

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize (Non-LT)

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Bachelor of Laws (LLB)

黃鳥歌

翩翩黃鳥

Two orioles soar up high

雌雄相依

Wing to wing in the sky

念我之獨

Leaving me alone.

誰其與歸

Who can I go back home with, not my own?

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## Commentary

When I first read this poem, I thought that its format is similar to that of *Shijing*, the collection of poetic songs in ancient China. It amazed me when I found that the poet was not a Chinese, but was a Korean. The most interesting point is that he only used 16 Chinese characters to describe a scene where a pair of Orioles were flying wing to wing in the sky, and the poet gradually reflected his sadness on this scene. It shows the beauty of Chinese poems since the poem with a story behind cannot be translated with the same brevity in any other languages. However, I would say that this poem has the characteristic of using simple words. Therefore, the most challenging part of the translation is to keep the original style and simplicity of language in an English version. Firstly, a problem that comes to me is the word “翩翩”. In Chinese, it is enough to create the visual that the birds are flying gracefully and lightly in the sky. Nothing gets in their way. The sky is the infinite sea in which they accompany and love each other freely. Nevertheless, I found it insufficient to describe such an imagery accurately with the word “flying”. Therefore, I decided to bring about the meaning in the first two sentences: “soar up high... in the sky”. I think that it would be a strong contrast when readers imagine that the Orioles are soaring up and flying away from the vision of the poet; while the poet, whose wife has left, is overwhelmed by the sadness because of the loneliness. Therefore, the third sentence would be of utmost importance to bring about his feeling. For the third sentence “念我之獨”, I wanted to translate this sentence as “thinking of my loneliness” originally. However, I realized that the strong feeling of loneliness would be weakened with the use of a descriptive word “thinking”. I also found that the Korean version of this sentence is translated as “the sense of loneliness is in my body (mind)”, but I think this is not enough to convey such sadness. Thus, I decided to translate it as “leaving me alone...” since it can retain its original meaning while emphasizing the loneliness of the poet, together with the feeling of melancholy (“...”).