Ji Yun (1724-1805)

translated from Chinese by Ouyang Yu

A SAIL IN THE GLASS

countless welcoming good mountains along the river
my eyes are lit up as soon as I’m out of hangzhou
misty river banks with mixed sky and green
a sail in the glass
Gao Panlong (1562-1626)

translated from Chinese by Ouyang Yu

ON THE PILLOW OF STONE

my heart as clean as flowing waters
my body as light as white clouds
now, evening in the depth of a quiet mountain
i hear the faint sound of a temple bell
Gu Mei (woman poet) (?-1650)

translated from Chinese by Ouyang Yu

LOVEBIRDS

you say flowers are as red as my face
i say willows are as green as your clothes
when shall we turn into a pair of lovebirds
flying together through leaves and flowers?
Jiang Shiquan (1725-1785)

translated from Chinese by Ouyang Yu

GOOD IS EVERYTHING MOHU

i don’t like to write about sunny hills but rainy ones
the same way a woman breathes into a mirror to look at herself
good is everything mohu in the human world
to make it easy for wind horses and cloud chariots to move around

Translator’s note: there is no other way to translate the word mohu than to keep it as it is. It means, among other things, blurred, blurry, indistinct, dim, vague, obscure, etc. Borrow it into English if you like but never try to match it up for you do not have the equivalents.
Lin Bu (967-1028)

translated from Chinese by Ouyang Yu

BANANA RAN

autumn hills are as impossible to paint as autumn thoughts are boundless
red leaves float on the clear creek and green trees point to the white clouds
a bird comes down in the cool shade and the setting sun brings noisy cicadas
who, i wonder, on the pillow will listen to tonight’s banana rain?

A word about Lin Bu: He never married in his lifetime but preferred to grow plums
and raise cranes. Hence the reference meiqi hezi (plum wife crane son or, more
clearly, he’s married to the plum as his wife and has cranes as his sons).
Du Mu (803-852)

translated from Chinese by Ouyang Yu

I LOVE THE MAPLE TREES AT DUSK

the cold mountain up in the distance with diagonal stone paths
families only found where white clouds rise

i stop my carriage and sit down for i love the maple trees at dusk

their leaves, after frost, are redder than february flowers