



## THE MASTER'S CONCEIT—SPRING EVENING

*Who would sorrow alone in the springtime?  
Faced with this you must drink straightaway.* —Li Bai, tr E. Eide

Li Bai, you look so weary. All the wine  
is gone. It's just as well—another cup  
wouldn't extend the night a minute longer.  
Somehow you staggered down these ragged stones  
with no one to lean upon—another miracle—  
to let your feet dangle bleeding in the stream.  
A bowl of gold coins glitters on the water.  
Ignore them, poet. Lie back instead and gaze  
at the high moon on her watch. How much more wine  
has she had than you? Composing lines  
in your head about the joys of drink and desire  
although you're alone and weeping, certain that  
the moon's verses are putting yours to shame  
as she sings to the faint stars gathered near her.  
And not a word will you remember, come the dawn.

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