

**Karl Plank**

**QUIET NIGHT**

At year's end, the hermit Paul burned all the baskets  
he had made and the hut where he kept them.  
Then he began anew to braid strands of palm and prayer  
over and under and over again.

Li Bai, it is said, wrote characters that stood like decent gents.  
He read his poems to a washerwoman with her stick  
before folding them into boats to float downstream.  
If he died trying to grab moonlight in the Long River,

he also wrote, *Let us waste not the moon.*

And now, though I know you will not read these words,  
I will not squander their moment.  
I will write them to spark fire in the desert  
and play in the current that bears grief away.

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