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)