Li Po (701-762). He might be not the real author of this poem.

Xiao. A vertical bamboo flute.

Chin-E. A princess of the Chin State. Married to Xiao Shi, a legendary xiao player, who taught her to play xiao to imitate the cry of the phoenix. Her father built them a Phoenix Terrace, where they could play xiao and entertain themselves. Later, Xiao riding on a dragon, Chin-E on a phoenix, they flew away.

Pa Ling. An imperial tomb for Emperor Wen of Han. As a result of its location (by the major route leaving the capital), it was also a popular place for departure, where people would break a willow branch as a token for separation.

Clear Autumn. A festival on September Ninth by lunar calendar, when people go sightseeing on the Joy-Jog Plain, a place near Chang’an, the capital of the Tang Dynasty.
2. 箫 (xiao). The upper part, 茅, means bamboo, while the lower part is the pronunciation, /hsiao/.

8. 音 or 韵 (sound). It etymologically follows 言 or 聞, which means “to speak,” or “words.” But the latter doesn’t have the stroke inside the lower part ( 耳 , mouth), which indicates something coming out of the mouth—“sound.” Ezra Pound thinks the lower part of “sound” is sun ( 太 ) in the character 韻. Hence the lines in Canto LXXIV:
   in Chi heard Shun’s music
   the sharp song with sun under its radiance

8. 塵 or 尘 (dust). A horde of 鹿 (deer) are leaping, stirring up from the ground ( 土 ) what is called “dust.”

[RADICAL TRANSLATION]

憶秦娥
[Title] Heart-Recollect Chin Woman-E

簫聲咽
bamboo xiao ear-sound mouth-sob

秦娥夢斷秦樓月
Chin Woman-E moon-dream blade-break Chin wood-terrace moon

秦樓月
Chin wood-terrace moon

年年柳色
year year wood-willow color

霸陵傷別
Pa Ling man hurt bone-blade-separation

樂遊原上清秋節
Happy Walk Plain above Water-Clear Plant-Dry-Autumn bamboo-festival

咸陽古道音塵絕
Xian Yang ten-mouth-old walk-road mouth-sound deer-dust silk-cut

mouth-sound deer-dust silk-cut

西風殘照
west worm-wind handicap sun-shine

漢家陵闕
Han house-pig-family tomb door-tablet
What's in English:

- A
- -s (sobs)
- broken (“break”)
- the
- -s (hues, tablets, tombs)
- -ing (recollecting, parting, fading)
- of

What's in Chinese:

- 小 (heart)
- 女 (woman)
- 破 (bamboo)
- 耳 (ear)
- 口 (mouth)
- 刀 (moon)
- 木 (blade)
- 人 (wood)
- 火 (man)
- 之 (walk)
- 水 (water)
- 日 (plant)
- (fire)
- 月 (sun)
- 初 (deer)
- 土 (earth)
- 虫 (silk)
- 蛾 (worm)
- 房 (house)
- 畜 (pig)
- 门 (gate)

BEAUTY YU

Li Yu

When will the spring flower
and autumn moon end? So
much to recollect! On the little
tower, last night, the east wind
blew again. Unbearable to
look homeward in the
moonlight. Carved railings,
jade steps, should still be
there, only the rosy faces fade!
Asking: How much sorrow
can one have? Just like a river
of spring water flowing east.

Li Yu (937-978). The last emperor of
the South Tang Dynasty. Captured by
the Sung conquerors and imprisoned
in the North, he wrote nostalgic
poems, including Beauty Yu,
reminiscing of his lost kingdom in the
South.

Beauty Yu. A tune title, but Yu is also
the name of an ancient beauty.

Carved...fade. The poet is imagining
what's happening in his old court.

虞美人

李煜

春花秋月何時了 往事知多少
小樓昨夜又東風
故國不堪回首月明中
雕欄玉砌應猶在 只是朱顏改
問君能有幾多愁
恰似一江春水向東流
2. 春 or 草 (spring). 春 is grass. 草 is sun. Grass grows in the spring, thus the
association of the word “spring” with grass.

2. 時 (time). The left component is “sun.” This character also appears
in a famous Confucian saying: 學而時習之不亦說乎 (Is it not
pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application?). Ezra Pound,
using his “etymosinological” interpretation, translated this sentence as: “To
study with the white wings of time passing/is not that our delight” (Pisan
Cantos: 74/464-5). Achilles Fang, who once worked closely with Pound and
helped the latter’s Chinese, explained in his 1958 Harvard Ph.D. dissertation
Materials for the Study of Pound’s Cantos:

Here “with the white wings of time passing” is strictly Poundian
“etymosinological” interpretation of 時習: he took the second
ideogram as composed of 羽 (wings) and 白 (white), but the
latter component appears in the seal-script as 自. (The composite
ideogram could then be interpreted as to “use one’s own
wings,” i.e., “young birds learning to fly,” hence “to practise; be
familiar with custom,” — Bernhard Karlgren, Analytic Dictionary of

Chinese and Sino-Japanese, No. 78; “習 is the rapid and
frequent motion of the wings of a bird in flying, used for ‘to repeat,’
‘to practise,’” — Legge’s footnote.) The word 時 “time” cannot
imply be considered as anything but a temporal adverb modifying the
verb 習.

The misinterpreted character, 習, also appeared in Robert Duncan’s
“Effort,” a long poem which was lost and then recovered thirty years later
among his papers:

but: pleasant to learn
this sign
“the rapid and frequent
motion of wings” a bird
learning to fly;
an effort
“of how to enter Heaven?”

The mistakenly stroked Chinese character, among others was “in the manner
of Pound but not taken from The Cantos.”

3. 多少 (many few, i.e. how many, or, how much). It belongs to a
group of Chinese words which use two opposite terms to indicate an abstract
concept, such as size (“large small”), length (“long short”), weight (“heavy
light”). Florence Ayscough, who collaborated with Amy Lowell on Fir-
Flower Tablets: Poems from the Chinese, made an interesting comment on
this linguistic phenomenon:
China is a land of counter-balance. Its people think in terms of compensation, and its philosophy is founded on a belief in the efficacious interaction of two essences which are called Yang and Yin. The idiomatic speech of everyday life is full of expressions which betray this love of counterpoise. An inquiry is made about size, and the inquirer asks how ‘large small’ a thing may be— if length is in question the ‘long short’ is referred to, and weight is described as ‘heavy light.’ In writing the fateful letter which decided me to send a cable asking my little dog Yo Fei, whom I had left at the Grass Hut, in Shanghai, be shipped to me in Canada, Mr. Cultivator-of-Bamboo expressed himself in the following words: ‘I have been to the Grass Hut, and I have seen your little Yo Fei. You do not know how many few are his unwillingness. He anything, everything does not like.’

Thus counterpoise and balance are perhaps the most typical of all Chinese characteristics...

5. 首 or 頭 (head). The lower part is a head; the upper is hair.

回首 literally means “turning back the head,” or “look back.”

6. 雕 (carve). Originally it is a name of a bird, Diao (vulture). The right component, 鸟 is a hieroglyphic bird; the left, 周 means “use mouth.” A vulture uses its beak; hence “carve.”

9. or 向 (toward). A house with its window open “toward” north.

水 or 河 (water). The other two characters in this last line, 江 (river), and 流 (flow), also use the radical 水 (water).
What’s in English:

the
much (as different from “many”)
blew (“blow”)
-able (unbearable)
-ward (homeward)
to (as in “to recollect,” “to vision”)
-ed (carved)
-s (railings, steps, faces)
-ing (railings, asking, flowing)
-y (rosy)
a

What’s in Chinese:

羊 (lamb)
人 (man)
日 (sun)
禾 (plant)
火 (fire)
月 (moon)
木 (wood)
虫 (worm)
土 (earth)
首 (head)
门 (middle)
中 (bird)
门 (door)
石 (stone)
刀 (knife)
心 (heart)
一 (one)
水 (water)
向 (toward)