Listening to the Ghostly Genius:

The Auditory Depiction in Li He’s Poetry

by

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ABSTRACT

Li He (790-816), an outstanding poet full of literary talent in classical Chinese poem history, his poignant words, incredible literary construction, nether artistic conception and nuanced peculiar poem style owned him the reputation of “ghostly, demonic genius” 鬼才. Scholars demonstrated that his ghostly and demonic style has much to do with the special imagery and allusion in his poetry. However, this kind of ghostly appeal of literature exactly have much to do with the large quantity of sensory vocabulary that the poet is expert in using in his poems, which evokes resonance from the readers/audiences. Li He fuses visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactile sensation in his poems, building up his special writing style, evoking and creating a sensorial space for readers. The thesis concentrates on analyzing the sensory vocabulary in Li He’s poetry, sonic depiction in particular, which are rarely discussed before, based on which making further conclusion about the artistic conception and the special style of Li He’s poetry.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother Ms. Yaru Sun, father Mr. Xuejian Wen and my twin sister Miss Hao Wen for their lasting support and understanding.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to thank my advisor, Prof. Stephen H. West. Because of his knowledge and consideration, these years turned out to be a great journey. I am grateful to his patience and encouragement. I cannot overemphasize the support I received from him. I also give sincere thanks to my other committee members, Prof. Xiaoqiao Ling, for her patient guidance and constructive criticism was critical to my thesis and my daily studies, and Prof. Young Kyun Oh, for his generate sharing his knowledge and warm encouragement. I would also like to register my gratitude to other faculty members and my graduate student colleagues at Arizona State University for their consistent encouragement. Finally, I am truly indebted to my family for their support and understanding of my pursuit.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

With the reading experiences we got from poetry, it is clear that poetry is an exploration of different worlds and of languages used by the poets; the choice of “what to write,” as in motifs, images, and allusions, and “how to write,” as in language and ways of expression together build up to a certain poet’s writing style.

As for the poetry of mid-Tang and late-Tang, after the extreme abundance of high-Tang poetry, the writing style of poets in this time period, as generally considered, developed in two opposite directions: “plain and easy” (ping yi 平易) and “steep and strange” (xian guai 險怪). As we all know, Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846) and Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779-831) are viewed as the representative poets of the former while Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) and Meng Jiao 孟郊 (751-814) represent the latter. As a Ming scholar, Tan Yuanchun 譚元春 (1586-1637) commented on the mid-Tang poetry:

The transformation of poetry has already reached its extremity in the high-Tang. As for later those who distinguished themselves from others, naturally the school of Dongye (Meng Jiao) and Changji (Li He) cannot be lacked.

詩家變化，盛唐已極，後又欲別出頭地，自不得無東野，長吉一
Li He 李贺 (790-816), as an eminent poet with a “strange and steep” writing style, has his own style, dictated by his choices in both “what to write” and “how to write.” According to his writing style, though he was grouped into the school of Han and Meng, he has his own approach to make himself prominent among those people. As for the images he used and the high aspiration shown in his poems, the comments of later generations have reached to a high degree of uniformity. For instance, the monk Qi Ji 齊己 (863-937) said in his poem of “Reading the Lyric Collection of Li He” 读李贺歌集, “With much craziness, he overthrow the Penglai island, the coral was exhausted picked and only the empty mound was left.”

狂多兩手掀蓬萊，珊瑚掇尽空土堆。The monk Dao Qian 道潛 (1044-1114?) in his poem “Observing the Painting of Li He’s ‘The Tall Official Carriage Comes on a Visit’ by Ming Fa” 觀明發畫李賀高軒過圖, saying that “The power of his brush blocks hundreds of streams, the wind and waves even petered out their craziness.”

風瀾息其狂. In these two couplets, we may see that Li He’s writing is full of

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strength even mixed with a state of craziness while his dictions are so delicate that can be compared with a colorful treasure as coral. Li Gang 李綱 (1083-1140) also has a couplets commenting on Li He’s dictions in his poem “Reading Li Changji’s Poetry” 讀李長吉詩, “Changji experts in writing yuefu poetry, every characters are all engraved and carved.”

For the images and allusions in Li He’s poems, Zhang Lei 張耒 (1054-1114) in his poem “On Li He’s House” 李賀宅 says that, “He especially interested in writing poems with images beyond normal figures, he respected and relied on the mountains, waters, spirits and deities.”

For those good poetry and writings, not only employing allusions or what predecessors have been said is needed, more importantly, what others haven’t been explored should be presented. Li He’s writing is exactly doing what others cannot do and by which wins him a name of “ghostly, demonic genius” 鬼才. What makes Li He’s poetry so valuable is that he finds himself a special way to express his inner emotions. His creation not only flourished in the content of his poetry, say the ideas, themes, images etc. the way of his expression deserves more of our attention, especially in an artistic dimension. Except for using large quantities of “steep words” 險辭

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4 Li Gang 李綱 (1083-1140), Wang Ruiming 王瑞明 annotated, Li Gang quanji 李綱全集 [The Whole Collection of Li Gang] (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2004), vol.5, 98.

5 Zhang Lei 張耒 (1054-1114), “Zhangyoushi wenji” 張右史文集 [The Literature Collection of Zhangyoushi], in Sibu congkan chubian 四部叢刊初編 [The First Compilation of the Fourfold Classification Series] (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1989), juan 26, 3.
and has a passion for the images of “deities,” “ghosts,” “demons,” and “monsters,” for the creation of the poetry texts, are there any other factors that could have a strong influence on forming Li He’s special “ghostly” writing style?

Scholars have paid attention to the themes, images and allusions in Li He’s poetry, identifying them as “ghostly, demonic” and “immortal.”

Admittedly, the strange and unfamiliar themes and images in Li He’s poems contribute greatly to his writing style, and surely we cannot avoid talking about “what to write” when dealing with a certain poem. However, rather than discussing images and allusions, I would like to put emphasis on “how to write.” In other words, by exploring the language and ways of expression he uses, I would like to, hopefully, make clear the special writing style of Li He.

One may has a general panorama in his/her mind by reading the sentences from one of Li He’s contemporaries, Du Mu’s 杜牧 (803-852) “Preface to the Songs and Poems of Li Changji” 李長吉歌詩集序:

Clouds and mist gently intermingling cannot describe his manner; illimitable waters cannot describe his feelings; the verdure of spring cannot describe his warmth; the clarity of autumn cannot describe his style; a mast in the wind, a horse in the battle-line cannot describe his courage; earthenware coffins and tripods with seal-characters cannot describe his antiquity; seasonal blossoms and

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lovely girls cannot describe the colorfulness; fallen kingdoms and ruined palaces, thorny thickets and grave mounds cannot describe his resentment and sorrow; whales yawning, turtles spurting, ox-ghosts and serpent-spirits cannot describe his wildness and extravagance. He is in the tradition of the *Li Sao*. Even though he does not come up to it in high seriousness he sometimes surpasses it in expression.

雲煙錦聯，不足為其態也；水之迢迢，不足為其情也；春之盎盎，不足為其和也；秋之明潔，不足為其格也；風檣陣馬，不足為其勇也；瓦棺篆鼎，不足為其古也；時花美女，不足為其色也；荒國陊殿，梗莽丘壟，不足為其怨恨悲愁也；鯨吸鼇擲，牛鬼蛇神，不足為其虛荒幻誕也。蓋騷之苗裔，理雖不及，辭或過之。⁷

When it comes to “how to write,” one of the manifold aspects of his poetry is the sensory expressions. As an extremely sensitive man, Li He mobilized extensive sensation, including visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactile sensation, into his poetry composition. For me, it is the perfect usage and management of these sensory words that makes Li He’s writing style as it is: strange, eccentric, unfamiliar, rocky and steep. In the past, scholars have preferred to discuss Li He's usage of vision in his poems and his

use of color dictions in particular. As J. D. Frodsham listed out a table of the
color dictions and its usage rate in his book and Du Guoqing also made
another one to show that Li He’s inclination of using color words. Since the
vision part has been almost fully discussed before, I would not elaborate on it.
However, some scholars, both eastern and western, have mentioned the
outstanding usage of auditory dictions in Li He’s poetry. These aspects of his
poetry have not been elaborated upon, though, nor discussed in detail. As
such, the sensory composition in Li He’s poems, especially the sonic ones,
demands more attention from us. According to my research, the poems “with
sound” comprise as much as 57% of his corpus (see the table #1, 2 and 3);
such predominance is rarely found in the corpuses of other poets throughout
Chinese literature and therefore could be viewed as one of the most prominent
features of his poetry.

As Ming scholar Wang Siren 王思任 (1574-1646) in his “Preface
of Analysis on Changgu’s Poetry” stressed, the different kinds of sound in Li
He’s poetry as well as the images contribute much to the “strangeness” of his
writing style:

[He] likes using words such as “ghost,” “weep,” “death” and
“blood” and so on......[In his poems] sometimes [there are] crickets

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chanting, sometimes parrots chattering, sometimes making the sound of frosty crane screaming, sometimes flower, flesh and coquettish eyebrows, sometimes army chariots and iron horses, sometimes sacred caldron and white smoke, sometime emerald wildfire and flashing lightening. In a flashy short minute they merged, [his lines] do not contain any normal things.

喜用“鬼”字，“泣”字，“死”字，“血”字，如此之类……时而蛩吟，时而鹦鹉语，时而作霜鹤唳，时而花肉媚眉，时而兵车铁马，时而宝鼎袅云，时而碧磷划电，阿闪片刻，不容方物。10

Apart from some steep diction and the abnormal images, which are used extensively in Li He’s poetry corpus, such as “ghost,” “weep,” “death” and “blood,” Wang Siren, in his preface, also mentioned several kinds of sounds in Li He’s poems, mainly those from nature.

Contrastingly, by figuring out all the sound poems and all the couplets, which describe or are concerned with sound, I categories Li He’s sound world into three sections: “natural sound,” “supernatural sound” and “cultural sound.” Additionally, since sound and silence usually come and show together and should not the divided, the silent poems of Li He will also be discussed. In the absence of any extensive studies of Li’s auditory depiction, based on exhaustive auditory sources of his poems, combing

through and categorizing those sources, this study will attempt to explore some of the ways in which he employs the sound and even silence, and make further conclusions on how these auditory depictions, combining with visual, tactile and other sensations build up his weird, steep, ghostly writing style.
Chapter 2

2.1 FEELING FROM NATURE: A LAMENTABLE MAN OF MIMICKING

“Natural sound” refers to all kinds of sounds from nature that can be used in any poems of any poets – there is nothing fancy and strange in such references, which cannot even be involved in the conception of “style.” However, what makes Li He prominent here is the way he chooses to express, namely “how [he chooses] to write,” those certain natural sounds. He has always got an inclination of putting the sound from nature into his inner world, and after his own interpretation, he twists the sound and puts it out with a strong color of his inner emotion. Usually, the sounds from nature are represented in a way that mimicks human beings; in other words, he uses personification. Specifically, the human being that these sounds mimick is, far from a general conception of a human being or a human abstraction, the poet himself. That’s why the sounds from nature in his poems are often mingled with “cry,” “weep,” “shout,” and “roar,” etc.; they reflect directly the inner emotion, always the sorrow, resentment, and unpeacefulness of the poet. Many examples can be found in his corpus of this technique of personification; by personifying the sounds of nature, a sense of the unfamiliar is evoked and a sense of strangeness is lent to his composition style. Though the personification of sound in his poems is one of the focuses of my auditory
research, it is not what I’m going to elaborate here.

In addition to the usage of personification, another significant choice in how he represents the sounds of nature in his writing is his frequent usage of onomatopoetic words, which are always presented in a reduplicative form. According to my statistics, the number of lines with onomatopoetic words is 39, taking up 14% of the total sound lines of 276, while most (31 of 39) of the onomatopoetic dictions are reduplicative form, representing 79% of total. The research shows that when dealing with sounds, Li He has an inclination to mimic the sounds of nature and put them directly into his composition, reaching an effect of vitality. As we know, onomatopoetic words are scarcely used in classical Chinese literature, especially poems. Contravening the norm, Li He’s reliance on such words definitely leads his poems to a sense of the “strange” and “steep.” In particular, some of the onomatopoetic words were invented by himself, such as “ke-ke” (猋猋), “cuk-cuk” (促促) and “hong-long” (鴻璉) etc.

A close reading on one of his “poems with sound,” “Twelve Music Lyrics on the Theme of the Twelve Months of the Year Composed While Taking the Examinations in Henan Fu, Ninth Moon” 河南府試十二月樂詞・九月 might help us unveil his special ways of expressing the sounds of nature and get a sense of the choices that lend themselves to his “eccentric” or “strange” writing style.

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11 See the appendix, table of “Lines of Sound in Li He’s Poem Corpus,” no. 19, no. 40, no. 60, no. 81.
In the summer palace scattered fireflies and the sky is like water.

Bamboos turn yellow, pools grow chilly, the lotus dies.

Moonlight embellishes on golden door-rings, light beams softly.

Under the cold moon, deserted and void courtyard is limpidly white and empty.

Flowers of dew are flying, flying, winds are making rustle sound of cou-cou.

Kingfisher brocades in gorgeous hues and light spot spread along wayside of different levels.

12 Li gong, generally understand as the summer/winter palace, which is the temporary imperial head-quarters away from the capital. As it is the ninth month of the year, the term here means the summer palace. Additionally, the li gong can also has the meaning of a constellation, which can be found in “Record of astronomy”天文志 of Jinshu [Book of Jin]. This constellation also refers to the imperial’s summer palace on the ground.

13 Jin pu, the golden door-rings, is actually the pu shou, which is brass animal-heads set into the rings of the knockers.

14 “Flowers of dew” is the frost on the grass.

15 The “kingfisher brocades” could be the colorful autumn leaves on the road. Also, if read together with ban lan 斑斕 (colorful), it could also has the meaning of the morning lights through trees.
The Cock-herald\(^{16}\) ceases chants – 雞人罷唱曉瓏璁，
refulgence of morning!

Ravens cry by the brazen well\(^{17}\) 鴉啼金井下疏桐。
as leaves flutter down from bald \textit{wutong} trees.\(^{18}\)

In this poem composed for an examination, a scene of late autumn is stretched out in front of our eyes. Li He composed a poem of scenery that perfectly matched the theme of the “ninth moon.” It was 809 when he wrote this poem series; he was 20, he had not started his bitter journey to Chang’an yet and he was a candidate for the district examination of Henan-\textit{fu}. The poems were almost certainly intended to demonstrate his poetic gifts to the examiners since they showcased his tendency toward the cold, strange and steep, which is perfectly shown in this poem.

When composing a poem, Li He tends to call up all kinds of sensation to describe a certain scene. This usage of sensory words can be a prominent feature of his dense writing style.

Despite the symbolic images of autumn he used in this poem, such

\(^{16}\) \textit{Ji ren} 雞人 is a term used for the palace watchman who announces each dawn of the day.

\(^{17}\) \textit{Jin jing} 金井, the brazen well, conveys a meaning of the autumn. The color \textit{jin} 金 (gold), refers to the west and autumn, and also implies the brazen material.

\(^{18}\) Wang Qi 王琦 (r. 1661-1760), Yao Wenxie 姚文燮 (1628-1693), Fang Funan 方 扶南 (ca. 1675-1759) annotated and commented, \textit{Sanjia pingzhu Li Changji geshi} 三家評注李長吉歌詩 (Commentaries and Annotations of Li Changji [He]'s Poems from the Three Masters) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1998), 51.
as “scattered fireflies,” “yellow bamboo,” “dead lotus,” “cold moon,” “empty courtyard,” “golden well”\(^1\) and “bald wutong tree,” Li He uses several sensory organs in this poem to describe the sense of late autumn, including vision, auditory and tactile sensation. For vision, he shows the images of autumn in two ways: one is color, the other is light. As we can see, besides the yellow bamboo and white courtyard, the roadside is brocaded with the brilliant colors of the kingfisher. The management of light is shown by the description of the moon. Instead of directly describing the moon, the poet describes the objects under the moonlight. The golden door-rings reflect the soft light, and the courtyard remains even more empty and pale since it is in the light of the moon.

As for the sound in this poem, there are three lines invoking sonic words: line 5, line 7 and line 8. These words represent sounds coming from nature, but they are expressed specially in Li He’s own style. Line 5 is difficult to understand. But if we view it as a line concerning sound, it can be better understood. I translate it as “Flowers of dew are flying, flying, winds are making rustle sound of cou-cou.”\(^2\) We find that the poet tries to mimic the sound of the blowing wind by using an onomatopoetic word of “cou-cou.”\(^3\)

\(^{1}\) The word of “golden” can often refers to the direction of west and the season of autumn in Chinese literature history.

\(^{2}\) Frodsham translates this line as “Flowers of dew are flying, flying on an unhurried wind,” which I think does not makes sense, for the word “cao-cao” 草草 does not have a meaning of “unhurried.” See J. D. Frodsham, ed. and tr., The Poems of Li Ho (791-817) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 41

\(^{3}\) When I translate a line with onomatopoetic word, I would rather choose the pronunciation of Cantonese, for it is closer to ancient Tang dynasty’s pronunciation
which can make the description more vivid. The “flowers of dew” refers to
dewdrops about to freeze. Since there are scarcely any flowers in late autumn,
the “dew flower” (lu hua 露花) cannot be referring to real flowers and must
be talking about the frost. Unlike “coo-coo” in English that invokes sounds
that doves makes, which suggest a gentle and warm sound, this “cou-cou”
could be compared with “sou-sou” (嗖嗖) in modern Mandarin. Likewise,
when the wind of autumn and winter are described in literature as “sou-sou,” it
is always harshly blowing and cold. By using “cou-cou,” the poet makes clear
that the wind is strong and chilly. In this light, the sonic word “cou-cou”
contributes to the strangeness of his writing style, for he invented this sound
description by himself; therefore, his poems sometimes can be “difficult and
obscure” (hui se 晦澀).

Li He also uses natural sounds to convey the passage of time. As can
be seen in this poem, the sense of time is shown along with the description of
sound. There is a perfect sense of time sequence within this poem. In the first
two couplets, the time is night, for the fireflies are coming out, and the moon
is shining. For the next couplet, the dawn is coming together with the
emerging of the frost, because frost only congeals during the early morning
before the rise of the sun. Next, the morning sun comes out shining through
the woods. Admittedly, the word “colorful” (ban lan 斑斓) could refer to the
colorful autumn leaves of trees on the wayside; however, without sunlight, the
color cannot be seen. So the sun has already come out in line 6, and the word
*ban lan* could also, to a larger extent, refer to the light spot among the trees.

For the last couplet of this poem, both lines are concerned with the sound of
morning. The day has already come, since the “Cock-herald”\(^{22}\) has ceased his
singing and the morning sun has become rather bright and refulgent. In the last
line, the cry of the crow serves as a symbol that the world has come awake. In
this sense, the “sing” and “cry” function to indicate the time of day. Rather
than choosing other images, Li He chose the sounds of nature to make clear
the passage of time, which, to some degree, can show his attention to and
preference for auditory words.

\[2.2 \text{ Table #1:}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines of Natural Sound in Li He’s Poem Corpus</th>
<th>Chinese text</th>
<th>English translation</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. 天高慶雷齊墮地</td>
<td><em>Heaven is high, and celebrating thunder altogether falls to the earth.</em></td>
<td>The Emperor Returns 上之回</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 撞鐘飲酒行射天</td>
<td>To the chime of bells he drank his wine, shot arrows at heaven.</td>
<td>*Melancholy on the Ancient Terrace of Liang 梁臺古愁</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 轉轆咿呀轉鳴玉</td>
<td>The turning windlass of the well, creaking <em>ji-ah</em> like singing jade.</td>
<td>Song: A Lovely Girl Combing Her Hair 美人梳頭歌</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 啼鳥披彈歸</td>
<td>A crying crow, struck by a bolt, came home.</td>
<td>Leaving the City 出城</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 蟲響燈光薄</td>
<td><em>Insects were nosing and the lamplight was wan.</em></td>
<td>While Studying in Changgu, I Showed This Poem to My Servant-lad from Ba.</td>
<td></td>
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\(^{22}\)“Cock-herald” (*jiren* 雞人) is a term used for the palace watchmen who announced
the dawn each day, which can be found in *Ritual of Zhou* 周禮 and *Ritual of
Officials of Han* 漢宮儀.
6. 马首鸣金环
   Jingle of golden rings on horses’ heads.
   Night rain calls the rent collector, his shouts darkly mingle
   with thump of pestle on mortar.

7. 石涧冻波声，鸡叫清寒晨。
   From stony ravines, the sound of freezing waves, a cock crows out
   in the cold of a clear dawn.

8. 金环蹙鬱摇玲珑，
    马蹄隐耳声隆隆。
   *Gold rings weighing down their reins, shaking and jingling.
   Drumming of hoof beats in my ear, lung-lung sound as it was.

9. 使我清声落人后
   *Make my pure sound fell far behind others.

10. 雄鸡一声天下白
    Yet at a single cock-crow the sky will turn white.
    *Who needs a man who sits and wails out in the deep cold?

11. 霜重鼓寒声不起
    *So cold the drums, in the heavy frost, their sound cannot be
    raised up.

12. 金粟堆边哭陵树
    To weep at Gold Grain Mound by funereal trees.
    *The high official wearing silver tortoise seal with a sound of
    hap-hap, his white horse was lingering about.

13. 壁上雷霆
    [Short sword] hang on the wall, growling like thunder.
    The sound of a woman’s weeping comes.

14. 走马夜归叫严更
    *Galloping homewards at night, past watchmen calling the hours
    of alert walking at night.
    *Mouth chanting with a glib speaking tongue he is only
    deserves praise from women.
軍裝武妓聲琅琅  *Singing-girls in battle-array with a jangling sound of long-dong.*  
They held the reins, let their steeds gallop on among the clouds, thunder from a rainless sky!

雲弛絕騈詡旱雷

15. 七星掛城聞漏板 When Seven Stars hang over the city-wall, I hear the clepsydra’s gong. Song of a Palace Beauty 宮娃歌

16. 美人醉語園中煙 Lovely girls chatting tipsily, mist-hung gardens.  *Song: Planting Peonies 牡丹種曲*

17. 紙錢窸窣鳴風風  *Rustling sound of paper money together with moans of whirlwind.* Magic Strings 神弦

18. 圓毫促點聲新靜 Often the round brush whispers on the stone, forever new. Singing of Yang’s Purple Inkstone with a Green Pattern 楊生青花紫石硯歌

19. 夢泣生白頭 *Wept in my dream and my hair turned white.* After Days of Rain in the Chongyi District 崇義裏滯雨

20. 露光泣殘蕙，蟲響連夜發。 *Shining dew weeps over withered orchids, cry of insects’ sounds out every night.* Autumn Cold, A Poem Sent to My Twelfth Elder Cousin, the Collator 秋涼詩寄正字十二兄

21. 豈解有鄉情，弄月聊嗚啞。 *How could those who even have not got a home sickness, do not have a sorrow of sighing and sobbing when appreciating the moon?* Ballad for Encouraging My Beloved, Two Poems for Seeing off My Little Brother on His Way to Mount Lu, No.1 勉愛行二首送小季之廬山

22. 水聲繁，弦聲淺 *Sound of water is louder, and the sound of turning windlass is faint.* Song: Digging a Well in the Back Gardens 後園鑿井歌

23. 旅歌屢彎鉞 Often I sing a traveler’s song, beating my sword. The Traveler 客遊

24. 夜聞馬嘶曉無跡 At night we hear his whinnying horse, at dawn not a hoof-print there. Song of the Brazen Immortal Bidding Farewell to Han 金釧仙人辭漢歌
渭城已遠波聲小 and its waters faintly calling.  

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<th>No.</th>
<th>Chinese Text</th>
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<th>Pinyin</th>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>酒酣喝月便倒行</td>
<td>*Flushed with wine, he shouts at the moon to run back in her course.</td>
<td>*The King of Qin Drinks Wine</td>
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<td></td>
<td>宮門掌事報一更</td>
<td>At the palace portals the Gatekeeper cries the first watch of the night.</td>
<td>秦王飲酒</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>大旗五丈撞雙鐶</td>
<td>*Mighty banners, five fathoms long, battered the double knockers of the gates.</td>
<td>宫門掌事报一更</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>春月夜啼鴉</td>
<td>Spring moon, crows crying at night.</td>
<td>春月夜啼鸦</td>
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<td>涼風雁啼天在水</td>
<td>*In the chill wind wild geese are crying, heaven is in the water.</td>
<td>过华清宫</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>呼喚學楚吟</td>
<td>*Chokingly chanting, I study the sighs of Chu.</td>
<td>嗥魂嘆中語</td>
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<td></td>
<td>羈魂夢中語</td>
<td>The vagrant spirit mutters through its dreams.</td>
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<td>31.</td>
<td>晚漏壺中水淋盡</td>
<td>*In the bottle of water-clock at night, the water would still its drips.</td>
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<td>32.</td>
<td>雀步蹙沙聲促促</td>
<td>*Treading like sparrows, they kick up the sand with sibilant sound of cuk-cuk.</td>
<td>歌：黄家洞</td>
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<td>黑幡三點銅鼓聲，高作猿啼搖箭箇。</td>
<td>Jet-black banners with triple marks, bronze drums calling, high-pitched voices shrilling like apes, they shake their quivers.</td>
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<td>33.</td>
<td>城上烏啼楚女眠</td>
<td>As crows cry from the city walls, the girl from Chu sleeps on.</td>
<td>歌：屏风曲</td>
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<td>34.</td>
<td>塘水漻漻蟲嘖嘖</td>
<td>*Pool-water clear and quiet, insects whining in a sound of zik-zik.</td>
<td>Ballad of the South Mountain Fields</td>
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<td>石脈水流泉滴沙</td>
<td>Water flows from veins of rocks, spring drip on sand.</td>
<td>南山田中行</td>
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<td>35.</td>
<td>鳥唱星懸柳，鴉啼露滴銅。</td>
<td>At cockcrow stars hang in the willows, crows cry as dew drops from the plane trees.</td>
<td>歌：看月出</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>秋沙亂喋喋</td>
<td>*The autumn sands mass up the</td>
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Horses are whinnying, loaded down with armor.

*Howling as the apes and baboons on the silver arrow-jars.

As hawking, his elbow weighed down with a dangling, gold seal.

*He comes with the ang-ang neighing white horse.

In the willow-garden crows are cawing; A drunken princess!

*Willows company with the crying crow.

*Sound of plash of water rise from a stony spring.

In Vermilion City they announce the spring as the water-clock turns.

*Officials east of the Pass are tired of revile for taxes.

Cicadas cry from high sequestered spots.

*Down in their damp, mole-cricketts making a chirp sound of resonant, a muted choking spring wells up with startled splash.

*A singing stream runs on melodiously with rhyme.

Small-throated birds chatter by an island spring.

*Several of the eaves bells tinkle, making a sound of hung-lung.

Away in the distance zang-zang booms a lonely bell.

*Torrents from high make their sounds in a way of competed different levels.

*Your virtuous brother and the little girl are bitterly weeping sound of wu-wu.
| 45. | 城中嘶瘦馬 | *Our half-starved horses whinny in their city. | *In Ping City |
| 46. | 爭瀰海水飛凌喧,山瀑布無聲玉虹懸。 | Whirling in a raging sea the flying ice-floes roar, soundless hang mountain waterfalls, rainbows of jade. | Cold up North |
| 47. | 騎馬釘鈴踏沙路 | Jingle of bridle-bells, as horses tread the sandy road. | Song: Sandy Road |
| 48. | 疊聲問佐官來否 | *Continuously sound of asking his assistants: “Is he coming or not?” | The Official Has not Come, A Poem Written in the Office of My Senior, Huangfu Shi |
| 49. | 新槽酒聲苦無力 | *Splash wine into new vats, the sound is bitterly faint. | Song: The Mansion by the River |
| 50. | 馬嘶青塚白 | *Horses whinny, the green grave becoming bald and white. | *Song: At Frontiers |
| 51. | 春梭拋擲鳴高樓 | *Spring shuttle is tossed and thrown busily, humming in the tall tower. | Dyed Silk on the Spring Loom |
| 52. | 塘水聲溘溘 | *Water splash in the pool with a sound of hap-hap. | Song: By the Pool |
| 53. | 青嘶臥沙馬,老去悲嘶尾。塞嚶折翅雁 | *Horses lie on the sands, whinnying in the bright sun; The old ones walk off, piteously neighing develops. | Passing through Sandy Park |
| 54. | 玉轎鈴鉤轅,綠網銜金鈴 | *The jade carriage wheels rumbling and clattering by. Golden bells dangle from their green nets. | On Leaving the City and Parting from Zhang Youxin I Pledge Li Han with Wine |
| 55. | 鴉噪城堞頭 | Up on the city battlements crows are cawing. | Song: Never Sorrow |
| 56. | 鴉鴉向曉鳴森木 | *Crow after crow towards dawn, cries in the dark grove. | *Someone I longing |
| | 露花飛飛風草草 | *Flowers of dew are flying, flying, winds are making rustle sound of cou-cou. | Twenty Lyrics for Music on the Theme of the Twelve Months of the Year (Together with an Intercalary Month) Composed While Taking the |
鴉啼金井下疏桐
as leaves flutter down from bald wutong trees.

Examinations in Henan Fu, Second Moon.

57. 騲鐘高飲千日酒
Strike the bells! Drink your fill of this thousand-day wine!

Eleventh Moon.

58. 古剎疏鐘度
沙頭敲石火
*Occasional boom of a bell from the ancient monastery comes.

Thirteenth Moon.

59. 晓思何譊譊,
闤闠千人語。
*At the day break, how dissentious as my thought!
Round the market gates, a thousand chattering men.

Ninth Moon.

60. 鳴騶辭鳳苑
*Neighing steep bid farewell to the Phoenix Park

Twenty-three Poems about Horses, No.3

61. 向前敲瘦骨,
猶自帶銅聲。
*Stand in front, rap on its skeletal bones, they still ring out like bronze on their own.

No.4

62. 隨鸞撼玉珂
*Hanging simurgh bells shake jade bridle-gems.

No.22

63. 狒狒啼深竹
Baboons screaming deep in the bamboos.

Four Poems Written after Looking at a Painting of the Jiangtan Park, No.3

64. 旗濕金鈴重
The banners are drenched, their gold bells heavy.

No.4

65. 曲沼鳴鸳鴦
On a winding pool, mandarin-ducks start singing.

Six Satires, No.1

66. 黑水朝波咽
Black Water’s waves sobbing at dawn.

No.2

67. 班子泣衰紅
*Lady Ban weeps for her fading beauty.

No.5

68. 春昏弄長嘯
*Long whistles sound through spring night.

No.6

68/243 (27%)
Chapter 3

3.1 SUPERNATURAL CREATION: CRYING OUT OF UNEASINESS

Like “natural sound,” supernatural sound also plays an important role in building up Li He's eccentric writing style. These “supernatural sounds” are generated from ghosts, demons, and immortals and are always sounded in a shrill way.

As Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824), one of Li He’s contemporaries conveyed in “An Essay of Bidding Farewell to Meng Dongye” 送孟東野序:

Generally, an object will cry out when it cannot get its easiness......they sing with thoughts, they cry with concerns. Those who is making a sound out of their mouths, how could all of them don’t get a sense of uneasiness?

大凡物不得其平則鳴......其歌也有思，其哭也有懷，凡出乎口而為聲者，其皆有弗平者乎！

Though the point Han Yu made in his essay concerns writing itself, the shrill and eccentric sounds in Li He’s poetry can also be viewed as a violent expression of his inner uneasiness, which contributes to his “ghostly and demonic” style.

23Ma Qichang 馬其昶 ed., Han Changli wenji jiaozhu 韓昌黎文集校注 [Revision and Annotation of Han Changli’s Collection] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 232.
Undoubtedly, Li He is well known for his “ghostly and demonic” writing style; however, we may have this question: in what way, to what extent, shall we understand his “ghostly and demonic” writings? To answer this question, we should pay attention not only to “how [he chose] to write,” but also to “what [he chose] to write [about].” In discussing this “supernatural sound,” we cannot avoid talking about his images and allusions, some of which are tightly connected to the sound of supernatural. I would like to subject to a close reading the famous “ghostly” piece of Li He – “Coming of Autumn” – in order to examine its incorporation of “supernatural sound” and its creation of a “ghostly sense.”

Wind in the wutong trees startles heart, and a heroic man feels bitter.

In the guttering lamplight, spinners cry their icy silk.

Who can see that these slips of green bamboo, the cricketer is called "spinner," because its singings like the reeling of silk. In the Qing scholar Wang Qi’s annotation, it says luowei is shaizi, a kind of cricket, also called cuzhi, which literarily translated as “urge to spin.” Also in “Annotation of Poems,” it says “the spinner cries, lazy women startled.” In “Wu You’s Biography” of Houhan shu, it records as “Wu Hui wanted to dry bamboo slips to write classics on them.” Evidently, killing on fire to make them creep, then choose green ones and some easy to write on, they would not be rotten by worms any more, this called ‘dry the greens,’ also called “make creep of strips.”
they do not avoid from the ornate worm to pierce its powdery holes.

Such thoughts tonight should disentwine my knotted guts.

In the cold rain comes a fragrant spirit to console the scholar. 

On an autumn grave a ghost sings poems of Bao’s.

A thousand years in earth makes emerald jade that rancorous blood.

There are two lines concerning “sound” in this poem, which are the second line and the seventh line. The “weep of spinner” in the first line derives from nature, and the “singing from a ghost” in the second line references the supernatural. To contextualize the supernatural sounds, we shall talk about the special allusions used in this poem, with which the poet successfully creates a sense of the “ghostly.”

Unlike other poets, when using allusions from former sources, Li He


26 In the version of Wenyuan yinghua 文苑英華 [Illustrious of Literature], the “fragrant spirit” (xiang hun 香魂) is recorded as “home spirit” (xiang hun 鄉魂).

27 The “poems of Bao’s” refers to “Represent Walking in the Wormwood” 代蒿裏行 and “Represent the Eulogy” 代挽歌.

28 Sanjiazhu, 55.
likes to create self-referential allusions as well. Or it could be more properly said that he is good at intertwining sources, stories, imageries, and conceptions into his own world to recreate allusions, with which he builds up a distorted space and expresses his fierce and depressed emotions.

While some images are of his own creation, many are borrowed from tradition, as “wind in the wutong trees” (tong feng 桐風), “spinners” (luo wei 絲緯) and “slips of green bamboo” (qing jian 青簡). The wind in the wutong-trees and the spinners are two traditional symbols of autumn, and the usage of these two allusions therefore perfectly creates a sense of “coming of autumn,” as the title goes. Also, the “autumn” in the title has already, in the traditional context, indicated a sense of melancholy. The sadness and sense of unfulfilment of ambitions caused by coming of autumn also make the mention of time in this poem proper and natural, and therefore creates a sense of time anxiety. We can see this sort of time anxiety in the allusion of “spinners” as well. Not only does this allusion indicate the time of autumn, it also suggests an urge to action. Together with the words “startles heart” (jing xin 驚心) and “bitter” (ku 苦), Li He uses the traditional allusions to suggest the sadness and bitterness in his heart caused by the passage of time. This kind

Traditionally, Chinese literati have an inclination of “mourning the spring and sad for the autumn” 傷春悲秋. As the first sentence of “Nine arguments” 九辯 of Song Yu 宋玉 (ca. 298 B.C.-222 B.C.) goes “How sad is the qi of autumn!” 悲哉秋之為氣 and a contemporary of Li He, Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772-842), also got poems goes as “From ancient times when we face with autumn, there would be sadness and solitary.” 自古逢秋悲寂寥 in his “Lines of Autumn” 秋詞. In autumn time, literati always get a sense of unfulfilment of ambitions and careers.

29
of time anxiety is further explained in the second couplets, which Frodsham has translated as “Who will ever read these slips of green bamboo, or forbid the ornate worm to pierce its powdery holes,” which is not necessarily a good reading. According to the footnote of this line in Frodsham’s translation, clearly, he follows the reading of Wang Qi, which suggests Li He's fear that no one else would read or appreciate his own poetic work. But in my understanding, the “shui kan” (誰看) cannot be understood as “who [else] will ever read,” but “who can see that,” and therefore this “green slips” dose not necessarily refers to Li He’s own works in specific, but to a broader spectrum of literature in history. If we examine the “slips of green bamboo,” a crucial allusion which Wang Qi and Frodsham failed to study, we can find that rather than expressing the hopeless of his writings, this couplet actually has a perfect continuity of time anxiety of the last sentences. These “slips of green bamboo,” in “Wu You’s Biography” of East Han Records, are actually the slips which cannot be rotten by bookworms at all. Li He keeps the intact meaning from Houhan shu here. By using the sharp comparison of imperishable qingjian that can also eventually be rotten by worms, he implies his pessimistic and gloomy belief that there is nothing everlasting, including poems and literature, which deepens the sense of time anxiety of the poet.


31 Wang Qi holds the view that Li He bitterly wrote poems and wanted it to be handed down, but no one could appreciate it and it would be rotten by bookworms in vain. There was no benefit or hope to tore his guts and carved his bones to devote himself in making such kind of elaborated poems. Sanjiazhu, 55.
Therefore rather than refers to Li He’s own works, the “slips of green bamboo” implies the enduring literature in history. So I translate the couplets as “Who can see that these slips of green bamboo, they do not avoid from the ornate worm to pierce its powdery holes.” That is why bu qian 不遣 makes sense. Rather than “forbid,” it should be translated as “do not avoid from” in this light.

As well as preserving intact the meaning of certain allusions, Li He is also good at creating self-referential allusions. Some certain allusions found in his poems can always bear the same meaning throughout his whole collection; therefore, we can see that these allusions have an inter-textual consistency and significance within his own corpus. Two good examples are his “heroic man” (zhuang shi 壯士) and “guttering lamplight” (shuai deng 哀燈). What appears in front of our eyes when we talk about a zhuangshi is probably a man full of heroism, roughness and audaciousness; we might think of Fan Kuai 樊噲 (242 B.C.-189 B.C) recorded in Shi ji 史記. But in this poem, this “heroic man” refers to Li He himself. According to the biography written by Li Shangyin 李商隱 (813-858),33 Li He’s appearance is clearly too far away from a traditional conception of a “zhuangshi.” However, Li He

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32In “Banquet of Wild Geese Gate” 鴻門宴, Fan Kuai is described as a brave, strong man. When his lord Liu Bang faced with danger, he broke into the gate with his shield; his hair bristled up and opened his eyes so broadly that the canthus nearly cracked. Xiang Yu therefore called him as “zhuangshi.”

33“Changji was slender and thin, and his eye brows brushed together. His fingers are thin and long, and he can do bitterly composition and fast writing” 長吉細瘦，通眉，長指爪，能苦吟疾書. “A Short Biography of Li Changji” 李長吉小傳, in Sanjiazhu, 13.
twists the allusion into his poems in order to convey the lofty aspiration within his heart. If we examine his whole corpus, it is not difficult to see that Li He always refers to himself as “a heroic man” or “a true man” (nan er 男兒), those words of masculinity. Likewise, he uses the allusion to “guttering lamplight” frequently in his whole collection of poems, allowing it to be read in an inter-textual way within his corpus. He uses this kind of dying lamplight to build an atmosphere that suggests gloom, decline, faintness of life and instability.

The construction of atmosphere shows exactly what was on the poet’s mind: in this autumn time, there is no hope for a man like me to fulfill my ambitions. And my condition, life and aspiration are just like the guttering lamplight which could die out at any time. This kind of scene is enough to make even a “heroic man” feel “startled” and “bitter.”

34 As he does in the poem “Song in the Wilds” 野歌, in the whole poem, he describes a hero wearing a coarse black linen clothes, standing in the wilderness. There are lines “Bend my body though I may, my heart’s unyielding. Success and failure are both uncertain, why rail at the Creator?” 男兒屈窮心不窮, 枯榮不等嗔天公. In his “Thirteen Poems from my Southern Garden” 南園十三首, No. 5, he says, “Why shouldn’t a young man wear a Wu sword? He could win back fifty provinces in pass and mountain” 男兒何不帶吳鉤, 收取關山五十州. Also, in “Presented to Chen Shang” 贈陳商, “In Chang’an city lives a lad of twenty whose heart’s already so much rotten wood” 長安有男兒, 二十心已朽. These are translated by Frodsham, which are not quite faithful to the original texts and do not show fully what does “nan er” mean. These masculine pronouns are all refers to the poet himself.

35 As in “Ballad of an Aching Heart” 傷心行, “The lamp burns blue, its orchid-oil run dry, found its falling sparks the flying moths are dancing” 燈清蘭膏歇, 落照飛蛾舞 . “Lament of the Brazen Camels” 銅駝悲, “Useless to toil away in this life of ours, it’s only a wind-blown candle in a bowl” 生世莫徒勞, 風吹盤上燭. Also in “Someone I love” 有所思, “Mountains and rivers stretch into the distance, endless, unbroken. My tear-filled eyes gaze at the taper, flaring, the dying” 江山迢遞無休絕, 淚眼看燈乍明滅, etc.
Also, Li He in this poem uses allusions in an unexpected way to create an alienating effect and to arouse the sense of the “ghostly.” The third couplet is a perfect example. As we know, traditionally, literati or poets chose to express their laments by using the phrase, “break my guts” (duan chang 斷腸). In Sima Qian’s “Letter to Ren An” 報任安書, he expresses his unbearable sufferings and pains by saying that “my guts are even rotate or entwine nine times in a day” (chang yiri er jiuhui 肠一日而九回). However, Li He is the only man in literary history who disentwines and straightens his guts to express his melancholy. This sort of expression seems more powerful than the usual one. The sheer repetition, in literature, of “guts are entwined,” suggests that this entwinement - even “entwined nine times”- is easier than Li He’s inspiration to “straighten” his guts.

When he has “spirits come to pay condolence to the scholar,” Li He also contravenes literary tradition. Typically, to express sorrow, poets mourn the graves and spirits. But Li He makes the spirit come and mourn for him. In this light, he switches the world of life and death: his sorrow, he implies, is so deep that it can call on spirits from the nether world. In this sense, his sorrow rises to the utmost level, for it deserves even the condolence of the spirits. This “fragrance spirit” can be treated as a female. In the Qing scholar Fang Funan’s 方扶南 (1675-1759) annotation, this “fragrance spirit” can be traced back to a story of “Biography of Dugu Mu”36 in Taiping guangji 太平廣記. According

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36The “Biography of Dugu Mu” 独孤穆傳 in Taiping guangji tells a love story of Mu Dugu with a ghost, who is the daughter of Yang emperor of Sui 隋煬帝
to Fang Funan, the line can be understood as the unbearable sorrow which the poet would rather die than suffer. But if we read it in this way, the allusion used here is intact from the original one, but not an alienation composition skill. However, in my understanding, this “fragrance spirit” does not necessarily refer to a female but to a male spirit with virtue, as “fragrance grass and beauty” (*xiangcao meiren* 香草美人) could also refer to men with virtues in Qu Yuan’s lyrics. If we read it together with the last couplets, the “fragrance spirit” could refer specifically to Bao Zhao 鮑照 (ca. 415-470) or Chang Hong 蕭弘. In any case, this couplet is the most attractive lines in this poem. By re-making a traditional expression in an unexpected way, making an ordered expression into a disordered one, and viewing things from exactly the opposite side, Li He creates a voice of unpredictability, alienation and strangeness. It is the alienation and strangeness that contribute to his “ghostly poems.”

Based on the discussion of the allusions in this poem, we make clear the sense of “strangeness and eccentricity.” Further, when the “supernatural sound” is introduced, the “strangeness” would rise to an utmost point. In the last couplet in this poem, the poet shows us three allusions. One is “ghost
singings,” one is “poems of Bao’s,” and another one is the “rancorous blood.”

The latter two are based on the “ghost singings” and are generated from it. As the three Qing scholars say, there might be a story of “ghost sings poems,” but there is no way to locate an original source. Or in my opinion, it is probably just an allusion the poet created by himself. Since the line has a sequence and directly follows the lines in which a “spirit” appears, it could be natural to have ghosts here. The “poems of Bao’s” in the next sentence might also make it natural. The “poems of Bao’s” refers to “Represent Walking in the Wormwood” and “Represent the Eulogy.” The first one indicates an anxiety over the passage of time and the vulnerability of

37“Rich and poor, all meet the same end. Differing wishes granted or unfulfilled. Galloping waves urge on eternal night, falling dew hastens the brief dawn. Make up my secluded carriage, to leave away from all relatives filled up the hall. Worthless appearance left over with the swords and tassels, the real figure put away my clothes and scarf. How could a dou of wine be drunk, and who would read again of a chi of book? As the ages process a little bit further, thinking and ambitions would gradually fall deep. Man’s life time just originally passes by quickly, the heavenly principle would go with whom? Taking my everlasting resentment with me, I would eventually go back to the dust of fox and hare” 同盡無貴賤，殊願有窮伸。馳波催永夜，零露逼短晨。結我幽山駕，去此滿堂親。虛容遺劍佩，實貌戢衣巾。鬥酒安可酌，尺書誰複陳。年代稍推遠，懷抱日幽淪。人生良自劇，天道與何人。齎我長恨意，歸為狐兔塵。Qian Zhonglian 錢仲聯 annotated, Bao Canjun jizhu 鮑參軍集注 [The Annotated Collection of Bao Canjun] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chufanshe, 1980), 141.

38“Staying lonely beneath the layers of earth, I recall the ascending to the high terrace of old times. Overweening this world during my life, I did not constrained by benefits. The tomb gates are only double closed; white worms are coming in clans. The orchid-fragrant body of life time is now harmed by little worms. There is no a root again of my black hairs and my bones are next to moss. Remembering I was like drinking in old times and green plums were offered in plain plate. Peng Yue, Han Xin, Lian Po and Lin Xiangru, they were all became ashes in ancient times. The heroic men were all dead, where is the rest part of men?” 獨處重冥下，憶昔登高台。傲岸平生中，不為物所裁。埏門只複閉，白蟻相將來。生時芳蘭體，小蟲今為災。玄鬢無複根，枯髏依青苔。憶昔好飲酒，素盤進青梅。彭韓及廉藺，瘠昔已成灰。壯士皆死盡，余安在哉? Bao Canjun jizhu, 142.
books, literature and ambitions, just as Li He expresses in his second and third couplets. We can say that the emotions Li He wants to express are exactly borrowed from Bao Zhao’s “Walking in the Wormwood.” As for the “Eulogy,” it speaks from the perspective of a ghost, conveying the remembrance of his life time and expressing pity for that “heroic man,” and expresses the poet's resentment toward this world. Therefore Li He's “ghost singings” could specifically refer to this ghost of Zhao's. Also, the “emerald blood” has its origin in Chang Hong’s story,\(^\text{39}\) which can be found in chapter of “What comes from without” 外物篇 of Zhuangzi 莊子. But in Li He’s poem, he uses this allusion in an ambiguous way. It can refer to Chang Hong, Bao Zhao, the singing ghost or Li He himself. Generally, Li He preserves the meaning of this allusion intact and perfect; this “blood of resentment” can go all the way back to his first sentence to match that “heroic man.” In this sense, Chang Hong, Bao Zhao, the ghost and Li He himself, are all conflated in the “heroic man.” By using all these allusions, Li He couches his voice within the voices of other people; the “ghost singing” could perfectly shout out the depressed and gloomy emotions within his heart.

Based on the discussion of allusions above, we can see the “supernatural sound” from the ghost is actually the inner sound from the poet himself. The usage of the “supernatural sound” is, in Han Yu’s words, exactly

\(^{39}\text{In Zhuangzi, “Chang Hong died in Shu, people put his blood away for three years and it turned into emerald jade.” 莘弘死於蜀，藏其血三年，而化為碧. Chang Hong was a person of integrity and loyalty, and was killed in injustice and died in a heroic way, so his blood was said to become jade.}
the “uneasiness” within the poet’s heart. In other words, the poet expresses the violence, wildness and depression in his heart by means of the “supernatural sound.”

### 3.2 Table #2:

**Lines of Supernatural Sound in Li He’s Poem Corpus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese text</th>
<th>English translation</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 蘭臉別春啼脉脉</td>
<td><em>Orchids’ faces wept soundlessly, parting from spring.</em></td>
<td><em>Melancholy on the Ancient Terrace of Liang (梁臺古愁)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 临歧击剑生铜吼</td>
<td>Where the road forks I beat my sword with a brazen roar.</td>
<td><em>Release from Melancholy: Written under Mount Hua (開愁歌華下作)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 曉声隆隆催转日,暮声隆隆催月出。</td>
<td><em>Drums at dawn lung-lung, rumbling like thunder, hastening the sun; Drums at dusk lung-lung, rumbling like thunder, calling out the moon.</em></td>
<td>Drums in the Street of the Officials (官街鼓)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 剑龍夜叫將軍閑</td>
<td>His dragon-sword cries out at night—but the general’s left idle.</td>
<td><em>Song: General Lü (呂將軍歌)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 金蟾呀呀蘭燭香</td>
<td><em>Golden toads as if making a sound of ah-ah burnt fragrant, orchid candles.</em></td>
<td>Joys of the Rich (榮華樂)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. 樓頭曲宴仙人語</td>
<td><em>A banquet on top of a palace tower, immortals talking.</em></td>
<td><em>Poem on Qin Gong (秦宮詩)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In purple brocade and flaxen shoes he treads on a roaring tiger.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. 嘯蛄吊月鉤欄下</td>
<td>Crying mole-crickets mourn for the moon, beneath curved balustrades.</td>
<td><em>Song of a Palace Beauty (宮娃歌)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. 樓臺月明夜燕語</td>
<td>Moon shines bright on terrace and tower, swallows chatter all night.</td>
<td><em>Song: Planting Peonies (牡丹種曲)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. 江娥啼竹素女愁</td>
<td><em>Ladies of the Xiang River weeping among bamboos and the Whit Girl mournful.</em></td>
<td><em>Song: Li Ping at the Vertical Harp (李憑箜篌引)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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33
Lotuses are weeping dew, 
frAGRANT Orchids laugh.

Through strings of a lute from Shu, two phoenixes talk. 
Hidden girdle-gems of an honest minister, tinkling crystals.

Singing came from the tower of Yunyang, wail of a ghost, and all to no avail.

*Song: Listening to Master Ying Playing the Lute
*Song: Tangji of Han Drinks Wine
*A Matter of Sealing up Green Prayers

In perfumed lanes of the Jin family, noise of a thousand wheels, there was no mundane sound within Yang Xiong’s autumn studio.

*In a jade brazier charcoal burns in fragrance, with a boom dung-dung sound of drum.
*Rustling sound of paper money together with moans of whirlwind.

She calls down stars and summons demons to savour meat and drink.

*His demon mother wailing loudly making a sound of ngou-ngou in the autumn wilds.

When these antique swords together give a roar?

Returning to Changgu in Spring

*Thin greens and rondures scarlet, heterogeneously weeping and laughing along my road.

*Shining dew weeps over withered orchids, cry of insects’ sounds out every night.

*The cricket weeping in the old sedge.
19. 戴犬狺狺相索索
公看呵壁書問天
Dog whistles sound like 
sok-sok and the dogs snarling,
making a sound of ngan-ngan.
*You sir think of the man raving
wildly towards the wall, as he
wrote his “Heavenly Questions.”

20. 幽蘭露，如噎眼。
*Dew upon gloomy orchids like
weeping eyes.

21. 義和敲日玻璃聲
*Xi He knocks the sun with his
whip, which tinkles like glass.
*Pipa with golden slot makes a
The aged hare, the cold toad,
sob for the color of the sky.

22. 銀浦流雲學水聲
The Silver Stream floats through
the clouds, mimics the murmur
of water.
*The King’s son plays his sheng
pipe, which as long goose-quills;
Calling on dragons to plough the
mist and plant Jade Grass.

23. 苏小墓
*Dew upon gloomy orchids like
weeping eyes.

24. 潘催水咽玉蟾蜍
Hurrying drops of the
water-clock choke the jade toad.

25. 衰燈絡緯啼寒素
*In the guttering lamplight,
spinners cry at their icy silk.
*On an autumn grave a ghost
chanting loudly the poems of
Bao’s.

26. 紅絃婉轉雲咽深思
Red-string music writhes to the
clouds, as she sobs out her grief.

27. 青青無光宮水咽
Blue, so blue and lusterless the
clouds over sobbing palace
waters.
*The lonely simurgh gives a
startled cry, and a shang note
from the strings starts.

28. 孤鶴驚鳴商絲發
*The lady Li

The Lady Li
李夫人
29. 蠻娘吟弄滿寒空

*Chanting and playing with
music of southern native girls fill
the cold sky.

In the icy night among those
waves, the ancient dragon roars.

The Ladies of the Xiang
湘妃

30. 水弄湘娥佩，
竹啼山露月。

*Water plays with girdle-jades
of the Lady of Xiang, bamboo
sobbing, moon over
dew-drenched hills.

The Man with a
Yellow Hat
黄頭郎

31. 木葉啼風雨

Leaves on the trees moan in the
wind-blown rain.

Ballad of an Aching
Heart
傷心行

32. 山壇晚霧吟白鼉

*In mist-wreathed mountain
tarns at dusk white alligators
chants.

The Cave of the
Yellow Clan
黃家洞

33. 冷紅泣露嬌啼色

*Cold reds weeping dew,
tenderly and sweetly crying
colors.

Ballad of the South
Mountain Fields
南山田中行

34. 千歲石床啼鬼工

From thousand-year-old beds of
stone, demon weavers wail.

Verses on Being
Presented with a
Length of Summer
Cloth by the
Mountaineer of Luofu
羅浮山人與葛篇

35. 蜂語繞粧鏡

Bees go buzzing round the
vanity mirror.

Hard to Forget
難忘曲

36. 燕語踏簾鉤

*Chattering swallows tap on the
curtain-hooks.

Ballad of the Noble
Son-in-law of Jia
Gongliu
賈公閭貴婿曲

37. 弹琴石壁上，翻翻一仙
人。

*Strumming his lute, high on a
crag of stone, sits and immortal
flapping his gown.

Immortals
仙人

38. 行輪出門去，玉鸞聲斷
續。

Sound of the traveler’s wheels
leaving our gate, jade
simurgh-bells
tinkling
intermittently.

Lying awake, I listen to the
crickets’ tears.

Thoughts in Her
Chamber
房中思

39. 光露泣幽淚

Bright dew weeps, shedding its
secret tears.

*Down in their damp,
moist-crickets making a chirp
sound of resonant, a muted
chocking spring wells up with
startled splash.

An oriole chants the song of a
girl from Min.

*Poem of Changgu
昌穀詩

40. 銅駝夜來哭

*The brazen camels weep as

Lament of the Brazen
night comes.

Camels

*Eight bridles dong-long jingling as they drove round the heaven.

Joys of the Jasper Pool

Eight bridles dong-long jingling as they drove round the heaven.

Song of the Magic Strings

*Painted zithers and plain flutes play sparsely and tersely tunes, to the rustle of embroidered skirts she treads the autumn dust. Cassia leaves stripped by the wind, cassia seeds fall, and blue raccoons are weeping blood as shivering foxes die.

Song: Sandy Road

*Emerald fire, laughing wildly, they leaps from their nests.

Horseman with torches, on clattering hooves, riding to Heaven.

Lady of the Cowrie Palace

*The Sea-lady plays with her god rings, with a jingling softly zang-zang sound.

The Temple of the Goddess of Orchid Fragrance

Playing her flute, a little drunk with wine.

Roaming the heavens, she calls up her white deer.

A Cold Gorge at Twilight

A white fox barking at the moon calls out the mountain wind.

The bitter bamboo facing at this traveler chant as singing flutes.

Song of an Arrowhead from Changping

Souls to the left, spirits to the right, gaunt with hunger, wailing.

A Cold Gorge at Twilight

Swallows are chattering on rain-drenched beams, sad that I’m growing old.

Song: A New Summer

*The crocodile chanted by the harbor and the plum-rain flew.

Song: The Mansion by the River

*The pin of dawn urged hairs saying words to the south wind.

Song: The Mansion by the River

Swallows are chattering on rain-drenched beams, sad that I’m growing old.

Song: Imitating the Singing of Dragons

*Laughing wildly, it contains the words of spring.

Song: The Mansion by the River

*Stone grating on a copper bowl, the sound is faint and lasting as chanting dull and deep.

Blood spattered from blue eagles, lungs ripped from a white phoenix.

Song: Deriding the Snow

*A poor calling up to clouds as a man from the heaven.
53. \text{清明笑語聞空虛} & \text{On clear, bright days their laughter and words echoes round the empty sky.} & \text{嘲少年}

54. \text{泣露枝枝滴天淚} & \text{Brach after branch is weeping dew, shedding heaven-born tears.} & \text{Ballad of the Immortals}

55. \text{宜男草生笑人} & \text{*Day-lilies grow there and orchids smiling at people.} & \text{神仙曲}

56. \text{啾啾赤帝騎龍來} & \text{*With flames roar of \textit{zau-zau} comes the Scarlet Emperor riding his dragon.} & \text{第	ext{六}月}

57. \text{傍蟾葫緞絲} & \text{*Beside the eaves insects weave their silk.} & \text{第	ext{八}月}

58. \text{紅花夜笑凝幽明} & \text{*Red flowers smile upon the night; light and dark congeal on it.} & \text{第	ext{十}月}

59. \text{黃桑飲露窣宮簾} & \text{Yellow mulberries, drinking dew, rustle on palace blinds.} & \text{第	ext{二}月}

60. \text{文章何處哭秋風} & \text{*Where should be a place for writings to cry for the autumn wind?} & \text{第	ext{六}首}

61. \text{山璺泣清漏} & \text{A mountain crevice weeps with crystal tears.} & \text{第	ext{五}首}

62. \text{露臊煙啼千萬枝} & \text{*Weighed down with dew, a million branches are weeping in the mist.} & \text{第	ext{十}月}

63. \text{神騅泣向風} & \text{Divine Dapple wept, breasting the wind.} & \text{第	ext{三}月}
Chapter 4

4.1 INDULGENCE IN MUSIC: WRITING INTO SYNÆSTHESIA

When it comes to the “cultural sound” in Li He’s poetry, I would like to talk about the music pieces. The sound of music and his preference for musical description can be treated as one of the most prominent aspects in Li He’s poetry. It seems there is a music troupe in the mind of this genius poet, for according to my research, there are as many as thirteen different musical instruments in his corpus: “se zither” (se 瑟), “zheng zither” (zheng 箜), “ancient zither” (gu qin 古琴), “pipa lute” (pipa 琵琶), “vertical harp” (kong hou 簫篌), “sheng pipes” (sheng 笙), “vertical pipe” (xiao 箫), “short flute” (duan di 短笛), “bamboo flute” (zhu di 竹笛), “barbarian flute” (hu jia 胡笳), “tartar reed” (bi li 毂篥), “painted horn” (hua jiao 畫角) and “drum” (gu 鼓). Not only the musical instrument troupe but also the chants and songs from singing-girls are frequently mentioned in his poems. In his corpus, there are several pieces which specially describe music, such as “Song: Li Ping at the Vertical Harp,” “Song: Listening to Master Ying Playing the Lute,” “Song: Bearded Shen Playing His Tartar Horn” and “Bitter Bamboos: A Tiaoxiao Ballad” etc. Here I choose one of his banquet poems for close reading to discuss the sound of music in his poetry.
Straddling a tiger, the King of Qin roams the Eight Poles.

His glittering sword flashes through the sky, heaven becomes sapphire-blue by itself.

Xi He knocks the sun with his whip, which tinkles like glass.

The ashes of kalpas all fly away, the world is at peace.

From a dragon’s head spouts wine

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40 Straddling a tiger instead of a horse shows the ambition and the invincibility of the host. The allusion can be found in the Zuo Tradition, the 28th year of duke Xi, in the battle of Chengpu 城濮之戰. Jin army covered their war-horses by tiger skins, therefore they won the battle. “Straddling a tiger,” on the one hand, indicates the vigorousness of the king. But on the other hand, also conveys a meaning of danger and risk. In “Biography of Wen Qiao” of Jinshu 晉書, it says “Straddling on a fierce animals, how could one get down in the half way?” 騎猛獸,安可中下哉?

41 Eight points of the compass. This is a Daoist phrase in Zhuangzi and Huainanzi, it refers to extremely remote places in universe. It indicates the universal power of the host and the military prowess of the host was manifest everywhere.

42 The line implies the heaven also obey the host’s military power, let alone all things under the heaven. See Wang Qi’s commentary.

43 Xi He is the charioteer of the sun.

44 A kalpa is a Buddhist unit of measure for a cosmic cycle. Fourteen mahayuga of 4,320,000 years each constituted one kalpa. At the end of each kalpa came a great dissolution (Mahapralaya), when the universe was reduced to ashes. This ash of kalpa is said to be firstly found by Emperor Wu of Han in a mythical lake of Kunming 昆明湖. By saying that the kalpa ashes has been totally wiped out, the line indicates under the power of this host, it has reached a time of unexampled prosperity and the peace would last long forever.

45 Scholars as Wang Qi and Fordsham interoperate the “dragon head” as a large wine-vessel made of copper and shaped like a dragon spouted wine from its mouth for the guests. The historical records assert the place is the emperor’s palace Taiji dian 太極殿 and the guests are officials, which can be found in “Records of
to call down the wine-stars.

6 *Pipa* with golden slot.

makes a sound of *cang-cang*\(^\text{46}\)

The feet of rain on Dongting lake

come blown on the *sheng* pipes.

6 Flushed with wine, he shouts at the moon
to run back in her course.

Beneath dense drifts of silver clouds

the jaspar hall glows.

8 At the palace portals the Gatekeeper cries

the first watch of the night.\(^\text{47}\)

In the ornate tower, a jade phoenix sings,

faltering and sweet.\(^\text{48}\)

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Marching to West” *西征* in *Beitang shuchao* 北堂書鈔.

\(^{46}\) According to Frodsham’s translation, he just omits this kind of onomatopoetic word as “Golden lutes are singing softly throughout the night.” Also, several layers of meanings are thereby being ignored.

\(^{47}\) Wang Qi understands this “first watch of the night” as the time is still early in night according to last line: “the dense drift silver clouds” indicates the moonlight. But Yao Wenxie says according to last line, “the jaspar hall glows” and the “silver clouds” are caused by morning light, which is saying that the night has passed and dawn has arrived. But the Gatekeeper just cries the first watch of the night because dare not to violate the wish of he host and gives false information of the time. See *Sanjiazhu*, 57, 220.

\(^{48}\) Jiao ning 嬌獰, the fist commentator Wu Zhengzi 吳正子 says, the character 猃 could be 偕, the former one has the meaning of ugly sound and the latter one means “gentle and tired.” Wang Qi take this as the sings of the singing girls, which is plausible because it is the occasion of a banquet, playing of musical instrument, singings and performances are presented here. Fang Funan understands the sound here is the chaos of laughter of those concubines after drunk, which is sweet and also ugly. This is also a possible way of interpretation.
From ocean-pongee, patterned in crimson,
a faint, cool scent.

The yellow beauties kneel down in their dance.

A thousand years with each cup!

As immortals candlesticks waft on high a light.
waxy smoke,

Eyes rapt with wine, those Emerald Lutes shed seas of tears.

“The King of Qin Drinks Wine” is an outstanding and a representative work of Li He. Basically, it describes a drinking banquet of a certain emperor. We may want to set aside the intention of this poem, the question of which emperor this poem refers to, and whether it means to critique or praise the emperor. What really strike me are its auditory words, imagery and special way of describing this drinking occasion.

The poem can be divided into two parts; the first part is the first four lines, and the second is the rest of the poem. The first part identifies the host of this drinking banquet and the reason why the banquet is held. From the imagery, we can see that this is an imperial banquet, the host of which could be a person with great power. The poet chooses mystical and celestial imagery to indicate the imperial or aristocratic identity of the host. Though the title of this poem as well as the first line shows us the host of this banquet is the King was shaped as immortals or it was a kind of wax, which was named as immortals. Sanjiazhu, 57.

According to different edition, it was recorded as “pure zither” (qing qin 清琴) or “emerald zither” (qing qin 青琴). If take the first one into consideration, it was a description of the sound of zither. Basically, its sound is pure. If take the second one, this “emerald zither” can be traced back to “Rhapsody of Shanglin” of Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (ca. 179 B.C.-118 B.C.), in which is an ancient goddess. This goddess can refer to the ladies in banquet, performance girls or concubines, according to which, the “eyes rapt with wine” could be eyes of those ladies. Sanjiazhu, 56-57.
of Qin, this image, to a larger extent, could be a metaphorical expression. This kind of mystical and celestial imagery is used throughout the poem. In order to show the great power and the grand achievement of the host, Li He uses the allusions and images of “straddling a tiger,” “eight poles,” “sword flashes through the sky,” “Xi He” and “ashes of kalpas.” When it comes to the scene of the banquet, all of the imagery is divine and suggests the banquet's extreme luxury. The “dragon’s head” can be a certain symbol of imperialism, and the guests of the banquet, who are “wine-stars,” are also from the celestial world. From this “wine-stars,” we can see the immortals who take charge of wine also attend the banquet; in this case, the overabundance of wine is highlighted. The banquet is held at “jaspar hall,” where immortals dwell. The dancers and singing girls are those “yellow beauties” in “ocean-pongee” dresses, the decorations of the banquet are candlesticks of the “immortals,” and the palace beauties are fairy maidens and “emerald lutes.”

All these mythical and celestial figures and imagery contribute to exhibiting the extreme power, indulgence and appetite for luxury of the host.

Second, the auditory words in this poem are also a prominent

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54 The old commentaries say that this poem was made for King of Qin. But the Qing scholars Wang Qi 王琦, Yao Wenxie 姚文燮 and Fang Funan 方扶南 all have the interpretation of this King of Qin as a representation of De emperor of Tang 唐德宗 (742-805), whose career and deeds has much influence on Li He when he was young. For the reason that the poem just mentions the name of King of Qin, but throughout the poem, there were no other stories or allusions concerns about Qin. Wang Qi also points out that when Li Kuo hasn’t got throne, he was a prince has the enfeoffment of Yongzhou 雍州, which was once belonged to Qin state. These scholars also compares the disposition of King of Qin with De emperor, both of them are staunch and brutal and love luxurious banquets. Li He, comp., Wang Qi etc., annotated, *Sanjiazhu*, 57, 220, 301.
feature. Since the poem is describing a banquet, the auditory words are unavoidable and can be seen everywhere. However, what makes Li He’s poems so special here is that he puts the sounds into a twisted sensory world according to his own feelings.

Specifically, he always has an inclination to mix all of his sensations together with imagination. Therefore, a composition style of synaesthesia occurs. There are two outstanding lines of synaesthesia in this poem, and both of them include the auditory words. The first one is the line “Xi He knocks on the sun, which tinkles like glass.” In this line, the poet compares the host of the banquet to the charioteer of the sun. Frodsham translates “qiao” (敲) as “whipping,” which I think is not as faithful as “knock” because it may hide away the direct effect of sound. We may wonder why the sound of knocking on the sun is like glass, since glass was a strange conception which was introduced from central Europe during mid-Tang dynasty. Li He just mingled visual and auditory sensations, as well as his imagination together to create an effect of alienation to his readers. The brightness and transparent visual sensation leads Li He to imagine a lucid, transparent sound.

The second synaesthetic line is “The feet of rain on Dongting lake come blown on the sheng pipes.” This line is a complex one, fusing many images together. There can be two ways to interpret it. Literally it reads: “Dongting rain feet come blow sheng pipes” and the basic allusion is to the

55Frodsham, The Poems of Li Ho (791-817), 48.
music played for the Yellow Emperor on Dongting lake in northern Hunan (see Zhuangzi, XIV), which sounds like raindrops on water. This is the understanding of Yao Wenxie and Frodsham. However, “Dongting rain feet” does not necessarily refer to the sound of raindrops on the water. If we understand it in this way and compare the sound of raindrops to the sound of pipes, we would miss the visual part and omit the visual sense which combines together with the sound. Dongting, according to Zhuangzi, could be the name of the tune of “Xian pound” played by the Yellow Emperor and “rain feet” could mean the raindrops themselves. Actually, in this line, Li He is using the visual sight to describe the sound. \(^{56}\) The shape of the raindrop can be mellow and full, and this visual sense was applied to the sound. Also, raindrops are scattered everywhere, and the sound can also be scattered and mussy.

As mentioned before, the sound in his poetry is also shown in a descriptive way or in an onomatopoetic way. In the 11\(^{th}\) line, the singing voice is described as “sweet, faint and tired,” which indicates that the excesses of the feast have made the singers exhausted. And the metaphor of “jade phoenix” refers to the singing girls. It could refer to the singers themselves, but to a larger extent, it could also be the description of their voices as bright as jade and as pure as the twitter of the phoenix.

For the onomatopoetic words in this poem, we can see that in line

\(^{56}\)If we take this interpretation, it would be different from Bai Juyi’s 白居易 (772-846) as the first interpretation, which is just a comparison of two different kinds of sounds but not a synaesthesia phrase.
six, when describing the sound of *pipa*, Li He uses the word “cang-cang” (枨枨). This onomatopoetic word, to my understanding, indicates the technique of “sweep strings” (*sao xian* 掃弦) when playing *pipa*. According to Bai Juyi’s famous lines, when music sounds like “pearls dropping onto jade plate,” it might be the result of the technique of “bo xian” 撥弦, which literally means “plucking or picking one string,” or “fingers circulating” (*lun zhi* 輪指), which is a circular movement of the fingers on one string to make a succession of separated sounds. “Sweep strings,” then, literally means sweeping on all of the strings, which implies a sudden and hard sound. Usually this kind of technique can express grandness and dignity within a musical piece. And it sounds like “cang-cang,” which Li He describes very vividly here. Also, this “jin cao” (金槽) can literally be translated as “golden or medal slot,” which describes the upper part of a *pipa*. This “golden or medal” can be the appearance and the material which the *pipa* is made of. At the same time, it could also be another description of the sound of *pipa*, as an echo to “cang-cang” and as a kind of strong, clanging sound.

Besides, the auditory words in this poem always appear together with a sense of time. For example, “Xi He knock the sun” implies that the time of day is passing by quickly, as does the line, “Flushed with wine, he shouts at the moon to run back in her course.” Frodsham translates the verb “shout at” (*he* 喝) as “command,”57 which is not proper enough for its omitting the sound

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57Frodsham, *The Poems of Li Ho (791-817)*, 48.
effect and losing other layers of meanings as well. If we use the verb “shout at,” it suggests the directness and crudeness of the host. On the other hand, if we translate it as “command,” in Chinese it can be a word of “ming” or “ling,” which are inanimate and soundless words. Also, this “shout at” can show the improper manner of the host because of his arrogant or unconstrained and obstreperous state after drinking. The sense of time here is that he orders the moon to run back. Although he is of great power, he is also afraid of the passage of time and wants to use his power to change nature, so that he can indulge himself in entertainment forever.

Moreover, we are reminded of the passage of time when “At the palace portals the Gatekeeper cries the first watch of the night.” The appearance of this sudden voice in the middle of poem and also in the middle of the banquet puts the issue of time in a prominent place and sort of stresses it. The sense of time also shows in 13th and 14th line and the two forms a sharp comparison of time. In the 13th line, when the dancers finish their dancing, they cheer the emperor, hoping for “a thousand year with each cup,” and wishing that his career and entertainments will last so long, but in the next line, if we follow the reading of Yao Wenxie, this “light, waxy smoke” could also be a sign of the coming of dawn, for the wax is nearly burned out and therefore smoke comes out. The juxtaposition of the wish for longevity with the quick ending of the entertainment emphasizes the poet's sense of quickly-passing time. In Li He’s composition, he has an inclination to pay
much attention, and always with a sense of anxiety, to time, a concern which is shown in this poem.

4.2 Table #3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines of Cultural Sound in Li He’s Poem Corpus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 蚩尤死，鼓逢逢。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 五十弦瑟海上聞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 角聲滿天秋色裏</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. 含嚼蘆中聲</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. 嘈嘈絃吹匝天開，洪涯簫聲繞天來。</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. 樓頭曲宴仙人語，帳底吹笙香霧濃。</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. 拂袖風吹蜀國弦</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. 吳絲蜀桐張高秋</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>江娥啼竹素女愁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>昆山玉碎鳳凰叫</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>芙蓉泣露香蘭笑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. 蜀國弦中雙鳳語

Through strings of a lute from Shu, two pho

enixes talk.

Song: Listening to Master Ying Playing the Lute

聽穎師彈琴歌

暗佩清臣敲水玉

Hidden girdle-gems of an honest minister, tinkling crystals.

聲: 聽穎師彈琴歌

涼館聞弦驚病客

Sound of strings through the cold room rouses me from my sick-bed.

聲: 聽穎師彈琴歌

10. 雲陽臺上歌，鬼哭複何益。

*Singing came from the tower of Yunyang, wail of a ghost, and all to no avail.

*Song: Tangji of Han Drinks Wine

漢唐姬飲酒歌

11. 玉爐炭火香咚咚

*In a jade brazier charcoal burns in fragrance, with a boom dung-dung sound of drum.

Magic Strings

紙錢窸窣鳴風風

*Rustling sound of paper money together with moans of whirlwind.

呼星召鬼飲杯盤

*Knitting her brows, she heavily plucks the lute for each word uttered.

She calls down stars and summons demons to savour meat and drink.

12. 郊原晚吹號號

*Over fields of the waste the evening, the hou-hou sound made by the wind moans sadly.

Ballad for Encouraging My Beloved, No.2

13. 離歌繞懦弦

*Songs of parting rose from flabby strings.

While Recovering from a Drinking-bout in the Elder Zhang’s House in Luzhou, I Sent This Poem to My Fourteenth Elder Male Cousin through the Agency of a River Messenger

潞州張大宅病酒遇江使寄上十四兄

14. 旅歌屢彈鈞

Often I sing a traveler’s song, beating my sword.

The Traveler

15. 吳歈越吟未終曲

Catches of Wu, ballads of Yue-our songs never stop.

Pleasures South of the Yangzi

16. 吹龍笛，擊鼉鼓，皓齒歌，細腰舞。

Blow dragon flutes! Beat alligator drums! Dazzling teeth in song, slender waists in dance.

Let Wine be Brought in!

17. 金槽琵琶夜擊撥

*Pipa with golden slot makes a sound of cang-cang.

*The King of Qin Drinks Wine

洞庭雨腳來吹笙

*The feet of rain on Dongting lake come blown on the sheng
In the ornate tower, a jade phoenix sings, faltering and sweet.

18. *Drummers and pipers at the feast, no zithers or flutes, long knives planted in the ground split the singing zither.

19. *The King’s son plays his sheng pipe, which as long goose-quills; Calling on dragons to plough the mist and plant Jade Grass.

20. *On an autumn grave a ghost chanting loudly the poems of Bao’s.

21. Songs of Wu maidens rise to the heavens.

22. The goddess of Xiang, playing her lute, welcomes the Emperor’s daughters.

23. Singing to the moon in her tall tower, beating time on a pendant. Red-string music writhes to the clouds, as she sobs out her grief.

24. *The lonely simurgh gives a startled cry, and a shang note from the strings starts.

25. On a jade zither she plays “Green Gates.”

26. A pale moon over the battlements as the horns crow out with a sound of ji-ji.

27. I hear her singing among dewy, spring grass. *The small pipes chants by the curtains at dawn.

At cockcrow stars hang in the willows, crows cry as dew drops from the plane trees.
吹笙翻舊引
She plays again an old tune on her sheng pipes.

長絃怨削崧
*Long strings resent the incapability to cut down the Song Mountain.

歌聲且潛弄
*Make the singings tentatively faint.

侯調短弄哀
*Hou Tiao plays mournful short tunes upon her harp.

羌兒奏落梅
A nomad boy played the tune called “Falling Plum.”

箫聲吹日色
*The vertical pipe blows the color of the sun.

笛愁翻隴水
*The flute is sorrowful and rise to play the tune of Longtou.

胡琴今日恨，急語向檀槽。
*Today my barbarian lute grows rancorous, quick-tongued playing towards its sanders slot.

彈琴石壁上，翻翻一仙人。
*Strumming his lute, high on a crag of stone, sits and immortal flapping his gown.

歌迴蠟板鳴
Circling songs, click of waxed castanets.

風桐瑤匣瑟
*Bamboo aquiver as if short flute playing.

唯留一管人間吹
*Only a single pipe remains blowing in mundane world.

為君起唱長相思
For you I rose and sang my song, long thoughts of love.

青帳吹短笛
They sit and play short flutes in their green tents.

歌淫淫，管愔愔。
*Singing is loud and long, pipes are peaceful and harmonious.

吹簫飲酒醉
Playing her flute, a little drunk
41. 苦黃對客吟歌筒
   *The bitter bamboo facing at this traveler chant as singing flutes.

42. 胡角引北風
   *Barbarian horns lead the northern wind.

43. 帶酒日晚歌田中
   Drunk at twilight, I’m still singing down in the fields.

44. 清弦五十為君彈
   *Fifty pure strings will be played for your delight.
   *Plucking sound sobbed the spring, stirring your bones.
   *Gliding from note to note with the shang tune, her song pierced the sapphire clouds.

45. 羅床倚瑤瑟
   She Sings to a jeweled lute on her silk-hung couch.

46. 去年陌上歌離曲
   Last year, by the wayside we sang a song of parting.

47. 樓高夜靜吹橫竹
   *By a tall mansion, in the still of the night he is playing his transversal bamboo.
   *One note seems to have come down from heaven.
   Gong and zhi secretly harmonize with the pure breeze.
   Play no more the Longtou tune, nomad boy!

48. 畫鼓餘清節
   *Pure beating of the painted drum throbs in ears.

49. 調歌送風轉
   Sound of singing borne afar on the breeze.

Goddess of Orchid Fragrance
A Cold Gorge at Twilight
A Song for Xu’s Lady, Zheng
Song in the Wilds
Song: Never Sorrow
Song: At Frontiers
Song: At Frontiers
Song: At Frontiers
Song: At Frontiers
Song: At Frontiers
Song: At Frontiers
Chapter 5

5.1 SOUNDLESS WEEPING: THE SILENCE OF REPRESSION

When talking about the various sounds in Li He’s poetry, one cannot avoid the discussion of the contrary part of sounds: the silence. Before touching on this term, several questions should be made clear. What is the conception of silence? How could people get a sense of silence? What is its significance and what kind of feelings can be aroused from such human experience? What is the relationship between sound and silence?

Actually, from the perspective of a binary, the acoustic world consists of these two important elements: the sounds and silence cannot be separate from each other, most of the time, they even rely on each other to be fetched out. One cannot tell the sounds if there were no silence and in turn, a sense of silence is usually felt strongly by people after a noisy occasion or in an anechoic environment, that is, a completely soundproof environment. For the latter one, does this kind of environment really exist? At least there will be slightest sounds from nature and from lives. Even in the modern world where technology can help to construct a completely soundless chamber, when a life (the experiencing subjective as human) enters in, the sound of breath and blood circulation can be heard. Since the sound and silence are both included in human experience, we can say, whereas there is life, there is sound, and we
also could say, whereas there is sound, there is the experience of silence, usually physiological but not physical.

In Schafer Murray’s book *The Soundscape*, he described the “silence” in several ways.\(^{58}\) In the chapters of “Ceremonies of Silence” and “Western Man and Negative Silence,” he also mentioned that experiences of silence happened after a noisy occasion by giving out examples of the program of the War Remembrance on May 4\(^{th}\) in Utrecht, Netherlands and tried to make clear the definition of silence by discussing the “absolute silence.” He concluded that “When man regards himself as central in the universe, silence can only be considered as approximate, never absolute.”\(^{59}\) Also, he cited the book *Silence* from John Cage, saying, “For modern man, any use of this term must be qualified or assumed to be ironical.”\(^{60}\) From this point, how could we examine the abstract silence in whatever social or textural context?

In Schafer’s descriptions of the ceremony, we can see the untouchable abstract “silence” exposed in quite a few physical and valid ways. At the beginning of the ceremony, all public amusements are closed with no advertising or store-window lighting, people are asked not to carry ensigns, flags or wreaths with them, and are requested to be still (literally, to pay attention to being silent), the church bell starts and then ends, and two minutes of total silence

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\(^{59}\) Ibid., 256.

\(^{60}\) Ibid.
begin of the Cathedral Square. In this social occasion, we can see silence becoming fluid, lingering between human’s sensations of visual and audial.

Not only the approximate audial silence occurred, as the two minutes stillness after the sound of bells, the visual silence also contribute a great deal to create the feeling of silenceness. The closing of lighting and the inhibition of flags and wreaths provide a comparative stillness for eyes. Thus the sense of silence comes into a larger spectrum, not limited to the auditory world by comparing with sounds, but the visual, even other human sensations as tactile sensation, altogether creating a psychological silence in social or textural context. Since Li He’s poetry is full of audio depiction, the soundless world comes together, as yin comes with yang, as those sounds definitely needs more attention from us.

To reveal the sense of silence, poets can use all kinds of the direct and straight-forward words such as ji 寂 (soundless), jing 靜 (quiet), qiao 悄 (silent), wusheng 無聲 (without a sound), wuyu/wuyan 無語/無言 (without a word). However, as we know, usage of these direct “soundless words” does not necessarily build up a soundless couplet or a soundless poem. In most cases of classical Chinese poetry, poets tend to make comparison with sounds or other approaches to create an atmosphere of silence and stillness. As in two of the most famous narrative poems “Peacock Flying to the Southeast” and “Song of Pipa Lute” by Xu Ling and Mu Kehong, both of them...
have couplets to introduce the soundless occasions. After demonstrating the bustling and noisy occasion of wedding ceremony, a soundless couplet occurs to turn the whole picture into silence, “Glomming after the sunset, soundlessly people just got rest.” 奄奄黃昏后，寂寂人定初 to provide a silence environment for Liu Lanzhi to commit suicide. Also, after the lute girl finishes the gorgeous piece of music in “Song of Pipa Lute,” a silence scene is created for her to promote her unparalleled music skill to extreme, “The east boat and west yacht are quiet and without a word, only the pale autumn moon was seen in the river” 東船西舫悄無言，唯見江心秋月白. Both of the examples included the direct soundless words, but the true essence of the sense of silence, which takes the readers’ breath, is the comparison with sounds and the visual stillness as “glomming sunset” and “the pale moon in river.” These are only couplets showing a sense of silence, a technique that can also be found in other “silent poems.”

Regarding the “silent poem,” what I mean is not soundless poem, but the whole poem creates a sense of silence and stillness not necessarily using the soundless words as mentioned above. When mentioning about the “silent poem,” one cannot avoid talking about “Buddhist poem” 禪詩 and Wang Wei 王維 (701-761), who is a representative figure for “silent poem.” One of his famous pieces concerning silence is “The Deer Stockade” 鹿柴:

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In the empty mountain one cannot see a person, 空山不見人,
But one can hear people’s voice, 但聞人語響。
The reflective sunlight enters in the deep forest, 返景入深林,
Again the light shines on the green moss. 復照青苔上。

When examining the whole poem, we can find that there are no such explicit expressions as “soundless” or “quiet,” on the contrary, a sounding line of “people’s voice” 人語 even plays an indispensable role in the poem. For this five-syllable quatrain, two dimensions of audio and visual parts together construct the sense of silence and the Buddhist meaning of restfulness. As mentioned before, when it comes to the sense of silence, one cannot avoid talking about its counterpart sound and the visual stillness. For the first two couplets, the emptiness and silence is created by mentioning the sound. Wang Wei’s piece is a perfect example to explaining this point. Another silent poem “Entering the Ruoye River” 入若耶溪 by Wang Ji 王籍 (fl. 502-557)


64 How floating is the grand warship, together with the misty water in the remote. The shady clouds rise from the distant mountain peak, the reflection of the sun chases the swirling floats. The noisy cicada makes the woods even quiet; the singing of birds makes the mountain more resolute. At this place I get the idea of returning, for so long a year I sorrow for the tired travelling. 艋艎何泛泛, 空水共悠悠。 陰霞生遠岫, 陽景逐迴流。 蟬噪林逾靜, 鳥鳴山更幽。 此地動歸念, 長年悲倦遊。 In Chen Changqu 陳昌渠 ed., Weijin nanbeichao shixuan 魏晉南北朝詩選 [The Selected Poems of Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties] (Chengdu: Sichuan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1987), 169.
demonstrates this idea perfectly by saying “The noisy cicada makes the woods even quiet, the singing of birds makes the mountain more resolute” 蟬噪林逾靜，鳥鳴山更幽 and it is exactly what Wang Wei is doing here in his first two couplets. For the second dimension to make the silence, Wang Wei also applies the visual silence of light and shadow in this poem. Interestingly, numbers of “silent poems” deal with Buddhist or Daoist ideology for they are concerned with the peace of mind and inner fulfillment of the poets. In order to reveal and construct the silent of the whole poem, poets tend to choose and use the image of light, shadow, reflections in water and mirror. Another poem famous for its “silence” is Chang Jian’s 常建 (708-765?) “A Poem on Zen-court of a Shabby Mountain Temple” 題破山寺后禪院.65 The last two couplets “The light of mountain delights the nature of birds, the reflections in a deep pool make one’s heart empty. All of the creatures become silent here, only the sound of bells is left” 山光悅鳥性, 潭影空人心. 萬籟此都寂, 但余鐘磬音 combines visual silence and isolates sound to construct the sense of silence in the poem. Similarly to the silent poems mentioned above, Chang Jian also uses light, shadow and reflection to create this visual silence. The reason for this inclination of poets to use light, shadow and reflection probably

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65 At dawn I entered the ancient temple, the rising sun shines on the top of woods. Bamboo path leading to the place of resolute, flowers and bushes of Zen studio are deep. The light of mountain delights the nature of birds, the reflections in a deep pool make one’s heart empty. All of the creatures become silent here; only the sound of bells is left. 清晨入古寺, 初日照高林。竹徑通幽處, 禪房花木深。山光悅鳥性, 潭影空人心。萬籟此都寂, 但余鐘磬音。Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋 ed., Quan tangshi 全唐詩 [The Whole Collection of Tang Poetry] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2013), vol.2, 1465.
comes from the sense of silence itself, for all bright colors and bustling scenes fade away, only light and shadow exist, and the reflection conveys a meaning of vagueness of the real world or even carry on a sense of solitude and self-retrospect.

Following the conception and explanation of “silent poems” above, I will examine the “silent poems” in Li He’s poetry. As I conclude, there is no absolute silence in a well-written silent poem. As a genius poet dealing with sound, Li He managed the silence in his poems with expressions of different sounds. From the second to fourth sections of this article we know that there are three sound categories in Li He’s poetry.

When it comes to silent poems, not comparing with the supernatural or cultural sounds (the music), Li He’s sense of silence is often aroused from the sound of nature. Like other prominent poets dealing with silent poems, Li He also combines the dimension of visual, the use light, shadow and all kinds of reflections. What makes Li He different from others is that, not only is the visual sensation is applied, but also other human sensations are freely used altogether to create a feeling of silence. Not as regulated as the Buddhist silent poems, he breaks the disciplines of auditory, visual, tactile sensations, mixes them together and put the feelings to the extreme to create a silence. Unlike other silent poems of inner peace, Li He’s silence poems are full of loneliness, coldness and depression. As I discussed in section two, Li He’s inner heart is full of uneasiness and there is a necessity to cry out, therefore the high
frequency of supernatural sound in his poetry. But in his silent poems, a psychological conflict between “crying out” and “keeping silent” occurs. He wanted to be a man full of ambition and masculine as nan’er 男兒, but the real world threw him into a straitened circumstances as he even has no chance to join the imperial examination simply because of his father’s name.66 Facing the fact, he tends to go to extremes to make his sound heard, as he does to make supernatural sounds through animals, spirits, ghosts, gods, goddess and demons, or he just represses his emotions in deep silence and immerses in sorrow and solitude. In several poems, he describes himself as “At my twentieth I cannot fulfill my ambitions, my heart is worried and withered like the decayed orchid” 我當二十不得意，一心愁謝如枯蘭,67 “There is a man in Chang’an city, at his twenty his heart has already got rotten” 長安有男兒，二十心已朽,68 “From Longxi comes a fatigued and hear-loosen guest Li Changji, after drinking he feels a narrowness in his heart” 隴西長吉摧頹客，酒闌感覺中區窄,69 and “His straw clothing is tattered and ragged in the autumn of Zhao city, chanting a poem for a whole night till the east is

66 According to Li He’s biography by Du Mu 杜牧 (803-852), Li He was inhibited to join the imperial examination because his father’s name is Li Jinsu 李進肅, which is homophonic with the name of exam jinshi 進士. It was considered inauspicious for Li He to take part in the exam. To help Li He, Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) wrote a famous essay “Discussion on Taboo” 諱辯 to argue with those who prevent Li He from joining the exam, but failed.

67 “Song of Breaking Sorrow” 開愁歌, in Sanjiazhu, 121.

68 “For Cheng Shang” 贈陳商, in Sanjiazhu, 111.

69 “‘After a Drinking-party’: Zhang Che, My Elder, Once Presented Me with a Poem on This Theme. At That Time Zhang Was Serving as Adviser in Luzhou” 酒罷張大徹索贈詩時張初效潞幕, in Sanjiazhu, 82.
lightened” 葛衣斷碎趙城秋, 吟詩一夜東方白, all of these lines are the self-portrait of himself. This kind of depression for not fulfilling his ideals could be revealed in his silent poems.

Depending on his passive emotions, one of his silent poems of repressions turns into supernatural imagination, mostly ghost poems; the other kind of silent poems are concerned about the real world and mostly reproduce his difficult situations. I will choose a most representative silent poem of Li He to talk about the special features of his silent poems and his repressed emotions.

“The Tomb of Su Xiaoxiao” 蘇小墓 is an outstanding ghost poem in Li He’s poetry, and a most representative poem of silence. Unlike other ghost poems in his poetry collection, “The Tomb of Su Xiaoxiao” has no sharp words such as shrill crying, distinct colors of blood, absurd faces of ghosts and demons, and the strangeness of inconsistency of the inner logic. However it successfully creates the ghostly atmosphere and reading experience for readers through silence and quietness. Instead of crying out, Li He chooses to repress the loneliness and weeping in this poem.

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70 Ibid.

71 Su Xiaoxiao, 蘇小 was a famous singing-girl in Qiantang 錢塘, which is Hangzhou 杭州 in nowadays. She lived during Southern Qi dynasty 南齊 (479-502). It is said she has two tombs, one is in Jiaxing county 嘉興縣, which is not far from Hangzhou. The other one is said on Mount Gu 孤山 in Hangzhou. A Tang writer Li Shen 李紳 (772-846), recounts the story that sounds of music and singing could be heard coming from the tomb on stormy nights. “I ride in an oil-silk carriage, my love rides a piebald horse. Where shall we twine our love-knots? Under the pine and cypress of the Western Grave-mound.” 我乘油壁車, 郞乘青驄馬。何處結同心, 西陵松柏下。In Sanjiazhu, 46.
Dew upon lonely and remote orchids, 幽蘭露，

2 Like crying eyes. 如啼眼。

No twining of love-knots, 無物結同心，

4 Misty flowers she cannot bear to cut. 煙花不堪剪。

Grass for her cushions, 草如茵，

6 Pines for her awning, 松如蓋。

Wind as her skirts, 風為裳，

8 Water as girdle-jades. 水為佩。

In her oil-silk carriage, 油壁車，

10 She is waiting at dusk. 夕相待。

Cold kingfisher-green candles, 冷翠燭，

12 Weary faint light. 勞光彩。

Under the Western Grave-mound, 西陵下，

14 Wind blows rain. 風吹雨。

In this poem, Li He portrays a female ghost named Su Xiaoxiao, who was a renowned singing-girl in Southern Qi dynasty. It is a silent poem without any silent words such as “quiet” and “soundless,” but a sense of silence in the whole poem was created and perfectly received by the readers.

In this short poem, Li He depicts a scene in which Su Xiaoxiao is waiting for her lover. Without crying or singing or expressing her own feelings, she just
waits in silence. To reveal the silence, the poet tried to create a sense of nothingness, that is, to create nothing out of something. We could say, in this poem, nothingness is the essence of constructing the sense of silence. Nothing of sight, nothing of sound, nothing of tactility and even the heroine is nowhere and cannot be seen, be heard, be caught, but can only be felt. Nothing is left but silence. As I discussed before, only by depending on their contrary parts, all human sensations, all of these silences can be revealed. By evoking all of his sensations, Li He created the visual silence, audio silence, tactile silence and the quiet female ghost.

The first ten lines are all picturing the ghost, her eyes, cushions, awning, skirts, girdle-jades, carriage, and candles. All of her daily objects are formed by nature, except the carriage, which could be buried together with her in her tomb, and even the ghost herself is from nature. The heroine’s identity generates the necessity to create the sense of silence in this poem. According to her name Xiaoxiao (small), one could have a rough idea of her small and light figure. Since she is a ghost who is buried in the tomb, she becomes nothing but dew, water and wind. Although she was a singing girl when she was alive, she has nothing to do with any warmth, prosperous occasions and music any more. Even the flowery ornament, “misty flower” is untouchable and could not bear to cut. The only accessories she got is the cold water jade but no love-knot. All of the visual things are mixed with tactile

See Frodsham’s annotation 2, in The Poems of Li Ho (791-817), 30.
sensation and full of coldness, as orchid, dew, misty flowers, grass, pines, wind, water, setting sun, and kingfisher-green candle, which altogether create a visual silence. Additionally, this visual silence is promoted by the dealing with lights. As it is a waiting occasion, the lights in the poem exhibit the sense of time. From “waiting at dusk” to the “weary faint light” of the “cold kingfisher-green candle,” it was the dusk to night. The sunlight has gone and only the faint candlelight was left. The darkening of light construct a sense of silence, and the glooming candlelight put the silence to the utmost. According to Hu Sanxing 胡三省, the “cold kingfisher-green candle” 冷翠燭 is the will-o’-the-wisp, “has light but with no flame” 有光無焰,73 which is glittering, dim and has no warmth. The word “weary” 労 also bears the meaning that the candle lasts for a longtime, probably for a whole night, but the waiting for her lover is just in vain. Because the action of waiting itself has a sense of stillness and silence, for a long-time’s waiting, thus the word “weary” also carries a sense of stillness.

From the perspective of sound, the silence is presented through two sentences; one of which is from the very beginning when describing the eyes of Su Xiaoxiao. There is a tension and contrast between the first two couplets. The “lonely and remote orchid” 幽蘭 bears a sense of quiet and solitude, which makes the sentence as a silent one; but the “crying eyes” 啼眼, not as normally expressed by other poets as “tearing eyes” 淚眼 (lei yan), seems a

73 In Sanjiazhu, 46.
synaesthesia expression combining visual and audio together, as tearing eyes with a sound of weeping. By contrast, the dew on orchid appears more lonely and quiet. Not from a perspective of hearing, but from the sight of those “eyes,” a sound of silence was delivered. The other comparison of sound and silence occurs in the end of the poem, which is not explicitly using any sharp sounding words like some other audio poems in his works as “whistling”嘯, “shouting”呼, “screaming”叫 etc., as he only present the sight of “wind blows rain”風吹雨. Definitely, the wind must be whistling, the rain must be pattering, and the verb “blow” makes all of the sounds heard, combined with each other and becoming even stronger. At this point, the candlelight should have been died out, leaving the Western-mound and Su Xiaoxiao in a total silence. When Schafer explaining the silence, he said, “Man likes to make sounds to remind himself that he is not alone. From this point of view total silence is the rejection of the human personality. Man fears the absence of sound as he fears the absence of life.”⁷⁴ Throughout the whole poem, the poet is absent from the occasion, and the only subject is Su Xiaoxiao, who makes no sounds and even does not form a valid figure. The only action for her is waiting. The absence of sound specifically refers to the absence of life here. And the only sound from the nature sharpens the contrast and makes the silence even prominent.

The other contributing element to the silence of this poem, which I

⁷⁴ In The Soundscape, 256.
want to talk about, is the format of the poem itself. Generally, it is an ancient-style poem, not a regulated five or seven-syllables poem. Li He uses the ancient-style more freely to write his poems and is not constrained in the regulated forms. In this specific poem, all of the lines are three-syllables except the third and fourth line. A pattern of three-syllables can make the whole poem full of a sense of isolation when chanting. It seems that the poet himself cherished every character and saved words to make this poem. The deduction of syllables to three can also be considered as an important aspect to create the sense of silence, as if the poet did not want to make more chanting sound to disturb the quiet atmosphere in this poem. In regards to the rhyme and tones in this poem, although it has fourteen lines, the only rhymed characters are dai 待 and cai 彩, both of which belong to the 15th hai 海 entry of the third tone 上聲 in the *Grand Collection of Rhymes* 廣韻. Though the poem is not rhymed, most of the lines, except 3, 5, 7, 9, are all oblique tone 仄聲 (ze sheng), which is falling or short when chanting. The format of the poem and the sounding of the syllables can certainly add to the sense of silence and solitude of this poem.

Knowing that Li He is a man full of depression who experienced many frustrations during his life, we can easily understand why he composed

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75 See Du Guoqing 杜國清, *Li Ho*, (Boston: A Division of G. K. Hall & Co.), 98-105. He makes a statistical analysis on Li He’s versification, and most of his poems are ancient-style ones. The regulated verses and quatrains are takes only 26.5% in total.

some silent poems to represent his repressed emotions. Admittedly, most of his sound poems consist of weird and sharp sounds, from the view of natural, supernatural or cultural, and in some certain cases he also composes such silent poems as “The Tomb of Su Xiaoxiao.” One cannot just keep crying and shouting to express his inner uneasiness, sometimes the silence can be a stronger way to deliver the deepest depression.
Since Tang times, numerous of commentators and scholars have offered various interpretations of Li He’s poems, especially in regards to his composing style. After Song dynasty, Li He’s followers even made his steep and ghostly writing style into a conception of poetry genre as “Changji’s style” 長吉體. Instead of talking about the imagery, the employment of spirits, immortals, ghosts, god, goddess, and demons, which has been discussed for so such long a time, this study examined Li He’s ghostly poetry style from the perspective of sensations. Rather than talking about the color in those poems, the paper explored the usage of auditory in his corpus.

A review of poetic diction in Li He’s work permits, first of all, a definition of the poet’s universe of diction, through isolation of the favored vocabulary. A statistical review and categorization of the auditory diction in Li He’s work permits us to know the exact percentage of Li He’s auditory poems in his whole corpus and thus reveals the importance of the sonic function contributing to his writing style. Categorization also helps to figure out the inclination and tendency of how the poet applied sounds to his writings. Predominating in the auditory vocabulary are the sounds from nature and supernatural world. The culture sound, at a music banquet or a ritual occasion helps us understand how the sounds was used in his music pieces to twine the
When examining the sound from nature, one sees how the personification of objects from nature is frequently applied in Li He’s poetry. Not only are these personifications used on all kinds of animals, but also wind, rains, branches, leaves, stones, the sun and moon etc.: all nature things could be a vocal one. Intensive usage of personification creates a certain sense of strange and weird, and in turn, the vocal things are also the reflections of Li He’s pursuit. In addition, a high frequency of the onomatopoetic vocabulary is found in Li He’s mimicking the nature world. This is because of the vividness of representation, drama, and intensity of description driving Li He to do so. For onomatopoetic vocabulary is normally used in colloquial expressions, applying these characters into his intensively carved poetry certainly creates a sense of abnormal as the weirdness and strangeness are aroused.

The impossible fulfillment of his ideal from the real world inner anxiety forced the poet to pursuit mysterious world beyond the mundane world and the supernatural sound is therefore raised. Concerning the supernatural sound, the subjects of the sound actually create the sense of strangeness. When mentioning the supernatural subject, one cannot deny that they come from the imagination world of the poet. Since the uneasiness is fierce inside, Li He just cannot keep silent and make his voice be heard through those supernatural creatures. Most of the sounds coming from the supernatural world are fierce and full of temperamental vigor, which are actually the sound from the bottom
of the poet’s heart, and therefore have a sense of steepness and uneasiness.

To clarify the cultural sound, the music pieces are dragged out from all kinds of sounds in Li He’s poetry. Soaking in the entertainment of music or music banquets, the poet temporarily gets away from the depressing world. As an extremely sensitive poet, Li He’s attraction of music is irresistible; therefore numbers of music pieces was composed. Music often arouses the wildest imagination of the poet, as well as all of his sensations. Synaesthesia is perfectly applied in his poems concerning music. To put the auditory sound on paper, he mixed up visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactile sensations altogether and put them to extreme to describe what he heard. The expression of synaesthesia usually constructs a sense of weirdness.

After elaborating on the sound poems, the contrary part of sound, the silence, is an indispensable way to explore the auditory. By firstly making clear the definition of “silence,” one can get an idea of how sound and silences are created in poetry. Discussions on “silence poems” in Chinese poetry history give us ideas of how sound and silence are mingled, what is the features of a silent poem and how a poet employs visual and audio to compose a silent poem, based on which, the specialty of Li He’s silent poems is revealed. Compared with the part of supernatural sound, one can see that the silent poem of Li He also has a great deal with psychological depression of the poet, thus applying a certain ghostly feature to his writing style.
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