请毫不懊悔地穿过我臭皮囊，
向我说，对于这没灵魂的陈尸，
死在死者间，还有甚酷刑难当！

——快乐的死者

Le Poète est semblable au prince de nuées
Qui hante la tempête et se rit de l'archer;
Exilé sur le sol au milieu des huées,
Ses ailes de géant l'empêchent de marcher.

— L'Albatros

诗人恰似天云之间的王君，
它出入风波间又笑傲弓弩手，
一旦堕落在尘世，笑骂尽由人，
它巨人般的翼翅妨碍它行走。

——信天翁

Il me semble, bercé par ce choc monotone,
Qu'on cloue en grande hâte un cercueil quel-
que part. . .

Pour qui? . . . — C'était hier l'été; voici
l'automne!

Ce bruit mystérieux sonne comme un départ.

— Chant d'Automne

为这单调的震撼所摇，我好象
什么地方有人匆忙把棺材钉…
给谁？——昨天是夏，今天秋已临降！
这神秘的声响好象催促登程。

——秋歌

He learned to deal with Baudelaire's abstractions and personifications, always a problem to translators:

— Et de long corbillards, sans tambours ni
musique,

Défilent lentement dans mon âme; l'Espoir,
Vaincu, pleure, et l'Angoisse atroce, despoti-
que,

——而长列的棺材，无鼓也无音乐，
慢慢地在我灵魂中游行，“希望”
屈服了，哭着，残酷专制的“苦恼”
把它的黑旗插在我垂头之上。

Sur mon crâne incliné plante son drapeau noir.

— Spleen (LXXXI)

—— 烦闷 (二)

He could be terse and sharp as the original:

Race d'Abel, dors, bois et mange;

Dieu te sourit complaisamment.

亚伯的种，你吃，喝，睡，

上帝向你微笑亲切。

Race de Caïn, dans la fange

Rampe et meurs misérablement.

该隐的种，在污泥水

爬着，又可怜地绝灭。

.....
Race d'Abel, vois tes semailles

Et ton bétail venir à bien;

.....
亚伯的种，你的播秧

和牲畜，瞧，都有丰收，

Race de Caïn, tes entrailles

Hurlent la faim comme un vieux chien.

该隐的种，你的五脏

在号饥，象一只老狗

.....

.....

— Abel et Caïn

—— 亚伯与该隐

He could also be warm and erotic, with Baudelaire's own sublime hankerings:

Quand, les deux yeux fermés, en un soir
chaud d'automne,

Je respire l'odeur de ton sein chaleureux,

Je vois se dérouler des rivages heureux

Qu'éblouissent les feux d'un soleil monotone;

秋天暖和的晚间，当我闭了眼

呼吸着你炙热的胸膛的香味，

我就看见展开了幸福的海湄，

炫耀着一片单调太阳的火焰，

— Parfum Exotique

—— 异国的芬芳

He conformed religiously to Baudelaire's verse forms, rhyme schemes, structural shifts, all the startling images:

Car je serai plongé dans cette volupté

D'évoquer le Printemps avec ma volonté,

De tirer un soleil de mon coeur et de faire

De mes pensers brûlants une tiède atmosphère.

因为我将要沉湎于逸乐狂欢，

可以随心所欲地召唤回春天，

可以从我心头取出一片太阳，

又送我温雾，用我炙热的思想。

— Paysage

—— 风景

The superiority of Dai's rendering will be seen more clearly when compared with two other Chinese versions of the same passage:

1. 心田种火生红日，

思路涵春起暖烟。

窗外喧嚣关底事？
低头澄念写诗笺。³

Thus Wang Liaoyi's, which bears little resemblance to the original, quite apart from the translator's deliberate choice of the metre and diction of classical Chinese verse as the fit medium to present this precursor of European modernism in.

2. 这欢乐会使我沉醉、入迷，
随意啜饮着春风，多么欢愉，
它将使我的心头升起来一个太阳，
用我燃烧的思想制造暖热的空气。⁴

Thus Chen Jingrong's, which is the newest version so far, being published only in the summer of 1984. The translator is a poetess of no mean stature and yet here she is wordy and woolly where the original is hard and clear. Neither Wang nor Chen translates the crucial image

De tirer un soleil de mon coeur

which is kept in Dai's

可以从我心头取出一片太阳

just as he keeps the original rhyme scheme — the only one to do so in the three versions compared.

Above all, Dai reproduced wholes as wholes. Indeed, there is hardly a single one of these twenty-four poems that doesn't come over as a unified whole, with its mood and atmosphere intact. One more example must suffice:

Chant d'Automne

II

J'aime de vos longs yeux la lumière verdâtre,
Douce beauté, mais tout aujourd'hui m'est
amer,
Et rien, ni votre amour, ni le boudoir, ni
l'âtre,
Ne me vaut le soleil rayonnant sur la mer.

Et pourtant aimez-moi, tendre coeur! soyez
mère,
Même pour un ingrat, même pour un méchant;
Amante ou soeur, soyez la douceur éphémère
D'un glorieux automne ou d'un soleil couchant.

秋歌

二

我爱你长睛碧辉，温柔的美人，
可是我今朝觉得事事尽堪伤，
你的爱情和妆室，和炉火温存，
看来都不及海上辉煌的太阳。

然而爱我，温柔的心！做个慈母，
纵然是对刁儿，纵然是对逆子，
恋人或妹妹，请你做光耀的秋
或残阳的温柔，由它短暂如此。

Courte tâche! La tombe attend; elle est avide!
Ah! laissez-moi, mon front posé sur vos
genoux,

Goûter, en regrettant l'été blanc et torride,
De l'arrière-saison le rayon jaune et doux.

Superb! As evocative, as full of autumn sunshine, and as suggestive of approaching decay, as the original.

What made Dai succeed where the others failed?

There were many reasons. Two may be mentioned here.

First, he took Baudelaire seriously and verse translation seriously. Second, he was aware that what mattered most in verse translation was how the translator solved the problem of poetic language.

These are his own words:

I should like to make two points as regards the significance of translating Baudelaire.

First, this is an experiment — to see how much of Baudelaire's qualities and his exquisite, pure forms can be kept when he is transformed into Chinese. Second — which follows from the first — to let the readers of our country see something actually written by a modern, rather special poet whom they have heard about so much but read so little.

To let Baudelaire appear in his true light, the translator expended great, perhaps futile, efforts. The differences between the two language systems and between the two ways of thinking often made it extremely difficult to try to reproduce the original qualities and forms — more so in the case of Baudelaire than that of any other foreign poet. Still, an experiment, once launched, is not deterred by thoughts of failure. The translator has no regrets if he has done his best.⁵

He went on to deal with the technical details — how he rendered the alexandrin, décasyllabe and octosyllabe in 12-, 10-, and 8- character lines and kept all the rimes suivies, rimes croisées and rimes embrassées — “a stupid thing to do, no doubt, even ridiculous,” he admitted, insisting however that Baudelaire was worth all the trouble, because he was “a modern classic”.

By contrast, Wang Liaoyi, one of the two other translators just cited, sounded casual:

频年格物叹偏枯，
偶译佳诗只自娱。
不在文辞呆刻画，
要将神态活描摹。⁶

(To relieve tedium of studious years,
Rendering fine verse only to please self,
Aiming not at stiff word-for-word translation,
I strive to catch the live expression.)

But the “live expression” cannot be caught with the over-familiar rhythm and worn-out phraseology of classical Chinese poetry chosen by Wang; indeed, Baudelaire himself had

dismissed all attempts at classical revival as "pastiche inutile et dégoûtant" and stressed the special quality of his own poetry thus:

Toute notre originalité vient de l'estampille
que le temps imprime à nos sensations.⁷

This was a point grasped by Dai, who moreover saw, with a poet's rapport with another poet, that the special fascination of Baudelaire lay in a curious combination of two seemingly opposing qualities, classicism and modernism. He was a classicist in his delicacy, fastidiousness and sense of form: he was a modernist in his tireless search for new rhythms, new images, new confrontations and juxtaposition, indeed in a whole new way of writing that would give full expression to the new sensibility. Dai felt a special kinship with Baudelaire because he himself was that kind of poet, at once a classicist and a modernist. Translation was an affirmation and a continuation of what he had all along been doing in his own poetry. Hence the happy results.

2

Dai had other triumphs.

The Russian poet Sergei Yesenin, for instance, comes out surprisingly well in Dai's rendering:

Если голоден ты — будешь сытым.
Коль несчастен — то весел и рад.
Только лишь не гляди открыто,
Мой земной неизвестный брат.

Как подумал я — так и сделал,
Но увы! Всё одно и то ж!
Видно, слишком привыкло тело
Ощущать эту стужу и дрожь.

Ну, да что же Ведь много прочих,
Не один я в мире живой!
А фонарь то мигнет, то захочет
Безгубой своей головой.

Только сердце под ветхой одеждой
Шепчет мне, посетившему твердь:
«Друг мой, друг мой, прозревшие вежды

如果你饥饿

如果你饥饿，你会饱的，
不幸的人，你会愉快而满意，
可是不要望着那张开的眼睛
我世上的陌生的弟兄啊。

我做了我所想过的事，
可是啊，那总是一般无二，
我的躯体无疑是太习惯于
感到寒冷，太习惯于战栗。

没有关系，别的人多着呢…
我不是世上唯一的活人；
那生着没有嘴唇的老头的街灯，
一会儿眯眼睛，一会儿笑。

唯有在我的旧衣衫下面的心
对升到苍穹上去的我低语：
“我的朋友，那张开的眼睛，

Закрывает одна лишь смерть».

只有死亡能合上它们！”

One is astounded on coming to such a stanza:

Догорит золотистым пламенем
Из телесного воска свеча,
И луны часы деревянные
Прохрипят мой двенадцатый час.

脂蜡的大蜡烛
将发着金焰烧尽，
而月的木钟，
将喘出了我的十二时。

.....

— Я последний поэт деревни

——最后的弥撒

which should please all modernists!

There are also renderings of Pushkin, Blake, Ernest Dowson (“In Tem Pore Senectutis”, etc.), in varying degrees of accuracy, but all readable. It is not clear where Dai learnt his Russian, probably he had consulted other translations. The languages he was most at home in were French and, perhaps to a less degree, Spanish. Certainly the bulk of his translations were from these two languages.

In addition to Baudelaire, Dai had translated a host of other French poets. Some famous names are only represented by single poems: Hugo (1 poem), Valéry (1), Apollinaire (1). But the symbolists and post-symbolists appear in impressive quantity: Remy de Gourmont (11), Paul Fort (6), Francis Jammes (7), Pierre Reverdy (5), Jules Supervielle (8) and Paul Eluard (14).

He made various experiments with poetic language. He translated the musical Verlaine with versions equally musical:

Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit,
Si bleu, si calme!
Un arbre, par-dessus le toit,
Berce sa palme.

— Le Ciel Est, Par-Dessus le Toit...

瓦上长天
柔复青！
瓦上高树
摇娉婷。

——瓦上长天

O bruit doux de la pluie
Par terre et sur les toits!
Pour un coeur qui s'ennuie
O le chant de la pluie!

— Ariette

霏霏窗外雨，
滴滴淋街宇，
似为我忧心，
低吟凄楚声。

——泪珠飘落紫心曲

However, the diction and the phrases are a trifle too refined, and the metrical arrangement too much like classical Chinese poetry, so that they verge on preciosity. In fact, they are in Dai's own earliest poetic manner, which may be exemplified by the following:

来到此地泪盈盈，
我是飘泊的孤身，
我要与残月同沉。

——流浪人的夜歌

There is the same kind of diction and metrical arrangement, there is the same mood, saved from sentimentality only by the poet's sincerity. (The last line, which may be rendered as "I want to sink with the wan moon", reminds one of what another poet wrote:

The wan moon sets behind the white wave,

And time is setting with me, O:

which are from Burns's poem, "Open the Door to Me, O". There are of course great differences between the tightly controlled Chinese verse and a more open Scots folk poetry. Still, both are wonderful lines and use the same image.)

When Dai came to Remy de Gourmont and other post-symbolists, he had acquired a new manner, more colloquial and more relaxed, which comes out in his translations as well:

Tu auras l'odeur des pommes
sur ta robe sur tes mains,
Et tes cheveux seront pleins
Du parfum doux de l'automne.
Les pommiers sont pleins de pommes,
Allons au verger, Simone,
Allons au verger.

你将有林檎的香味
在你的衫子上和你的手上，
而你的头发将充满了
秋天的温柔和芬芳。
林檎树上都已结满了林檎
到果树园去吧，西蒙纳，
到果树园去吧。

——Remy de Gourmont: Le Verger

——果尔蒙：果树园

Read this side by side with Dai's own lines:

给我吧，姑娘，那朵簪在发上的
小小的青色的花，
它是会使我想起你的温柔来的。

.....

给我吧，姑娘，你的像花一样燃着的，
像红宝石一般晶耀着的嘴唇，
它会给我蜜的味，酒的味。

——不，它只有青色的橄榄的味，
和未熟的苹果的味，
而且是不给说谎的孩子的

.....

——戴望舒：《路上的小语》

and one can see that there was a parallel development as regards style and poetic language, in addition to affinity in mood.

How much affinity was there between Dai and Eluard, fourteen of whose poems he had translated? Well, they had both experienced a transformation — from being avant-garde in artistic sensibility to being avant-garde in the anti-fascist fight. Certainly at the time, both were confronted with a similar situation — war and enemy occupation. Whatever the reason, Eluard inspired Dai to reach a new height in translation. Take the very first poem in his collection:

Avis

La nuit qui précéda sa mort
Fut la plus courte de sa vie
L'idée qu'il existait encore
Lui brûlait le sang aux poignets
Le poids de son corps l'écoeura
Sa force le faisait gémir
C'est tout au fond de cette horreur
Qu'il a commencé à sourire
Il n'avait pas UN camarade
Mais des millions et des millions
Pour le venger il le savait
Et le jour se leva pour lui.

— Au Rendez-Vous Allemand

公告

他的死亡之前的一夜
是他一生中最短的
他还生存着的这观念
使他的血在腕上炙热
他的躯体的重量使他作呕
他的力量使他呻吟
就在这嫌恶的深处
他开始微笑了
他没有“一个”同志
但却有几百万几百万
来替他复仇他知道
于是阳光为他升了起来

All preciousness, all sentimentality, all over-refinement are gone, but there is no undue looseness either. The tone is colloquial, but the structure is compact. Poetic language is used in its essence: bare, clear, resonant, with the sole image emerging at the very end, to round up the poem and also to open triumphantly onto a fresh day:

Et le jour se leva pour lui.

于是阳光为他升了起来

Naturally all that is in the original, but much would have been lost if the translator had not got the sensibility or the poetic language to reproduce it.

3

In translating Garcia Lorca, Dai tackled a new problem — how to bring out his folk element. Lorca must have appealed to Dai in all sorts of ways — he had colour, music, verve, a very pleasing sense of form and the contemporary European sensibility both artistic and political, but these were all fused together by his love of the old ballads. His stanzas were usually short, as in the ballads. His diction is simple and striking, as in the ballads.

His repetitious key phrases, his catching melodies, his dramatic effects, all come from his roots in the Andalusian ballad tradition. But Dai seems never to have written that kind of poetry. He had been nurtured on a different poetic tradition, which had by his time become over-literary, cliché-ridden, burdened with a thousand years of allusiveness.

Linguistic problems were also formidable. Dai's friend Shi Zhecun has remarked on his inability to bring out the full musicality of some of Lorca's lines. Thus the line from the "Romance de la Guardia Civil española"

En la noche platinoche,
noche que noche nochera

is rendered by Dai as

在这白金的夜里，
黑夜遂被夜色染黑。

which strikes Shi as "very clumsy".⁸

Yet all this did not prevent Dai from turning out beautiful versions such as:

Arbolé, arbolé
seco y verdé.

树呀树，
枯又绿。

La niña del bello rostro
está cogiendo aceituna.
El viento, galán de torres
la prende por la cintura.

脸儿美丽的小姑娘
正在那里摘青果，
风，高楼上的浪子，
来把她的腰肢抱住。

Pasaron cuatro jinetes,
sobre jacas andaluzas
con trajes de azul y verde,
con largas capas oscuras.
"Vente a Córdoba, muchacha"
La niña no los escucha.

走过了四位骑士，
跨着安达路西亚的小马，
披着黑色的大氅，
穿着青绿色的短褂。
"到哥尔多巴来呀，小姑娘。"
小姑娘不听他。

Pasaron tres torerillos
delgaditos de cintura,
con trajes color naranja
y espadas de plata antigua.
"Vente a Sevilla, muchacha"
La niña no los escucha.

走过了三个青年斗牛师，
腰肢细小够文雅，
佩着镶银的古剑，
穿着橙色的短褂。
"到塞维拉来呀，小姑娘。"
小姑娘不理他。

Cuando la tarde se puso
morada, con luz difusa,
pasó un joven que llevaba

暮靄转成深紫色，
残阳渐暗渐西斜，
走过了一个少郎，

rosas y mirtos de luna.
"Vente a Granada, muchacha"
y la niña no lo escucha.

La niña del bello rostro
sigue cogiendo aceituna
con el brazo gris del viento
ceñido por la cintura.

Arbolé, arbolé
seco y verde

带来了月亮似的桃金娘和玫瑰花。
“到格拉那达来呀，小姑娘。”
小姑娘不睬他。

脸儿美丽的小姑娘，
还在那里摘青果，
给风的灰色的胳膊，
把她的腰肢缠住。

树呀树，
枯又绿。

——树呀树

The beauty, of course, must first be ascribed to Lorca, whose use of the folk tradition and the ballad form is seen here at its quintessential best. At the same time, one marvels at the translator's ability in bringing the poem across, with its gaiety, its colour and verve, all intact. The refrain.

树呀树，
枯又绿。

is simple and very terse, consisting of only three characters — three syllables — in each line; colloquial without being loquacious, familiar without being cheap, concrete, transparent, opening onto fresh pastures — just the kind of poetic language every sensitive poet has been looking for, over and above all the diversities of style, period and nationality.

The story — for as in nearly all ballads, there is a story — is told with parallel structures and subtle variations, again a Lorca forte, here matched by the translator's artistry — notice the neatness of the rendering and the gradation in his use of verbs in the parallel lines:

小姑娘不听他。

小姑娘不理他。

小姑娘不睬他。

来把她的腰肢抱住。

把她的腰肢缠住。

There is thus a cumulative dramatic force fully in accord with the original.

How was Dai able to achieve all this?

Naturally his own poetic sensibility and experience accounted for much of the success. But curiously enough, one also finds his earlier poetic education, his steeping in classical Chinese poetry, playing a hand here. Phrases like “高楼上的浪子”、“腰肢”、“佩着镶银的古剑”、“少郎”，savour of the atmosphere of some old Chinese songs, reminding one of snatches like:

青青河畔草，郁郁园中柳，
盈盈楼上女，皎皎当窗牖。……

——古诗十九首

何用识夫婿？白马从骊驹。
青丝系马尾，黄金络马头。
腰中鹿卢剑，可值万余。……

——陌上桑

Echoes of this kind add to the resonance of the Chinese version, evoking a richer, more romantic mood.

Such loveliness never lasts, in China or in Spain. Lorca's idyllic world was soon intruded by a force that combined old cruelty with new ruthlessness:

Sobre el rostro del aljibe
se mecía la gitana.
Verde carne, pelo verde,
con ojos de fría plata.

那吉卜赛姑娘，
在水池上摇曳着，
绿的肌肉，绿的头发，
还有银子般沁凉的眼睛。

Un carámbano de luna
la sostiene sobre el agua.
La noche se puso íntima
como una pequeña plaza.
Guardias civiles borrachos
en la puerta golpeaban.

一片冰雪的月光
把她扶住在水上。
夜色亲密得
象一个小小的广场。
喝醉了的宪警
正在打门。

——Romance Sonámbulo

——梦游人谣

Notice the shift from the green flesh, the green hair, the eyes of cold silver and that icicle of a moon — all images of purity and beauty — to something urban and promiscuous — “The night became as intimate as a little square” — and then the end comes with a bang: “Drunken civil guards were knocking at the door!” The sequence is crucial, and the imagery all important. The translator reproduces all these. Indeed, he packs more dramatic force into the last line by making it extra short — only four characters as against the usual seven or eight.

His handling of the “Romance de la Guardia Civil española” is equally effective:

Los caballos negros son.
Las herraduras son negras.
Sobre las capas relucen
manchas de tinta y de cera.
Tienen, por eso no lloran,
de plomo las calaveras.
Con el alma de charol
vienen por la carretera.
Jorobados y nocturnos,
por donde animan ordenan
silencios de goma oscura
y miedos de fina arena.
Pasan, si quieren pasar,
y ocultan en la cabeza
una vaga astronomía
de pistolas inconcretas.

黑的是马。
马蹄铁也是黑的，
他们大髦上闪亮着
墨水和蜡的斑渍。
他们的脑袋是铅的
所以他们没有眼泪。
带着漆布似的灵魂
他们一路骑马前来。
驼着背，黑夜似的，
到一处便带来了
黑橡胶似的寂静
和细沙似的恐怖。
他们随心所欲的走过，
头脑里藏着
一管无形手枪的
不测风云。

One notices in the poem a montage-like technique, as well as a different kind of poetic language, marked by a more conversational tone and a number of surrealist metaphors. The folk element is still there, in the descriptions of gipsy life — flags, festoons and so on — but the modernist sensibility informs all. It is a sensibility as much political as artistic, for the poet was concerned with combating fascism, then rearing its head in Western Europe. Dai, who also hated fascism, turned out a version that caught the spirit of the original and he did this by overcoming a special difficulty, namely, reproducing the startling images without recourse to a private language acceptable only to a few. Thus expressions like 漆布似的灵魂, 黑橡胶似的寂静, 细沙似的恐怖 are at once surrealist and intelligible, while the phrase 一管无形手枪的不测风云 combines the very real “pistol” with the elusive but wide-ranging “fateful astronomical changes”: a good example of poetic telescoping with all the dramatic force of the original.

When he came to the “Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías”, another memorable poem of Lorca’s, Dai did something more than reproducing the original effects: he presented to his Chinese readers a new poetic form and a new hero.

For although Chinese poetry was full of short poems that mourn the death of loved ones and friends, there had been no elegies of some length, nothing to compare with *Lycidas*, *Adonis*, *In Memoriam* or even “In Memory of W.B. Yeats”. These latter had come from a European tradition. What added to the novelty of Lorca’s elegy, in Chinese eyes, was that it was devoted to a bullfighter.

Once again the translator rose to the occasion. He reproduced Lorca’s praise of the torreador with an equal combination of exultation and sorrow: