Chapter 53. “For Revenue Manager Lu”\textsuperscript{418}

Autumn colors know no near or far,  
it’s all cold mountains once you’re out the gate.  
White clouds, my familiars, wander  
and wait for me within the Cangwu Mountains.  
Tell me, Lu Dan’s crane,  
you’re flying west, when are you coming back?\textsuperscript{419}

贈盧司戶

秋色無遠近  
出門盡寒山  
白雲遙相識  
待我蒼梧間  
借問盧駕鶴  
西飛幾歲還

Revenue Manager Lu\textsuperscript{420} is Lu Xiang 廬象 (?–763), a Tang aristocrat, unusually skillful administrator but also skilled poet, friend of Wang Wei, linked with Du Fu. During the Rebellion he was captured in the Eastern Capital and served An Lushan’s government. With the restoration, he was demoted to Revenue Manager in dismal Yongzhou 永州, the deep south, by the Cangwu Mountains where Sage-King Shun had wandered and died three thousand years before.\textsuperscript{421} See the poem “Distant parting,” a few chapters hence.

Lu Dan — the same surname, but of an unknown time. From the \textit{Records of Nankang} 南康記 (Nankang ji):\textsuperscript{422}

Once there was an official named Lu Dan. When young, he’d mastered the arts of the immortals, and he could unbind himself and fly with the clouds. Each evening he’d mount the sky and return home, and at dawn he’d come back to court. One time he didn’t appear at the ruler’s morning audience.
He had become a white crane, which circled in the air before the palace, trying to land. The dignitaries of the court threw rocks at it and grabbed a shoe. Lu Dan startled and took his place in the assembly. Everyone was shocked.

Li Bo’s poem says, “Tell me, Lu Dan’s crane,” but he might equally have said, “Tell me, Lu Dan, you crane……”