

1<sup>st</sup> Price (LT)

CHEN Yaxue

Master of Arts in Language Studies  
(General Linguistics stream)

黃鳥歌

Orioles' Song

翩翩黃鳥

Lightly the orioles fly,

雌雄相依

With their mates beside.

念我之獨

For the loneliness I sigh,

誰其與歸

Who would with me abide?

1<sup>st</sup> Price (LT)

CHEN Yaxue

Master of Arts in Language Studies  
(General Linguistics stream)

## Commentary

Considering the fact that this poem was by a Korean author and the “黃鳥” [yellow birds] are monogamous, I have translated “黃鳥” as “orioles” in my poem. “翩翩” as “lightly” to show the birds flying in graceful pairs. “雌雄相依”, in my understanding, is more than birds’ habits in the mating season, but also the spiritual companionship between male and female, like soul mates. Thus, “mates” is used to express these two meanings. As for the rhythm, ‘lightly’, ‘fly’, ‘beside’, ‘I’ and ‘sigh’ are adopted to form assonance. Diphthongs like [ei], [ai] and [əu] are preferred in my translation in order to create a deep tone and atmosphere of envy and sorrow. Especially the diphthong [ai] might sound like the pronunciation of the Chinese character “love” (“愛”). This poem has created a sharp contrast between the orioles in happy pairs and the King’s pain and loneliness; therefore, in my translation, the number of words in the first two lines describing the orioles is even while that of the last two telling the King’s loneliness is odd. Besides, the number of syllable for each line in my four-lined poem is respectively 7,5,7,5, to convey the overall theme -- loneliness. With regard to the poem’s inner spirit, I believe that what the King needed is never servants or palaces. The warmth brought by “home” and soul mate is exactly what he desired, which is also the reason why I have adopted the verb form of the frequently-used noun “home”.