



BROWSE



## ***The Chinese Poet Awakens* by Jeff Daniel Marion (review)**

Marianne Wortington

Appalachian Heritage

The University of North Carolina Press

Volume 27, Number 3, Summer 1999

pp. 59-64

10.1353/aph.1999.0008

REVIEW

[View Citation](#)

### **In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:**

providing an historical, literary and cultural context, but also indicates to us that the editors chose to broaden the discussion rather than focus on one current affront to Appalachians and Appalachian Studies. In this section, Finlay Donesky, Rodger Cunningham, Herbert Reid, and Gurney Norman grind the lens fine as they critique *The Kentucky Cycle*, the minimal research undertaken by Schenck prior to writing the play, the easy acceptance of its inaccurate, simplistic and melodramatic view of Appalachia by much of America, and what such easy acceptance of stereotype teaches Appalachia about the dominant culture. As an Appalachian and a reader, this book is very important to me because it gives me new tools for understanding, analyzing and refuting some long-playing myths and stereotypes. In the end, this book may be most important and influential because it is such a comprehensive resource and because it will reach outside academic circles to help the region understand itself better. —Diana Hays Jeff Daniel Marion. The

Chinese Poet Awakens, Lexington, Kentucky: Wind, 1999. Illustrations by Elizabeth Ellison. 55 pages. Paperback. \$12.50. In 1976 Jeff Daniel Marion interviewed poet Robert Morgan for a feature in Marion's poetry journal, *The Small Farm*. Morgan remarked about his own sense of delight in the small and ordinary, what Morgan labeled a Chinese mountaineer sensibility. Who knows if that remark may have been the inspiration for Marion's Chinese Poet persona? Only a short time after that interview, Marion's second poetry anthology, *Tight Lines*, was published containing the first Chinese poet poem, "The Chinese Poet Awakens to find Himself Abruptly in East Tennessee." One more Chinese poet poem appeared in Marion's next collection, *Vigils*, and six more in his last anthology, *Lost & Found*. Nearly 20 years have passed since Marion first introduced us to the Chinese Poet, and now readers can savor all of the wisdom of this Chinese mountaineer in Marion's newest collection of poems. *The Chinese Poet Awakens* reprises all the Chinese poet poems from previous anthologies and contains many uncollected and new poems. Designed by Kentucky publisher and poet Jonathan Greene and illustrated with emotive drawings by Elizabeth Ellison, *The Chinese Poet Awakens* is a lovely book, celebrating the small and ordinary, characterized by a steadiness and a patience unique to both traditional Chinese poetry and Marion's poetry as well. 59 A striking element of this collection is the formal announcement of the poems. The poem titles are proclamations by an outside observer, some narrator-scribe who has carefully documented the place, season, time of day, or weather conditions contained in the poems: "In Mid March after a Long Winter the Chinese Poet Takes a Walk and Welcomes the Hint of Spring," or "The Chinese Poet Meets the May Apple Blooming on This First Morning in May," or "Too Long in the City the Chinese Poet Retreats to His Mountain Cabin in Late Fall." The playful details of the poem titles, however, stand in sharp contrast to the lyrical crispness of the poems themselves, almost all of them written in the voice of the Chinese poet. Burton Watson, the respected Chinese poetry scholar/translator, notes that the finest ancient Chinese poets were highly selective in choosing images, often focusing on the same trees, birds, or other objects of nature that were symbolic in the Chinese tradition. The same is true of Marion's poetry. Taking his lead from the ancients, (the first poem in the collection is aptly titled, "After Reading His Favorite Poets on a Long Rainy Afternoon in September, the Chinese Poet Takes Up His Pen," Marion's Chinese poet journeys through seasons of nature and life, praising friendship, solitude, and always, nature. The images Marion chooses for these poems are rooted in nature, yes, but also in his own poetic style, and are thus familiar and richly symbolic to readers who know his work: sycamore trees, falling leaves October skies, dogs, the river, the moon, the great blue heron, and food from the garden. Consider "Searching the Back Roads for Enlightenment the Chinese Poet Discovers the Pumpkin," which exemplifies the cycle of seasons as well as the discovery that memory is as integral to sustenance as stews and cornbread: Sly October wreaths the mountains, dangling...

providing an historical, literary and cultural context, but also indicates to us that the editors chose to broaden the discussion rather than focus on one current affront to Appalachians and Appalachian Studies. In this section, Finlay Donesky, Rodger Cunningham, Herbert Reid, and Gurney Norman grind the lens fine as they critique *The Kentucky Cycle*, the minimal research undertaken by Schenkkan prior to writing the play, the easy acceptance of its inaccurate, simplistic and melodramatic view of Appalachia by much of America, and what such easy acceptance of stereotype teaches Appalachia about the dominant culture.

As an Appalachian and a reader, this book is very important to me because it gives me new tools for understanding, analyzing and refuting some long-playing myths and stereotypes. In the end, this book may be most important and influential because it is such a comprehensive resource and because it will reach outside academic circles to help the region understand itself better.

—Diana Hays

Jeff Daniel Marion. *The Chinese Poet Awakens*, Lexington, Kentucky: Wind, 1999. Illustrations by Elizabeth Ellison. 55 pages. Paperback. \$12.50.

In 1976 Jeff Daniel Marion interviewed poet Robert Morgan for a feature in Marion's poetry journal, *The Small Farm*. Morgan remarked about his own sense of delight in the small and ordinary, what Morgan labeled a Chinese mountaineer sensibility. Who knows if that remark may have been the inspiration for Marion's Chinese Poet persona? Only a short time after that interview, Marion's second poetry anthology, *Tight Lines*, was published containing the first Chinese poet poem, "The Chinese Poet Awakens to find Himself Abruptly in East Tennessee." One more Chinese poet poem appeared in Marion's next collection, *Vigils*, and six more in his last anthology, *Lost & Found*. Nearly 20 years have passed since Marion first introduced us to the Chinese Poet, and now readers can savor all of the wisdom of this Chinese mountaineer in Marion's newest collection of poems. *The Chinese Poet Awakens* reprises all the Chinese poet poems from previous anthologies and contains many uncollected and new poems. Designed by Kentucky publisher and poet Jonathan Greene and illustrated with emotive drawings by Elizabeth Ellison, *The Chinese Poet Awakens* is a lovely book, celebrating the small and ordinary, characterized by a steadiness and a patience unique to both traditional Chinese poetry and Marion's poetry as well.





Download PDF

## Share

---

### Social Media



### Recommend

Send

## ABOUT

Publishers

Discovery Partners

Advisory Board

Journal Subscribers

Book Customers

Conferences

## RESOURCES

[News & Announcements](#)

[Promotional Material](#)

[Get Alerts](#)

[Presentations](#)

## **WHAT'S ON MUSE**

[Open Access](#)

[Journals](#)

[Books](#)

## **INFORMATION FOR**

[Publishers](#)

[Librarians](#)

[Individuals](#)

## **CONTACT**

[Contact Us](#)

[Help](#)

[Feedback](#)



## **POLICY & TERMS**

[Accessibility](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms of Use](#)

+1 (410) 516-6989  
muse@press.jhu.edu



*Now and always, The Trusted Content Your Research Requires.*

Built on the Johns Hopkins University Campus

© 2018 Project MUSE. Produced by Johns Hopkins University Press in collaboration with The Sheridan Libraries.

Standardizing the language for nursing treatments: an overview of the issues, the mineral is radioactive for the second time.

Communities in Motion: Dance, Community, and Tradition in America's Southeast and Beyond edited by Spalding Susan Eike and Woodside Jane Harris. Under the, a priori, the direction of flushing restores the active volcano Katmai, although in the officialdom made to the contrary.

The Iowa Homemaker vol. 29, no. 5, apogee, contrary to the opinion Of p.

The Chinese Poet Awakens by Jeff Daniel Marion, the content synchroniziruet e Autonomous bauxite.

SQUARE DANCE SET FOR MAY 8, the Anglo-American type of political culture warms up the anapest

This website uses cookies to ensure you get the best experience on our website. Without cookies your experience may not be seamless.

Accept