

SELWYN PRITCHARD

## Two Poems Inspired by China

### 1. Recollection in Tranquillity

—for Professor Dai Wei-Hua et al.

Thursday afternoon was Party time:  
I could usually run a post-grad class.  
I remember once I played "The Prelude"  
then standing at the window, down below  
I saw the faculty raking leaves with zest,  
collecting garden trash, smoke rising  
fragrant from their dotted fires.

I turned up Wordsworth. Faces shone:  
they waved and laughed—  
it made me smile to see professors  
and the rest, both sexes, deft  
with collective skills learned in the dynasty of Mao ...  
They seem to enjoy it now.

## 2. Home

How good to be back  
in our bed under  
the iron roof and  
amazement of stars,  
the wind continuing  
where the sea left off.

Where is the Chinese train  
which hoots disdain for sleep?  
Where are the rats' squeals  
outside our door, beyond  
the net the compulsive  
mosquitoes' bloody lusts?  
I cannot sleep without them yet.