

RENEWING MUSICAL USAGE IN TRAN DAN POETRY THROUGH A TRADITIONAL FOLK METHOD: A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE POETRY OF TRAN DAN

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Abstract. This research provides an exploration of the relationship between music and poetry in the context of Vietnamese modern poetry, with a specific focus on Tran Dan's innovative contributions and the incorporation of traditional folk influences. Throughout this research, various dimensions of music, including structural aspects, sounds, and rhythms were used to highlight the effectiveness of music in constructing a multidimensional inner world and enhance the empathetic connection between poet and reader. Thus, Tran Dan's contribution to the renewal of Vietnamese poetic musicality lies in his innovative use of traditional folk influences, such as folk verses, folk songs, and children's folk poems (*đông dao*). The paper discusses Tran Dan's unconventional approaches to poetry, breaking away from conventional norms and delving into profound semantic layers. It also explores the poet's engagement with folklore, emphasizing the persistence of folkloric sources in his verses, testifying to the beauty of the past and the values embedded in tradition, then investigates how Tran Dan and other modern Vietnamese poets (for example Duong Tuong) use language to craft aesthetic effects, incorporating elements of pitch, rhythm, and rhyme. It highlights the flexibility and artistry in organizing musical sections within modern Vietnamese poetry, drawing parallels with the structure of songs and symphonies. The research emphasizes the interplay of language and sound, creating a distinctive musicality in Vietnamese modern poetry and underscores the significance of the intertwining of language and structure in the alchemy of poetry, where folklore and cultural cadence serve as catalysts for renewing the poetic world.

Keywords: Vietnamese poetry, Tran Dan's poetry, poetic musicality, poetic folklore.

1. Introduction

Music holds a place within the realm of poetry, serving both as its subject and a vessel for expression. In this study, our focus revolves around music as a means of poetic expression, exploring how various facets of music enrich the expressive form of poetry. We delve into the structural aspects, musical organization, sounds, rhythms, and, notably, the effectiveness of music in constructing a fantastical, multicolored imaginative world.

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By intertwining sensory channels, we aim to create an impression of a multidimensional inner world, where the interchange of emotions becomes a focal point - the empathetic connection between the poet and the reader; the poet and the artist.

Using music to craft aesthetic effects in language, sentences, and poetic rhythms has long been considered an effective method in poetry. There are poems where the dimensions of time, space, entities, and emotions flow endlessly, carried by an infinite stream of music. In this realm, emotional resonance truly soars, awakening a spiritual world. Language and musical structure become both the descriptive objects of music and the expressive means of poetry. Lines of poetry and musical notes intertwine, creating aesthetic effects, unfamiliar emotions, vagueness, and mystical imagery in verse. It is also a time when the self is revealed strongly and passionately.

In modern Vietnamese poetry, from the case of New Poetry to the present, the poetic form has been recognized as comprising musical elements alongside pitch, rhythm, and rhyme [1]. Modern Vietnamese poetry from the period of 1930-1945 is also perceived in terms of genre, wherein Music in romantic literature is considered the voice of people, the tone of people, and the melody of people. Thus, romantic poetry, compared to classical poetry, is three times more subjective: “using mood as content, individual perspective as the basis for creating form, individual voice as tone and melody” [2]. Addressing rhythm and the conscious organization of rhythm in modern Vietnamese poetry, the relationship between content and form in poetry is particularly emphasized. Musicality and rhythm are not only created from the external organization of content [3].

It can be seen that the organization of music in modern Vietnamese poetry not only acts as a form of arranging the sections of a song or music piece in a logical and coherent sequence, to optimize the presentation and perception, but modern Vietnamese poets also pay attention to the organization of music into basic musical forms, including introduction, development, climax, and conclusion. This organization is commonly used in songs, musical compositions, and even in symphonic movements and poetic symphonies. The basic form of musical organization is stable; however, the creative minds of sound creators use various musical forms flexibly. Audiences can immerse themselves in the sudden and captivating high notes from the beginning, gradually subside, and return to the opening melody. It may skip the development stage and transition directly from the introduction to the climax, creating a subtle change in the music structure, accelerating and emphasizing the climax, and causing a shift in pace and rhythm. These elements are applied with great flexibility and artistry in how modern Vietnamese poetry organizes musical sections.

Research on the innovation of musicality in modern Vietnamese poetry begins from words to sound, from poetry to the form of a song. Our study highlights Tran Dan, one of the pioneering poets in the modernization process of Vietnamese poetry. He innovatively draws inspiration from traditional folk influences, such as folk verses, folk songs, and especially children's folk poems (*đồng dao*). In the aspect of Tran Dan's verses, Tran Ngoc Hieu [4] pointed out the constrained writing in Tran Dan's poetic language and verses as well as the fluctuations in *đồng dao*'s traditional form. Dinh Minh Hang [5] mentioned the unfamiliar/ abnormal traditional lyrical usage in constructing Tran Dan discourse. This research aims to emphasize of the process of modernization music in Tran Dan's poetry.

2. Content

2.1. Tran Dan and folklore

Tran Dan can be regarded as a pioneering poet in the endeavor to renew modern poetry, a leading innovator in poetic form, devoting his entire life to artistic creation through written language and crafting a distinctive Vietnamese idiom. From works such as “*Bài thơ Việt Bắc*,” “*Công tình*,” and “*Mùa sạch*” to later works like “*Thơ Mini*,” “*Jờ joac*,” “*Thơ không lời*,” readers have witnessed unique and unconventional approaches to poetry and the creation of a distinct Vietnamese voice.

Transcending the predefined boundaries of the conventional notion that poetry should be easily understandable, laden with meaning, emotionally accessible, and readily embraced, Tran Dan's poetry increasingly delves into the realm of differentiation and profound semantic layers. Innovating in poetry does not imply mere novelty or deviation. Readers can still perceive, beyond the peculiar combinations and structures borrowing from music, painting, etc., profoundly human and existential sentiments. Tran Dan's self, symbolizing lives trapped in bottles and those flying without horizons, remains an integral part of the collective ego of the era. However, the era he embodies is not necessarily the era in which his poetry emerged; it is rather reminiscent of horizons devoid of those who fly.

On the other hand, investigating the continuity from the folk poetic tradition to Tran Dan is a challenging task. In this writing, we address a narrow aspect: folklore, something seemingly more apparent but challenging to identify and define in Tran Dan's poetry, which is often considered representative of a different era with a distinct influence.

Throughout the creative journey of this poet, it becomes evident that the folkloric source in Tran Dan's poetry may not form a major current, but it persists, flowing subtly in his verses. It serves as a testimony to the beauty of the past, the nostalgia for tradition, the love for the homeland, and the reverence for and aspiration toward timeless values. Perhaps, it is also a way for us to perceive Tran Dan from a different perspective – a minute, yet profound, poignant aspect filled with love within the four-faced Bayon tower that he brought to life in his existence and poetry.

Moving beyond the grandiosity of square-filled poems and the fervor of Maiacôpxki-style stair-shaped verses, Tran Dan returns to works like “*Công tình*” and “*Mùa sạch*.” These poetry collections, even in their titles, convey an impression of a quest for roots that endears readers to the poet's endeavor.

2.2. Renewing poetic musicality with folklore words

Language, a symphony of sounds, weaves its essence into both the spoken word and the realm of music. Sound in language encompasses sonic attributes and sound units, where pitch, intensity, and duration emerge as key sonic attributes, and vowels and consonants as fundamental sound units. These sonic attributes echo and resonate within the orchestration of poetic processes, shaping the rhythm between verses, while sound units are preserved and conveyed in the arrangement of rhyme schemes, composing the poetic meter.

This interplay of language and sound constructs a distinctive musicality, akin to the rhythmic cadence and harmonies found in music. Poetic lines become a melodic allure, drawing the reader into a harmonious balance. The tonalities can be identified through pitch classes: high-pitched, mid-pitched, and low-pitched, each delivering a unique

emotional nuance-sharp, falling, or rising. The nuances of each pitch class are distinguished, much like notes on a musical staff, one slightly higher or lower than the other, crafting the poetic landscape.

Vietnamese poetry often adheres to a balanced structure, employing tonal patterns as a foundation, and the alternation of these patterns creates a poetic rhythm. Innovations in sound arrangements contribute to the musicality of poetry. Breaking away from the established tonal patterns introduces a novel height, fitting for expressing specific sentiments.

Beyond pitch, the construction of syllabic sounds also plays a crucial role in crafting the auditory experience. The participation of vowel and consonant systems in the Vietnamese language holds artistic significance in poetry. Utilizing the Vietnamese vowel system, one can evoke a sense of resonance and openness or depth and closure. Vowels, such as “i, ê, e,” project brightness, while “u, ô, o” evoke depth, creating a symphony of tones that enriches the poetic atmosphere. The concluding consonants, distributed between sonorous and unvoiced series like “m, n, nh, ng” and “p, t, ch, c,” further contribute to the diversity of language dynamics.

These distinctive features of sound, whether in pitch, syllabic structure, or consonant-vowel interplay, not only expand the linguistic palette but also contribute to the musicality of poetry. For instance, the continuous combination of open vowels and sonorous consonants produces a melodious line: “*Long lanh tiếng sỏi vang vang hận*” (The sparkling sound of pebbles evoking resentment echoes). Here, harmony between sound and sense is achieved, resonating like a finely tuned musical composition.

While rhyme patterns are decisive, they alone do not determine the overall musicality of language, as their structured nature is constrained by convention. Each type of rhyme serves a specific purpose, creating musicality tailored to the form of a particular poem. The flexibility of free verse will be explored later. For instance, using a foot rhyme and multiple pitch classes to rhyme in a 4-3 and 2-2-3 pattern generates a gentle rhythm for a seven-word line.

The diverse cadence, the perpetual interplay between pitch classes, and the fusion of vowel and consonant characteristics, along with the strategic positioning of rhyme schemes, orchestrate modern poetry as if it were playing directly on a musical instrument. The words, arranged in their rhythmic dance, resonate like notes on a grand score, forming an exquisite symphony of language and sound.

The relationship between music and literature did not emerge with modern poetry. Folk tunes, verses, and folk songs largely originated from folk verses. The difference lies in the fact that if folk verses - text on beautiful paper due to artistic measures and folk images, then folk songs, chants, improvised rhymes... are beautiful mainly due to the mode of expression, the form of presentation. Placing the text in a performance context immediately makes it vivid and strange; this liveliness and push often come from the rhythmic verses: à oi, ơ hò, ồ mây tang tình... endlessly echoing or rhythmically swaying along the short, continuously rhymed steps of the verses that children still shout throughout the village at the end of the village. Through this, we have seen that folk poetry creates a special musical quality, a kind of music that can be considered as a form with the content characteristic of this genre. Tran Dan also borrowed the music material of folk

literature to create an atmosphere for his works, or, looking in another direction, the way Tran Dan performed some of his poems obscured the folk underground vein.

Tran Dan not only renewed poetry with words by eliciting layers of meaning, but he also transformed with sounds. For example, Nhu Huy, a poet aimed to the trend of renewing the Vietnamese poetic language, believed that from the word “trăm,” one can derive “mấy,” “mãng,”... Vietnamese has a strange ability to transform sounds that, from ancient times to the present, due to being loyal to self-contained meaning, consumer meaning, with tones carrying inherent meanings, artists have temporarily forgotten that there was a time when just with oi, nhi, nhé, tang tít, tang tít... one could convey many more expressions of love, affection for each other. Tran Dan did not start the musicality with the smooth, standard rhyming methods. Like folk songs, originating from some note, but a series of verses were opened; in Tran Dan's poetry, from an opening note, Tran Dan created an entire harmony. However, if folk verses stopped borrowing verses to perform words, Tran Dan made poems from the basic rhythms. The poet utilized and created from what seemed to be just a driving factor, and split it into hundreds of pieces, so that each small piece became a focal point, leading to a series of different emotions and thoughts. The poet borrowed the way of transforming sounds full of illusions from the language of folk literature to, from form to content, lead the reader from one mysterious lake to another, in the depth, the vastness of the meaning that is freely creating its journey:

*I like working in the Vietnam season the most
Where connecting season
Where soaking season grain
Where caring season silkworms
Where plowing season mountains
Where crossing season sea
Rustling season wind
Vietnamese season on this season earth
(Clean Season)*

Where - Season: Structure that seems to circulate throughout the poem gives the feeling that if the poet allows the words to continue their independent existence, to flow with the stream of reality, it is unclear where it will lead the reader. Whether it has stopped at a place: have you looked thoroughly in all directions of the eight directions or not? The writing style simultaneously carries the tune of a folk song: rhythmic like the sound of a wooden hammer and freely wandering, bringing a lively rhythm and surging emotions of love to the thousands of seasons in the form of poetry. Also using the masterly method, primarily expressed through the repetition form of folk verses, Tran Dan has brought the beautiful melodies of nine longings and ten sorrows into a very modern arrangement called *Nine Rainy Letters*:

*Who tempts the nursery with nine roofs
Thread soaked in nine rolls
Green beans in nine fields
Silkworm falls - Nine harvests
Who tempts the door with nine folded panels*

*The way back to your street, the lantern shines on nine paths
The letter goes as if in a daze in nine alleys...
The flower garden has nine doors
Waiting - nine nights
Who tempts the lake with nine lotus leaves?
The boat swims with nine spans
Night session work, nine people running
The whistle sounds in nine directions, calling
Meeting in nine evenings
The distant factory's nine smokestacks
Nine people - searching for letters.*

Tran Dan often uses a style that is both gentle and poignant, reminiscent of folk verses, in his mockery. Phrases like “Who tempts...”, and “Who made...”, and the way of expressing waiting, inviting, and remembering, such as “Who comes...”, and “Who goes...”, have appeared frequently in Tran Dan's poetry. Mostly, these are ways in which the poet creates a musical tone:

*Who goes to the fort gate?
Tell the storm not to flash!
Who goes down the row of officials' houses?
Tell the watchtower not to beat the drum
Who goes to the market gate?
Tell not to sweep the street to hurt the trees!*

Who goes up - who goes back - who crosses: moving from the high note to the bass and then across the middle high. The entire verse echoes loudly. The lines starting with 'who' are like lyrics, in search of freedom, opening up a realm of beautiful, peaceful memories - memories of the gate, official houses, market gates. The lines starting with 'please' are like a cushion, thick, firm, and endlessly resonant. They are like threads connecting memories, holding onto memories, tying together memories that freely leap in the questions above. It seems that Tran Dan's poems starting with “Who” all carry a melancholy, vaguely defined sadness stemming from an indefinite pronoun. The structure and rhythmic tone of the poet are thus resonant with that common melody.

In 'Nine Rainy Letters': nine nurturing houses, nine soaked silk threads, nine silkworm nurseries, nine late alleys, nine lotus leaves, the number nine dancing, the number nine according to the folk belief nurturing worn-out sentiments. Tran Dan creatively incorporates the number nine into all the close and familiar phenomena of folk life, allowing it to live its own life in poetry, for the reader to personally feel the worn-out sentiments, the waiting, and the longing of the sincere characters. The number nine, along with its resonance, continuously seeps into every object, every action, contemplation, restlessness, engraving, and repetition.

2.3. Renewing poetic musicality with folklore structure

Poetry, in its entirety, and the innovation of modern Vietnamese poetry, even within the realm of free verse, is intricately shaped by an underlying conceptual structure. Particularly, the form of organization into stanzas is predominantly manifested in seven-

word poems, also known as “thất ngôn” or seven-syllable poems. This poetic form gained popularity during the New Poetry movement. “Thất ngôn” poems vary in length, with no strict limit on the number of lines. However, they often coalesce into quatrains, each comprising four lines. While poems can be structured into seven or nine quatrains, the four-quatrains form is more commonly favored, providing a balanced, symmetrical framework reminiscent of musical compositions.

This approach aligns seamlessly with the basic organization of musical compositions, showcasing a sense of equilibrium and a structured model. Importantly, it allows authors to fully express the richness of content and musical nuances within the poem. A four-quatrains poem need not be entirely dependent on a predefined stanzaic structure. Lines can vary in length, and the rhythmic pace can be fast or slow, depending on the organization of the meter. This flexibility echoes the complexity found in music. Discovering a suitable structure for a poem, one that effectively captures the predominant emotional melody of the poet, is no simple task. On the other hand, how to coordinate elements to maintain the conventions of structure while allowing freedom and innovation in the enchanting, boundless world of music depends largely on the creative prowess of the poets. About the musical organization, the refrain form, or “điệp khúc,” cannot be overlooked. The refrain significantly contributes to the sound and melody of a work. This form is commonly used in musical structures, serving as both a method to connect sound systems and a means of organizing components, often appearing in the climactic section. In music, the refrain emphasizes different themes and adds melody to songs and compositions. It unifies the musical piece into a cohesive, emotional whole. In poetry, this phenomenon is frequently and effectively employed to create a tonal consistency, linking poetic sections and ideas based on a shared emotional theme.

The recurrence of the refrain can either be exact or nearly identical, often with a circular repetition, creating a poetic composition that is resonant and reflective. When the refrain takes on a leading role, the impact of the stanzaic organization becomes more profound, elevating the musicality of the poem. The repetition of the refrain enhances the depth and musicality of the poem, creating a lingering and contemplative ambiance that aligns with the expressed content. If the refrain is elevated to a leading role, the impression of the organized stanzas is heightened, and the musicality of the poem is elevated. In the orchestration of modern Vietnamese poetry, the intricate dance of words, the rhythmic arrangement, and the melodic interplay fuse to create a poetic symphony. The poem, a composition of verses, resonates like notes on a grand staff, forming a harmonious and evocative masterpiece.

Tran Dan borrows the rhythm of folk tunes, primarily nursery rhymes, singing in children’s play, and short folk verses to create musicality for entirely modern content:

Go playing! Go playing

Bald head bottle

Two hands, two stones

Go playing! Go playing

Bald head bottle...

Go playing! Go playing

(Adult's song)

The poem bears no trace of authorial artistry, no adherence to traditional rhyme's embrace. In the spirit of its opening line, "Go playing! Go playing," the verses unfold as a whimsical foray. Through consonance's refrain and an original image's core: "Bald head bottle," the poem channels the exuberance of children's lore. It borrows the expressive cadence akin to a playful chorus, echoing the whimsy that Tran Dan labels "Adult's song." Amidst the vivid resonance of linguistic play, a hallmark reminiscent of Ho Xuan Huong's poetic word. It's in the poetry's melody, the way words freely interlock, like an eternal nursery rhyme's clock, that Tran Dan breathes life into a narrative anew. Familiar folk rhythms he imbues, from the vernacular of the young to adult song's vernacular tongue, Tran Dan might adorn forms to express unsung tales.

In another poem, the poet adeptly weaves together the arts of painting, music, and verse in a harmonious expression:

*Rain falls gently
last year crossroads
aware of my foolishness
how can resist her departed
the treacherous boulevard
You - long innocent
You - long forgetful of concealment*

(Unnamed poem number 4)

Adhering to the traditional repetition method to create a melody through unrhymed lines, disjointed structure, and seemingly illogical line breaks, the poem forms a fractured tapestry. Readers still sense a poignant rhythm, lingering, elongating in the likeness of "you - long oblivious to balance." In contrast to the familiar repetition in folk sayings, where an object, regardless of its actions, remains a constant reminder, the verses extending from a dominant theme act as a contemplative vessel for emotional melodies alone. However, for Tran Dan, each elongation marks a shift into various imaginings, swirling into different emotional dimensions, unveiling the tender subject in various aspects, some perhaps veiled: "you - long blameless". Like turning an object into a Rubik's cube, placing it in a kaleidoscopic lens to let it unveil meanings of rich aesthetic value - which Ché Lan Viê'n did successfully with his philosophically and intellectually enriched poetry. However, Tran Dan's purpose isn't to manipulate the Rubik's cube or kaleidoscope but to let it move on its own, surrendering to the flow of meaning and melody. The chain of elongations casts an infinite shadow upon the poetry, not aimed at illustrating any specific object, not focused on any particular fixed meaning. Each time the refrain of "you, long forgets balance" rises, it is a moment when the sentimental character falls into a state of waiting illogically: "How could you resist her departed", then again, a moment of discovery unfolds.

Alongside *Unnamed poem number 4*, Tran Dan paints a canvas: "You - long forgets balance." This is a complex blend of contrasting hues, divergent lines, and unconventional dimensions - an image that transcends the perception of a young woman in Tran Dan's eyes, not a person with authentic lifelike contours. "You - long forgets balance" repeats in Tran Dan's poetry, echoing an awareness of innocence and irrationality in the world,

using rich, sensuous language and imagery - sensuousness unattainable when entwined with balance, authenticity, and originality.

In the realm of melody, Duong Tuong weaves the twists of communal songs, crafting a musical essence for his verses. In the quest for innovation in Vietnamese poetry, the poet retraces his steps to the fields, to lullabies, and most notably, to the children's folk songs. These are “*đồng dao*,” the folk poems of Vietnamese children, conveyed through oral traditions. They may surface in folk games or manifest as children's songs. Tailored for the young, *đồng dao* often boasts a repetitive structure, and rhythmic verses, easy to remember, and easy to grasp, fostering a child's language acquisition and acquainting them with the rural life, familiar creatures, vivid images, and plays surrounding them.

In comparison, Duong Tuong employs the structure, rhythm, and repetition of *đồng dao* to speak to the reader about life, existence, and love:

*In the memory of women,
poisonous eggplant fruit,
the rhythm of Ô Thước bridge,
I am green, you are green,
the reminiscence is green,
the grudge is green,
the pain is green,
yet the afternoon is cold,
the afternoon is swaying,
no one waits,
rain in the coffee shop...*

(In the Memory of Women)

*The poem commences with a familiar *đồng dao* refrain:
Release the leech softshell turtle,
but don't capture the women.*

Originally, this is a children's folk song within the chasing play. Children pretend to run through flooded fields where the leech cannot bite them. The person play chasing other children until one is caught, who then takes on the chasing role. This childhood game is resurrected in Duong Tuong's poem but with the perspective of an adult, a seasoned individual. Now no children are chasing each other; only “I” chasing “you” within the mind's realm of “Green reminiscence,” “green grudge,” and “green pain.” Without the purpose of shaping phenomena, Duong Tuong's “modern *đồng dao*” blurs the lines between joy, memory, and sorrow. He revitalizes the *đồng dao* motif for adults, infusing it with the hidden emotions and yearnings of a poetic soul: “no one awaits.”

In *Mea Culpa chorus*, Duong Tuong similarly utilizes the structure and melody of *đồng dao*: “*Chi chi chành chành*”:

*I weep sitting,
Circle Silently overflowing.
Chi chi chành chành,
Full Silently white,*

*I weep standing.
Chi chi chành chành,
Raindrops like needles,
I weep.*

“*Chi chi chành chành*,” instead of a playful introduction to a children's play, now in Duong Tuong's poem becomes meaningless, empty words, functioning as a refrain, opening the floodgates of the protagonist's emotional outpour. “Weeping standing,” and “weeping sitting,” expressions frequently found in Vietnamese folk sayings, are employed disjointedly in Duong Tuong's poetry. Drawing on the common understanding of “weeping standing” and “weeping sitting”, readers can imagine the role of these lines as tonal accents, signaling the successive loops of sorrow. Duong Tuong successfully integrates the sound, cadence, and structure of folk poetry into his works, providing readers with a sense of both novelty and familiarity, evoking the nostalgic, tender sentiments of childhood, interspersed with intervals of contemplation, emptiness, and melancholy inherent in the journey of maturation.

3. Conclusion

In the realm of poetry, the weaving of language and structure, embracing diverse forms, including the use of folklore and cultural cadence, serves as an alchemist's touch, forging and renewing the poetic world. The poetry shaped by the influence of music is a shared dreamscape - a mystical realm where poetic spaces ripple, and time remains elusive. It might be the time of yore, the present shrouded in the structure of reminiscence. Sometimes, in these poetic symphonies, space and time vanish, blurring the boundaries of all things. They accompany, or even meld, the rich tapestry of human emotions into the enigmatic, the mystical, and the vastness of existence. With the myriad hues of sound and rhythm, vivid and ethereal, the poets construct a vibrant, ethereal world - a world deeply immersed in the mellifluous and the surreal. Parallel to the creation of this vivid imaginative realm, following the contours of sound gradients, readers easily encounter an inner, multidimensional world. It is a world where humanity, through the medium of music, articulates profound sentiments about life, embracing a spectrum of emotions. In this poetic odyssey, language dances with melody, giving voice to the intricate whispers of the soul. Through the varied shades of sound and the rhythmic heartbeat of verse, the poets craft a kaleidoscopic tableau - a world resonant with emotions, painted in hues of melody and cadence.

Embarking on Tran Dan's poetic journey, we recognize that the poet's creativity and modernization of poetry stem not only from contemporary influences of Western culture but aligning with the post-modern world of poetry. What is remarkable about Tran Dan is that he draws inspiration from a different stream, flowing through the veins of Vietnamese poetry for generations: a consciousness of tradition and ethnicity; a sacred, profound, and pristine childhood that the poet wishes to safeguard, fearing its demise. The poet holds onto this fragile and beautiful essence with a sensitive soul, a poetic form enriched with folk melodies, and a unique arrangement of familiar and surprising imagery. It is the folklore essence unique to Tran Dan, the pure essence of the memories of a bygone era in human life and poetry. However, it is certain that, in line with Tran Dan's creative spirit, each reader will discover their folk nuances, not imposed, not

duplicated, akin to one's quest for emotions in the meticulous journey with words, to rejuvenate, make novel, distinct, and embellish Vietnamese language.

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