

Literary Con/Texts Student Handout

Read closely the following poems on your own, and, based on the text, decide the gender and nationality of their authors, as well as the period in which they lived. Then, in small groups of four, discuss your choices and the rationale that informed them. You have twenty minutes to come up with a list you all agree on (more or less), with the goal of presenting your reasons to the rest of the class. We will all discuss as a class the various lists and will analyze together the literary, cultural, social and linguistic expectations and ideas that shaped your decisions and readings.

1. Amidst the flowers a jug of wine,
I pour alone lacking companionship.
So raising the cup I invite the Moon,
Then turn to my shadow which makes three of us.
Because the Moon does not know how to drink,
My shadow merely follows the movement of my body.
The moon has brought the shadow to keep me company a while,
The practice of mirth should keep pace with spring.
I start a song and the moon begins to reel,
I rise and dance and the shadow moves grotesquely.
While I'm still conscious let's rejoice with one another,
After I'm drunk let each one go his way.
Let us bind ourselves forever for passionless journeying.
Let us swear to meet again far in the Milky Way.

2. When I carefully consider the curious habits of dogs,
I am compelled to admit
That man is the superior animal.

When I consider the curious habits of man,
I confess, my friend, I am puzzled.

3. Love's intoxication, my disintegration:
My heart's beyond the need for food or sleep.
My body floats at sea; my feet and head
Are nowhere to be found; my soul has fled.

4. How quickly the season of apricots is over—
a single night's wind is enough.
I kneel on the ground, lifting one, then the next.
Eating those I can, before the bruises appear.

5. I live in sin, dying to myself I live;
Life is no longer mine, but belongs to sin;
My good is from heaven, my evil I give to myself,
From my own unbound will, which has been stolen from me.
My freedom is a slave, my divinity has made itself
Mortal.
Oh, unhappy state!
To what misery, to what life I've been born!
6. I always remember the sunset
Over the pavilion by the river.
So tipsy, we could not find our way home.
Our interest exhausted, the evening late,
We tried to turn the boat homeward.
By mistake, we entered deep within the lotus bed.
Row! Row the boat!
A flock of herons, frightened,
Suddenly flew skyward.