Wendy Mulford
From I CHINA AM

OVER THE HEART line
    from the Underworld
    A pair of wounded cats
Where
    Is she speaking
    The sea-hawk places
his blue mark
    It was
    China
by the Laeisz route
    It may be 83 days
Depending upon

    The DRAGON strays
into our UNIVERSE
    Red blessings bring luck nine times
    TRANQUILLITY
the pellucid sea

    Floating screens
disguise military
manoeuvres
Give back the scholar poet
  shape science self-
knowledge an
  incomplete reference
to all you did not know

Late in life the
Shaman insists
  No more floating. To be anchored
by the inkstone should permit
monochrome drift
  Meanwhile there is the sea
The poet’s friend and the habit
  of perfect brightness

II
Three instructions to the jade(d) planet
Inauspiciously beautiful summon the bamboo flute do you hear
  the cranes calling surround
the five-clawed peach PROSPERITY spins
  a silken floss
- they cannot see the bones they must eat
  sumptuous information rules
only the BRONZE hound can restore
movementís lost
   Restless the scholar hoards the
poet lists assiduous rituals
   SO MANY SHADES OF SILENCE

III

   Pearls    Pearls    Pearls
   Just
   No justice
   Chimes
   Asylum    Tatters

IV NUMBER FOR SHOU - Long Life
White pen numbers dreams
Other pearl fishermen place incense
Cormorants catch heart-images
The tattered seal-script drops
Lapis-lazuli in the
Nine-walled city fabulous pomegranates fall
Silence returns to virtue
Palest blue, coral, lingzhi
Each unknown presence instructs
The ear
Different satins Bodsivatta bells the
Heavenly bodies
A toe-hold awareness in the
Four Treasures
Deliver a garden across the world
for broken souls

Within the scrolls across the gaps
His mind wanders timeless endeared
Folded into SILENCE
Working Note

This poem was composed for performance at 'Swayed to the West' - an event held in conjunction with "Starting at Zero: Black Mountain College 1933-57", Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, 3.xii. 2005
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