



Poetry

Group 3

The Murder at Dawn

ESF Island School, Chand, Nimisha – 12

I had been through an event, that traumatised
I needed some explanation, then I realized
To consult greater authority, was what I need
Soon enough, I brought myself to ease

The judge was rumoured to solve matters in hell
And from his reputation anyone could tell
But this wasn't afterlife, this was the present land
And before him I was bound to stand

The only person who could help me, was Judge Pao, the great
What I did not realise though, is I was trembling at the gaze
By the time I reached the footstep, of his siheyuan, I inhaled,
I was about to knock on his door, but to my surprise I didn't fail

The door slid open, and there I was on my own
Standing face to face with a justice, whose eyes were like stone
“What is it?” Judge Pao grumbled and looked down on me.
To be fair it was 4am, which is not ideal to be

He looked he just banished, someone in eternal fire
And I was worried he was going to call me a liar

Nonetheless, I pointed, to my clothes which looked doused
Nearing a dark red maroon, it was once my blouse
“That's blood” I pointed out, just to confirm.
“Your own?” Judge Pao asked, to remain on terms.

This led me to question my communication skills
but I remained calm as I replied, while standing still

“No, I have just come to tell you that a murder has taken place”
“Just outside your courtyard”, I saw the look on his face
Intrigued, or so I thought, Judge Pao stroked his beard and went inside.
I didn't really know what was happening, so stepping in I tried

Peering inside the room, It was a well organised house
And I thought I was being, as quiet as a mouse
“What are you doing snooping?”, I almost jolted and tripped
Turns out he was just getting his slippers, and came from the back equipped

“I was just admiring your room”. I perked up a smile.
I don't think he believed me. I was acting quite hostile

I insisted on following, his each and every stride
As soon as he started walking, I was right there beside.
We had just taken a single pace forward, when he jerked behind
“When did the murder happen, what was the time”?

I honestly had no idea so I just said, “ 12 – 4 I think.”
I hoped that was correct, and started to reassuringly blink
It seemed like he made a mental note of everything I said.
There was no concrete evidence, but my instincts instead

And as we walked closer I saw it. There it lies.
The bark of the tree splattered with blood before my eyes
An idle body lying, not too far from the scene.
It was a girl. I knew that girl. She was about fourteen.

I knew why she got murdered. That I would know
I wasn't ready to reveal that though.

It was nearing 5am, and all the villagers from the towns
They were approaching. The gossip, it spread somehow
Somebody else must have saw the event
And then the message must have been sent

Judge Pao on the other hand, drove away guests who were keen
As they tried peeking their way to look at the crime scene
It was a long time before we disappointed all customers vast
We drove them away to their rabbit holes at last

I was keeping watch for any more sightseers, while Judge Pao examined
"A knife wound, or rather knife *wounds*", he said astounded
"stabbed right in the heart and stomach, must be painful to bear"
And I just hyperventilated, as I stood there

But I wanted to be a bit useful so I blurted out some words
"That girl was the town chief's daughter", I waited for him to turn
I then proceeded, with my facts to say,
"She has been pronounced missing, for quite a few days

And rumour had it that she ran away, holding on to a bag
Filled sapphire and gold and which her father used for brags
"Hmmm interesting" Judge Pao stroked his beard a second time
He reached around the girl's dress with a stick, aiming for a bag tied

With a silken string bound it seemed quite a hefty load
My eyes blinked themselves as I started to decode
That the very bag that was dangling
Was at fault for all bestowed...

I approached the bag, like predator with its prey
I examined it curiously, And looked at it that way
I hadn't realised that the bag, was there all along...
The thief didn't search properly, or their reasons were wrong

There was nothing else that sparked interest, so we called it a day
And casually headed towards Judge Pao's house, with all the information we got today
I nervously sat down, watching a person pace
Again and again and murmur about the case.

I did need to know, what we were getting at
Because he was solving, and I was just sat
I did need to know the process, so I could get closer to my dream
I wanted to become like him, and plot plans and schemes

Judge Pao came in front of me, and presented what he knew
His knowledge on current affairs, and what was new
I picked up a sense of worry from the tone in which he spoke
and with the frantic speed of talking, my mind almost broke

Judge Pao was not done yet though and continued on,

“They didn't want any money but killed at almost dawn,
which is a bit strange and also points out the fact
that the murderer was very bad at finding the bag”

“But then again, who wakes at 3?
Then leaves the gold, that they could get for free?
Also they happen to wear a white cloth
They're going at night, they should dress goth”

I look at my blouse that used to be white
Now it was red, which gave me a fright
Thankfully there wasn't, blood anywhere else
And I went back, listening to intel

“They were killed, with something that stabs—”
“It was a kitchen knife”, this opportunity I grabbed
I wanted to help, that's it, that's all
There's nothing deceiving that I have to call

“But that is a fact only the murderer would know”
Judge Pao kept staring, like there's something I owe
“Either you witnessed, the murder in front
Or you have committed a very deadly stunt”

“Maybe they were tired, I started to reply
And they had to run, since it was midnight”
I glanced at the judge, who looked at me with suspicion
What had I done to reach this position?

I hopped nervously and this is what I said,
“Maybe they did that, it's just a guess”
“You're wearing white and you were awake
Then the judge said “you made a mistake”

You know what trouble comes when someone lies
You know I can see it, right in your eyes
My ancestors before me they also know
And there's no other place where you can go

My sanity act collapsed, and soon it broke
I was about to defend, when I felt a poke
The Judge loomed over me, and he looked mad
I don't remember when I did this, no memory I had

I pleaded and pleaded, that I didn't know what came
For some reason, I didn't feel the same
I knew I killed that girl, but I don't know why
But to punish myself, he was right I should die.

Conquered Land of Bao

Hong Kong International School, Zhuang, Aisling – 14

Bao QingTian,
The Lord of Justice,
Honored
Yet feared by many
Stood firm with uprightness
In his glorified land
Justice is all he desired,
Ruthless
For virtue and ingenuity

Mercy
They begged
Innocence
You cried

Years you'd not returned
Wicks burned to the end, melted
Yet there was no man
No one by the name Chen Shimei
Burden, you left behind
Your shameful past, neglected
Famine and death
Nothing left,
Except for me, and I

Aloof,
You looked
“Why?”
I asked

Power and Gold
Was what you longed
Severing the past we tied
Eradicating...all
Our past and memories
Were worth not a penny
“Do you recognize Qin Xianglian”
Unknown, you affirmed
Yet, dead you wanted me to be

How satirical,
Lord Claimed
Justice,
He demanded

With gathered evidence, verified
Innocent not,
Chen was sentenced to death
Yet, still pardoned by the emperor
Indignant, his official headwear removed
Lord declared,
“Chen Shimei shall be executed before me”
Execution proceeded despite the edict
For Xianglian, and Justice

Bao QingTian,
The Lord of Justice
Entitled,
Justice Bao
In his conquered land

White Lie of the Black-Faced

St. Paul's Co-educational College, Tang, Yik Yan – 13

A candle of hope adorn the only desk in the room, flashing brightly,
the Kaifeng Office remains silent.
The setting is the same as usual: A desk and a chair in the center, simple and clean.
Metal guillotines stand still, cold and violent.
Only cicadas sing outside among trees.

The black-faced sat in the middle of the room.
Browsing through the cases he adjudged the morning, dipping his brush in ink.
Out of the blue, in front of the office, stopped a groom,
an old man came down from the sedan chair and walked with a wooden crutch.
Strolling towards the black-faced workroom.

'Judge Pao! Judge Pao! Please help!' He called, bowed and greeted.
The black-faced stretched out a helping hand and let him seated,
'See! My son! He...he is in danger!' He took out a folded letter from his pocket, tensely shivering
The black-faced glance at the man, comforting him and taking the letter, carefully reading...

*Dad, my dear!
Save me from such a fear!
The soldiers imperiled me with a long spear,
And tell me that a theft is what I bear!
If I ain't saved with one hundred taels of silver in a year,
The spear will pierce through my rear!*

'This was brought back from northern China by a homing pigeon. Oh, my son, my only son!'
'I will try my best to help, really, trust me.' promised the black-faced, firmly.
His eyes glitter with his determination to search for the truth,
and a mysterious grin appeared on his face – the confidence as a sleuth!
He never disappoint his clients,
As he knows, he should not, and could not,
Instead, he needs everyone to pay for their own fault!

The cool wind huffs and puffs, ridiculing the old man.
Why is he told such a joke?
His wrinkles are deep, tears dropping from his eyes.
The black-faced understand that he needs to take action, to reassemble the man's heart, which is broken.
The black-faced takes a deep breath, smells the letter.
The letter not only smells decent, but also uncomfortable.

This
is
certainly not the type of paper being used by a suspect or a prisoner!

The fragrant smell of a high-qualified rice paper
made the black-faced frowned.
The writer will not use such expensive paper
unless he wants to ensure that the letter could be read by an elder!

If his son is really in prison,
the letter should be instead, written
by the watchperson.

The black-faced rubbed the moon on his forehead
that he couldn't imagine meeting the hardest case ever in such an ordinary midnight.
He kneels in front of the old man on one knee,
'I told the soldiers to release him, tell him, next time when he is in need, Judge Pao will again help protect his right!'

One year later, the old man comes with a youngster again,
Reporting that his son came back and explained
He was in debt a month ago,
so he made a wrong decision to scam money.
He was moved for not being listed as a wanted criminal,
then he decided to become a coolie and learned to live by himself.
Improving his living standard without consuming pelf.

The old man kneels down, bow and thanks to the black-faced,
he noticed that the impartial judge had lied.
They gave the black-faced a pack of tea leaf,
although the black-faced forced them to take it away.

Both of them left ...

The black-faced is lost in thought.
Maybe, sometimes, guillotines can't address the root cause of crimes.
Sympathy and help are what criminals sought.
All of them deserve a second time.
To choose the right route and strive.



Creative Writing
Poetry
Group 3

Haiku New Tales of Judge Pao

Shanghai American School, Han, Eva – 12

Legend speaks of a
man who fights for the justice
of the innocent.

He creates a peace
during the Song Dynasty
against the culprits.

High-ranking agent
but myths told different tales—
an afterlife judge.

Campaigning against
corrupt officials and thieves
with no sign of doubt.

Carrying a heart
cold as ice, solid as stone
and sharp as the blade.

Stringent and fearless
with dominating power
and pure devotion.

A source of power
rising in reputation
for spreading justice.

Harbinger of Justice

Shanghai American School, Jin, Sheng—Han Sophie — 12

In the era when the darkness of corruption engulfs the land,
peasants and commoners all despaired,
until Judge Pao came to answer their pleas.
Armed with his deductions and intellect,
he punishes the wicked and saves the innocent.

His will is like an impregnable fortress,
no amount of bribery, flattery or luxury can penetrate it.
He speaks truth to power,
gives equal judgement,
deal sentences accordingly.
No compromises,
no mercy,
for the sake of the people.

His words are a shield,
defending the truth.
His words are a sword,
attacking away at criminals.
His deductions never cease to amaze,
unveiling all lies and deceits.
Under his detection,
officials' underhand tactics,
are now open secrets.

Scolding emperors,
his pillar of fame,
The threat of death just won't faze him.
Remonstrating any immoral acts,
his courage refuses to idly watch injustice.

He tries cases with integrity,
firmness,
impartiality.
He's sympathetic to the poor,
the uneducated,
the disadvantaged.
He's the Robin Hood of China,
aiding the commoners,
in order for equality to prevail.

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