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Pak Chaesam: Enough to Say It's Far

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Soaring Dragon Waterfall

By now the voice of the sky
may have become the voice of the earth;

half of Sōrak Mountain's Piryong Falls
still is a part of the sky.

In the end, I left it with the evening sky
and came back down again.

Enough to Say It's Far

Han

Something like the persimmon tree?
Ripening in the sad evening glow,
the tree where the fruits of my heart's love
ripen.

With room to spread in the next world only,
still it looms behind the one I was thinking of,
falling down from above her head.

It may yet become the fruit
of her overwhelming grief
that she wished to plant
in the yard of her house.
Or would she understand
if I said it was all my sorrow,
all my hope from a previous life,
the color of that fruit?
Or did that person too
live in sorrow through this world?
That I do not know, I do not know.

Sound of the Taffy Seller's Shears

There is illness in my body lingering,
like the debt that must be repaid,
but I can deal with that.
The sudden sound of the taffy seller's shears
as they begin their new composition
scatters brilliant gems
on the grassy meadow of my mind.
If I go out into the sound of
the taffy seller's shears,
close companion to the sunlight,
and get a little piece snipped off
just to try the taste,
will the law of nature be revealed, or
will I arrive at the mistaken notion
that I have rounded the corner
toward eternity?

Landscape

The winds pass over the grassy field;
sunlight passes across the southern sea.

As two or three gulls
have risen at the end
of their indifference, a sailboat
has gone far and farther away,
as if bound for some dim and distant land.

How pitiable,
these, and these white things,
gone only so far and tiring;
and tiring, turning to come back.

For a moment the wind
finds refuge in the shadow
of the falling flower.
Beneath the wing,
or under the sail,
for a brief moment
the sunlight finds refuge.

Where do you suppose this
and the next world divide?

Winds cross the grassy fields
as sunlight passes over the southern sea.

Thousand-Year Wind

The wind is still playing
its tricks of a thousand years ago.
See how it ceaselessly comes back
to the pine boughs and tickles them.
See, just see, what it still
goes on repeating after a thousand years.

So do not grow weary.
You, the one who
turns even to strange things
in your yearning; you.

From the Song of a Celebrated Singer

Wind that moves among the pine branches;
with such a gentle stirring, my love,
I wish I could go to you.

But this is a dream
that eighty years of practice will not bring.
So it is. With this flesh-stained,
blood-stained voice, my one, sole possession,
torn from the field that I
cultivate, ripped root, branch and trunk
from my innermost body
shaken to its core, I sing you
this song.

A Path of a Heavenly Maiden

Seeing the many peaks of Sörak Mountain,
the heavenly maiden's descending path
appears. Not a single trail,
nor a path of two or three branches,
but a shy path along the inner
thighs, deepened with numerous valleys,
the borderline where clouds
and sunlight met and departed,
where the sound of thin robes rustling,
and even the scent of divine flesh
may be captured.