Going With Carl Hertel To See 56 Chinese Paintings In Pasadena: Three Poems

1: Consort Ming Crossing The Frontier by Kung Su-jan

cold wind off the high desert a carved p'i-p'a shaggy ponies Tu Fu wrote about her, a shih

'sierras, valleys, ravines, at last the mountain Ch'u Gateway the village is still here where lady Ming Fei grew up

the red brick terraces behind her, desert stretched to the $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) \left(1\right)$

a green grave mound remains alone in the dusk

paintings remember her face under spring winds jade ornaments tinkle her ghost troubles the moonlit night

a thousand years the tatar lute has spoken as if its alien melodies told her wrongs'

Wang Shao-chun Sho kun in Japanese the loveliest lady relied on beauty alone while the three hundred others bribed the painter

2: Pavilion In An Autumn Landscape by Ni Tsan

Ni Tsan his dry stingy brush several trees
a bleak stretch of water dirt hills not far off a pavilion

nobody in it
over and over
he didn't like people if they were vulgar
collected antiquities, calligraphy
but left his possessions

lived wandering amidst lakes and streams was not present when the Yuan went under he couldn't stand not being clean enjoyed: 'a relatively tranquil old age'

3: Patio Mural by Robert Rauschenberg

I used to wash the windows in Running Springs the Wagon Wheel Cafe lifting up carefully the neon sign to sponge glass behind it hot vinegar water cut fly specks, smoke film, dust, then
deftly I plied the squeegee, carefully
let the sign back down \$200 sign even then ACME
beer cans with cone tops capped like bottles

later in the war patriotic quarts

to save metal Lucky Strike Green gone to war then too outside on the stoop great oaken barrels, the empties fifty gallons or so of draught beer

I remember how thick the staves were

doubly curved four
iron hoops fit to the bulge
the bung replaced, loosely
there was lettering carved or by

there was lettering carved or burnt deeply in the wood

I forget what
you can't get beer in wooden barrels anywhere any more
Robert Rauschenberg
how come they still have neon

-- R G Barnes

Claremont CA

The Phenomenologist

Bald and silent a thin, ascetic man he was one of the ten disciples of P. taking the path of phenomenologist up the dim and seedy cliffs of 20th century philosophy.

The sun of La Jolla baked the rest of them in their ambition but he was fair and liked the shade.

He did not contend. He made no defense of anything.

He kept his contemplations in a pile of little notebooks arranged in order on a shabby one drawer desk.

Now ten years have passed. I suppose the rest are all professors now.