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譴瘧鬼 *A Reprimand to the Fever-Demon*

The complete text — seventeen couplets in five-syllable lines — with a working English beside it. The English is literal where the Chinese is odd and leaves the seams showing on purpose: it is a floor to translate from, not a finished rendering. Textual notes at the end record the readings adopted and the variants they were adopted against. The medical material is recorded as the Tang text has it, historically and literarily.

THE TEXT

屑屑水帝魂，謝謝無餘輝。
如何不肖子，尚奮瘧鬼威。
乘秋作寒熱，翁嫗所罵譏。
求食歐泄間，不知臭穢非。
醫師加百毒，熏灌無停機。
灸師施艾炷，酷若獵火圍。
詛師毒口牙，舌作霹靂飛。
符師弄刀筆，丹墨交橫揮。
咨汝之胄出，門戶何巍巍。
祖軒而父頊，未沫於前徽。
不修其操行，賤薄似汝稀。

豈不忝厥祖，覩然不知歸。

湛湛江水清，歸居安汝妃。

清波為裳衣，白石為門畿。

呼吸明月光，手掉芙蓉旗。

降集隨九歌，飲芳而食菲。

贈汝以好辭，咄汝去莫違。

THE ENGLISH

Worn down, the soul of the Water Emperor; dwindled away, with no radiance remaining.

How is it that his degenerate son still rouses himself in the majesty of a fever-demon?

Riding the autumn he works cold and heat by turns, and is cursed and mocked by old men and old women.

He seeks his food among the vomit and the flux, and does not know that stench and filth are wrong.

The physician applies a hundred poisons; the fumigating and the dosing never stop for a moment.

The moxa-master sets on his cones of mugwort, cruel as a hunting-fire closing its ring.

The curse-master poisons mouth and teeth; his tongue makes thunderclaps fly.

The talisman-master plies knife and brush; cinnabar and ink cross and slash.

Alas, consider the stock you came from: how lofty and towering that gate and house!

Xuanyuan your grandfather and Zhuanxu your father — the former excellence is not yet dimmed.

You do not cultivate your conduct; mean and slight as you are, your like is rare.

Do you not disgrace your ancestors — brazen-faced, and not knowing how to go home?

Deep and clear, the river water is pure: go back and dwell there, and settle your consort in peace.

Clear waves for your skirt and robe, white stones for your threshold and gate.

Breathe in and out the light of the bright moon, and wave in your hand a lotus banner.

Descend and alight in the train of the Nine Songs, drinking fragrance and eating herbs.

I present you with well-made words; and — off with you — go, and do not disobey.

TEXTUAL NOTES

- 咄汝去莫違 — 咄 not 出. Every witness but zh.wikisource gives 咄, the sharp dismissive interjection; 出 flattens a shout into an instruction.
- 熏灌 is to fumigate and to dose. Several modern glosses give 拔火罐, cupping; that is not what the compound says.
- 歐泄 — 歐 also written 嘔, 泄 also written 洩. The Wikisource note argues 歐泄 is the correct form, citing 嚴助傳.
- 乘秋作寒熱 — 作 is dropped in some witnesses, leaving a four-graph line where the metre wants five. Restored.
- 芙蓉旗 is written 旂 in several witnesses; the same word.

- 沫 read mèi = 昧, to grow dim. 祖軒而父頊: Xuanyuan as grandfather, Zhuanxu as father.