Love Poems of the Sixth Dalai Lama

TSANGYANG GYATSO
TRANSLATED BY KATHARINE MILL WITH TOBY FEE

(1)
From top the eastward peak,
arose the clear white moon:
her immaculate face
turned and turned in my mind

(2)
Last year's cast seedlings
this year ripple as hay.
A stripling's aging frame
stiff as a southern bow.
(4)
On chance's road I met
a perfumed body's girl.
Like turquoise in my hand
I threw its beauty back.

(25)
A bee caught in a web:
body of a Kong youth.
Her bed mate for three days,
he thinks to holy lands.
(34)
If my girl could not die
there'd be no end to beer;
we'd stay in youth's haven.
In this I put my trust.

(36)
Is not my love since youth
descended from the wolves?
Once she's known skin and flesh
she bolts back to the hills.
Central kingly Meru,
stay faithful, do not change;
the rounds of sun and moon
must not be thought to stray.

I know all her soft flesh
but not her constancy;
by drawing in the dirt
I measure to the stars.
Our tryst in the dense woods of the southern valley
a parrot only knows,
all else are ignorant.
O parrot, please do not repeat our secret words.

Hey, old dog called beard,
more clever than a man,
don’t say, “He left at dawn,”
don’t say, “He came at dusk.”
I ask you, you white crane,
give me your wing’s power.
I am not going far,
just ’round Li-Thang and back.

Behind me a demon.
Who cares if he’s fearsome?
I saw a sweet apple
and was compelled to pluck.