Poetry by Cai Tianxin

The Number and the Rose

Pythagoras played music on the hypotenuse
while devising the system of rational numbers
a labyrinth as transparent as quartz
his home was on Samos on the Aegean Sea
as a child he never wanted to be a sailor
nor was he ever enticed by the beautiful girls of Salonika
numbers were the treasured roses of his heart
those crimson, orange, yellow, or pure white flowers
were the perfect expressions of his unequalled mind
urging him to write his famous assertion "all things are numbers"
Leonardo once, in Florence, devoted himself to this principle
neglecting the charms of the young beauty Genevra
finally giving up for reasons we don't know

Medellin, 2000

数字和玫瑰

毕达哥拉斯在直角三角形的斜边上
弹拨乐曲，一边苦苦地构想着
那座水晶般透明的有理数迷宫
他的故乡在爱琴海的萨摩斯岛
从小就没有想要做水手，也没有被
萨洛尼卡城里的漂亮姑娘诱惑
数字成为他心中最珍重的玫瑰
那些绯红、橙黄或洁白的花朵
巧妙地装饰着无与伦比的头脑
敦促其写下著名的断言：万物皆数
佛罗伦萨的莱昂拉多曾设法凑近
把妩媚的小美人吉勒芙拉撂在一旁
终于因为体格的缘故半途而废

2000，麦德林

Dr. **Cai Tianxin** is a professor of mathematics at Zhejiang University, China, majoring in number theory. He is also a well-known poet, essayist. He has published a dozen books and his poems has been translated into more than 20 languages, including books of poems in English, French, Spanish, Croatian, Turkish, Korean, Bengali. The three poems here is from his book Song of the Quiet Life , published in Deep South, South Africa, in 2006.