

2nd Price (Non-LT)

CHENG Guo

Bachelor's Degree in Economics and Finance

黃鳥歌

翩翩黃鳥

Trippingly dancing, a couple of orioles,

雌雄相依

Romantic and sweet, two birds snuggle!

念我之獨

As I reflect, deep solitude's a tangle.

誰其與歸

Who'll accompany me home? My lone shadow...

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Commentary

When I first read Yellow Bird Song, I was deeply touched by its unique wording, along with the lonely feeling permeating between lines. This poem goes beyond time and space, conveying emotions of an ancient King to me in the modern age. In my opinion, Yellow Bird Song excels in expressing emotions with artistry and simplicity. Despite the fact that this poem consists of only 4 lines, 16 characters totally, this is an artwork of abundant aesthetic appeal that arouses my keen interest. The poem is rich in contrasts. Two orioles are snuggling with each other, while Koguryo King is saddened by the departure his beloved concubine. Such a contrast triggers and reinforces the loneliness of the King. The delightful sight and sad feelings are perfectly blended as much as they also strongly collide. These artistic expressions have given me great motivation and inspiration in translating it. At the beginning stage of translation, I attached weight to appropriate rhymes. However, deeply moved by the original work, which presents rich artistic conception with only a few words, I determined to make the translation more concise and precise, yet with abundant emotions. This was a truly challenging but rewarding task, which required continuous modification and comprehensive understanding of this poem. Apart from keeping the original artistic expressions, I also strived to use my own imagination to create innovative artistic effects. I added the imagery of “shadow” to my translation. In the original work, the King sighed with emotion and wondered who could accompany him on the lonely path home. Therefore, I gave the answer in my translation; only his lone shadow would never leave him, not his concubine. This further strengthens the implications that love might be transient and inconstant, even for the King. Simultaneously, although there are no punctuations in the original poem, I decided to make full use of them to express emotions more effectively and clearly. For example, when seeing the snuggling birds, the lonely King becomes extremely susceptible to this romantic scene. I used an exclamation mark to stress the transparency of this feeling. And at the end of the poem, I used ellipsis to create an endless lonely feeling, which also offers the readers more space of imagination. Although the translation process was really demanding for a non-LT student like me, I enjoyed the process of translation and desire to have more attempts like this! (397)