



THE MOUNTAIN POEMS OF STONEHOUSE

translation and commentary by

RED PINE

The Mountain Poems of Stonehouse

translation and commentary by

RED PINE



COPPER CANYON
PRESS

Note to the Reader

Copper Canyon Press encourages you to calibrate your settings by using the line of characters below, which optimizes the line length and character size:

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Pell

Please take the time to adjust the size of the text on your viewer so that the line of characters above appears on one line, if possible.

When this text appears on one line on your device, the resulting settings will most accurately reproduce the layout of the text on the page and the line length intended by the author. Viewing the title at a higher than optimal text size or on a device too small to accommodate the lines in the text will cause the reading experience to be altered considerably; single lines of some poems will be displayed as multiple lines of text. If this occurs, the turn of the line will be marked with a shallow indent.

On many devices, double-tapping the Chinese will enlarge the image for better readability.

Thank you. We hope you enjoy these poems.

This e-book edition was created through a special grant provided by the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation. Copper Canyon Press would like to thank Constellation Digital Services for their partnership in making this e-book possible.

for Stefan Hyner and Mimi Steele

Contents

- [Title Page](#)
- [Note to Reader](#)

1. [Preface](#)

2. [Introduction](#)

3. [Seven-Syllable Verses](#)

- [1. I made my home west of Cha River](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [2. To glimpse the fluttering of shy birds](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [3. Grave upon grave buried beneath weeds](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [4. A paper-window bamboo hut a hedge of hibiscus](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [5. To glorify the Way what should people turn to](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [6. Movement isn't right and stillness is wrong](#)
([Chinese](#))

- 7. Below the pines its twin doors are never closed
(Chinese)
- 8. More than twenty years west of Mount Yen
(Chinese)
- 9. Green gullies and red cliffs wherever I look
(Chinese)
- 10. Don't think a mountain home means you're free
(Chinese)
- 11. My hut is at the top of Hsia Summit (Chinese)
- 12. After twenty years of nights beneath the moon
and the clouds (Chinese)
- 13. Seclusion of course means far from the world
(Chinese)
- 14. I entered the mountains and learned to be dumb
(Chinese)
- 15. The streams are so clear and shallow I can see
pebbles (Chinese)
- 16. A white-haired Zen monk with a hut for my home
(Chinese)
- 17. I sleep in the clouds where the sun doesn't shine
(Chinese)

- [18. My Zen hut rests upon rocks at the summit](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [19. The Great Way has never known abundance or want](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [20. My broken-down hut rests upon rocks](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [21. A human life lasts one hundred years](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [22. A trail through green mist red clouds and bamboo](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [23. A monk on his own sits quiet and relaxed](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [24. I may be white-haired and nothing but bones](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [25. I chose high cliffs far from a market](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [26. Their zigzagging sails crowd government quays](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [27. Who enters this gate who studies this teaching](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [28. A friend of seclusion arrives at my gate](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [29. A hundred years pass by in a flash](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [30. I entered the mountains and my cares became clear](#) ([Chinese](#))

- [31. This body lasts about as long as a bubble](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [32. I saw through my worldly concerns of the past](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [33. Day after day I let things go](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [34. A white-haired monk afflicted with age](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [35. Profit and fame aren't worth extolling](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [36. I was a Zen monk who didn't know Zen](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [37. I've lived as a hermit more than forty years](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [38. Scorpion tails and wolf hearts pervade the world](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [39. The crow and the hare race without rest](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [40. A thatch hut in blue mountains beside a green stream](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [41. The ancients entered mountains in search of the Way](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [42. Everything's growth depends on its roots](#)
([Chinese](#))

- [43. I live in the mountains in order to practice](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [44. I searched high and low without success](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [45. Old but at peace in body and mind](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [46. Opening my door at dawn to fetch water](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [47. I built a thatched hut deep in the clouds](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [48. Examine the patterns of transient existence](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [49. To get to the end the very end](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [50. I'm a poor but happy follower of the Way.](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [51. You know very well yet seem not to know](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [52. The shame of dumb ideas is suffered by the best](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [53. A round head and square robe constitute a monk](#)
([Chinese](#))

- [54. The sunrise in the east the sunset in the west](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [55. The Way of the Dharma is too singular to copy.](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [56. There isn't much time in this fleeting life](#)
([Chinese](#))

4. [Five-Syllable Verses](#)

- [57. Followers of the Way are done with reason](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [58. A hoe provides a living](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [59. Most of the time I smile](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [60. Reasoning comes to an end](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [61. The landscape unrolls from the cliffs](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [62. A winding muddy trail](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [63. A monk's home in the mountains](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [64. Where did that gust come from](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [65. From the very top of Hsiawushan](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [66. A hoe supplies a living](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [67. Lunch in my mountain kitchen](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [68. True emptiness is like a translucent sea](#)
([Chinese](#))

- [69. The Eighth Month in the mountains](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [70. A thatch hut in a bamboo grove](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [71. As soon as the red sun bites the mountain](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [72. I hiked staff in hand beyond the pines](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [73. On a ten-thousand-story-high mountain](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [74. Advancing or retiring grasping or letting go](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [75. I weave rush grass for my hut](#) ([Chinese](#))

5. [Seven-Syllable Quatrains](#)

- [76. A thatch hut is lonely on a new fall night](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [77. Mountains of fiddleheads garden of tea](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [78. Someone asked what year I arrived](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [79. If you hate hard work and like to loaf](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [80. Old and retired I nurse a sick body](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [81. Novices don't stay to stir the fire](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [82. Jade-hall silver-candle nights of song](#) ([Chinese](#))

- [83. All those I meet say the world's ways are hard](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [84. There's nothing going on in my mountain kitchen](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [85. I plant winter melon then aubergine](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [86. Will the porridge or rice ever end](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [87. Eight or nine pines behind his hut](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [88. This is something no one can force](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [89. What's gone is already gone](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [90. Three or four naps every day](#). ([Chinese](#))
- [91. The flux of attachments is easy to stop](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [92. True emptiness is clear and always present](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [93. Sky Lake is a pool of aquamarine](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [94. Old and exhausted I'm truly lazy](#). ([Chinese](#))
- [95. Old through and through I'm utterly lazy](#).
([Chinese](#))
- [96. There's no dust to sweep on a mountain](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [97. My hut is two maybe three mats wide](#) ([Chinese](#))

- [98. Why do my Zen friends choose smoke and vines](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [99. A clean patch of ground after a rain](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [100. Ten thousand schemes and fantasies have ended](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [101. My home in the cliffs is like a tomb](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [102. There's a snag in front like a standing man](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [103. Up-and-down mountain zigzag trail](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [104. A hundred years slip by unnoticed](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [105. There's a road to the West nobody takes](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [106. Try to find what's real and what's real becomes more distant](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [107. Trying to become a buddha is easy](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [108. Stripped of conditions my mind is at rest](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [109. Work with no mind and all work stops](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [110. No mind in my work the wind blows through the trees](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [111. New year head old year tail](#) ([Chinese](#))

- [112. Head of white hair shoulders all bones](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [113. Before I can finish the *Lankavatara*](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [114. Corpses don't stink in the mountains](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [115. Rain soaks my hut then the sun shines](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [116. No one else sees what I see clearly](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [117. Half the window pine shadows half the window moon](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [118. Not one care in mind all year](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [119. For dinner I cook a bowl of old rice](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [120. I moved west into a maze of peaks](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [121. Mountain wind ripped out my old paper windows](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [122. The setting sun's cold light fills half the window](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [123. A few trees in bloom radiant red](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [124. I shut my door before the clouds return](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [125. After porridge after rice after drinking tea](#)
([Chinese](#))

- 126. Dense fog and clouds too thick to push away.
(Chinese)
- 127. As soon as the sun lights the southeast sky.
(Chinese)
- 128. I eat a peach spit out the pit the pit becomes a tree (Chinese)
- 129. My hut isn't quite ten feet across (Chinese)
- 130. Don't run away when he strikes (Chinese)
- 131. Our time is confined to one hundred years
(Chinese)
- 132. The whole Buddhist Canon is worthless old paper (Chinese)
- 133. Leaves along the shore stop and flow with the stream (Chinese)
- 134. Hsiawu is high and the trail is long (Chinese)
- 135. I feel old and decrepit and weaker by the day.
(Chinese)
- 136. A hermit's hut is lonely encircled by bamboo
(Chinese)
- 137. People say everyday mind isn't our buddha nature (Chinese)

- [138. East or west north or south then back again](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [139. What sort of work takes place in the mountains](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [140. Too long away from monasteries I don't have a cushion](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [141. When my clothes come apart I plant hemp](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [142. Parched wheat and pine pollen make a fine meal](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [143. Life in the mountains depends on a hoe](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [144. I repair my hoe and let my hut lean](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [145. From outside my round pointed-roof hut](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [146. I built a thatch hut beneath tall pines](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [147. Late autumn rain is all mist](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [148. When the red sun climbs above the blue mountains](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [149. My hut is so secluded it's beyond the reach of dust](#) ([Chinese](#))

- [150. Now that I'm old nothing disturbs me](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [151. After meditation I chant a Cold Mountain poem](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [152. For property monks apply at an office](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [153. I put mulberry wood in the stove to make charcoal](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [154. Last year my food supply failed me](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [155. A pointed-roof hut in the shade of the clouds](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [156. How could someone who practices not become a buddha](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [157. I sit and meditate in the quiet and dark](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [158. Jade-winged plum blossoms perfumed trees](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [159. Good and bad fortune never lose their way.](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [160. A lotus-leaf robe keeps me warm when I'm cold](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [161. My newly sewn paper quilt is so warm](#)
([Chinese](#))

- [162. I chop green wood and lift the pole \(Chinese\)](#)
- [163. It's hard to say if the year has been hot or cold \(Chinese\)](#)
- [164. Surrounding the summit is nothing but pines \(Chinese\)](#)
- [165. Sewing purple robes with fine yellow silk \(Chinese\)](#)
- [166. Spring is gone summer is gone and autumn is cool \(Chinese\)](#)
- [167. The people I meet are busy night and day \(Chinese\)](#)
- [168. People all know about death and rebirth \(Chinese\)](#)
- [169. People all say there is time to cultivate \(Chinese\)](#)

6. [Other Verses](#)

- [170. To Redcurtain Mountain and Sky Lake Spring \(Chinese\)](#)
- [171. A clear sky and nothing planned I climbed Hsia Summit \(Chinese\)](#)
- [172. Magpies talk magpie outside my hut \(Chinese\)](#)

- [173. The trees in the forest grow new leaves](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [174. Cold Mountain has a line](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [175. The moon lights up my door](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [176. After a meal I dust off a boulder and sleep](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [177. If you don't read sutras when you're young](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [178. I planted a few hills of beans](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [179. Whenever the mountain enjoys a good rain](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [180. I built my hut on a desolate ridge](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [181. Letting go means letting everything go](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [182. My broken-down hut isn't three rafters wide](#)
([Chinese](#))
- [183. I built my hut on top of Hsia Summit](#) ([Chinese](#))
- [184. A couple of impoverished monks](#) ([Chinese](#))

- [About the Author](#)
- [Also by Red Pine](#)

- [Acknowledgments](#)
- [Copyright](#)
- [Special Thanks](#)
- [Index](#)

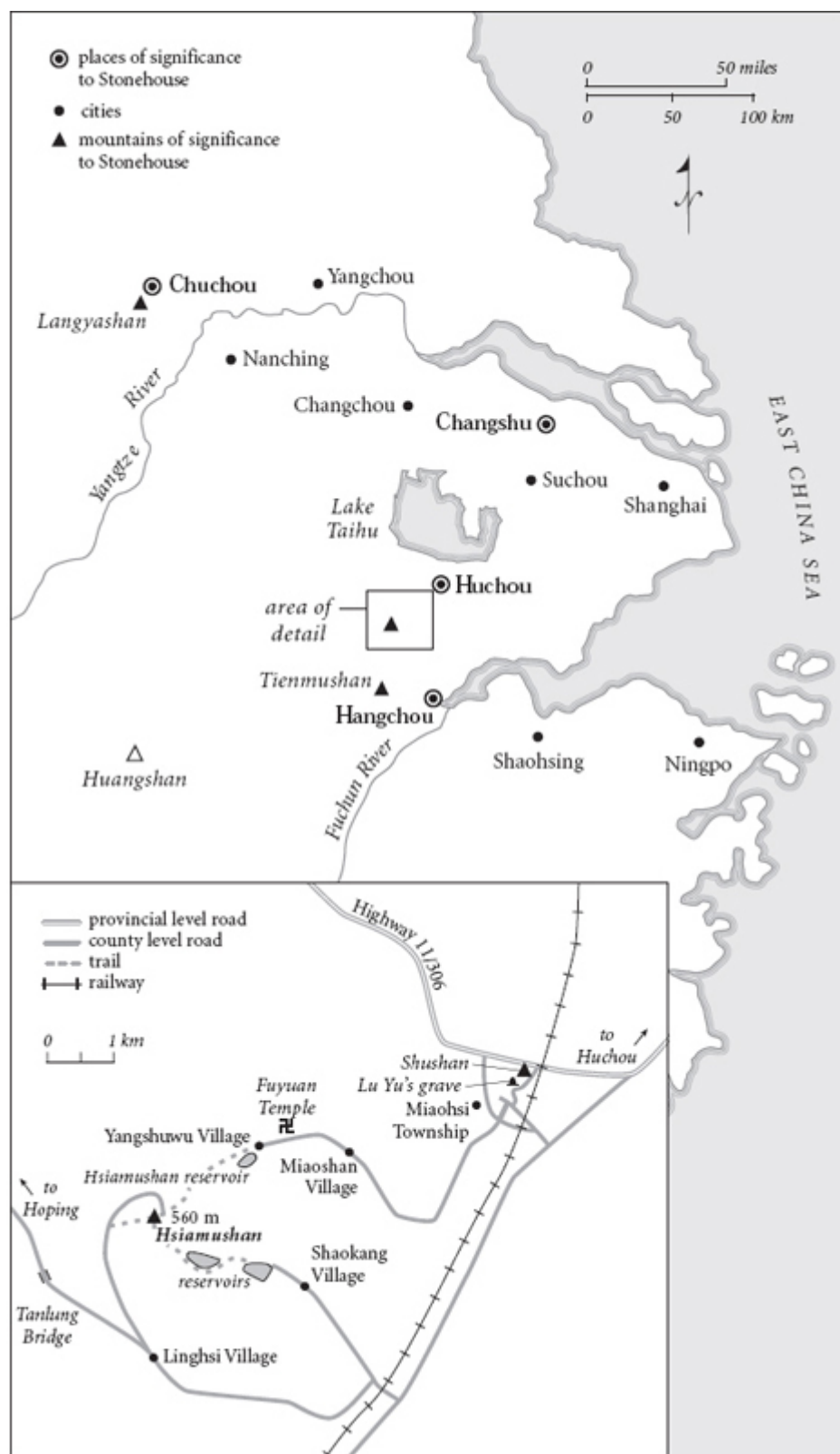
PREFACE

If you've never heard of Stonehouse, you're not alone. Not many people have, even in China, even among Buddhists, much less poets. Back in the early 1980s when I was translating the poems of Hanshan (寒山), or Cold Mountain, one of the Chinese editions I was using was published by Taiwan's Hsinwenfeng (新文豐) Publishing Company, and it included the poems of two other Buddhist poets. When I got to the end of Cold Mountain's poems, there was Stonehouse waiting for me. I couldn't believe my good fortune. I was captivated by his poems. And yet I couldn't find anyone in Taiwan who had heard of him. Undeterred, once I finished Cold Mountain's poems, I translated Stonehouse's as well.

Publishing them, though, was a problem. It was hard enough finding a publisher in America for Cold Mountain, who at least had a reputation of sorts. Trying to interest a publisher in Stonehouse was a nonstarter. I ended up publishing his *Mountain Poems* myself in a limited edition distributed by my friends at Empty Bowl in Port Townsend. Although that edition soon went out of print, I later combined it with Stonehouse's other works—his *Gathas* and *Zen Talks*—and published all three in a single volume entitled *The Zen Works of Stonehouse*, first with Mercury House and later with

Counterpoint Press. The *Mountain Poems*, though, have remained my favorite, and I have thought about revising my earlier translations and bringing them out again in a separate volume. And now the same press that published my Cold Mountain translations thirty years ago has offered to do just that. So here they are, Stonehouse's *Mountain Poems*, the same poems I translated and published back in 1986. Only now they're better. But first, let me tell you about the poet no one knows about.





Stonehouse was born in 1272 in the town of Changshu (常熟), not far from where the Yangtze empties into the East China Sea. Nothing is known about his family or his early life, other than that his father's surname was Wen (溫) and his mother's surname was Liu (劉) and that he received the traditional Confucian education for someone from a family of means. No one knows either when he started using the name Stonehouse (Shihwu, 石屋) or why. He probably picked up the name while he was still studying to become an official. It was the name of a cave on Yushan (虞山), just outside his hometown. Yushan was known for its pine trees, its rock formations, and its springs, in particular a spring that flowed out of a cave as big as a house. Locals still call it Stonehouse Cave. Ironically, the scenes of Yushan were among the favorite subjects of Huang Kung-wang (黃公望, 1269–1354), one of the great artists of the time. Huang was also born in Changshu, and his grave is still there on Yushan, not far from the cave from which Stonehouse took his name. It was not uncommon for an educated person to assume such a name. Many people took several names in the course of their careers, especially artists and poets.

Despite Stonehouse's Confucian upbringing, when he was twenty, he changed tracks. He quit his studies and became a novice under the guidance of Master Yung-wei (永惟) at Hsingchiao Chungfu Temple (興教崇福寺) just outside Changshu. After three years, he was formally ordained and given the monastic name Ch'ing-kung (清珙). Being a young monk, he did what many young monks did back then and still

do today: he sought further instruction. One day soon after his ordination, he saw a monk walk past his door wearing a broad-brimmed straw hat—the kind travelers wore to keep the sun out of their eyes and the rain off their shoulders. The monk also had a hiking staff in his hand. When Stonehouse asked where he was going, the monk said he was going to Tienmushan (天目山) to see Kao-feng Yuan-miao (高峰原妙), a great Zen master of the time. He invited Stonehouse to join him, and the two monks journeyed there together. It wasn't far — maybe a four- or five-day journey on foot, assuming they didn't shorten it by availing themselves of the Grand Canal as far as Hangchou. Kao-feng was living on the West Peak of Tienmushan, just south of Hangchou.

Following their arrival, Kao-feng asked Stonehouse why he had come. Stonehouse said, "I've come for the Dharma." Kao-feng said, "The Dharma isn't so easy to find. You'll need to burn your fingers for incense."¹ To this, Stonehouse replied, "But I see the master before me with my own eyes. How could the Dharma be hidden?" Kao-feng nodded his approval and suggested Stonehouse study the koan "All things come back to one" (萬法歸一).

Stonehouse stayed with Kao-feng for three years, serving with diligence but without satisfying his quest for the Dharma. Stonehouse finally decided to leave and went to announce his departure. Kao-feng said, "You're still a blind donkey. But over in the Huai watershed (淮河), there's a master named Chi-an (及庵). Why don't you go see him?" Stonehouse followed this suggestion. He traveled west to the old capital of Nanching,

crossed the Yangtze, and found Chi-an outside Chienyang (建陽)² on Langyashan (琅玕山) at West Peak Temple (西峰寺).

Chi-an asked Stonehouse where he came from, and Stonehouse told him, "From Tienmu." Chi-an asked, "And what instruction did you receive?" Stonehouse said, "All things come back to one." When Chi-an asked what that meant, Stonehouse didn't answer. Chi-an said, "Those words are dead. Where did you pick up such rot?" Stonehouse bowed and asked to be instructed. Chi-an said, "Tell me what this means: 'Don't stop where there are buddhas. Hurry past where there aren't any buddhas.'" Stonehouse answered, "I don't understand." Chi-an replied, "More dead words." Stonehouse still didn't understand, but he decided to stay with Chi-an.

Finally, one day Chi-an asked him what the koan about buddhas meant, and Stonehouse answered, "When you mount a horse, you see the road." Chi-an said, "You've been here now for six years. Is that all you've learned?" Exasperated, Stonehouse left. But on his way down the mountain, he looked up and saw a pavilion. Suddenly he understood.³ He hurried back and told Chi-an, "'Don't stop where there are buddhas.' Those are dead words. 'Hurry past where there aren't any buddhas.' Those are dead words, too. Now I understand living words." Chi-an asked, "And what do you understand?" Stonehouse answered, "When the rain finally stops in late spring, the oriole sings from a tree."⁴ Chi-an nodded his approval. Later, when Stonehouse decided to

leave, Chi-an told him, “In the future, we will share the same niche.”

Not long afterward, Chi-an was asked to take over as abbot of Taochang Temple (道場寺) outside Huchou (湖州), and Stonehouse later joined him there. When Chi-an introduced his disciple to the assembly, he said, “Here is a rare fish that slipped through the net and entered the Dharma Sea.” After several years at Taochang Temple, Stonehouse was invited to become the meditation master of Hangchou’s famous Lingyin Temple (靈隱寺), a hundred kilometers to the south. It was a prestigious post in the monastic world, but after a short stay Stonehouse decided he preferred the mountains. He traveled back toward Huchou, and twenty-five kilometers south of the city he took up residence at the southern summit of Hsiamushan (霞幕山), where he built a hut and began life as a hermit. The year was 1312, and he was forty years old. A contemporary wrote that Stonehouse lived a hard life, refusing to beg for food in nearby villages, unlike other hermit monks. When he ran out of food, he survived on water and wild plants. According to this early account, he was hard on himself but kind and generous to others.

Stonehouse enjoyed the seclusion of the mountain for twenty years, until the spring of 1331. The previous year Emperor Wen had ordered Fuyuan Temple (福原寺) rebuilt in what is now Hsintai County (新埭鎮), eighty kilometers east of Hsiamushan. The temple was originally built in 1312 by the emperor’s father, and once the rebuilding was finished, he asked Stonehouse to take over as the temple’s abbot.

Stonehouse at first declined but was admonished, “If monks are supposed to work for the benefit of the Dharma, how can they succeed while living in idleness and isolation.” And so, Stonehouse left Hsiamushan and took up his post as abbot of Fuyuan Temple.⁵

While he was there, he gave instruction in Zen,⁶ but his heart remained in the mountains. Finally, after seven years, he pleaded old age, and in 1338 he returned to the mountain. This time, he settled on the mountain’s northern summit, known as Hsiawushan (霞霧山). It was toward the end of this second stay, around the year 1350, that he compiled his *Mountain Poems*, which included poems that spanned both periods of residence on the mountain.

Soon afterward, in the spring of 1352, in recognition of his reputation as one of the age’s great Dharma masters, the empress presented Stonehouse with a golden robe. His disciples were in awe, but Stonehouse remained unmoved. In autumn of that same year, on the twenty-first day of the seventh moon, he told his disciples he was feeling ill. The following night, he announced he was leaving them. One of them asked whether he had any parting words. Stonehouse picked up his writing brush one last time and wrote:

Corpses don’t stink in the mountains
there’s no need to bury them deep
I might not have the fire of samadhi
but enough wood to end this family line⁷

He dropped the brush and died. He was eighty-one. Mindful of Chi-an's premonition that someday both teacher and disciple would share the same niche, Stonehouse's disciples put their teacher's cremated remains next to those of Chi-an, which Stonehouse had already interred on Hsiawushan, not far from where he built his second hut. Three hundred years later, a local official is reported to have opened Stonehouse's stupa while restoring it. The relics emitted such an intense light, the official was dumbfounded and couldn't move. Only after others had re-interred the relics and repaired the stupa did the light stop and the official recover. Earlier, a portion of Stonehouse's relics was sent to the Korean monk Taego Pou (太古普愚),⁸ who in turn presented them to his ruler, King Kong-min (恭愍王, r. 1351–74), who had a stupa built for them.

This then is all I have been able to find out about Stonehouse. It is based largely on Stonehouse's stupa inscription, which was written in the fall of 1377 and which has survived in the three Ming dynasty editions of his poems, while the stupa itself has not.



In the fall of 1991, I decided to see what more I could learn by visiting the mountain on which Stonehouse once lived. I was traveling with my friends Steve Johnson and Finn Wilcox, gathering material for a series of English-language radio programs I later recorded and broadcast on Metro News in Hong Kong, and Huchou was on the way.

In Taiwan I had located Hsiamushan south of Huchou on a declassified Chinese military map. But I had neglected to bring the adjoining sections with me and had no idea how to reach the mountain from Huchou. All I remembered was that it was southwest. I looked at the route map on the Huchou bus station wall and picked Teching (德清), a town about forty kilometers to the south. I reasoned that if we hiked into the mountains west of Teching, sooner or later we would stumble onto Hsiamushan. I went to the ticket window and asked for three seats on the next bus to Teching. Not many foreigners passed through Huchou in 1991, and when the ticket agent saw us, she left and returned with the stationmaster. I told him we wanted three tickets to Teching. He nodded and sold us tickets for a bus due to leave thirty minutes later.

Meanwhile, a crowd of onlookers had gathered, and the stationmaster suggested we would be more comfortable waiting in his office. We gladly accepted. After exchanging introductions, I asked him whether he had ever heard of Hsiamushan. But neither he nor anyone at the station recognized the name. Perhaps the name had changed, I thought. While our host left to get us some tea, I looked around his office. On the wall behind me was a detailed topographic map of the entire county. It took me about thirty seconds to find Hsiamushan. It actually existed. After six hundred years, the name was still the same, and it was only twenty-five kilometers southwest of Huchou. When the stationmaster returned, we told him to forget Teching, we wanted to go to Hsiamushan, and I pointed to the map. He not

only refunded our fares, he went outside to hire a taxi to take us there. While we were waiting, I continued to pore over the map and also located Taochangshan (道場山), which was where Stonehouse lived with Chi-an before moving to Hsiamushan.

A few minutes later, we were in the taxi and on our way there. After heading south about five kilometers, we turned east and drove as far as we could up a rutted dirt road. A muddy trail led us the rest of the way to Wanshou Temple (萬壽寺). In Stonehouse's day it was called Taochang Temple and was considered one of the ten great Zen centers in all of China. But it had since fallen on hard times, very hard times.

Inside the main shrine hall, we met the abbot, Master Fushing (馥馨). He said that during the Cultural Revolution everything was destroyed, except the main hall's T'ang dynasty pillars, a T'ang dynasty well, and the Sung dynasty pagoda on the ridge behind the temple. He invited us to join him for tea and a dessert of fried rice pudding. While we sipped our tea and ate our pudding, I showed him my edition of Stonehouse's poems. I asked him whether he had heard of Stonehouse or Chi-an. He just shook his head. We chatted for half an hour, and as soon as we finished our pudding, we said goodbye. The day was half-gone, and we were anxious to find Hsiamushan while there was still light.

We returned to the highway and continued south. I should have borrowed the stationmaster's map or at least drawn my own and written down the village names along the way. We spent the next hour stopping every few kilometers to ask

people along the roadside whether we were headed in the right direction. Everyone shrugged, and we continued on in ignorance. Finally, just after the road crossed a set of railroad tracks, a farmer told us to turn west onto a dirt lane just wide enough for a single car. We followed his directions, and after four or five kilometers we came to a village. It was at the foot of a mountain, and as luck would have it, the villagers called their mountain Hsiamushan.

They pointed us back the way we had come, to a turnoff, which we took up an even narrower track that led along the west side of the mountain. It was slow going, but our driver managed to keep his battered blue Skoda sedan going far beyond where sense would have suggested he stop. The road, such as it was, circled around the north side of the mountain and brought us to just below the summit, where a chain and a compound of blockhouses barred our way. Our driver parked his car, and before anyone inside the buildings had time to come out, we got out and climbed over the chain and started up a trail that led the rest of the way to the top of the mountain.

A few minutes later, we were there, at the summit — not that we had a better view. The bamboo was so high, we couldn't see beyond it. But there was something other than bamboo at the summit. There was a metal tower and a big metal dish and a bunker, from which six soldiers came running with rifles pointed in our direction. As they surrounded us, the base commander came puffing up the trail from one of the blockhouses below. I explained that we were looking for

traces of a monk who had lived on the mountain six hundred years earlier—which in China isn't as silly as it sounds. I showed him my string-bound edition of Stonehouse's poems. Along with my translations, it included the Chinese text. His eyes opened wide, and he smiled. He pulled out his machete, waved the soldiers away, and led us straight into the bamboo. It was a variety known as arrow bamboo, which produces the most delicious shoots but which becomes incredibly thick if allowed to grow wild.

The commander and his machete disappeared before us. We tried to follow, but the bamboo was so dense that we sometimes found ourselves stuck, unable to move our arms or our legs. Yet somehow we always got unstuck and managed to find the commander's swath ahead of us. After twenty minutes and maybe two hundred meters, we finally emerged at a small farmstead and open vistas just south of the summit.

The commander said that before the telecommunication base was built,⁹ the farmhouse was the only structure on the mountain. As we approached, a farmer appeared in the doorway and waved for us to come inside. He said the place was originally a small Buddhist temple whose monks had been forced to leave during the Cultural Revolution. In the six hundred years since Stonehouse lived there, the place hadn't changed much. The roof was covered with tiles instead of thatch. And the walls were made of rock instead of bamboo and mud. But the dirt floor was probably the same dirt floor. And the spring Stonehouse called Sky Lake still flowed from

the rocks in back. And the slopes were still covered with tea and bamboo. And there were still a couple of pines hanging on.

The farmer poured us tea, and we sat down on the tree stumps he used for chairs. He lived there alone, he said. His children had grown up, and his wife had moved down to the village at the foot of the mountain where life was easier. He had been living at the summit by himself, he said, for the past twenty years. Like Stonehouse, he didn't have much to say. I was reminded of the penultimate verse of the *Mountain Poems*:

I built my hut on top of Hsia Summit
plowing and hoeing make up my day
a half dozen terraced fields
two or three hermit neighbors
I made a pond for the moon
and sell wood to buy grain
an old man with few schemes
now you know everything I own^{[10](#)}

That was in 1991. Twenty years later, I visited the mountain again in the company of several other foreign friends and a local historian named Wu Zhen (吴震), better known by his *nom de thé*: Dacha (大茶), or Big Tea. We drove up the mountain on a much smoother road this time. It was still dirt, but it was smoother. Just before the summit, we parked at the same place as before. I was surprised to see that the blockhouses had been replaced by a water-bottling plant. And

there was no chain to climb over this time. We followed the same old trail again on foot, but it was now wide enough for a car. A few minutes later, the trail ended where I expected to see the old farmhouse. But the farmhouse had become a temple. It was called Yunlinshi (雲林寺), or Cloud Forest Temple. As we approached, we heard chanting. We arrived as the noon chant was ending and just in time for lunch. As the abbot came out of the shrine hall, he saw us and led us into the mess hall, where several dozen laywomen were sitting down to the noon meal, which is always the biggest meal of the day at any Buddhist monastery. The laywomen made room for us at one of the tables, and we enjoyed a memorable lunch of mostly mountain produce. The place had changed, but it was still surrounded by hillsides of bamboo and tea.



Yulin Temple



Site of Stonehouse's first hut on Hsiamushan

Afterward, Big Tea led us back to the bottling plant and just beyond it to the ruins of another farmhouse-temple near the northern part of the summit. He said most scholars were of the opinion that this was where Stonehouse lived, not at Yunlin Temple, which was where I thought he lived. It was so dark and swampy, I was not convinced. But my friends and I had other places to go that day, and we didn't linger.

Recently, I visited the mountain again, again with Big Tea. I had some questions only another walk around the top of the mountain could answer, including questions concerning the location of Stonehouse's hut. Was it at Yunlin Temple, or was it near the water-bottling plant? Since my previous visit, Big Tea had found some old maps of the mountain, maps that were part of the Huchou Gazetteer (湖州地方志) published back in the nineteenth century. I was surprised to see that the

summit of the mountain had two names. The southern part of the summit was labeled Hsiamushan, and the northern part was labeled Hsiawushan. Stonehouse used both names in his poems, but no one had given any thought to what that meant. Most likely they thought it was a printing error or reflected a change in the mountain's name whereby both names were at one point retained. But seeing both names on the same mountain, I came to a different conclusion, namely, that Stonehouse lived in two different places on the same mountain.



Distant view of Hsiamushan from vicinity of Fuyuan Temple

In poem 170, Stonehouse says he moved to Hsiamushan in 1312, not to Hsiawushan, while his stupa inscription, composed in 1377, lists his residence as being on Hsiawushan, not on Hsiamushan. Rather than confusing the

issue of where Stonehouse lived, the idea of two locations made sense. After all, Stonehouse vacated his first hut on Hsiamushan when he became abbot of Fuyuan Temple in 1331. When he did, another hermit most likely moved in. I'd seen that happen in China on other mountains where hermits lived. So when Stonehouse returned in 1338, he chose a new location for his hut, near what was now the water-bottling plant, where he noted in one of his last poems: "who would have guessed at seventy-seven / I would dig a pond for lotus roots and water chestnuts."¹¹ Clearly, he was not living at Sky Lake anymore, the name he gave to the spring-fed pond near his first hut.

Walking around both locations only helped confirm this, as I began seeing certain poems in one of the two locations but not in the other. Finally, I felt I had cleared up the confusion about the location of Stonehouse's residence, at least to my satisfaction. As for Stonehouse's stupa and the stupa of his teacher, they were somewhere in the ruins of the stupa cemetery whose nameless stones covered the overgrown slope near Stonehouse's second hut. One of the stupas was still intact, but it dated back only to the Ch'ing dynasty. A Korean Buddhist group also visited the mountain, and in 2008 they erected a memorial stupa to commemorate Stonehouse's transmission of the Dharma to Korea. But Stonehouse's own stupa had merged with the hillside.

In my earlier edition of these poems I neglected to mention their textual basis. When I first translated the *Mountain Poems*, I was living at Bamboo Lake (竹子湖), a farming village near the summit of Chihshingshan (七星山) an hour by bus north of Taipei. But my wife was still living with her parents in the city, and their apartment was only a five-minute walk from Taiwan's National Central Library. One day when I was in town and had nothing better to do, I decided to see what I could find in the library's archives. I should have visited earlier. Within a matter of minutes, I found three Ming dynasty copies of Stonehouse's poems. Surprisingly, two of these early copies were published only a few decades after Stonehouse's death. One copy included a preface written at Hangchow's Lingyin Temple by the poet-monk Yu-chang Lai-fu (豫章來復) and dated the fifteenth year of the Hungwu (洪武) reign period, or 1382. A second copy was less precise and listed only the Hungwu period (1368–1398) as its date of publication. The third copy was published near the end of the Ming dynasty in 1615 by P'an Shih-jen (潘是仁). Naturally, a number of later editions of the *Mountain Poems* have appeared over the years. But I have based my translations on these three early copies, and where variants occur, I have invariably sided with the Ming dynasty versions and have mentioned this in my notes.

Since I first translated and published Stonehouse's *Mountain Poems*, I have moved on to other poets. But Stonehouse is still my favorite, and whenever I give a public reading, I invariably include a few of his poems. But I have

discovered that I can't read just any poem. Many of my earlier translations, I have found, don't read that well. This, I presume, is a problem every translator of poetry encounters. What I translate one day doesn't read that well the next. And this goes on, until the publisher says it's time to send in the manuscript. Hence, reading my translations years later, I cannot help but cringe. Some translations still work. Others don't. Of course, translators know that translating poetry is not the same as translating prose, that when you translate a poem you have to make a poem. But a translator doesn't work the same way as a poet. A translator has to go through a different process to bring a poem from one language into another. I don't know how others do it, but when I've tried to think of a metaphor for what I go through, I keep coming up with the image of a dance. I see the poet dancing, but dancing to music I can't hear. Still, I'm sufficiently enthralled by the beauty of the dance that I want to join the poet. And so I try. And as I do, I try not to step on my partner's feet (the so-called literal or accurate translation), but I also try not to dance across the room (the impressionistic translation or version—usually by someone who doesn't know the poet's language). I try to get close enough to feel the poet's rhythm, not only the rhythm of the words but also the rhythm of the poet's heart. And I love Stonehouse's heart. So I've hit the dance floor one more time. I like to think I've become better at this over the years. But just as there is no perfect dance, there is no perfect translation. It can always be better. But not today. Today it feels perfect. Just don't ask me tomorrow.

I've also decided to separate Stonehouse's *Mountain Poems* from his *Gathas* and *Zen Talks* and to publish them separately, as I first did in 1986. The reason is that poems need room on the dance floor. I wasn't able to do that when I combined all three of Stonehouse's surviving texts in *The Zen Works of Stonehouse*, where as many as seven poems appeared on a page. But I'm fortunate to have found a publisher willing to indulge me. So here they are again, Stonehouse's *Mountain Poems*, all dressed up and ready to go. If they have fallen into your hands, surely the muses have smiled upon you. Say hello to your new best friend.

Red Pine

April 10, 2013

Port Townsend, Washington

1. This bizarre and extreme practice is rare but still occurs, as evidenced by the monk known as Eight Fingers (八指頭陀), one of the better poet monks of the late nineteenth century.

2. An old name for Chuchou (滁州).

3. Halfway up the trail to the main temple on Langyashan stands Tsuiweng Pavilion ((醉翁亭)), which still bears the name given to it by Ou-yang Hsiu (歐陽修), 1007–1072) during his tenure as magistrate of Chienyang. It remains the area's most famous sight and was, I presume, the location, if not the source, of Stonehouse's insight into Zen. Its name means Pavilion of the Old Drunkard and is taken from the inscription Ou-yang Hsiu left there in 1046, and which Stonehouse would have known by heart. Many educated people in China still do. It ends, "The birds know the joys of the mountains and forests, but they don't know the joys of the people. And the people know the joys of accompanying the Magistrate on his hikes, but they don't know the joy that their joy gives

the Magistrate. He who can share the joy of others while drunk and describe it while sober, this is the Magistrate. And who is the Magistrate? Ou-yang Hsiu of Luling.”

[4.](#) Confucius said of the oriole, “When it rests, it knows where to rest. Is it possible man is not equal to this bird?” (*Great Learning*: 3.2).

[5.](#) The only source that gives a date for Stonehouse's arrival at this monastery is the prefatory statement by the compiler of Stonehouse's *Zen Talks*, who lists the fourth month of the Hsinwei (辛未) year, which occurred in 1331. But the same statement also lists the reign period of Yuan-tung (元統), which didn't begin until 1333. Clearly, one of these dates is wrong. My guess is that 1331 is correct. First, Emperor Wen, who reportedly asked Stonehouse to serve as abbot, died in 1332. Second, the Yuan-tung period didn't begin until the last month of 1333. Hence, if the Yuan-tung period were correct, Stonehouse could not have arrived until the fourth month of 1334. But the compiler of *Zen Talks* also says that upon Stonehouse's arrival, he was appointed administrator of monastic affairs for the entire region, an office that was eliminated in 1334.

[6.](#) Stonehouse's *Zen Talks* were compiled by Stonehouse's disciple Chih-jou (至柔), the same disciple who compiled Stonehouse's *Mountain Poems* and *Gathas*. My translations of both texts can be found in *The Zen Works of Stonehouse*.

[7.](#) This poem appears as number 114 in all three Ming dynasty editions of the *Mountain Poems*, but it is not present in more recent editions.

[8.](#) Taego first visited China in 1347 and impressed Stonehouse enough that he called him his Dharma heir. Taego is still revered in Korea as the founding patriarch of the Chogyŏ Order (曹溪宗), which united the various schools of Zen in his country and which more recently instigated the first conference ever held in China to discuss Stonehouse's works and contributions.

[9.](#) I later learned that the buildings, which included both radar and telecommunication facilities, were commissioned in the early 1960s by Lin Piao (林彪), who was Minister of Defense at the time. Their purpose was to help protect Nanching from an air attack by Taiwan.

[10.](#) Poem 183.

[11.](#) Poem 24.

THE MOUNTAIN POEMS OF STONEHOUSE

余山林多暇瞌睡之餘偶成偈語自娛。紙墨少便不欲紀之。雲
衲禪人請書蓋欲知我山中趣向。於是靜思隨意走筆不覺盈帙
故掩而歸之。復囑慎勿以此為歌詠之助當須叅意則有激焉。

Here in the woods I have lots of free time. When I don't spend it sleeping, I enjoy composing poems. But with paper and ink so scarce, I haven't thought about writing them down. Now some Zen monks have asked me to record what I find of interest on this mountain. I have sat here quietly and let my brush fly. Suddenly this volume is full. I close it and send it back down with the admonition not to try singing these poems. Only if you sit on them will they do you any good.

SEVEN-SYLLABLE VERSES

吾家住在雲溪西
未到盡驚山險峻
蝸涎素壁粘枯殼
閒閉柴門春晝永

水滿天湖月滿溪
曾來方識路高低
虎過新蹄印雨泥
青桐花發晝胡啼

I made my home west of Cha River
where water fills Sky Lake and the moon fills the stream
strangers are frightened by the mountain's heights
but once they arrive they know the trail
dried snail shells on rock walls
fresh tiger tracks in the mud
I leave my door open when spring days get longer
when paulownias bloom and thrushes call

Note: Both the East and the West Forks of the Tiao River (苕溪) originate in the Tienmu Mountains west of Hangzhou, meet in Huchou, then flow into nearby Lake Taihu. The last stretch of their combined waters, from Huchou to Taihu, is called the Cha River. As early as the Sung dynasty, the city of Huchou was also referred to by this name. Hence, when Stonehouse says he lived west of Cha River, he means west of Huchou. Actually, the mountain on which he lived was twenty-five kilometers to the southwest. Sky Lake was the name he gave to the small pond in front of his hut. Nowadays, it is also called Butterfly Spring (蝴蝶泉), because of the shape of its two “wings,” or Medicine Spring (藥泉), because of the reputed healing quality of its water. Until recently, hermits in China often reported encounters with the South China tiger, which is much smaller than its Siberian and Bengali cousins but still dangerous. The paulownia is one of China’s most fragrant trees. It blooms in late March and early April and is the only tree on which the phoenix will alight—should a phoenix be flying by. In the last line, I’ve read *hua-hu* (畫胡), a compound not attested in any dictionary or database, as a copyist error or local usage for *hua-mei* (畫眉): “thrush.”

柴門雖設未嘗關
尺璧易求千丈石
雪消曉嶂聞寒瀑
古栢煙消清晝永

閒看幽禽自往還
黃金難買一生閒
葉落秋林見遠山
是非不到白雲間

To glimpse the fluttering of shy birds
I don't always close the door I made
a piece of jade is worth more than a cliff
but gold can't buy a lifetime of freedom
the sound of icy falls on a dawn-lit snowy ridge
the sight of distant peaks through leafless autumn woods
mist lifts from ancient cedars and clear days last forever
right and wrong aren't found in the clouds

Note: The fourth-century Buddhist monk Chih Tun (支遁) became the butt of jokes when he tried to buy a mountain from the hermit who lived on it (cf. *A New Account of Tales of the World*: 25.18).

荒塚累累沒野蒿
有求莫若無求好
貪餌金鱗終落釜
山翁不管紅塵事

昔人未葬盡金腰
進步何如退步高
出籠靈翮便冲霄
自種青麻織布袍

Grave upon grave buried beneath weeds
before their funerals they carried gold seals
but desire is no match for detachment
and how can ambition compete with restraint
lured by bait golden fish end up in kettles
uncaged magic wings fly high
worldly affairs don't concern a hermit
I weave my robe from homegrown hemp

Note: Gold seals were the prerogative of royalty and high-ranking officials. The graves of the elite of the preceding Southern Sung dynasty were located east of the capital of Hangchou near the city of Shaohsing. With the fall of the Southern Sung, they were abandoned to weeds and later desecrated in 1278 by the Mongols, who dug up more than a hundred royal graves and pillaged the surrounding area following their conquest of the southern half of China.

紙窓竹屋槿籬笆
 多見清貧長快樂
 看經移案就明月
 盡說上方兜率好

客到蒿湯便當茶
 少聞濁富不驕奢
 供佛簪瓶折野花
 如何及得老僧家

A paper-window bamboo hut a hedge of hibiscus
 wormwood soup for tea when guests arrive
 the poor people I meet are mostly content
 rare is the rich man not vain or wasteful
 I move my table to read sutras by moonlight
 I pick wildflowers to fill my altar vase
 everyone says Tushita Heaven is fine
 but how can it match this place of mine

Note: The paper used for windowpanes was treated with oil to make it waterproof. The hibiscus is often used to form hedges in the warmer southern half of China. The first line becomes two lines in poem 62. Wormwood, which includes several varieties of *Artemisia*, is used as a general tonic and specifically as an antipyretic and in chronic dysentery. A tea or soup is made from leaves and buds picked before the plant flowers in summer. It was once common to drink such a soup on the fifth day of the fifth moon, or Poet's Day, which commemorates the death of the poet Ch'u Yuan (屈原, d. 278 BC). Hermits tend to go to bed when the sun goes down, but not on moonlit nights. Tushita is the name of the highest heaven in the realm of desire and is where bodhisattvas reside before their final rebirth, when they become buddhas.

道在人弘孰可憑
貪心似海何時足
幾樹梅花清處士
而今隨例菴居者

發言須與行相應
妄念如苗逐日增
一園芋子樂閒僧
見道忘山似不曾

To glorify the Way what should people turn to
to words and deeds that agree
but oceans of greed never fill up
and sprouts of delusion keep growing
plum trees in bloom cleanse a recluse
a garden of taro cheers a lone monk
those who follow rules in their huts
never see the Way past the mountains

Note: Confucius said, "A man can glorify the Way. The Way does not glorify a man" (*Analects*: 15.28). When Tzu-chang asked how he should act, Confucius replied, "To your words be true, in your deeds be sincere" (*Analects*: 15.5). The plum blossom's association with purity and seclusion was immortalized in the poems of Lin Ho-ching (林和靖, 967–1028), a recluse who lived on a small island in Hangzhou's West Lake. More than one Zen master has summarized their Buddhist path in words similar to those of Ch'ing-yuan Hsing-ssu (青原行思), a disciple of Hui-neng: "Thirty years ago, before I began practicing Zen, I saw mountains as simply mountains. Then, while I was practicing Zen, I realized mountains were not mountains. But now that I understand Zen, I see mountains are simply mountains" (*Wutenghuiyuan*: 17).

動則乖真靜則差
無心未合祖師意
矮屋朝陽寒氣少
白雲曳曳方拖練

非思量處更淆訛
有念盡為煩惱魔
踈籬種菊晚香多
又被風吹過綠蘿

Movement isn't right and stillness is wrong
and cultivating no-thought means confusion instead
the Patriarch didn't have no-mind in mind
any thought at all means trouble
a hut facing south isn't so cold
chrysanthemums along a fence perfume the dusk
as soon as a drifting cloud starts to linger
the wind blows it past the vines

Note: Movement is the practice of mortals, and stillness is the practice of Hinayana monks. Bodhidharma says, "While ordinary people keep giving birth to the mind, claiming it exists, disciples of the Hinayana keep wiping out the mind, claiming it doesn't exist. But bodhisattvas and buddhas neither create nor annihilate the mind" (*The Zen Teaching of Bodhidharma*: p. 53). The Indian Patriarch of Zen is often pictured meditating while facing a wall, while T'ao Yuan-ming, the poet of recluses, is said to have entered samadhi while picking chrysanthemums along his fence. Clouds are often used as metaphors for thoughts, while vines represent convoluted logic. Drifting clouds can also refer to wandering monks.

松下雙扉冷不扃
 眠雲野鹿驚回夢
 得意看山山轉好
 多時不向門前去

一龕金像照青燈
 落澗獼猴墜折藤
 無心合道道相應
 蘚葉苔花積幾層

Below the pines its twin doors are never closed
 its gilt statue is lit by blue light
 a monkey breaks a vine and falls into a stream
 startled deer resume their dreams in the clouds
 glad to see mountains I like mountains better
 the Way finds me without me trying
 it's been so long since I went to the gate
 the lichen and moss must be inches thick

Note: The first couplet suggests a small mountain shrine and the faint flame of an oil lamp.

二十餘年住崦西
 一園春色熟茶笋
 山頂月明長嘯夜
 舊交多在名場裏

鑿頭邊事不吾欺
 數樹秋風老栗梨
 水邊雲暖獨行時
 竹戶長開待阿誰

More than twenty years west of Mount Yen
 I've never been cheated by a hoe
 a garden in spring of new tea and bamboo
 a few trees in fall of ripe chestnuts and pears
 I drone on the summit when the moon is bright
 and walk along the stream when the clouds turn warm
 with so many friends in examination halls
 why do I leave my door open

Note: According to the *Shanhaiching* (Western Mountains: 4), China's oldest book of geography, the sun sets behind Mount Yen at the westernmost reaches of the empire. To live west of Mount Yen was to live in the wilderness. The realm of Amita Buddha was also said to be west of the setting sun, the contemplation of which constitutes the first of sixteen visualizations once used in Pure Land meditation. In China, the best tea is usually picked in late March or early April. The same is true for bamboo shoots. The term Stonehouse uses here, *ch'ang-hsiao* (長嘯), and which I translate as "drone," refers to something akin to throat singing. It was once cultivated by Taoists as a breathing technique to generate *ch'i* (氣). In ancient times, many poets had their designated *hsiao-t'ai* (嘯台), or droning platforms, just for that purpose. Civil service exams were discontinued in North China during most of the Yuan dynasty, but they were still held periodically in the provincial capital of Hangchou, which was only sixty kilometers south of Hsiamushan. Before he became a monk, Stonehouse also spent a good deal of his youth studying for exams. See also poem 20. In the first line, "twenty years" suggests this poem was written near the end of Stonehouse's first stay on the mountain, which, in fact, lasted twenty years. Altogether, he spent thirty-four years on the mountain.

翠竇丹崖列四傍
 一身布衲衣裳煖
 石瘦種來蒲葉細
 有時夜半聞鐘磬

茅菴恰好在中央
 百念消融歲月忘
 土深迸出笋茅長
 知有招提在下方

Green gullies and red cliffs wherever I look
 and my thatch hut in between
 beneath a patched robe my body stays warm
 I've forgotten my worries along with the date
 rushes grow thin where the soil is rocky
 bamboo shoots grow tall where it's deep
 sometimes at midnight I hear a bell
 and remember there's a temple down below

Note: A monk's robe is traditionally made of twenty-five patches, one for each of the twenty-five kinds of existence and the twenty-five kinds of understanding that liberate its wearer from such existence. The rushes (most likely *Juncus effusus*) were for mats and meditation cushions. The large bell in a Buddhist temple is normally rung around four o'clock in the morning and again around nine o'clock at night. But beginning in the Sung dynasty, temple bells were also rung at midnight to remind people of the Buddha's teaching of impermanence. The temple to which Stonehouse is referring was most likely Fuyuan Temple (福原寺), at the northeast foot of Hsiamushan near Yangshuwu Village (楊樹塢). Among the temple's extensive overgrown ruins, a stone slab with Stonehouse's name on it was recently unearthed, attesting to some sort of association with the place. Stonehouse probably spent time there before moving to the summit, and at some point he was probably the temple's abbot as well, even if in name only. However, this Fuyuan Temple is not to be confused with the temple of the same name outside Pinghu where Stonehouse served as abbot at the emperor's request.

莫謂山居便自由
竹邊婆子常偷笋
栗蠹地蠶傷菜甲
施為便有不如意

年無一日不懷憂
麥裏兒童故放牛
野猪山鼠食禾頭
只得消歸自己休

Don't think a mountain home means you're free
a day doesn't pass without its cares
old ladies steal my bamboo shoots
boys lead oxen into the wheat
grubs and beetles destroy my greens
boars and squirrels devour the rice
things don't always go my way
what can I do but turn to myself

Note: Elders and children are often assigned the more marginal tasks in a farm family, such as gathering medicinal herbs or wild plants in the hills and grazing the family ox or water buffalo.

菴住霞峰最上頭
 擔柴出市青苔滑
 口體無厭宜節儉
 老僧不是閒忼怛

巖崖巖嶮少人遊
 負米登山白汗流
 光陰有限莫貪求
 只要諸人放下休

My hut is at the top of Hsia Summit
 few visitors brave the cliffs and ravines
 lugging firewood to market I slip on the moss
 hauling rice back up I drip with sweat
 with no end to desire less is better
 with limited time why be greedy
 this old monk doesn't mean to cause trouble
 he just wants people to let go

Note: Stonehouse abbreviates the mountain's name here. The word *hsia* (red) refers to the color of clouds at sunrise or sunset and is also used to describe cliffs.

嘯月眠雲二十年
 烏來索飯生臺立
 鰕蜆人爭撈白水
 黃精食盡松花在

自憐衰老見時艱
 僧去化糧空鉢還
 鑿鉏我且斲青山
 不着閒愁方寸間

After twenty years of nights beneath the moon and the clouds
 to find myself old is hard
 crows come looking for food at the altar
 monks return with empty begging bowls
 others work the waves for shrimp and clams
 I swing a hoe in the mountains
 when Solomon's seal is gone there is still pine pollen
 and one square inch free of care

Note: According to his contemporaries, Stonehouse preferred not to beg for his food. But he was joined on the mountain by other monks who did. Nearby Lake Taihu is still famous for its tiny white shrimp and freshwater clams. The root of Solomon's seal, or *Polygonatum cirrhifolium*, contains a significant amount of starch. It is usually dug up in early spring. Pine pollen is slightly sweet and also has nutritional value. It is gathered in late spring by placing a sheet under a pine tree and knocking the branches with a bamboo pole. The "square inch" refers to the mind.

幽居自與世相分
 山色雨晴常得見
 煮茶瓦竈燒黃葉
 人壽希逢年滿百

苔厚林深草木薰
 市聲朝暮罕曾聞
 補衲巖臺剪白雲
 利名何苦競趨奔

Seclusion of course means far from the world
 thick moss deep woods and perfumed plants
 the sight of mountains rain or shine
 no sounds of a market day or night
 I burn dry leaves in my stove to make tea
 and to patch my old robe I cut a cloud by the cliff
 lifetimes seldom fill a hundred years
 why suffer chasing profit and fame

Note: According to the biography of the ninth-century poet-recluse Lu Kuei-meng (陸龜蒙), as recorded in the *Hsintangshu* (New History of the T'ang Dynasty), Lu never went anywhere without his small portable tea stove, which he felt was among the necessary possessions of every recluse.

入得山來便學呆
 他非莫與他分辨
 瓦竈通紅茶已熟
 古今誰解輕浮世

尋常有口懶能開
 自過應須自剪裁
 紙窓生白月初來
 獨許嚴陵坐釣臺

I entered the mountains and learned to be dumb
 I'm usually too tired to open my mouth
 I don't point out the mistakes of others
 my own faults are what I try to alter
 the tea must be ready my clay stove is red
 the moon must be up the paper windows are white
 who in the past saw through this transient world
 Yen Tzu-ling fished alone from his rock

Note: Lao-tzu said, "Those who seek learning gain every day / those who seek the Way lose every day" (*Taoteching*: 48). Lao-tzu also said, "Everyone has a goal / I alone am dumb and backward" (ibid.: 20). During the preceding Sung dynasty, tea aficionados began boiling their tea instead of steeping it, as they now do. And they often used a small, portable clay stove for that purpose. Yen Tzu-ling and Liu Hsiu (劉秀) were boyhood friends. When Liu led a rebellion that resulted in the restoration of the Han dynasty with himself as Emperor Kuang-wu (光武), he invited his old friend to join him at court. But Yen Tzu-ling declined, preferring the life of a recluse on the Fuchun River (富春江) south of Hangchou, where he spent his days fishing from a boulder. The boulder has since been submerged by the waters of a dam, but the site still bears the name of this famous recluse.

溪淺泉清見石沙
夜深月下長猿嘯
庭竹欹斜春雪重
寥寥此道非今古

屋頭無角寄藤蘿
苔厚巖前少客過
嶺梅消瘦夜寒多
徒把瓢來石上磨

The streams are so clear and shallow I can see pebbles
my gableless hut is surrounded by vines
gibbons howl at night when the moon goes down
few visitors get past the moss by the cliffs
the bamboos in my yard bend with spring snow
the plum trees on the ridge are withered by frigid nights
the solitude of this path isn't something new
but grinding a brick on a rock is a waste

Note: Stonehouse's hut had no gables because his roof was round, as he tells us in poem 145. I imagine something like a thatched yurt with bamboo walls and a layer or two of mud on the exterior. Gibbons and their eerie howls were once common throughout the Yangtze watershed but are now found in the wild only in a few nature reserves in the extreme south. Huai-jang (懷讓) was the dharma heir of Hui-neng, Zen's Sixth Patriarch. After Hui-neng's death in 713, Huai-jang moved to Fuyen Temple (福嚴寺) on Hengshan (衡山) in southern Hunan province. One day on the slope above the temple, he saw a young monk meditating and asked what he was doing. The young monk said he was trying to become a buddha. Huai-jang picked up a brick and started grinding it on a boulder. When the young monk asked what he was doing, Huai-jang said he was making a mirror. The boulder was still there when I visited in 1991, just up the trail from Huai-jang's grave, but has since disappeared during a road-widening project. The young monk eventually became the Zen master known as Ma-tsu (馬祖). The story was recorded in the *Chuantenglu* (Transmission of the Lamp: 5).

白髮禪翁久住菴
溪邊掃葉供爐竈
本有天真非造化
豁開戶牖當軒坐

衲衣風捲破襟絀
霜後芭茆覆橘柑
現成公案不須叅
盡日看山不下簾

A white-haired Zen monk with a hut for my home
the wind has torn my robe into rags
down by the stream I rake leaves for my stove
after a frost I wrap a mat around my orange tree
ultimate reality isn't created
ready-made koans aren't worth a thought
all day I sit by my open window
looking at mountains without lowering the shade

Note: The Yangtze watershed is the earliest known home of not only the orange but also such citrus fruits as the tangerine, the kumquat, and the pomelo. Apparently Stonehouse's orange tree (or "trees," as Chinese is ambiguous when it comes to number) didn't make it. He never mentions it again. Hermits with the good fortune to inherit such trees from previous residents, or with the patience to wait for saplings to mature, receive enough income when the trees bear fruit to support themselves for several months every year. In North China, hermits receive the same benefit from walnut trees. The Buddhist definition of reality is that which is self-existent and thus dependent neither in time nor in space upon anything else. During the preceding Sung dynasty, enigmatic statements of previous Zen masters were compiled into books and used as subjects (Chinese: *kung-an* [公案]; Japanese: koan) for meditation and aids to enlightenment. However, by Stonehouse's time, some Zen masters began to view such devices as more likely to become obstacles than aids and moved on to tea.

臥雲深處不朝天
竹榻夢回窓有月
萬緣歇盡非除遣
湛若虛空常不動

只在重巖野水邊
砂鍋粥熟竈無煙
一性圓明本自然
任他滄海變桑田

I sleep in the clouds where the sun doesn't shine
beside a high cliff and a mountain stream
I dream on my cot until the moon fills the window
the porridge is done when the stove smoke clears
a million reasons vanish without being driven off
our single perfect nature shines by itself
as clear as a cloudless sky it never changes
the sea meanwhile is now a mulberry grove

Note: Hermits in the Yangtze watershed and those farther south usually sleep on beds whose sleeping surface consists of woven bamboo or a network of rope, while their colleagues in the colder Yellow River watershed to the north prefer brick beds with built-in ovens. According to Buddhists, only what is not subject to causation, only what is not connected to anything else, is real. Over the past five thousand years, the silt of the Yellow River has formed most of North China out of what used to be the Pohai Sea. So in China the sea did, in fact, turn into mulberry groves.

嶽頂禪房枕石臺
門前瀑布懸空落
素壁淡描三世佛
下方田地雖平坦

白雲飛去又飛來
屋後山巒起浪堆
瓦瓶香浸一枝梅
難及山家無點埃

My Zen hut rests upon rocks at the summit
clouds fly past and more clouds arrive
a waterfall hangs in space beyond the door
a mountain ridge rises like a wave in back
I drew three buddhas on a wall
I put a plum branch in a jar for incense
the fields down below might be level
but can't match a mountain's freedom from dust

Note: The buddha portraits would most likely have been those of Amita, Shakyamuni, and Maitreya, buddhas of past, present, and future dispensations of the Dharma.

大道從來無盛衰
聖賢隱伏當斯世
痛策諸根休自縱
人身一失袈裟下

未明大道著便宜
邪法流行在此時
常存正念莫他為
萬劫千生不復追

The Great Way has never known abundance or want
those who don't see it choose profit instead
sages and wise men hide from the world
where counterfeit truth prevails
rein in your senses and stop indulging
be ever mindful and nothing else
once your body disappears beneath a robe
say goodbye to a thousand rebirths

Note: Buddhists view liberation as freedom from rebirth. No matter how propitious a given life might be, such existence is still a delusion. The Buddhist robe of twenty-five patches protects its wearer from twenty-five kinds of existence in the realms of desire, form, and formlessness that make up the Wheel of Rebirth.

破屋蕭蕭枕石臺
 名場成隊挨身入
 深夜雪寒唯火伴
 袈裟零落難縫補

柴門白日為誰開
 古路無人跨脚來
 五更霜冷有猿哀
 收捲雲霞自剪裁

My broken-down hut rests upon rocks
 why do I leave my door open all day
 people who file into exam halls
 don't set foot on an ancient trail
 snow-filled nights a fire is my lone companion
 frost-covered dawns I hear a gibbon howl
 my tattered monk's robe isn't easy to mend
 I cut a new patch when a cloud rolls in

Note: Admission to the civil service or military officer corps was based on a series of competitive examinations held at the local, at the provincial, and at the national levels. The examination hall for the region in which Stonehouse lived was in nearby Hangchou. See also poem 8. The patches that make up a monk's robe can consist in anything from hemp to silk or, here, something even less substantial.

人壽相分一百年
 危如茅草郎當屋
 流俗沙門真可惜
 寥寥世道非今昔

有誰能得百年全
 險似風波破漏舡
 貪名師德更堪憐
 日把柴門緊閉關

A human life lasts one hundred years
 but which of us gets them all
 precarious as a hut made of thatch
 or a leaking boat in a storm
 mediocre monks are pathetic
 would-be masters are sadder still
 the world's empty ways aren't new
 some days I shut my old door tight

Note: In ancient China and India, people believed that the human lifespan once extended for thousands of years and that the limit of one hundred was recent and due to the degeneration of human morals. Buddhists say it is much easier to become enlightened as a monk or a nun than as a layperson beset with the cares and responsibilities of secular life. Hence, to waste such an opportunity on mediocrity or vanity is tragic, indeed.

綠霧紅霞竹徑深
等閒放下便無事
古鏡未磨含眾像
本源自性天真佛

一菴終日冷沉沉
著意看來還有心
洪鐘纔扣發圓音
非色非空非古今

A trail through green mist red clouds and bamboo
to a hut that stays cold and dark all day
simply let go and worries end
stop to think and cares reappear
an unpolished mirror holds countless shapes
a great bell resounds only when it is rung
our original nature is the one true buddha
not form or emptiness not past or present

Note: Bamboo grows so thick on Hsiamushan, trails don't last long. When I first visited the mountain in 1991, the army officer who led me to the area where Stonehouse first lived needed a machete to reach it. Until fairly recently, mirrors in China were made of bronze or brass, and they had to be polished in order to reflect. Bodhidharma says, "To find a buddha all you have to do is see your nature. Your nature is the buddha" (*The Zen Teaching of Bodhidharma*: p. 13). In the *Heart Sutra*, Avalokiteshvara says, "Form is emptiness, and emptiness is form." Buddhists often speak of three buddhas: past, present, and future.

優游靜坐野僧家
 翠竹黃花閒意思
 石頭莫認山中虎
 林下不知塵世事

飲啄隨緣度歲華
 白雲流水淡生涯
 弓影休疑盞裏蛇
 夕陽長見送歸鴉

A monk on his own sits quiet and relaxed
 he survives all year on what karma brings
 bamboo and yellow flowers simplify his thoughts
 his life is as plain as a cloud or a stream
 he doesn't mistake a rock for a tiger on a hill
 or the image of a bow for a snake in his bowl
 oblivious in the woods to worldly affairs
 at sunset he watches the crows flying back

Note: Stonehouse traced his spiritual ancestry through his teacher, Chi-an, to the Tiger Hill Zen lineage. The hill, which is in Suchou, was said to resemble a tiger. In his biography in the *Chinshu* (43), Yueh Kuang (樂廣) explains to a distraught guest that the image of a snake in his wine bowl is merely the reflection from a nearby painting. The last two lines recall a line from “West Garden”: “In the woods fading rays call the crows home,” a poem by Lu You (陸游).

滿頭白髮瘦稜層
木臼秋分舂白朮
黃精就買山前客
誰道新年七十七

日用生涯事事能
竹筐春半曬朱藤
紫菜長需海外僧
開池栽藕種菱菱

I may be white-haired and nothing but bones
but I'm versed in the work of daily survival
in fall I pound thistles in a wooden mortar
in spring I dry vine buds in a wicker tray
I buy Solomon's seal from a peddler down below
for seaweed I rely on a monk from across the sea
but who would have guessed at seventy-seven
I would dig a pond for lotus roots and water chestnuts

Note: The roots of wild thistle, or *Atractylis ovata*, are used as a tonic, especially for the spleen and the stomach. The vine flowers were most likely wisteria racemes, which remain a delicacy of this region and are usually stir-fried. In poem 12, Stonehouse implies that Solomon's seal was readily available on Hsiamushan. Apparently he ate all he could find and was forced to buy more. The seaweed was probably a present from Yu T'ai-ku (Korean: Taego Pou [太古普愚]), who visited Stonehouse the summer of 1347, when Stonehouse was seventy-seven. For more on their meeting and later exchange of letters, see J.C. Cleary's *Buddha from Korea*. Since Stonehouse died at the age of eighty-one and wrote this poem four years earlier, he apparently did not finish his *Mountain Poems* until shortly before his death. Lotus roots and water chestnuts are both nutritious starches that flourish in the watery regions of the Yangtze watershed. Clearly, Stonehouse was doing more than surviving and was even enjoying the occasional indulgence afforded by mountain living.

卜得重巖遠市朝
是誰白髮貧無諂
急債莫於寬裏做
白雲也道青山好

柴門半掩草蕭蕭
那箇朱門富不驕
妄情須是靜中消
夜夜飛來伴寂寥

I chose high cliffs far from a market
a half-closed gate overgrown with weeds
where is the pauper who isn't deferential
or the rich man who isn't vain
emergency loans don't come without strings
delusions require stillness to end
clouds too say mountains are better
returning at night they ease the solitude

Note: The first line recalls the opening of Cold Mountain's first poem: "Towering cliffs were the home
I chose / bird trails beyond human tracks."

風檣來往塞官塘
 站馬如飛日夜忙
 冒寵貪榮謀仕宦
 貪生重利作經商
 人間富貴一時樂
 地獄辛酸萬劫長
 古往今來無藥治
 如何不早去修行

Their zigzagging sails crowd government quays
 their relay mounts fly night and day
 officials seeking favor and glory
 merchants after comfort and gain
 but the joys of worldly riches are brief
 while the sufferings of hell last ten thousand kalpas
 and no elixir has ever been found
 better change your ways while you can

Note: The regions north and south of the Yangtze delta are still major producers of salt and silk in China. For many centuries, taxes on these two products provided the central government with its major source of revenue, and trade was tightly controlled, with distribution taking place via the Grand Canal and the Yangtze. The government also maintained an extensive network of horse-mounted couriers for transmission of documents. Buddhists recognize a series of hells in which the length of one's residence is determined by one's karma. A kalpa is a unit of time equivalent to the existence of a world, from its creation until its destruction. The reference to elixir was aimed at Taoist alchemists and their clients, who sought to cheat death through the ingestion of various minerals and herbs. The injunction of the last line suggests Stonehouse must have been reading the poems of Cold Mountain or Pickup the day he wrote this, as both were given to dispensing similar advice.

入此門來學此宗
清虛體寂理猶在
樹掛殘雲成片白
是風動耶是幡動

切須仔細要推窮
忖度心亡境自空
山銜落日半邊紅
不是幡兮不是風

Who enters this gate who studies this teaching
has to be thorough and push to the end
still the empty body and reason remains
forget the thinking mind and the world disappears
cloud-draped trees form a landscape of white
the summit turns red as it bites the setting sun
the flag moves or is it the wind
it isn't the wind or the flag

Note: The “gate” is the gate of Zen, and the teaching is Bodhidharma’s: “This mind is the buddha” (*The Zen Teaching of Bodhidharma*: p. 9). The last couplet comes from this story: One day two monks were arguing in a temple courtyard. Pointing to a flag flapping in the wind, one said it was the wind that was moving. The other said it was the flag that was moving. Having just arrived at the temple and overhearing their argument, the Sixth Patriarch said, “It isn’t the wind that’s moving, and it isn’t the flag. It’s your minds that are moving” (*The Platform Sutra*: p. 123).

客愛幽閒到竹籬
滿頭白髮鬢鬆聚
黃葉火殘終夜後
擁衾相對蒲團坐

逢迎應恕禮全虧
一頂袈裟撩亂披
青猿聲斷五更時
各自忘言契此機

A friend of seclusion arrives at my gate
we greet and pardon our lack of decorum
a mane of white hair more or less tied
a monk robe gathered loosely around
embers of leaves at the end of the night
howl of a gibbon announcing the dawn
sitting on cushions wrapped in quilts
words forgotten finally we meet

Note: Given the ambiguity of Chinese grammar, it is unclear whether the white hair and monk robe should be singular or plural. I've decided in favor of the former and that Stonehouse's visitor is a Taoist priest, as Taoist priests, unlike Buddhist monks, don't cut their hair. The leaves suggest Stonehouse used up whatever firewood he had on hand in the course of the night. Meditation cushions were made of woven grass and filled with rice straw, while quilts usually included an inner layer of cotton wadding.

百歲光陰過隙駒
 已躬下事未明白
 衲定線行嬌婦淚
 莫言施受無因果

幾人於此審思惟
 生死岸頭真嶮巇
 飯香玉粒老農脂
 因在果成終有時

A hundred years pass by in a flash
 how many think this through
 if what you're doing right now isn't clear
 the edge between life and death is sheer
 stitches on a monk's robe are a loving wife's tears
 jade grains of rice are an old farmer's fat
 don't think who gives receives no reward
 a fruit forms in time where there is a seed

Note: In ancient China, a man was required to have his parents' permission to become a monk. Of course, such a requirement was often ignored, but his wife's approval was not necessary, since she and their children lived with the man's parents. For all their self-reliance, many hermits would starve without the generosity of farmers, many of whom still share their "fat" with them. Alms and acts of charity are likened to seeds planted in a field of blessing, bringing benefit to both the giver and the recipient.

自入山來萬慮澄
庭前樹色秋來減
挑薺煮茶延野客
錦衣玉食公卿子

平懷一種任騰騰
檻外泉聲雨後增
買盆移菊送鄰僧
不及山僧有此情

I entered the mountains and my cares became clear
serene at heart I let them all go
the trees beyond my yard thin out in fall
the stream before my door becomes louder when it rains
I pick greens and boil tea when a fellow hermit arrives
I give a neighbor monk chrysanthemums in a pot from town
the gentry might have their fine food and clothes
but they can't match a mountain monk with scenes like these

Note: Stonehouse did not have the mountain to himself. In fact, during the last decade of his life a number of disciples moved to the summit and built their own huts nearby. The small temple that later developed from where he built his first hut was vacated during the Cultural Revolution but was recently replaced by a new set of buildings and named Yunlin Temple. The small temple that replaced his second hut is still in ruins. Flowering in autumn, chrysanthemums are a symbol of old age. Hospitality to strangers and generosity to friends remain among the virtues cultivated by Chinese of all classes. The gentry included the propertied and educated elites.

是身壽命若浮漚
 事欲稱情常不足
 衰榮可喻花開落
 我已久忘塵世念

只好挨排過了休
 人能退步便無憂
 聚散還同雲去留
 頽然終日倚岑樓

This body lasts about as long as a bubble
 may as well let it go
 things don't often go as we wish
 who can step back doesn't worry
 we blossom and fade like flowers
 we gather and part like clouds
 I stopped thinking about the world a long time ago
 relaxing all day in a teetering hut

Note: The *Diamond Sutra* ends with this gatha: "As a lamp, a cataract, a star in space / an illusion,
a dewdrop, a bubble / a dream, a cloud, a flash of lightning / view all created things like this."

自覺從前世念輕
 芒鞋竹杖春三月
 求佛求仙全妄想
 松風昨夜熾然說

老來任運樂閒情
 紙帳梅花夢五更
 無憂無慮即修行
 自是聾人不肯聽

I saw through my worldly concerns of the past
 I welcome old age and enjoy being free
 rope shoes a bamboo staff the last month of spring
 paper curtains plum blossoms and daybreak dreams
 immortality and buddhahood are merely fantasies
 freedom from worry and care is my practice
 last night what the pine wind roared
 that was a language the deaf can't hear

Note: Shoes made of braided grass or rushes were still worn by farmers in China until fairly recently. The third line is indebted to Su Tung-p'o (蘇東坡): "With rope shoes and a new bamboo staff / I set off on a hundred-coin journey," which in his day would have been enough for a few days at most. The "paper curtains" here refer to a kind of mosquito net that was hung over the bed during Stonehouse's day. It had a gauze top for ventilation and paper sides printed with butterflies and plum blossoms. While Buddhists seek to become buddhas, Taoists seek to become immortals. The fifth-century Taoist T'ao Hung-ching (陶弘景) planted hundreds of pines around his hermitage in Hangchou in order to hear the wind in their branches. The pine wind can also refer to the sound of a buddha's voice.

逐日挨排過了休
死生老病難期約
湖上朱門縈蔓草
所言皆是目前事

明朝何必預先憂
富貴功名不久留
澗邊遊徑變荒丘
只是無人肯轉頭

Day after day I let things go
why worry about tomorrow today
the four afflictions are hard to predict
wealth and honor don't last
lakeside villas swallowed by vines
deserted promenades along the river
these are things anyone can see
but no one is willing to consider

Note: Buddhism's four afflictions are birth, illness, old age, and death. The lakeside villas would be those along the shore of nearby Lake Taihu. The promenades, I imagine, were along the waters of the Tiao River, whose East and West Forks merged just south of Huchou and flowed through town as the Cha River before entering Taihu.

白髮頭陀老病侵
消磨本有凡情執
百鳥不來山寂寂
分明空劫那邊事

住來茅屋幾年深
析蕩今從聖量心
萬松長在碧沉沉
一道神光自古今

A white-haired monk afflicted with age
living under thatch year after year
I've spent my existence on the simplest of passions
all of which come from the buddha mind
the mountain is quiet when the birds don't come
ten thousand pines keep it dark green
from the kalpa of nothingness it's clear
a miraculous light still shines

Note: Stonehouse's expression *sheng-liang-hsin* in the fourth line is a contraction of two phrases that occur frequently in the *Lankavatara Sutra*, namely, *sheng-chih* (buddha knowledge) and *liang-hsin* (nothing but mind). The kalpa of nothingness lasts from the destruction of one universe until the creation of the next. Thus, the light Stonehouse sees is from the end of the last universe — such is the power of karma. In Zen, this and other phrases refer to one's original face, one's face before one was born.

競利奔名何足誇
 心田不長無明草
 黃土坡邊多蕨笋
 我年三十餘來此

清閒獨許野僧家
 覺苑長開智慧花
 青苔地上少塵沙
 幾度晴窓映落霞

Profit and fame aren't worth extolling
 to an untroubled solitary mountain monk
 weeds of delusion don't grow in the mind
 where flowers of wisdom bloom instead
 bamboo shoots and fiddleheads blanket the slopes
 dust seldom falls on moss-covered ground
 I was over thirty when I first arrived
 how many sunsets have turned my windows red

Note: Delusion is one of the three poisons, which also include anger and desire. Fiddlehead ferns made up the diet of two of China's most famous recluses, Po-yi (伯夷) and Shu-ch'i (叔齊, ca. 1100 BC), both of whom preferred to die of hunger rather than eat the produce of a realm ruled by an unfilial king. In characterizing the decades of life, the Chinese often quote Confucius: "Thirty and on one's own. Forty and no doubts" (*Analects*: 2.4). According to poem 170, Stonehouse was forty when he moved to Hsiamushan. However, some local historians of Huchou think he first spent time at Fuyuan Temple northeast of the mountain before moving to the summit. I'm more of the opinion that the temple was built at the beginning of his second stay on the mountain, by disciples who followed him there after he moved out of the much larger temple of the same name a two-day walk to the east.

我本禪宗不會禪
 鶉衣百結通身掛
 山色溪光明祖意
 有時獨上臺盤石

甘休林下度餘年
 竹箴三條薦肚纏
 鳥啼花笑悟機緣
 午夜無雲月一天

I was a Zen monk who didn't know Zen
 so I chose the woods for the years I had left
 a robe made of patches over my body
 a belt of bamboo around my waist
 mountains and streams explain the Patriarch's meaning
 flower smiles and birdsongs reveal the hidden key
 sometimes I sit on a flat-topped rock
 late cloudless nights once a month

Note: Bodhidharma is usually listed as the First Patriarch of Zen in China, as he was credited with bringing this teaching to China in the late fifth century. However, the traditional beginning of Zen is said to have occurred nine hundred years earlier when the Buddha held up a flower and a monk named Kashyapa smiled. As evidence of his own understanding, Stonehouse told his master, "When the rain finally stops in late spring, the oriole sings from a tree." The flat-topped rock is still there, just up the slope from the water-bottling plant. Local farmers call it "chess-playing rock."

四十餘年獨隱居
 夜爐助暖燒松葉
 坐石看雲閒意思
 有人問我西來意

不知塵世幾榮枯
 午鉢充饑摘野蔬
 朝陽補衲靜工夫
 盡把家私說向渠

I've lived as a hermit more than forty years
 oblivious to the world's ups and downs
 a stove full of pine needles keeps me warm at night
 a bowl of wild plants fills me up at noon
 I sit on rocks and watch clouds and think idle thoughts
 I patch my robe in sunshine and cultivate silence
 if someone asks why Bodhidharma came from the West
 I tell them everything I own

Note: Stonehouse lived as a hermit on Hsiamushan for thirty-four years. But he also lived for three years with Kao-feng on the West Peak of Tienmushan and for six years with Chi-an on Langyashan outside Chuchou. Although the Buddhist practice of eating one meal a day was never as widespread in China as it was in India, the noon meal was, and still is, considered the major meal of the day for monks and nuns. "Why did Bodhidharma come from the West?" ("the West" being India) is one of the most popular koans used in Zen meditation. In the last line, the term *chia-ssu* means "patrimony," or "inherited possessions." If there is no self, how can there be possessions? Then again, where would Stonehouse be without his bowl and his robe and his little tea stove? Still, I've never seen a hermit yard sale.

蠱尾狼心滿世間
 百年能得幾回笑
 車覆有誰知改轍
 老僧不是多饒舌

爭先各自使機關
 一日曾無頃刻閒
 禍來無地著羞慚
 要與諸人揭蓋纏

Scorpion tails and wolf hearts pervade the world
 everyone has a trick to get ahead
 but how many smiles in a lifetime
 or moments of peace in a day
 who can change tracks when their cart tips over
 when disaster strikes there's no time for shame
 this old monk isn't merely pointing fingers
 he's trying to remove people's blinders and chains

Note: One of the first measures enacted by the First Emperor when he unified China in 221 BC was to standardize the axle length of carts so that all tracks would be the same width. As a result, the speed of overland travel was greatly improved. The five blinders (五蓋) or hindrances are desire, anger, sloth, anxiety, and doubt. And the ten chains (十纏) are shamelessness, insensitivity, envy, meanness, regret, laziness, overactivity, self-absorption, hate, and secretiveness.

烏兔奔忙不暫停
 水邊行道影加瘦
 紅葉旋收供瓦竈
 勞生好飲利名酒

巖居忽爾到頽齡
 松下看山眸轉青
 黃花時採插銅瓶
 昏醉無由喚得醒

The crow and the hare race without rest
 living among cliffs I'm suddenly old
 my reflection looks thin when I walk beside a stream
 my eyes have turned blue viewing mountains through pines
 I gather red leaves to fill my tea stove
 I pick yellow flowers for my altar vase
 working for the wine of profit and fame
 others get drunk and can't be revived

Note: According to Chinese mythology, the moon is yin and represents Earth. Hence, its symbol is an animal of the land. And the sun is yang and represents Heaven. Hence, its totem is a creature of the air. Stonehouse's "blue eyes" could allude to the "blue-eyed barbarian," Bodhidharma, who brought Zen to China. But they could also refer to cataracts. Ironically, cataract surgery was introduced to the Chinese by Indian monks about the same time that Bodhidharma arrived, but the technique had been lost by Stonehouse's time. While Stonehouse used chrysanthemums for his altar, others infused them in wine.

茅屋青山綠水邊
 數株紅白桃李樹
 竹榻夜移聽雨坐
 人生無出清閒好

往來年久自相便
 一片青黃菜麥田
 紙窓晴啟看雲眠
 得到清閒豈偶然

A thatch hut in blue mountains beside a green stream
 after so many years visits are now up to me
 a few peach and plum trees blooming red and white
 a green and yellow field of vegetables and wheat
 all night I sit in bed listening to rain
 when it clears I open the window and doze off watching
 clouds
 nothing in life is better than being free

but getting free isn't luck

古人為道入山中
 添石墜腰舂白米
 擔泥拽石何妨道
 驢懶借衣求食者

日用工夫在己躬
 攜鉏帶雨種青松
 運水搬柴好用功
 莫來相伴老禪翁

The ancients entered mountains in search of the Way
 their daily practice revolved around their bodies
 tying heavy stones to their waists to hull rice
 shouldering hoes in the rain to plant pines
 moving dirt and rocks it goes without saying
 carrying firewood and water they stayed busy
 the slackers who put on a robe to get food
 don't come to join an old Zen monk

Note: Traditionally, Buddhist monasteries in China depended on donations from lay believers. And such donations were sometimes in the form of land, the rent from which paid for those things the monks needed. As a result of such rent income, some monasteries became so rich that the monks did little or no work. This was not the case at monasteries in the mountains, where the monastic rules of Pai Chang (百丈清規) prevailed, chief of which was “No work, no food.”

萬物生成感宿根
 一團猛火利名路
 草莽荊榛狐窟宅
 滿頭白髮居巖谷

已長彼短不須論
 三尺寒冰佛祖門
 雲霄蓬島鶴乾坤
 幾度凭欄到日曛

Everything's growth depends on its roots
 why argue about which is tall or short
 the road to fame and fortune is a circle of fire
 the door to buddhahood is a wall of ice
 my hut sits alone among brambles and weeds
 the cloud-wrapped isle of Penglai is a crane's universe
 here in the mountains my hair has turned white
 I've leaned at the windowsill so often until dark

Note: In this case, “roots” refer to past actions whose karmic fruit we reap today. When Taoist adepts finally succeed in transforming themselves into pure spirit through yoga and alchemy, they are said to fly off as cranes or be carried by cranes to the island of Penglai (蓬萊), the home of immortals. The last couplet suggests Stonehouse wished he had a few more visitors.

巖居我本為修行
 道性淳和餘習盡
 種松鋤菜一身健
 世異事殊真好笑

不許人知每自評
 覺心圓淨照功成
 補衲翻經兩眼明
 避秦亦得隱山名

I live in the mountains in order to practice
 I don't need others to examine my faults
 when life becomes simple old habits end
 when the mind becomes clear its light finally shines
 planting pines and tilling fields have strengthened my body
 reading sutras and mending clothes have sharpened my sight
 the world's absurdities are absurd indeed
 the refugees of Ch'in are called hermits too

Note: In T'ao Yuan-ming's story "Peach Blossom Spring," a group of people fleeing the oppressive rule of the Ch'in dynasty (221–207 BC) discovers a hidden valley. When several centuries later a fisherman stumbles upon their sanctuary, he finds a peaceful farming community. Eventually, the fisherman returns to his own village and tells others about his discovery. But the descendants of the original refugees obliterate the traces he left to mark the way there, and their hidden valley was never found again.

歷遍乾坤沒處尋
 茅菴高插雲霄碧
 人為利名驚寵辱
 蒼松恠石無人識

偶然得住此山林
 蘚逕斜過竹樹深
 我因禪寂老光陰
 猶更將心去覓心

I searched high and low without success
 by chance I found this forested peak
 my thatch hut pokes through the clouds and sky
 a moss-covered trail cuts through the bamboo
 the greedy are worried about favor and shame
 I spend my time in the stillness of meditation
 bizarre rocks and gnarled pines remain unknown
 to those who look for the mind with the mind

Note: The Chinese have always had a passion for old pine trees and oddly shaped rocks. In the last line, Stonehouse recalls the Zen monk who sees beyond the mountains but who has not yet seen beyond the emptiness with which he has replaced them.

年 老 心 閒 身 亦 閒
 巖 扃 幽 寂 自 為 喜
 風 暖 野 禽 聲 瑣 碎
 藜 羹 粟 飯 家 常 有

掃 除 一 榻 臥 松 間
 世 路 崎 嶇 人 轉 頑
 日 斜 花 藥 影 闌 珊
 不 用 持 盂 更 下 山

Old but at peace in body and mind
 I cleared a place to rest in the pines
 a remote mountain hut makes me happy
 up-and-down roads make others perverse
 wild birds chatter when the wind turns warm
 cerulean shadows fade as the sun declines
 with pigweed soup and coarse rice at home
 why take my bowl down the mountain anymore

Note: Lines five and six are inspired by Ou-yang Hsiu's *Liuyishihhua*, except that Ou-yang Hsiu has the sun high and the shadows heavy. The term *huayao* (cerulean) was used in Stonehouse's time in reference to a certain kind of blue found in the pottery glazes of the preceding Sung dynasty. The leaves of pigweed, or *Chenopodium album*, are eaten fresh as salad greens in Europe but are usually cooked in China. Pigweed has been a metaphor for simple fare ever since Confucius had nothing but this to eat for ten days while traveling through an inhospitable region. Although monks all have a large bowl they use for begging, the hermits I've met coming down the trail invariably carry an empty sack and leave their bowls at home. Stonehouse was known for his refusal to beg for food.

清晨汲水啟柴門
 黃獨火香思嬾瓚
 林間猿鶴慣曾見
 幾度坐來苔石暖

看見天空四斂氛
 碧桃花謝悟靈雲
 世上衰榮杳不聞
 好山直看到斜曛

Opening my door at dawn to fetch water
 I examine the sky's seasonal moods
 the smell of roasting yams recalls Lazy Scrap
 peach petals falling woke up Magic Cloud
 I usually see gibbons and cranes in the forest
 I hear no news of the world's ups and downs
 I often spend days warming moss-covered rocks
 gazing at the mountains I love until sunset

Note: The T'ang dynasty official Li Mi heard about Lazy Scrap (Lan-ts'an) and decided to pay him a visit. When Li arrived, Lazy Scrap offered the official part of a yam he was roasting and advised him, "Don't talk too much, and you'll last ten years as prime minister" (*Kaosengchuan*). Li did, in fact, later become prime minister, but his readiness to criticize put him in and out of favor. Magic Cloud (Ling-yun) was enlightened while watching peach petals falling, after which he composed this gatha: "For thirty years I expected a sword / scattering leaves I cut through branch after branch / but since I discovered peach blossoms / I haven't had any more doubts" (*Wutenghuiyuan*: 4).

白雲深處結茅廬
未死且留煨芋火
湛然凝寂通三際
菴內不知菴外事

隨分生涯樂有餘
息機何必絕交書
廓爾圓明裏十虛
幾番花落又還敷

I built a thatched hut deep in the clouds
I find enough joy in what life brings
I bury a few potatoes before the fire dies
I'm done with schemes but not with writing letters
clear and still as ice I transcend the bounds of time
open and full of light I encompass the ten directions
but events outside my hut are a mystery to me
like how many times have flowers fallen and bloomed again

Note: Lines five and six recapitulate the two stages of meditation known as *chihkuan* (止觀):
“stilling” thoughts and “illuminating” what is real.

細把浮生物理推
 僧居青嶂閒方好
 風颺茶烟浮竹榻
 如何三萬六千日

輸贏難定一盤碁
 人在紅塵老不知
 水流花瓣落青池
 不放身心靜片時

Examine the patterns of transient existence
 the outcome of a game of chess isn't fixed
 a monk in the mountains needs to be free
 people in the dust grow old unaware
 windblown tea smoke floats above my bed
 stream-borne petals fill the pond outside
 with thirty-six thousand days
 why not spend a few staying still

Note: The Chinese play two kinds of chess: *wei-ch'i* (圍棋), which the Japanese call Go, and *hsiang-ch'i* (象棋), which is similar to Indian or Western chess. Both have been played in China for more than three thousand years. In Buddhist parlance, "dust" refers to the world as perceived by the senses. The tea smoke is from the small clay brazier Stonehouse used for boiling tea.

怎麼徹底怎麼去
 兩片唇皮堆白醺
 雲邊木馬飛如電
 雪覆萬峯晴月夜

放下從頭放下來
 一條古路長蒼苔
 海底泥牛吼似雷
 暗香春信到寒梅

To get to the end the very end
 let it all go let it go
 foam piles up on a pair of lips
 moss grows thick on an ancient road
 a wooden horse flashes through the clouds
 a clay ox thunders beneath the waves
 a clear moonlit night amid ten thousand snowy peaks
 a hidden scent says spring has reached the winter plum

Note: The third and fourth lines refer to people who talk about the truth without knowing it for themselves. The fifth and sixth lines summarize koans in which the wooden horse that flashes through the clouds and the clay ox that thunders beneath the waves represent the liberated mind free of feelings and thoughts. As to the second of these metaphors, Tung-shan (東山) once asked Lung-shan (龍山) what he had learned while living in the mountains. Lung-shan answered, "I saw two clay oxen plunge into the sea. And since then, I haven't heard any news" (*Chuantenglu*: 8). The last two lines recall a famous couplet about plum blossoms by Lin Ho-ching (967–1028): "Their hidden scent rides the wind / the moon shines through the mist."

清貧長樂道人家
昨夜西風吹古木
霞飄素練粘丹壁
活計從來隨現定

日用頭頭自偶諧
天明滿地是乾柴
露滴真珠綴綠崖
不勞辛苦去安排

I'm a poor but happy follower of the Way
whatever happens takes care of my needs
last night the west wind blew down an old tree
at daybreak firewood covered the ground
windblown white silk wreathed the red scarps
dewdrop pearls adorned the green cliffs
my survival has always depended on what's present
why should I tire myself out making plans

Note: Buddhists and Confucians also used the word *Tao*, or Way, to describe their path of spiritual and moral practice. The west wind blows in autumn in China and is usually the mildest of the seasonal breezes.

了了常知似不知
 旋乾倒嶽鎮長靜
 有耳聽聲風過樹
 休言我獨能明了

翛然如兀又如癡
 一念萬年終不移
 無心應物月臨池
 此事人人盡可為

You know very well yet seem not to know
 speechless like a dunce or a fool
 you keep still while storms flatten mountains
 not a thought moving for ten thousand years
 with ears you hear the wind in the trees
 with no-mind you respond like a pond to the moon
 but don't think you alone understand
 this is something anyone can do

計拙慙應世才
 自言境物皆虛幻
 黃葉隨流閒去住
 雙眸合却方纔好

聰明無分占癡呆
 誰解資財盡倘來
 白雲橫谷謾徘徊
 為愛青山又放開

The shame of dumb ideas is suffered by the best
 but the absence of intelligence means a fool for sure
 claiming external things are nothing but illusions
 yet not understanding wealth is simply luck
 the leaves in the stream move without a plan
 the clouds in the valley drift without design
 I closed my eyes and everything was fine
 I opened them again because I love mountains

Note: Confucius said, "The wise love water. The kind love mountains" (*Analects*: 6.21). While wisdom is the basis of enlightenment, compassion is the basis of liberation. The saying of Zen master Ch'ing-yuan Hsing-ssu comes to mind: "Thirty years ago, before I began practicing Zen, I saw mountains as simply mountains. Then, while I was practicing Zen, I realized mountains were not mountains. But now that I understand Zen, I see mountains are simply mountains" (*Wutenghuiyuan*: 17).

圓顱方服作沙門
止惡防非調意馬
鍊磨道性真金淨
把手牽他行不得

便是牟尼佛子孫
忘機息見制心猿
涵養靈源美玉溫
惟人自肯乃方親

A round head and square robe constitute a monk
 behold a descendant of Shakyamuni Buddha
 stopping wrongs and evils taming the galloping will
 banishing schemes and views controlling the monkey mind
 refining his moral nature until it is pure as gold
 nurturing his mystic source's jade-like luster
 but give him a pull and he won't budge
 only when he is willing is he friendly

Note: Although Shakyamuni Buddha didn't cut his hair, his disciples began the custom of shaving their heads to distinguish themselves from members of other sects. They also wore the simplest possible garment patched together from rags. In regard to the residents of a Zen monastery, Stonehouse treats slouches and fanatics with equal disdain.

紅日東升夜落西
乾坤老我一頭雪
借地栽松將作棟
寄言世上傷弓羽

黃昏鐘了五更鷄
歲月消磨百甕釐
喫桃吐核又成蹊
好向深山擇木棲

The sunrise in the east the sunset in the west
the bell at dusk the rooster at dawn
the flux of yin and yang has turned my head to snow
over the years I've emptied a hundred crocks of pickles
I plant pines for beams where I find room
I spit out peach pits and make a peach-tree trail
this is for the bow-wary birds in the world
head for the mountains and choose any tree

Note: The Chinese often eat pickles with their meals, especially the morning meal. For those, such as hermits, who don't have much else, pickled vegetables are often the main course at meals during the winter. The *Chankuotse* (戰國策) says, "When a bird that has been previously shot at hears a bow string, it flies away as fast as it can" (Chutse).

法道寥寥不可模
門前養竹高遮屋
獼抱子來崖果熟
禪邊大有閒情緒

一菴深隱是良圖
石上分泉直到厨
鶴移巢去礪松枯
收拾乾柴向地爐

The Way of the Dharma is too singular to copy
but a well-hidden hut comes close
I planted bamboo in front to form a screen
from the rocks I led a spring into my kitchen
gibbons bring their young to the cliffs when fruits are ripe
cranes move their nests from the gorge when pines turn
brown
lots of idle thoughts occur during meditation

I gather the deadwood for my stove

Note: The spring still flows from the rocks behind Yunlin Temple, the current incarnation of Stonehouse's first hut. But multiple springs also flow behind and in front of his second hut north of the current water-bottling plant. In choosing a location for a hut, hermits always try to build near a water source. Among the fruits I've been surprised to find growing in the mountains in China where hermits dwell are Chinese gooseberries and passion fruit, loquat and dragon eyes.

浮世光陰有幾何
 厨空旋去尋黃獨
 塵尾罷拈言語斷
 可憐身在袈裟下

誰能挈挈又波波
 衲破方思剪綠荷
 佛經忘看蠹魚多
 趣境攀緣事似麻

There isn't much time in this fleeting life
 why spend it running in circles
 when my kitchen is bare I go look for yams
 when my robe needs a patch I consider lotus leaves
 I've put down the elk tail and stopped giving sermons
 my long-forgotten sutras are home to silverfish
 I pity those who wear a monk's robe
 whose goals and attachments keep them busy

Note: The Chinese yam, or *Dioscorea bulbifera*, is usually collected from the plant's vines in autumn. However, as Stonehouse notes elsewhere, he considered it a food of last resort. Lotus leaves retain their supple yet leathery character through the summer but become dry and brittle as autumn approaches. Hence, they are used as a substitute for cloth only in emergencies or in jest, as here. The whisk is an abbot's symbol of authority and consists of a handle to which the tail of an elk, a deer, or an ox is attached. Stonehouse stopped giving sermons in 1338 after serving as abbot of Fuyuan Temple near Pinghu for seven years.

FIVE-SYLLABLE VERSES

曾	草	何	道
見	深	處	人
樵	蛇	碧	緣
翁	性	桃	慮
說	悅	謝	盡
雲	日	滿	觸
邊	暖	谿	目
雲	蝶	流	是
畫	心	水	心
房	狂	香	光

Followers of the Way are done with reason
 wherever they look is the light of the mind
 somewhere peach trees are blooming
 their petals perfume the stream
 deep grass is bliss for a snake
 sunshine is butterfly heaven
 I heard a woodcutter mention
 a lean-to in the clouds

Note: The fisherman who discovered the hidden valley in T'ao Yuan-ming's "Peach Blossom Spring" (cf. poem 43) did so by following peach petals upstream to a spring that flowed from a cleft in the rocks.

一鋤足生涯
 有功惟種竹
 水碓夜舂米
 人間在何處
 居山道者家
 無暇莫栽花
 竹籠春焙茶
 隱隱見桑麻

A hoe provides a living
 for a follower of the Way in the mountains
 usually busy planting bamboo
 he doesn't have time to grow flowers
 a waterwheel hulls his rice at night
 a wicker tray dries his tea in spring
 where is everyone else
 in the haze of hemp and mulberry groves

Note: The waterwheels here are pounding rice to remove the husk. Although timber bamboo remains a major product of the hills south of Huchou, Stonehouse was probably more interested in the smaller, edible varieties. Tea leaves are picked several times a year, but those picked in spring

are usually the best. Once picked, the leaves are withered in the sun for brief periods then tray-dried in heat-controlled rooms or over a heat source, such as a stove, for shorter or longer periods depending on whether a green, an oolong, or a black/red tea is desired. Mulberry and hemp are usually grown at the margins of farming communities on land unsuitable for rice. Mulberry leaves were used to feed silkworms, which produced the silk that everyone needed to pay their taxes and rent. Hence, most farmers produced silk, but only the very rich actually wore it. Everyone else wore hemp.

時時自解顏
 心下渾無事
 天空鵬翮翼
 獨與梅花好
 年老得安閒
 眼前惟有山
 霧重豹添斑
 相期盡歲寒

Most of the time I smile
 old men can take it easy
 not a care in mind
 nothing but mountains before my eyes
 the P'eng soars into the sky
 the leopard blends with the fog
 I'm more like the flowering plum
 waiting for the year-end cold

Note: The P'eng is the great bird (at the beginning of *Chuangtzu*) said to be so big it has to climb ninety thousand miles into the sky before it has room to turn. Thus, it is viewed as a symbol of transcendence. In the *Yiching* (49), the leopard that can change its spots is used as a metaphor for

the person who succeeds in eliminating vices through the cultivation of virtue. Here, though, it simply disappears by blending with its surroundings. The flowering plum, meanwhile, is a symbol of perseverance in the face of hardship, blossoming during the coldest period of the year.

磨煉工夫到
 山空雲自在
 盡日閒閒地
 萬緣休歇罷
 難同知解禪
 天淨月孤圓
 長年坦坦然
 一念絕中邊

Reasoning comes to an end
 a thought breaks in the middle
 all day nothing but time
 undisturbed all year
 on deserted mountains clouds come and go
 in the clear sky the moon is a lonesome o
 even if yoga or alchemy worked
 it wouldn't match knowing Zen

Note: In the seventh line, *mo-lien* (grinding-firing), which I've translated as "yoga or alchemy," refers to the Zen story of grinding a brick to make a mirror — for which see poem 15 and the accompanying note — and also to Taoist alchemical practices aimed at achieving immortality.

巖臺舒野望
 唐代高僧寺
 溪光晴瀉遠
 山路歌聲絕
 樵歸煙火村
 野色晚來昏
 宋朝丞相墳
 依約見松門

The landscape unrolls from the cliffs
 Pine Gate is there as usual
 a Buddhist temple from the T'ang
 a Sung prime minister's grave
 a river of light drains into the distance
 the wilderness turns dark at dusk
 singing fades from mountain trails
 as woodcutters return to their smoke village

Note: Pine Gate is apparently another name for Lone Pine Pass (獨松關), about forty kilometers southwest of Hsiamushan not far from the town of Anchi (安吉). Just inside the pass is Lingfeng Temple (靈峰寺), which dates back to the end of the T'ang. I don't know to which prime minister

Stonehouse is referring, but in the vicinity of Lingfeng Temple there are several stupa cemeteries and pagodas dating back to the Sung. The West Fork of the Tiao River also begins just inside the same pass and flows west of Hsiamushan on its way to Taihu Lake. The singing refers to woodcutter work songs. The villages to which Stonehouse is referring were at the foot of the mountain.

何人能侶我
 平澹忘懷處
 紙窓開竹屋
 屈曲黃泥路
 無事亦無為
 蕭然絕照時
 瓦竈爇松枝
 團圞紫槿籬

A winding muddy trail
 a hedge of purple hibiscus
 a paper-window bamboo hut
 stove-blackened pines
 a simple place where cares disappear
 quiet untroubled days
 who can be like me
 free of work and effort

Note: The hibiscus is found throughout the southern half of China, where it is often grown to form a hedge. Lao-tzu says, "I make no effort / and the people transform themselves / I stay still / and the

people correct themselves / I do no work / and the people enrich themselves / I want nothing / and
the people simplify themselves" (*Taoteching*: 57).

深山僧住處
 地上竝無草
 閒多諸想滅
 一頂破禪衲
 端的勝蓬萊
 園中却有梅
 靜極自心開
 和雲曬石臺

A monk's home in the mountains
 leaves Penglai in the dust
 the ground is free of weeds
 there's a plum tree in the garden
 fantasies cease there's so much time
 the mind opens up it's so quiet
 a monk's ragged robe
 dries on the rocks next to a cloud

Note: Penglai is the abode of Taoist immortals and thought to be located off the north coast of Shantung somewhere in the Pohai Sea. The plum blooms during the coldest time of the year, and throughout Chinese history it has been the friend of recluses looking for any sign of spring.

一
陣
從
何
起
憾
他
林
木
動
本
自
無
形
段
欲
窮
窮
不
到

颼
颼
徧
九
垓
吹
我
竹
門
開
如
何
有
去
來
一
虎
嘯
巖
臺

Where did that gust come from
whistling across the sky
shaking the trees in the forest
blowing open my bamboo door
without any arms or legs
how does it come and go
my attempts to track it down have failed
from the cliffs a tiger roars

Note: In the last line, all three Ming dynasty editions have “roars,” while later editions have “laughs.”

The Chinese words for “laugh” and “roar” are homophones—both are pronounced *hsiao*. Either way, the tiger is considered the source of wind in China. According to an early Chinese saying

recorded in the *Hanshu*, “When a tiger roars, the wind rises. When a dragon stirs, clouds gather”
(biography of Wang Pao).

此 生 隨 分 過	繭 紙 衣 裳 軟	夏 涼 窓 近 竹	霞 霧 山 頭 頂
無 可 得 思 量	山 田 粥 飯 香	冬 暖 閣 朝 陽	雲 邊 闕 小 房

From the very top of Hsiawushan
 my hut peers through the clouds
 cool in summer beside bamboo
 warm in winter facing the sun
 cocoon-paper clothes feel soft
 mountain-grown rice smells sweet
 I live on what life brings
 nothing else is worth my time

Note: Hsiawushan is the name that appears on old maps for the mountain's northern summit, which
 was the location of Stonehouse's second hut. His first hut was near the southern summit labeled

Hsiamushan on old maps. People who couldn't afford cloth wore garments made of a heavy grade of paper that included silkworm cocoons unsuitable for silk thread.

一鋤足生涯
有山堪寓目
嵐氣濕茅屋
任緣終省力

長年飽水柴
無事可干懷
苔痕上土階
渾不用安排

A hoe supplies a living
there's water and wood all year
mountains to relax my eyes
nothing to cause me trouble
mist soaks through my thatch roof
moss covers up the steps on the trail
accepting conserves my strength
I don't need to arrange a thing

Note: A thatched covering of grass or rushes is still the most common roofing in the mountains. However, hermits who can afford them use fired clay tiles. If there is one element of Chinese culture most Westerners find incomprehensible, if not exasperating, it's the Chinese glorification of

acceptance. But acceptance provides the basis for transcendence, while struggle keeps us enslaved to the dialectic of opposites. At the end of his *Taoteching*, Lao-tzu wrote, "The Way of the Sage / is to act without struggling" (81).

百	油	羹	山
味	煎	熟	厨
皆	清	筍	修
難	頂	鞭	午
及	蕈	爛	供
何	醋	飯	泉
須	煮	炊	白
說	紫	粳	似
上	芽	米	銀
方	薑	香	漿

Lunch in my mountain kitchen
 there's a shimmering springwater sauce
 a well-cooked stew of preserved bamboo
 a fragrant pot of hard-grain rice
 blue-cap mushrooms fried in oil
 purple-bud ginger vinaigrette
 none of them heavenly dishes
 but why should I cater to gods

Note: As previously noted, there were springs adjacent to both of Stonehouse's huts. Hard-grain rice refers to a coarse, nonglutinous variety. As for the mushrooms, most likely Stonehouse is referring to *Lactarius indigo*, which is an edible blue mushroom found in forests throughout China.

Later editions have the graphically similar *ch'ing-ting* (clear-cap) in place of *ch'ing-ting* (blue-cap),
an obvious misprint.

真空如湛海
纔受形骸報
識情奔野馬
不悟空王旨

微動即成漚
便懷衣食憂
妄念走狂猴
輪迴卒未休

True emptiness is like a translucent sea
where the faintest movement makes foam
as soon as we have a body
we worry about food and clothes
with feelings racing past like horses
and delusions as restless as monkeys
until we understand the Master of Emptiness
the Wheel of Rebirth rolls on

Note: At the end of the *Diamond Sutra*, the Buddha says, "As a lamp, a cataract, a star in space / an illusion, a dewdrop, a bubble / a dream, a cloud, a flash of lightning / view all created things like this." And Lao-tzu says, "The reason we have disaster / is because we have a body / if we didn't

have a body / we wouldn't have disaster" (*Taoteching*: 13). According to the Buddha, who is referred to here as the Master of Emptiness, the motive forces that move the Wheel of Rebirth are the three poisons of delusion, anger, and desire, chief among which is delusion.

世	割	荳	山
上	茅	莢	家
誰	修	新	八
知	舊	垂	月
我	屋	隴	天
優	斫	稻	時
遊	竹	花	物
樂	覓	香	自
晚	清	滿	相
年	泉	田	便

The Eighth Month in the mountains
 the seasonal fruits are at hand
 new peas hang on terraced banks
 rice-flower perfume fills the fields
 I cut tall grass to patch my roof
 and chop bamboo to channel the spring
 who in the world would guess
 how carefree and happy I am in old age

Note: The eighth lunar month in China is roughly equivalent to September. Farmers often take advantage of the hiatus that occurs during this period, when weeding and watering are no longer necessary and harvesting is either over or has not yet begun, to make repairs to their homes and

irrigation systems. Where fields are terraced, farmers often grow beans and melons on the banks that separate levels. Bamboo canes are prepared for use as water pipes by dropping hot coals into one end and allowing them to burn through the junctions, or as water conduits by cutting larger bamboos in half lengthwise.

不	煙	門	茆
悟	熏	對	菴
空	茶	一	竹
王	竈	池	樹
法	黑	水	間
緣	塵	窓	塵
何	蒸	開	世
得	布	四	不
此	裘	面	相
間	斑	山	關

A thatch hut in a bamboo grove
 beyond the world of dust
 a pond before the door
 mountains out every window
 a tea-stove black with soot
 a hemp robe streaked with dirt
 if I didn't follow the Master of Emptiness
 how did I end up here

Note: Stonehouse's portable tea stove is also mentioned in poem 13. As in poem 68, the Master of Emptiness refers to the Buddha, whose teaching on this subject was often summarized by the lines from the *Heart Sutra*: "Form is emptiness, and emptiness is form."

紅日半銜山
綠蒲眠褥軟
松月來先照
迢迢清夜夢

柴門便掩關
白木枕頭彎
溪雲出未還
不肯到人間

As soon as the red sun bites the mountain
I shut my rickety door
I sleep on a mattress of soft green grass
and the curve of a wooden pillow
and when the moon shines through the pines
before clouds return to the stream
clear night dreams go far
but not to the world of men

Note: In poem 27, the mountain bites the sun. Here, the sun bites the mountain. In both cases, as in Hui-neng's response to the argument in the *Platform Sutra* about a flag moving in the wind, it's

the mind that does the biting. Until fairly recently, the Chinese preferred to sleep on hard pillows designed to cool the brain. In addition to making pillows of wood, they also used porcelain.

澹烟斜日暮
野果棘難採
鶴群衝鵲散
扶杖出松林

紅葉半巖陰
藥苗香易尋
樹影落溪沉
閒行上翠岑

I hiked staff in hand beyond the pines
and found myself on an emerald peak
a flock of cranes were chasing a hawk
tree shadows darkened the streams
thorns made wild fruit hard to pick
their scent made herbs easy to find
thin smoke veiled the sinking sun
red leaves shaded half the cliff

Note: When Buddhist monks or nuns venture into the mountains, they often carry a six-foot staff with rings on the top that jangle, announcing their presence to wild animals, and with a small spade at the bottom for negotiating slippery slopes or for digging up the odd root.

好山千萬疊
 減塑三尊佛
 鐘敲寒夜月
 客問西來意
 屋占最高層
 長明一椀燈
 茶煮石池冰
 惟言我不能

On a ten-thousand-story-high mountain
 my hut sits at the very top
 I shaped three buddhas from clay
 and keep an oil lamp burning
 I ring a bell cold moonlit nights
 and brew tea with pond ice
 but when someone asks what coming from the West means
 I can't say a word

Note: The Buddhist trinity is usually represented by Amita, Shakyamuni, and Maitreya, the buddhas of the past, the present, and the future. A small handbell is often used while chanting. At the end of the fifth century, Bodhidharma left his home in South India and brought the teaching of Zen to

China. Originally, the word *dhyana* (which the Chinese at that time pronounced *zen-na*) meant “meditation.” Following Bodhidharma’s arrival, the word was also used to refer to his technique of pointing directly to the mind, and it was eventually applied to the lineage of teachers and disciples who followed this teaching. A favorite *kung-an* (or koan in Japanese) was, “Why did Bodhidharma come from the West?” — “the West” in this case referred to India.

取捨與行藏
乾坤容我懶
背日鷗眠埠
情迷隨物轉

人生各有方
名利使他忙
營窠燕遶梁
不得悟空王

Advancing or retiring grasping or letting go
people all have their own ways
Heaven and Earth let me be lazy
profit and fame put others to work
gulls sleep on piers with their backs to the sun
swallows build nests above house beams
misled by passion distracted by things
they remain unaware of the Master of Emptiness

Note: In the *Analects*, Confucius advises his disciples, "Come forward when you are of use. Retire when you are not" (7.10). Heaven and Earth represent the basic dialectic of yin and yang. The

Master of Emptiness refers to the Buddha, who taught that since all things depend on other things for their existence, they are themselves empty of self-existence, and thus not ultimately real.

生	麥	紙	結
涯	飯	窓	草
隨	惟	松	便
分	饒	葉	為
過	火	暗	菴
誰	藜羹	竹	年
管	不	屋	年
世	點	薜	用
人	塩	花	覆
嫌		粘	苔

I weave rush grass for my hut
 every year a new layer of thatch
 pine trees shade the paper windows
 moss flowers decorate the bamboo walls
 for wheat gruel I only need fire
 and pigweed soup requires no salt
 I survive on whatever comes my way
 why should I mind what others hate

Note: The paper used for windows was treated with oil to make it waterproof. Although mosses are nonflowering plants, their spore capsules are sometimes borne on long stems that suggest those of a flower. Wheat gruel is made by grinding wheat together with its husk and boiling the resulting

mixture with wild or cultivated vegetables. Pigweed soup is also mentioned in poem 45. Wheat gruel and pigweed soup were once among the survival foods of the poor. Lao-tzu says, "The best are like water / bringing help to all / without competing / choosing what others avoid / they thus approach the Tao" (*Taoteching*: 8).

SEVEN-SYLLABLE QUATRAINS

妻
妻
茅
舍
新
秋
夜
山
月
如
銀
牽
老
興

白
荳
花
開
絡
緯
啼
閒
行
不
覺
過
峰
西

A thatch hut is lonely on a new fall night
with white peas in flower and crickets calling
mountain-moon silver evokes an old joy
suddenly I've strolled west of the peak

Note: A poem written on the Mid-Autumn Festival, when the Chinese celebrate the harvest. Next to the Lunar New Year, this is the most important annual celebration in China, and family members

make every effort to be together this night, which occurs on the full moon of the eighth lunar month, usually in September. I'm guessing the flowers in this case are those of the hyacinth bean (*Dolichos lablab*), which blooms throughout the summer and autumn in this part of the Yangtze watershed.

滿山筍蕨滿園茶
大抵四時春最好

一樹紅花間白花
就中猶好是山家

Mountains of fiddleheads garden of tea
one tree of pink mixed in with the white
of all the seasons spring is the best
a mountain home then is especially fine

Note: Fiddleheads have been standard hermit fare in China ever since Shu-ch'i and his brother, Po-yi, tried to survive on a diet of little else ca. 1100 BC. Spring is also the best time to pick the leaves

of most varieties of tea. In its natural state, the tea tree can grow as tall as any other tree, but it is usually kept pruned waist-high to make picking its leaves easier. Hsiamushan teas include white, green, and red varieties, and are famous in the Huchou area. The second line suggests a peach tree in a group of plum trees. Normally, the plum blooms before the peach, but in poem 40, Stonehouse reports both flowering together on Hsiamushan.

有人問我何年住
門外碧桃親手種

坐久纔方省得來
春光二十度花開

Someone asked what year I arrived
I had to think before the answer came
the peach tree I planted outside my door
has flowered in spring twenty times

Note: Stonehouse must have planted this tree as soon as he arrived at Hsiamushan, which, according to poem 170, was in 1312. Because he left to become abbot of Fuyuan Monastery near

Pinghu in May 1331, this poem would have been written shortly before his departure.

厭煩勞役愛安閒
百丈已前巖穴士

箇樣如何居得山
生涯全在鑿頭邊

If you hate hard work and like to loaf
how will you survive in the mountains
Pai-chang made his home among cliffs and caves
and his living depended completely on his hoe

Note: Pai-chang (百丈, 720–814) is credited with establishing the basic rules still used in Zen monasteries, which have often been summarized as “No work, no food.” Paichang was the name of

the mountain he lived on. The mountain is one hundred kilometers west of Nanchang, the capital of Kiangsi, and it was by the mountain's name that he was better known, rather than by his monastic name, Huai-hai (懷海).

年老菴居養病身
怕寒起坐燒松火

日高猶自未開門
一曲樵歌隔塢聞

Old and retired I nurse a sick body
long after sunrise my door is still closed
shivering I get up to start a pine fire
from the next valley over I hear a woodcutter's song

Note: This would have been written after Stonehouse retired as abbot of Fuyuan Temple and moved to the mountain's northern summit, or Hsiawushan. The cold has forced him to consider a

fire of something more than the usual leaves and twigs. In China, woodcutters sing to accompany the rhythm of their work. Stonehouse may also be alluding to the hermit-poet Chu Tun-ju (朱敦儒, 1081–1159), who titled one of his collections *Woodcutter Songs*. Chu retired to Chiahsing, a prefecture not far from where Stonehouse served as abbot.

童子未曾歸動火
山菴喜免征徭慮

水雲早已到投齋
賸種青松只賣柴

Novices don't stay to stir the fire
wandering monks prefer free meals
hermits at least avoid corvée and taxes
and plant enough pines to live off firewood

Note: Before a man or woman can be ordained as a Buddhist monk or nun, they must first spend several years as a novice under the guidance of a senior monk or nun. Here, novices visit

Stonehouse seeking instruction. But while they might arrive in the morning to pay their respects, they are gone by nightfall. Once ordained, monks and nuns are allowed to wander at will and stay at any temple where they can find room. But they, too, prefer life in a monastery to life in a mountain hut. During the Yuan dynasty, monks were exempt from corvée, or forced labor on state projects. In addition to firewood, hermits sell or barter wild herbs, nuts, and fruits to obtain such necessities as salt, rice or wheat flour, cooking oil, lamp oil, and cloth.

玉堂銀燭笙歌夜
爭似道人茅屋下

金谷羅幃富貴家
一天晴月曬梅花

Jade-hall silver-candle nights of song
gold-valley silk-curtain homes of the rich
can't compare with a hermit's thatch hut
where plum blossoms bask in unclouded moonlight

Note: The appellation *jade hall* was first applied to the imperial palace and in particular to the women's apartments. By Stonehouse's day, however, the term was usually reserved for the Hanlin

Academy, which housed the country's most prestigious scholars. Shih Ch'ung (石崇, 249–300) held ostentatious banquets at a place called Gold Valley in the Peimang Hills north of Loyang. Whenever a guest failed to drain his cup, Shih had one of the serving girls beheaded, or so one story went.

相逢盡說世途難
除却淵明賦歸去

自向菴中討不安
更無一箇肯休官

All those I meet say the world's ways are hard
even in a hut they can't find peace
besides Yuan-ming announcing his retirement
who else mentions resigning

Note: T'ao Yuan-ming lived in the late fourth and early fifth centuries and is revered as one of China's greatest poets, certainly its greatest poet extolling the retired life. Finding the demands of government service not to his liking, he quit his post and retired to a farmstead at the foot of Lushan (廬山) at the age of forty. T'ao celebrated his decision in his "Ode to Retirement," which began "Oh, let me retire / let socializing end and wandering stop / let the world and me say goodbye."

山厨寂寂斷炊煙
面壁老僧無定力

凍鎖泉聲欲雪天
又思乞食到人間

There's nothing going on in my mountain kitchen
I hear the spring melting but the sky says snow
facing the wall meditating in vain
again this old monk thinks of begging in town

Note: The most distinctive sound of a traditional kitchen in ancient, and even not so ancient, China was that of the bellows, which was built into the side of the stove with a handle that could be pumped whenever more air was needed. There was a spring near each of Stonehouse's two huts on the mountain. The practice of "wall contemplation" was associated with Bodhidharma, who was said to have spent nine years sitting in a cave near Shaolin Temple meditating upon the cave's rock wall before he transmitted his understanding to Hui-k'o (慧可), who then became Zen's Second Patriarch. According to his contemporaries, Stonehouse preferred surviving on wild plants to begging.

種了冬瓜便種茄
眾人若要厨堂好

勞形苦骨做生涯
須是園頭常在家

I plant winter melon then aubergine
I wear myself out staying alive
but someone who wants a decent kitchen
needs to keep a garden nearby

Note: In the Yangtze watershed, winter melon, or *Benincasa cerifera*, and Chinese eggplant, or *Solanum melongena*, both bear their fruit well into autumn. Neither requires much effort to grow,

and both are easily preserved, the former with heat and vinegar, the latter with stove ashes.

粥去飯來何日了
都來與我無干涉

日生月落幾時休
空起許多閒念頭

Will the porridge or rice ever end
will the sun or moon ever rest
either way it's no concern of mine
so many fantasies arise in vain

Note: Because it's easier to digest, rice porridge is usually eaten in the morning, while steamed rice is the standard staple at lunch and dinner. The only difference is the amount of water used in

cooking.

山居道者機關少
屋後青松八九樹

門前紫芋兩三隣
家火從頭說向人

Eight or nine pines behind his hut
two or three mounds of taro in front
a mountain recluse doesn't have many interests
all he talks about are his provisions

Note: Taro, or *Colocasia esculenta*, is one of the principal starches of hermits in the southern half of China. In the last line, the term *chia-huo* (home-fire) nowadays means "tools," but in the past it also

meant “provisions” or “means of support,” which is how Stonehouse uses the same term in poem 154 as well.

此事誰人敢強為
分明月在梅花上

除非知有莫能知
看到梅花早已遲

This is something no one can force
besides knowing it's there there's nothing to know
once the moon shines above a flowering plum
it's too late to look at the blossoms

Note: Zen Buddhists liken any teaching to a finger pointing to the moon: once you've seen the moon, you don't need to look at the finger.

過了事已過去了
只今便道只今句

未來不必預思量
梅子熟時梔子香

What's gone is already gone
and what hasn't come needs no thought
right now I'm writing a right-now line
plums are ripe and gardenias in bloom

Note: In the lower Yangtze watershed, plums ripen and gardenias bloom in the fifth lunar month.

一日打眠三五度
 循環數徧琅玕竹

也消不得許多閒
 又出青松望遠山

Three or four naps every day
 still don't exhaust all my free time
 I walk around the jade bamboo a few times
 then hike past the pines and gaze at far mountains

Note: The kind of jade mentioned as hyperbole here is an iridescent variety found in the Kunlun Mountains of myth where plants are made of precious stones.

我笑青山高突兀
攀緣起倒易消停

青山嫌我瘦稜層
卒急難除是愛憎

The flux of attachments is easy to stop
but it's hard all at once to end love and hate
I laugh at the mountain for towering so high
and the mountain mocks me for being so skinny

Note: Love (desire), hate (anger), and delusion make up the three poisons that turn the Wheel of Rebirth.

真空湛寂惟常在
真性何曾離妄有

不覺良由妄所朦
花開花落自春風

True emptiness is clear and always present
masked by delusions for reasons we don't know
how could what is real and false exist apart
flowers bloom and flowers fall when the spring wind blows

Note: True emptiness is also empty of emptiness and thus includes all things.

天湖水湛琉璃碧
觸目本來成現事

霞霧山圍錦幃紅
何須叉手問禪翁

Sky Lake is a pool of aquamarine
Redfog is a screen of crimson brocade
regarding what is present before your eyes
why press your hands together and ask an old monk

Note: Sky Lake was the name Stonehouse gave to the pond formed by the spring near his first hut on the mountain's southern summit. According to the sutras of Pure Land Buddhism, the ground of

Amita's Western Paradise is made of aquamarine, which ranks first among the gemstones that are Buddhism's seven jewels. Hsiawu, or Redfog, was the name for the mountain's northern summit and where Stonehouse built his second hut and dug a second pond he also called Sky Lake. Silk brocade remains among the most famous products of the nearby Hangchou area.

年
老
氣
衰
真
箇
懶
客
來
無
語
相
祇
對

晨
朝
更
不
見
和
南
辛
苦
空
勞
到
草
菴

Old and exhausted I'm truly lazy
no folded hands at dawn anymore
to those who visit I have nothing to say
their trek to my hut is such a waste of effort

Note: Among the Buddhist and Taoist hermits I've encountered in China, they all conduct some sort of ceremony at dawn and again at night involving chanting and meditation.

老去一身都是懶
與兄相見畧彈指

閒來百念盡成灰
無奈人情強接陪

Old through and through I'm utterly lazy
a hundred fantasies all turn to ash
but the moment a friend arrives
inescapable feelings force me up

田地無塵長不掃
雪晴斜月侵簷冷

柴門有客扣方開
梅影一枝窓上來

There's no dust to sweep on a mountain
guests have to knock before I open the door
after a snowfall the setting moon slips through the eaves
a plum branch shadow comes right to the window

Note: It is customary when expecting guests to sweep the path in front of one's house and to leave the door ajar. Here, Stonehouse receives visitors that require no such preparation.

茅屋低低三兩間
竹牀不許閒雲宿

團團環遶盡青山
日未斜時便掩關

My hut is two maybe three mats wide
surrounded by mountains on every side
my cot couldn't fit a cloud for the night
I shut the door before sunset

Note: The Chinese measurement known as a *chien* was used for taxation and sumptuary purposes.

It was the distance between two pillars or posts that supported the roof beams (or *chia*) of a

building. Its actual length varied anywhere from three to four feet, or about the width of a mat. Elsewhere, Stonehouse talks about his “wooden bed.” I imagine he tried several kinds in the course of thirty-four years. The “cloud” also conjures the image of a visiting monk. For another version of this poem see poem 129.

巖下木樨香滿樹
禪兄何事到煙蘿

園中菜甲綠成窠
老我生涯苦不多

Why do my Zen friends choose smoke and vines
this life of mine isn't so hard
gardenias below the cliff perfume the trees
shoots in my garden form rows of green

Note: The smoke was that of the sticks of incense used to measure time in the meditation hall, and the "vines" were the tangled logic of the koans used for instruction at Zen monasteries.

一片無塵新雨地
目前景物人皆見

半邊有蘚古時松
取用誰知各不同

A clean patch of ground after a rain
an ancient pine half-covered with moss
such things appear before our eyes
but what we do with them isn't the same

Note: Lao-tzu wrote, "Existence makes a thing useful / but nonexistence makes it work"

(*Taoteching*: 11). Pointing to a huge, gnarled oak tree, Chuang-tzu (莊子) said, "It's because its

wood is useless that it has lived to such great age" (*Chuangtzu*: 4.6).

閒閒兩耳全無用
萬境萬機俱寢息

坐到晨鷄與暮鐘
一知一見盡消融

Ten thousand schemes and fantasies have ended
all that I've known and seen has vanished
my two fine ears are no good at all
I sit past the cockcrow and the evening bell

Note: The bell was probably that of Fuyuan Temple at the northeast foot of the mountain near the present village of Yangshuwu (楊樹塢). However, during Stonehouse's second stay on the mountain, he was joined by other monks, and perhaps by that time there was a hermitage big enough to require something other than a handbell.

巖房終日寂寥寥
雖著衣裳喫粥飯

世念何曾有一毫
恰如死了未曾燒

My home in the cliffs is like a tomb
barren of even one worldly thought
although I eat food and wear clothes
it's as if I were dead but not yet cremated

Note: Although burial has always been common in China, during the Yuan dynasty cremation became popular. However, it became so popular and wood sufficiently scarce that the government

was compelled to issue a decree forbidding the practice, except for monks and nuns.

門前枯木似人立
老我為人無可說

屋後好山如浪堆
高高雲路賺兄來

There's a snag in front like a standing man
a ridge in back like a curling wave
as for me there's nothing to say
it's the road through the clouds that lures people here

山形凹凸路高低
地窄栽來蔬菜少

石占雲頭屋占蹊
又營小圃在橋西

Up-and-down mountain zigzag trail
stone in the clouds house by a stream
land too scarce to grow much
I even farm west of the bridge

Note: In addition to the current road built in the 1950s during the construction of a radar station on the summit, there are four trails, all of them lined at various points with stone slabs. Normally, such trails are not made by farmers or herb collectors but by pilgrims, and they probably didn't exist in

that form during Stonehouse's day, as it was Stonehouse who first "opened up" the mountain. The second line is intended as a pun on Stonehouse's name. Most likely, the stream here is the one that forms at the northern summit and flows down the mountain's north slope alongside the trail that leads to the village of Yangshuwu. There is, in fact, an ancient bridge between the foot of the mountain and the village.

百年日月閒中度
綠水光中山影轉

八萬塵勞靜處消
紅爐焰上雪花飄

A hundred years slip by unnoticed
eighty-four thousand cares dissolve in stillness
a mountain image shimmers on sunlit water
snowflakes swirl above a glowing stove

Note: Some Buddhist pundit once counted the number of afflictions to this mortal coil and came up with eighty-four thousand.

西方有路不肯去
金閣銀臺仙子少

地獄無門鬪要過
鑊湯爐炭罪人多

There's a road to the West nobody takes
people struggle to escape a hell with no gate
jeweled towers and pavilions see few immortals
cauldrons and ovens welcome the wicked

Note: The Western Paradise of Amita Buddha features platforms and pavilions and even trees made of the seven jewels: gold, silver, aquamarine, crystal, coral, carnelian, and nacre (the

iridescent lining of the giant clam). Buddhists count eighteen cold hells and eighteen hot ones.

著意求真真轉遠
道人一種平懷處

擬心斷妄妄猶多
月在青天影在波

Try to find what's real and what's real becomes more distant
try to end delusions and delusions multiply
followers of the Way have an all-embracing place
the moon in the sky and its reflection in the waves

幾度霜天明月夜
要求作佛真箇易

坐來覺得五更寒
唯斷妄心真箇難

Trying to become a buddha is easy
but ending delusions is hard
how many frosty moonlit nights
have I sat until I felt the cold before dawn

Note: Yung-chia's *Song of Enlightenment* begins: "Does no one else see / the idle follower of the
Way / neither working nor studying / neither ending delusions nor seeking the truth?"

幾度夜窓虛吐白
萬緣脫去心無事

月和流水到門前
諸有空來性坦然

Stripped of conditions my mind is at rest
emptied of existence my nature is at peace
how often at night have my windows turned white
as the moon and stream passed by my door

Note: Buddhists recognize twenty-five kinds of existence: fourteen in the realm of desire, seven in the realm of form, and four in the formless realm. Stonehouse channeled the spring flowing from

the rocks behind his hut into a pond that he dug in his yard.

無心莫謂便無事
一事無心萬事休

尚有無心箇念頭
也無歡喜也無憂

Work with no mind and all work stops
no more joy and no more sorrow
but don't think no mind means you're done
there is still the thought of no-mind

Note: Here, "no-mind" refers to the fourth and highest state of meditation in the realm of form, which is devoid of all thought but still subject to karma and thus impermanence.

於事無心風過樹
風聲月色消磨盡

於心無事月行空
去却一重還一重

No mind in my work the wind blows through the trees
no work in my mind the moon crosses the sky
windsound and moonlight wear away
one layer then another

Note: Our false mind is an illusion, and our true mind cannot be grasped. Hence, Buddhists sometimes call our true mind “no mind.” The expression “No mind in work, no work in mind” was a saying attributed to the ninth-century Zen master Te-shan (德山).

新年頭了舊年尾
道業未成空白首

明日四兮今日三
大千無處著羞慚

New year head old year tail
tomorrow the fourth today the third
the Way unattained I have grown old in vain
where in the world can I express my shame

Note: The second line refers to the third and fourth days of the year, when the new moon first becomes visible. The Chinese calculate their ages not from their birthdays, but from New Year's

Day. Hence, the holiday often reminds people of the ephemeral nature of life.

白髮催人瘦入肩
 裋無腰帶袴無口

住來茅屋已多年
 一領偏衫沒半邊

Head of white hair shoulders all bones
 I've lived in a hut more years than I can count
 my shorts have no drawstring my pants have no legs
 and half of my robe is missing

Note: In the last line, Stonehouse is referring to the kasaya, which monks wear like a toga over one shoulder. It thus covers only half as much of the upper body as a regular robe. Although it is

standard attire among Buddhists in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, in China it is usually reserved for begging and for temple ceremonies.

青山不着臭屍骸
顧我也無三昧火

死了何須掘土埋
光前絕後一堆柴

Before I can finish the *Lankavatara*
sunset shadows flow east with the stream
clouds return and I retire to my hut
a day of light and shade ends early again

Note: All hermits have a favorite text they read or chant every day, but I have never seen a copy of the *Lankavatara* in a hut. Nowadays, it's usually the *Lotus* or *Titsang* sutras. But then, times have

changed. I'm guessing Stonehouse is referring to the course followed by the stream near his first hut, which flowed down the east slope of Hsiamushan toward Shaokang Village.

雲歸自就茅簷宿
一軸楞伽看未周

一日光陰又早休
夕陽斜影水東流

Corpses don't stink in the mountains
there's no need to bury them deep
I might not have the fire of samadhi
but enough wood to end this family line

Note: This poem, which Stonehouse wrote down just before he died, appears between poems 113 and 115 in all three Ming dynasty copies but does not appear in later editions. I'm guessing it was

simply the poem that came to mind as he was asked for a few parting words when he was dying. I'm also guessing later editors deleted it because it was his death poem, and they reasoned it wouldn't have been part of the *Mountain Poems*, which Stonehouse finished before he died. The term *samadhi* refers to deep meditation where the separation between subject and object disappears. The "family line" is the karma one accumulates that leads to further rebirth and suffering.

茅簷雨過日頭紅
況是死生呼吸事

瞬息陰晴便不同
黃昏難保聽朝鐘

Rain soaks my hut then the sun shines
weather can change in the blink of an eye
but not as fast as the breath of existence
at dusk it's hard to hear the morning bell

明明見了非他見
記得去秋煙雨裏

了了常知無別知
猿來偷去一雙梨

No one else sees what I see clearly
no one else knows what I know well
I recall one misty day last fall
a gibbon came here and stole two pears

半窓松影半窓月
盤膝坐來中夜後

一箇蒲團一箇僧
飛蛾撲滅佛前燈

Half the window pine shadows half the window moon
a solitary cushion a solitary monk
sitting cross-legged after midnight
when a moth puts out the altar lamp

長年心裏渾無事
飯罷濃煎茶喫了

每日菴中樂有餘
池邊坐石數游魚

Not one care in mind all year
I find enough joy every day in my hut
and after a meal and a pot of strong tea
I sit on a rock by the pond and count fish

Note: The ability of tea to allay hunger and to quench thirst as well as to clear the senses without overstimulating them has made it the drink of choice among those who meditate.

飯炊五合黃陳米
淡薄自然滋味好

羹煮數莖青薺苗
何須更要着薑椒

For dinner I cook a bowl of old rice
and a soup of shepherd's purse greens
bland but natural flavors are fine
who needs to add ginger or spice

Note: The expression *ch'en-huang-mi* (old rice) refers to rice left over from the last harvest, and *wu-k'o* (a quarter pint or "bowl"), which is still used in Chinese pharmacies for 100ml, suggests

Stonehouse was rationing it out until the new harvest was in. Shepherd's purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*) was associated with hardship simply because it grew wild. But it was, and still is, the vegetable of choice in such prepared foods as dumplings.

移家深入亂峰西
 年老心閒貪睡穩

煙樹重重隔遠溪
 厭聞鐘響與鷄啼

I moved west into a maze of peaks
 put trees and mist between me and the distant river
 old and untroubled I like to sleep late
 I hate to hear roosters or bells

Note: In the first of his *Mountain Poems*, Stonehouse says he moved west of Huchou (Cha River).

Between Huchou and Hsiamushan there are a dozen smaller mountains, but the actual direction

was more southerly than westerly. The distance, meanwhile, was less than twenty-five kilometers.

The second line most likely refers to the East Fork of the Tiao River.

山風吹破故窓紙
 添盡布裘渾不煖

片片雪花飛入來
 拾枯深撥地爐灰

Mountain wind ripped out my old paper windows
 snowflakes swirl inside
 my once-padded robe isn't warm anymore
 I probe the hearth with a stick

Note: Stonehouse often mentions his clay tea stove and sometimes refers to the stove he used for cooking, but here he refers to what would have been a brick-or stone-lined small pit in the middle of

the earthen floor of his hut.

半窓斜日冷生光
枯葉滿爐燒焰火

破衲蒙頭坐竹床
不知屋上有寒霜

The setting sun's cold light fills half the window
sitting on my bamboo bed with my ragged robe across my
head
and the stove ablaze with dry leaves
I would never guess there's frost on the roof

Note: Stonehouse is being facetious. Burning leaves in the stove as winter night approaches suggests he is out of firewood.

幾樹山花紅灼灼
衲僧若具超宗眼

一池春水綠漪漪
不待無情為發機

A few trees in bloom radiant red
a pond in spring rippling green
a monk with eyes that see beyond Zen
doesn't have to be dead to use them

Note: Ah, the peach trees.

山家不養鷄和犬
雲未歸時便掩扃

日到茅簷夢未醒
柴牀眠穩思冥冥

I shut my door before the clouds return
on my cot I sleep deep my thoughts unseen
hermits don't raise dogs or chickens
the sun warms my roof and I still dream

細推百億閻浮界
粥去飯來茶喫了

白日無人似我閒
開窓獨坐看青山

After porridge after rice after drinking tea
I open the window and sit and gaze at mountains
survey every realm throughout Jambu
during the day no one is more idle than me

Note: Rice is watered-down for breakfast and steamed or boiled at other meals. Tea is drunk as an aid to digestion and to dispel fatigue. Stonehouse also tells us he drank his tea strong. Jambu is the

short form of Jambudvipa. According to ancient Indian geography, the world was divided into four continents, with Jambudvipa constituting all of Asia.

任他伎倆自磨滅
黑霧濃雲撥不開

紅日依前照石臺
忽然去了忽然來

Dense fog and clouds too thick to push away
suddenly appear and suddenly depart
clever people can wear themselves out
the sun lights the rocks the same as before

Note: "To push away the clouds in order to see the sun" was an old saying the Chinese used when someone was trying to remove insurmountable obstructions from their path.

一天紅日曉東南
布襖半沾泥水濕

自拔青苗插瘦田
歸來脫曬竹房前

As soon as the sun lights the southeast sky
I transplant sprouts into rocky fields
my robe half-soaked with mud
I take off and dry in front of my hut

Note: As the days of autumn and winter become shorter and darker, the place where the sun rises moves progressively southward. Hence, its reappearance on the southeastern horizon marks the

advent of spring.

春去秋來知幾度
喫桃吐核核成樹

爭教我不白頭毛
樹大花開又結桃

I eat a peach spit out the pit the pit becomes a tree
the tree grows and flowers and makes another peach
spring departs and fall arrives year after year
how can I keep my hair from turning white

Note: The peach is native to China and appears in the archaeological record of the Hangchou area as early as five thousand years ago. In poem 78, Stonehouse dates his arrival on Hsiamushan by

the peach tree he planted outside his door.

茅屋方方一丈慳
老僧自住尚狹窄

四簷松竹四圍山
那許雲來借半間

My hut isn't quite ten feet across
surrounded by pines bamboo and mountains
an old monk hardly has room for himself
much less for a visiting cloud

Note: The expression *chang-fang* (ten-foot square) originally referred to an abbot's room and was later used to refer to the abbot himself. In the last line, the cloud could also refer to a monk or nun

on pilgrimage.

打得趙州關子破
臨機切莫避刀鎗

大千無處不皈降
拚死和他戰一場

Don't run away when he strikes
make it a fight to the death
break down Chao-chou's door
the whole universe will surrender

Note: Chao-chou (趙州) and his teacher Nan-ch'uan (南泉) were among the most renowned Zen masters of the ninth century. One day when Chao-chou was working alone in the monastery

kitchen, he shut the door and let the room fill with smoke then cried, "Fire!" When the other monks came running, he said, "Say the right word, and I'll open the door!" But none of the monks could think of anything to say. Finally, when Nan-ch'uan arrived, he handed Chao-chou a lock through the window, and Chao-chou opened the door (*Chuantenglu*: 10). According to Buddhists, a universe consists of a billion worlds (one thousand to the power of three).

有限光陰一百年
縱饒百歲終歸死

幾人得到百年全
只是相分後與前

Our time is confined to one hundred years
but which of us gets them all
hundred-year-olds die too
the only difference is sooner or later

誰能去討他分曉
一大藏經閒故紙

起箇念頭猶是多
一千七百葛藤窠

The whole Buddhist Canon is worthless old paper
seventeen hundred tangled vines
who can see through the mess
one thought is still too many

Note: Among the works listed in the Buddhist Canon, or Tripitaka, is a series of five Sung dynasty works (the *Chuantenglu* and its companion volumes) that include some seventeen hundred koans.

Elsewhere, Stonehouse uses the word *vines* in reference to koans. Note, too, that the Chinese used vines in the production of paper.

溪邊黃葉水去住
爭似老僧常不動

嶺上白雲風往來
長年無事坐巖臺

Leaves along the shore stop and flow with the stream
clouds above the ridge come and go with the wind
no match for an old monk who doesn't move
who does nothing but sit among the cliffs all year

却嫌住處太危險
霞霧山高路又遙

落賺多人登陟勞
菴居從藺篋三條

Hsiawu is high and the trail is long
and my hut is nothing but bamboo and vines
despite their dislike of dangerous places
people are still fooled into making the climb

Note: Again, Stonehouse uses Hsiawu (Redfog) as the name of the mountain's northern summit, where he was living when he wrote this poem—as opposed to Hsiamu, the name of the southern

summit, where he first lived.

老覺形枯氣力衰
自憐不解藏踪跡

客來勉強出祗陪
松食荷衣憶大梅

I feel old and decrepit and weaker by the day
but visitors force me up
I regret not learning to cover my tracks
but lotus clothes and pine cakes call Big Plum to mind

Note: Pine meal, which can include pine nuts and pine pollen, has kept many recluses from starving and provided a rare treat for others. Lotus-leaf attire is not entirely imaginary, though it is

usually associated with immortals, as in a poem by Ch'u Yuan (d. 278 BC) entitled "The Lesser Lord of Long Life": "A lotus-leaf robe and a belt of vines / suddenly he appears and suddenly departs." Ta-mei, or Big Plum, was a disciple of Ma-tsu. Following his enlightenment, he moved so far into the mountains people thought he had died. Then one day, a monk who had lost his way stumbled into a clearing and discovered Big Plum sitting in front of a hut. Not long afterward, Ta-mei had so many disciples he wished he had moved deeper into the mountains (*Chuantenglu*: 7).

屋冷道人
道人屋冷
道人屋冷
四簷竹
心愈靜

門高長者
長者門高
百尺墻
日多忙

A hermit's hut is lonely encircled by bamboo
a merchant's gate is high with hundred-foot-long walls
in his lonely hut a hermit finds peace
behind his high gate a merchant finds none

Note: Repressed by the Confucian values of earlier governments, merchants were given unprecedented freedom and power during the Yuan dynasty, when the Mongols made extensive

use of their services in collecting taxes and financing state projects.

盡道凡心非佛性
工夫只怕無人做

我言佛性即凡心
鐵杵磨教作線針

People say everyday mind isn't our buddha nature
I say our buddha nature is simply everyday mind
afraid no one will do any work
they teach grinding iron rods to make needles

Note: Buddhists agree that we all possess the potential to become buddhas but differ as to how the realization of buddhahood takes place. While most sects say it is realized in stages and through

moral discipline and meditation, the Zen sect prefers the radical approach of Bodhidharma: "If you could find your buddha nature apart from your mortal nature, where would it be? Our mortal nature is our buddha nature. Beyond this nature, there is no buddha" (*The Zen Teaching of Bodhidharma*: pp. 16–17). Thus, Zen masters point to the everyday mind.

利名門路如天遠
南北東西去復還

走殺世間人萬千
陸行車馬水行船

East or west north or south then back again
by cart or horse on land by boat on water
the gate to fame and fortune is as far away as Heaven
yet people by the million kill themselves to reach it

Note: Long before the Grand Canal was completed, an extensive system of small canals and natural waterways enabled people to do much of their long-distance traveling in China by boat. The

system of roads was even more extensive and was maintained by the government to ensure its continued control over the territory it administered.

居山那得有工夫
設使一毫功不及

種了冬瓜便種瓠
許多田地盡荒蕪

What sort of work takes place in the mountains
planting winter melons then planting gourds
and if your efforts fall a bit short
most of your fields end up beneath weeds

Note: For winter melons, see my note to poem 85. Gourds, or *Lagenaria vulgaris*, were grown for use as containers and utensils as well as for food.

離眾多年無坐具
單單有箇鐵鐺子

入山長久沒袈裟
留待人來煮瀑花

Too long away from monasteries I don't have a cushion
too long in the mountains I don't have a robe
all I have is an iron pot
to entertain guests with bubbling water

Note: A meditation cushion and a robe for wearing in public were part of every Zen monk's or nun's gear. This particular kind of pot was made of iron or clay and had three feet, which enabled it to be

placed over a charcoal fire. Stonehouse would have used it for boiling water for tea, others for heating wine.

辛苦做來牽補過
布衣破綻種青麻

復身免得報檀那
糧食無時刈早禾

When my clothes come apart I plant hemp
when my food runs out I harvest rice early
I pull myself through with effort
and when I'm better I don't owe any alms

Note: According to his contemporaries, Stonehouse refused to beg for food.

飯香麥麩和松粉
我已盡形無別念

採好藤花雜筍鞭
任他作佛與生天

Parched wheat and pine pollen make a fine meal
vine flowers and salted bamboo make a tasty dish
when I'm exhausted I think of nothing else
let others become buddhas or immortals

Note: Pine pollen is collected in late spring or early summer. "Vine flowers" refers to wisteria blossoms, which are removed individually from each raceme and stir-fried. At the monastery in

Taiwan where I lived for several years, we dined throughout the summer on stir-fried daylily blossoms, picked a day or two before they were due to open. Among the mountain-dwelling Aini in Yunnan province, I also enjoyed stir-fried baubinia flowers.

山居活計
種稻下田
泥沒膝邊

衣食須營
賣柴出市
檐磨肩然

Life in the mountains depends on a hoe
 food and clothes don't appear by themselves
 I'm knee-deep in mud planting rice in a field
 or my shoulders are sore from hauling firewood to town

Note: Hermits usually need to sell or trade something to get the few things they can't grow or gather on the mountains where they live. If it isn't firewood, it's herbs or other mountain products. One

Buddhist nun I met in the Chungnan Mountains south of Sian was able to buy everything she needed with the harvest from four walnut trees.

紅日正中黃獨熟
鑿頭添鐵屋頭懸

甘香不在火爐邊
健即鋤雲倦即眠

I repair my hoe and let my hut lean
I farm clouds when I'm able and sleep when I'm tired
yams turn ripe from summertime sun
their flavor doesn't come from the stove

Note: The Chinese yam, unlike its cousins in the sweet potato family, is not especially meaty or sweet and needs all the help it can get when it comes to flavor. In poem 56 Stonehouse says he

turned to yams when there was nothing else to eat.

團團一箇尖頭屋
世界大千都着了

外面誰知裏面寬
尚餘閒地放蒲團

From outside my round pointed-roof hut
who would guess at the space inside
all the worlds in the universe are there
with room to spare for a meditation cushion

Note: In poem 15, Stonehouse says his hut has no gables. Apparently, this was why: the roof was round, like that of a yurt, with all the beams meeting at a central point. Buddhists say the universe

contains a billion worlds, all of which were also able to fit inside Vimalakirti's hut in the sutra of the same name.

目對青山終日坐
草菴盤結長松下

更無一事上心來
面面軒窓盡豁開

I built a thatch hut beneath tall pines
windows open on every side
all day I sit facing mountains
nothing else comes to mind

深秋時節雨霏霏
一夜西風吹不住

蘚葉層層印虎蹄
曉來黃葉與階齊

Late autumn rain is all mist
tiger tracks appear in the moss
all last night the west wind blew
by dawn the leaves were up to the steps

Note: The South China tiger, which is no longer seen in the wild, is much smaller than its Bengal or Siberian cousins. The Chinese associate the tiger with the wind, which rises when it roars. For

more on the steps in front of Stonehouse's hut, see poem 163.

團團紅日上青山
白髮老僧眠未起

竹屋柴門尚閉關
勞生磨蟻正循環

When the red sun climbs above the blue mountains
the door of my hut is still closed
before the white-haired monk is up
ants are already making their rounds

山舍清幽絕點塵
不知何處碧桃放

心閒與世自相分
幽鳥銜來遶竹門

My hut is so secluded it's beyond the reach of dust
my mind is so detached it's left the world behind
somewhere a peach tree is blooming
wild birds encircle my door with twigs

Note: Peach blossoms are reminiscent of T'ao Yuan-ming's story "Peach Blossom Spring," in which a fisherman once followed peach petals up a stream to an idyllic world.

老來無事可干懷
夢裏不知誰是我

竹榻高眠日枕斜
覺來新月到梅花

Now that I'm old nothing disturbs me
I'm asleep on my cot before the sun sets
dreaming and wondering who I am
until the new moon lights the plum blossoms

Note: Obviously, a short and light sleep. The faint glow of the new moon is briefly visible just after sunset before it, too, follows the sun westward. As he tells us in poem 49, Stonehouse has a

special sensitivity to moonlight on plum blossoms.

尚 禪
有 餘
閒 高
情 誦
無 寒
着 山
處 偈

携 飯
籃 後
過 濃
嶺 煎
採 穀
藤 雨
花 茶

After meditation I chant a Cold Mountain poem
after dinner I brew grain-rain tea
and when some feeling lingers I can't express
I take a basket across the ridge and gather vine flowers

Note: Cold Mountain, or Han-shan, lived during the second half of the eighth century and the first half of the ninth in the Tientai Mountains 250 kilometers south of Shanghai. The 300-odd poems he

left behind have been translated into English by several people, including me. For chanting, Cold Mountain's poem 302 would have been a good choice: "The mountain I live on / nobody knows / here in the clouds / it's always deserted." Most varieties of tea benefit from frequent mist but not from heavy rain. The solar period known as grain-rain, *ku-yu* (穀雨), occurs in late April. Among the varieties for which the mountain is currently known, the most popular is *hsia-wu ts'ui-yu* (霞霧醉玉) (Redfog drunken-jade). "Vine flowers" refers, as in poem 142, to wisteria, the blossoms of which are a mountain delicacy and usually stir-fried.

僧因產業致差科
我有山田三畝半

官府勾追恥辱多
盡情回付與檀那

For property monks apply at an office
where bureaucratic snares and insults abound
I own a half acre of mountain land
I'm giving it back as alms when I die

Note: During various periods in Chinese history, monks were issued a small piece of land from which they supported themselves by farming or by renting it to others. During the Yuan dynasty, a

special office was set up to handle monk affairs, and it was to this office that monks were required to apply. Ironically, Stonehouse was appointed the head of this office for the entire province in 1331 when he became abbot of Fuyuan Temple. However, the office was eliminated three years later.

一冬煖活如何說
楮閣安爐種炭團

夢想不思兜率天
床鋪新薦被新綿

I put mulberry wood in the stove to make charcoal
new cotton in my quilt a new mat on the bed
what can I say about staying warm all winter
I don't dream about Tushita Heaven

Note: Tushita Heaven is the highest of the heavens in the realm of desire and one in which all needs are satisfied and in which bodhisattvas reside prior to their final rebirth.

去年家火缺支持
田裏多收三斗穀

家火今年用不虧
門前添得一方池

Last year my food supply failed me
this year I can't use it all
I've harvested three bushels of grain too many
and filled up the pond outside my door

Note: The term *chia-huo* (home-fire) in the first line means "provisions," as it does in poem 87.

Stonehouse had ponds he called Sky Lake at both his huts.

漏 白
 筴 雲
 篱 影
 撩 裏
 無 尖
 米 頭
 飯 屋

破 黃
 砂 葉
 盆 堆
 擣 頭
 爛 折
 生 脚
 薑 鐺

A pointed-roof hut in the shade of the clouds
 a broken-legged pot on a pile of dry leaves
 a strainer with holes too big to strain rice
 and a cracked grating bowl for grating fresh ginger

Note: Stonehouse's round pointed-roof hut also appears in poem 145 and his three-legged pot in poem 140. Bowls with a coarse interior surface are still used in China for grating and extracting

juice from rhizomes and roots.

修行豈得不成佛
不是頑皮鑽不破

水滴年深石也穿
惟人只欠自心堅

How could someone who practices not become a buddha
if water drips long enough even rocks wear through
it's not true a thick skull can't be pierced
a person just needs a hard enough mind

Note: In "Choosing a Friend," the T'ang poet Meng Chiao wrote, "To be like the immortals / you need a mind as hard as iron."

獨坐窮心寂杳冥
西風吹盡擁門葉

箇中無法可當情
留得空堦與月明

I sit and meditate in the quiet and dark
where nothing comes to mind
I sweep in front when the west wind is done
I make a path for the moonlight

錦衣公子如知得
玉蝶梅花香滿樹

定是移家入薜蘿
水池洗菜綠浮科

Jade-winged plum blossoms perfumed trees
pond-washed vegetables floating plants of green
if the silk-clad young lords knew about this
they would move into the wilds for sure

逆順未嘗忘此道
是他了達虛空性

窮通一味信前緣
不動纖毫本自然

Good and bad fortune never lose their way
failure and success both depend on karma
realize distinctions are empty at heart
what doesn't move a hair is what's real

寒披荷葉衣裳煖
不比世人營口體

饑食松花餅餌香
奔南走北一生忙

A lotus-leaf robe keeps me warm when I'm cold
pine-pollen cakes are a treat when I'm hungry
I'm not like those who worry about food and clothes
running north and south busy all their lives

Note: Stonehouse's use of lotus leaves for clothing, especially cold-weather clothing, is somewhat facetious, as lotus leaves would be supple enough to wear only during the summer. Stonehouse,

however, mentions using them in poem 135. He also mentions eating pine pollen in poem 12.

新縫紙被煖烘烘
閒夢不知誰喚醒

黃葉堆頭火正紅
五更聽得下方鐘

新縫紙被烘來煖
聞得下方鐘鼓動

一覺安眠到五更
又添一日在浮生

My newly sewn paper quilt is so warm
and the pile of burning leaves is so red
I wonder who will wake me from my dream
then just before dawn I hear the bell down below

I heat my newly sewn paper quilt
and sleep all night until dawn
when I hear the sound of a bell down below

add one more day to this floating life

Note: The first version of this poem appears between poems 160 and 162 in all editions. The second version, however, appears only in later editions, such as the Ch'ing dynasty edition published by Taiwan's Hsinwenfeng Publishing Company, but in a different location: between poems 101 and 102. I've decided to include both. Unable to afford cloth, Stonehouse turned to a heavyweight paper (probably made from hemp or mulberry fiber) for the outer shell of his cotton-filled blanket, which here he heats up by hanging it above his hearth. Calling his blanket "newly sewn" suggests he has bought himself a new cover and sewn it up after inserting the cotton filling from the old blanket. In the third line of the second poem, the Ch'ing dynasty text has *shang-fang* (above) instead of *hsia-fang* (below), and is clearly a mistake. Most likely, the temple in question was Fuyuan Temple (not to be confused with the temple of the same name where Stonehouse served as abbot for seven years). The temple, though a shadow of its former size, is still there, outside the village of Yangshuwu at the northeast foot of Hsiamushan. During the Yuan dynasty, temple bells were rung at dusk, at midnight, and once more at dawn.

旋斫青柴逐把挑
今朝未保得來日

擔頭防脫莫過腰
且了寒爐一夜燒

I chop green wood and lift the pole
I keep the load level with my waist
what's here today won't last until tomorrow
I fill my cold hearth and burn it all night

Note: A late-spring cold wave finds Stonehouse short of wood and reduced to cutting saplings. The most common means of carrying things in China is still a bamboo pole placed over one or both

shoulders and notched at both ends for ropes, to which loads can be attached and balanced. The trick is to keep the two loads level with one's waist. Stonehouse also mentions the fire pit in his earthen floor in poem 121. In North China, hermits use a k'ang, or oven-bed, to stay warm.

今年難測是寒暄
簷下紙窓乾又濕

一日陰晴變幾番
門前石逕濕還乾

It's hard to say if the year has been hot or cold
how many times does the sky change in a day
my hut's paper windows are dry then they're wet
the stone steps in front are wet then they're dry

Note: The Tienmu Mountains, of which Hsiamushan is a northern spur, receive a meter of rain annually, most of it falling between April and September.

峰頂團團盡是松
天風一陣來何處

茅廬着在樹陰中
吹起波濤響半空

Surrounding the summit is nothing but pines
and my thatch hut is set in their shade
where does that gust of wind come from
stirring up waves echoing across the sky

Note: The pines are gone. Now the summit is all bamboo and tea. Buddhists use the metaphor of the ocean and its waves to explain our misperception of reality, with its focus on the waves, which

in this case would have been inspired by those of nearby Taihu, China's third- or fourth-largest freshwater lake, depending on the time of year.

黃羅直綴紫伽梨
 爭似道人忘寵辱

出入侯門得意時
 松針柳線補荷衣

Sewing purple robes with fine yellow silk
 they achieve their goals through back doors
 no match for a hermit beyond praise and blame
 with willow floss and pine needle mending lotus-leaf clothes

Note: Monks chosen by the emperor to head the office in charge of monastic affairs were allowed to wear the imperial colors of purple and yellow and were given special access to imperial quarters.

春歸暑退一秋涼
盡把工夫閒雜話

日晷如梭夜漸長
幾曾回首暫思量

Spring is gone summer is gone and autumn is cool
the days are like a shuttle and the nights are getting long
people fill their time with idle talk and chatter
how often do they stop and think

Note: The shuttle of a loom is meant.

我見時人日夜忙
到頭一事將不去

廣營屋宅置田莊
獨有骷髏葬北邙

The people I meet are busy night and day
enlarging their houses or clearing more land
until that day none can escape
when all they own are bones on Peimang

Note: Peimang is the name of a long, low ridge of hills between the ancient city of Loyang and the Yellow River. It was used as a cemetery by the wealthy and powerful as early as three thousand

years ago. A popular saying in ancient times went: “To be born in Hangzhou / to be buried on Peimang.”

箇箇聞知有死生
堂堂大道無人到

聞知何不早修行
開眼明明入火坑

People all know about death and rebirth
why then don't they cultivate
instead of walking the wide-open Way
they enter the fiery pit clear-eyed

Note: By "cultivate," Stonehouse means to clear the mind of delusion through meditation and other practices. Buddhists believed there were a number of hot hells as well as cold hells.

盡說修行不在遲
三塗一報五千劫

今生還有後生期
出得頭來是幾時

People all say there is time to cultivate
if not now there is still next year
but headed for five thousand kalpas below
they won't be back anytime soon

Note: A kalpa is the length of time between a world's creation and its destruction. In the third line, "below" refers to the three lower realms of rebirth: not only as a denizen of one of the hells but also

as a hungry ghost or as some kind of nonhuman creature.

OTHER VERSES

山名霞幕泉天湖
 山頭有塊臺盤石
 更有天湖一泉水
 就泉結屋擬終老
 外面規模似狹窄
 碧紗如煙隔金像
 蒲團禪椅列左右
 瓷罌土種吉祥草
 飯香粥滑山田米
 得失是非都放卻
 有時把柄白塵拂
 懶舉西來祖意說

卜居記得壬子初
 宛如出水青芙蕖
 先天至今何曾枯
 田地一點紅塵無
 中間取用能寬舒
 雕盤沉水凌天衢
 香鐘雲板鳴朝晡
 石盆水養龍湫蒲
 瓜甜菜嫩家園蔬
 經行坐臥無相拘
 有時持串烏木珠
 甚東魯詩書

自亦不知是凡是聖 他豈能識是牛是驢

客來未暇陪說話 拾枯先去燒茶爐

紅香旖旎春花開敷 清陰繁茂夏木翳如

巖桂風前喚回山谷 梅花雪裏清殺林逋

人間無此真樂 山中有甚凶虞

也不樂他輕輿高蓋 也不樂他率眾匡徒

也不樂他西方極樂 也不樂他天上淨居

心下常無不足 目前觸事有餘

夜籟合樂 曉天昇鳥 戲魚翻躍

好鳥相呼 路通玄以幽遠境

超世而清虛 騷人盡思吟不成句

丹青極巧畫不成圖 獨有淵明可起予解道

吾亦愛吾廬 山中居沒閒時

無人會惟自知 遶山驅竹筧寒水

擊石取火延朝炊
砂鍋未滾涎先垂
鉏地更要栽黃萁
黃昏未到神思疲
困重不知山月移
一團紅日懸松枝
來年後年還如斯
秋雲片片冬雪霏
三世如來脫垢衣

香粳旋舂柴旋斫
開畝未及種紫芋
白日不得手脚住
歸來洗足上床睡
隔林幽鳥忽喚醒
今日明日也如是
春草離離夏木葳
虛空落地須彌碎

To Redcurtain Mountain and Sky Lake Spring
I moved at the start of Imperial Celebration
to a flat-topped rock near the summit
like a blue lotus rising from a pool
and a spring I call Sky Lake
flowing without cease since the world began
here I cleared a field of worldly dust
and built a hut to live out my old age
from outside it might look small
but inside there is room for all my things

a gilt statue veiled by emerald silk
a carved bowl whose water reaches the vault of heaven
a straw cushion and meditation chair
incense bell and gong to mark the dusk and dawn
I planted good-luck grass in a porcelain pot
and dragon-pool rushes in a basin of stone
mountain-grown rice is fragrant and smooth
vegetables from my garden are tender and sweet
I've abandoned right and wrong success and failure
I don't care how I walk or sit or lie down
sometimes I pick up my deer-tail whisk
sometimes I finger my black wooden beads
sometimes I feel like dancing
sometimes I sit like a dunce
too lazy to explain why Bodhidharma came east
much less the poetry or annals of Lu
I don't know if I'm a fool or a sage
or if others are oxen or donkeys
when a guest arrives there's no time to chat
I gather dry wood and light the tea stove
perfumed red pennants unfold in spring
the foliage of summer shade is brief
a gust of wild cassia calls Shan-ku to mind
plum blossoms in the snow purified Lin Pu
true joys like these aren't found in town
in the mountains you won't find evil
I don't want a fancy carriage
I don't want a flock of disciples

I don't want a Western Paradise
I don't want a pure celestial abode
my mind has enough to think about
my eyes have plenty to see
the music of the wind at night
the crow on the wing at dawn
fish swim and jump for joy
birds call back and forth with delight
on the road to the dark and distant
in the realm of transcendence and void
inspired poets are speechless
master artists can't paint
only Yuan-ming could play with the Tao
like him I love my hut
but in the mountains there's no leisure
and yet I've learned what others don't know
how to channel a spring around a slope with bamboo
how to start the morning fire with a rock
how to pound mountain rice and chop wood
before the pot boils I drool
on uncleared land I plant taro
and beans where I've managed to hoe
I don't stop moving all day
before the sun sets I'm exhausted
back home I wash my feet and lie down
too tired to notice the phases of the moon
birds from the next forest over wake me up
along with the sun's red disk through the pines

today and tomorrow are the same
last year and next year no change
in spring plants sprout in summer they flourish
in autumn clouds gather in winter it snows
when the sky falls to earth Sumeru shatters
buddhas take off their dirty clothes

Note: Poems 170–184 are missing from later editions but present in all three Ming dynasty copies of the *Mountain Poems*. Hsiamushan, according to maps found in old gazetteers for the Huchou area, refers to the southern summit, while Hsiawushan refers to the northern one. The Yuan dynasty's reign period known as Imperial Celebration (Huangching [皇慶]) began in 1312 and ended in 1313. The flat lotus-shaped rock is still there, just up the slope from where Stonehouse built his first hut. No doubt the rock was a good place to meditate. Good-luck grass, or *Reineckia carnea*, is a member of the lily family. Its association with good fortune and its ability to flourish indoors have made it a common sight in shrine halls. Dragon-pool rushes are those that grow near waterfalls. For the whisk, see my note to poem 56. Beads are used to count repetitions during chanting. A meditation chair is much wider than a normal chair so that it can accommodate someone sitting in the lotus position with their legs crossed. Meditation periods were marked by lighting a stick of incense of a set length and ringing a small handbell. A bronze cloud-shaped gong was also used in Buddhist temples to announce periods of assembly. I'm not sure what Stonehouse is doing with one, unless he just likes making music. Or perhaps he liked to use it to mark dusk and dawn. Bodhidharma is credited with bringing Zen to China, and by the seventh century Zen masters were using the reason for his arrival as the subject of meditation. The *Book of Poetry* and the *Spring and Autumn Annals of Lu* are among the works all scholars and would-be officials were expected to know by heart. Both were attributed to Confucius, who spent most of his life in the state of Lu (in Shantung province). Shan-ku was the pen name of Huang T'ing-chien (黃庭堅 1045–1105), whose poetry immortalized cassia flowers. Lin Pu (967–1028), or Lin Ho-ching, did the same with plum flowers. Achieving rebirth in the Western Paradise of Amita Buddha was the goal of Pure

Land Buddhists. Sloughing off this mortal coil and ascending to a pure realm in the heavens was the goal of certain Taoist practitioners. The “crow” refers to the sun, on which lives a three-legged crow. One day Chuang-tzu said the fish he saw below a bridge were happy, and his companion questioned his ability to know what the fish knew, to which Chuang-tzu replied, “How do you know I don’t know?” (*Chuangtzu*: 17). Mount Sumeru is at the center of every world and as many miles high as there are grains of sand in the Ganges. Dirt includes the dust of sensation, but it also includes emptiness as well.

徘徊不忍便歸去
 明知此境俱幻妄
 又疑天女來獻花
 初疑仙子始綰角
 太湖萬頃白潑灩
 清明無事登霞峰

夕陽又轉山頭松
 對此悠然心未終
 玉盤捧出雙芙蓉
 碧紗帽子參差籠
 洞庭兩點青濛茸
 伸眉望極開心胸

A clear sky and nothing planned I climbed Hsia Summit
 I opened my heart and gazed into the distance
 the shimmering white expanse of Taihu
 and the two emerald buds of Tungting
 I imagined at first were a young immortal's topknots
 and silk cap with uneven sides
 then a deity's offering of flowers
 two lotuses rising from a basin of jade

such scenes I knew were fantasies
but my mind wandered on without stop
until I couldn't bear it and went back down
at sunset I turned again toward the summit pines

Note: Stonehouse begins this poem standing at the summit of Hsiawushan (the northern part of the mountain) looking northeast across Lake Taihu. Covering more than 2,500 square kilometers, Taihu is China's third- or fourth-largest freshwater lake, depending on the season. On the northeast corner of the lake and about 50 kilometers from where Stonehouse was standing are an island and an adjacent peninsula known as West Tungting and East Tungting, respectively. Both are about 100 square kilometers in area and 300 meters in elevation. Stonehouse's hometown of Changshu was another 70 kilometers past these two "emerald buds."

乾鵲傍簷鳴鵲喈
 西菴道者來送果
 吉凶占相既有驗
 道人若有此見解
 懶融一見四祖後

烏鴉遶屋聲鴉啞
 東鄰稚子去偷瓜
 罪福果報應無差
 青銅鏡面生痕瑕
 百鳥更不來御花

Magpies talk magpie outside my hut
 crows talk crow circling my roof
 a hermit to the west brings me fruits
 a boy to the east steals my melons
 we see the signs of blessing and disaster
 but we shouldn't separate good and bad fortune
 followers of the Way who cling to such views
 see defects on a polished mirror

after Lazy Yung met Tao-hsin birds stopped bringing him flowers

Note: The Chinese consider magpies good luck and crows bad luck. The third couplet reads as if it were a quote. If so, I'm at a loss as to its source. Chinese mirrors were made of bronze and were small, convex, and polished on one side. Tao-hsin was the Fourth Patriarch of Zen, and his disciple Fa-yung was the founder of the Oxhead Zen lineage. Fa-yung was called lazy because he never stood up or bowed to greet visitors. One day while Tao-hsin was in Nanching, he saw birds flocking around a mountain to the south. When he went to investigate, he found Fa-yung meditating and the birds dropping flowers on him. But he also saw wolf tracks and tiger tracks and feigned fright at such a sight. Seeing this reaction, Fa-yung said, "There is still that in you?" Tao-hsin responded by drawing the character for "buddha" in the dirt in front of Fa-yung. When Fa-yung expressed embarrassment, Tao-hsin said, "There is still that in you?" After this meeting, the birds and wild animals stopped visiting Fa-yung (*Chuantenglu*: 4). Hence, despite his attainments, Fa-yung had yet to overcome his attainments.

既遊好自深林
 善目雨耕草木
 解周及復沒長
 空宇時自塵新
 理宙來種跡葉

不物活側隔遶
 樂物我笠山屋
 還皆新披聽清
 如何消栽青樵陰
 磨禾蓑歌多

The trees in the forest grow new leaves
 surrounding my hut with more cool shade
 tall grass hides my tracks
 over the ridge I hear a woodcutter sing
 I plow and I plant
 my tree-bark coat and leaf hat askew
 the rain comes in time
 my rice sprouts are saved
 I've scanned the whole world
 everything fades
 having understood emptiness
 what do I do about sorrow

Note: Most farmers in the Yangtze and West River watersheds in China wear hats made of a framework of bamboo strips and an outer covering of bamboo leaves. Until recently, the standard raincoat in South China consisted of layers of palm tree bark or coconut husk fiber. The summer monsoon, which the Chinese call “plum rains,” normally arrives mid-June along with the first plums and is crucial for transplanting rice sprouts. The first of the Buddha’s Four Noble Truths is “All is sorrow,” which itself is based on the realization that all things are impermanent and thus empty of self-existence.

寒山曾有言
我亦曾有言
秋月非不明
安得如我心
有問心如何

吾心似秋月
吾心勝秋月
有圓復有缺
圓明常皎潔
教我如何說

Cold Mountain has a line
My mind is like the autumn moon
 I have a line of my own
 my mind outshines the autumn moon
 not that the autumn moon isn't bright
 but once it's full it fades
 how unlike my mind
 forever full and bright
 as for what the mind is like
 what more can I say

Note: Among the more than three hundred poems attributed to Cold Mountain, poem 5 is one of my favorites and one of Stonehouse's, too: "My mind is like the autumn moon / clear and bright in a pool of jade / nothing can compare / what more can I say."

萬事草頭露
玄鬢化為雪
勸君石上坐
月來照我門

豈得長如今
朝光成夕陰
聽我山中吟
風來吹我襟

The moon lights up my door
the wind blows open my robe
sit down on a rock my friend
hear my mountain song
black hair turns to snow
dawn light to evening shade
everything is dew on the grass
nothing stays the same

Note: Loosening the lapels of one's robe and exposing one's chest is a metaphor for revealing one's innermost feelings. The penultimate line recalls an ancient folk song known as "Dew on the

Leek": "Dew on the leek / how quickly it dries / it dries and tomorrow falls once again / but when do
we return from the grave?"

只俯靄飯
此仰靄飽
是翫孟拂
真時夏石
樂物景睡

何散新睡
必誕樹足
求暢鳴起
虛吟黃閒
名情鶯行

After a meal I dust off a boulder and sleep
and after I sleep I go for a walk
on a cloudy late summer day
an oriole sings from a sapling
enjoying the season while it can
joyfully singing out its heart
true happiness is right here
why chase empty names

Note: Stonehouse is probably referring to the flat-topped boulder just uphill from his first hut, the one farmers nowadays call "chess-playing rock." In the *Great Learning* (3.2), Confucius is reported to have said, "The *Book of Odes* says, 'The twittering oriole / rests at the top of the hill.' When it

rests, it knows where to rest. Is it possible man is not equal to this bird?" In the background here is this story at the end of chapter 17 in *Chuangtzu*: "One day when Chuang-tzu and Hui-tzu were walking across the Hao River Bridge, Chuang-tzu said, 'See the fish rising and swimming so gracefully. This is what makes fish happy.' Hui-tzu said, 'You're not a fish. How do you know what makes a fish happy?' Chuang-tzu replied, 'You're not me. How do you know I don't know what makes a fish happy?' Hui-tzu said, 'I'm not you, so I certainly don't know. But you're certainly not a fish. Hence, you can't know what makes a fish happy.' Chuang-tzu said, 'Let's go back to the beginning. You asked how I knew what makes a fish happy. So when you asked, you already knew that I knew.'" In the last line, the phrase *empty names* usually refers to fame, but here it also refers to illusory goals to which we give names, goals such as buddhahood.

小不讀佛書
焉知百萬門
終日恣貪嗔
一朝老病來

大不識玄旨
只在方寸裡
幾時念生死
懊惱亦徒爾

If you don't read sutras when you're young
you won't know what they mean when you're older
you won't know a million doorways
are all inside the square inch of your mind
indulging all day in desire and hate
how often do you think about life and death
one day illness or old age will surprise you
remorse then will be too late

Note: Since ancient times, education in China began with memorization. Only later were the memorized texts explained. The sutras of the Buddha say there are a million doors to the truth but you only need to walk through one of them. Buddhists often refer to the mind as the "square inch."

種豆兩三畦
不知陽和功
老兔伏崖根
果能息汝貪

離離覆原上
惟言土力壯
我心欲希望
我寧不食醬

I planted a few hills of beans
their tendrils now cover the summit
forgetting the sunshine and sweat
I say it's all in the soil
an old rabbit crouches at the base of the cliff
fantasies filling its thoughts
if it would give up its desires
I would give up soy sauce

頭 咄 手 山
 上 哉 種 中
 雪 世 三 一
 紛 間 畝 雨
 紛 人 薯 滋

胸 名 亦 原
 中 利 可 上
 塵 常 延 百
 浩 關 昏 物
 浩 抱 早 好

Whenever the mountain enjoys a good rain
 everything flourishes here on the summit
 planting an acre of yams
 can wait for another time
 people in the world alas
 keep thinking of fortune and fame
 heads aswirl with snow
 hearts awash with dust

Note: As noted elsewhere, the yam was one of Stonehouse's least favorite food options—more of a starvation food. An acre of them would have meant an awful lot of depressing meals. As elsewhere, "dust" refers to sensation and desire for sensation.

結屋荒山巔
 賣柴糶米歸
 雖是勞形骸
 說妙與談玄

隨緣度朝夕
 煮粥做飯喫
 且免當戶役
 箇卻曉不得

I built my hut on a desolate ridge
 and pass my days in karma's wake
 I sell firewood to buy grain
 and live on porridge and rice
 although I wear myself out
 at least I avoid corvée
 but talking about the dark and distant
 that is something I can't do

Note: In ancient China, the government required every household with able-bodied males to provide a certain number of days' labor on government construction projects or service in the local

militia or army. But since monks were no longer members of a household, they were exempt from such forms of labor. The “dark and distant” refer to Taoist and Buddhist profundities.

放 動 飲 執
下 念 啄 法
全 即 但 去
放 成 隨 修
下 魔 緣 行

佛 開 只 牽
也 口 麼 牛
莫 便 閒 來
要 招 閒 拽
做 禍 過 磨

Letting go means letting everything go
 buddhahood has to go too
 each thought becomes a demon
 each word invites more trouble
 survive instead on what karma brings
 pass your days in freedom
 make the Dharma your practice
 lead your ox to the mill

Note: Buddhists recognize an infinite number of demons, or maras, one for every thought, word, and deed. The purpose of these demons is to obstruct us from understanding the true nature of reality. *Dharma* is the Buddhist word for what is held to be real, especially the Buddha's teaching.

As early as the T'ang and Sung dynasties, Chinese monks used the ox as a metaphor for the untamed mind. Among the most famous examples of this usage was the series of oxherding pictures and accompanying verses by P'u Ming (普明) describing the stages of Zen training.

日世雲破
落界散屋
山空天三
風裡宇兩
寒花清椽

閉起放住
門滅目在
燒皆聊千
火虛四峰
向妄望上

My broken-down hut isn't three rafters wide
perched above a thousand peaks
when clouds unveil an azure sky
I let my eyes roam the four horizons
the world is a flower in space
its bloom and decay are delusions
when the sun goes down and the wind turns cold
I close my door and face the fire

Note: During the Yuan dynasty, structures were measured by the number of rafters used in their construction, and taxation of householders was assessed on this basis—though without much success. By Stonehouse's time, when the owners of a building paid taxes on what they reported as being "three rafters" (三椽), the actual width had expanded from three feet to nine feet. Hence, they paid only one-third of the taxes they should have. In poem 97, Stonehouse says his hut was two or three mats wide, a mat being equivalent to three feet. And in poem 129, he says his hut wasn't quite ten feet on a side. By "a thousand peaks," Stonehouse is referring to the dozen or so smaller hills around Hsiamushan.

結屋霞峰頭
 山田六七坵
 開池放月來
 老子少機關

耕鋤供日課
 道人二兩箇
 賣柴糴米過
 家私都說破

I built my hut on top of Hsia Summit
 plowing and hoeing make up my day
 half a dozen terraced fields
 two or three hermit neighbors
 I made a pond for the moon
 and sell wood to buy grain
 an old man with few schemes
 I've told you all that I own

Note: The term *chia-ssu* (patrimony, inherited possessions) in the last line also appears in poem 37.

也 煮 開 兩
 勝 粥 得 箇
 利 儘 一 窮
 名 有 坵 道
 人 餘 田 人

奔 做 收 三
 南 飯 得 間
 又 却 半 弊
 走 不 檐 漏
 北 足 穀 屋

A couple of impoverished monks
 living in broken-down huts
 clearing terraced fields
 we harvest a basket of chaff
 enough to make porridge
 but not enough for a meal
 still we outdo the rich and famous
 racing north and hurrying south

Note: Stonehouse shared the mountain with others, especially during his second residence on the mountain. No doubt, his neighbors included the monk Chih-jou, whose name appears as the editor of his *Mountain Poems* as well as his *Gathas* and *Zen Talks*.



Red Pine, Finn Wilcox, and Steve Johnson at the site of Stonehouse's first hut, 1991.

About the Translator

Bill Porter's translations have been honored with a number of awards, including two NEA translation fellowships, a PEN translation award, the inaugural Asian Literature Award of the American Literary Translators Association, and more recently a Guggenheim Fellowship, which he received to support work on a book based on a pilgrimage to the graves and homes of over thirty of China's greatest poets of the past.

Also by Red Pine

The Lankavatara Sutra: Translation and Commentary

Guide to Capturing a Plum Blossom by Sung Po-jen

*Lao-tzu's Taoteching: With Selected Commentaries from the
Past 2,000 Years*

In Such Hard Times: The Poetry of Wei Ying-wu

Zen Baggage: A Pilgrimage to China (as Bill Porter)

The Platform Sutra: The Zen Teaching of Hui-neng

The Heart Sutra: The Womb of Buddhas

*Poems of the Masters: China's Classic Anthology of T'ang
and Sung Dynasty Verse*

The Diamond Sutra: The Perfection of Wisdom

The Collected Songs of Cold Mountain

*The Clouds Should Know Me by Now: Buddhist Poet Monks
of China*

*The Zen Works of Stonehouse: Poems and Talks of a
Fourteenth-Century*

Chinese Hermit

*Road to Heaven: Encounters with Chinese Hermits (as Bill
Porter)*

The Zen Teaching of Bodhidharma

P'u Ming's Oxherding Pictures and Verses

Acknowledgments

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Empty Bowl Press for its previous publication of *The Mountain Poems of Stonehouse*.

Translation, notes, and preface copyright 1986, 1999, 2014 by
Red Pine

All rights reserved

Cover art: Tang Yin, *The Thatched Hut of Dreaming of an Immortal*, early 16th-century China, ink and color on paper. H: 29.6. W: 682.1 cm. Courtesy Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Purchase, F1939.60 detail

ISBN: 978-1-55659-455-7

eISBN: 978-1-61932-118-2

Support Copper Canyon Press:

If you have enjoyed this title, please consider supporting
Copper Canyon Press and our dedication to bringing the work
of emerging, established, and world-renowned poets to an
expanding audience through e-books:

www.coppercanyonpress.org/pages/donation.asp

Contact Copper Canyon Press:

To contact us with feedback about this title send an e-mail to:

ebooks@coppercanyonpress.org



The Chinese character for poetry is made up of two parts: “word” and “temple.” It also serves as pressmark for Copper Canyon Press.

Since 1972, Copper Canyon Press has fostered the work of emerging, established, and world-renowned poets for an expanding audience. The Press thrives with the generous patronage of readers, writers, booksellers, librarians, teachers, students, and funders — everyone who shares the belief that poetry is vital to language and living.

Special Thanks

We are grateful for the major support provided by:

THE PAUL G. ALLEN
FAMILY FOUNDATION

amazon.com

the
POINT
WHERE LESS IS MORE

golden
lasso

Lannan



**National
Endowment
for the Arts**
arts.gov

**WASHINGTON STATE
ARTS COMMISSION**

The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation

[Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Anonymous

John Branch

Diana and Jay Broze

Janet and Les Cox

Mimi Gardner Gates

Golden Lasso, LLC

Gull Industries, Inc. on behalf of William and Ruth True

Beroz Ferrell & The Point, LLC

Mark Hamilton and Suzie Rapp

Carolyn and Robert Hedin

Steven Myron Holl

Lakeside Industries, Inc. on behalf of Jeanne Marie Lee

Maureen Lee and Mark Busto

Lannan Foundation

Brice Marden

National Endowment for the Arts

New Mexico Community Foundation

H. Stewart Parker

Penny and Jerry Peabody

John Phillips and Anne O'Donnell

Joseph C. Roberts

Cynthia Lovelace Sears and Frank Buxton

The Seattle Foundation

Dan Waggoner

Washington State Arts Commission

Charles and Barbara Wright

The dedicated interns and faithful volunteers of Copper Canyon Press

To learn more about underwriting Copper Canyon Press titles, please call 360-385-4925 ext. 103

INDEX

- A clean patch of ground after a rain ([99](#))
- A clear sky and nothing planned I climbed Hsia Summit ([171](#))
- A couple of impoverished monks ([184](#))
- A few trees in bloom radiant red ([123](#))
- A friend of seclusion arrives at my gate ([28](#))
- A hermit's hut is lonely encircled by bamboo ([136](#))
- A hoe provides a living ([58](#))
- A hoe supplies a living ([66](#))
- A human life lasts one hundred years ([21](#))
- A hundred years pass by in a flash ([29](#))
- A hundred years slip by unnoticed ([104](#))
- A lotus-leaf robe keeps me warm when I'm cold ([160](#))
- A monk on his own sits quiet and relaxed ([23](#))
- A monk's home in the mountains ([63](#))
- A paper-window bamboo hut a hedge of hibiscus ([4](#))
- A pointed-roof hut in the shade of the clouds ([155](#))
- A round head and square robe constitute a monk ([53](#))
- A thatch hut in a bamboo grove ([70](#))
- A thatch hut in blue mountains beside a green stream ([40](#))
- A thatch hut is lonely on a new fall night ([76](#))
- A trail through green mist red clouds and bamboo ([22](#))
- A white-haired monk afflicted with age ([34](#))

A white-haired Zen monk with a hut for my home ([16](#))
A winding muddy trail ([62](#))
Advancing or retiring grasping or letting go ([74](#))
After a meal I dust off a boulder and sleep ([176](#))
After meditation I chant a Cold Mountain poem ([151](#))
After porridge after rice after drinking tea ([125](#))
After twenty years of nights beneath the moon and the clouds
([12](#))
All those I meet say the world's ways are hard ([83](#))
As soon as the red sun bites the mountain ([71](#))
As soon as the sun lights the southeast sky ([127](#))
Before I can finish the *Lankavatara* ([113](#))
Below the pines its twin doors are never closed ([7](#))
Cold Mountain has a line ([174](#))
Corpses don't stink in the mountains ([114](#))
Day after day I let things go ([33](#))
Dense fog and clouds too thick to push away ([126](#))
Don't run away when he strikes ([130](#))
Don't think a mountain home means you're free ([10](#))
East or west north or south then back again ([138](#))
Eight or nine pines behind his hut ([87](#))
Everything's growth depends on its roots ([42](#))
Examine the patterns of transient existence ([48](#))
Followers of the Way are done with reason ([57](#))
For dinner I cook a bowl of old rice ([119](#))
For property monks apply at an office ([152](#))
From outside my round pointed-roof hut ([145](#))
From the very top of Hsiawushan ([65](#))

Good and bad fortune never lose their way ([159](#))
Grave upon grave buried beneath weeds ([3](#))
Green gullies and red cliffs wherever I look ([9](#))
Half the window pine shadows half the window moon ([117](#))
Head of white hair shoulders all bones ([112](#))
How could someone who practices not become a buddha
([156](#))
Hsiawu is high and the trail is long ([134](#))
I built a thatch hut beneath tall pines ([146](#))
I built a thatched hut deep in the clouds ([47](#))
I built my hut on a desolate ridge ([180](#))
I built my hut on top of Hsia Summit ([183](#))
I chop green wood and lift the pole ([162](#))
I chose high cliffs far from a market ([25](#))
I eat a peach spit out the pit the pit becomes a tree ([128](#))
I entered the mountains and learned to be dumb ([14](#))
I entered the mountains and my cares became clear ([30](#))
I feel old and decrepit and weaker by the day ([135](#))
I hiked staff in hand beyond the pines ([72](#))
I live in the mountains in order to practice ([43](#))
I made my home west of Cha River ([1](#))
I may be white-haired and nothing but bones ([24](#))
I moved west into a maze of peaks ([120](#))
I plant winter melon then aubergine ([85](#))
I planted a few hills of beans ([178](#))
I put mulberry wood in the stove to make charcoal ([153](#))
I repair my hoe and let my hut lean ([144](#))
I saw through my worldly concerns of the past ([32](#))

I searched high and low without success ([44](#))
I shut my door before the clouds return ([124](#))
I sit and meditate in the quiet and dark ([157](#))
I sleep in the clouds where the sun doesn't shine ([17](#))
I was a Zen monk who didn't know Zen ([36](#))
I weave rush grass for my hut ([75](#))
I'm a poor but happy follower of the Way ([50](#))
I've lived as a hermit more than forty years ([37](#))
If you don't read sutras when you're young ([177](#))
If you hate hard work and like to loaf ([79](#))
It's hard to say if the year has been hot or cold ([163](#))
Jade-hall silver-candle nights of song ([82](#))
Jade-winged plum blossoms perfumed trees ([158](#))
Last year my food supply failed me ([154](#))
Late autumn rain is all mist ([147](#))
Leaves along the shore stop and flow with the stream ([133](#))
Letting go means letting everything go ([181](#))
Life in the mountains depends on a hoe ([143](#))
Lunch in my mountain kitchen ([67](#))
Magpies talk magpie outside my hut ([172](#))
More than twenty years west of Mount Yen ([8](#))
Most of the time I smile ([59](#))
Mountain wind ripped out my old paper windows ([121](#))
Mountains of fiddleheads garden of tea ([77](#))
Movement isn't right and stillness is wrong ([6](#))
My broken-down hut isn't three rafters wide ([182](#))
My broken-down hut rests upon rocks ([20](#))
My home in the cliffs is like a tomb ([101](#))

My hut is at the top of Hsia Summit ([11](#))
My hut is so secluded it's beyond the reach of dust ([149](#))
My hut is two maybe three mats wide ([97](#))
My hut isn't quite ten feet across ([129](#))
My newly sewn paper quilt is so warm ([161](#))
My Zen hut rests upon rocks at the summit ([18](#))
New year head old year tail ([111](#))
No mind in my work the wind blows through the trees ([110](#))
No one else sees what I see clearly ([116](#))
Not one care in mind all year ([118](#))
Novices don't stay to stir the fire ([81](#))
Now that I'm old nothing disturbs me ([150](#))
Old and exhausted I'm truly lazy ([94](#))
Old and retired I nurse a sick body ([80](#))
Old but at peace in body and mind ([45](#))
Old through and through I'm utterly lazy ([95](#))
On a ten-thousand-story-high mountain ([73](#))
Opening my door at dawn to fetch water ([46](#))
Our time is confined to one hundred years ([131](#))
Parched wheat and pine pollen make a fine meal ([142](#))
People all know about death and rebirth ([168](#))
People all say there is time to cultivate ([169](#))
People say everyday mind isn't our buddha nature ([137](#))
Profit and fame aren't worth extolling ([35](#))
Rain soaks my hut then the sun shines ([115](#))
Reasoning comes to an end ([60](#))
Scorpion tails and wolf hearts pervade the world ([38](#))
Seclusion of course means far from the world ([13](#))

Sewing purple robes with fine yellow silk ([165](#))
Sky Lake is a pool of aquamarine ([93](#))
Someone asked what year I arrived ([78](#))
Spring is gone summer is gone and autumn is cool ([166](#))
Stripped of conditions my mind is at rest ([108](#))
Surrounding the summit is nothing but pines ([164](#))
Ten thousand schemes and fantasies have ended ([100](#))
The ancients entered mountains in search of the Way ([41](#))
The crow and the hare race without rest ([39](#))
The Eighth Month in the mountains ([69](#))
The flux of attachments is easy to stop ([91](#))
The Great Way has never known abundance or want ([19](#))
The landscape unrolls from the cliffs ([61](#))
The moon lights up my door ([175](#))
The people I meet are busy night and day ([167](#))
The setting sun's cold light fills half the window ([122](#))
The shame of dumb ideas is suffered by the best ([52](#))
The streams are so clear and shallow I can see pebbles ([15](#))
The sunrise in the east the sunset in the west ([54](#))
The trees in the forest grow new leaves ([173](#))
The Way of the Dharma is too singular to copy ([55](#))
The whole Buddhist Canon is worthless old paper ([132](#))
Their zigzagging sails crowd government quays ([26](#))
There isn't much time in this fleeting life ([56](#))
There's a road to the West nobody takes ([105](#))
There's a snag in front like a standing man ([102](#))
There's no dust to sweep on a mountain ([96](#))
There's nothing going on in my mountain kitchen ([84](#))

This body lasts about as long as a bubble ([31](#))
This is something no one can force ([88](#))
Three or four naps every day ([90](#))
To get to the end the very end ([49](#))
To glimpse the fluttering of shy birds ([2](#))
To glorify the Way what should people turn to ([5](#))
To Redcurtain Mountain and Sky Lake Spring ([170](#))
Too long away from monasteries I don't have a cushion ([140](#))
True emptiness is clear and always present ([92](#))
True emptiness is like a translucent sea ([68](#))
Try to find what's real and what's real becomes more distant
([106](#))
Trying to become a buddha is easy ([107](#))
Up-and-down mountain zigzag trail ([103](#))
What sort of work takes place in the mountains ([139](#))
What's gone is already gone ([89](#))
When my clothes come apart I plant hemp ([141](#))
When the red sun climbs above the blue mountains ([148](#))
Whenever the mountain enjoys a good rain ([179](#))
Where did that gust come from ([64](#))
Who enters this gate who studies this teaching ([27](#))
Why do my Zen friends choose smoke and vines ([98](#))
Will the porridge or rice ever end ([86](#))
Work with no mind and all work stops ([109](#))
You know very well yet seem not to know ([51](#))