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Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu

HARMONIZING A POEM BY PALACE-ATTENDANT KUO

High beyond the thick wall a tower shines with sunset,
Where peach and plum are blooming and willow-cotton
flies.

You have heard it in your office, the court-bell of twilight:
Birds discover perches, officials head for home.

Your morning-jade will tinkle as you thread the golden
palace,

You will bring the word of heaven from the closing gates
at night.

And I should serve there with you; but, being full of years,
I have put aside official robes and am resting from my ills.

A GREEN STREAM

I have come on the River of Yellow Flowers,
Borne by the current of a green stream
Rounding ten thousand turns through the mountains
To journey less than a hundred li.

Rapids hum on scattered stones,
Light is dim in the close pines,
The surface of an inlet sways with nut-horns,
Weeds are lush along the banks.

Down in my heart I have always been clear
As this clarity of waters.

Oh, to remain on a broad flat rock
And cast my fishing-line forever!

Translated from the Chinese

by Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu