

The Space Imagination in Li Bai's Poetry: Centered on *Mount Skyland* Ascended in a Dream — A Song of Farewell

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Abstract

Mount Skyland Ascended in a Dream — A Song of Farewell contains Li Bai's unique philosophy of life and self-will. It was written before he was rewarded and banished with money, returned to his hometown in Donglu, and set off again after temporarily residing. This is a significant turning point in his life. In the poem, he uses his dream as the basis, and with his excellent space imagination, shows the world multiple fantastic and magnificent poetic spaces — natural space, fairyland space, and free space. These space imaginations loop back and forth, layer upon layer, allowing people to appreciate the beauty of poetry and at the same time embody Li Bai's unique life experience, illuminating his philosophical thinking and detachment about life, all of which are derived from his high-spirited self-conscious.

Keywords: Mount Skyland Ascended in a Dream — A Song of Farewell, Li Bai, space imagination, life experience

1. Introduction

"Looking up at the sky, I laugh aloud and go. Am I a man to crawl amid the brambles low?" (Parting from My Children at Nanling for the Capital) Li Bai, who was ride on the crest of success, entered Beijing with great ambitions, but became a jester. Depressed and resentful, he offended the powerful dignitaries, and was rewarded and banished with money. He traveled to the mountains and rivers with Du Fu and Gao Shi, and then returned to Donglu. The comfortable life of returning to the garden did not make Li Bai choose to take care of his life, but started wandering again. This poem was written when he was about to say goodbye to his relatives and friends in Donglu, so it is also titled Farewell to Friends of Donglu. However, this poem was not written by Li Bai after actually visiting Tianmu Mountain, but the poet's extraordinary imagination, written with a dream, with the characteristics of a poem about wandering immortals. At this time, Li Bai has experienced three years of life in Chang'an and the subsequent roaming journey. He has a deeper understanding and understanding of the decay and decline of the Li and Tang Dynasties at that time, as well as the universe and life. He poured these complicated life experiences into his poems, writing as he pleased, and constructed a poetic space that is both virtual and real, illusion and real, and brilliant and fluent in the space imagination of Tianmu Mountain. This article starts from the standard of poetry, takes the context of the text as the starting point, and analyzes Li Bai's spatial imagination in his poems to see through his thinking about life and predicaments, and illuminate his life force with high self-consciousness.

2. Natural Space — Natural Implications in Space Imagination

"Of fairy isles seafarers speak, Mid dimming mist and surging waves, so hard to seek; Of Skyland Southerners are proud, Perceivable through fleeting or dispersing cloud." Yingzhou is a fairy mountain in the East China Sea, illusory, but Tianmu Mountain, which is in the clouds and clouds, can be found. At the beginning of this poem, Li Bai juxtaposes Tianmu Mountain and Yingzhou, indicating the upcoming journey of seeking mountains and

visiting immortals. And the misty waves and clouds are drawn together, using the virtual to set off the real, and outlines a mountainous space supported by five clouds with the brush. Then "Mount Skyland threatens heaven, massed against the sky, Surpassing the Five Peaks and dwarfing Mount Red Town. Mount Heaven's Terrace, five hundred thousand feet high, Nearby to the southeast, appears to crumble down." Three mountain images "Five Peaks", "Mount Red Town" and "Mount Heaven's Terrace" appear in succession in the poem. Mount Tai, Mount Heng, Mount Hua, Mount Heng and Mount Song are collectively known as the Five Mountains, and they are all places where Taoist gods live. Mount Chicheng and Mount Tiantai are famous mountains in Zhejiang. In Li Bai's works, whether it is the Taoist cave or the mountains and rivers in the south of the Yangtze River, they all have to worship in front of Tianmu Mountain. Li Bai was deeply influenced by Taoism and Taoism since he was a child. He not only learned Taoism to seek immortals, made alchemy and took food, but also became Taoist and made friends with famous Taoist. However, the Five Sacred Mountains, which are important places of Taoism, are not as good as the Tianmu Mountain constructed in his spatial imagination. The Tianmu Mountain outlined in the first two sentences is in the flickering clouds, and this exaggeration makes Tianmu's momentum ready to emerge, high into the blue clouds, as it is now, which is fascinating.

"Longing in dreams for Southern land, one night I flew o'er Mirror Lake in moonlight. My shadow's followed by moonbeams until I reach Shimmering Streams," Li Bai flew across the mirror lake in his dream, and the lake water reflected his figure in the moonlight. Under the moonlight, he flew to the edge of Shanxi River on Tianmu Mountain. These four lines of poem not only explain that this poem is a work of remembering dreams, but also that the scene constantly changes with the state, pulling the spatial imagination to the Shanxi River at the foot of Tianmu Mountain in an instant. Then expand the space imagination to Jinghu Lake and Shanxi River, which are flying waterways — a immortal under the moon, crosses the lake at night, and the water waves are calm, reflecting the swaying figure.

Immediately afterwards, "Where Hermitage of Master Xie can still be seen, And clearly gibbons wail o'er rippling water green. I put Xie's pegged boot each on one foot," The first two lines of poems express Xie Lingyun while shaping the quiet and quiet natural space of Shanxi River. "Stay overnight at Shanxi River and climb Tianmu Mountain tomorrow", this is Xie Lingyun's self-statement. Shanxi has always been a place where literati and elegant scholars go together, especially in the Wei and Jin Dynasties, the wind of visiting mountains and waters prevailed, and romantic celebrities often visited Shanxi. Li Bai's mention of Xie Lingyun here is clearly not unintentional. Throughout his life, Li Bai greatly admired the Xie brothers and repeatedly mentioned and praised them in his poetry, "Your writing's forcible like ancient poets while mine is in Junior Xie's clear and spirited style." (Farewell to Uncle Yun, the Imperial Librarian, at XieTiao's Pavilion in Xuanzhou). At the same time, Xie Lingyun was born in a family. He was not only a famous official with high talent, but also a high self-esteem, full of talent, and was once used as a royal literati by the current emperor. But in the end, it is difficult to develop a grand plan, and I am depressed, so I have to pay attention to the mountains and rivers and travel the mountains and rivers. From this point of view, Li Bai pointed out Xie Lingyun, and the similar life trajectory has a sense of sympathy for each other. However, the word "still be seen" in Where Hermitage of Master Xie can still be seen seems to be a sigh, and it echoes with the next sentence "And clearly gibbons wail o'er rippling water green.", which brings out the right and wrong of things, and the feeling of recalling the past and hurting the present.

With the climbing of Tianmu Mountain, "And scale the mountain ladder to blue cloud. On eastern cliff I see Sunrise at sea, And in mid-air I hear sky-cock crow loud." Just halfway up the mountain, the rooster announced the dawn, and the sun rose to the sea, and then walked along the stone path in the mountain, coiling and turning, the direction was uncertain, strange flowers and rocks, hazy and blurred, leaning on the stone. Unconsciously, it was already late. Wherever it goes, "Bears roar and dragons howl and thunders the cascade, Deep forests quake and ridges tremble, they're afraid!" The bear roars and the dragon roars, shaking the spring water in the rock, making the forest and mountains tremble. "From dark, dark cloud comes rain; On pale, pale waves mists plane." The dark clouds are heavy and about to rain, and the water is turbulent and smoky. Rocks and springs tremble, mountains and forests are frightening, this is a "sound" space; clouds are green like rain, water waves are smoke, it is a "silent" space, between "sound" and "silence", the harmony, three-dimensional, and vividness of the natural space in the spatial imagination. And the sense of space arises spontaneously, just like "the boat on the east and the boat on the west are quiet and silent, only the autumn moon in the heart of the river is white" (Bai Juyi's Pipa Xing). Throughout the dream mountaineering process, Li Bai used his extraordinary imagination to create a strange, magnificent and ever-changing natural space of Tianmu Mountain, which makes people feel like they are in the mountains and rivers, and on the top of the quiet and eerie mountains, forests and rock springs.

As far as the poem is concerned, the natural space constructed by spatial imagination has already appeared. However, Taibai poems often prefer majestic and steep mountains and rivers, turbulent rivers and seas, and strange wonderlands with mythical colors. The natural space in the poem is not simply a description of the scenery, but is smelted by Li Bai's self-emotion, condensing his life experience, pursuit of free life and desire to break free. Just as he howled, "If you don't want to be sloppy, but let yourself be comfortable, how can you be restrained?" (*Ode to Dapeng*) Therefore, the natural space in Taibai's poems is often his self-externalization, and the passionate praise of the natural space is the expression of his ideals and emotions.

The same is true for this poem, from the beginning of the poem with the situation of Yingzhou, Wuyue, Chicheng, and Tiantai in the East China Sea as a backdrop to Tianmu, to Jinghu Lake, the moon shining on the lake, Shanxi, Xie's former residence, and then to mountaineering, walking to the depths of the mountain forest, the clouds are green and the hookah is smoked, and the bear roars and the dragon sings. The natural space of Tianmu Mountain is strange and eerie, quiet and eerie, but such a strange scene does not make people afraid or daunting. Instead, it makes people desire to climb and climb and yearn to experience it personally. The fantastic and magnificent natural space makes people yearn for it. Li Bai's self-feeling is not a feeling of fear, so the natural space constructed by his spatial imagination permeates his yearning for a free life and is full of his life experience — leaving farewell to Donglu, and he can't wait to be fascinated by the "fairy mountain". This "fairy mountain" is not only the Tianmu Mountain in the spatial imagination, but also the symbol of "free life" in Li Bai's heart. All the natural scenery in the space of "Fairy Mountain" is full of novelty, fun and vitality. Xie's old residence is still there, full of vitality. The poets are sympathetic to each other. Follow your own will, pursue life freedom and your own ideals. Then the sun rises on the sea, and the rooster announces the dawn, which seems to indicate the dawn of Li Bai's life. He didn't stop there, he continued to explore, and in response to Li Bai's abandonment of the comfortable and usual residence in Donglu's hometown in reality, he embarked on a roaming journey again. With the deepening, the poet entered the more secluded deep forest on the top of the mountain. There are not only the sound of bears roaring and dragons singing, but also a state of tranquility, which heralds the coming encounter.

3. Wonderland Space — The Life Dilemma Implied in Space Imagination

Li Bai is in the deep twilight space where the sound complements the silence, everything is quiet. Suddenly, "Oh! lightning flashes and thunder rumbles, With stunning crashes peak on peak crumbles." Li Bai cites Yang Xiong's "Hunting Fu" to depict the roar of thunder and the collapse of the earth. Afterwards, "The stone gate of a fairy cavern under suddenly breaks asunder," to present a strange and imaginary fairyland space. The four lines of poems are all four-syllable sentences, showing obvious differences from the six-syllable and seven-syllable sentence patterns before and after. Li Bai is very good at using sentence patterns in his poems to express emotions, moods and even the big turning point of the situation. In The Difficult Road to Shu, "Avoid fierce tigers in the morning, avoid long snakes in the evening. Grind your teeth and suck blood, and kill people like hemp" using four short sentences in a row, the four-character short sentence speeds up the rhythm of the poem, like a sharp knife piercing the eyes, or like playing the piano with both hands, rapid and resounding, highlighting the difficulty of the Shu Road, which is difficult to go to the blue sky. The combination of short four-character sentences in this poem is interwoven with shocking natural images such as lightning, thunderbolt, collapsing hills and ridges, and the sudden opening of stone gates, so that the space atmosphere of the earth-shattering space and the poet's astonishment and astonishment can be brought into full play. While the previous poems used sound to set off the silent stillness, here the silent stillness is used to set off the restlessness of thunder and lightning, the earth cracking and the sky collapsing, and the fairy cave suddenly appearing. The first part of the poem constructs a quiet and beautiful natural space. Although the natural scene in the space is weird and fantastic, it still focuses on reality and presents a "quiet" situation overall. And the consecutive short and straightforward four character sentence structures create a completely opposite spatial state between dynamic space and tranquil space. In Li Bai's dream, the sense of surprise of encountering the immortal cave suddenly fills the paper, creating an imaginative space of seeing movement in stillness. From this, the space in the poem turns from reality to emptiness, making the space imagination, which is originally a dream, more complicated and confusing, strange and unreal, and the whole poem enters the climax from this.

After the Immortal Mansion Cave appeared, a fairyland space of "So blue, so deep, so vast appears an endless sky, Where sun and moon shine on gold and silver terraces high," appears. "Immortals row out from the clouds, but you can see Jinyintai" (Guo Pu's *Poems of Wandering Immortals*) Compared with the fairyland depicted in Guo Pu's Poem, the fairyland space created by Li Bai is obviously more magnificent. The blue sky is so vast that you can hardly see the limit, and the sun and the moon dazzle each other, illuminating the splendid golden and silver palaces of the fairy family. After stepping into the paradise, Li Bai created another layer of imaginary space — a further structure in the deep forest space of his spatial imagination, which is parallel to the quiet natural space before. This layer of space has been completely separated from reality, and is completely immersed in Li Bai's space imagination-the sky and the earth are infinite, the sun and the moon shine at the same time, and his body seems to be floating in the infinite vast universe, surrounded by the golden palace. The gods and gods in the clouds wear rainbows as clothes, ride the wind as horses, play tigers as drums, and luan as carriages. *Master of the Nets Garden Tang Poetry Notes* commented on this paragraph: "Vertical and horizontal changes,

grotesque, strange and strange, writing dreams with strange pens, uttering sentences are all immortals."¹ Li Bai's sleepwalking in the Heavenly Grandma, looking for mountains and visiting immortals, has reached his perfection so far, and the emotion of the whole poem has also reached its climax in this magnificent fairyland space.

However, when readers harbored expectations and wanted to explore the secret realm of Xianjia, Li Bai turned to another direction, "Suddenly my heart and soul stirred, I awake with a long, long sigh. I find my head on pillow lie And fair visions gone by." In the trance of the fairyland space, the high emotions aroused by the poems in the dazzled wandering stopped abruptly, and the fairyland's prosperity suddenly dissipated, with palpitations in the soul, a long sigh, and sat up after waking up from the dream. When the poet's spatial imagination advances to the realm of the fairyland, continuing to extend it is nothing more than contacting the immortals or traveling in the fairyland. Although it caters to the readers' aesthetic expectations, it will inevitably fall into the cliché, and the conception of the poem will appear shallow. However, Li Bai defied the aesthetic inertia in just four sentences, and suddenly broke the reader's vision of expectation. Pulling the poetic space back to reality suddenly, these four sentences become the key turning point of poetry. Then Li Bai sent out a faint philosophical sigh, "Likewise all human joys will pass away, just as east-flowing water of olden day." The minds of the readers who have just encountered setbacks are suddenly released, drifting into metaphysical profound thoughts.

From movement and stillness to philosophical exclamations, the spatial imagination of poetry has undergone a change from reality to emptiness, and from emptiness to reality. Such a turning point is accompanied by the change of the poet's state of mind. Li Bai's night tour of Tianmu Mountain in his dream depicts the natural space of Tianmu Mountain with full emotion. He regards nature as the externalization of himself and eulogizes passionately. It integrates his life experience and symbolizes his yearning for a free life state. Although he knew clearly that the mountaineering journey might repeat Xie Lingyun's fate, he still insisted on his philosophy of life. When the fairyland is in front of him, Li Bai's self-life ideal is almost completed, and he has reached the fairyland of freedom that he has longed for all his life. Whether such a glorious and lofty Asgard implies that his three years of royal life in Chang'an symbolizes that he has touched his own political ideals, we don't know. But we can clearly feel that he is not intoxicated by it. Even though it is a space imagination constructed by himself, he still breaks this dreamlike and blurred space without hesitation, returns to reality, and asks and sighs.

Li Bai had great aspirations for success and success since his youth, and he had great ideals and ambitions, "If once together with the wind the roc could rise, He would fly ninety thousand li up to the skies." (*The Roc* — *To Li Yong*) Li Bai was not willing to succeed in the imperial examination, but wanted to rely on his own knowledge and talent to enter the political center. When he was summoned by Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang Dynasty, it can be said that he got his wish, achieved great success, and almost realized his life ideal. However, the reality is that the emperor only regarded him as a royal literati, and did not entrust him with important tasks, and he was exiled not long after. This period of life experience and experience is like the sleepwalking in Tianmu Mountain in this poem. Li Bai's spatial imagination constructs a natural space, and then changes into a fairyland space, from longing to obtaining, from obtaining to disillusionment, and finally "Likewise all human joys will pass away, just as east-flowing water of olden day." A sense of disillusionment naturally appeared in my heart. This is Li Bai's interpretation of this dream, and also a clear understanding of his plight in life.

The trip to Chang'an made Li Bai realize that his political ideals might not be realized, and his life was thus in trouble. His persistent ideals in the first half of his life turned into nothingness. Against all odds, he still found the Immortal Palace and met the Immortal in the Clouds. However, everything is just a reflection in the water, and it turns into nothingness in a blink of an eye. In his melancholy, he can only comfort himself that "just as east-flowing water of olden day", which is not only sigh, but also doubt, and even more hesitation. Through philosophical meditation, he may be able to release himself, but Li Bai's life dilemma is still confined here.

4. Free Space — Detachment from the Predicament of Life

But this is Li Bai after all. In the entanglement of his life, after expressing his sighs and doubts, he was still able to say "I'll take my leave of you, not knowing for how long. I'll tend a white deer among the grassy slopes of the green hill, So that I may ride it to famous mountains at will." Zhuang Ji's *Lament of Fate* says: "Fly to the sky on clouds and mists, and ride a white deer calmly." This poem takes Qu Yuan's life experience as the axis, laments that his fate is as twists and turns as Qu Yuan, and expresses the Many literati are confused about life and life.

Li Bai also used "White Deer" as an image, which is naturally a poetic language with ingenuity. "Zhuangzi and Qu Yuan were originally two different theories that could not be combined. Li Bai took the lead in combining them with his own mind. Confucianism, seeking immortality, and chivalry were originally three different philosophies that could not be combined. Li Bai combined them with Qi."² Qu Yuan and Li Bai have always been inextricably connected with each other — experiencing the family and country from prosperity to decline, encountering a life of loyalty to the country but being exiled, the poetry is infiltrated with the spirit of romanticism, and Li Bai is more rebellious than Qu Yuan Unruly, the poetic style is more bold and fresh.

Compared with "although he died nine times, he still has no regrets", Li Bai used his free and unrestrained rebellious character to expand his spatial imagination, and created another layer of free space-the white deer herds among the green cliffs, and he visits famous mountains by riding whenever he needs to go. The life philosophy contained in such a free space has an inherent temperament connection with Zhuang Zhou's state. Li Bai's pursuit of free life and yearning for the free state all show the profound influence of Zhuang Zhou's philosophy on it. Therefore, the temperament of Qu Yuan and Zhuangzi formed a contradictory and harmonious fusion in Li Bai. And when Li Bai's life ideal of making great achievements in reality vanished, this spirit of rebellion and idealism prompted him to turn to another life ideal-the pursuit of a free life, and the realization of self-dignity and the meaning of life itself. Therefore, saying goodbye to relatives and friends in Donglu and wandering again is Li Bai's choice to practice such an ideal of life, which also reflects Li Bai's detachment from his life predicament. He does not feel self-pitying and trapped in a predicament, but makes a bold choice to leave the dream, move on, and go to a more free space, responding to his yearning for the natural space as self-externalization at the beginning of the poem. This spirit of always moving forward, constantly breaking the shackles of self, and transcending the predicament of life has an inner fit with Goethe's "Faust spirit" — Faust is in the never-ending exploration of life, constantly pursuing the ultimate goal, reflecting a positive and enterprising spirit of romanticism.

The poem seems to have ended here, and there is no problem with ending with these three sentences. But Li Bai still sang: "How can I stoop and bow before the men in power and so deny myself a happy hour?" If other poets express two more sentences when the artistic conception of the poem is relatively complete, it will definitely appear redundant. However, in the progressive reconstruction of space imagination one after another, this poem already has Li Bai's complex emotions and states, permeating his unique life experience. After experiencing the self-externalized natural space, contacting the erratic fairyland space, and longing for the free space where you can roam freely, the emotion of the poem has reached the critical point of climax here, and then guided by Li Bai's heroic pen, the majestic momentum came out. "How can I stoop and bow before the men in power and so deny myself a happy hour?" It seems like a deep cry, venting Li Bai's pent-up resentment towards the plight of life, and also venting the depression of a lonely literati throughout the ages. Therefore, these two sentences are not only not obtrusive, but also become the finishing touch of the whole poem, the enduring swan song, and also become one of Li Bai's most poems. In connection with the previous part of the poem, these two swan songs are even richer and fill the free space constructed in the poem. If the two sentences "I'll tend a white deer among the grassy slopes of the green hill" are to complete the resistance and detachment from the predicament of life through the pursuit and practice of free life, the two sentences "How can I stoop and bow before the men in power" permeate a higher level of detachment - from Li Bai's philosophy of life with high self-awareness. The strong emotions and heroic momentum that permeate Li Bai's poems are all manifestations of his high-spirited self-awareness. And his magnificent and majestic space imaginations are also deeply rooted in the soil of self-consciousness after he broke the shackles of the soul. Li Bai's high self-awareness and life philosophy of seeking a free life are, on the one hand, influenced by society and the environment in which he grew up, and are the product of his life experience. The prosperity and aesthetics of the prosperous Tang Dynasty, the cultural atmosphere of the integration of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, and the social environment of tolerance and coexistence of various ethnic groups endowed Li Bai with extraordinary confidence in life, a positive and enterprising spirit of life, and the full awakening of individual life consciousness.³ Moreover, his family and hometown are full of chivalrous spirit, Taoism and Taoism are prevalent, forming a mind that walks with a sword and stand at ease. On the other hand, it is the result of historical development. From Ji Kang's perception of individual consciousness in the Wei and Jin Dynasties, Zuo Si's desire to realize his personal ambitions, Tao Qian's chanting that going against the original intention is the loss of self, and Wang Ji's denial of the shackles of decadent dogma on human nature, ⁴these all reflect the self-awareness of literati to varying degrees. The awakening of Li Bai reflects the historical trend from Wei Jin to Tang Dynasty, and Li Bai is an important link in this historical trend. On this basis, when Li Bai is in a difficult life, he can pursue the life value of freedom according to his own mind, and only then can he cry out from the depths of his soul to get rid of the difficult life.

5. Conclusion

Yin Fan, a literati in the Tang Dynasty, said at the beginning of *The Collection of Heyue Heroes*: "Writing has spirituality, spirit, and emotion, and there are elegant styles, wild styles, vulgar styles, and vulgar styles." Spirituality, spirit, and emotion are not only the aesthetic style of poetry, but also the concentrated expression of the atmosphere of the prosperous Tang Dynasty. Li Bai and his poems are typical of this kind of atmosphere and aesthetics. Perhaps it is why Du Fu said that "Li Bai's poetry is invincible in the world, and his poetry is both chic and outstanding" (*Recalling Li Bai in Spring*). Li Bai is free and unrestrained, and his poems are extraordinary. Du Fu's poem: "When the pen falls, the wind and rain startle, and the poem becomes weeping ghosts and gods" (*Twenty Sentences to Li bai*) is a very suitable evaluation and praise for Li Bai's poems. Taibai poems often permeate the spirit of positive romanticism in the free and easy poetry. And his poems are by no

means only exquisite in appearance but without meaningful content. In addition to the exquisite poetic art, his life experience and his examination, thinking and detachment of the plight of life are contained under the romantic appearance. It is this kind of contemplation of life, high-spirited romanticism, and strange imagery with mythological colors, and the fusion of magnificent poetry, which endows Li Bai's poems with unique bright, vivid, and soul-stirring power. It has resonated with countless readers for thousands of years.

Mount Skyland Ascended in a Dream — A *Song of Farewell* is showing Li Bai's unique philosophy of life and self-awareness. After being frustrated in politics, Li Bai wrote this eternally famous poem with his extraordinary skill and skill before embarking on roaming again. The spatial imagination in the poem is progressive and interactive, layer upon layer, reflecting the multiple meanings formed by his high-spirited self-awareness. During the subsequent journey, Li Bai sadly witnessed the situation of Anlu Mountain's separatist regime and rebellion, and witnessed Yang Guozhong's conquest against Nanzhao. With the rapid deterioration of the society in the Tang Dynasty, the Anshi Rebellion broke out. At this time, Li Bai was in his twilight years. While mourning the suffering of the motherland, he still had the will to sacrifice his life to serve the country. It can be seen that even at the end of his life, Li Bai's active heart to use the world and his ambition to make contributions have not been wiped out, and the source of supporting his spirit is still his high self-awareness and life force of rebellious resistance. Li Bai's poems deeply influenced the later generations. In the poems of the middle and late Tang Dynasty, there were tendencies of indulgence, fantastic imagination, pursuit of beauty, and the evolution trend of subjectivization of poetic images, all of which showed the traces influence from Li Bai's poems.

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