

Liang Ting

I sit in my pavilion, perched on a high rock
My face waits with the morning dew, for the first kiss of the sun
If you travel far, even skip over this rising light
You will find my fertile birthplace,
The hallowed soil of my ancestors

Rustle, rustle, the mother deer cuddles her twin fawns
In the shade of the young alder grove
Clack, clack, the green grasshopper flits here to there
Seeking one last tender grassy stem
The sun bears down hard on the shingles of my liang ting
As I sit gazing over the hazy humps of many islands
Stepping stones to a forgotten eternity

A bitter wind scatters cascading golden leaves
Laying bedding for the coming winter's sleep
I turn my face to encounter the newest season
Allowing the wind to tear at my face, my collar, all my clothes
Until it reaches my soul
Until it reminds me - the mind can rest on pillars
But needs no walls

While frogs dream in the deep mud of the pond
Billowy mists, spun from clouds spread over the vast ocean
Swirl through the liang ting
The ancestors are coming, walking this cobbled cloud carpet
I give them warming tea and a savory biscuit
They bring stories of love, fierce battles, fallen emperors, and countless seasons
Thawed from ancient times
My hand is busy now, translating these enduring human rhythms
To bring to the modern mind, still warmed by the ageless sun

Bob Supernant