In the Oriental Art Room

By Mamie A. Meloy

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In bronze they speak, and tufted snow
That fell two thousand years ago.
High tides of vast emotion swept
And surged through hoary centuries;
Unnumbered patient fingers wrought
To shape the lofty dream, the fate,
The longing inarticulate,
The priceless jade, in brass, in silk,
Here untold ancient altars flame.

In awe, I... alien Occident...
Go softly, breathless, reverent;
East's august emperors are here;
Calm Buddha by his Bo-tree sits;
Here wintry, austere mountains rise
To stay the poet where he goes
To seek plum-blossoms in the snows;
Quintessences of dynasties—
A whole faith blooms in one jade flower!

Not my unseasoned loom can weave
This precious stuff, and I must leave
This many-shining wool; I have
No backward-ranging centuries,
For I am Oklahoman—saw
The ground beneath this very room
In its primeval grass and virgin bloom,
To its far horizon lie newborn—
Without inhabitant or name!