What Country

LISA RAPHALS
What Country

LISA RAPHAELS

Twickenham and Wakefield
Acknowledgements

Some of these poems and translations were first published in ZEUGMA and LIFT.

Earlier versions of “Fez”, “His Last Captain”, “Metamorphosis” and “Orpheus” were first published in How the Net is Gripped: a selection of contemporary American poetry (Stride, 1992).

What Country is published in a trade edition and in a signed edition of 11 copies lettered

W H A T C O U N T R Y

ISBN 1 870314 24 7 Trade Edition

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epitaph</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Country</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cats and Mice</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icarus</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh it is godlike</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashes</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odysseus and Penelope</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orpheus</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Une Fleur de Mal</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Borges</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His Last Captain</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A child for my love</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Catharsis of Grey</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To An Alchemist</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ru Meng Ling</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qin Guan</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Qingzhao</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metamorphosis</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fez</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falling Flowers</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recalling Old Journeys</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once more Eros</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poise</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Egret</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking Down on White Eagles</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painted Falcon</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three poems from lines by Robert Kelly</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Pentimento</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spem in aliurn</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pen and Handle</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adonis to the shades in Hades</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Elaine’s Indian grandmother

lies in this field

recognize her
by the flowers
in the lower left
black hunched figures, the snow
mountains
What country?  
tell me  
where  

that Roman beauty  
Flora  
lies;  

and Archipiada,  
where  
's her  

first  
cousin, fair  
Thais,  

and Echo  
who speaks  
in the cries  

of sound  
over the  
river, then below,  

such beauty more than human wise:  
where do they go,  
les neiges d'antan?  

Where  
is that wise  
Heloise?  

Peter  
Abelard became  

a eunuch and  
at Saint Denis  

a monk  
for love of same.  

Similarly  
where's the queen  
who ordered them to throw
Buridan
in a sack
in the Seine:

Where do they go,
*les neiges d’antan*?

Where’s the siren-voices

lady, lily
Blanche
the queen,

Bertha Bigfoot,
Beatrice,
Alice,

Ermegarde, the dame
of Maine,

and Joan
the good Lorraine

the one the English
burned
at Rouen,

Sovereign Virgin, where are they:
Where do they go,
*les neiges d’antan*?

Prince
don’t ask again

this week or year.
Know

you’ll hear
the same refrain:

Where do they go,
*les neiges d’antan*?

— Villon
A Kitten

sat there unmoved, a sphinx, viewed from the side beautiful, each muscle silent, still as marble.

It had no wings really of a woman, that and it sat lab.

where the riddle of the brain was being removed for sectioning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cut</th>
<th>cat</th>
<th>clock — the</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>right lateral hypothalamic</td>
<td>12:03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>right medial hypothalamic</td>
<td>12:04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>left posterior pyriform lobe</td>
<td>12:04:30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>left medial hypothalamic</td>
<td>12:05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>right posterior pyre —</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What about the left lateral hypothalamus?

Blood velvet nose Procedure incomplete.

that had been bubbling *non in vivo*

a small perfection
Mice

Once I had a mouse, it

lived in a cage
on a row with nine
in a stand with twenty-
on a corridor with fifteen
on each side

with nine other mice
other cages
three other rows
stands
of the aisle. There

were three such aisles
wire mesh), or
on each corridor
eight corridors

(separated in blocks by
ninety stands total
and twenty-
in the room (there were three rooms)

which was

several floors high
with connecting galleries.

Mice were living in those rooms.

The mental energy of a mouse

is negligible. Once

I had to be there late at night

when they were all

awake. The rustle was terrifying.
ICARUS

he knowing less than drugged beasts

Saline drifts through the tubes
ruby in a vein
sapphire in an artery

all night
syringes, like fingers. right:
adrenaline, antibiotic.
left: narcotic
bringer of blackness

double vision:
adrenaline, morphine
dark crows
the dayshift

Release, he belongs
to another her
wedding set
two weeks Tuesday

in his under world
incubates
pneumonia

slow and far
from the medical lights
the left lung
the
right
Oh it is godlike
to sit self-possessed
anywhere near you, your speech hearing,
your laughter heedless, fire,
desire
to me. My heart stumbles and
flies. One glance, and my tongue
is cancelled.

It melts. Fire fine-
stitches me, all over.
Eyes ... gone, ears ... bzzz ...

and a sweat / holds me cold, tremor
seizes me. I am greener than grass.
Just to see you, I
all but die ...

— Sappho
ASHES

My brother’s ex-
lover’s ex-
husband’s ashes

(following
cremation following
death by murder in
the Lower East Side)

stayed in
  my brother’s closet
  a year and a half,

which became
  (he being in
  South America and I having
  her name)
  my fault.

His other
  ex-lover
  is threatening to vacuum.

Mine says
  return the urn, but first
  glaze it.
    Turn the ashes.
ODYSSEUS AND PENEOPE

Agamemnon stewed at Aulis
ten years' dull folly
but Homer's Odysseus
comes into his own,
his wife and son
into a sleek old age
far from the waves' harsh break.

Penelope
rises, having questioned the
beggar, who has told her
every lie. Now?
Will long grief sway?
Or feed and clothe an old
man, and send him on his way?
ORPHEUS

The Maenads got him and his music too.

We found his smile hanging from a pine

fingers there like amanita buds

under the needleway, and stars.

No branch could match the etch of his brow.

his hair blacker than the sky,

eyes deeper, reflecting no light.

We found his smile.

Then the wind began,

first with pre-dawn light, the curl-ends

of his music

waiting in the hemlocks

in that place

before day could intervene.
UNE FLEUR DE MAL

The castle is old and wrecked hard on the ocean.
We clean our house,
luring the rats
by strewing the rocks with
sweet carrion.

Too late,
the rats have been absorbed to the marrow.
A man leaps from the highest tower
as the seas swallow.
We run frantically
from the rotten castle to the rotten sea.
AFTER BORGES

Entre mi amor y yo han de levantarse trescientas noches como trescientas paredes y el mar sera una magia entre nosotros.

Stars weave on a night
warp, sea separations,
and each strike of the clock weaves
from an inexhaustible source
of distance. Nor do different clocks change
the stars’ identities, and the same sun
touches us both when touch is out. Three
hundred nights’ how naked presence,
but absence is always one
wave
of no diminutions,
one wall and one night.
HIS LAST CAPTAIN

for Victor

He waited for his name where names could not
as if some other man — hair by hair —
had watched a moustache
lose form, disappear

in a shaving basin. Now in the Odessa crowd,
in with the wind, to flow
softly in the new old civilian clothes,
complete with forged papers,

death sentence heavy
on the air. The Czar’s arm is long or steps
keep their own time no reverie
can alter — the station door, the train, border

at last. Suddenly everything lurches. Overcast
looks knit into one face — his last
captain from the army, the very man, he guessed,
who found the pamphlets hidden in the bunks

and denounced the traitor. Watching his arm
rise, a salute no disguise could
it was so smart, saw his death in the distance
between them. Calm, dumb,

waiting, walking on, waiting for his name,
it seemed the buttonhole of his lapel
had caught the crook of someone else’s thumb —
and the man went on without a second look.
A CHILD FOR MY LOVE

for Sarah, Fred, and Mariah

I gave my love an apple
    without any skin.
I gave my love a leather pouch
    of the evening sun.
I gave my love a new bone
    of erythropoeic marrow.
I gave my love ungerminated seeds
    stolen from the furrow.
I gave my love a pair of sleeves
    of green of all the summer leaves.
I gave my love a little cat
    that cried and died and that was that.
I gave my love a laundry line
    for drying flour,
and a perpetuum mobile machine
    without power.
I gave my love a leather boot
    that was not right for either foot.
I gave my love a bed of oak
    we used until the bedsprings broke.
A CATHARSIS OF GREY

Acheron       alley cat       birch grove grey
bored baby     book dust       Chicago back porch grey
centipede      centrefold      census taker grey
dirty sheet    door factory    electrical tape grey
elevator       enervator       \textit{ex machina} grey
factory        fragile         and failure grey
gull-back and grey-away, goo of eternal youth
hail, hallways and halcyon potential grey
indigo-faded-into juniper and kangaroo grey
lonely         laboratory      lay-away grey
money, mould and map-of-Norway grey
nearly         newly-sprayed   natty and old chemicals grey
old grey       orange grey    order form grey
peat moss      pinwheel quartz ore grey
rotor-rooter   radar-used-by-bats grey
slicks         slop           sludge    sewer
water          test-tubes-from-\textit{the Rats} grey
torrent grey   terror grey    theory of holes and
unburied moles used clothes and unbelievable grey
varied         vivid           wizard hat wistful warlike
xylene         x-ray          xenon tetrafluoride grey
your eyes      yellowing lies \Sigma_{ebra} grey
TO AN ALCHEMIST

Nor fear of death nor weeping leaf
will cover you,
or shelter or succour of time.
Extract oils and platinum be over you,
the gold, the tangent, and
the sine.

My words unstrung —
the old song — lover, you
return as the tides but for this —
the lees of your days massing over you,
without comfort, without kiss.
如夢令

秦觀

1
鴛鴦指吹依人
啄點玉小依楊
花波笙梅舊楊
紅綠寒春俱瘦
溜透

2
遙風夢霜無門
夜緊破送寐外
沉遝屬曉無馬
沉亭窺寒嘶嘶
如沈燈侵起
水閉人
RU MENG LING

Oriole bills
    pluck
    red bud lees.
Swallow trails
    dot
    the green seas.

And numb hands,
    the jade flute
    so cold
keens
    “Little Plum”
    spring flees.
Always again
    Always again
As the willow
    green fades, so,
    people
    grow thin.

— Qin Guan

Distantly, like
    water, the
    dusk deep night.
Shut the inn
    doors to the
    edge hard wind.

By the lamp
    a mouse moves
    my dream shards.
Dawn
    in the covers
    sends its frost.
Sleepless again
    Sleepless again
On the street
    horses
    people
    awake again.

— Qin Guan
如夢令
李清照

1
常沈興誤爭驚
記醉盡入渡起
溪不晚藕爭一
亭知回花渡灘
日歸舟深
處
驚

2
昨濃試卻知應
夜睡間道否
雨不捲海知緣
疏消篋棠否肥
風殘人依
紅
瘦
Always remember
Flood Lodge
dusk.
Plumb drunk, I
lost
the road home.

Rapt
all night, my
home skiff
strayed into
lotus holds,
depth ways.

How to get through
How to get through
Startled from the
stands, a sandbar of
egrets
flies.

— Li Qingzhao

Spattering rain
blast winds
last night.
Drowned in dregs,
sunk in
wine-deep sleep.

The maid,
raising the blinds —
ask her.
"Plum —
still in bloom?"
"Still there."

How could it be?
How could it be?
Now should the greens
shine and the
reds
pine.

— Li Qingzhao
cormorant shadows

(sea-spray’s white crash along the rock)

ululating black
METAMORPHOSIS

*We had changed our throats and had the throats of birds.*

Squirrels the shadow of
soot, moths with wings of ink,
dead fish rise
to meet us from the lake …

Tadpoles have extra legs.
Flowers are petalled wrong.
The oil on our feathers is not right,
even snow is the wrong colour.

a world too full of things
to hold any reflection,
how will salmon
find the road upstream?
FEZ

Medina

Behind it, a spiral stair,
winding us up the cool shaft,
the dark wells of the Medina.
Below it, noise of everything,
flies, smells of dung, food, dye,
the rainbow of the tanneries,
segmented by vats and drying hides.

Before it, descent down slippery paths,
jumping roof to roof,
above the chasm of the town.
Above it, the mosque,
the mullah and the sun,
in its sea, the
indigo vertigo.

Periphery

I met him crowded on a bus
near the desert at the city’s edge.

He carried yellow melons,
soft with a heavy load,
and laughing copper hair.
I never learned his name.
All freckles, friends
he shone.
Festival

The guest of honour
duly hennaed and circumcised
alternately sleeps and cries
the night away.

Upstairs, we all
danced; beating
rhythms on
everything.
Downstairs, a
solitary
twirler — bills from a bosom
already overflowing.
落 花
李 商 隱

去 飛 陌 暉 掃 歸 盡 依
客 花 連 送 未 仍 向 是
竟 亂 曲 斜 忍 欲 春 沾
高 小 參 迴 腹 眼 芳 所
閣 園 差 遞 斷 穿 心 得
FALLING FLOWERS

Even you have quit my high pavilion;
flowers astir in the garden below

scattering west, flown along the twisted dike
escorting dusk, passed into distances.

In the faded light I reach for your return
and still can’t bear to sweep them away

fragrant mind following spring, to end
here in a tear-drenched robe.

— Li Shangyin
憶舊遊寄譙郡元參軍

李 白

酒樓

丘造笑侯客逆難惜

憶為黃一海就迥傾

餘金醉內山情向留

昔為黃一海就迥傾

憶舊遊寄譙郡元參軍

李 白

酒樓

丘造笑侯客逆難惜

憶為黃一海就迥傾

餘金醉內山情向留

昔為黃一海就迥傾

憶舊遊寄譙郡元參軍

李 白

酒樓

丘造笑侯客逆難惜

憶為黃一海就迥傾

餘金醉內山情向留

昔為黃一海就迥傾
RECALLING OLD JOURNEYS:

To Yuan Canjun, Chancellor of Qiao

Think back —

Luoyang
    that drinking-inn
old "Wine-Barrel" Dong
    had built me
    south of Tianjin Bridge

Yellow gold, white jade
    bought laughter and song,
one everlasting month
    forget kings and princes
    — drunk!

'mid restless sages,
    come from all directions
    wanderers of the vivid clouds
to meet you there
    and none more welcome

Who thought it nothing
    to turn peaks, churn seas,
to incline together in open admiration
    with open meanings
    and no shadow of umbrage.

I went to Nanhuai,
    "picking cassia"
    going nowhere fast
you stayed at Beiluo
    dreaming backwards, thinking of it.
城萤明声地迎我乐鸣鼓舞

玉笙

随仙遐花风平相邀仙凤轻起
相访水千松倒来人动舞欲醉
别迥曲入途络宿真上似著守

不相三一万银汉紫荡嘈袖汉
Then —
I couldn’t bear it,
back to meet
to wander

We wandered far to
Xiancheng
that City of Spirits
coiled in its
thirty-six-fold river

Every stream giving onto
a thousand flowers blazing,
only then at the end
of ten thousand valleys,
each hollow full
of sound,
pines,
wind.

Gold reins,
gilt saddles.
down the plain,
the Taishou of Donghan
came to greet us.

The Daemon of
Ziyang,
“Purple Light,”
offered me his
jade sheng flute to play

And back at high
Canxia, began
playing that immortal music,
a brouhaha
of brooding-phoenix calls

into the long
sleeves of the
Taishou of Zhonghan
and up he rose, swaying and
started to dance.
身股霄朝遙巌橋虎膺行若深金案心
我其九終水故潄豹戎太腸月黃玉歸
覆枕凌不山尋度勇遏渡羊歲輕青無
袍眠氣散關山家君州呼道涼義食飽
錦橫意雨楚還歸嚴井相不北貴綺醉
手我當星分余君作五摧行感瓊使
who, with his own hands
covered me with his
brocade robe
and I was drunk
and fell asleep with my head on his thigh.

And that
banquet's
    thought and force, we reached ninth heaven
Star-scattered, rain-driven
over by dawn.

Flown apart, riven
    by Chu Pass
    seas and vastnesses,
I over the mountains, back to the old nest.
You home, back by Wei Bridge.

Your father,
    august and fierce,
    a leopard and tiger,
made governor of Bingzhou,
    put down the barbarians.

In the fifth month
    you sent for me,
    across Taihang Mountain
broke the wheels, trackless,
    twisted like sheep guts

I reached Beiling,
    already deep into the year,
moved, most
    by weight of kindness,
    made light of yellow gold.

And there —
the jade winecups
    pure jade tables
drunk, wearing brocade,
    no thought of return.
曲玉鳴
締過何日娥輝
衣去飛
四壁鼓草經雪斜
翠月羅空雲
城如簾莎態似宜寫助舞入行
向水水鱗妓花醉潭娟唱哥繞
出流弄龍攜楊欲清嬋更吹自
時祠舟波來若妝尺娥人風曲
時晉浮微興其紅百翠美清哥
And sometimes, bending west,
    beyond the city walls,
    to the Jin shrine,
ancestral waters flowing like
    green and white jade.

An idling boat,
    strumming the stream
    to flute and drum,
etched ripples, dragon scales
    emerald water grass.

The impulse comes, lead out those girls
    giving in — the moment passes
how do they do it.
    white poplar flowers
    so like snow?

Vermillioned, they will get drunk
    apt to the setting sun.
a hundred feet of clear pool
    to mirror kingfisher grace

Kingfisher elegance
    reflected in young moonlight
each beauty
    sings her gauze robe
    into dance.

Clear wind
    plays their songs
    away, into the void,
curves of song
    twirling on their heels
    after passing clouds.
遊賦期去君群少紛
辭憶
再揚可歸離多紛
此相
樂獻雲首領北恨暮可可跪里
行因青白難之別春不不長千
時遊闕山橋臺余花亦亦兒君
西北東渭渭間落言情呼寄
This moment of joy
   flies
   hardly to be met again
I journeyed west,
   to offer my "Long Willow" verse

North Tower's
   vivid clouds
   undo hope;
I returned to Dongshan
   with white hair.

At the south head
   of Wei Bridge
   I met you one more time
we parted again
   north of Can Terrace.

You ask me about parting
   how bitter? How much?
At the end of spring
   falling flowers
   scatter and disperse

Words cannot reach the end of this
   nor feelings fathom
I call the boy to kneel
   and close this poem

   and send you this a thousand miles, thinking.

— Li Bai [Li Po]
Once more Eros
unhinges my limbs
and stings —

bicerebral
untamable
animal.

— **Sappho**
POISE

for Phil

Midsummer sunset
clear from the street’s end
winter dusk, northwest.

It’s all right
the snow compass
buried in the park.

The fifth direction
(centre) still autrement, bow
at rest, program slow

until the winds change
to one work hold all over
turning everything.
白鷺鷺
李白

白孤心猶
驚飛閑立
下如且沙
秋墜未洲
水霜去旁

觀放白鷺
李白

八胡孤百
月鷺飛里
邊白一見
風錦片秋
高毛雪毫

緒鷺
杜甫

素蒼竦側
練鷺身目
風畫思似
霜作狡愁
起殊兔

條軒何毛
錦櫻當血
光勢擊灑
堪可凡平
摘呼鳥
蕪
WHITE EGRET

white egret
drops
to fall water
flying alone
like
falling frost

mind so still
still
I can’t go
standing alone
beside
the strand

— Li Bai [Li Po]

LOOKING DOWN ON WHITE EAGLES

The August border winds
blow high
Hu eagle feathers
white brocade

a mote of snow
flies alone
see their autumn down
a hundred li away

— Li Bai [Li Po]

PAINTED FALCON

winds rise, and frost from the pale silk
grey falcon, uncanny work in paint
strains its body longs for the crafty hare
hooded eyes nomad’s worried glance

metal tie-ring gleam from silk cord beckons the hand
form in motion, poised on the rail to command
When will it strike the common flock
plumage and blood sprinkle the grassy plain?

— Du Fu [Tu Fu]
THREE POEMS FROM LINES BY ROBERT KELLY

A PENTIMENTO

full of a special kind of dark called light

circling in the pool
a special kind of dark called light
and another clear, not dark or bright:
full light and empty light

down where the rapid resolves, water falls
to foam of energy (blackwhite light) and bubbles
reflect, absorb each other: whiteblack rocks, blackwhite falls
ink leaves no trace on water.

SPEM IN ALIUM

A congress of deception practices truth

Voice by voice, the motet grows
eight five-part choirs shift imperceptible parts.
Deduce who can, that creator coeli et terrae
invoked in fortyfold counterpoint.

Russell to Bishop Berkeley, Hume and Kant:
against things-in-themselves
induce phenomena, distinguish synthesis from cause,
arguments and cases, bulwarks ground to a fault.

Hear and rejoice, sense and doubt
as voices interleave a single sound and note
rising and falling, waves furl and calm
to a deft design hidden from the ear of reason.

One tone, purer than light
spem in alium nunquain habui
all my trust and hope
only in thee.
PEN AND HANDLE

flotsam on the surface
    perceive through your pen he said
    the entry points, surface of the day.

Pass the handles, semaphores, the wrong road,
    no where here, how
to know.

Follow the marks, reckon signifies as
clefts in rock, potential, invisible ink,
dew on dead trees’ leaves.

And learn to detect Han forgeries, lull the dozy brain
of deep if useless memory (and useful particulars):
    te deums, To Do lists
unwrite themselves, and do.
BOOK

a book about the edges
of language, les ruses
d'intelligence, their curves

misses have it. The other words
are shy, direct light
stumbles them, threading

through, natural and relentless, around such obstacles
are slow-moving if at all, and dull.
body to stride, nothing out of season.

... words
like certain cats that resist placement
arrange themselves, and purr
Adonis to the shades in Hades, asked what he missed most

I leave

-best of all-

the light of the sun.

Then-

the shining stars and the face of the moon.

Then-

wet cucumbers,

apples

and pears.

— Praxilla of Sicyon
Unlike Tang regulated verse forms, Song dynasty \textit{ci} took its metres from songs, possibly of Central Asian origin. The music is lost, but each title identifies a distinctive metre. Like Elizabethan madrigals, \textit{ci} could be read or sung. Most was written by men, ostensibly in the voices of the women who traditionally sang them. These four \textit{ci} were written to the tune “Like a Dream”.

\textbf{Qin Guan (1049-1100).} One of the great \textit{ci} poets of the Northern Song, associated with the “Delicate Restraint” (\textit{wan yue}) genre of \textit{ci} poetry, his \textit{ci} poems were considered superior to those of his friend, the great Tang poet Su Shi (also known as Su Dongpo), who was imprisoned in 1079 for offence against authority. Su tried to recommend the rather unsuccessful Qin Guan to the attentions of the great reformer Wang Anshi, but Wang’s death prevented any action on the recommendation. Some fifteen years later (1094), Qin was accused of tampering with official records to help Su, and Qin was demoted and relieved of his official duties in the capital. Four years before his death, he was exiled to Chenzhou, where several more such transfers broke his spirit and his health.

\textbf{Li Qingzhao (1084-1151), the greatest woman poet of China.} Born into a literary family, her talents were recognized while she was still in her teens; and her early life and marriage were happy until the fall of the Northern Song (1127) and the subsequent death of her husband, the mayor of Nanjing. Her poetry combines an unaffected, natural style of language with rigorous observance of metrical rules.

\textbf{FALLING FLOWERS}

\textbf{Li Shangyin (813?-858) explored a complex and ambiguous emotional range previously untouched by Chinese poets.} His poems are known for their tight structure, rich allusion, irony, portrayals of secret love and use of Taoist and Buddhist imagery.

\textbf{RECALLING OLD JOURNEYS}

Opinion divides whether Li Bai [Li Po] (701-762) or Du Fu (see below) is the greatest of the Tang poets. Born somewhere in Central Asia, possibly of Turkic origin, Li Bai grew up in western China (modern Szechuan) and presented himself in the tradition of such “frontier” poets as Sima Xiangru.
He was summoned to a post at the Han Lin Academy by the emperor Xuan Zong in 742, and was expelled two years later. Thereafter he travelled widely, was implicated in a minor rebellion and arrested for treason during the An Lushan Rebellion. He was eventually released, and spent his last years wandering the Yangtze Valley, but never regained favour with the government.

POISE

Midsummer sunset: The geographical orientation of Montreal makes streets that run east- (northeast) west (-southwest) seem to run north-south.

Outremont: a neighbourhood in Montreal.

PAINTED FALCON

Du Fu [Tu Fu] (712-770) is variously esteemed for the technical precision of his verses, the realism of his representation of poverty and hardship during the An Lushan Rebellion, for his introspection, and for a surrealist richness of symbolism. He was a younger contemporary and devoted student and friend of Li Po.

ADONIS TO THE SHADES

The expression "Mad as Praxilla's Adonis" comes from this poem.
Lisa Raphals teaches Chinese history at Bard College in Annandale, New York. She has worked as a technical writer and computer applications developer and taught at Harvard University. Her book *Knowing Words: Wisdom and Cunning in the Classical Traditions of China and Greece* was published by Cornell University Press in 1992.
Contemporary Literature from North and South

Poetry

David Annwn, *King Saturn's Book*
David Annwn, *The Spirit / That Kiss: New and Selected Poems*
Richard Caddel, *Against Numerology*
Kelvin Corcoran, *The Next Wave*
Lee Harwood, *Rope Boy to the Rescue*
Geraldine Monk, *The Sway of Precious Demons: Selected Poems*
Eric Mottram, *Selected Poems*
Frances Presley, *The Sex of Art*
Lisa Raphals, *What Country*
Catherine Walsh, *Short Stories*
Jonathan Williams, *Metaphors for Mysophobes*

Prose

Bobbie Louise Hawkins, *The Sanguine Breast of Margaret*
Elaine Randell, *Gut Reaction*

Interviews

ed. Peterjon Skelt, *Prospect Into Breath*
Dowsing in the ancient chemicals, the poet of information responds to the resources of time and human sequence. Translation coaxes not just Other Language into speech, but facts, destinies, lowly desires, learned trifles. Raphael here treats her readers to inventions and renewals. From technology and so-called history, two ends of the yardstick called Europe and China, song and simple sense, ideas and images throng to animate her poetry. With sly manoeuvres her poems witness formal energies of other passions and other ages. To read her is to return pleasurably to a half-remembered conversation, intelligent, alert and full of promise.

Robert Kelly