

A Summer Stroll at the Pavilion

On these tender shores under
the shade of elm and oak, sunfish
nip fishing lines as hawks caw
overhead. Children call and play.
Leaves rustle in the wind. Above
the flowing waters, willows whisper
to Lake Phalen, to the Mississippi,
to sister river Xiang in Changsha.

The pavilion's arches swoop upward
like eagles, its dragons protecting
the four pillars. Two small sisters
on stools sing a gentle Hmong
song, the blue ceiling tiles echoing
the summer sky, their heavenly voices.

No red-crowned cranes, but flashes
of robins and a cardinal, red as the roof.
No blooming peach trees but maples
near the stone bridge, the pavilion's
pillars of friendship, peace, and poetry,
of rivers deep and wide. Youyi chang cun.
We almost hear the song of the red crane.