Peach Blossom
(after Li Po)

Ask why I stay on the green mountain
and I smile but do not answer; my heart rests.
A peach blossom floats downstream
–
Heaven and earth, apart from this world.

Sheng-yu’s Lament
(after Mei Yao-ch’ên)

First heaven took my wife,
and now, my son.
These eyes will never dry
and my heart slowly turns to ash.
Rain seeps far into the earth
like a pearl dropped into the sea.
Swim deep and you’ll see the pearl,
dig in the earth and you’ll find water.
But when people return to the source,
we know they’re gone forever.
I touch my empty chest and ask, who
is that withered ghost in the mirror?

Sheng-yu’s Lament

Parting from Wang Wei
(after Mei Hsiang-ch’ên)

These quiet days are ending
and now I must leave.
I miss my home’s sweet grasses
and no eye spies me but the moon’s.

No Eye But The Moon’s:
Adaptations from the Chinese

Robert Okaji

I sit alone among the cedars,
play my guitar and hum.
In this dark forest
no eye spies me but the moon’s.

Robert Okaji

No Eye But The Moon’s:
Adaptations from the Chinese

Robert Okaji

“These are adaptations of Chinese poems
- five from the Tang Dynasty, and one
from the Song. I call them adaptations
rather than translations because I neither
read nor speak Chinese, and have used
transliterations to produce these versions.”

- Robert Okaji

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Cedar Grove
(after Wang Wei)

I sit alone among the cedars.

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Cedar Grove
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I sit alone among the cedars.