

The Fast of Chu Chuan

For thirty aching years
 you sat and stared at a wall,
Foregoing the sweets of this world
 for a sweeter nothingness.
Sometimes you even laughed
 at the bell's daft dinner-call:
Its meaning, eat or not,
 long since grown meaningless.

—*Po Chu-i (772-846)*
(Translated from the Chinese
by Graeme Wilson)