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### Authors

Qiji, Xin  
Kelen, Christopher  
Vong, Agnes

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## Translators' Preface

*Christopher Kelen and Agnes Vong*

Xin Qiji (1140-1207) was a Song Dynasty poet who wrote in a range of genres and is famous for more than six hundred ci poems he composed to one hundred and one different tunes. We approached the task of translating Xin Qiji's poems by first producing a "gloss"; that is, a rough translation into English with notes. We then worked from the gloss to create a text we thought worked as a poem in English.

A compilation of our translations of Xin Qiji's poems entitled *Clear Echo in the Valley's Depths* is in press with The Association of Stories in Macao and is expected to appear in May 2007.

## 鷓鴣天

壯歲旌旗擁萬夫。  
錦檐突騎渡江初。  
燕兵夜娖銀胡轆，  
漢箭朝飛金僕姑。

追往事，歎今吾。  
春風不染白髭鬚。  
卻將萬字平戎策，  
換得東家種樹書。

## "PARTRIDGE SKY" by Xin Qiji

*Translated by Christopher Kelen and Agnes Vong Lai Ieng*

when I was young  
I waved a flag  
to lead a thousand soldiers

horse too  
how my men  
fashioned arrows  
of silver  
at night

they brought  
down the moon

now the enemy owns it  
I come back  
I'm nobody

now  
thinking of the past  
how one  
sighs to be neglected

Spring won't bring back  
the black to my beard

you can't imagine  
the tracts I wrote  
on tactics  
for this country

in return I'm given  
this poor field  
bent mattock  
and some weather-worn tome  
titled 'how to grow tree'