

*Wilderness House Literary Review 1/4*

**Four Poems after Xue Tao**

1.

We will never share these flowers  
that bloom this afternoon—  
these lilacs that smell  
like love would smell  
if it could.

We will never share  
the gut-deep sadness  
we would feel when  
the flowers fall  
to the ground to fold  
into themselves.

If you ever wondered  
when I missed you most  
simply think this—  
I missed you when  
the flowers bloomed up  
to the sky and I missed you  
when they shivered  
and fell dying to the ground.

2.

Absently, I twist  
grass stems and flowers  
into the shape of  
your heart  
and mine—  
entwining the one  
to the other—  
and send it to you,  
the only one  
who understand my poems.

It is almost noon and with it,  
a sorrow like thawing earth  
breaks the day apart.  
The sparrows who fled  
here in the fall  
now sing songs so sad  
I almost want to die.

3.

The wind—  
like these flowers—  
like this whole season—  
is growing old and dying.

Does anyone know if—  
or even when—  
we'll see each other again?  
If I can't tie your heart  
to mine, why keep on tying  
flowers into  
heart-shaped knots?

4.

Do the lilacs—  
growing fat on the branch—  
know how overwhelming it is  
when two people  
who love each other  
are not together?

When I look at myself  
in the water, my tears  
are the shapes of spoons.  
Does the wind—  
blowing this day  
with such recklessness—  
even know  
what tears are?