Though early five-character *shi* 詩-poetry is a highly formulaic, often-anonymous, likely performance-oriented artform, a number of the earliest surviving poems are attributed to writers who also wrote in other genres wherein a robust concept of individual creative authorship prevailed. Given this context, we should not read this corpus as simply naïve, as scholars sometimes have. Instead, much of it represents a deliberate abjuration of the role of the individual creative “author,” an abjuration that is in fact often discussed, justified, and theorized in surviving early poems.

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