

A Hong Kong Mood at 2022 from a Millennium Ago

My adolescent years
from the equator,
the lustre of the Pearl of the Orient
conjures the Zeitgeist of the Sung dynasty.

Then comes the ox near millennium's turn.
It's element: the water under the stream.¹ And thence,
“*A Full River of Red*”

*Fury pushes hair against the coronet,
at the railings,
the gloomy rain peters off.
Raising the eyes, shouting toward the skies,
a vigorous wrath.
Thirty years accomplishing a mere speck
of the 8000 li distance of cloud and moon.
Waste not one's youth, for when
the hair turns white,
Empty grief!*

*The humiliation of Zinghong
unavenged.
When then a patriot's hatred be quenched?
Intrepid chariot, trample Holoan,
and dent their mountain.
Eating forcefully the flesh of the enemies,
and cheerily drinking their blood,
That is when I retake all lands lost
To the heavenly palace of His Majesty!*

There,
just outside the fortified walls
of the counterfeit democratic barons,
the alleged privileged youths of our city
—whose future has been stolen, robbed, and spent—
indicate that they know I had caught a whiff of
“*Latent Scent*”

*The moonbeams of old,
often have you fallen on me,
playing a flute by the plum tree.
The beauty is awakened,
having endured solitude, cold,
and those who break her boughs.
Ho Seon has aged and*

《滿江紅》 岳飛 Yue Fei
(1103-1142).

怒髮衝冠，憑欄處，瀟瀟雨
歇。抬望眼，仰天長嘯，壯懷
激烈。三十功名塵與土，八千
里路雲和月。莫等閒，白了少
年頭，空悲切。

靖康恥，猶未雪；臣子恨，何
時滅？駕長車，踏破賀蘭山
缺。壯志飢餐胡虜肉，笑談渴
飲匈奴血。待從頭，收拾舊山
河，朝天闕。

《暗香》 姜夔 Jiang Kui (1155-
1221).

舊時月色，算幾番照我，梅邊
吹笛。喚起玉人，不管清寒與
攀摘。何遜而今漸老，都忘卻
春風詞筆。但怪得竹外疏花，
香冷入瑤席。

¹ The *dingcau* year is of the water element, specifically, the water under a mountain stream.

*his pen has forgotten the words
of spring. Yet the blossoms
beyond the bamboo growth surprisingly send cool fragrances to the
celestial party.*

*The banks of Gongnaam are hushed with sighs.
Too distant to convey through the fresh night snow,
the jade bottle cries to a different person;
the rhodochiton silent;
deep reminiscences.
Often recalling where our hands once held,
the trees print themselves
on the cold green of Lake Sai. Then each leaf
blows away.
When again?*

That Metallic rot of cold prison bars.
or the disquieting shores of exile.
I wonder if they hear the same Aberdeen
“Waves Washing the Sand”

*Beyond the blinds, the rain.
Spring remains indolent.
The quilt is no defense against the cold
of the wee hours.
In dreams,
the body does not know
it is in estranged lands, and
indulges itself in pleasure.*

*When alone, do not
lean on the railings.
The boundless rivers and
mountains, easily forsaken,
are hard to recover.
Flowing water and fallen petals
take spring with them.
Once in paradise, now
in the earth.*

江國正寂寂，歎寄與路遙，夜
雪初積。翠樽易泣，紅萼無
言，耿相憶。長記曾攜手處，
千樹壓西湖寒碧。又片片吹盡
也，幾時見得。

《浪淘沙》李煜 Li Yu
(937-938)

簾外雨潺潺，春意闌珊。羅衾
不耐五更寒。夢裏不知身是
客，一晌貪歡。

獨自莫憑欄，無限江山，別時
容易見時難。流水落花春去
也，天上人間。

Notes:

*These *ci* poetry were translated as parts of the programme notes for *Musica in Villam* (for the years 2021 and 2022). An uncanny echo from the void must have precipitated the selection of these pieces for the two concerts, so that in a moment of poetic fatigue, the voices of antiquity hinge complementarily into my broken stanzas—anachronistic or not.

**Chinese names transliterated here in Cantonese Jyutping.