



The following poems were composed by Teachers Exchange Program participants at the Mid-Year Conference for Chinese Teachers in January 2010. The teachers wrote the poems in a demonstration class during which they learned about “enabling constraints,” a teaching technique in which the teacher provides a set of rules for an assignment, but gives no other instructions. The I-Poem format provided a framework for the participants to write a poem about themselves. The participants then divided into small groups and wrote poems using the same guidelines from the perspective of characters in Greek myths that they had read prior to the conference. The teachers were surprised and pleased by how well their poems turned out, especially because they were written in English, their second language.

INDIVIDUAL POEMS

I am a Mother and Friend

by Chen Qing

I am a mother and friend
I wonder who my son will become
I hear his excitement for movies and music
I see him play and dance to his music
I want to listen to him and dance with him
I am a friend and mother

I pretend his playing is so wonderful
I feel he is learning and growing
I touch his heart when he is sad
I worry if he can reach his dream
I am a mother and friend

I understand he is trying to get there
I say I'm always there with you my son
I try to reach to him from thousands of miles away
I hope he can make it, making his best tunes
I am a mother and friend

I am a Traveler

by Du Ruirui

I am a traveler
I wonder how I can describe the beauty of the world
I hear the birds laughing and rivers singing
I see the clouds drawing on the blue sky
I want the people I love to be with me
I am a traveler

I pretend that I can put the world in my backpack
I feel the weight on my shoulder
I touch the grass and the stones on my way
I worry that people miss the beauty of the world and underestimate the power of nature
I am a traveler

I am a Daughter of my Parents

by Han Dongni

I am a daughter of my parents
I wonder what my parents are
I hear their encouragement
I see high expectations in their eyes
I want them to be proud of me
I am a daughter of my parents

I pretend they will always stay with me
I feel their pain when they are sick
I touch their hands when they are weak
I worry that they will get upset some day
I am a daughter of my parents

I understand how much of their love is for me
I say that they are the best parents in the world
I try to respect and love them the same way
I hope that we are the happiest family
I am a daughter of my parents

I am an Exchange Chinese Teacher in a Foreign Country

by Pan Huali

I am an exchange Chinese teacher in a foreign country
I wonder if I am able to survive in this unfamiliar land
I hear kids' voices speaking Chinese
I see the passion for learning in their eyes
I want to help them achieve their goals
I am an exchange Chinese teacher

I pretend that I don't miss my sweet family and homeland
I feel the curiosity deep in students' hearts
I touch every homework paper they hand in
I worry how to become a more capable language educator
I am an exchange Chinese teacher

I understand nothing comes easily both to me and my students
I say that we are all making progress without being noticed
I try to understand and know more about their generation
I hope to open a door that leads to another world for my students
I am an exchange Chinese teacher

I am Sensitive and Emotional

by Wang Fangqiong

I am sensitive and emotional
I wonder if my sensitivity builds a prison trapping me inside
I hear pleasure and pain in your voice
I see joy and bitterness in your eyes
I want you to know what I have in my mind
I am sensitive and emotional

I pretend everything concerned with you has nothing to do with me
I feel it is virtually impossible
I touch you in my dreams
I worry you have the same dream but keep silent
I am sensitive and emotional

I understand it's like two hearts living in separate worlds when things go wrong
I say let's communicate instead of being immobile
I try to break the silence that keeps us afar
I hope assumptions will never be in the way
I am sensitive and emotional

I am a Daydreamer

by Wu Guohua

I am a daydreamer
I wonder how we can have perfect dreams while we're living in such an imperfect world
I hear people tell me to be realistic
I see people pursue their own goals
I want to be as practical as they are
I am a daydreamer

I pretend the world is full of honesty, equality and fairness
I feel I am kidding myself
I touch the postcards I have received from friends
I worry I can hardly hold the feeling of being with them
I am a daydreamer

I understand we are mortals
I say "don't blame people and myself so often"
I try to change my point of view on the world
I hope people can stay naïve even though time passes
I am a daydreamer

I am a Reader of Readers

by Zhang Chunyan

I am a reader of readers
I wonder why it is so magical holding a book
I hear the writers read their stories to me

I see the scenes jump out and display themselves in front of me
I want all children to enjoy books and love reading
I am a reader of readers

I pretend I am characters in different stories
I feel their joy and sorrow, laughter and tears
I touch the covers as if they were manna from heaven
I worry so many wonderful books can't be shared with more people
I am a reader of readers

I understand only wisdom and true feelings turn prints
I say everyone has to write his own life story into his own book
I try to take time and pleasure reading with my family and my students
I hope books will accompany us as our best friends
I am a reader of readers

GROUP POEMS

I am Phaeton, Son of Apollo **by Chen Qing, Du Ruirui and Zhang Chunyan**

I am Phaeton, son of Apollo
I wonder whether the sun-god is really my father
I hear friends tease me behind my back
I see the doubt in people's eyes
I want to prove my blood and identity to all
I am Phaeton, son of Apollo

I pretend I can control the impossible Chariot of Fire
I feel the horses pulling me nowhere
I touch the glory of being the mighty sun-god
I worry that my reckless acts turns into destruction
I am Phaeton, son of Apollo

I understand the cost I have to pay
I say loudly, Dad, come and save me
I try to pull the Chariot under my control
I hope I could have a second chance and make the wise choice
I am Phaeton, son of Apollo

I am a Weaver

I am a weaver
I wonder if there is anyone better than me
I hear people say I can't challenge Athena
I see the doubt in their eyes
I want to prove that I am unique and the best
I am a weaver

I pretend that I am deaf to people's comments
I feel the confidence in beating Athena
I touch the spindle and thread
I worry Athena dare not accept the contest
I am a weaver

I understand every evil thing happening there
I say I can defeat Athena herself in person
I try to have a competition against her
I hope the common people can realize their dream
I am a weaver