

1.

storied cliffs were the fortune I cast
bird trails beyond human tracks
what surrounds my yard
white clouds nesting dark rocks
I've lived here quite a few years
and always seen the spring-winter change
tell those people with tripods and bells
empty names are no damn good

16

people ask the way to Cold Mountain
roads don't reach Cold Mountain
summer the ice never melts
sunup the fog is thick
how did someone like me arrive
our minds aren't the same
if they were
you could get there then

26

I've lived on Cold Mountain now
already a few million years
trusting fate I fled to woods and springs
to linger and gaze where I will
no one comes to the cliffs
white clouds keep them shrouded
fine grass serves a mattress
blue sky does for a quilt
happy with a rock for a pillow
let Heaven and Earth transform.

29

pole your three winged galleons
ride your thousand-mile stallions
you still won't reach my home
it's called the darkest wild
cliff cave deep in the mountains
clouds and thunder come down all day
I'm not Master Confucius
I have nothing to say

30

wise ones you ignore me
I ignore you fools
neither wise nor foolish
don't hear of me henceforth
at night I'll sing to the moon
at dawn I'll dance with the clouds
how can I stop my mouth and hands
and sit up straight with all this hair

(Red Pine's note on this poem quotes Hui Neng. "To still the mind and contemplate purity is a disease, not meditation. To sit all the time constrains the body and doesn't profit the understanding. Listen to my song: Alive they sit, never resting/dead they rest, never sitting/with a bunch of stinking bones/how can you start your training.")

37

I've heard that cares are hard to dispel
a saying I thought untrue
but yesterday what I drove off
entangles me again today
moons wane but not cares
the year is new but cares are newer
who's guess beneath the big hat
is really a man of old cares

43

the white crane carries a bitter flower
a thousand miles before resting
he's bound for the peaks of P'eng Lai
with this for his provision
not yet there his feathers break off
far from the flock he grieves
returning to his old nest
his wife and children don't know him

45

if you were too dumb the life before
you won't be enlightened now
and such poverty as today's
is the work of previous lives
don't reform this life either
and next life will be the same
on both shores there's no ferry
it's far but you'll cross one day

48

beneath high cliffs I lie alone
steaming clouds don't fade all day
my hut might be dim
but my mind is free of noise
off dreaming I visited golden gates
my spirit returned when I crossed Stone Bridge
I left behind what burdened me
my dipper in the trees click clack

54

picking lotuses we called
the Clearwater was lovely
having fun we didn't feel dusk
we kept watching a wild wind stir
swells cradled the mandarin ducks
waves rocked the mallards
and us resting our oars
while our thoughts surged on and on

171

in Liang times I've heard
the Worthies of four Reliances
Peo Chih and Master Fa Yun
the four Immortals and Scholar Fu
made known the teachings of a lifetime
served as the Tathagata's envoys
built retreats for the Order
and relied on the Buddha's Law with faith
such were their achievements
but actions make more trouble
and lead further from the Way
they tore the West to patch the East
they didn't know the merit of inaction
they did great harm and not much good
sound but no form
where are they today

177

you who seek the Way
you waste your spirit searching
we all have something wondrous
unmarked and unnamed
called it answers clearly
it doesn't stay in hiding
guard it well I pray/don't let it get scratched up

197

is there a self or not
is this me or not
this is what I ponder
still seated against the cliff
while between my feet green grass grows
and on my head red dust settles
I've even seen members of the laity
leave fruit and wine by the bier

200

the unfortunate human disorder
a palate that's never weary
of steamed piglet with garlic sauce
roast duck with pepper and salt
deboned raw fish mince
unskinned cooked pork cheek
unaware of the bitterness of others' lives
as long as their own are sweet

208

where's the dew that fell this morning
daybreak it disappeared
man's body is like that too
and Jambu but an inn
so don't just go along
let the Poison Three be gone
enlightenment is affliction
let there be nothing left at all

229

you're all a bunch of angels
on a rotten bark at sea
in front of your mast is gone
in back your rudder too
round and round where the wind blows
high and low with the swell of the waves
how will you get to shore
look alive don't sit there stiff I see are fools

230

all I see are fools
storing wealth and grain
drinking wine and eating creatures
thinking they're well-to-do
unaware of the depth of Hell
seeking only blessings for Heaven
with bad karma like Vipula
can they escape disaster
the boss suddenly dies
they crowd around to cry
hire monks to read elegies
but ghostly pay is void
without one field of blessings
supporting baldheads a waste
and not like waking in time
but making a hell of darkness
a tree unmoved by wild winds
a mind true neither sinful nor blessed
tell those blockheads for me
tell them to read this over

235

a notice to all good people
what do you think about
reaching the Way seeing What's What
What's What is just What's Here
What's Real has always been perfect
pursuing proof you get further away
forsaking the trunk for twigs
all you get is stupid

259

give me the joys of the mountains
rambling not tied down
feeding a crippled frame day by day
musing with nothing to do
unrolling an ancient sutra
or climbing a granite spire
peering down thousand-foot cliffs
or up where clouds roll around
the desolation of a winter moon
a body like a lone flying crane