

Honorable Mention (LT)

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Bachelor of Arts in Translation and Interpretation

黃鳥歌

Song of the Yellow Warblers

翩翩黃鳥

Two happily dancing yellow warblers,

雌雄相依

female and male cuddling with each other.

念我之獨

Thinking of my loneliness, I wonder

誰其與歸

who will go with me as my lover?

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Commentary

Introduction

The character 「獨」 in 「念我之獨」 has stolen most of my interest throughout this poem.

Personal Comments

Although the first two verses seemed to create the feeling of joy and romance, this poem was mainly about how *King Yuri* missed his departed lover *Chihui*, while seeing a pair of yellow birds. When I read 「念我之獨」, what stuck in my mind was Cliff Richard's *Ocean Deep*, a song lamenting an unrequited love of a man:

'Love, can't you see I'm alone?'

I am curious, how should I describe a feeling of 「孤獨」? In my mind, rather than a sort of unhappiness, 「孤獨」 can be an enjoyment that I can escape from the noisy crowd for a while to do everything quietly and in a carefree way, or not do anything at all. Just like the prose *Solitude* I have read in Literary Translation class, Henry Walden enjoys being with himself. That means being alone can be one's own choice.

On the other hand, the writer was the one who couldn't stand loneliness. As in both English and Chinese, interestingly, there is an expression named 'other half' (另一半). Everyone seems to need someone's love to complete his heart and soul. Therefore, the kind of 「孤獨」 of the writer was more likely 'loneliness',

showing that being alone was a state he didn't want to be in. Initially, concerning the rhymes of the poem, in my translation, "thinking of myself, what a *loner*", the 'loner' refers to someone who tends to be alone. Then I tried to modify it by my understanding. The writer felt lonely as he lamented that fate didn't treat him well. That was why I eventually added "*I wonder*" to treat it as a dialogue with Providence (「有語問蒼天」) as well as to link the last verse, 「誰其與歸？」 ("Who will go with me as my lover?")

Conclusion

「獨」 is definitely a special word that everyone may have different interpretations of. Some may be fond of solitude, some may be terrified of loneliness. This translation competition is more than a competition to me as an enthusiast of classical Chinese poetry. It is an opportunity for me to practice my hobby. Thanks everyone.