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Song Poems (sanqu) of the Yuan Dynasty : The art of tongue-in-cheek : Two love songs by two great dramatists

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Denison University

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How to Read Chinese Poetry Podcast

Topic 16 Long Song Lyrics (*manci*) of the Song Dynasty

Guest Host: Xinda Lian (Denison University)

Episode 51 The Art of Tongue-in-Cheek: Two Love Songs by Two Great Dramatists

I. Text

To the Tune “A Half”: On Love (Guan Hanqing)

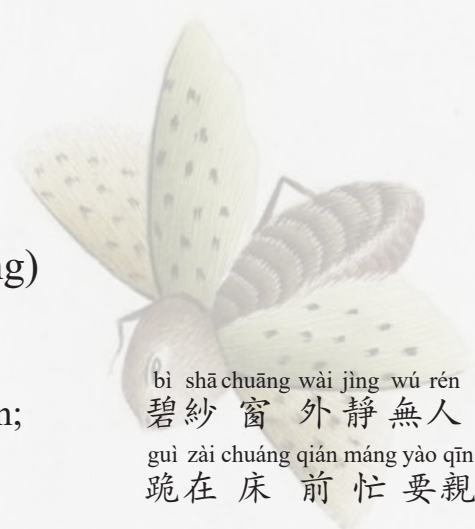
關漢卿 一半兒·題情

All was quiet outside the green-gauze window curtain;
He knelt down in front of my bed and wanted to get
intimate.

I just called him an ingrate and turned my back on him.

Though there was annoyance in what I said,

Half of it meant to reject; the other half, consent.



bì shā chuāng wài jìng wú rén
碧紗窗外靜無人
guì zài chuáng qián máng yào qīn
跪在床前忙要親

mà liǎo gè fù xīn huí zhuǎn shēn
罵了箇負心回轉身
suī shì wǒ huà ér chēn
雖是我話兒嗔
yí bàn er tuī cí yí bàn er kěn
一半兒推辭一半兒肯

To the Tune “Spring Song”: On Love (Bai Pu)

白樸 陽春曲·題情

Laughing, I block out the silver candlelight with red sleeve,

And forbid my erudite dear one to read books.

Nestling together, we have such fun.

Isn't that only about exams?

Who cares even if you pass?

xiào jiāng hóng xiù zhē yín zhú
笑將紅袖遮銀燭

bù fàng cái láng yè kàn shū
不放才郎夜看書

xiāng wēi xiāng bào qǔ huān yú
相偎相抱取歡娛

zhǐ bú guò dié yìng jǔ
止不過迭應舉

jí dì dài hé rú
及第待何如

[Translated by Xinda Lian]

English poems recited by Dr. Andrew Merritt and Mrs. Deborah Merritt

Chinese poems recited by Zhan Aifan and Zhao Sikun

II. Episode Notes

- Dramatic scene
- Playing love games
- Formal pattern and thematic content

III. Textual Source

Xinda Lian. “Qu Poetry: Song Poems (*Sanqu*) of the Yuan Dynasty.” In Cai Zong-qi, ed., *How to Read Chinese Poetry: A Guided Anthology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 329-347.