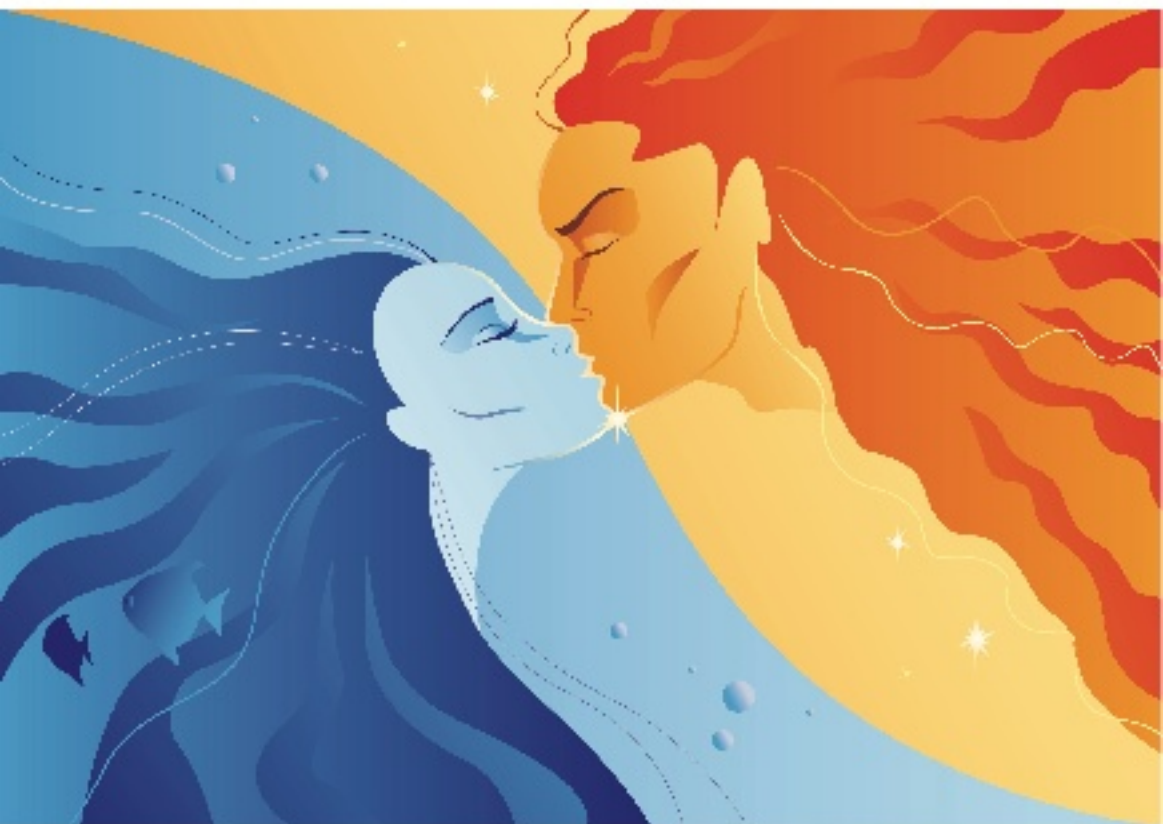


# Everything Speaking Chinese

ENHANCED, REVISED EDITION



Timothy Gordon

Everything  
Speaking Chinese  
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*The seventy-six meditations, prose and tone poems on the Southeast Asian landscape, evoke correspondences in aesthetic, cultural, social, and spiritual realms. Sensory experience of "Asia" and "Asian" is remade with an outlier's freshness that weighs "Cathay" with "Christmas," traditional-rich heritage with the "breathless poor" and "rickshaw baggage" culture. Its landscape of vision recreates one art of-a-piece with "blissful invisible people" whom "you can almost hear/as fresh Asian spirits not yet setting out from the other side."*

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**EVERYTHING SPEAKING CHINESE**

一切说中文

**ENHANCED, REVISED EDITION**

Poems by

GTimothy Gordon 戈登

*EVERYTHING SPEAKING CHINESE*  
by GTimothy Gordon

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圣灵的最拉姆新闻

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**IV**  
**MINDLESS**

*Not Two*  
-Zen philosophic koan-

*The “self” is empty of independent existence.*  
-Samantabhadra-bodhiisattva-sutra-

*To “exist” is a habit I do not despair of acquiring.*  
-Emil M. Cioran-

*Zen is poetry; poetry is Zen.*  
-R. H. Blyth-



## Daisies

. . . *learn to listen as things speak for themselves.*

-Bashō-

They've always known how to be alone, common,  
Anonymous and ordinary in number as the cricket,  
Except for silence, redundant as blackboard clunch,  
But even more than this, though underfoot, beaming  
Perennially face-up, starship voyagers eyeing the heavens,  
Whatever weather, donning the same *cloche* and pillbox  
Saffron hats season after season, never *la nue*, but never  
*Outré ou gauche* either, as might be expected, never even  
Rococo, downright out-of-the-loop, never wishing they were  
Dressed to kill like toffs and swells, and *almost* never,  
Confides the poet in Edo, in perfectly erudite Mandarin,  
At fall twilight, echoing a solitary cicada's cry,  
Unless you listen, *listen*, "sinking/into stone."

Spring and All: Mt. Huang'shan

After another polite Du Fu poem  
Goosebumps irradiate my arms and legs,  
Slowly, late, the way spring reclaims Huang'shan—  
Though no Buddha halo, no home of gods,  
Or jade rabbit lover in her yellow moon, *yet*—  
Briefly, almost not at all, in its small wold,  
As plumrains soak and blanch leaves from a grove  
Of fruit trees now cleansing the deepest forest floor,  
Its hothouse oast drying-out their wetness, crackling veins,  
Resurrecting soil persimmon orange, cobalt-blue plum,  
Purple grape, blood-red pomegranate and scarlet poppy,  
And I, poor spirit, shadow on the wall, sit stranded  
At the strait gate, a lyric on my lips, half-forgotten,  
Half-redeemed, calling me by my own name home.



Blue Heaven, Blue Earth  
(Wu-tung Trees in Moonlight)

The birds know the balm from memory,  
Each swollen blue bud as they perch in aerie peaks  
On twigs and branches swaying like willows  
In the brief spring wind, the blossoms' fertile oil,  
Catkins' attar scenting passes, recesses, monks' trails,  
Liquid jade, pearl, fit only for gods, Great Khan himself,  
Even Queen Phoenix, poets have sung, sits at its head  
Inhaling the nectar, while the regal bamboo groves  
Far south, Meng'hai, or by lowland Daoist temples  
In Sich'uan sit silent all spring and summer and fall  
Unseen and unfelt until late harvest, and threshing.  
Under Chang-an autumn moonlight, among tall reeds,  
Beside the deep blue river, I am caught, like the sage,  
His trout, between this blue heaven, and this blue earth.

## At the Great Wall

*Poetry and letters/Persist in silence and solitude.*

-Du Fu-

When I hit the Wall once more for friendship, and feeling,  
I all-the-more sense the ancients' fears about warfare and winter  
And wayfarers traveling through ice-thatched nights or on watch  
Along the ramparts, atop parapets, alone and lonely, some exiled,  
Some not, their pipe, cup of wine, coarse beige blanket, flimsy notebook  
Annotating iceplants owning faint pink buds, barren pepper- and -silktrees,  
Seamless inkblot night skies, own cross tempers, lacks of recognition,  
And favor, friends and wives absent or dead, most *noted by name*,  
As with Yeats, anon, irregular grey hairs, health issues, lovers, old age,  
Wine, wine, infinitely more wine, *cris de coeur* for spring, and birdsong,  
Young girls' in sundresses, enticing berets and floral hair brocades,  
Each detail coming-to-life after each sojourn overland or by sea,  
Traversing dicey mountain crevices, *en route* always elsewhere but home  
Before turning back to wherever they began, waiting anxiously at temples,  
Travel stations, for the next actual or imagined excursion, ready to record,  
Then reorder, fact and fiction, reconnect magic with mundane, naturally,  
Long afterward, while on probable or improbable T'ang or Song missions,  
Military maneuvers or reconnaissance 'ops for border incursions, just demands  
Of office or commerce, routine selling of wares, emptiness but gestation, time  
For filling up, crafting, inventing detail, this anguish, conveyed of others,  
    hemmed-in  
By form, evoking emotion and pain and joy as expressive and hard and  
    mortally cool  
As green and white jade to professional touch—, thawing purple-green peach  
    trees,  
Egrets roosting on fist-tight baitboxes, arrowroot river blossoms, fried bamboo  
    shoots,  
Windowpots leeking onion attar, spooky Li'shan mists, absent infant shoes,  
    ethereal  
New Year *kwai* minted from laughing Buddha's sustainable belly— God/Poet,  
Authoring white moments in shudders and glimmers, of things given, things  
    made.

## Summer My Beloved Ex-Beatnik Bro' Grown Defunct

... *how I wish you were here.*

-Pink Floyd-

I'm abroad, per usual, in blistering Beijing 42°C sub-equatorial heat (deadsville, not the Five-Spot, Half-Note, Miles, Mingus, Monk, all that jazz!), Forbidden City, Palace of the Emperor, but no one ever complains, *Everybody Out of the Pool!* never ethnic Chinese, as we gulp vendors' icy plastic liters *Just half-yuan!* then Tian'anmen still absorbing a mostly rustic family crowd Eager to explore purged pasts, cultures, climb stairways to even hotter heavens But firstly *must expunge all smokes, rust booties on* to enter covert, airless, Room after room, take snaps of quaint expected stuff inside, outside, mosaic artwork

All along the walls, colossal frescoes, anachronistic Riveraesque tapestries (some quite

Western), snaps of *moi* solo with lovely, obeisant women from Wuhan 大学, Primo cool alien with *striking bright blue eyes!* more snaps of us, fat-cheeked Kids, moms gifting them like prey for selfies, old, halt, infirm all too eager for Gummy closeups, strictly from hunger man, if you dig it, even bone-eyed-cops Trying hard to look cool and not seem like *ancien régime* Mao-menacing pills, We hump Still farther up and up this veritable stately pleasure dome old STC Could only imagine but quite doped-out dreamily, if not accurately, what Greedy Great Khan or *post res* C. F. Kane decreed, wanting to absorb *Everything!* we equally greedy pervs, say, at Phil's Tinseltown *Über* Alhambra Castle stashed full of guns and frightwigs, or Lana's Hills' hacienda when Cheryl knifed pretty-boy Johnny quite dead, gawking like freeloading Rubberneckers at gristly roadway mashups—the *vics, dead, maimed? Vehicles totaled?*—

Sweat irradiating my Rascals' "People Got to be Free" tee— my pits, pants, But view we must nonetheless 'til we're again out of ice, subsumed by heat, Consumed by artwork, bored by what lies beneath, extravagant Middle Kingdom *couture*

And cutlery and five-plus ultra millennial pre-aughts' *haute* style, stomachs  
Demanding *Very famous* Pepín Duck, or, next best, *Very Famous* dim sum,  
*Wait-time slow, Latecomer seat optional, Not all dish available.* Dying  
To pound down a few knifey Old Molokos, be comfortably numb. Years later,  
Mobiles in vogue when my Mandarin was less despised, we'd have excused  
Ourselves hourly between scaling heights, excavating rooms, for smoke breaks  
(no getting much higher here, relighting my fire, buddy-boy!), whipped-out  
iPhone 5- or -6 *ad nauseam*, ice-cream Droid, Walmart cheapie, dialed home  
Far, far away America, as might any Spielberg alien, Asian hi-tech sim intact,  
Learned *super spottum*, since we Western *ah-dao-ah* Big-Noses expect, love,  
Our news *Yesterday!* beloved, ex-beatnik Bro' gone irrationally, unnerving  
“complications”—,

*Bummer!* But that's the just the way it crumbles, cookie-wise, later 'gator,  
You split The Scene, Daddy-O, cut out, blew this popsickle stand clean  
After taking the royal shaft up The Old Wazoo, not a day at the beach but we  
Be kickin' it *bueño mañana*, like Cloud 9, like made-in-the-shade, Fat City  
A very gone-stone-gas, we call it riding' The Gravy Train, boy-o, no drag,  
No sweat for no square, even if cubed, by-the-bye, if you dig it, *defunct-wise*,  
It's the livin' end, *obol* pressed against *my* tongue, pending final arrangements  
For The Dearly Departed Loved One. It's All Over Now, Baby Blue.

## Songbird

. . . *Mindless— for everywhere is Zen.*

-Liu Ch'ang-ch'ing-

Mornings lately have brought back  
My songbird, the ash, white birch,  
Daylilies, mutable chameleons all,  
Now even more full of life, this spring,  
And I, I'm over my head in love, still,  
With what little music life offers, and yet,  
*And yet*, understand no more than this.

*GTIMOTHY GORDON*

## Shadowland

Night-chimes echoing the wild buds  
Stirred by wind, unthinking themselves  
From memory, and meaning, the music  
Turned back into itself from the fields  
And darkness, into moments, and blossoms,  
Quiet white words, still, under full blue snow.

## Ghostlife

. . . *that which has no name.*

-The Buddha-

Ghost-trees, the color of self,  
Their absent tops anonymous  
By moonlight, like the lotus,  
Lily, in milky goldfish ponds,  
Or fuchsia, shy-quiet amaranth,  
Sheltered by high mountain pine,  
Cypress, ginkgo and white willow,  
So like the gods in their aeries,  
Never known except by name,  
So joyous a thing being unknown.

## Gone

*I want to go back to that time after Michiko's death/ . . .  
To the magnitude of pain, of being that much alive.*

-Jack Gilbert-

Even before dawn broke over the mountains  
I missed you, then and now, late and early,  
When last here, here last, even more now  
Than ever, the late summer color you love  
So terribly exquisite in the late breaking sun,  
The fruit trees, especially peach and saggy plum,  
All full-figured wonders, the ground flowers aglow,  
As expected, but still absent from your touch,  
As am I, flying solo, as it were, in your garden,  
Lost among hydrangeas and tulips and violets,  
Daylilies, one with lavender petals and a deep  
Red heart ready to die at a moment's notice,  
The speckled Monarchs' haunt, all Asia waiting  
For you, your touch, the color, as I note,  
All so exquisite in the late-day sunshine,  
And you, and you, and you just gone.



Asian Field Notes

*What you seek is seeking you.*

-Rumi-

On the farway north up rocky, zigzag highway 9, off even zanier 11,  
T'ai-tung to Suao, where it ends, jutting slightly west to Ilan,  
I'm thinking of my girl, Ya-yin, at the wheel, misting twilight  
Fog slicking the scenic coastal road, iconic Ron Stewart, ICRT expat  
Dj, T'ai-pei, now Frampton, *Alive!* "I Love Your Way," me always  
Wanting *Waves*, and I'm tingly all over, incoming fall junks and skiffs  
Hauling up nets, boathouse and fishing hut lights now lit, pre-harvest,  
Pre-squall, pre-typhoon half-moon searching the sky to shed more light  
On incoming storms, wind-blade surf ruffling sandbars and shore stones,  
Near west, Stone Mountain, peak rife with lilies, but not much else, not quite  
More famous Jade or Snow, farther west, tombs stuck-up on cropped roadside  
Hillocks, landslides sometimes stretching down to ocean edge, valley rifts,  
Plateau clichés of homely rice, betelnut farms, black-gated iron railroad truss,  
Opening acts for postcard misty rain and evening song, skiff, faint light, fog,  
Storm-front ocean cognates signifying *love*, alien ride never ending, like  
Nothing else in my world, geography beyond self felt in the blood, long ride  
From home, remapping new land, new love, new tintinnabulation.

## Inscriptions

*With one finger I write in the air, "sorrow."*

-Du Fu-

### I

Like you, I sense I've forgotten my way,  
What my children look like, even my own face,  
How all wars, and sometimes lovers, go badly,  
But I know how typhoons blow-up on the unsettled coast  
Beside the Pacific, wrinkling, then flattening, mango trees,  
Elephant grass, flaps of gulls' wings, on time each summer  
Through fall wasting small villages, flooding noodle and stinky  
Dofu stands, caking streets and fancy boulevards and tollways  
Up by urban Ilan, Suao, T'ai-pei, with mud and knee-deep  
Saltwater only the young plastered in blue slickers dare drive  
Through on cheap two-stroke cycles, drenching, disturbing,  
Everything and everyone, not least of all, the already dead.

### II

Like you, I rarely see my family now, in all seasons,  
Wet or dry, frigid or torrid, bare or fertile, except when  
I read of your aloneness on your skiff, stealing down Yang-tze,  
Passing by and saluting the poor in poems, village after village,  
Dying before death, damming Three Gorges never imagined  
Even by you in your radical heart. And like you, exile, wartime *dp*,  
I'm drifting, alone this time on coastal T'ai-wan, typhoon time,  
Though caught in autumnal gusts rousting the Pacific, lost among  
Raindrop tears and morning stars like the always absent dispossessed  
You love best. Would there were words your equal; none but one  
Comes on my tongue, on water, in gloomy air, among blank stars,  
Hovering new music of the spheres, as lovely and as sad as *sorrow*.

When Everything Ever Sad Ends

(Mount Lu, Jiang'xi)

Spring comes as usual suspects, all tricked-out  
Color and blue mist showered by rain and light  
And wind in right degree, almost too much  
At once for sense, for Li B'ai, too, once,  
Clichéd aspen rust, purple vetch, goldenrod  
And hollyhock, regal iris and ultra lavender  
Hyacinth hues reverentially true to self,  
And nothing else, before innocence ends,  
White nothing begins, even in my life,  
Shrouding mountain and plain, buried below,  
Brown and blind, until it all begins again,  
Rosé brocade, unctuous and light  
Illuminating the dead, without words  
(As if they were needed), as *Spring*,  
When everything ever sad ends.

## Racing with the Moon

*-Banished Immortal-*

### 1

Racing with the moon, downwind, in your skiff,  
Expired (*they say*) even as you embraced *her* aura  
Dying dead-drunk in the river before your time,  
Millennia before baritone Vaughn, far beyond  
Middle Kingdom expanse, crooned *his* signature song.

### 2

Lovers, wives, wine, dreamy Dao, all noted  
In sharp, small brushstrokes, landscaped by  
Flutes and yellow cranes and lotus and unicorns  
Hoping insensibly to forgo this sensible world  
For another, in drink, but never quite— never quite.

### 3

Blue mists infolding mountain-high monks, temples,  
Joss-sticks, burnt stubs of tallow tapers, fresh herb,  
But still meditating on girls, fresh wives, and blind,  
Sweet scent, like me, devouring nutmeg and clove,  
Vanilla that haunts yet. *You*, spring orchid, lilac sprig.

### 4

Your Eden beyond all sense, garden drenched pea-green  
By eternal plumrains, love so excessive, a spark of the divine,  
But banished down here, dear, bare life, until her return every  
Fall harvest feast when *she* comes again, luring lovers, lunatics,  
Poets—*Li B'ai*—into her light, from whom immortal music descends.

## Three Visions, Baylor Pass

*Be empty, that is all.*

-Zhuangzi-

### 1

Trailhead rise leading up through Baylor Pass.  
Wildflowers in full desert artform, searing-hot, dry,  
Late afternoon *my caliente* midsummer sun.  
Organs basking, palpably quiet, perpetually hot.

### 2

I dream darkness and frost, white China winter.  
Five snowy Immortals gracing Three Gorges.  
Ice-glazed Sich'uan steppes, storm-swept trees  
Stripped bare by late December Gobi winds.

### 3

My quiet cabin door, silent ghost-hooves.  
Spiritual snow-prints, pages better read later  
When I have forgotten what words to write.  
Not quite ready to be at peace with nothing.

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