

*Season's drift so quickly
Beneath the single sky.*

It seems only a few years ago that I was introduced to Charles Chu. It was 1979, and as was his tradition, it was lunch at his and Bettie's home. Sunlight streamed in around the heavy oak table and tantalizing smells drifted in from the kitchen. Bourbon on ice in-hand, his exuberance of energy kept him dancing around as he cooked and served one delicious dish after another and conversation flowed from one topic to the next.

Then in the middle of tea – he jumped up, went to his studio, painted the bouquet of flowers I had brought, and delightedly handed me the painting. That was my introduction to Chinese brushwork, “The Three Perfections” and the generosity of Charles Chu.

As the decades passed, our lives interwove with each other both professionally and personally. There were times of laughter, times of tears and times of just plain hard work. Charles was a respected scholar and well loved teacher, but it was his artistic talent and his mindfulness that I connected to most. To paint and write a poem about wisteria blooming in early summer, a bluebird perched in the birdfeeder, or a frog patiently sitting at the edge of the pond, was to share with the world his intimate feelings. He was a flurry of activity and a single quiet moment. And he imbued in me, as he did with so many, a respect and love of Chinese Literati Painting.

*We have met in this life, to dance in the light,
In the time we have.*

I have a small collection of Charles Chu paintings and calligraphy, each special to me in their own way, but one of my favorites is “Dragon.” It was painted for my new office in 1982 – the Year of the Dragon, with a new brush Charles was experimenting with. The style is unique, quite large, artistic and different than anything he had painted. His brushstroke was an expression of his spirit. It was done in a moment and it will last an eternity.