

## SUBSTANCE, SHADOW, AND SPIRIT

### *Substance speaks to Shadow:*

Heaven and Earth exist forever:  
Mountains and rivers never change.  
But herbs and trees in perpetual rotation  
Are renovated and withered by the dews and frosts:  
And Man the wise, Man the divine —  
Shall he alone escape this law?  
Fortuitously appearing for a moment in the World  
He suddenly departs, never to return.  
How can he know that the friends he has left  
Are missing him and thinking of him?  
Only the things that he used remain;  
They look upon them and their tears flow.  
Me no magical arts can save,  
Though you may hope for a wizard's aid.  
I beg you listen to this advice —  
When you can get wine, be sure to drink it.

### *Shadow replies:*

There is no way to preserve life.  
Drugs of Immortality are instruments of folly.  
I would gladly wander in Paradise,  
But it is far away and there is no road.  
Since the day that I was joined to you  
We have shared all our joys and pains.  
While you rested in the shade, I left you a while:  
But till the end we shall be together.  
Our joint existence is impermanent:  
Sadly together we shall slip away.  
That when the body decays Fame should also go  
Is a thought unendurable, burning the heart.  
Let us strive and labour while yet we may  
To do some deed that men will praise.  
Wine may in truth dispel our sorrow,  
But how compare it with lasting Fame?

*Spirit expounds:*

God can only set in motion:  
He cannot control the things he has made.  
Man, the second of the Three Orders,  
Owes his precedence to Me.  
Though I am different from you,  
We were born involved in one another:  
Nor by any means can we escape  
The intimate sharing of good and ill.  
The Three Emperors were saintly men,  
Yet to-day — where are they?  
P'ēng lived to a great age,  
Yet he went at last, when he longed to stay.  
And late or soon, all go:  
Wise and simple have no reprieve.  
Wine may bring forgetfulness,  
But does it not hasten old-age?  
If you set your hearts on noble deeds,  
How do you know that any will praise you?  
By all this thinking you do Me injury:  
You had better go where Fate leads —  
Drift on the Stream of Infinite Flux,  
Without joy; without fear:  
When you must go — then go,  
And make as little fuss as you can.