

Poetry – arranging words to express intense emotion – is found all over the world and takes many different forms. The essential concerns of poetry are the same everywhere: love, loss, family, nature, joy, suffering, the divine or the absence of the divine. And poetry has a twin sister: music.

We have chosen poems connected with Autumn or with an autumnal feeling. Two are Chinese and two are in English with strong Gloucestershire connections.

The two poems written in English were translated into Chinese by Yoong Shin Lee, who lives in Selango, Malaysia. She is a writer and translator: yoongshin.wordpress.com.

Robert Frost and Edward Thomas lived for a while near Dymock in Gloucestershire, just before WWI. With them were several other notables, including Rupert Brooke, Lascelles Abercrombie, John Drinkwater and Wilfrid Gibson. The popular memory of most of these has been eclipsed by that of Eleanor Farjeon, who is left out of the usual list of ‘Dymock Poets’, for the usual reason. She wrote the words of ‘Morning has Broken’, a hymn based on a Scottish folk-tune and made famous by the pop singer Cat Stevens in 1972.

The village church has an excellent display about the poets, there are poetry walks, and the Friends of the Dymock Poets have an excellent website: dymockpoets.org.uk.

Our Ivor Gurney poem is taken from *Collected Poems of Ivor Gurney*, edited by P. J. Kavanagh. It includes an excellent introduction to his work and life. This poem was written in 1915 in Hucclecote, near Gloucester. Thank you, Kate Kavanagh, for encouraging us.

Our presentation uses four pieces of music. The first piece is based on ‘Water Song’, with music by Hu Xiaou. We found the notes on MuseScore.com and used Apple GarageBand to bring them to life. The second piece is Ivor Gurney’s famous ‘Severn Meadows’, one of the few songs for which he wrote both words and music. He wrote it on the way to the front line in Flanders in 1917. We used the sheet music published by Oxford University Press in 1928 and again converted it to music on the computer. We replaced the vocal with a flute sample. The score can be found at ISMLP.org.

For our second appearance, we walk on to a *guzheng* version of ‘Autumn Night Song’ that we found on YouTube. It is by @tree9483. If we track her down we will ask permission. In the meantime, we are very grateful. The final piece is the start of ‘All This Is That’ by the Beach Boys, written by Al Jardine, Mike Love and Carl Wilson. It began as an attempt by Al Jardine to set ‘The Road Not Taken’ to a simple guitar accompaniment. Only a phrase of Frost remains; the finished song owes more to the Vedic scriptures the band encountered through Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, an Indian guru who also had dealings with The Beatles. The rights belong to Universal Music Group and we need to ask for their permission.



POETRY FOR AUTUMN IN CHINESE AND ENGLISH DAN LIU AND JOHN MORRISH

水调歌头 苏轼 ‘Water Song’ by Su Shih (1037–1101), tr. Burton Watson.

Su Shih was a politician, artist and writer of the Song Dynasty. He wrote nearly three thousand poems as well as letters and essays.

明月几时有？
把酒问青天。
不知天上宫阙，
今夕是何年。
我欲乘风归去，
又恐琼楼玉宇，
高处不胜寒。
起舞弄清影，
何似在人间。

Bright moon, when wast thou made?
Holding my cup, I ask of the blue sky.
I know not in heaven's palaces
What year it is this night.
I long to ride the wind and return;
Yet fear that marble towers and jade houses,
So high, are over-cold.
I rise and dance and sport with limpid shades;
Better far to be among mankind.

转朱阁，
低绮户，
照无眠。
不应有恨，
何事长向别时圆？
人有悲欢离合，
月有阴晴圆缺。

Around the vermilion chamber,
Down in the silken windows,
She shines on the sleepless,
Surely with no ill-will.
Why then is the time of parting always at full moon?
Man has grief and joy, parting and reunion;
The moon has foul weather and fair, waxing and waning.

此事古难全。
但愿人长久，
千里共婵娟。

In this, since ever there has been no perfection.
All I can wish is that we may have long life,
That a thousand miles apart we may share her beauty.

Darkness Has Cheating Swiftness by Ivor Gurney (1890–1937), tr. Yoong Shin Lee

黑暗来得狡猾又匆忙 艾佛·格尼著

Ivor Gurney was born a few steps from here, in 1890, and christened at All Saints Church in Barton Street. He was a choirboy in the Cathedral and went to the Royal College of Music in London, where he began to compose. He volunteered in WWI and began to write poetry. In 1917, he was injured and sent home. He tried to restart his career but was shattered by his experiences and was sent to a lunatic asylum in Dartford. This poem was written in 1919, when he was trying to live off the land on the slopes below Crickley Hill.

Darkness has cheating swiftness
When the eyes rove,
Opens and shuts in long avenues
That thought cannot prove.

Darkness shuts in and closes;
There are three ghosts
Different in one clump of hedge roses
And a threat in posts

Until one tops the road crest,
Turns, sees the city lie
Long stretched in bright sparkles of gratefullest
Homecalling array.

子夜吴歌秋歌 李白

Autumn Night Song by Li Bai (701–762AD), tr. Rewi Alley (1897–1987)

Li Bai is one of the most acclaimed poets of the Tang dynasty. He left around 1,000 poems. Rewi Alley was a New Zealander who spent most of his life in China.

长安一片月，
万户捣衣声。
秋风吹不尽，
总是玉关情。
何日平胡虏，
良人罢远征。

Changan flooded by moonlight
and I in the evening listening
to women from
many homes, pounding clothes
by the water. Chill blows the
autumn wind, ever growing
colder; yet each is anxious
for her lad out at the Yumen Pass
each wondering when we shall
defeat the enemy who drives in
so that he can return and
no longer be a soldier.

黑暗来得狡猾又匆忙
当双眼四处张望
漫长小径忽明忽暗
思绪难以丈量。

黑暗开启了又合拢，
那里有三个幽灵在动
藏在玫瑰丛里各不同
木桩亦是危机重重。

直到登上山坡
转身，看见城市安卧
最为感激的是万家灯火
呼唤着回家的你我

The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost (1874–1963), tr. Young Shin Lee

未走过的路 罗伯特·弗罗斯特

Robert Frost was born in 1874 in San Francisco. He was a schoolteacher with aspirations to be a poet when he came to England in 1912. He settled near Dymock, Gloucestershire, where he met the young English poet Edward Thomas and wrote this, perhaps his most famous poem, about their wanderings in the woods. Thomas was killed in France in April 1917. Frost became the most celebrated poet in America.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

黄叶林中有两条岔路，
可惜我无法两者皆行
身为旅人，我伫立良久
尽可能远望其一末处
直到它隐没于灌木林；

但我踏上了另一条路，
它碧草萋萋，引人前行，
多像是我向往的旅途；
来往的旅人匆匆赶路
留下几近相同的足迹，

但清晨的落叶铺满两径
金黄，尚未被脚印摧残。
啊，我将原路留待他日行！
然而路径延绵无止境
谁知此路可否能回返？

当时光已滴答地飞过
我将幽幽地把往事述：
林中有两条岔路，而我—
我择了幽静的路而探索，
从此决定了人生的迥殊。