

# Betrayal It Is

By Lily Gough - Poolesville High School

*Khara Khoto (The Black City) was a kingdom in the Gobi desert, established in the reign of Genghis Khan. It prospered during the Silk Road, serving as a pit stop for travelers. During the Ming Dynasty, military forces took over their river. This caused everyone to die of thirst. Mythology in the surrounding area states that the ruler, Khara Bator, killed his wife and family so they would not have to suffer.*

Cowardice, you called it to leave our people to die. For as they supported us with their crops, we must support them now  
I was a mere figurehead standing next to you silently  
It was such torture watching you slowly shrivel  
Like that of the meadow crane's bill, wilting swiftly as winter approaches. You slowly drying up, like that of the water thyme after a drought  
Even the Gruiforme flees when the fish dry up. Begging, pleading for you to leave with me, knowing you never would. Even as I gaze at you now, peaceful in death, grief and guilt suffocating my heart  
Our love, like that of Orpheus and Eurydice, doomed from the start to be ended prematurely  
Peering out the window, the people wake with the sun  
Children running to wake their friends to play, their joy hardly masking the sunken eyes and dry skin  
Running without care for the bodies around them, the corpses' hair blowing silently as the wind picks up  
I return back to your words, a reminder of all I have yet to do  
I lay beside you, my body crumbling slowly  
Finally I may join you, my burdens leaving my shoulders. The giggling of children still ringing in my ears, growing fainter  
Betrayal you will call it, betrayal it is