



Cloud Gate Song

The Verse of Tang Poet Zhang Ji

Translated by Jonathan Chaves

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- First book of Zhang Ji (c.766 - 830), a major poet of the Tang dynasty, in any Western language

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Zhang Ji (c.766-c.830) was a major poet of the Tang dynasty, and friend and poetic correspondent of such giants as Bai Juyi and Han Yu. In this first book of his work in any Western language, 300 poems are rendered in accurate, readable translation, demonstrating the remarkable range of Zhang's stylistic choices: from atmospheric landscape quatrains, evoking vast scenes with just a few brilliantly chosen words, to folk-style Music Bureau poems, conjuring up the impact on ordinary people of great historical events, such as the Tibetan invasions of China that took place during Zhang's lifetime. Particularly unusual is that for the first time, the works of a major Chinese poet are rendered in rhymed, or half-rhymed translations, tracking the original rhyme-schemes that play such an important role in Chinese poetics. An in-depth introduction by Professor Chaves analyzes the two reasons-linguistic and stylistic-previous translators have tended to avoid rhyme in their English versions, and shows why both barriers can and should be overcome. He further places his translations in the context of the important Neo-formalist movement in contemporary American poetry.