

Honorable Mention (Non-LT)

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Master of Science in
Professional Accounting and Corporate Governance
(Corporate Governance stream)

黃鳥歌

翩翩黃鳥

Couples of yellow bird rise and dance

雌雄相依

Stay with each other as close as they can

念我之獨

Alas I'm standing alone

誰其與歸

Would someone be with me on the way back home?

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Commentary

The poem is extremely short and the neat 4 x 4 structure is very perfect and attractive. Comprehending ancient Chinese has always been difficult for many Hong Kong students, not to mention translating it in a foreign language. Hence, besides literal translation, I take up the challenge to 1) use as few words as possible to show the simplicity of the original; 2) keep the number of syllables in each line to be more or less the same to make the translation's structure similar as classic Chinese poetic structure; and 3) Use words in rhyme for the final word in each line in the translation.

""相依"" in the 2nd line describing the intimacy between the birds was difficult to translate in only 2-3 words in English. Hence, translation of the first 2 words ""雌雄"" is included in the first line (a) of the translation. In the 1st line, number of yellow birds are not mentioned. Are there only two birds or few birds paired up into few couples? I chose to use ""couples of yellow bird"" instead of ""bird couples"" as it reflect the meaning of ""雌雄"". Meanwhile, it shows there are few birds and complement the paired-up status described in the 2nd line in the original. This arrangement can balance the number of words in the translated line (a) and (b) without eliminating any content or expression in the original.

Another point to note is that the original used ""翩翩"" to describe the birds' motions which does not directly mention the birds fly. ""翩翩"" consists of both the natures of adjective and verb, implying elegant motions and creating the atmosphere. In this case, 2 verbs ""rise"" and ""dance"" are used instead of using adjectives to translate in order to enrich the translation while effectively limit the words used. The 3rd line and 4th line are mainly lyrical. The author used a negative question in the 4th line to magnifying his feeling of loneliness. By contrasting the bird couples sticking together with his love lost, the poem is simple yet powerful and beautiful.