Li Bo Unkempt
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Published by Punctum Books

Smith, Kidder, et al.
Li Bo Unkempt.

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Chapter 8. “Bring on That Wine”
for Billie Holiday

Hey, man, don’t you see that River rollin’ down from Heaven?
It’s headin’ out to sea, an’ it’s never comin’ back.
Hey, man, don’t you see that mirror in the great hall, grievin’
your white hair?
Black silk threads in the mornin’, snow at night.
In this life to get what you want, you gotta celebrate,
so don’t lift some empty golden goblet to the moon.
For sure we gotta use the stuff we got from God —
just drop a thousand pieces of gold, it’ll all come roarin’
back.
Stew the chicken, kill the goat, but to be merry
you got to drink up all three hundred cups at once.
Hey Jack, hey there Prez,
bring on that wine, don’t you stop, man!
I’ll sing a song with you,
give me your ear, ok?
The best music, the finest food, don’t do the trick,
just vow to be drunk forever an’ never sober up.
All the wise an’ worthy of old times got forgotten,
only the drunks left us their names.
When Queen Sheba feasted with King Solomon,
the wine cost ten-thousand a barrel, an’ everybody frol-icked.
So, boss, how can you say you’re short on cash,
you have to spend it dry so I can toast you, man.
Your dappled horse, your fancy furs,
just have the kid take ’em out an’ trade ’em for good wine.
Together, sir, we’ll melt the sorrows of ten-thousand ages.29
將進酒

君不見黃河之水天上來，奔流到海不復回
君不見高堂明鏡悲白髮，朝如青絲暮成雪
人生得意須盡歡，莫使金樽空對月
天生我材必有用，千金散盡還復來
烹羊宰牛且為樂，會須一飲三百杯
岑夫子，丹丘生，將進酒，君莫停
與君歌一曲，请君為我側耳聽
鐘鼓饌玉不足貴，但願長醉不願醒
古來聖賢皆寂寞，惟有飲者留其名
陳王昔時宴平樂，斗酒十千恣歡謔
主人何為言少錢，徑須沽取對君酌
五花馬，千金裘，呼兒將出換美酒
與爾同銷萬古愁

John Thorpe writes:

Billie Holliday, is anyone catching the set?

— come
  moon’s quick’s
    bright
  shine —

Something like the curls of Billie’s throat (and the spitball she puts on this word, the whisper with which she lets the other word fall) is open, whether anybody’s here to hear it or not, and so much the better if you don’t take her as an entertainer.