to tern again the flight a turning trade." Other poems are brief lessons, such as the extraordinary meditation beginning, "To be of one place as another / is forbidden." Enslin's syntax is often both sinuous and halting, and his punctuation is erratic; once in a while a poem apparently intended to make a statement ends up as a puzzle. That said, one should hesitate before dismissing anything here: like all good poems, these demand to be felt out, rehearsed, and inhabited to be appreciated. There are a few people who will give poems such as these the chance they deserve, but only a few.

To be of one place as another
is forbidden not by law or ritual
it is of the kind and species.
Only at the time of its uprooting
will a tree sense something of its roots
no longer dark and secret
in a parent loam.

* * *

When I Find You Again It Will Be in Mountains: Selected Poems of Chia Tao.
Translated by Mike O'Connor.
Wisdom Publications, 2000.
140 pages. $15.95 (paperback).

Reviewed by Robert West

Mike O'Connor, a poet from Washington state and a former resident of Taiwan, brings us a scholarly yet compact edition of the late eighth- and early ninth-century Chinese poet Chia Tao. O'Connor's introduction is quite helpful: it offers a biography of the poet, an overview of his period, and a discussion of his style, and also provides interesting information about the poet's critical reception. O'Connor has translated 88 of Chia Tao's 404 extant poems; the English texts are attractively printed next to the Chinese originals, and in four cases are also accompanied by photographs from China by Steven R. Johnson. A brief glossary and twenty pages of endnotes provide help with references to Chinese geography, history, customs, and other matters. A five-page bibliography lists editions of the poet's work and translations of it, as well as a number of works of general interest to students of Chinese poetry. You couldn't hope for a more inviting introduction to Chia Tao, who is less well known in the Occident than his eighth-century predecessors Li Po, Tu Fu, and Wang Wei. My sole complaint about the book's format is the lack of an index; any future edition should include one.

Classic Chinese poetry abounds with poems of farewell and travel, and that is certainly true of Chia Tao's work. A former monk, he also often writes about visits with monks and hermits; O'Connor notes that the frequency of this choice of topic distinguishes his oeuvre from those of earlier poets. He also points out that stylistically Chia Tao's poetry is marked by a new concern for le mot juste, a concern likewise evident in O'Connor's fine English versions. If there is any shortcoming to the translations, it is that they give little sense of attempting to duplicate the sound effects of the originals — effects, such as rhyme, that O'Connor describes in his introduction. But of course this is a problem each translator deals with in his own way; to translate is "to bring across," and such smuggling always involves one compromise or another.

"Seeking but Not Finding the Recluse"

Under pines
I ask the boy;

he says: "My master's gone
to gather herbs.

I only know
he's on this mountain,

but the clouds are too deep
to know where."

* * *

The Lost Sea.
Keith Flynn.
Iris Press, 2000.
114 pages. $13.00 (paperback).

Reviewed by Mark Roberts

Perhaps it was the sinuous tails of René Magritte's candles crawling along the shoreline illustrated on its cover that drew me in, but the poems made me stay. It was snowing when I read *The Lost Sea*, Keith Flynn's third book of poems, and as I recall, it was near twenty degrees here in my little mountain home. A perfect day, I thought, to endure a different type of accumulation — snowy excerpts from Keith Flynn's mind. A good decision, I can report.

Thematically, *The Lost Sea* reaches far and wide, from the history and myth of the West, to our intriguing post-modern culture, to the poet's own personal, contemplative reflections. To match the wide range of themes, there are also a variety of poetic forms presented — dramatic monologues, lyrics, and narratives. Flynn tries his hand at experimental form, too, and when he does, it pays off, particularly with the cycle of poems called "The Fatigue of Post-Modern Irony."

"Waco Ruby Ridge Oklahoma" is a poem from the "Fatigue" cycle that reveals how our society increas-

ingly views art not as a cultural poison but as a benign nuisance. The result? A static deadness. Flynn writes: "This poem / is more harmless / than Dioxin / and will spend / less time in the heart," while the speaker's mother chimes in, asking why he "leave[s] out / all the / happy parts." That's the irony, isn't it? The "happy" parts lose their meaning when they're repackaged as Visa advertisements. Finally, Flynn observes that "we are / a bulky / people / hard to move" — an apt physical image of the "static deadness" don't you think?

In a style at once challenging and original, Flynn strategically positions metaphors to strike us at our most vulnerable moments — when we wish to stop reading and intellectually analyze the text. At first reading, some of these poems may induce disorientation, the metaphors often interrupting a poem's narrative, but soon one grasps the flavor of the structure. Clearly a child of the great early Moderns — Eliot, Pound, Yeats — Flynn's poetic style is not exactly Imagistic, though there are nods and tastes of it in nearly every poem. Rather his work is, to my mind, filmic or cinematic. He understands the power of juxtaposition, which makes his metaphors spin like small planets, causing the microcosm of the poem to hold itself together. Read the first stanza of "The Pink River Dolphins of Peru," a poem not so much about dolphins as about human music and myth-making:

> The pink river dolphins of Peru
> are more myth now than reality
> but some still exist,
> radishes of petrified laughter,
> ashes in the river roots
> shocked into music.
> Whatever is not stone is light,
> like the pythia said, preaching
> in the troubled body's lost horizon.
> Music is a blouse on the moon,
> unzipping her shadow
> and stepping out into blossom.

Note how, at the end of the stanza, the finely tuned metaphor for music bursts open like the early bud of a white iris. Surprising. Pleasing. The stanza just quoted represents Flynn's style perfectly. The first three lines set the stage, the next three cast a few baiting metaphors, the next three lines are commentary (I especially like the quotable, beautiful line: "Whatever is not stone is light") and finally the last three lines, a precise metaphor, poetically (not narratively) unifies the entire stanza. Many of Flynn's poems move us — sometimes fluidly, sometimes joltingly — from intellect to emotion.

The fourth and final section of the book, "Still Life with Delirium," moves into the poet's personal life, which for me makes all his political/cultural observation more immediately effective and potent. In fact, I'd say that the entire book is worth buying simply for these beautiful and poignant poems. I'll not spoil all the fun by quoting endlessly; quoting two lines from a poem called "Critical Mass" sums up this small collection of poems: "In all crisis, opportunity. / In all bedlam, beauty." Enough said.

The Lost Sea earns its right to sit on any poetry shelf; it offers a host of well-tuned, delicately constructed poems that stand and sing with each return visit. The poet's attention to structure — of individual poems and of the book entire — makes the collection reel with energy, challenging us to a more poetic way of thinking and living.

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