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.