

FRANCHOT BALLINGER

After Reading Mao's Poem "The Snow"
Only today are there men of feeling.

This is the coldest year of confusion.
The Yellow River is frozen.

Red-faced girls of the earth wander its banks;
the faces of the old are like snow.

Heroes clatter in the villages,
an ice storm among the lotus and plum.

They do not believe in spring as they ride and die,
these men of feeling.

Chu Yuan knew how to die
in the red flow of the Milo River, believing

"To yield with a pure heart and die righteously
is what the men of old always commended."

By the time night marches from my courtyard
the red body of my neighbor's wife is frozen.