Afterwords
Drinking under the moon by myself for the first time

We three: flowers,  
wine jug, and me.

We’re drinking by ourselves  
without regard.

Hey, hey, bright moon,  
I lift my cup to thee.

Three more people: the moon,  
my shadow, and me.

Fool moon  
couldn’t care less for wine.

Silly shadow  
just follows me round like a dog.

I’m stuck with you all,  
all the way till pleasure turns to spring.

I sing,  
my moon wanders along.

I dance,  
my shadow staggers along.

Now we’re sobering up.  
That was some good joy.
Now drinking’s done.
Every body goes its own way.

Bound together,
we roam all time without regard.

And some time in some Milky Way
we meet.\textsuperscript{596}

月下獨酌四首其一

花間一壺酒，獨酌無相親
舉杯邀明月，對影成三人
月既不解飲，影徒隨我身
暫伴月將影，行樂須及春
我歌月徘徊，我舞影零亂
醒時同交歡，醉後各分散
永結無情游，相期邈雲漢

And where-when is that point, Li Bo? Oh, you rascal, you pretend it’s somewhen else. If we trust you, you’ll take us on a long, entrancing journey through a hundred moons, “Who cares how long it takes, my whole life I’ve loved this roaming.” If we distrust you, you’ll take us right now behind the star curtain of the Milky Way and show us our old home. It’s up to us, he couldn’t care less, but some time in this Milky Way we meet.

Poetry is a belly dancer’s veils. Always in spangled motion, always in advertisement for itself. An invitation to knowledge, or a trick of the light. Who wields this veil, a wave or a particle?

If we get Poetry a little tipsy, with flagon on flagon of light, it will disclose the secrets of all three of us: Silence, Words, and You. Of our unkempt three-way love affair. Words claims it was because Silence burbled and destroyed all possibility of meaning. Silence claims it was Words’ importunate blandishing, “Look, I got you special bling just for you, excellent stuff like ‘pre-ontological’ and ‘post-apophatic.’ I will teach you to say
“Ahh!” And You, my best beloved? You were there too, and You kept these secrets, until now.697

Silence is a tigress in her first heat. You are astride her, or sometimes the lady from Niger inside her. Words is a Russian divorce lawyer who won’t shut up.

Silence surrenders itself. Words surrenders parataxis. You surrender your good looks.

It is the way that snow falls in the mountains. Snow is words. It is the natural state describing itself, the first sound, first light. Snow is Li Bo falling down from nowhere.

Up to his eyes in white, he wonders how much bliss we can bear. How much horror. He will haunt us until we answer honestly. He’s standing on the earth, the sky keeps falling.

By springtime all the snow is opened and gone.

Li Bo is the only poet I’ve really envied.

Traktung Yeshe Dorje
White Lotus Farms
Winter solstice, 2020