



# In Limpid Dream: Nostalgia and Zhang Dai's Reminiscences of the Ming

By Philip A. Kafalas

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The first extended study in English of *Dream Reminiscences* written by the Chinese aesthete, historian and poet Zhang Dai in the late 1640s. Philip Kafalas' *In Limpid Dream* captures the beauty and complexity of Zhang's book with adept grace.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

The Chinese aesthete, historian and poet Zhang Dai wrote his *Dream Reminiscences* in the late 1640s, just after the Ming dynasty had fallen to Manchu invaders.

Despite the beauty and complexity of Zhang's book, until Philip Kafalas' *In Limpid Dream* neither Zhang Dai nor his *Dream Reminiscences* had been the subject of an extended study in English. Kafalas and Zhang turn out to be an ideal match, for Kafalas is a critic with the spirit of a poet, alert to every nuance and swerve of Zhang Dai's diction, constantly discovering new meanings and connections in Zhang Dai's random-seeming sequence of 123 brief prose pieces. Zhang Dai's structural ingenuity and cultural allusiveness fascinate Kafalas, who follows Zhang wherever he beckons. The result is a powerful and moving joint soliloquy on memory, history, time, space and the moment, in which Ming sensibility blends almost seamlessly with our current cultural condition. *In Limpid Dream*, like the *Dream Reminiscences* that inspired it, is a book to read and to ponder. --Jonathan Spence, Yale University

#### About the Author

Philip A. Kafalas earned the AB in English and American Literature and Languages from Harvard College, an M.A. in East Asian Studies from Stanford University, and the Ph.D. in Asian Languages (Chinese) from Stanford University. He is Associate Professor in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, Georgetown University.

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