I. Texts

Magpie’s Nest  鵲巢

The magpie has a nest,
But the cuckoo stays in it.
This girl is going to her mate’s home,
A hundred carriages welcome her.

The magpie has a nest,
But the cuckoo owns it.
This girl is going to her mate’s home,
A hundred carriages escort her.

The magpie has a nest,
But the cuckoo fills it.
This girl is going to her mate’s home,
A hundred carriages complete the ceremony.

[Translated by Wai-yee Li]
Picking Artemesia 采蘩

Where does she pick artemisia?
At the pool, at the pond.
For what will it be used?
For the affairs of lords and princes.

Where does she pick artemisia?
In the middle of the stream.
Where will it be used?
At the temple of lords and princes.

With her hairpiece piled high,
Day and night she is at the lord’s hall.
With her hairpiece resplendent,
She makes her way back.

[Translated by Wai-yee Li]

There is a Dead Doe in the Wilds 野有死麕

There is a dead doe in the wilds,
White rushes wrap it.
There’s a girl longing for spring,
A fine man shows her the way.
There are oak and elm branches in the wood,
There is a dead deer in the wilds.
White rushes bound and wrap it,
There is a girl just like jade.
Slowly! Gently!
Do not ruffle my kerchief!
Do not make the dog howl!

Plum Tree

The flowers of the plum tree—
Are they not truly splendid?
Of men that now are,
None equals a brother.
The fear of death and mourning
Makes brothers long for each other.
As upland and lowland form a pair,
So elder brother and younger brother go together.

There are wagtails on the plain:
Brothers relieve each other’s plight.
But even good friends
At the most do but heave a sigh.
Brothers may quarrel within the walls,
But outside they fend off insults.
Whereas even good friends
Offer but little help.

Death and chaos, having been brought to an end,
All is calm and still.

Now even brothers
Are not the equal of friends.

Set forth your food stands,
Drink wine to your fill.

All you brothers are here together,
Peaceful, happy, and brotherly.

With your wives and children you are in harmony,
Matched like the little zither with the big zither.

You brothers are in concord,
Peaceful, merry, in great glee.

Thus you bring good to house and home,
Joy to wife and children.

Examine this, ponder this—
Isn’t it truly so?

[Translated by Wai-yee Li]
Poems read in Mandarin by Zhao Wenxuan and Zhao Sikun
II. Episode Notes

- Zhao Wu 趙武 (d. 541 BCE), leader of Jin, great grandson of Zhao Cui
- Shusun Bao 叔孫豹 (d. 538 BCE), minister in Lu 魯
- Han Hu 罕虎 (d. 529 BCE), minister in Zheng 鄭

III. Textual Source