

BLOOD ACTOR

赤伶 (Chì Líng) by 等什么君(Děng Shénme Jūn)

Translation ©Ashley Swanner

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CHINESE	PINYIN	ENGLISH
台下人走过 不见旧颜色	Tái xià rén zǒu guò bù jiàn jiù yán sè.	Beneath the stage, people pass by, yet the old colors are no longer seen. (Old colors can symbolize fading traditions, past glories, lost history or impermanence of emotions & people, etc.).
台上人唱着 心碎离别歌	Tái shàng rén chàng zhe xīn suì lí bié gē.	Onstage, someone sings a heartbreaking farewell song.
情字难落墨 她唱须以血来和	Qíng zì nán luò mò tā chàng xū yǐ xuè lái hé.	The word 'love' is hard to write—she must sing it with blood.
戏幕起 戏幕落 谁是客	Xì mù qǐ xì mù luò shéi shì kè?	Curtains rise; curtains fall—who is but a guest?
戏一折 水袖起落	Xì yī shé shuǐ xiù qǐ luò.	With each act, water sleeves rise and fall. (Water sleeves: the long flowing sleeves used in Chinese opera for expressive movements).
唱悲欢唱离合 无关我	Chàng bēi huān chàng lí hé wú guān wǒ.	Singing of joy and sorrow, of reunion and separation—it has nothing to do with me.
扇开合 锣鼓响又默	Shàn kāi hé luó gǔ xiǎng yòu mò.	The fan opens and closes; the gongs and drums sound, then fall silent.
戏中情戏外人 凭谁说	Xì zhōng qíng xì wài rén píng shéi shuō?	Love within the play, lives beyond the stage—who can truly judge?
惯将喜怒哀乐都融入粉墨	Guàn jiāng xǐ nù āi lè dōu róng rù fěn mò.	Emotions of joy, anger, sorrow, and happiness are blended into the stage makeup.

陈词唱穿又如何 白骨青灰 皆我	Chén cí chàng chuān yòu rú hé bái gǔ qīng huī jiē wǒ.	What does it matter if stale words are sung to the end? In the end, I'm nothing but bones and ashes.
乱世浮萍忍看烽火燃山河	Luàn shì fú píng rěn kàn fēng huǒ rán shān hé.	Like drifting duckweed in a world aflame, I watch as war devours the land.
位卑未敢忘忧国 哪怕无人 知我	Wèi bēi wèi gǎn wàng yōu guó nǎ pà wú rén zhī wǒ.	Though I'm lowly, I dare not forget my country's grief—though none may know my name.
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戏幕起 戏幕落 谁是客	Xì mù qǐ xì mù luò shéi shì kè?	The curtain rises and falls—who is but a guest?
惯将喜怒哀乐都藏入粉墨	Guàn jiāng xǐ nù āi lè dōu cáng rù fěn mò.	Emotions of joy, anger, sorrow, and happiness are hidden within the stage makeup.
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戏幕起 戏幕落 终是客	Xì mù qǐ xì mù luò zhōng shì kè.	The curtain rises and falls—ultimately, we are all but guests.
你方唱罢我登场	Nǐ fāng chàng bà wǒ dēng chǎng.	Once you finish singing, I take the stage.
莫嘲风月戏 莫笑人荒唐	Mò cháo fēng yuè xì mò xiào rén huāng táng.	Do not mock the romance on stage, nor laugh at human folly.
也曾问青黄 也曾铿锵唱兴亡	Yě zēng wèn qīng huáng yě zēng kēng qiāng chàng xīng wáng.	I have pondered rise and decay and sung resoundingly of triumph and loss.
道无情 道有情 怎思量	Dào wú qíng dào yǒu qíng zěn sī liàng?	This world* is heartless, yet full of emotion—how can one measure it? *Literally Dao, referring to the fundamental way or principal of the universe.
道无情道有情费思量	Dào wúqíng dào yǒuqíng fèi sī liang.	This world is both indifferent and compassionate—pondering this is exhausting.